

**Christ is the Head of this House: Material Culture and New Modes of
Consumption for Kayan in the 1990s**

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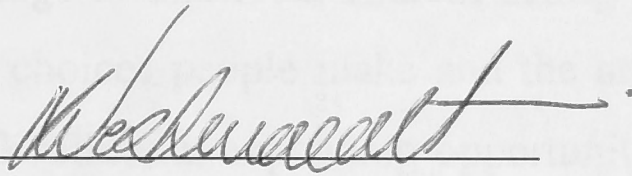
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines new modes of consumption among Kayan in the Barun River district of Sarawak, East Malaysia, focusing on the Long Niah community, between 1993 and 1995. For Kayan, new modes of consumption are associated with the expansion of the timber industry in Northern Sarawak and the consequent growth in wage labour for local peoples. The thesis also looks at religious change in the Barun. For Kayan communities in the mid 1990s, rapid economic and social change were occurring alongside an intense participation in both the spiritual journey and the teachings of the local church, acting prescriptively and proscriptively. This thesis is entirely the original work of the author, based on research conducted between 1993 and 2000. Where the works of others have been cited, this has been clearly indicated in the text.

Signed:



18, 04, 2000

(Karen Westmacott)

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines new modes of consumption among Kayan in the Baram River district of Sarawak, East Malaysia, focusing on the Long Na'ah community, between 1993 and 1995. For Kayan, new modes of consumption are associated with the expansion of the timber industry in Northern Sarawak and the concomitant growth in wage labour for local peoples. The thesis also looks at religious change in the Baram. For Kayan communities in the mid 1990s, rapid economic and social change were occurring alongside an intense participation in both the spiritual ministry and bureaucratic structures of a Protestant evangelical church: *Sidang Injil Borneo* (the Evangelical Church of Borneo). An analysis of the ways evangelical Christianity intersects with economic change and new modes of consumption is a major concern of the thesis. The teachings of this local church, acting prescriptively and proscriptively, are implicated in the choices people make and the attitudes they express about newer cash-based forms of livelihood, expanding opportunities for consumption (particularly of the products of the national and global industrial economy), and aspects of the state's development program. In focusing on new modes of consumption, this thesis also engages with arguments which see processes of globalisation and commoditisation as a source of cultural homogenisation, as well as with the alternative argument which urges a recognition of continued diversity, or emerging new cultural difference, in local cultural systems. While the culturally homogenising effects global capitalism can have are acknowledged, the thesis also argues that it is the local form of Christianity which in some cases proves the more overtly homogenising power. However, the thesis also shows that people in communities such as Long Na'ah are not to be understood simply as unwitting victims of (assumed) processes of cultural globalisation, or the meek followers of church injunction. Room remains, including in the context of new modes of consumption, for the creation and recreation of local social and cultural identities.

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INTRODUCTION

A Picture of a Borneo Longhouse Apartment 1994-1995

Leaving the brightness of the concreted longhouse verandah, and stepping through the front door of Taman Kajan's *amin* (apartment), one enters a large rectangular room which stretches away toward the back of the longhouse. It is cooler and darker than outside, but light enters from windows set into the wall on the right. These windows overlook the courtyard of the neighbouring apartment, that of Taman Kajan's sister. Light blue linoleum covers the floor, and plywood sheeting, some designed to mimic the sheen of ceramic tiles, lines the walls. The central area of the room is clear of furniture, giving a feeling of spaciousness, but the walls, particularly the long north wall, are busy with objects (see Figure 22).

Beginning at the front of the apartment, the north wall (to the left, on entering the apartment) proceeds from the television and VCR, both resting inside a cabinet near the front door, to a row of upright cane chairs for watchers. One of these is a tiny child's-size chair. Next to these are some varnished timber lounge chairs, missing their foam cushions. The cane chairs and lounge suite sit in a row along the north wall, at right angles to the television, making it necessary for viewers to crane their heads over their right shoulders in order to watch. (This configuration is disrupted from time to time by children of the household, who pull the chairs around to face the television directly. On occasion, Taman Kajan himself places a chair in front of the TV, but usually only when nursing a small child who is watching. At times the apartment fills with a crowd of small viewers from around the village who sit on the floor around the television.)

Beyond the TV and chairs the wall passes behind a small storeroom under the stairs which lead to the upper floor. Here there sits a heavy treadle sewing machine covered with a brightly coloured crocheted rug. The wall continues on past the foot of the stairs to a small round table – the site of many small acts of day-to-day storage – and then towards the back of the apartment where there is a row of glass-fronted cabinets. The round table is dominated by the shifting

paraphernalia of infant feeding, cleaning and medication. These objects – feeding bottles, infant formula, pacifiers, towels, toys and Vicks Vapour Rub – are the property of Puyang, Taman Kajan's daughter-in-law, and are for the care of her baby son La'ing. The glass-fronted cabinets contain the more permanently stored belongings of Taman Kajan, his wife, and their youngest daughters. Clothes that are in everyday use sit atop the cabinet in neat piles and next to these are a collection of family toiletries. The latter rest below a small mirror attached to the wall. Here Taman Kajan and his family comb and fix their hair before attending church, and other formal occasions. Finally, in the corner at the farthest extent of the north wall, before one would exit through the door into the kitchen, is another small cupboard on top of which sits a pile of ten or twelve video cassettes.

Returning to the front door, a different journey surveys the objects which hang upon the north wall. Above the row of cane chairs, only a little below the point where wall meets ceiling, hangs a row of framed beadwork. In a number of these the meticulous threading and knotting of tiny glass seed beads reveals images from a recognisable Kayan-Kenyah repertoire – a stylised human face entwines with the characteristic Kayan *aso'* ('dog' or 'dragon') motif;¹ a non-figurative work, also suggesting the *aso'*, exhibits Kayan decorative themes. But most of the beadwork spells out something else. One rectangular block of beadwork with neat crosses in each corner proclaims: '*Tiada Yang Mustahil Bagi Tuhan*' (Nothing is impossible for God), and another in the form of a suspended pennant, fringed with beaded tassels, prays, in English, '*God Bless Our Home*'. (On the opposite wall of Taman Kajan's apartment these are reflected by other beaded Christian homilies which affirm that '*Christ is the Head of this House*', and '*God Gives Our Family Joy and Love*'. On the north wall, these exhortations sit beside greeting-card messages which offer '*Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year*' and declare, against the background of a staggered pair of hearts: '*You are the melody in my heart, with love, Rabia*', Rabia being one of Taman Kajan's adult daughters.)

¹ See Munan (1989: 84-85), King (1985) and Whittier (1973) for an interpretation of the *aso'* in Borneo art.

The journey along the north wall continues to the storeroom under the stairs where there are three small palm-leaf sunhats. One of these is applied, in the manner of patchwork, with bands of coloured fabric. Beside the door of the storeroom is pinned a day-by-day calendar (which is carefully changed each day by one of Taman Kajan's sons). As the north wall continues past the stairs and on toward the back of the apartment, the row of suspended decorations continues, although in this back section the beaded pictures and homilies are replaced by large elaborately beaded sunhats. Between two such hats is another calendar; this one advertises the services of a Chinese insurance company. Not too far along again is the head of a deer (locally acquired horns are fitted to a carved timber head). The deer's head forms a convenient storage hook: it is draped with the finely knotted mesh of a homemade fishing net. Another sunhat separates the deer's head from a walking stick; this latter object is covered with a sheath of fine Kayan beadwork (its purpose is decorative: the walking stick rarely leaves the wall). Beside it are two equally decorative carved wooden shields of Kayan design; and beside these are two colourful baskets, this time of Kelabit design and manufacture. Looping around and behind all these things, from end to end of Taman Kajan's front room, is the electricity cable which provides power for neon lighting, for the television and VCR and, through into the kitchen, for the intermittent operation of a refrigerator.

The Thesis

This thesis offers an image of life in the mid-1990s for a relatively remote upriver Kayan community in Sarawak, East Malaysia. Within this, the focus is on new modes of consumption associated largely with the expansion of the timber industry in Northern Sarawak, and the concomitant growth in wage labour for local peoples. While still reliant to a large extent on the cultivation of hill rice, some communities in this region have been able to secure significant cash incomes through employment in the timber camps. At Long Na'ah, the Kayan community on the Baram River (see maps in Appendix) where I did field research, new modes of consumption associated with such incomes may be

reflected, for example, in the style and furnishings of longhouse apartments (such as Taman Kajan's apartment, described above).

In covering a period just prior to the Southeast Asian economic crisis and the growing uncertainties of the late 1990s, the picture offered also reflects the rather frenetic atmosphere of high economic growth and rapid development in Malaysia and other southeast Asian countries at that time. Local peoples in the more remote areas of Northern Sarawak, such as the Kayan, were linked to the regional, national and global processes which lay behind that era of high growth via the operations of local and multi-national timber companies, as well as by processes of Malaysian nation-building and economic development. It was a time of heightened national optimism, something which certainly reached people at Long Na'ah. Such optimism was reflected in the rhetoric and ceremony of local events such as school sports days. The small, local successes of particular villages, and even of individual children, were cast as integral to the national endeavour, and in particular, to Malaysia's goal of achieving developed nation status by the year 2020. The orchestrated optimism of the state also reached people in the Baram through television and radio. During 1995 (a federal election year) a campaign was run on Radio Television Malaysia under the slogan '*Malaysia: Kestabilan, Kemakmuran*' ('Malaysia: Stable and Prosperous'). Entitled 'Malaysia: Host to the World', the advertisement proclaimed that 'It is a sign of the times...that in the last ten years, Malaysia has become host to the world', a circumstance attributed to the country's 'stability', 'infrastructure' and to the Malaysian people's 'enthusiasm'. Scenes from the 1989 Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting, held in Malaysia, and a flagging of the 1998 Commonwealth Games, also to be held in Malaysia, reinforced this vision. (When watching television at the timber camps, people from Long Na'ah would sometimes take note of this national promotion and occasionally repeat the slogan after the narrator.) It must be emphasised that the picture presented in this thesis, including my understanding of the mood of people in a small community such as Long Na'ah, and more broadly in the East Malaysian state of Sarawak, is one which is firmly tied to a specific period of time, that is, between 1993 and 1995.

The thesis also looks at some aspects of religious change in the Baram River district.² For Kayan communities in the Baram in the mid-1990s, quite rapid economic and social change were occurring alongside a remarkably intense participation in both the spiritual ministry and bureaucratic structures of a Protestant evangelical church: *Sidang Injil Borneo* (the Evangelical Church of Borneo).³ The church services which I attended at Long Na'ah were both frequent and long, and the weekly schedule of the church marked the progress of other community activities, whether work or socialising, from Monday through to Sunday. An analysis of some of the ways evangelical Christianity intersects with economic change (and new modes of consumption) for people at Long Na'ah is an important concern of the thesis. The teachings of the local church are implicated, for example, in the choices people make, and attitudes they express, about newer cash-based forms of livelihood, expanding opportunities for consuming (particularly the products of the national and global industrial economy), and aspects of the state's development program, such as education. On these matters church ideology acts variously as both a prescriptive and proscriptive force: the message on '*kemajuan*' (development) is to 'take what is good and reject what is bad', according to the judgement of the church.

In focusing on new modes of consumption, the thesis engages with arguments which see processes of globalisation and commoditisation as a source of cultural homogenisation (e.g. Weismantel, 1989; Lundgren, 1988; Rodgers, 1984), as well as with the alternative argument, frequently proposed by anthropologists, which urges a recognition of continued diversity, or emerging new cultural difference, in local cultural systems (e.g. Friedman 1994; Hirsch, 1994; Miller, 1995b). The picture of an upriver⁴ Borneo community presented in this thesis does, in part, acknowledge the culturally homogenising effects which global capitalism may bring. The thesis also argues, however, that it is the local

² Generally referred to hereafter as 'the Baram'.

³ Referred to locally by its initials 'SIB'.

⁴ In Sarawak peoples such as the Kayan and Kenyah who live on the middle and upper reaches of the states river systems are often referred to as *orang ulu* ('upriver people'). The term also has the sense of 'up-country' people, or people of the interior. As such it is sometimes perceived as derogatory, especially by those '*orang ulu*' who are now firmly urban people. Nevertheless, 'upriver' and 'downriver/coastal/the sea' remain salient reference points for Kayan, whether they are resident in riverside longhouses or in the towns.

form of evangelical Protestant Christianity which may prove, in some instances, to be the more overtly homogenising power. Nevertheless, this picture is tempered by the understanding that people in communities such as Long Na'ah are not simply unwitting victims of (assumed) processes of cultural globalisation. There is some room for Kayan to '(use) goods that they (do) not produce, and that they experience only as consumers, in the creation (and recreation) of social and cultural identities' (Miller, 1995a: 156), whether these reflect a continuity of Kayan notions of social hierarchy, for example, or express attempts to create new forms of cultural identity.

Undoubtedly globalisation (viewed here largely in terms of new modes of consumption) and Christianity have been significant factors in the lives of Kayan in the Baram of the 1990s. Yet I do not present a picture of a people necessarily either submerged by, or struggling against, a globalising tide, excessively afraid for their future (even if they are unsure of what it will bring) and troubled by an embattled sense of their own identity.⁵ While to be Kayan in the 1990s may not be the same as it was to be Kayan, say, in the 1940s or '50s, it is still to possess a firm enough sense of membership in a group, and to distinguish oneself, sometimes quite sharply, from other cultural groups in Sarawak, including (spatially and culturally) close neighbours such as the Kenyah, as well as from groups such as the formerly nomadic Penan, or indeed from the Muslim Malay populations of the coastal towns and cities.⁶ A sense of membership in a group is maintained for Kayan despite the growing mobility of people from communities such as Long Na'ah. Kinship networks and continuing obligations between people who remain in rural communities and those who have moved away to live and work in the urban centres help to maintain this sense of Kayan identity, if one which is experienced in broader regional terms than formerly. Interestingly, this regionalising trend is one which is also fostered by the activities of the local evangelical church, such as the annual round of regional Christian conventions.

⁵ It may be the case that for some upriver peoples in Sarawak these are more pressing concerns. It is significant, perhaps, that other researchers have noted the economic success of Kayan in Sarawak, relative to at least some other upriver peoples (e.g., Nicolaisen, 1986).

⁶ While cultural globalisation is often closely identified with 'Westernisation', for the peoples of the East Malaysian state of Sarawak, concerns may well be expressed about 'Malaysianisation' (Appadurai, 1990: 5-6). Kayan comment, for example, on the weighting of the nation's cultural

For Kayan, this sense of group identity exists alongside a preparedness to engage, according to one's means, with a wider world. An early impression of my fieldwork was a sense that Kayan at Long Na'ah, and elsewhere in the Baram, exhibited a remarkable determination to reach out and take hold of what might be available to them in circumstances of change. There was a sense of looking outward, something reflected, for example, in the encouragement given to children to further their education,⁷ and in the ease with which new commodities were adopted (I would include here services such as short computer courses, and driving lessons for women).⁸ This is not to suggest that Kayan take an uncritical approach to processes of development, or to their relationship to the Malaysian state. The timber industry has brought cash incomes, but has also meant insecurity in relation to land tenure for local peoples, as well as environmental degradation, including decreasing stocks of fish and wild game. Kayan are well aware of their relatively powerless position in relation to the larger forces of the state and a wider economy. There are new hardships in seeking a living by juggling hill rice farming (which may provide some households with only six months' supply of rice) with participation in the cash economy. People also express concerns about the potential precariousness and hardship of pursuing a livelihood based exclusively on cash. The institution of a world in which people's livelihoods are wholly based on cash, and 'everything is buying and selling' – as one man said to me – is a circumstance which people sometimes interpret as the ultimate aim of the government's development policies.

Linked to the world by radio, television and, at least for a very small number of people from the community, by international travel, residents of Long Na'ah are themselves also well able to conceive of and discuss their own lives in relation to the lives they understand other people to be leading, concurrently, in other parts of the world. In acknowledgment of their ability and willingness to

calendar toward the patterns of the West Malaysian Muslim Malay majority.

⁷ One man at Long Na'ah, whose daughter had gained entry to a dental nursing course in West Malaysia, keenly, if somewhat anxiously, hoped that she would overcome the hardships of studying and long periods away from family, as he perceived the course as 'her chance' in life.

⁸ For those with very limited material means, an engagement with the wider world might take the form of a philosophising curiosity about global issues, such as the religious affiliation of nations, or their comparative wealth. Such thinking may be linked to the teachings of the church, and be aided by listening to radio, including the BBC World Service.

look, at times critically and at times longingly, at the world beyond their region and nation, I have wanted to avoid presenting the people in this thesis as exotic Others, geographically remote and temporally distant, not only from the likely readers of this thesis (and myself, now that 'my time' at Long Na'ah is over), but also from the 'downriver' world of coastal towns and cities in Sarawak and Peninsula Malaysia.

In the course of fieldwork I listened to long evenings of deliberation over the marriage arrangements of young Kayan couples; heard the chanted stories of past battles between Kayan and their neighbours (stories which recalled headhunting and heroic feats); participated in days and nights of mourning on the death of an uncle; listened to young women discuss platform shoes and makeup; was told by middle aged women of their reasons for having their elongated earlobes surgically removed at the local clinic, and of their preferences for certain styles of earring; was recounted stories of a woman of the village who had migrated with her husband to his home in Scotland; discussed the merits of Evelyne Hong's book *Natives of Sarawak: Survival in Borneo's Vanishing Forest* (Hong, 1987) with a former resident of Long Na'ah; listened to one man's analysis of the English usage of newsreaders on the BBC World Service; attended Christian conventions where the books of the international evangelist Billy Graham were on sale; and witnessed the recreational amusement that young Kayan men can find in the driving of trucks and heavy timber machinery. All these things were part of the lives of Kayan in the 1990s.

In recognition of this I have attempted to remain conscious of what Fabian describes as anthropology's use of 'evolutionary Time':

[Anthropology] promoted a scheme in which not only past cultures, but all living societies were irrevocably placed on a temporal slope, a stream of Time – some upstream, others downstream. Civilisation, evolution, development, acculturation, modernisation (and their cousins, industrialisation, urbanisation) are all terms whose conceptual content derives...from evolutionary Time. (Fabian, 1983: 17).

I have also wanted to keep in mind his more general contention that the writers of anthropological texts have systematically denied the people they write about 'coevalness' with themselves. That there has been: *a persistent and systematic*

tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse [emphasis in original] (1987: 31). And this despite the fact that the experience of fieldwork is central to the discipline, with all its immediacy and undeniable 'coevalness' between the fieldworker and the people with whom they live and interact.

While an interest in new modes of consumption may tend to presuppose an emphasis on change and the new, the concerns which I have noted here also lie behind my choice to emphasise certain topics over others in this thesis. I do not give, for example, any lengthy treatment of conventional anthropological topics such as kinship systems⁹ for people at Long Na'ah, nor do I offer a detailed account of that typically Bornean anthropological subject: the dry rice agricultural cycle. (Although connections may certainly be drawn between important topics such as these, and my own interests.) I have emphasised, rather, those things which emerged as important during the, from the local perspective, relatively short time I spent in the community of Long Na'ah: the pervasiveness of the local evangelical church and its program; the timber industry, cash incomes and new ways of consuming; the mobility of people from the community, and their expansive mood at the time.

That the fieldwork for this thesis was based in a Kayan community on the Baram, rather than on the Balui (a tributary of the Rejang River), is also important here. Despite significant amounts of research and writing on social and economic change, there is still some tendency in the anthropology of Sarawak to privilege the 'traditional' and 'authentic', not least in the process of choosing fieldsites.¹⁰ Local institutions such as the Sarawak Museum have also had a role to play in this. The very firmly evangelical Christian communities of the Baram have perhaps seemed less likely sites for anthropological research for this reason. Finally, it should be noted that anyone endeavouring to write about Borneo, in an anthropological vein or otherwise, must contend with the legacy of cultural mystique which attaches to Borneo itself, with its long history of exoticising

⁹ For an account of Kayan kinship, in the context of one Kayan community on the Balui River, see Rousseau (1974).

¹⁰ As Miller notes, in relation to mass commodities, anthropology 'originally (drew) its students mostly to societies defined by the absence of such goods' (1995a:142).

writing, in the form of adventurers' tales, the nostalgic memoirs of colonial administrators, or the tourist industry's (often unashamedly lurid) advertising material.

Theory

The thesis draws on a range of literature on the theory and ethnography of consumption (Douglas and Isherwood, 1979, 1996; Bourdieu, 1984; Appadurai, 1986; Ferguson, 1988; McCracken, 1988; Rutz and Orlove, 1989; Thomas, 1991; Friedman, 1994; Miller, 1995a, 1995b). It is an area which has received growing attention in anthropology in recent times. Common to this literature is a deliberate shift in focus away from an emphasis on production, or Marxist 'modes of production', and toward consumption. While the new emphasis on consumption is in one sense a theoretical corrective to the past over-emphasis of production, more recent arguments have gone further in attributing an empirical primacy to consumption. Miller has argued, for example, that:

[T]here has been a historical shift in the relative importance of consumption as against production and distribution in the construction of society and culture. Consumption has become the main arena in which and through which people have to struggle toward control over the definition of themselves and their values (1995a: 277).

The theoretical shift toward consumption has also been related to more general moves within anthropology, beginning at the end of the 1970s, to reintegrate culture and the economic. This followed a period in which they were frequently conceived as antithetical, an understanding which was influenced in the 1960s and '70s not only by Marxist critiques of structural-functionalism, but also by the critique of modernisation theory. The latter was critical of anthropological explanations connecting poverty and economic underdevelopment among third world peoples with cultural characteristics or values. A sharpening theoretical division between culture and the economic and an emphasis on rational decision making, including economic decision making among third world peoples, were both results of this effort to reject cultural essentialism (Ferguson, 1988: 489).

The development of more sophisticated forms of cultural analysis in the 1980s, which emphasised the dynamic nature of culture, dismantled the rigid distinction drawn between static 'symbolic' cultural analysis, and historically-informed political economic analysis (Ferguson, 1988: 490-91). The effort to reintegrate culture and the economic was also reflected in a growing dissatisfaction among anthropologists with the theoretical tools economics offered for the analysis of consumption and commodities. At the end of the 1970s, Douglas and Isherwood (1996) found utility theory, with its emphasis on individual needs and rational choice, and its consequent neglect of social interaction, to be a poor starting point for developing an anthropological theory of consumption. They called for a 'corrected version of economic rationality' and stressed the need for 'setting consumption back into the social process' (1996: viii, xxi-xxv). Treating goods, or commodities, as a system of categories, they argued that they were part of a 'live information system' (1996: xiv) which reflected more complex motivations for the acquisition of commodities than merely a crude pursuit of competitive display.¹¹ As an integral part of social life, consumption may be used by the consumer to include or exclude others, to fix or challenge public meanings:

Food is a medium for discriminating values, and the more numerous the discriminated ranks, the more varieties of food will be needed. The same for space. Harnessed to the cultural process, its divisions are heavy with meaning: housing, size, the side of the street... The same for clothing, transport, and sanitation; they afford sets of markers within the spatial and temporal frame. The choice of goods continuously creates certain patterns of discrimination, overlaying or reinforcing others. Goods, then, are the visible part of culture (1996: 44).

For the purposes of this thesis (and particularly in relation to an analysis of the style of Kayan apartments), I have found suggestive their idea that the meaning of goods is often most fruitfully understood 'in their assemblage'. Douglas and Isherwood vividly illustrate the communicative, cultural aspects of consumption in human life by evoking the novelist's project of building a picture

¹¹ In line with their concept of grid-group analysis, Douglas and Isherwood accept that Thorstein Veblen's (1970 [1898]) observations concerning the motivations for consumption (that they are based on emulation, envy, and competitiveness) may be more accurate in some social

of a character, their life history and their social standing through meticulous accumulative description of their possessions, and particularly of the interiors of their homes:

In the protracted dialogue about value that is embedded in consumption, goods in their assemblage present a set of meanings more or less coherent, more or less intentional. They are read by those who know the code and scan them for information. The great novelists have never doubted just how far removed this function of creating meanings is from the uses of goods for welfare and display (1996: ix).

Douglas and Isherwood refer to this ability to read or 'scan' such an assemblage as 'metaphorical appreciation' or 'metaphorical understanding'. I take their idea to be similar to Bourdieu's linked notions of disposition and habitus (1977: 72-76), particularly as they emerge within his analysis of taste (1984). In describing the 'reading' of a work of art, Bourdieu characterises consumption as:

[A] stage in the process of communication, that is, an act of deciphering, decoding, which presupposes practical or explicit mastery of a cipher or code... The conscious or unconscious implementation of explicit or implicit schemes of perception and appreciation which constitutes pictorial or musical culture is the hidden condition for recognising the styles characteristic of a period, a school or an author... The beholder who lacks the specific code feels lost in a chaos of sounds and rhythms, colours and lines... Not having learnt to adopt the adequate disposition... (1984: 2).

While Bourdieu is speaking particularly of 'aesthetic consumption' here, he argues for the reintegration of 'aesthetic' and 'ordinary' consumption.¹² The acquisition of socially constituted 'dispositions' is as relevant to the 'apparently incommensurable "choices", such as (those concerning) music and food, painting and sport, literature and hairstyle' (1984: 6); or indeed clothing, transport and sanitation. And those who share dispositions will desire comparable goods:

The homogeneity of the mode of production of the habitus (i.e. of the material conditions of life, and of pedagogic action) produces a

environments than others.

¹² This idea is echoed in Appadurai's (1986) argument concerning the cultural basis for demand, in which he cautions against contrasting luxuries and necessities – a contrast which he claims is filled with problems. He does allow, however, that luxuries are 'goods whose principal use is *rhetorical* and *social*, (they are) goods that are simply *incarnated signs*' (1986: 38).

homogenisation of dispositions and interests which ... inclin[e] those who are the product of the same conditions of production to recognise and pursue the same goods... (Bourdieu, 1977: 63-64).

Connecting the dispositions (or tastes) with his notion of distinction, Bourdieu argues that they both unite and separate groups: 'Being the product of the conditions of existence, (taste) unites all those who are the product of similar conditions while distinguishing them from all others' (1984:56). While for the purposes of this thesis I would not couch Kayan consumption in terms of Bourdieu's overall theory of symbolic capital (1977: 171-183), his notions of taste and symbolic accumulation are suggestive, for example, in looking at some newer patterns of consumption expressed in the new (or renewed) style of Kayan longhouse apartments. There is certainly a sense of shared tastes between Kayan apartments, and particularly between those of the higher ranking households.

Douglas and Isherwood, and Bourdieu, are foundational for another approach to consumption and commodities which in the 1970s and 1980s emerged variously in archaeology, the anthropology of art, and in museology. Here a revitalisation of an old topic – material culture – enabled a reconceptualisation of the commodity more generally in anthropological studies, giving objects a more central role in the constitution of social relations (Miller, 1995a: 148). The studies in Douglas's (1987) own edited volume on drinking, for example, show how drinks may variously construct the world, or invoke ideal worlds. Other studies in this area have treated textiles, and latterly clothing, in terms of identity (e.g. Friedman 1994). Miller notes a tendency among anthropological studies of this type to focus on ranges of objects which show more or less clear continuities with past practices (such as food and drink), with less attention being given, for example, to seemingly mundane things as cars or supermarkets (1995a: 149). Commodities, seen as material culture, also reveal themselves to be tied to projects of both interpreting the experience of modernity and reinterpreting the past and tradition. A noteworthy observation of ethnography in this area is that the most avid adoption of new modes of consumption may in fact occur among people on the periphery of the industrial world, '(who) use them to embody elements of modernity that are as yet resisted

in metropolitan regions working through slower transformations of class and peasant relations' (Miller, 1995a: 150).

Another characteristic of theorising on consumption in the 1980s and 90s has been the effort to conceptualise consumption, less as the final stage in a linear sequence which begins with production, than as part of a circular process which includes production and exchange (Bourdieu, 1986: 231; Appadurai, 1986: 13; Kopytoff, 1986; Rutz & Orlove, 1989: 14-17).¹³ In Bourdieu's discussion of the correspondence between goods production and taste production in Western societies, the hegemony of production is not assumed:

...[T]he matching of supply and demand is neither the simple effect of production imposing itself on consumption nor the effect of a conscious endeavour to serve the consumers' needs.... the tastes actually realised depend on the state of the system of goods offered; every change in the system of goods induces a change in tastes, But conversely, every change in tastes resulting from a change in the conditions of existence and of the corresponding dispositions will tend to induce, directly or indirectly, a transformation of the field of production...(Bourdieu, 1986: 231).

Bourdieu is of course referring to the combined weight of the taste of consumers in Western societies such as France, and not to the tastes of a small and rather remote cultural group within a larger nation, such as the Kayan – a group for whom the sphere of production (of many consumer goods) may seem rather distant. (Although the existence in Sarawak of a brand of liquor labelled 'Longhouse Brandy' might suggest that the tastes – real or imputed – of upriver communities have an impact on at least some areas of mass production in the state.) Nevertheless, in terms of this thesis, this view of consumption suggests a more complex approach than is often apparent in arguments concerning the cultural homogenisation which is understood to accompany globalisation and the influx of 'Western' consumer goods into 'peripheral' societies. If the potential for the creation of social identities through the (selective) consumption of mass produced objects is a central premise of studies of consumption and taste in

¹³ Although this is, in a sense, a reclamation of an older more inclusive strain of classical economics. In this connection, Douglas and Isherwood note the work of Piero Sraffa and his effort to counter 'the view presented by modern (economic) theory, of a one-way avenue that leads from 'Factors of Production' to 'Consumption Goods' (1996: 9).

Western societies, and the hegemony of production is not necessarily assumed here, these things might also be allowed for 'small scale' Borneo societies.¹⁴

In the influential introduction to his edited volume on commodities and consumption, Appadurai (1986) also argued, within a highly processual approach to the subject, for a more complex, socially and politically informed view of demand:

Demand...emerges as a function of a variety of social practices and classifications, rather than a mysterious emanation of human needs, a mechanical response to social manipulation...or the narrowing down of a universal and voracious desire for objects to whatever happens to be available (1986: 29).

In his analysis of commodities and consumption, Appadurai has also argued for the breaking down of strict oppositions between commodities, or commodity exchange, and other forms of exchange such as gift and barter. This entails moving away from the production-dominated Marxian view of the commodity and 'focusing on its *total* trajectory from production, through exchange, distribution, to consumption' (1986: 13). By placing the emphasis less on what commodities are, than on processual questions concerning the social and political circumstances which favour (or restrict) the exchangeability or 'flow' of goods, he is also able to further explore processes of demand and consumption. In all societies the circulation of objects is culturally regulated (a long standing insight of the anthropology of exchange, e.g., Bohannon 1955), that is, determinations are made about what may be exchanged, for what, by whom, and so on. What is new about Appadurai's approach is the understanding that the capacity for objects to be exchanged is by no means a static characteristic, but very much a dynamic one.

¹⁴ The notion of the periphery itself has been problematised through theorising around the concept of globalisation, and by a questioning of the assumption that asymmetries of culture are necessarily aligned with those of economy, politics, or military might (e.g., Hannerz, 1989; Appadurai, 1990). Reflexive efforts to make explicit the significance of place in the development of the object of anthropological study have also played a role here. As Appadurai notes, 'anthropological theory has always been based on the practice of going *somewhere*, preferably somewhere geographically, morally, and socially distant from the theoretical and cultural metropolis of the anthropologist...(and) the ethos of anthropology has been driven by the appeal of the small, the simple, the elementary, the face-to-face' (1986a: 356-57; see also Gupta and Ferguson, 1997). While in past decades the notion of the periphery may have worked against seeing consumption, particularly of the products of an international industrial economy, as a legitimate area of cultural investigation, this is now much less the case.

As he expresses it, 'objects may move in *and* out of the commodity state [and] such movements can be slow or fast, reversible or terminal, normative or deviant' (Appadurai, 1986: 13). Even more importantly, whether an object, or category of objects, may be exchanged (and how freely it may be exchanged) is fundamentally a matter of political contestation. Although Appadurai would allow that some societies may be seen as more highly 'commoditised' than others, his concept of the commodity 'state' or 'phase' means that comparing societies on this basis would be a complicated matter. As he says, 'commoditisation is (to be) regarded as a differentiated process (affecting matters of phase, context, and categorisation, differentially) and the capitalist mode of commoditisation is seen as interacting with myriad other indigenous forms of commoditisation' (1986: 16). Such an approach forestalls both seeing commoditisation in terms of a simple, unidirectional evolutionary trajectory, and drawing a sharp contrast between 'traditional, small-scale, non-capitalist (or pre-capitalist)' societies and the societies of 'modern industrial capitalism' (see also Parry & Bloch, 1989: 7ff). Appadurai's critique of the conventional gift-commodity dichotomy (and by extension the division between 'traditional' and 'modern' societies, or economies) has worked against earlier understandings of the commodity as desocialised, or culture free (and therefore a less fitting topic – along with consumption – for anthropological investigation).

With the acceptance through the 1990s that the consumption of commodities produced by others was an everyday aspect of the lives of the peoples studied by anthropologists, consumption increasingly came to be seen as 'mundane practice' (Miller, 1995a: 144). For some this acceptance tended to relativise not only the consumption practices of those studied, but also the anthropologist's own practices. Thus it is suggested that things such as South Asian brands and Indonesian soap operas need no longer be seen as 'unauthentic copies (made) by people who have lost their culture after being swamped by the things that only North Americans and Europeans "should" possess, (it is rather that) none of us (are) a model of real consumption and all of us are creative

variants of social processes based around the possession and use of commodities' (Miller, 1995a: 144).¹⁵

This relativising trend in the analysis of consumption should be understood against the background of other studies in which consumption and commoditisation are explained in terms of resistance (e.g. Comaroff, 1990). Here what is at stake, with the entry of market forces and capitalism (and the contaminating commodity), is the destruction of customary or 'traditional' social relations. Thus the focus is on local forms of resistance which may involve a taming of these destructive forces, an effort to restrict or isolate their extent, or to control them by incorporating them within indigenous cosmologies. For the Fuyuge of Papua New Guinea, for example, Hirsch argues that the arrival of missionaries and the creation of a market economy are events which people attempt to 'get a hold on' through ritual performances; a particular ritual, called *gab*, has 'significantly determined the manner in which (these) two profound events of European incursion have been comprehended and acted upon' (Hirsch, 1994: 707-708). Other studies show how money or commodities may be subsumed within traditional cosmologies (e.g., Toren 1989). The notion of resistance is sometimes also more simply represented as the rejection of mass-produced commodities (an idea which needs to be approached with caution by ethnographers, not least because of its resonance with the Western notion of materialism – in the pejorative sense).¹⁶

Another stream of scholarship has, however, reformulated the more-or-less negative idea of resistance in the more positive terms of appropriation. Here there tends to be an emphasis on social or cultural continuity coupled with the recontextualisation of commodities. As an example of the indigenous appropriation of European things Thomas (1991) analyses the growing

¹⁵ Although many anthropologists would now accept this 'relativising' of the practice of consumption, not so many would endorse Miller's more radical suggestion that the study of consumption be seen as most akin to the anthropological study of kinship (an area with which it was radically contrasted in the past); even less the suggestion that 'it may come to replace kinship as the core of anthropology' (Miller, 1995a: 141, 144; see also Miller, 1995b: 264-295). Certainly this would be a major shift for ethnographers of Borneo societies, and one which would be difficult to sustain for most of these societies.

¹⁶ Note also Miller's dissection of 'the myths of consumption' and the 'increasingly meaningless debate [in academia and the colloquial world of discourse] as to the morality of goods' (1995b: 21-30).

importance of firearms to the people of the Marquesas in the 1830s and '40s. Far from merely satisfying a utilitarian end, he argues that the salient factor in the evaluation of guns was their association with the particular experience of contact with Europeans. Guns became a way of conjuring up a history, and the narratives which flowed from contact with Europeans fuelled indigenous evaluations of firearms. One such experience was the participation in 1813 of a US Navy Captain, Porter, in local inter-group warfare – an incident in which several lives were taken with musket fire and Porter's allies were victorious. Figures such as Porter (or *Opoti*, as he became known) were assimilated to the category of warrior chiefs. By the 1830s and '40s the narratives which grew out of his actions had contributed to a local preoccupation with muskets. During the same time guns were imbued with meanings associated with indigenous weapons. As with spears and clubs, guns came to be bearers of *tabu*, that is, they were associated with the influence of deities. In this guise guns were connected with considerations of rank, and became objects of display (1991: 98-110).

A contemporary example of appropriation is offered by Friedman (1994) who, connecting consumption with projects of self definition, describes the appropriation of French fashion by Congolese men. Ironically, while Friedman finds Bourdieu's thesis in *La Distinction* only partially applicable to modern European societies, he argues that it 'perfectly suits' the Congo, where 'clothing is definitive in the practice of social differentiation' (1994: 170). Noting that Central Africa has a long history of traffic in both cloth and clothing, and that dress always seems to have played an important role, he describes the use of clothing, and especially *haute couture* (as well as other imported goods) as an expression of status. Friedman argues, however, against seeing this as an instance of the 'colonial complex'; for the Congolese 'it is more a question of complementarity in which a colonial regime maps onto an already existing praxis', thus dress demarcates a set of 'tribal' or ethnic distinctions (1994: 175-6). Within this scheme young men must progressively accumulate a wardrobe (itself hierarchical, ranging from locally-made clothing using local cloth through ready-to-wear, and finally to French or Italian *haute couture*) and participate in its ritual display at organised parties and dance bars. Through this process young men progressively attain

higher rank, and a mythology of great men is generated. Friedman describes these men as functioning like 'lineage chiefs in a vast network of clientship and exchange', and notes that there is exchange of clothing 'among great men themselves, a veritable circulation of prestige goods reminiscent of traditional Congolese politics' (1994: 180).

These localised studies tend to counter arguments concerning the homogenising power of commodities, including common understandings of the power of cultural commodities, such as television programs. Without dismissing the presence of global asymmetries, writers concerned with theorising these processes ask such questions as: Is the relationship between local and imported culture always one of competition (an assumption which invokes notions of cultural authenticity)? Might continued cultural diversity in the world, linked to local heritage, be seen in a coexistence and creative interaction between the transnational and the indigenous? What is the evidence for widespread cultural homogenisation? And how well understood is the process by which people receive and respond to transnational culture flows – screenings of TV sitcoms and dramas such as *Dallas*, for example? (Hannerz, 1989: 72-73).

Against a celebratory approach to consumption are the cautions of those who suspect that a determination to emphasise appropriation and the local may make it 'impossible for anthropologists to admit to cultural homogenisation ...because (they) might suspect that they simply had not looked for the true subtleties that would have allowed them to discern significant new cultural difference' (Miller, 1995a: 147). However, Miller suggests that the anthropology of consumption will probably ultimately move 'beyond any simple moralising of commoditisation and mass consumption as either destructive or liberating, concentrating instead on examining how these processes often differ from the assumptions made in dominant models of modernisation' (1995: 147). Rather than seeing mass consumption as an unremittingly homogenising force, he points to recent studies which emphasise the diverse forms consumption may take, regionally, or in relation to class and gender.

The Kayan and Sarawak Ethnography

The ethnographic literature on the Kayan in Sarawak from the 1970s through to the 1990s has been made up largely of the work of Jerome Rousseau. The Kayan do frequently appear, however, in early colonial ethnological sources (e.g., Burns, 1951 (1849); Hose & McDougall, 1912; Hose, 1988 (1926)) and in later studies such as Leach's social and economic survey of Sarawak (1950) produced for the Colonial Social Science Research Council. More recent articles on aspects of Kayan material culture, social organisation, agriculture, economy, settlement patterns, religious change and other topics have also been published in the *Borneo Research Bulletin* and in *The Sarawak Museum Journal* (e.g. Prattis, 1963; Metcalf, 1974; Guerreiro, 1988). Included here are a number of articles by Kayan, notably Lah Jau Uyo's¹⁷ (1989) short account of Kayan on the Baram.

Rousseau did anthropological fieldwork in a Kayan longhouse on the Balui between 1970 and 1972 and wrote a doctoral thesis on Kayan social organisation (Rousseau, 1974). Since that time he has published numbers of articles on the Kayan, treating particularly the 'stratification' of Kayan society (1979, 1979a), but also topics such as Kayan agriculture and land tenure (1977, 1987); his article in Victor King's (1978) edited volume on Borneo societies gives an overview of the Kayan. Rousseau has also produced a volume on ethnicity in Central Borneo (1990), which once again looks at the notion of social stratification among peoples in this region. Although his work has become a foundation for studies of Kayan society, Rousseau's analyses refer primarily to Kayan communities in the Balui. As with Iban who now question some of Derek Freeman's (1970) material on Iban society in terms of what they see as its extrapolation from one region of Sarawak,¹⁸ there are Kayan who are concerned to point out regional cultural differences, particularly between the Balui and Baram Rivers (e.g., Lah Jau Uyo, 1989).¹⁹

¹⁷ A Kayan man originally from the Central Baram, now employed in the Sarawak state bureaucracy.

¹⁸ This description is based on comments made to me by Iban while in Sarawak.

¹⁹ More recent work on particular cultural groups in Sarawak has been published under the auspices of the Office of Customary Law. This material contends with the issue of representing regional difference.

The Kayan and Social 'Stratification'

The emphasis, particularly in Rousseau's work, on stratification in Kayan society is one which stems partly from the historical preoccupation in the anthropology of Sarawak (beginning with Leach's classification of its population)²⁰ with a contrast between egalitarian 'downriver' societies, as represented by the Iban, and stratified societies, as represented by the 'upriver' Kayan, Kenyah, Kajang and a number of other groups. In this debate, however, it is perhaps Kayan society which has tended to become the paradigm of 'stratification'.

In his doctoral thesis and in later work, Rousseau describes a four strata system for the Balui Kayan: *maren*, who are the ruling group; *hipuy*, a kind of residual group of *maren*; *panyin*, a category glossed as 'commoners' (and who constitute the bulk of the population); and finally *dipen*, a term generally translated as 'slaves'. Rousseau argues that Kayan social strata have a political and economic basis with *maren* monopolising the chiefly role, receiving prestations of labour, and being free to participate in trade. In terms of pre-Christian Kayan religion (which was practiced by the community where Rousseau worked in the 1970s) the category of *maren* is also underpinned by a special relationship to the supernatural (Rousseau, 1979: 218).

The system of hierarchy differs, however, in the Baram²¹ where '*maren*' does not exist as a designation but has an equivalent in the *hipun uma* - or 'owners of the house'.²² This designation is divided into two ranks, the *hipun uma aya* and the *hipun uma uk*, respectively the 'great owners of the house' (*aya*: 'big' or 'primary'), and the 'lesser owners of the house' (*uk*: 'small' or 'few').²³ Lah Jau Uyo (1989) states that the former can trace genealogical connections to *hipun uma* who led migrations from the Apau Kayan (in Kalimantan), while the latter may only make connections with headmen drawn from the *hipun uma* in Sarawak. The

²⁰ Drawing on older systems of ethnic classification (such as Hose & MacDougall, 1912) Leach (1950) divided the population of Sarawak into seven groupings which included Malay, Iban (Sea Dayak), Bidayuh (Land Dayak), and the 'Kayan-Kenyah-Kajang complex' (1950: 46).

²¹ This description is based on my own fieldwork at Long Na'ah, and on Lah Jau Uyo's account.

²² Uma Pu speakers do, however, use the adjective '*paren-paren*' ('aristocratic', or even 'fastidious') to describe *hipun uma*.

²³ Lah Jau Uyo uses the glosses 'first-' and 'second-class owners of the house' (1989: 69).

*hipuy*²⁴ designation is also absent from the Baram system, and although it occupies a position similar to the Baram category of *hipun uma uk*, the two cannot be exactly reduced to each other. Rousseau notes that the term *hipuy* is, however, most often used in the Balui, not as a label for one particular status level, but in a generalised way as a synonym for the term *kelunan jia*, meaning 'refined people'. It can therefore include people of both *hipuy* and *maren* status designations. Rousseau argues that this blurring of labels enables the process by which some *maren* progressively lose status (across generations), finally becoming *hipuy* (or *hipuy uk*), without undermining the ideology of hierarchy (Rousseau, 1979: 230-31).

In the Baram system, status may be lost through marriage between individuals of different status. For example, the children of a marriage between a *hipun uma* woman and a *panyin* man would, with some provisos concerning residence, be designated *hipun uma uk*. If these children themselves marry *panyin*, their children will generally only be *panyin*. Status ascription is complicated, however, by issues of residence. In the Baram, as in the Balui, uxori-local residence is the favoured pattern, but in the case of high ranking men, and particularly village headmen, virilocal residence is more common than in other marriages. In the Baram of the 1990s, questions of residence have also begun to collide with at least two other important changes: the desire of Kayan men to locate themselves according to the availability of wage labour, and the increasing instance of marriages between Kayan and other peoples, particularly between Kayan women and Chinese men. Both these trends tend to work against the practice of uxori-locality. It might also be noted that marriage as an institution has also received a great deal of attention within the ministry of the SIB church; exhortations against divorce are frequent and vociferous in sermons on love and families. In these contexts, divorce is often cast as primarily the outcome of adulterous desires. In the 1970s, Rousseau found that one in three marriages in the community where he worked on the Balui ended in divorce, and there were

²⁴ Rousseau notes, however, that in the Balui at least, *hipuy* is a cognate of *hipun* (1979: 230). As far as I know, the word *hipuy* is not used in the Baram, at least not by *Uma Pu* speakers at Long Na'ah, either in the context of the status designations, or as the possessive article 'to own, possess' which is always '*hipun*'.

individuals who had married and divorced a number of times. Although I do not have figures on divorce for the population at Long Na'ah, the instance of divorce there would seem to be well below this.

More recent writings make it clear that Rousseau's 'stratification', or even 'class' would be more correctly understood as 'ascribed rank', and that the stark divide between 'stratified' and 'egalitarian' societies in Borneo ethnography is a result, among other things, of overemphasising the observation that leaders in upriver societies were generally drawn from the uppermost ranks. Even early writers such as Hose & MacDougall (1912) noted that such leaders did not wield great power, or accumulate significant material rewards through their position (Alexander, 1992: 207-208). Determining the mechanisms for the reproduction of inequality in central Borneo societies has proved a more complicated task (Alexander, 1992; Armstrong, 1992) than earlier studies may have suggested (such as Leach, 1950; Geddes, 1954; Freeman, 1970; as well as Rousseau, 1974). In the course of her analysis of the reproduction of rank in Lahanan society (a member of the Kajang group), Alexander questions whether ascribed rank is necessarily linked to inequality. She also contends, for central Borneo societies more generally, that although ascribed rank is an important feature of them, arguments about the reproduction of inequality which rely on demonstrating a link between control of the (generally small) productive surpluses of these societies, and on the presence of internalised hierarchical values, are difficult to sustain. At least for the Lahanan, Alexander finds that ascribed status apparently sits alongside an ethos, or culture, of egalitarianism (1992: 207), a finding similar to that of Armstrong for the Kenyah Badeng (1991; 1992).

Approaches to Economic Change and Commoditisation

Since the 1970s, approaches to economic change and processes of commoditisation in the literature on Sarawak (and more broadly, Borneo) societies have reflected some more general shifts in theorising on these topics. Some earlier approaches made broadly evolutionary connections between systems of kinship and the propensity or capacity, on the part of particular societies, for embracing change. The historical emphasis in Borneo ethnography on 'minimal' cognatic kinship systems (such as that of the Kayan) and independent corporate

households within longhouse communities has been associated with an attempt to see a functional connection between these systems and social and economic change (e.g., Appell, 1976: vii). The suggestion is that such systems are in a sense more 'open' to economic change, or even evolve out of it. (Although these older debates did not necessarily have in mind the kinds of economic change entailed in the experience of subsistence economies undergoing processes of incorporation into the world system.)

The terms of the debate about cognatic kinship systems tended to take as a point of departure a sense of what such systems lacked (unilineal descent groups), itself a residue of the concerns of an earlier anthropology. Much has changed in the discipline, and in Borneo anthropology, since the most vociferous expressions of these kinds of debates were current. Kinship itself, and debates about the structural evolution of different kinship systems in particular, are no longer centre stage. As for the characterisation of longhouse apartments, and questions concerning the nature of communality in longhouse societies, some work in the 1990s has shifted the focus away from the notion of the individualistic household and back to questions of community by focusing on the tenor of everyday life. This is an approach which, for at least one Borneo society, has revealed the adjoining walls of longhouse apartments to be less impenetrable, at the very least to the sounds of daily sociability, than some previous analyses suggested (Helliwell, 1993).

The conventional categorisation of Sarawak societies as either 'stratified' or 'egalitarian' has also been implicated in discussions of economic change, and particularly in the literature on state-sponsored economic development programs. While noting the enthusiasm which 'stratified' communities may evince concerning the possibilities of economic development programs, writers have continued to make links between social or political structure and the potential for change (e.g. Guerreiro, 1988). Here a contrast is made between 'rigid social system(s) with no social mobility in the longhouse or free movement of the households' (seen as exemplified in Kayan and Kajang society) and the 'open and loose' nature of Iban and Bidayuh societies. As a result of what is taken to be the 'closed' nature of the 'stratified' societies, there is a suggestion that the former may

'evolve' more slowly (Guerreiro, 1988: 39). Despite the emphasis on cultural specificities here, often underlying this kind of approach is a largely unilinear idea of change and development. The movement is progressively away from subsistence economics and inexorably toward thorough-going participation in the cash economy (even if the rate of advance varies). In this scheme the coincidence of cash cropping and 'subsistence activities' (such as collecting jungle produce, fishing and hunting, and small scale horticulture) tends to be seen as a 'transitional' stage on the way to a full market economy.

Approaches which connect economic underdevelopment with cultural characteristics or values were the focus of the critique of modernisation theory in anthropology of the 1960s and 1970s. Efforts to counter cultural essentialist approaches do appear in the ethnographic literature on Borneo at that time (e.g. Miles, 1976). Writing on the Ngadju, a group resident on the upper reaches of the rivers of Central Kalimantan, Miles specifically draws attention to a counter-instance of 'the thesis that an emphasis on kinship in traditional societies *inhibits* introduction of economic changes associated with far-reaching social and cultural innovation' (1976: 55). He found that the nature of Ngadju kin groups was conducive to the people's acceptance of economic changes (1976: 56-57).

A call for sensitivity toward 'the...role of cultural values in determining people's behaviour' (Nicolaisen, 1986: 112) need not, however, invoke a thorough-going cultural essentialism. Writing on Kajang (and particularly Sekapan and Punan Bah) response to economic change, Nicolaisen (1983, 1986) attempts to elucidate the historical observation of government officers in Sarawak that these groups 'respond unfavourably to incentives to alter their economic behaviour' (1986: 75). (In this case the responses of the Kajang are being contrasted unfavourably with the apparently more efficacious economic and agricultural practices of the Kayan and Kenyah, with whom their society shares many characteristics, as well as with those of the Iban.) Nicolaisen contextualises her aim by noting that Kajang themselves make comparisons with neighbouring groups, and feel that they have not matched the material and educational achievements of these. They state, for example, that they 'grow less rice and fewer

secondary crops than the Kenyah and Iban...(and) do not find themselves able to become cunning entrepreneurs like the Kayan..' (1986: 76).

She makes clear that the Kajang have not been resistant to change, have embraced new economic opportunities such as wage labour in the timber industry, which they combine with farming, and have quickly adopted new commodities. Rather than being 'tradition-bound', Nicolaisen argues that Kajang response to change 'can be explained as a rational reaction on the cultural premises of their societies' (1986: 79).

Nicolaisen goes on to describe a complex interaction over time between the initiatives of the state and the position of 'aristocrats' in Kajang society, which she argues has significantly altered an older system by increasing the power of high ranking members of the community. And it is this, coupled with an increasing lack of effective community leadership, which has frequently acted as an obstacle to economic development (p. 83). She also argues that Sekapan and Punan Bah economic activities have typically tended towards diversification, and that this is intimately connected with an ethos which values a latitude in economic activities, freedom of choice, and relief from monotonous, routinised work. (This greater diversification is noted as a particular point of difference between these groups and the Kayan and Kenyah whose activities are seen as more fundamentally focused on the cultivation of rice.) Nicolaisen also stresses the importance of the obligation among Sekepan and Punan Bah to share one's assets with others, and notes that people are increasingly critical of tendencies toward more selfish strategies. She argues that notions such as these are often absent from the deliberations of development planners: 'such norms and behaviour...run contrary to the rationale and the requirements of a monetised, capitalistic economy, by favouring immediate consumption and sharing rather than saving and investment' (1986: 105). In her account the Sekepan and Punan Bah (or at least the 'commoners' in these societies) are characterised as increasingly at the mercy of social and economic changes, and in despair at the contradictions they face.

While pursuing the understanding that localised cultural values are important to an understanding of economic change in Sarawak societies, more

recent approaches have questioned some conventional assumptions about processes of commoditisation (including those contained in Nicolaisen's account of economic change among the Sekapan and Punan Bah). Countering a tradition which has 'seen money as the principal mechanism promoting individualism, and consequently subverting values of community' (Alexander & Alexander, 1995: 179), studies in Borneo anthropology in the 1990s have offered a more complex view of processes of monetisation and commoditisation in small scale societies. A study of the processes by which one Borneo society is coping with increasing incorporation into the world system has stressed that 'monetisation' does not necessarily '[conquer] the internal economy of non-monetised societies, setting free the "drive inherent in every exchange system towards optimum commoditisation"' (Alexander & Alexander, 1995, quoting Kopytoff, 1986).²⁵ In this study the Alexanders argue that, for the Lahanan 'commodity relationships and the use of money have been strictly quarantined' (1995: 179). They explain:

[T]hings which the Lahanan see as being central to their lives – labour, land, staple foods and prestige goods – are still difficult to purchase with money, and price is certainly not a measure of their value. This marking of commodity transactions by excepting them from full incorporation in the repertoire of exchanges which structure Lahanan social life is not a simple historical accident. But nor is it the product of a naive attachment to primordial values, for, although they have been on the periphery of the world system for much of their history, the Lahanan have long been familiar with monetary transactions and are experienced in what Appadurai (1986: 13-5) terms the process of 'enclaving' singular commodities from the usual circuits of exchange (Alexander & Alexander, 1995: 179-80).

While I would not describe commodity relationships and the use of money as strictly controlled or 'quarantined' at the Kayan community of Long Na'ah where I did fieldwork, I do not dismiss the idea that people there act at times to divert processes of commoditisation in ways which are consistent with their own

²⁵ Gomes' (1990) account of economic change among the Orang Asli of West Malaysia, whose economy shares some characteristics with that of Orang Ulu in Sarawak, also suggests that, '[a]gainst popular conceptions, capitalism [and the market economy] did not completely destroy Orang Asli economies but actually transformed them in such a manner as to allow the continuance of subsistence-oriented economic activities and the preservation of salient features of their traditional economy: diversity, flexibility and adaptability' (p.12).

understandings of the value of certain categories of objects, or actions. For the Kayan of Long Na'ah, however, I also stress the importance of the part played by the local evangelical church – and the ways in which people there have taken in and used the messages issuing from that church – in their responses to economic change.²⁶ I am persuaded that an account of processes of commoditisation at Long Na'ah should give weight as much to such things as the influence of this church, as to the specific understandings Kayan may have concerning, for example, appropriate modes of exchange.

'Getting into the Field'

The field research which I undertook during two trips to Sarawak (from October 1993 to July 1994, and November 1994 to July 1995) had a number of influences. An initial interest in processes of commoditisation, particularly of indigenous art, and in exchange between cultures, formed a background to my early research aims. A specific interest in one form of indigenous Sarawakian art – beads and beadwork – was behind my aim of undertaking fieldwork in an area of Sarawak where these objects, and their production, use and exchange, were of ongoing importance. Consequently, I applied to do research at a Kayan community on the Balui River in Central Sarawak (see Maps 1 and 2). In this region individual glass beads and intricate beadwork, using tiny glass seed beads, are involved in processes of exchange both within and between particular cultural groups. Although Kayan, Kenyah and Kajang people on the Balui all own and exchange beads, these objects are perhaps of more importance to Kayan who are frequent purchasers of the beads of other groups (Armstrong, 1991: 60, 174). The consumption of beads also seemed to be most intimately connected with issues of status and rank for Kayan (Whittier, 1973; King, 1985; Armstrong, 1992: 203-5; Alexander & Alexander, 1995). Significantly for my interests, this circulation of things also involved the production, more recently, of some objects specifically

²⁶ Communities on the Balui, including the Lahanan, have had a different history of Christian missionisation than those in the Baram, and the SIB church, although present, has not the strength of following it does in the latter district. Up until 1986 members of the Lahanan community where Alexander worked were almost exclusively followers of the Bungan cult; after that time numbers

for sale or exchange; and some of these were being consumed, via the international market in indigenous art, well beyond their cultures of production. In addition to these things, this circulation of objects had long involved the entry of the larger glass trade beads into the 'indigenous' arena as commodities. Despite the arrival of this latter group of objects as commodities – albeit over several centuries – they are now objects which are quite firmly regarded as indigenous. Influenced at least in part by the revised concept of the commodity formulated by Arjun Appadurai (1986) and Igor Kopytoff (1986), it was this combination of the commoditisation of indigenous art, and indigenous appropriation of commodities, which interested me.

While these research concerns were the formal background to my plans for anthropological fieldwork in Sarawak, the shape of the quite different fieldwork which I ultimately undertook was also influenced by the exigencies of gaining the necessary research clearances from the Sarawak state government. I could also perhaps argue that the fieldwork assumed a form quite in keeping with the direction of rapid change which Sarawakian society, in line with the pace of Malaysia's development program, was undergoing at that time.

While I was seeking permission to undertake research in the Balui, the Malaysian federal government had made the decision to proceed with a long-planned hydro-electric scheme – the Bakun Dam – to be constructed in Central Sarawak. The scheme, as planned, is an extensive one involving the inundation of a 700 square kilometre area in the forested upper reaches of the Rejang River – principally of its tributary the Balui (*New Straits Times*, 31 January, 1994). It will also mean the resettlement of probably well in excess of 5000 local people – being largely the inhabitants of 15 longhouse communities.²⁷ At the time I arrived in Sarawak this project was very much in the news; it was also to become a frequent story in the West Malaysian press.²⁸ Despite questions about the financial underpinnings of the project – and its impact on local peoples and the environment – the tone of commentary on the Bakun scheme at that time was

of the community, including its headman, began to convert to Roman Catholicism.

²⁷ Some official estimates give a figure of 1000 families to be relocated (*Borneo Post*, 22 August, 1994); other reports have suggested as many as 10,000 people overall would need to be moved (*Berita Harian*, 31 January, 1994; *Borneo Post*, 30 October, 1994).

firmly optimistic. Predictions that the 15 billion ringgit (US\$5.4 billion) project could potentially be one of the world's biggest hydro-electric generators; that it would supply around one quarter of the nation's power requirements as soon as the year 2002; and that ultimately it would export electricity to other ASEAN nations, fuelled this optimistic discourse and its accompanying feeling of pride in the state of Sarawak.²⁹ The letting of the main contract for the project to the locally-based Ekran Berhad indicated federal endorsement of Sarawakian know-how and suggested a rapid advance for the state towards Malaysia's *Wawasan 2020* (Vision 2020) and its aim of achieving industrialised nation status by that year.

Watching these events at the time, and considering them now in retrospect, persuades me that they were important, not only for some of the practical aspects of my own fieldwork, but also to my understanding of the world I encountered in a Kayan community on the Central Baram River. If nothing else, these events were a lesson in the politics of contemporary Malaysian development, or at least in its rhetoric. It was indirectly as a consequence of the politics surrounding the Bakun hydro-electric project that my research was relocated from the Balui in central Sarawak to the Baram River in northern Sarawak. Kayan, as well as Kenyah and other upriver cultural groups, are resident on both rivers. The Sarawak Museum therefore advised me to undertake research in a Kayan or Kenyah community on the latter river. Apart from the (in the context, comparatively minor) inconvenience of moving an academic research project from one area to another, the knowledge that the range of communities in the Balui where I had intended to study faced wholesale relocation inevitably threw a new light on whatever research I would undertake in the Baram. In any case, the Kayan longhouse community in which I ultimately found myself was quite a different one to those on the Balui where I might have worked.

Some very general comparisons give a broad sense of the differences between the two areas: Kayan communities on the Baram have an average of

²⁸ The scheme continues to be a controversial one in Malaysia (*New Straits Times*, 30 April, 1996).

²⁹ 'Has Malaysia's Ekran bitten off more than it can chew?' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 10, 1994:54-55; 'A Small Price to Pay', and 'Ekran to Develop Bakun', *The Star*, January 31, 1994.

around 450 people (the largest communities have populations of more than 1000) compared to 270 for those on the Balui (Lah Jau Uyo, 1989: 61-64; Metcalf, 1974). Baram Kayan longhouses are large two-storey structures placed directly on the ground and use concrete and wood, and in some cases brick, as well as lining materials such as plywood sheeting. Balui longhouses are generally of the older form: one-storey wooden structures built on piles. While some Kayan communities on the Balui have embraced Christianity, it is a comparatively new experience for many people there. On the Baram all Kayan communities have converted to Christianity and, putting aside syncretic practices for the moment, it is for them a well-established allegiance with a history beginning in the late 1940s. In the upper part of the Central Baram, in particular, there is also a strong adherence to the indigenous Protestant evangelical SIB church. The growth of this church and the extent to which its ministry and bureaucratic structures have come to order the weekly, as well as annual, schedules of Kayan communities is an increasingly significant aspect of life in the Central Baram. Though also present in the Balui, this church is less firmly established there. The timber industry in the Baram operates on a larger scale than in the Balui³⁰ and consequently road building and wage labour have been much more ubiquitous there, and for a longer period. The Baram River is itself, at least in its lower and central reaches, a wider, more navigable waterway and freer of rapids than the upper reaches of the Rejang. It has thus provided easier access for logging.

Among both staff of the Sarawak Museum and anthropologists who have worked in Sarawak, there has certainly been a sense that the Balui is the more 'traditional' of the two areas. It is arguable that partly as a consequence of this, significant amounts of research in Sarawak in the last ten or fifteen years by anthropologists, linguists, and ethnomusicologists, among others interested in Borneo upriver cultures, has been based in the Balui rather than the Baram. Even though anthropological privileging of the 'traditional' may have been partly behind the tilt towards the Balui – prior to the Bakun project – there have been some institutional factors which have also favoured it as a research destination. In

³⁰ This may not be the case in future, given plans for clear-fell logging in the Balui associated with the construction of the Bakun hydro-electric scheme.

the light of the long-planned, even though for many years rather nebulous, hydro-electric scheme, the Sarawak state government, via the Sarawak Museum, has provided the impetus toward some of the research carried out in the Balui. Some of this research, whether or not formally associated with the requirements of government initiated environmental impact studies, has been framed in terms of salvage research (Chin and Kedit, 1983:10).

Apart from these things, the greater presence of the timber industry in the Baram – a factor, of course, in viewing the Baram as the less ‘traditional’ area – and the political sensitivities surrounding this industry, have shifted some research away from the region. Logging activities in the Baram have, over the last ten to fifteen years, received the attention of international conservation groups and the international press. Protests in the mid-to-late 1980s, which included the blockading of timber company operations, and the lobbying for the rights of local peoples, particularly in relation to land tenure, involved both local people and some international and West Malaysian conservation groups. At the time I sought to do research in the Balui, however, the Baram had become, if only comparatively, a more likely field site due to the initiation of the Bakun project.

Malaysia has been a long-time critic of what it sees as the hypocrisy of Western conservationists and other foreign ‘experts’ who criticise the environmental and human rights records of developing countries while themselves enjoying the benefits of a developmental history based on various forms of exploitation and environmental degradation. Known for his trenchant remarks on these issues, it is not surprising that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohammad responded to critics of the Sarawakian hydro-electric scheme along just these lines. Such comments were reported in the Sarawakian press in early 1994: ‘...people who oppose the Bakun project are usually those who have already destroyed their own forests and for years have enjoyed a cheap electricity supply’. In a characteristic aside, Mahathir offered any such country the benefit of Malaysian tree-planting expertise if they wished to replace their depleted forests (*Sarawak Tribune*, 31 January, 1994). The strength of feeling about these sorts of issues, at least within federal government rhetoric in Malaysia, was reflected in four leading issues in the press during the first six months of my field research in

Sarawak (during late 1993 and early 1994). These included the Bakun coverage itself; a diplomatic dispute between Australia and Malaysia associated with the 1993 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum; a ban on letting government contracts to British firms; and a seemingly unresolved allegation of interference by members of Australia's secret intelligence service (ASIS) in the Malaysian political process.³¹ To some extent these views are present in Sarawak as well, although it is there, as one might expect, that the most serious concerns about the large scale Bakun development project, for example, and its social and cultural consequences, are to be found.³² In this connection, charges of 'colonialism' also emerge between peninsula Malaysia and the Eastern states of Sarawak and Sabah. Promoters of the Bakun scheme have been quick to cast the project as one which transcends colonial attitudes on the part of the federal government, signalling rather the large investment the scheme would represent for Sarawak, and denying claims of unfettered extraction of resources.³³

Clearly these kinds of views and issues impinge on understandings of the role of academic disciplines, such as anthropology, in Sarawak. Peter Kedit, Director of the Sarawak Museum,³⁴ (and previously Government Ethnologist) has in the past articulated some criticisms and offered advice concerning the future of anthropological research in the state (Kedit, 1975: 29-36). He has suggested that, for anthropological research to have a future in Sarawak, it needs to engage with issues of development, and ideally to contribute to the process.

The history of colonially-based 'ethnological' and natural history research and writing in and about Sarawak stretches back at least to the mid-nineteenth century – and much earlier in the case of the literature of travel and adventure in Borneo.³⁵ Whether it is the writings of Alfred Russell Wallace, who spent two years in Sarawak around 1855 (Kedit, 1975: 29); the journals of colonial

³¹ 'Ban on Contracts: the Die is Cast Says PM', *New Straits Times*, 18 March, 1994; 'Canberra Asked to State its Stand on Spy Claim', *Borneo Post*, 30 January, 1994; 'Kes ASIS: Menteri cabar letak jawatan', *Berita Harian*, 31 January, 1994.

³² 'RM 100 million compensation for Bakun population not enough: Abit', *Borneo Post*, 30 October, 1994; 'Bakun hydro electric project report will be submitted', *The Borneo Post*, 30 October, 1994.

³³ 'The Greatest Gift From the Federal Government: Taib', *Borneo Post*, 31 January, 1994.

³⁴ Until 1996.

³⁵ See, for example, King, 1992, *The Best of Borneo Travel*, Oxford: OUP.

administrators such as Charles Hose under the Brooke government (Hose & MacDougall, 1912); Edmund Leach's reports produced under the auspices of the British Colonial Office in the 1950s, or the subsequent ethnographies of Geddes (1954) and Freeman (1955), the historical profile of research in Sarawak up until the 1970s is replete with the concerns of colonial powers, and of European scholars and adventurers. It is not surprising that representatives of the contemporary Sarawakian state should seek to reinterpret the role of anthropological research and bring it within the orbit of Malaysian nation-building and particularly of the national economic development program.³⁶ Criticisms are directed at the foreign exoticisation of local cultures, to the exclusion of more 'practical' concerns. Thus Kedit suggests anthropologists consider 'the social-cultural problems and processes that are taking place among the very subjects which (they) seek to study' (Kedit, 1975:32).

These kinds of issues also emerge in rather blunt forms in national rhetoric, for example with the claim that 'foreigners do not want Malaysians to be as civilised and progressive as them,'³⁷ and that foreign researchers would prefer that rural Malaysians, in particular, remain cultural 'museum exhibits'. Much, of course, has changed in the discipline of anthropology since Kedit's remarks were made in 1975, and in the intervening time research in Sarawak has responded to these kinds of concerns. Nevertheless, such concerns are still voiced in Sarawak, and in Malaysia more generally.

These issues formed a background to the field research which I undertook in the Central Baram. As a set of events and ideas – albeit familiar ones to most anthropologists now entering fieldwork – they were part of my intellectual preparation by the time I arrived at the Kayan longhouse on the Central Baram where I was to do fieldwork.³⁸ That this particular longhouse (Long Na'ah)

³⁶ One of the results of this has been that research in Sarawak has come to be categorised, at least from the bureaucratic perspective of the state government, in terms of how closely it relates to its planning and policy functions. These concerns also tend to determine the jurisdiction under which research is carried out, for example, under that of the Department of Agriculture, the Council of Customary Law, or the Sarawak Museum.

³⁷ 'A Small Price For Prosperity', *The Star*, 31 January, 1994.

³⁸ Throughout this thesis, I use the spelling 'Long Na'ah' for this community. However, there is some debate about the community's name and variation in its spelling. An alternative name is just 'Nahah'aa', (not prefixed by 'Long'), other spellings are 'Naha'A' or 'Nahah'are'. 'Long' is a prefix frequently used in the naming of both Kayan and Kenyah communities and means the

became the main site of my fieldwork had more to do with the history of my acquaintanceships with particular Kayan people than with the formal aims of my initial research plan. In the process of reorganising my thoughts around the prospect of working in the Baram, I had met a number of Kenyah and Kayan people in Kuching, some of whom had kin connections in the Baram. It was through these acquaintances that I was introduced to a Kayan family resident in the Central Baram town of Long Lama; and it was via the friendship and great hospitality of this family, and the networks which connected them with longhouses further upriver, that I arrived at Long Na'ah.

Long Na'ah was a larger community than I had expected, and a significant number of its members were involved in wage labour. The community also organised much of its weekly schedule around the activities of the SIB Church. Beads and beadwork, though present, did not seem an especially important part of life at Long Na'ah. My concerns with the commoditisation of indigenous art soon faded into the background. On the other hand, the indigenous appropriation of 'commodities' was an idea which was to re-emerge, though somewhat later, in thinking about something which did seem important to recent life for Kayan on the Central Baram: new modes of consumption.

Fieldwork

Although I did not anticipate undertaking a conventional community study, I did expect to do fieldwork essentially in one community. This expectation was displaced, however, by the realisation that people from Long Na'ah lived their lives in multiple settings, even though they continued to be, in an important sense, 'from' Long Na'ah. The mobility of people from this community was also underlined for me by my own movements in the field. Consequently, although the Kayan longhouse community of Long Na'ah remains the ethnographic basis for much of the material I present in this thesis, it is also one among a number of 'sites'.

confluence of two rivers, the usual place to locate a settlement (Whittier, 1974).

George Marcus has argued that the changing object of anthropological research has itself led to a 'multi-sited' approach to ethnography – that such an approach is not merely a disciplinary fad but

[A]rises in response to empirical changes in the world and therefore to transformed locations of cultural production. Empirically following the thread of cultural process itself impels the move toward multi-sited ethnography (Marcus, 1995:97).³⁹

As such, multi-sited ethnography has advantages for gaining an understanding of new cultural processes which are themselves diffuse and arise from multiple sources. Consumption is just such a process. My fieldwork therefore involved periods of time at Long Na'ah interspersed with trips to (nearby and distant) timber camps, journeys by boat to the downriver towns of Long Lama and Marudi, and to the regional city of Miri. I also made trips by road to Miri. These followed the timber roads and typically involved stopping off at the small centre of Lapok, an important transport node and marketing centre for people from Long Na'ah.

My trips to Miri sometimes took the form of accompanying people from Long Na'ah on holiday-making visits, but increasingly my visits to town also became shopping expeditions on behalf of people at the longhouse. Although I sometimes took hotel accommodation in Miri, I frequently stayed with a Kayan family in the semi-urban community of Lambir a short bus ride outside of town. This family had close kin connections with Long Na'ah and there was regular movement between this household and the upriver longhouse.

At the small town of Long Lama I stayed with my adoptive Kayan family. My relationship with this family predated my arrival at Long Na'ah by some months, and it was through one of the daughters of the family that Long Na'ah came to be the site for my fieldwork. Puyang was married to a man from Long

³⁹ These methodological concerns are common enough in much recent anthropological field research and writing and, despite a sense that there are new cultural processes to be explored (Marcus's 'empirical changes in the world'), multi-sited fieldwork does have well established antecedents in both anthropology and sociology (studies of trade networks, for example, or rural-urban migration). Gupta and Ferguson also highlight the fact that 'concern about the lack of fit between the problems raised by a mobile, changing, globalising world, on the one hand, and the resources provided by a method originally developed for studying supposedly small-scale societies, on the other, has...been evident in anthropological circles for some time' (1997: 3). They

Na'ah and although she often spent extended periods of time with her parents and two other married sisters at the house in Long Lama, for the rest of the time she and her two small children lived in her husband's parents' apartment in the longhouse at Long Na'ah. Her husband Kajan was often absent for long periods, working at a distant logging camp. Had I arrived at Long Na'ah without any particular connections, I would more likely have lived for the period of my fieldwork with the headman's family, or perhaps in his sister's household. As it was, I stayed in the household of Taman Kajan, Kajan's father. The nature of this household was influenced by the personality, position and beliefs of Taman Kajan.

Although not of high formal rank, Taman Kajan was recognised as an important man in the community and, in particular, as a prominent and upstanding member of the local church. He took a central role in the lay leadership of the church and was concerned to maintain its evangelistic efforts within the community. Taking seriously the injunctions of the church, Taman Kajan was a teetotaler, and did not smoke. At events such as school sports days, he was often seated with the school headmaster, village headman and, if the latter was in the community, the Penghulu (regional chief), and took a significant role in the proceedings. He was also an active member of community committees and cooperative work groups, such as that which dealt with village hygiene. In addition, he frequently represented the church and the community when it was necessary to conduct business on their behalf beyond the village, in Marudi or Miri.

During the time I was resident in Taman Kajan's *amin* (apartment) the household consisted of he and his wife Ubung,⁴⁰ their adolescent children Dennis and Sepai, their primary-school-aged daughter Ronila; as well as Kajan and

cite the work of Hymes (1972), and Asad (1973).

⁴⁰ Adult Kayan men and women who have children are generally addressed as 'Father (*Taman*) or Mother (*Hinan*) of - ' followed by the name of their eldest living child; thus Taman Kajan is the 'Father of Kajan'. (Taman Kajan's prior name is 'Ajeng Ing', 'Ajeng, the son of Ing'.) However, the Kayan naming system also includes necronyms, and these are still used at Long Na'ah. Thus Ubung is sometimes addressed as 'Uyu Ubung' ('Uyu' denotes a woman whose first child has died). Most children are now given both a Kayan name and a Western one, thus Puyang's daughter is Pauline Unyang Kajan, and Puyang herself uses the name Celestina, particularly in correspondence, or in dealings with state authorities. Puyang's full Kayan name is *Hinan* (Pauline)

Puyang, and their two small children Unyang and La'ing. Also resident was Ubung's elderly stepfather (*taman hedung*) Aban Ing.⁴¹ (Taman Kajan's eldest son had been killed some years earlier in a logging accident, and some time afterwards his son's wife had chosen to rejoin her natal *amin* rather than to continue to live virilocally.) Taman Kajan also had four adult daughters, two of whom were married to Chinese men with positions in the timber industry; they no longer resided at Long Na'ah. The two single daughters were also away working in the timber camps. Despite no longer living at the longhouse, these adult daughters did occasionally make return visits to their parents' *amin*, with the married daughters bringing their small children with them.

While at Long Na'ah I also spent significant amounts of time visiting the household of Purai Ing, one of Taman Kajan's sisters. This was a household with a very different flavour: highly convivial (given to festive evenings of wild pig and rice spirit consumption), less centred on church activities, less formal in its interior appointments. This was important in giving me contrasting instances of the ways in which different households engaged in processes of consumption. Apart from these two households, I also stayed from time to time with the headman's sister, and often spent nights at the apartments of other women I came to know, particularly women with young children. As a single woman without children, I was also able to join in some of the activities of younger unmarried women.

Young men were often absent from the community, but I was able to speak with them during community festivals such as Christmas, and at the end of the monthly work cycle, when they returned from the timber camps. Although middle-aged men were the group with whom I probably had least contact, one such man was particularly helpful to me in my efforts to learn Kayan. Uyo Emeng had learned English as a student of the Christian missionary Southwell, and was interested in speaking with me, when his farming schedule allowed. He helped me especially in putting together vocabularies,⁴² and to a lesser extent with translation. I also made recordings of church services which, apart from helping

Unyang Kajan ('Mother of Unyang, the Daughter of Kajan').

⁴¹ In the Kayan naming system, 'Aban' denotes a widower, and 'Balo' a widow.

me to understand sermons and church processes, helped with language learning (services were conducted in Kayan and some Malay, using Bibles in both languages). Overall my fieldwork was conducted variously in Malay, Kayan and English. Early on I used Malay as a medium to learn Kayan, but I continued to use Malay as well as Kayan for the rest of the fieldwork period, since my time at Long Na'ah was not long enough to become proficient in Kayan alone.

The time I was able to spend at Long Na'ah was shorter than I would have hoped (two periods totalling not quite a year, but covering two Christmas seasons). This was largely as a result of the delays I experienced in gaining research permission. There were limitations in having a shorter time to become familiar with the one community, yet the time I was able to spend travelling in Sarawak, as well as time spent in West Malaysia, prior to beginning work in the Baram, had its own advantages. (Overall I spent around 20 months in Malaysia.) It gave me time to gain a broader perspective on state and national politics, for example, and it was a factor in the emphasis on regional, as well as localised, analysis in this thesis.

Chapter Outline of the Thesis

Chapter One of this thesis describes the Baram Kayan community in the 1990s. The chapter also provides a brief history of the Baram Kayan. This chapter notes the growing mobility of Kayan, argues for the usefulness of taking a regional view of the population, and indicates that Kayan of the 1990s are well able to conceptualise a much wider world than that of their upriver longhouse and farming communities. Chapter Two gives a history of the Christianisation of Baram Kayan, beginning in the late 1940s. The importance of the missionary Charles Hudson Southwell is noted, and the observation is made that Kayan today associate conversion to Christianity with both spiritual and temporal benefits. The evangelical Protestant church to which many Kayan now belong, the SIB church, is also described.

⁴² A one-way Kayan/English dictionary was researched and published by Southwell (1990).

Chapter Three introduces the Kayan community of Long Na'ah and describes the role of the SIB church within this community. The chapter also indicates the mobility of people from this community by describing their movements between the longhouse and other locations, such as the timber camps, downriver towns and the state capital Miri. Chapter Four provides an overview of the timber industry in Sarawak. An account is also given of cash incomes from the timber industry, and other sources, for people at Long Na'ah. Following this is a brief description of commodity relationships and the use of money within the community. Chapter Five takes a look at marketing at Long Na'ah and at locations beyond the community. The chapter also gives a summary of the range of products and services of the industrialised economy which are consumed at Long Na'ah.

Chapter Six discusses attitudes to economic change and development at Long Na'ah and argues that the teachings of the SIB church are implicated in these local attitudes. Views on wage labour and monetisation are found to be varied, and two strands are identified in the SIB church's teachings concerning economic change and development: an optimism for the benefits of development, but also warnings about the dangers of an unfettered materialism. In order to detail the church's teachings and their influence on Kayan in the Baram, cases studies are offered of the activities and sermons at two large inter-community SIB conventions.

Chapter Seven describes and analyses the consumption of alcohol and tobacco at Long Na'ah. While the homogenising influences of globalisation and commoditisation have had an influence on these forms of consumption, this chapter argues that it is the influence of the SIB church which in many ways proves to be the more overtly homogenising force. This is found to be particularly the case for tobacco consumption. However, despite the proscription of alcohol by the SIB church, its consumption at Long Na'ah emerges as an area of contested meanings within the community. This chapter characterises alcohol consumption in terms of restrictive and expansive modes, and argues that there is room for Kayan at Long Na'ah to create and recreate aspects of local social and cultural identity through its consumption. Chapter Eight describes and analyses the forms

of consumption involved in the style of Kayan longhouse apartments. A detailed description of one middle-ranking apartment at Long Na'ah, and a more general account of the style of the apartments of high ranking Kayan, at Long Na'ah and elsewhere in the Baram, provide the basis for the analysis. As with other forms of consumption, the styles of Kayan apartments are found to express an intertwining of tendencies: choices may be connected to both homogenising 'external' influences (Christianity, global capitalism, nation building) but may also suggest the creation of local Kayan social and cultural identity (linked to notions of rank, hospitality and a local aesthetic repertoire). In particular, this chapter argues for the need to see the whole range of things in use in contemporary Kayan apartments as the collective body of Kayan 'material culture' (including sunhats and VCRs, lounge chairs and shields, Christian beadwork and school sporting trophies).

Finally, Chapter Nine looks to the future by giving an account of new modes of consumption among young Kayan women and men, and Kayan children. In contrast to other forms of consumption at Long Na'ah, which have been found to allow room for a local sense of Kayan identity, modes of consumption among young Kayan might more accurately be seen in terms of cultural homogenisation. Through an account of the consumption of such things as clothes, hairstyles, music, cars and driving, this chapter shows that young Kayan frequently pursue forms of consumption which symbolise aspects of modernity for them. Nevertheless, it is also found that young Kayan women and men do not lack a sense of Kayan identity and many of them actively value aspects of the way of life which they understand to be part of being Kayan. The thesis ends by looking towards what the future may hold for Baram Kayan and by considering a theme which has run throughout the thesis: the way in which rapid economic and social change has been coupled for Kayan at Long Na'ah, and elsewhere in the Baram, with an intense participation in both the spiritual ministry and bureaucratic structures of an evangelical church. I draw on Lifton's (1993) notion that responses to large scale change may take two seemingly opposed directions: an 'opening out' or 'closing down'. He terms these responses 'protean' and 'antiprotean' or 'fundamentalist'. (Through this thesis, I use the terms

'expansive' and 'restrictive' to characterise comparable tendencies.) However, rather than arguing for a sharp delineation of these tendencies, Lifton describes a complex intertwining of the two. In this final chapter, I suggest that his formulation is useful in coming to an understanding of the circumstances I encountered at Long Na'ah. It helps capture the kinds of ongoing, sometimes flexible, sometimes dogmatic, but hardly static, responses and explanations which Kayan make and propound. It also helps explain the combining of two seemingly opposed characteristics of Kayan at Long Na'ah in the 1990s: pragmatism and a thorough-going and intense involvement in evangelical Christianity.

CHAPTER ONE

THE BARAM KAYAN

With the construction of roads, increased participation in wage labour, and the purchase of vehicles, increasing mobility is a feature of the Kayan population in the Baram of the 1990s. Events such as annual Christian conventions also bring people together on a regional basis. It is useful, therefore, to take a broader regional view of the Baram Kayan, in addition to considering the population in terms of individual river-based longhouse communities. Despite this more inclusive sense, distinctions continue to be drawn, however, within the Baram Kayan community as a whole. These may revolve around linguistic differences, or be based on past (or passing) economic and political relations understood to exist between the more accessible downriver longhouses and the more remote upriver communities.

Since the early 1960s when Sarawak was incorporated into the Malaysian nation, the Baram Kayan have been incorporated into processes of Malaysian nation building and economic development, and have experienced rapid social and economic change. The growth of the timber industry, agricultural development programs, expanded school education, and public health initiatives have all brought change to Baram communities. High rates of economic growth through the 1970s, '80s, and into the 1990s helped accelerate the pace of economic development programs, although equity in the distribution of resources between West Malaysia and the East Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah has been an ongoing issue.

While as citizens of Malaysia, Baram Kayan have experienced rapid change in recent years, it should be noted that, since the end of the 18th century, they have come within the jurisdiction of three other powers. Through much of the 19th century the Baram Kayan were within the sphere of influence of the Sultanate of Brunei; by 1882 they were incorporated into the state of Sarawak under the Brookes, and from after the World War II until joining Malaysia in the

early 1960s, Sarawak was under British colonial rule. (Kayan on the Baram also have a long history of trade with the coastal Malay Sultanates of Borneo, which connected them, over several centuries, with international trade routes.) Kayan now look back with an interpretative eye at this history, and express various understandings of their circumstances under each of these powers.

It has been suggested, despite the connections wrought by the activities of earlier nation states and by systems of world trade, that the world is now an interactive system in a new way (Appadurai, 1990: 5). Appadurai identifies new global cultural processes with what he terms 'the imagination as a social practice' (p. 5). It is an idea which, among other theoretical sources, links Anderson's (1983) idea of the imagined community (broadened to become 'imagined worlds') with the Durkheimian notion of collective representations, but 'mediated (now) through the complex prism of modern media' (Appadurai, 1990: 4 - 5). He argues that 'imagined worlds (are) constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe' (1990:7). If this is the case, the ways in which peoples such as the Baram Kayan may participate in this new world system (and construct 'imagined worlds') may also be said to be new.

Baram Kayan at the community of Long Na'ah certainly draw together their understandings of a wider world from, among other things, their experience of radio and television, their participation in a world religion, their exchanges with the state bureaucracy, their (mostly second-hand) knowledge of international travel, and their conversations with foreigners. Through these things Kayan formulate what might be called their own theories of globalisation, and present various understandings of their place within a global order. Thus one man at Long Na'ah imagines himself part of an international community of Christians and ponders national and international processes of linguistic homogenisation in terms of the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel. In another example, women at Long Na'ah often think about economic development in terms of a comparison between their own working lives and the work (and lives) they imagine to be typical of people in developed countries. A frequent motif here is a comparison between hard physical work and easy office-based work (the latter is represented by the

phrase 'just writing'). Also frequently evoked here is a notion of mechanised ease: something often symbolised for Kayan women by the idea of the vacuum cleaner.

Baram Kayan in the 1990s

There are around 12,000 Kayan in the Baram District, with the majority of the population located in 12 communities on the Central Baram River and its tributary, the Apoh. Another nine communities are located on three other tributaries: the Tutoh, Akah and Tinjar Rivers (see Map 3). There are also around 4,000 Kayan resident in the Balui, Belaga District (to the south of the Baram) and a smaller population of around 1,000 in Tubau, near the coastal town of Bintulu (Ko, 1987; Lah Jau Uyo, 1989: 61-65) (see Map 2).⁴³ With the growing mobility of Kayan, however, official figures tend to exclude those people located in areas other than the discrete riverine communities, including, for northern Sarawak, the divisional capital of Miri and its outlying communities, the coastal town of Bintulu, and newer market centres associated with the expansion of logging roads.

Enumerating a mobile population is problematic, and official figures for Kayan in the Baram probably significantly underestimate the overall population. Figures for individual communities also seem to have been consistently underestimated. The Department of Statistics figure for the Kayan population of Sarawak in 1993 was 13,834, and for the Baram District itself, 8,278 (Yearbook of Statistics, Sarawak, 1993: 26).⁴⁴ However, another official estimate of the total Kayan population of Sarawak for 1987 gave 15,891 (Ko, 1987: 35). A third estimate for the same year, which takes into account apparent understatement of settlement-by-settlement population figures for Baram Kayan communities, suggests a figure of 17,996 for the state (Lah Jau Uyo, 1989:65).

Anthropological writing on Kayan and other 'up-river' peoples has focused on river-based longhouse communities and provides population figures

⁴³ These figures are based on annual growth rates and are only approximations.

⁴⁴ These are effectively figures for 1980. While the most recent Malaysian census was held in 1991, the breakdown for 'Minor Indigenous Groups' in the 1993 yearbook continues to draw on figures from the 1980 census. Figures for overall population growth are recorded for the Baram/Marudi District (rising from 52,000 in 1980 to 71,000 in 1991), but updated figures for Kayan are not given.

on this basis and, in the case of figures for Kayan, by longhouse community and dialect group. Official census figures for Sarawak are collated on the basis of the administrative areas, including Divisions (*Bahagian*), Administrative Districts (*Daerah Pentadbiran*), and Sub-districts (*Daerah Kecil*). A recent reorganisation of the divisions has seen the old system of seven numbered divisions, which radiated out from the state capital of Kuching and reflected the history of colonial expansion in Sarawak, being replaced by nine divisions named for the main town or population centre which they encompass. The latter system reflects newer patterns of population growth and distribution in the state, including growth centred on specific town or urban centres associated with state development initiatives.⁴⁵

In an effort to characterise the changing nature of Kayan lives in the Baram of the 1990s, I have wanted to find a way between these two schemes. Thus, in talking of the 'Baram Kayan', I will at times have in mind an area which encompasses something wider than the longhouse communities of the Central Baram River and its tributaries, and which does not correspond only to the Baram/Marudi Administrative District, which runs upriver from the town of Marudi. In addition to these areas, I would include the area downriver from the town of Marudi to Kuala Baram (the transport node and industrial area at the mouth of the Baram); the area traced out by logging roads running from points on the Upper and Central Baram north-west towards the Tinjar and continuing on to connect with the Miri-Bintulu highway south of Miri; the town of Bintulu; and the divisional capital of Miri and its outlying areas (see Map 2). In this chapter I will therefore move between the narrower sense of the 'Central Baram' (constituted primarily by Kayan longhouses between the town of Long Lama and the upriver Kenyah community of Long San) and this broader regional view of northern Sarawak. In case my description should suggest a contrast between some primordial pattern of settlement and a current situation of fluidity associated with economic change and the development policies of the state, it should be

⁴⁵ Such as the area which comes within the jurisdiction of the Bintulu Development Board (*Lembaga Kemajuan Bintulu*). A major site for Sarawak's offshore oil and gas industry, Bintulu and its hinterland has grown in population from 43,000 in 1980 to 86,000 in 1991 (Yearbook of Statistics, Sarawak, 1993: 13).

remembered that earlier patterns of riverine settlement in the first half of this century were themselves influenced by (sometimes punitive) colonial policies of sedentarisation and resettlement (Lah Jau Uyo, 1989: 59; Cleary and Eaton, 1992: 53-59; Rousseau, 1978: 79, 1990: 35-6).

Kayan communities on the Baram and its tributaries have an average population of around 500 people (Rousseau, 1990: 112; Lah Jau Uyo, 1989: 63). The largest communities, with populations of more than 1000, are located on the Apoh. These communities – Long Bedian, Long Bemang and Long Atip – received much of the downriver Kayan migration which occurred after World War II. The Apoh runs off the Baram River below the town of Long Lama and consequently these communities are oriented more towards the large downriver town of Marudi. Upriver from the smaller town of Long Lama the Longhouses of Long Laput, Long Miri and Long Pilah are also substantial Kayan communities, while the four communities furthest upriver – Long Keseh, Long Na'ah, Long Liam and Long Tebangan – are somewhat smaller (see Map 3).

The Central Baram itself, running upriver from the small town and government administrative centre of Long Lama to the Kenyah community of Long San, is dominated by Kayan longhouses (see Map 3). Above Long San, Kenyah houses predominate. Including the single longhouse remaining on the Akah – Long Tebangan – there are nine Kayan longhouse communities in this section of the river. Among these houses there is a movement in religious affiliation from mixed Roman Catholic and SIB in the lower section of the river, to an exclusive adherence to the SIB church in the upriver houses. Thus, moving upriver from Long Lama, the communities of Long Laput, Sungai Dua, Uma Bawang, Long Miri, and Long Pilah are affiliated with both the evangelical and Catholic churches, while Long Keseh, Long Na'ah, Long Liam and Long Tebangan are exclusively SIB houses. The up-river Kenyah houses are largely Roman Catholic. Since the 1980s, adherents to the Bungan Cult – an indigenous revivalist movement which emerged after World War II and which was based on a modified version of the older Kayan religion – have progressively decreased, and there are now no Baram Kayan communities which would identify themselves as such. Participation in regional church events is one of the ways in which Kayan

from many different longhouse communities in the Baram come together during the course of the year. The SIB church's program of conventions, for example, draws together Kayan from upriver communities, but also from the towns and district capital. (School sports tournaments and the annual Baram Regatta also bring people together on a regional basis, and political rallies surrounding elections can also see significant numbers of Kayan and other upriver people gathering in Miri and the smaller towns.)

The Baram Kayan recognise seven distinct dialect groups.⁴⁶ However, the majority of Kayan resident in the twenty-one longhouse communities in the Baram belong to the two large dialect groups *Uma Pu* and *Uma Pliau*.⁴⁷ The remaining five subgroups are relatively small. While migration in the 1950s and more recently have blurred older patterns of settlement, these are still reflected in the understandings people have of the relationships between groups. Thus, although in the past several communities, representing large numbers of *Uma Pu* people, moved from the more remote upriver tributaries of the Baram to downriver locations on the Central Baram, the Tutoh and the Tinjar, some older Kayan from more accessible downriver houses still think of the *Uma Pu* as in some sense more isolated, 'upriver' people than themselves. This is the case despite the growing accessibility of the remaining upriver Kayan longhouses through the construction of logging roads.

Although all Baram Kayan dialects are mutually intelligible, Kayan often comment on differences between them. These perceived differences are quite often based on aspects of pronunciation and conversational or oratorical style, rather than on variable vocabularies, although differences in vocabulary do exist. Linguistic differences between Kayan of the Balui and the Baram are, however, much more marked than those between individual subgroups of the Baram, to the extent that problems of comprehension do occur between Kayan of the two rivers. People from Long Na'ah (who are of the majority group *Uma Pu*) sometimes

⁴⁶ Kayan society and culture has sometimes been characterised in the literature as rather uniform. Kayan who are in a position to read the available literature on their society, and who have contributed to the literature themselves, have been critical of this (e.g., Lah Jau Uyo, 1989: 69). However, for Baram Kayan the criticisms refer more to a conflation of Balui and Baram Kayan culture than to a homogenised view of the latter.

⁴⁷ Lah Jau Uyo gives an estimate of around 5,000 *Uma Pu* and 2,300 *Uma Pliau* people in 1987

commented to me on the rather odd pronunciation of the community's pastor, a young Kayan woman from Long Panai, the large Uma Belor community on the Tutoh. Kayan of Long Laput and Sungai Dua – the two large longhouses close to the town of Long Lama – who belong variously to Uma Pako, Uma Semuka, and Uma Pliau, also make generalised comments about the linguistic style of upriver Uma Pu. Although people from these longhouses note differences in vocabulary, they also occasionally offer some broader characterisations of Uma Pu conversational style in comparison to their own. Paya, a woman in her fifties from Long Laput, told me: 'We talk loudly and just say things straight out', thereby characterising the verbal style of upriver Uma Pu as comparatively reticent. This assessment was offered, however, in the context of an anecdote from this woman's childhood which reflects some historical relationships between these downriver longhouses and the more remote Uma Pu houses. Once when she was a small child, Paya recounted, the Uma Pu came downriver to Long Laput. Times were hard and they asked for rice.⁴⁸ In fear of having too little to eat, the little girl ran to her grandmother saying, 'Tell them we have no rice'; but her grandmother scolded her, saying 'Don't talk like that'. This woman's adult children told me that occasionally the threat of the Uma Pu is still used as a cautionary tale for children of other groups who will not eat all their rice.

The anecdote thus reflects some older economic and social relationships in a scheme in which people further upriver were characterised as comparatively impoverished. (Paya's story probably also relates to past relations of power between the various Baram houses and between the Kayan elites.) At least in the understanding of Kayan of the lower reaches, a circumstance of comparative impoverishment is sometimes attributed to the poorer quality of the more mountainous land in the Upper, and parts of the Middle, Baram; but it is also related to their greater distance from the market towns. Older people tell these stories now, however, with the understanding that the arrival of the timber companies in the upper reaches of the Baram has altered these linear upriver-

(Lah Jau Uyo, 1989: 64).

⁴⁸ Paya's story also suggests the hard times in Sarawak immediately after World War II.

downriver economic and social dynamics with many upriver groups benefiting from timber commissions, wages and roads.

Although wage labour in the timber industry has become an important source of income for Baram Kayan, the annual round of dry rice farming continues to structure the day-to-day activities of those people living most permanently in the longhouses. (While Kayan women have always had a central role in farming, the greater involvement of men in wage labour has meant that farming now relies even more on female, and older male, labour.) Kayan grow one crop of rice each year which is sown in July/August and harvested between December and February.⁴⁹ In the past farms were located on land close to the rivers and smaller tributaries in the vicinity of the longhouses, but with the advent of logging roads and access to four-wheel-drive vehicles, in conjunction with the activities of the timber companies, land further from the longhouse and the river may now be farmed by some communities.⁵⁰ Farm houses or huts (*lepau*) of varying size and permanence are built near the rice fields and, particularly during harvest, people may live here for several weeks at a time. Domestic pigs and chickens are raised both at the longhouses and farms. Vegetables such as cassava (used frequently as a leaf vegetable as much as a root crop), egg plants, cucumbers, and chillies, as well as fruit including bananas, pineapples and coconuts are also grown at the farms or near the longhouses.

Forest disturbance associated with logging activities on the Baram has meant a decrease in the availability of wild game, and water turbidity resulting from soil erosion has affected both numbers and size of river fish. Kayan often comment on these trends. Wild pig, small river fish and crustaceans continue, however, to be important to upriver Kayan, as do forest fruits and vegetables such as edible fungi and rattan shoots. Government programs have encouraged the planting of cash crops, primarily rubber and pepper, but Kayan communities vary in their involvement in these. For example, Long Keseh, Long Na'ah's closest neighbouring longhouse, has a greater involvement in pepper cultivation than Long Na'ah.

⁴⁹ These dates may vary between communities and tributaries.

⁵⁰ Longhouses themselves used more often to be located on tributaries, rather than on the main

Most Kayan communities on the Baram are made up of more than one longhouse, as well as numbers of separate houses which serve as additional Kayan residences, similar to longhouse apartments (*amin*),⁵¹ or as accommodation for government teaching and health staff. All have at least one church building (two if community members are of different denominations) as well as a government primary school, and a small village health clinic. Accommodation is also provided for the village pastor(s). Playing fields and concrete basketball courts (associated with the village school but used more generally in the community) are also an important feature of Baram Kayan communities. Piped water is available to most, but not all, households, and an intermittent supply of electricity (mostly for electric lighting) is supplied by small generators. A 'village generator' may supply some electricity to the community generally, while some households also operate their own generator. Concrete drainage systems and garbage disposal services are also organised on a community basis.

Apart from representation by the state member for the Baram, individual Kayan communities and the Baram Kayan as a group are incorporated into systems of state administration through their village headmen (*Tua Rumah*) and through the government-appointed regional chiefs (*Penghulu*). These men (they are generally male, although there are some instances of female village heads in central Sarawak)⁵² spend significant amounts of time away from their home communities on administrative business and may have well-established alternative residences in Miri. The *Tua Rumah* has a role in interpreting the development programs of the state for the local community, and in leading any negotiations which may be necessary in relation to the activities of timber companies operating in the vicinity of the community. He may also play a lay leadership role in the village church.

river, allowing access to a larger area of farming land (Rousseau, 1977: 135).

⁵¹ As Kayan communities on the Baram are now increasingly made up of a range of buildings, in addition to the longhouse(s), I have sometimes used the term 'longhouse communities' in this thesis. In the literature on upriver people 'the longhouse' has often stood for 'the community' in general.

⁵² A woman is the *Tua Uma* at the Kayan community of Uma Nyaving on the Balui (see *New Straits Times*, 12 June 1996).

Kayan share the Baram District with other 'upriver people' including Kenyah, who are located largely in the Upper and Lower Baram and on a number of its tributaries; Penan, most of whom are now settled rather than nomadic; and Berawan, Sebop and several smaller groups which have affinities with the composite group labelled 'Kajang' in the Balui. In the highlands to the east are the Kelabit. Chinese communities, particularly Foochow and Hokkien, are located in the downriver towns. The timber industry has also brought a greater number and diversity of people into the Baram, including Chinese and Iban from other areas of the state, as well as migrant workers from Indonesia and the Philippines. At least in the Central Baram, however, Kayan maintain a certain cultural and political dominance and the Kayan language competes with Malay as the *lingua franca* for this section of the river. Kenyah are more likely to speak Kayan than the reverse. Although many Kayan would claim to be able to speak some Kenyah, there is a common feeling that this language is much harder to learn than Kayan. The reason generally given by Kayan is the diversity of Kenyah dialects.⁵³ Penan, who have historically occupied a dependant economic and social position in relation to Kayan, are also well able to speak the language. Some Chinese shopkeepers in the town of Long Lama also use the Kayan language in transactions with Kayan, and Chinese in the upriver timber industry speak some Kayan.⁵⁴

A Brief history of the Baram Kayan

Kayan arrived in the Baram from the *Apau Kayan* (Kayan Plateau) – an upland area encompassing the upper reaches of the Kayan River and its tributaries, and now within East Kalimantan – around two hundred years ago. The Apau Kayan features in narratives of origin and migration for Kayan and it is from this region that the toponym and ethnic label 'Kayan' derives.⁵⁵ While in pre-colonial times it

⁵³ Though this view itself should probably be seen as a reflection of the dominance of the Kayan language.

⁵⁴ Marriages between Chinese men working in the upriver timber industry and Kayan women have also become more common in recent years.

⁵⁵ Debate about ethnic diversity and the epistemology of ethnic classification has a long history in Borneo anthropology and is intimately connected with the practices and writings of colonialism. However, Leach's (1950) *Social Science Research in Sarawak: A Report on the Possibilities of a*

seems clear that the peoples of central Borneo referred to themselves largely on the basis of geographical locality, whether a river, a region, or a longhouse settlement, broader categories are of more recent origin and their genesis is linked to the politics of the colonial era (Eaton and Cleary, 1992: 55-57) as well as to more recent processes of state bureaucratisation. Nevertheless, Kayan appear to have had, early on, a quite strongly delineated sense of group identity. Rousseau describes Kayan ethnic identity in the following way:

The conceptual clarity of the Kayan ethnic category is important in understanding central Borneo... The Kayan language is the lingua franca, and few groups are unable to speak it. The *Apau Kayan* is the *fons et origo* of central Borneo, and the Kayan its original settlers. Some groups have defined themselves in relation to the Kayan. The Kayan are the paradigm of an ethnic category not only because of their linguistic homogeneity, but also because of their geographical position and political role: they occupy the middle range of most basins and thus serve as a focus; (and) they often were the dominant group (Rousseau, 1990: 67).

Migration of Kayan from the Apau Kayan, beginning in the late eighteenth century⁵⁶ appears to have been partly prompted by overpopulation (Rousseau, 1990:331). Historical studies of the relationship between the coastal states of pre-colonial Borneo and people of the interior have suggested, however, that this relationship was implicated in the escalation of large-scale migrations in central Borneo. Healey contends that these migrations may have been caused by demographic pressures coupled with a desire on the part of inland peoples to gain access to trade goods, particularly prestige goods which were important to the internal politics of stratified societies such as the Kayan and Kenyah (Healey, 1985: 4-5). For the most isolated groups, such as the Kayan at the time of their residence in the Apau Kayan, migration tended therefore to be towards the riverine trade routes and the coastal states themselves, including Brunei in the northwest (Healey, 1985: 24). Writing in 1849, Robert Burns noted that two Kayan chiefs in the Baram were 'well disposed as regards trade, and most eager

Social Economic Survey marks the beginning of systematic anthropological attention to the 'problem' of ethnic classification in Sarawak. (See also Rousseau, 1990, 1974; King, 1978; Harrison, 1948.)

⁵⁶ Dates for these migrations are based on Kayan and Kenyah narratives and remain tentative (Eghenter, 1995: 55-62; Rousseau, 1990: 331-339; Healey, 1985: 27).

for intercourse with Europeans' (1849: 481); and in 1958 the missionary Southwell relates the claim, which he attributes to Kayan themselves, that their migration from the Apau Kayan was not a quest ...

[F]or agricultural land, or for headhunting, but that their migrations followed in the train of an increasing number of parties which came to work the jungle produce in this virgin territory. Prices at that time were high, and produce commanded a ready sale owing to the proximity of the great trading centres at Brunei and elsewhere along the northwest coast of the island (Southwell, 1958: 161).

While some Kayan arrived in the Baram via the Rejang (the Balui and Baleh), others travelled directly from the Apau Kayan to the Baram and once there expanded downriver. Kayan migrants also made their way southwest to the Kapuas, Mendalam and Mahakam Rivers, now in Kalimantan. Some of these migrants returned to Sarawak later, however, and settled in both the Balui and Baram.

At the time Kayan arrived in the Baram in the late eighteenth century, the rivers and surrounding lands of northwest Borneo were among the loosely held territories of the Sultanate of Brunei. Sustained interaction with the Brunei government probably did not occur, however, for Kayan until the nineteenth century, although trade links between Kayan and Brunei have a longer history. It was via Brunei – a port of call for trade vessels from China since before the fifteenth century – that the Baram Kayan were connected with international trade routes linking the Malay archipelago with China and India. In 1848 Hugh Low, a Colonial Secretary in the Brooke government, described Kayan involvement in trade with coastal Malays:

Bees-wax and camphor are exported by (the Kayan) largely from Bintulu and Serekei, at which towns these valuable commodities are collected by the Mahometans, who ascend these rivers for the purpose, and by whom the whole of this valuable trade is carried on, in exchange for salt, cloth, beads, brass-wire, and ivory (Low, 1848: 323).

Brunei, as with the Brooke regime in Sarawak, manipulated relations between the indigenous groups of north-west Borneo as a means of maintaining hegemony. The Baram Kayan came within the sphere of both states in this way

(Tarling, 1971: 297, 386-87; Pringle, 1970), and as late as 1899 Sarawak threatened to use the Baram Kayan in a punitive expedition to pacify the 'petty feuding' of groups on the Trusan river to the north of the Baram (Baring-Gould and Bampfylde, 1909: 359). Although control of upriver people at times involved military action, for the coastal states the control of trading relationships was of greater significance. Control of the trade in salt, a commodity which upriver people could obtain only through trade links with the coast, allowed some control of the downriver trade in jungle produce collected by Kayan and other upriver peoples. Systems of patronage, forced trade, and debt also structured relationships between coastal traders and upriver people.

In 1841 the English adventurer James Brooke was appointed first Rajah of Sarawak and the subsequent expansion of the state of Sarawak under the Brookes was achieved at the expense of the Brunei Sultanate. Successive territories were ceded to Sarawak in return for annual payments. In the 1850s Kayan headmen in the Baram were already being approached by representatives of the Brookes in an effort to ensure the effective flow of trade in the region. Despite the declining power of the Sultanate, however, the Baram Kayan continued until the late nineteenth century to be oriented towards the north and Brunei. But in 1882 the expanding state of Sarawak, under the second Rajah Charles Brooke, annexed the Baram from Brunei for a sum of 4,000 Straits dollars per annum (Cleary and Eaton, 1992: 49; Tarling, 1971: 273-74). In the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Kayan resisted the authority of both Sarawak and the Brunei sultanate, and on occasion looked to Brunei to provide leverage in their dealings with the Brookes.

Soon after the ceding of the Baram to Sarawak in 1882, the Rajah ordered a fort to be built on the river. Named Claudetown and located some 42 miles from the coast, the settlement was to be both a commercial centre and a base for Brooke government in the Baram. (Claudetown became the town of Marudi.) As elsewhere in Sarawak, the establishment of fort-bazaars encouraged the trading activities of Chinese immigrants and in April 1883 a group of Hokkien traders from Kuching arrived in Claudetown. Chinese merchants from Marudi progressively established bazaars further upriver, including, in 1905, a small

bazaar at Long Lama (48 miles upriver from Marudi). By the end of the nineteenth century Chinese traders had begun to travel to the upper reaches of the Baram and its tributaries to trade with Kayan and Kenyah. Prior to the establishment of the official Long Lama Bazaar, there was at least one Chinese trader operating at the Long Lama site; one at the mouth of the Patah – close to the present-day site of Long Na'ah; and one at Long Akah fifty miles upriver from Long Lama (Chew, 1990: 76).

Six years after the annexation of the Baram, Sarawak, North Borneo (now Sabah) and Brunei became British Protectorates. Sarawak remained under the Brookes, however, until after World War II. Although by the time of World War I Sarawak was exporting rubber and pepper and there was the promise of revenues from an oil field at Miri, the introduction of large-scale mining or plantation interests, as a means of 'opening up' the state and precipitating economic change, was not encouraged by the Brookes. Rubber and pepper production were largely integrated into indigenous farming systems (Cleary and Eaton, 1992: 62). The Brookes considered themselves 'guardians' of local, particularly Iban, culture, and regarded rapid economic development to be inimical to its preservation.

It was under the second Rajah, Charles Brooke (1868 to 1917), that the system of administrative districts was established, each district being headed by a Resident assisted by Malay officers. Below the district level was a system of indirect indigenous administration constituted by government-appointed chiefs or elders. Under Charles Brooke communications were also improved and departments of forestry and agriculture were established. Their introduction was confined largely to the divisions around Kuching, however, and had little impact on the north and the Baram. State education for indigenous Sarawakians remained limited under the Brookes. What little formal education there was for Iban and upriver peoples was provided by Anglican and Catholic mission schools. Vyner Brooke, the third and last Rajah, succeeded his father Charles in 1917. His rule saw a closer relationship between Sarawak and Britain and ultimately the transfer of power to the latter in 1946, when Sarawak became a British Crown colony. The transfer to British colonial rule (for Sarawak and Sabah) was prompted in large part by the need for reconstruction following the devastation of the war years.

Elderly Kayan in the Baram remember the period towards the end of the Japanese occupation of Sarawak (January 1942 to August 1945), and the immediate post-war period, as a time of great hardship. Trade goods, particularly cloth, but also salt, were extremely scarce. One Kayan woman, from the community of Long Laput, who was a small child during the war, told me that she remembered a period of two years when there was no clothing, petrol or matches; people were forced to make cloth from bark and use old methods of lighting fires. The return of supplies of cloth after the war was something she emphasised, saying that at the end of the war people were embarrassed by their lack of clothing. She also recollected occasions on which rice and pigs were requisitioned at gunpoint by the Japanese forces.⁵⁷ While the introduction of new goods and technology to the Baram accelerated after the war, the long history of trade links between Kayan and coastal peoples of Borneo had meant that a range of manufactured goods such as cloth, salt, firearms and beads had been available for a significant length of time (Rousseau, 1978: 79).

During the post-war colonial period greater emphasis was placed on the development of export commodities such as rubber and palm oil. Timber exports had already been of some importance before the war, but extraction of timber now increased. Oil production also increased during the 1950s and into the 1960s with the establishment of the offshore oil fields. Road building projects expanded too at this time, but nevertheless remained confined to the first and second divisions of the state. Transport and communications in the Baram continued to be river-based. However, the role of light aircraft transportation which had begun before the war, did become increasingly important during the 1950s. The Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF) was important in this development: during the early 1950s, the MAF was responsible for building many airstrips in remote areas, some at Kayan longhouse communities in the Baram (Lees, 1993: 127-144).

Conversion to Christianity for the Baram Kayan began in the late 1940s and proceeded in some cases by the conversion of entire longhouse communities. The history of Christianity at the community of Long Na'ah itself, as for its

⁵⁷ Her commentary was prompted by a previous conversation about the war in Bosnia, which was receiving a great deal of coverage in Malaysia at the time of my fieldwork.

closest neighbouring longhouses, is linked almost exclusively with that of the Evangelical Church of Borneo (*Sidang Injil Borneo*). Long Tebangan, a community upriver from Long Na'ah, was the first Kayan longhouse on the Baram to convert, and did so in an emotional community conversion under the guidance of the missionary Charles Hudson Southwell in 1947 (Southwell, n.d., 177-180), a similar conversion ceremony occurred at Long Na'ah in 1950.⁵⁸

An indigenous Sarawakian church, the Evangelical Church of Borneo (*Sidang Injil Borneo*) emerged from the Borneo Evangelical Mission (BEM), an Australian-based Protestant group which arrived in Sarawak in 1928. Led by Southwell, a theological student from the Melbourne Bible Institute, the BEM entered the Baram after the Second World War. The mission was formed specifically to evangelise the 'interior tribes' of Borneo and aimed at forming an indigenous church with an indigenous leadership. Although for a time in the 1950s Christian proselytism was challenged by an indigenous revivalist movement (the Bungan cult), towards the end of the 1970s there were few followers of the Bungan and only one longhouse in the Baram adhering to the old religion (Metcalf, 1977). Proselytisation of Kayan and Kenyah in the Baram by the Roman Catholic Church was also occurring during the 1940s and 1950s.

It was in the 1950s under British colonial rule that state education for Iban, Bidayuh and upriver groups was progressively introduced, though fewer Kayan would have felt the effects of this policy in the 1950s. A mission school had, however, already been established by the Borneo Evangelical Mission at Long Tebangan following the community's conversion in 1947. By the mid 1950s schools such as this, although still funded and run by the missions, came under the supervision of the state Education Department (Southwell, n.d., 278).

Despite initial reluctance on the parts of Sarawak and Sabah, both Borneo states were incorporated into the Federation of Malaysia between 1961 and 1963. To allay fears of being overwhelmed by the population of peninsula Malaysia,⁵⁹ and of economic exploitation and political domination, the states were granted a number of concessions. Authority over immigration, including that of Malaysian

⁵⁸ In 1950 the Long Na'ah community was resident at a location (Batu Talang) some distance upriver from its current site.

citizens from other states, was retained by the states; although Malay was to be recognised as the national language, English was to continue as the medium of instruction until the state Legislature decided otherwise; while Islam would be the official religion, there would be the freedom to propagate other religions; indigenous peoples would receive particular privileges akin to those relating to Malays in Malaysia; a guarantee of Federal funds for economic development was given, and provisions were made for expatriate public servants to remain until there were sufficient trained local officers (Andaya and Andaya, 1982: 271-273).

The introduction of a three-tiered political structure of councils, culminating in the State Legislative Council in Kuching (from which representatives were elected to sit in the federal parliament in Kuala Lumpur), was also to allow some degree of state autonomy (though before the end of the 1960s federal power over Sarawak was increased). The system also aimed to provide training for representatives with limited experience of political process (those elected to represent the state at the federal level would have worked progressively through all three tiers), and in the course of this communicate local issues to the political centre (Tarling, 1999: 103-4). Sarawak subsequently came within the orbit of Malaysian state-building and economic development programs. Efforts to retain the early concessions, however, and to resist those state building measures which visualised a unified Malaysia based on Malay language and culture, remained a feature of relations between Sarawak and West Malaysia.

Particularly since the New Economic Policy of the 1970s, Malaysian development policies have aimed at increasing indigenous (*bumiputra*) ownership and participation in the economy, and consequently redressing a disproportionate representation (in the peninsula states) of Malays in agriculture, and Chinese in manufacturing, construction, and commerce – a situation understood, in part, as a legacy of colonial rule (Tarling, 1999: 159). These policies were to relate to all *bumiputra* ('sons of the soil'), i.e., to both Malays and the various indigenous peoples of Malaysia, including those of Sarawak. While the term itself has come to be associated largely with the Malays, the notion of bumiputra rights has been a factor in Sarawakian politics. In the 1980s, for example, the Iban-led *Parti Bansa*

⁵⁹ And Singapore, which was a member of the Malaysian Federation until 1965.

Dayak Sarawak (Sarawak Dayak Party) adopted a policy of 'Dayakism' which entailed demands for a better deal for non-Muslim bumiputras (Crouch, 1996: 53).

Malaysian economic development plans were aided by relatively high growth rates of 4 and 5 per cent during the 1970s and '80s (higher rates were reached in the 1990s), and the development of oil, gas and timber resources in the East Malaysian states played a part in the nation's economic growth. The timber industry has been associated with the growth of wage labour for upriver peoples such as the Baram Kayan, while the oil and gas industry, using high technology and skilled and imported labour has been less significant as an employer of local labour. Largely foreign-owned, the oil and gas industry⁶⁰ has contributed more to federal than to state revenue (Majid-Cooke, 1999: 140-43). There is greater state control, however, of timber resources.⁶¹ Expansion of the timber industry for Borneo as a whole began in the 1960s, though timber extraction on a large scale occurred earlier in East Kalimantan and North Borneo than in Sarawak. The 1970s and '80s, however, saw a great expansion in logging there, and by the 1990s Baram Kayan communities such as Long Na'ah had several timber camps (including the large base camps which resemble small towns in scale) in vicinity of their villages. Timber wages have not necessarily become an alternative to, or a replacement for, local subsistence agriculture, however. A recent study of forest resource policy in Malaysia notes that there is a sense among upriver groups that timber wages may be a good source of short-term cash, but may not necessarily provide a secure form of livelihood (Majid-Cooke, 1999: 146-47). Kayan at Long Na'ah certainly continue to balance a combination of farming and timber work.

Agricultural development programs began to have a greater impact on upriver communities in the 1970s and '80s, although for many of the most remote communities, agricultural extension services continued to be relatively limited (King, 1990: 163). The state Department of Agriculture administers a range of programmes, including subsidies for the improvement of crop quality and management, and to encourage diversification. A major rural development

⁶⁰ Offshore oil deposits are located out from Miri, and the offshore gas fields are in the vicinity of Bintulu.

⁶¹ To the extent that the awarding of timber concessions has been implicated in systems of patronage in state politics, particularly since the 1970s (Crouch, 1996: 54).

strategy has also seen the growth of large-scale centralised forms of cash cropping (producing crops such as oil palm and cocoa). These schemes involve resettlement of farmers (including shifting cultivators) and have been a focus of state efforts toward 'modernising' rural areas of Sarawak and increasing rural incomes. While such schemes do not impinge greatly on those people remaining in the more remote communities such as Long Na'ah, some Baram Kayan are familiar with and have experience of the oil palm estates closer to the coast, particularly those located off the Miri-Bintulu Highway to the south of the regional capital.

The estate schemes are based largely on models of agricultural development devised in West Malaysia (King and Parnwell, 1990: 21-22; King, 1990: 169-83). King notes that development policy in Malaysia tends to conceptualise society and economy in dualistic terms, with a division seen between the 'traditional' and 'modern' sectors, and the aim of development being the progressive movement of people and communities from the former to the latter (King, 1990: 172). He also suggests that 'traditional communities have (been) encouraged to adopt entrepreneurial values and a capitalistic spirit' (King, 1990: 172).

In the mid 1970s, problems with the operation of the large scale resettlement schemes also led to the promotion of *in situ* agricultural development schemes. These promoted a similar range of cash crops (e.g., rubber, pepper and cocoa) but did not involve the movement and resettlement of people. This allowed greater opportunity for communities to continue to combine other subsistence agricultural efforts with cash cropping. Since the early 1980s development policy has also begun to emphasise the role of the private sector, with more encouragement given to development projects involving joint ventures with private companies. However, in native customary land areas the requirement of transferring land rights to such companies has caused wariness on the part of local farmers.

Other aspects of development in the Baram in the decades after federation included the expansion of primary and secondary education, with primary education being provided by village schools and secondary education of upriver children being centralised in down-river boarding schools, such as those now

located at the towns of Long Lama and Marudi. The system of village dispensaries and regional clinics was also developed, and other public health measures (including immunisation programs) meant a significant decrease in child mortality; most upriver children are now born in downriver hospitals or at regional clinics. Diseases such as smallpox and malaria have also decreased substantially, and water-borne diseases have been reduced, in part through the provision of clean water supplies (Alexander, 1993: 250).

Some Kayan Interpretations of the History of Northern Sarawak

Today Baram Kayan look back with a certain ambivalence on the events of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. They ponder the position of their forebears at that time: somewhere between the jurisdictions of the old Kingdom of Brunei and the new state of Sarawak. This is particularly the case for those Kayan who have been involved in local politics and are thus most directly exercised by questions of Kayan identity and political status in Sarawak, as well as within the Malaysian nation. Events in the 1980s were important in politicising some Kayan in the Baram. During that time logging in northern Sarawak and the position of the forest-dwelling Penan received international attention from conservation groups, and the issue of land tenure for upriver peoples became a matter for public debate. Some Kayan communities during that time began to make representations to the government concerning these issues.

Despite an understanding that they are now firmly citizens of Sarawak, there is, for some, a touch of nostalgia for a past which they interpret as offering greater autonomy, one in which Kayan leaders took matters into their own hands. It is a vision of the past in which the Kingdom of Brunei tends to emerge in a positive light. In this scheme, links between Kayan 'aristocracy' and Brunei royalty are invoked, begging a comparison with a less exalted present in which Kayan find themselves to be small actors in the scheme of Sarawakian, and more broadly, Malaysian, politics and bureaucratic structures. For some Kayan, a vision of 'local' Brunei rule emerges as one preferable to the rule of external powers such as the Brookes and the British. A little of this view concerning rule by

external powers emerges in a different guise in attitudes toward federal policies now issuing from West Malaysia. In another permutation, frustration at the imposition of West Malaysian policy leads others to look back with favour and a reinterpreted eye on the latter years of British colonial rule.⁶²

Vacuum Cleaners and Visions of the Tower of Babel: Baram Kayan and Globalisation

Whatever their visions of the past, Kayan are now also exercised by the need to conceptualise their contemporary world and to imagine their future. Drawing on the range of their experiences, including the experience of Christianity (as a world religion); of radio and television broadcasts; on their exchanges with the state bureaucracy; on (mostly second-hand) knowledge of international travel, and their conversations with foreigners, Kayan at Long Na'ah formulate their understandings of a wider world and their place in it.

For one man at Long Na'ah, the world is imagined as a series of religious blocks. For a time during my fieldwork, a map was displayed on a wall inside Taman Rita's longhouse apartment. It was coloured according to the religious affiliations of the world's population. As a devout Christian, Taman Rita is concerned to understand the international position, and progress, of his religion. Guided by this concern, and by the teachings of the Protestant evangelical SIB church to which he belongs, he has also been exploring ways of understanding the direction of change, and 'development', in Sarawak and the Baram. The increasing use of Bahasa Malaysia as the language of communication in Sarawak is something which interests Taman Rita and he draws a parallel between the use of English as the international language, and Bahasa Malaysia (or Indonesian) as the '*lingua franca* in Southeast Asia'. (He also pointed out to me some changes which were occurring in Kayan as a result of the influence of Malay.)⁶³

⁶² Reinterpretations of this latter kind most usually revolve around issues connected with education policy in Sarawak, and particularly concern changes in policy on the language of instruction in government schools.

⁶³ Among other languages, Taman Rita speaks Kayan, Malay and English.

Despite the fact that, as a full-time farmer with very limited cash resources, Taman Rita was rarely able to travel beyond the longhouse, he cultivated an interest of a moral-philosophical kind in regional and international issues. He told me that he listened to American news broadcasts in English on short-wave radio, and asked if there was a simplified form of English which was used internationally, in much the same way that there are at least two levels of usage of Bahasa Malaysia: the formal language of state bureaucracy, for example, and a grammatically simplified form, sometimes referred to as 'market language' (*bahasa pasar*). The latter is used for everyday communication, often between persons for whom Malay is a second or third language. He also showed me an evangelical newsletter which he had written away for, from a Christian group based in Western Australia. Taman Rita considered the language of this newsletter to be an example of simplified English which he found readily understandable; he also said he found the American, and some Australian, radio broadcasts relatively easy to comprehend, while BBC broadcasts were more difficult.

On one occasion, Taman Rita invoked the Old Testament story of the Tower of Babel. He suggested to me, not without a certain humour, that perhaps when the world had achieved a single language, God would come down and once again visit linguistic confusion upon it. His commentary on this approaching era of linguistic congruence, and its suspected imminent dissolution, drew on images of Eden and humankind's fall from grace. He emphasised that the 'first people (before the Fall) in the Garden of Eden spoke the same language and understood each other', and connected this with the building of the Tower of Babel and its perpetrators' mistaken quest to reach Heaven. Taman Rita's discourse was directly informed by his knowledge of evangelical Christian teachings, and of Biblical texts, and he used the motif of the Tower of Babel to quite explicitly explore his concerns with development and the church. Thus, in his millennarian vision, a human struggle towards forms of homogeneity, and a hubristic striving towards Heaven (in a very material fashion), are cut short by the retributive hand of God. Taman Rita's discourse reflects the teachings of the SIB church which has much to say to its members about the pitfalls of development in Sarawak.

This Kayan 'theory of globalisation' is not, however, one which flows necessarily from a desire to comprehensively resist the fast pace of Malaysian development. Many Kayan at Long Na'ah, and elsewhere, are concerned to pursue those things which they feel will help them to grasp a share of the increased living standards promised by the Malaysian government's program. There are also people in the community who are exercised by the inequities they see in their position – at some distance from what they understand to be the centre or source of that development. Taman Rita's Tower of Babel commentary is itself coupled with the apprehension that Bahasa Malaysia is of great importance to the future livelihood of Kayan children now attending primary and secondary school.

Kayan women at Long Na'ah also ponder their place in a world where people, including other women from their own community, may make journeys far beyond the Baram, and even Sarawak. Here the experiences – or the commentary surrounding the experiences – of two particular Kayan women from Long Na'ah are interesting. These two women had travelled further than most: one as part of a cultural exchange to the 1988 World Exposition in Brisbane, Australia; and another, via marriage to an expatriate oil man, to a life in Scotland. The experiences of the latter woman in particular – her Scottish family and life (illustrated with occasional snapshots), the price of their air tickets, and the details of currency exchange – were quite frequent topics of conversation and surmise among women at Long Na'ah, especially among her close female relatives.

The experiences of these woman may seem somewhat peripheral to the day-to-day lives of other up-river Kayan. But they provide motifs, particularly for other Kayan women, for thinking about the shape and boundaries of their own lives, their futures, and the Malaysian government's development program. The commentaries also provide Kayan women with a focus for thinking about their position in a changing world where, for example, marriage outside the community – whether to a Scottish expatriate, or to a local Chinese man with a management position in the timber industry – can initiate a marked discrepancy in the social and economic circumstances of sisters.

The experience of the woman who travelled to the 1988 Brisbane Expo' was recounted to me, and referred to subsequently, both by the woman herself,

and by her sister-in-law. For the former, the story acted as a point of contact, and a catalyst to conversation, between her and me (the visitor from Australia), as well as being a prompt for general reminiscences about the experience. For this woman's sister-in-law, the experience served to throw into sharp relief her own circumstances, including the discontent she sometimes felt at being confined, with her two small children, to the world of her husband's upriver longhouse. She was also concerned to stress that her sister-in-law's international trip had only occurred because she was skilful in Kayan dance and had been lucky enough to be part of a government-sponsored cultural group (an exceptional event). She would like to go travelling herself, she said, to go sight-seeing⁶⁴ but there was no money. It was even too difficult and expensive for her to go to Miri, the district capital.

On a number of occasions, these stories, and their narrators' motional reactions to them, further served to position me in relation to the two women. This was a positioning which tended to turn on two things: my apparent ability to travel as freely as I liked, and my presumed enjoyment of the conveniences, and consumer choices, of daily life in a 'developed' country. The latter aspect was represented with surprising frequency by discussions which referred, somewhere along the way, to vacuum cleaners. When Kayan women at Long Na'ah contemplate the idea of a vacuum cleaner, it is usually in the context of making comparisons between their own lives and those they imagine people (or women in particular) to lead in developed countries. For example, on several occasions the headman's sister at Long Na'ah, whom I visited quite regularly, would ask, as she swept the floor of her apartment with a broom, whether I used a vacuum cleaner in Australia.⁶⁵ It is in this kind of context that Kayan women make comparisons between 'Kayan work', which is physically arduous, and 'white people's work', which is often identified with office work and sometimes described in Kayan as '*na surat*' (to make a letter, or produce written material), or in Malay, as '*tulis*

⁶⁴ She used the Malay word '*melancong*': travel for pleasure.

⁶⁵ This woman referred to vacuum cleaners as '*mesin/injin yang ambil*' (machines, or engines, which take or pick things up), but other women at Long Na'ah do use the word 'vacuum'. During a conversation with a woman whose infant son suffered from asthma, I rather ineptly mentioned the connection between asthma and allergens such as house dust and cobwebs, to which she promptly replied that it would be okay if she had a vacuum cleaner to keep the apartment clean, but spiders just came straight back in and rebuilt their webs after they were cleared with a broom.

saja ('just writing'). Along with certain kinds of mild resentment, these moments may also be ones of some humour.⁶⁶

If we accept, as Appadurai argues, that there is something 'strikingly new' about the way in which the world is now an interactive system (Appadurai, 1990: 5), the ways in which Kayan in the 1990s may participate in this world system, and conceptualise their place within it, may also be understood to be new. Appadurai suggests that, in this interactive world, what he terms 'imagined worlds' will be 'constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups around the globe' (1990: 7). His concept of 'imagined worlds' broadens Benedict Anderson's 'imagined communities', and makes connections with the Durkheimian notion of collective representations, but with the latter now 'mediated through the complex prism of modern media' (Appadurai, 1990: 4 - 5). In these terms, it might be suggested that, when Kayan women consider the idea of the vacuum cleaner, and the correlated ideas about work which it invokes, '...the imagination has become (for them) an organised field of social practices,a form of negotiation between sites of agency ('individuals') and globally defined fields of possibility' (Appadurai, 1990: 5).

Thus, for a growing number of Baram Kayan, including those based most firmly in upriver longhouses, the world they may now imagine is one which stretches beyond even the downriver towns and coastal cities of East Malaysia. This world may be constructed via the globalising language of evangelical Christianity, which proclaims Kayan to be members of an international community of Christians, or through a lexicon of consumption and work, linking Kayan to the products and processes of the global economy. These local imaginings may, however, variously express a sense of inclusion in, or exclusion from, such a world system.

⁶⁶ Although what I have described here will sound familiar to many anthropological fieldworkers, and may seem to simply reflect the kinds of things people say to them, spending as they do a lot of their time clutching a pen and notepad, the comments Kayan people made to me on these issues clearly went beyond that.

CHAPTER TWO

CHRISTIANISATION OF THE BARAM, AND *SIDANG INJIL BORNEO* (THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF BORNEO) IN THE 1990s

Sidang Injil Borneo (the Evangelical Church of Borneo – SIB) grew out of the Borneo Evangelical Mission (BEM), an interdenominational Protestant group established by missionaries from Australia. Although Catholic missionaries had been proselytising in the Lower Baram from the 1930s, it was the Borneo Evangelical Mission which was largely responsible for the Christianisation of Kayan communities in the Central Baram, including Long Na'ah, in the 1940s and '50s. This was partly a result of Brooke policy, and the history of Christian missionising in Sarawak more generally. However, it was also in keeping with the BEM's aim of 'evangelis[ing]...the untouched pagan tribes of inland Borneo' (Southwell, n.d.: 15) that the mission concentrated much of its effort in the more remote areas of Sarawak, such as the Kelabit Highlands and the Upper and Central Baram. The early history of BEM missionising is also reflected in the position of the contemporary SIB church as the church of rural, upriver Sarawakians.⁶⁷

For Kayan today, the missionary Charles Hudson Southwell is synonymous with their conversion to Christianity, something which is captured in the name they have given him: *Tuan Sapu*, which has the sense of 'the man who swept out (the old ways)'. In the early period of missionisation, the conversion of Baram Kayan often took the form of community, rather than individual, conversions. These conversions, directed by Southwell, seem to have been quite rapid and to have involved dramatic demonstrations of allegiance to the new religion, and repudiation of the old. However, not all Kayan attribute an all-encompassing role to Southwell. Some Kayan now argue that he is more correctly

⁶⁷ However, with the growth of urban SIB congregations in East Malaysia, and even in West Malaysia, this is changing in the 1990s.

seen as simply a teacher of God's word, as one messenger among many. These people prefer to give Southwell the less grand label of *Pandu* ('guide', a person who shows others the way).

Despite the pace of conversion in the 1940s and '50s, Christianity was itself challenged by an indigenous revivalist movement in the mid-1950s and early 1960s. The Bungan cult, based on the old Kayan religion but following a method of proselytisation similar to that of the Christian missionaries, may have attracted followers because it allowed a continuation of the Kayan cycle of agrarian ritual, while simplifying the intricate system of omens which had guided, and restricted, agricultural activity. (It is likely that this also played a part in initial conversion to Christianity for Kayan.) However, through the 1960s, and into the 1970s, the Bungan cult waned, while Christianity continued to gain converts.

Kayan now speak of their conversion to Christianity in both spiritual and temporal terms. Committed Kayan Christians speak of salvation, but also of the benefits (such as education and literacy) which they understand to have accompanied the early history of missionisation. The hardships experienced by upriver people during, and in the years after, World War II was probably also an impetus to conversion. Given that conversion to Christianity proceeded from the most to the least remote communities (those close to the market towns), it might also be argued that the pattern of conversion in the Baram was related to the variable choices made by particular Kayan subgroupings. It seems likely that groups such as the Uma Pu, who in the 1940s still resided in the more remote reaches of the Baram and its tributaries, saw conversion as something which might support them in their relatively disadvantaged situation. The Kayan longhouses which were the first to convert, and which in some ways remain among the least advantaged and more remote villages, are still among the most dedicated of SIB communities. Kayan from these communities who now consider the history of conversion to Christianity are keen to emphasise their belief that their past leaders 'made the right decision'.

In the 1990s the SIB church operates as an independent indigenous church, with headquarters in Miri and Kota Kinabalu, and is no longer tied to the earlier mission organisation. Evangelism does, however, remain the central focus of the

church. SIB congregations are also encouraged to see themselves as members of a greater international community of Christians. As a church which draws its members from different cultural groups in Sarawak and Sabah, it also has something to say about membership in a Christian community within East Malaysia. In recent years the practice of the church has been influenced by the Charismatic movement, reflecting trends in Protestant Christianity internationally. This has led to 'spiritual revivals' – large scale regional gatherings of church members, particularly as part of the annual Easter celebrations. On a community level, the church provides a comprehensive program, not only of services, but also of group activities for women and men, 'young people', and children. Particularly for Kayan communities with an exclusive adherence to Sidang Injil Borneo, the church schedule has a marked influence on the ordering of community activities throughout the week.

Christian Missionising in Sarawak

Under the Brookes (1841-1946), Christian missionising in Sarawak was characterised by negotiation between the proselytising aims of missionary organisations and the objectives of the Brooke government. In many ways the Christian missions and their work provided the Brookes with a political and administrative tool – the relationship between the opening up of new mission fields and the solidification of the state of Sarawak was a close one. The civilising mission (in both its theological and temporal aspects) of the Christian organisations was also to be directed, in large part, toward the peoples of upriver and inland Sarawak, and all three Rajahs were particularly concerned to prohibit Christian proselytisation of the Malays.⁶⁸

Anglican missionaries were the first to arrive in Sarawak, in 1848, and it was toward the Iban and Bidayuh in the vicinity of Kuching⁶⁹ that the first Rajah,

⁶⁸ James Brooke, the first Rajah of Sarawak, had consolidated his position as such by fostering a partnership between himself and the Malay leadership in Sarawak. His concern, and those of his successors, with avoiding the tensions which might arise with the arrival of Christian missions, and any attempts by them to proselytise in the Malay community, may be seen against this background (Saunders, 1992: 19-20).

⁶⁹ Up until the 1870s both the territory and capital were referred to simply as 'Sarawak', it was

James Brooke, initially encouraged their activities. The placement of the earliest Anglican mission stations reflected both the government's aims of pacification – particularly of the Iban, but also of the Rejang Kayan – and extension of government administration (Chan, 1975: 9-10). The siting of the later Catholic, Methodist and BEM missions also coincided with the government's aims, which included concerns with augmenting government social welfare work, and even instituting agricultural programs (Saunders, 1992: xv). While the early work of the Anglicans centred on Kuching, later proselytisation outside the capital was initiated in response to James Brooke's expansion into Iban areas on the Skrang and Saribas rivers and to his capture of Kanowit on the Rejang River. Brooke saw a role for the mission in consolidating his hold over these areas and encouraged the Anglican mission to extend its work to the regions surrounding the strategically placed government forts (Saunders, 1992: 34). Ultimately, however, the Anglican mission continued to maintain a focus on educational and proselytising activities within the capital, including evangelism among the Chinese. Anglican schools established in the 1860s were to occupy a significant position into the twentieth century in educating Sarawak's political elite, and the church has remained a largely urban one, drawing its congregations particularly from the Iban and Chinese communities. The contemporary Anglican church has not attracted a significant membership among people in the more remote upriver areas of Sarawak, including Kayan in the Baram.

Despite some reservations about the influence of Christian missionising on local peoples, the second Rajah, Charles Brooke (1868-1916), encouraged the work of Roman Catholic missionaries (Chan, 1975: 16). In the 1880s Charles Brooke sought to avoid competition between the Anglican and Roman Catholic missions by advising the latter to establish in the Upper Sarawak and Rejang rivers. The Brooke policy of separating the missions was also tied to that of the geographical segregation of Sarawak's indigenous groups, and to the government's efforts to control migration (Cleary & Eaton, 1992: 53-59). Charles Brooke maintained the policy of dissuading Christian interaction with the Malays – and to this end the Catholic mission was directed inland (Chan, 1975: 20). A

only after that time that 'Kuching' gained currency for the latter.

permanent Catholic mission station was established near the government fort and Chinese bazaar at Kanowit on the Rejang, and this station directed itself towards the Iban in that area. Work was also begun in Kuching, particularly the founding of a school and convent. Chinese ministries were established in Kuching and Sibuh, while mission work in the vicinity of the capital centred on the Bidayuh. The Catholic mission was to maintain an emphasis on the establishment of schools and hospitals, as well as churches, as it spread throughout Sarawak. Charles Brooke encouraged the mission's emphasis on the education of children by offering land grants and annual donations for the establishment of schools. The mission also played some part in furthering the government's policy of encouraging sedentary subsistence agriculture and cash cropping (Chan, 1975: 21).

Vyner Brooke, the third Rajah (1917-1946) followed the policies of his predecessors in seeing the missions as a stabilising force in unsettled regions of the state. Following a peace-making ceremony held at Kapit in 1924, which was aimed at ending hostilities between the Baleh Iban and upriver Kayan and Kenyah, the Rajah encouraged the establishment of a Catholic missionary settlement in the region (Chan, 1975: 23). The Baram had become part of Sarawak in 1882 and, as such, another Christian mission field (Saunders, 1992: 204). By the 1930s the Catholic mission had begun work in the Lower Baram, and in the 1940s and 1950s the Roman Catholic missionary, Father Jansens, was active in the Upper and, to a lesser extent, Central Baram (Metcalf, 1977: 101-102, 1974: 32). It was during the rule of Vyner Brooke that the Borneo Evangelical Mission began work in Sarawak.

The Borneo Evangelical Mission (BEM)

The BEM was formed by three Australian theological students from the Melbourne Bible Institute, and it was they who were the BEM's first missionaries to Sarawak in 1928. At its inception the mission reflected some wider trends in the Protestantism of the post-World War I era, including a return to Calvinistic Christianity, an emphasis on salvation by faith and, connected to an anti-clericalism current at the time, a promotion of the concept of the Universal and

Invisible Church,⁷⁰ (Chan, 1975: 23-24). These trends were reflected, in particular, in the mission's primary evangelistic emphasis on spreading the Gospel to all the 'interior tribes' of Borneo. To this end the BEM rejected the possibility of formal affiliation with any established church or Christian organisation, and determined to establish an indigenous church with an indigenous leadership. The students themselves – Charles Hudson Southwell, Frank Davidson, and Carey Tolley – came from three denominations: Baptist, Anglican and Brethren, respectively (Lees, 1979: 20). In contrast to the earlier Anglican and Catholic missions in Sarawak, which from the beginning pursued a range of broader educational and charitable objectives such as the establishment of schools and hospitals, evangelism was the explicit priority of the BEM's early work. (This is not to say that the mission did not concern itself with the practical dimensions of an evangelising program, promoting literacy and establishing a number of local schools, although these were primarily Bible schools).⁷¹

The BEM began its missionising in the Limbang River District of northern Sarawak. The missionaries were directed away from the lower Limbang, and the Muslim/Malay community there, towards areas further up-river occupied largely by Iban and Lun Bawang. In common with earlier missionary endeavours, it was the promotion of political stability which informed the initial placement of the new mission in Sarawak's northern region of the Limbang Valley, an area

70 The concept of the Universal and Invisible church may be connected to the problem of community (or 'the church') in Protestantism, divided as it has been by denominational and sectarian distinctions, and frequently characterised in terms of individualism. The notion of the invisible church is a Calvinistic one in which the church is constituted by the 'spiritual, invisible body of all the faithful' (McNeill, 1954: 77), as opposed to a more corporeal, administrative, or even doctrinal, sense of the church. (It cannot be known how many true believers there are in denominations with questionable doctrine, or how many impostors where the Gospels are 'properly' preached). As Marty has commented, it is not that Calvinistic Christianity is unconcerned with the social existence of the church, it is rather that 'what (is) invisible about the true Church (is) not its nature or membership but its boundaries' (1972: 135). This must have seemed a powerful notion for early missionaries in Sarawak facing a multi-ethnic mission field, as well as for the contemporary SIB church which brings together people of disparate cultural backgrounds and variable knowledge of church doctrine.

71 While in the 1990s the SIB church has taken a didactic role in relation to broader issues of economic development and social change, its formal educational endeavours continue to be represented in Sarawak by its four Bible or Theological Schools, as well as the Evangelical College in Miri. Reflecting the geographical history of BEM proselytism, the Bible schools are located at Lawas in the north of the state, Bakalalan in the Kelabit highlands, Long Lama on the Baram, and Belaga on the Balui. For Baram Kayan, as for most Sarawakians, primary and secondary education is now largely the responsibility of the state.

acquired from Brunei in 1890. (The government also hoped that the placement of the mission might aid in alleviating conflict which had arisen out of the government's policy of resettling Iban immigrants in the north of Sarawak.) Despite this willingness on the part of Brooke government to subsume BEM activities within its own political aims, the mission's initial emphasis on evangelism over broader educational or medical work, as well as its somewhat maverick status as a body unaffiliated with any established church, did mean that it was looked upon with a certain wariness by the Brookes (Chan, 1975: 24).

The BEM did not get permission to extend its mission beyond the Limbang district until 1938. At that time they were allowed to begin work with the Lun Bawang in Trusan further to the north, and were given exclusive permission to missionise Lawas, the recently acquired northernmost region of Sarawak (Newton, 1988: 57-59; Lees, 1979: 61; Chan, 1975: 26). Mission activity ceased throughout Sarawak during the Japanese invasion of Borneo, and foreign missionaries were interned during this period. It was not until after World War II that the BEM actually made its base in Lawas.

Although in the early 1930s the BEM had already indicated its desire to extend its mission further inland to include the Kayan and Kenyah of the Baram, their aims were frustrated by Rajah Vyner Brooke, who insisted that the Lower Baram was already the domain of the Roman Catholic mission. They were eventually able, however, to enter the Upper Baram after the Second World War to evangelise the Kelabit Highlands. By that time Sarawak had passed out of the hands of the Brookes to come under British colonial rule. It was thus ultimately by way of the Kelabit Highlands that BEM evangelism came to the Kayan communities of the Central Baram in the late 1940s. During British colonial rule (1946 to 1963) the BEM reconstituted itself as the independent indigenous church *Sidang Injil Borneo* (the Evangelical Church of Borneo). *Sidang Injil Borneo* continued to grow after independence, within the Federation of Malaysia.

Charles Hudson Southwell and Conversion to Christianity for Baram Kayan

It was Charles Hudson Southwell of the Borneo Evangelical Mission who led the Protestant missionisation of Central Baram Kayan in the late 1940s. Southwell had a Catholic counterpart in Father Jansens, and between 1947 and the early 1950s these two men were responsible for the conversion of large numbers of Kayan and Kenyah in the Baram.⁷² In several cases, Kayan, led by their headmen, received Christianity via emotionally-charged conversions of entire longhouse communities. In 1947 Long Tebangan, a longhouse on the Akah not far upriver from Long Na'ah, was the first Kayan community to accept the proselytising efforts of the BEM.

For the people of communities such as Long Tebangan, communal conversions involved more than a stated acceptance of Christian teachings. Missionaries such as Southwell presided over literal demonstrations of community rejection of the Kayan religion. In his memoirs, Southwell describes the communal conversion of Long Tebangan in dramatic terms:

Thursday 5th June 1947..... It was the day in which the first Kayan longhouse in Sarawak forsook their old spirit worship and taboos..... As I awoke there was an air of expectancy and activity – one could *feel* that people were wondering just what would happen. The Dayongs (witch doctors or shamans) were busy from early dawn performing the final rites or ceremonies for the spirits... After breakfast I got all the people to assemble in the open hall of the longhouse, about three hundred or more, and I gave them an address, explaining what we would do. Then I prayed in the Malay language for God's power and protection, and I taught them the Lord's Prayer in Kayan. I realised that the Dayongs... were the key people, so I asked all the nine Dayongs (two of them were women) to sit in front. I asked each one individually if they were willing to forsake obedience and submission to the spirits, and trust in Jesus Christ alone.... then I asked Guru Riong to pray for the whole village. The next step was to get rid of all the fetishes and charms upon which they relied for protection, many of which were tied under the rafters. They asked me to make the start. I said 'No, if

⁷² Metcalf notes that the pattern of denominational affiliation for Kayan and Kenyah communities of the Upper and Central Baram reflects the itineraries of these two men between 1947 and 1949 (Metcalf, 1977). This picture has, however, lost some of its definition via the migrations, particularly of Kayan, in the 1950s, and the more recent mobility of upriver Kayan and Kenyah.

you are really trusting in the power of Jesus, then one of you cut down the first'. They had their war swords at their waists, and one of them... sprang up and with a wild cry cut down the first fetish which was smeared with the blood of sacrifice. After that we and all the men went through the long open section of both longhouses cutting down all the charms and fetishes belonging to the men... they continued till not a vestige remained (Southwell, n.d., 177-178).

Community acceptance of Southwell's teaching and the decision to convert did not occur at his first visit to Long Tebangan, and some groups within the community were apparently less willing than others to embrace Christian teachings.⁷³ Nevertheless, many conversions of this kind at Kayan longhouses do seem to have been quite rapid.⁷⁴ There was only about one week between Southwell's first visit to Long Tebangan and the day of communal conversion described above. However, by the late 1940s Kayan of the Central Baram would, however, have been quite well aware of the activities of Christian missions in the district, even before receiving the visits and instruction of particular missionaries. Southwell himself notes that, on visiting Kayan longhouses, community leaders sometimes quizzed him on the relationship between the Christian teachings of the Roman Catholics and his own Evangelical Protestantism (p.174). By this time some individuals from communities on the Baram, particularly Kenyah, would have received a Christian education at the Catholic Schools already established in downriver towns. In some instances communities on the Baram appear even to have chosen the representatives of particular Christian denominations to teach them about the new religion.⁷⁵

In talking about the coming of Christianity to the Baram, and to Kayan in particular, people at Long Na'ah note the status of Long Tebangan as the first Kayan community to accept instruction and convert. The headman of Long Tebangan at that time (who was still alive in the mid-1990s) is often mentioned in

73 Southwell notes a greater reticence on the part of Kayan women at Long Tebangan in discarding ritual objects connected with the agrarian cycle and the protection of children.

74 Southwell does mention Kayan communities, such as Long Na'ah's immediately downriver neighbour Long Keseh, where only some families converted (p.246).

75 However, a certain rivalry between the Protestant evangelical and Catholic missions must be seen to colour Southwell's account of the Christianisation of the Baram. In his memoirs he does tend to emphasise cases where people expressed a preference for BEM teachings.

local oral accounts of BEM/SIB history, and is mentioned by Christians at Long Na'ah. As with Long Tebangan, Long Na'ah also converted as a community some three years later, in July, 1950. Southwell did make a brief visit in 1947, but this seems to have been little more than a rest stop. Batu Talang, the community which, after a shift in location, was to become Long Na'ah, seems not to have been a particular priority on Southwell's agenda for that year. He returned for two days in July, 1950, and following talks with people there presided over the community's conversion. He describes the conversion in the following way:

Then, on July 20th 1950, all were united in their decision to forsake the old animism (spirit worship and belief in omens) and decided to give their whole trust for salvation and worship to Jesus Christ, as the Lord and Master of their lives. As in other places, we gathered all the people together in a big assembly and held a solemn dedication service of commitment, and I prayed that God would cast out all the demonic powers and emblems of satanic worship. I prayed that God would cleanse them from sin and give them new birth by His Holy Spirit. I also prayed with each Dayong separately as they gave themselves to God. There were eight Dayongs, including the old man who held the... sacred symbols for the rice growing cycle, and also certain women who held the charms and fetishes for the protection of the rice. They were glad to have Winsome [Southwell's wife], who as a woman helped them by praying for them in this work.... Next morning we had a busy time answering questions and giving practical advice with regard to the birth of babies, and Christian practice at burials (Charles Hudson Southwell, n.d.: 246).

Contemporary accounts by Kayan at Long Na'ah of the Christianisation of the Baram, and particularly of their own history of conversion, emphasise the figure of Southwell. He is often affectionately referred to as '*Tuan Sapu*'. '*Tuan*' is the Malay term of reference for a respected man, particularly of some position and power, while '*sapu*' is a Malay root word meaning variously 'broom', 'sweep', or 'wipe'. Thus, '*Tuan Sapu*' was the man who, both literally and metaphorically, swept out the old ways and brought in the new. For Baram Kayan, conversion to Christianity in the mid-twentieth century does seem to have been a decisive moment, something reflected in Southwell's evocative tag of '*Tuan Sapu*'. Nevertheless, in the 1990s there is some local discussion and disagreement, and even a little laughter, about the naming of Charles Hudson Southwell. The

humour is not only that which emerges in any attempt at translating the term – for narrators of these accounts are often people who can speak English as well as Malay and Kayan – but is also suggestive of a range of other rather more ambivalent feelings. Some of these turn on attitudes to the colonial past more generally,⁷⁶ but also on certain self-conscious assessments of local religious sophistication. For those Kayan with a liking for theological argument, and who have the knowledge to indulge it, there is an alternative title for Southwell. Rather than an all-powerful figure who swept out the old ways, some people insist that Southwell, being only a man, is more appropriately called simply '*Pandu*' ('guide'). He was, and remains, an important man in the Baram, but ultimately for some Kayan he is only a teacher of God's word. This does not necessarily indicate a lessening of regard for Southwell, however, for there are many Baram Kayan in the 1990s who hold him in high esteem.

As Tuan Sapu, Southwell may have directed the 'throwing out of the old ways', and entry into Christianity⁷⁷ for many Kayan of the Central Baram, but his work was itself challenged by indigenous 'missionaries'. Following the intensive evangelisation of the Central and Upper Baram in the late 1940s,⁷⁸ an indigenous revival movement originating in Kalimantan – the Bungan cult – gained a following among Kayan and Kenyah of the Baram. For a time in the 1950s the cult offered an alternative to Christianity and in some instances won converts at newly Christianised longhouses. In some ways the cult mirrored the mode of operation of the Christian missions in proselytising via travelling missionaries who instructed people on the nature and rituals of the cult and performed conversions. The attraction of the new cult may have lain partly in its maintenance of aspects of Kayan-Kenyah religion, including some of the cycle of agrarian

76 When I mentioned Southwell to one Baram Kayan man, who is a public servant in Kuching, he said, with a smile, that Southwell had taught people to brush their teeth.

77 In the Baram, converting to Christianity is now associated less with a rejection of old ways than with a decision to accept the teachings of the church and participate fully in its program of worship and community activities. This is reflected in terms for conversion. In the 1970s Metcalf noted that the phrase 'buang adat lama' (to throw out the old ways) was used to describe conversion (presumably both the historical conversions of the 1940s and '50s, and conversion in the 1970s) (Metcalf, 1977: 102). In contrast, in the 1990s Kayan generally use the term 'masuk kristen' (to enter Christianity). (Similarly, one might marry a Malay and 'masuk Islam'.)

78 Metcalf estimates that by 1949 almost half the longhouses in the Baram had embraced Christianity and notes that in March of that year 1,000 Kayan converted (1977: 102).

ritual, while removing many of its more arduous restrictions, such as those associated with the observance of an extensive range of omens (Prattis, 1963).⁷⁹

The Bungan cult seems to have originated with the teachings of an Indonesian Kenyah, Jok Apoi, from the Apau Kayan region (Prattis, 1963: 65). Jok Apoi had a dream in which the female deity Bungan Malan urged him to lead the people in a rejection of their old religion (or at least of some of its practices); she also placed a single seed of rice in his hand. He followed Bungan's advice and ignored the many bird and animal omens which governed, and restricted, daily activities, particularly patterns of work at the rice farms. Despite censure by village leaders and warnings of divine retribution, Jok Apoi persisted, working at his farm every day, regardless of any untoward omens. Although previously a less than successful farmer, under his new regimen he prospered and produced a large harvest. Jok Apoi's example led others to follow him, and he began to preach his message beyond his community in the manner of the travelling Christian missionaries. It was not only the missionising aspect of the cult which reflected Christian practice. Conversion to the Bungan cult entailed, for example, a riverside ceremony followed by immersion of the convert in the river. Jok Apoi's teachings did not, however, involve a thoroughgoing rejection of customary religious practice, maintaining much of its ceremony. A group of Jok Apoi's followers travelled through the Baram in 1956 gaining many converts at Kayan communities (Prattis, 1963: 67).

Although it might be expected that a Christian evangelist such as Southwell would inveigh against 'superstitious' rituals and omens, it is interesting that he often mentions relief from restrictive agrarian omens as an element in the process of conversion to Christianity in the Baram. Even allowing for a tendency to attribute his own views to local converts, it is perhaps relevant to an understanding of the progress of the Bungan cult only a few years later (and of Christianisation) that his memoirs frequently recount particular instances of

⁷⁹ Metcalf suggests that the Bungan Cult may actually have facilitated the spread of Christianity later by undermining confidence in the old ways. He notes that convenience does not always make for a solid faith, and draws a comparison with the more 'liberal' churches of the West which have experienced declining congregations, while more strongly orthodox denominations have maintained theirs.

disregard for omens by fresh converts testing the powers of their new religion (Southwell, n.d.: 180).⁸⁰

Despite its early successes, during the 1960s and '70s the Bungan cult gradually gave way to Christianity and by the end of the 1970s there were few followers of Bungan and only one longhouse in the Baram adhering to the old religion (Prattis, 1963; Metcalf, 1977). This is not to say that all individuals within Baram Kayan longhouses have now abandoned all aspects of the earlier religion, or of the revivalist cult. It did seem, however, during my fieldwork that syncretic practices were more visible at some of the larger downriver longhouses which have an allegiance to both the SIB and Roman Catholic churches, than at the smaller upriver houses which adhere exclusively to the evangelical SIB church.

Making the Right Choice: Christianisation and the Benefits of Development

Despite current semantic debates about the naming of Charles Hudson Southwell, and the emergence, and decline, of a rival indigenous religious movement, Kayan Christians in the 1990s sometimes wanted to make clear to me that they felt their forebears had been right in their decision to convert to Christianity. While much of this feeling is expressed in spiritual terms, invoking the connection between Christian faith and salvation, some Kayan Christians do speak gratefully of the temporal benefits that came with Christian missionising, especially literacy. At Long Na'ah one man said to me, with feeling, that had it not been for Southwell, his people would have been illiterate (he was speaking largely of the 1940s and '50s) and that the school established at Long Tebangan provided the only opportunity for gaining an education, since at that time it was the only one in the area.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Rooney notes that the Kenyah have sometimes cited the role of the Japanese occupation in their conversion to Christianity. That the Japanese (who they apparently identified as an Asian people in some sense akin to themselves) could ignore customary Kenyah taboos and omens with impunity shook their belief in their own religious system. Although Europeans had acted similarly, this had not been as influential, since Kenyah presumed the Europeans relied on other quite different sources of 'magic' power (1981: 118).

⁸¹ When speaking of Southwell's role in bringing literacy to Baram Kayan, people also have in mind his later career as a teacher in the downriver town of Long Lama in the 1950s and 1960s. Southwell resigned from the BEM in 1955 and began work for a government-funded community

During fieldwork I also met the son of the Long Tebangan headman who had been the first Kayan leader in the Baram to accept Christianity and lead his community in conversion. He was concerned to tell me who his father was, and expressed his conviction that his father had 'made the right choice' in accepting Southwell's instruction. Apart from the initial process of conversion at Long Tebangan, this man's family and that of Southwell shared a close association during the early years of BEM expansion among Baram Kayan. Southwell and his wife adopted a Kayan baby and it was this man's mother who acted as a wet nurse for the child. His current circumstances may be understood, not only in terms of the advantages in being a Kayan headman's son, but also in the historical light of his family connection with Southwell and the BEM. Now a middle-aged man, he has a management position in the timber industry, is acquainted with members of the Sarawak state bureaucracy, and has been able to provide tertiary education for his children at institutions in West Malaysia and overseas (including a daughter studying civil engineering in Kuala Lumpur). He indicated that he was ambitious for his children, and said adamantly of their education and future that he wanted them to go further than he had and 'do what he could not'. The relatively rapid conversion to Christianity by Baram Kayan in the 1940s and 1950s may have been connected, among other things, to the hard economic times after the second world war. It also seems likely that the sequence in which communities 'made the right choice' (as people sometimes speak of it now), may be related to some distinctions drawn within the larger Baram Kayan population. Since the 1950s migration has altered an earlier pattern of settlement of the various Kayan subgroups, and economic changes connected with the arrival of the timber companies have modified economic relationships between up-river and down-river communities. Nevertheless, Kayan from the more accessible downriver longhouses, such as Long Laput near the town of Long Lama, still recall a time when people belonging to the sub-group *Uma Pu* (then mostly located in communities further upriver) were considered to be more isolated and poorer than

development project based in Long Lama. The project was primarily concerned with providing technical education (including carpentry, metalworking, building and construction, and some training in agricultural methods) to selected boys from Baram communities who would later return to their villages and pass on their new skills. The program also included upper level primary

themselves, as noted previously. Metcalf has noted in a survey article published in the 1970s (Metcalf, 1977) and dealing with religious change and Christianisation of the Baram, that conversion proceeded not in stages from the least to the most remote communities, but largely in the reverse direction. Thus within the Baram it was the upriver Kayan houses, particularly those on the more remote tributaries, which converted earlier, and more wholeheartedly, than those closer to the market centre of Long Lama. In this connection it is probably significant that downriver longhouses such as Long Laput (only ten minutes from Long Lama by longboat) and Uma Bawang (around an hour from Long Lama by express boat) were the last Kayan longhouses to maintain an allegiance, into the 1970s, to the Bungan cult. This circumstance is notable, given that conversion to Christianity (or to any world religion) on the economic periphery has sometimes been represented as part of the process of entering the world system, and has been related to increasing participation in a cash economy (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991: 7-9).

Although the pattern of conversion can be accounted for in the Baram at least partly by the specific histories of individual missions in the region and by the colonial policies of the Brooke regime in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, social and economic relationships between particular Kayan subgroupings may also have played a part. The progress of conversion may be seen as the product of the strategic choices made, for example, by upriver Kayan, particularly the *Uma Pu*. Contemporary commentaries by Kayan, and the current dynamics of allegiance to the SIB church support the contention that upriver longhouses such as Long Tebangan, Long Liam, Long Na'ah (and migrants from these places now living in other tributaries) may, in part, have seen conversion to Christianity as something which might support them in their relatively disadvantaged position, and in the hard times after World War II.⁸² Those upriver

school education (Southwell, n.d.: 281).

⁸² In his discussion of the history of conversion to world religions in Africa, Horton suggests that changes in the nature of the 'communion relationship' (the emotional involvement and identification with God, Christ, the saints, etc.) in Christianity have been implicated in processes of conversion. In Western Christianity 'other-worldly' communion, which tends to 'pull adherents away from their fellow man' has progressively given way to 'this-worldly' communion which gives adherents 'an immense strength and effectiveness in relations with their fellow man'. He argues that it was the latter which was compelling in the African context: '...if the missionaries had come in with a straight other-worldly creed, the Yoruba and many other African peoples would have

Kayan houses which were the first to choose to convert to Christianity, and which, arguably, remain among the less advantaged, somewhat more remote villages, are still among the most dedicated of SIB communities. And Kayan from these communities who now ponder that historical choice express their feeling that their past leaders made the correct decision. These comments are made both in religious terms and in terms of an understanding that beneficial aspects of development, such as literacy, are connected to the past, and present, efforts of the SIB church.

The SIB Church Today

In the 1990s the SIB church terms itself a 'multi-ethnic Malaysian church' and, through the notion of the Universal Church, urges its members to see themselves as part of an international community of Christians:

The primary meaning of the Church is the UNIVERSAL CHURCH which is the body of Christ consisting of all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, of every nation and race, and of every generation, and the localised expression of this is the LOCAL CHURCH which is a group of believers as members of the body of Christ meeting in a certain locality. [original emphasis] (Sidang Injil Borneo Handbook and Rules, 1989: 3)

The international nature of Christianity is an idea which emerges in various forms in sermons, both at regional Christian conventions in the Baram and at services in the small community church at Long Na'ah. On occasion this idea is lent a certain tangibility during services at Long Na'ah, through the use of props such as maps of the world, or lists of nations understood to be Christian, or to contain populations of Christians. Even though Islam is not the religion of the majority in Sarawak, as it is in the West Malaysian states, this emphasis on the international nature of Christianity ought to be considered in the light of the position of Islam in Malaysia.⁸³ Through the state education system, which provides a curriculum

rejected them. As it was, they came with a new source of strength which would enable people to live in and cope with a new world' (Horton, 1971: 97).

83 Although freedom of religion is codified in the Malaysian constitution, Islam has the position of the religion of the Federation. There are also provisos restricting propagation of religious beliefs

produced largely from the standpoint of the West Malaysian Muslim/Malay majority, Kayan school pupils in the Baram are likely to receive at least some generalised elements of instruction in Islamic traditions, or at least a familiarisation with the major events of the Islamic religious calendar. (People at Long Na'ah sometimes complain that the school holidays are geared to this calendar, while only short breaks are allocated to Christian holidays, such as Christmas.) In this context, the emphasis on an international community of Christians is significant.

The SIB church draws its congregation from a range of ethnic groups, and from rural and urban populations. The SIB charter cautions against prejudice on these bases and urges that divisions in the church, along these lines, be resisted. These are themes which also emerge in sermons at the local level. Some of these organisational and doctrinal concerns are of particular interest to Kayan communities. Kayan are familiar with systems of hierarchy within their own social system and, although still a predominantly rural population, are experiencing greater mobility and increasing migration to urban areas. They are also aware that increases in cash income (connected with a range of other changes, such as marriage outside the community, or access to tertiary education) can cause sudden economic and social disparities between members of a small community. In these circumstances, issues of equality, or otherwise, and the language in which they are expressed, can be compelling.

Beyond these things, the practice of the church is overtly evangelical. Proselytism is the church's primary task. The SIB church emphasises retributive and redemptive aspects of Christian doctrine and frequently focuses on human sin, the resurrection, and salvation for believers. The church also holds the fundamental evangelical belief in the divine inspiration, and ultimate authority, of the Bible. The training of members of SIB congregations is also of central importance. Apart from the intensive schedule of services, and the length of sermons, the church at Long Na'ah offers programs of fellowship and instruction for women and young people in the community, as well as an active Sunday

other than Islam among Muslim citizens, and providing for state funding for Islamic institutions and proselytism (Malaysian Federal Constitution, A 11).

school for children. The church also allows for a significant lay participation and this has been taken up enthusiastically by men at Long Na'ah. These men are involved in both the spiritual dimensions of church ministry and in its practical administration, but an important part of their involvement revolves around their own continuing education in the doctrine of the church. Through their participation in services they teach what they have learned to the wider congregation. The Pastors at Long Na'ah also offer individual instruction. The SIB church does not exclude women from its ministry – women may participate as both lay and full-time church workers. However, the dynamics of particular Kayan communities means that, even if they have female pastors, lay leadership in the church is often dominated by male members of the community. This is the case at Long Na'ah.

During the last three decades, SIB congregations throughout Sarawak and Sabah have been influenced by the Charismatic movement, reflecting international trends in Protestantism (Newton, 1988: 94-105). This has been expressed in 'spiritual revivals' – the large regional meetings of church members, particularly associated with the annual *Irau Easter* (Easter Celebration). Although these large-scale meetings and celebrations first became an important part of the SIB calendar for the Lun Bawang, and later the Kelabit, SIB congregations all over Sarawak now hold annual *Irau Easter*. There is typically a strong emphasis on the presence of the Holy Spirit at *Irau Easter*, and past *Irau* in the Baram are sometimes characterised in terms of whether or not the Holy Spirit was experienced strongly during the services.

The organisation of the church is based on a form of Presbyterian church government and the central executive of the church is located in Miri for SIB Sarawak and in Kota Kinabalu for SIB Sabah. A system of district councils oversees the operation of local churches and evangelism proceeds on the basis of these districts. Each local church, such as the church at Long Na'ah, has a church council made up of lay leaders (deacons and elders) elected by members of that church. If the community has an ordained pastor, he or she leads this council. The duties of lay workers include both those concerned with the spiritual ministry of the church and with administrative matters, such as church finances and property.

Each local church has a Sunday School (*Sekolah Minggu*), Youth Group and Women's Group (*Kaum Ibu*). The aim of the Sunday schools is to teach very young children the narratives of the Bible, and to later teach them Christian tenets. Sunday school teachers at local churches receive some training by the SIB. Youth Groups include young people from secondary school age up to the age of 25, including young married couples. The groups are concerned with enabling young people to understand the relevance of the Christian faith to the practical issues of daily living, and to particular problems encountered by young people. Mothers' Groups are concerned with issues considered to be of concern to women, chiefly marriage, homemaking and families.

For Baram Kayan communities in the 1990s with an exclusive adherence to the SIB church, it has become an increasingly important focus of community life. There are numerous church services scheduled throughout the week, and few services or church meetings last for less than two hours (many are considerably longer). The church program also has a marked influence on the ordering of community activities throughout the week, including the schedule of work at the rice farms, and patterns of socialising. And even for people who have left the longhouse permanently, to live and work elsewhere, Christmas is the one occasion on which they will return.

The Community of Long Na'ah

Long Na'ah is located on the Central Baram River a short distance upstream from its confluence with the Puch (see Map 3). There are two longhouses at Long Na'ah and these are positioned one above the other on land which rises up from the river (see Figures 1 and 2). The village is situated on a bend in the river, and from some vantage points it appears to be surrounded by water on three sides. A broad beach covered with large river stones serves as a landing area for longhairs, when water levels allow. Although the Baram River is generally deep and swift-flowing at Long Na'ah, water levels can rise and fall quite dramatically. In drier times areas of the rocky river bed upstream from the village may be exposed, making navigation difficult for vessels larger than the narrow wooden longhairs. After heavy rains, however, the river can rise rapidly by several metres and the

CHAPTER THREE

KAYAN AT LONG NA'AH: LONGHOUSE, CHURCH AND RICE FARM, TIMBER CAMP, TOWN AND CITY

In the 1990s Kayan at Long Na'ah, and other Baram longhouses, live not only within the circumscribed world of longhouse and rice farm, but also move between numerous upriver timber camps, downriver towns, the light industrial areas at the mouth of the Baram, and the coastal city of Miri. There are also people who have now left the upriver longhouses permanently, to live and work in the towns and cities. Despite this mobility, and the permanent departure of some people, Kayan longhouses such as Long Na'ah are generally not moribund or depleted communities, and remain active centres for the annual round of shifting hill rice cultivation. The active schedule of the SIB Church also contributes to a sense of community, particularly at villages which belong exclusively to this evangelical church, such as Long Na'ah, and where people have begun to define themselves by this allegiance.

The Community of Long Na'ah

Long Na'ah is located on the Central Baram river a short distance upstream from its confluence with the Patah (see Map 3). There are two longhouses at Long Na'ah and these are positioned one above the other on land which rises up from the river (see Figures 1 and 4). The village is situated on a bend in the river, and from some vantage points it appears to be surrounded by water on three sides. A broad beach covered with large river stones serves as a landing area for longboats, when water levels allow. Although the Baram River is generally deep and swift-flowing at Long Na'ah, water levels can rise and fall quite dramatically. In drier times areas of the rocky river bed upstream from the village may be exposed, making navigation difficult for vessels larger than the narrow wooden longboats. After heavy rains, however, the river can rise rapidly by several metres and the

lower-lying areas of the village, including the government primary school and playing fields, are periodically inundated. The longhouses themselves are above the high water mark.

Although the headman puts the population of Long Na'ah at 1000, this includes school teachers and health staff⁸⁴ and overestimates the more permanent Kayan population. Given the mobile nature of the community, a figure for the more permanently resident Kayan population would be between five and six hundred. In addition to the two longhouses, there are a number of more recently built separate dwellings at Long Na'ah which also house Kayan families. These are generally referred as 'separate', or 'stand-alone', houses (*'rumah sendiri'* in Malay). Including the apartments within the two longhouses and the separate dwellings, there are 63 occupied Kayan residences at Long Na'ah. These are made up of 15 apartments in the lower longhouse, 35 in the upper longhouse, and 13 separate dwellings. There are seven other dwellings (one adjoining the upper longhouse and one the lower, as well as five separate houses) which are vacant. Among these vacant dwellings are a number of separate houses which have only recently been built or have not yet been completed. The two empty apartments adjoining the longhouses are older dwellings which have been permanently vacated by people who have left the community. Seven further dwellings house the school principal and teachers, health staff, and the village pastor. In all, there are 77 'doors', or residences, at Long Na'ah.⁸⁵

The longhouses themselves are constructed of timber and concrete and have tin roofs. They are two-storey structures and, unlike earlier Kayan longhouses, they are not elevated on piles. The upper storey overhangs the lower (this section is supported by posts), creating a covered verandah at ground level which runs the length of each longhouse. The apartments of the *Tua Rumah* (headman) and the *Penghulu* (government-appointed regional chief) are located in the centre of the upper longhouse and the *Penghulu's* apartment is distinguished by having a frontage twice that of other apartments. In front of the *Penghulu's*

⁸⁴ During my fieldwork the head teacher and one other teacher at the primary school were Kayan (from other communities), but the remaining teaching and health staff were variously Iban, Bidayuh, Malay, and Kenyah).

⁸⁵ In the early 1970s Long Na'ah was reported to have a population of 390 and 43 'doors'. These

apartment there is also a large covered concreted area which extends out from the front of the longhouse. This provides an area for community meetings, celebrations, and entertaining visiting government dignitaries. Both the *Penghulu* and the headman at Long Na'ah, in their official capacities, are part of the broader scheme of state bureaucracy in Sarawak. Both men, though taking a central leadership role in longhouse affairs, are frequently absent in the pursuit of their wider political roles in the region, living during these times at their respective suburban homes in the divisional capital of Miri. Both the present and previous *Penghulu* from this community are of the highest Kayan rank (*hipun uma aya*) and the current headman at Long Na'ah is the *Penghulu's* nephew. Apart from the households of these two men, the household of the headman's sister is sometimes seen as constituting a third high-ranking (*hipun uma*) household. All three *amin* (apartments) are adjacent to each other and are in the centre of the upper longhouse.

A number of the separate houses which accommodate Kayan households have been built close to the ends of the longhouses, while two such houses have been built to face onto the concrete verandah of the lower longhouse. However, there are a number of other new separate houses, also for Kayan families' accommodation, which have been built in other areas of the village, away from the longhouses. Rather than approximating longhouse apartments, these are wooden buildings (some built on stilts) of a style similar to dwellings now being built in downriver towns. Three other small buildings, placed opposite the two longhouses, accommodate village shops. These are run by individual households and sell such things as tinned and packaged foods, rice, torches, detergents and clothing. Additional shops are run out of the longhouse apartments (from a small room, or even a cupboard).

Both the longhouse apartments and the separate houses reflect the varying economic circumstances of their occupants. While apartments other than the *Penghulu's* are mostly of a consistent size, the configurations of their interiors, and their fittings and furnishings, vary quite markedly. Some are generously furnished and have floor and wall coverings such as linoleum and plywood

figures are based on the Malaria Eradication Program survey (Metcalf, 1974: 38).

sheeting with decorative veneers, others are sparsely furnished, and have bare concrete floors and raw wood interior walls. While some of the separate houses are substantial and quite spacious buildings with comfortable interiors, there is another group of separate houses which are of meagre dimensions and materials. These are little more than simple two-room huts, and are located in a rather inhospitable area on the highest ground of the village where there is little protection from storms.

One young woman, her husband and their three young children, who were living in one of these small houses during the time I was at Long Na'ah, were often struggling to stretch their limited supplies of rice. This family combined rice farming with some intermittent timber work (an occupation the husband pursued but did not favour), but sometimes found themselves with only six months' supply of rice. This woman and her children, despite having the small separate house, often found it more congenial to spend time in her mother's apartment in the large upper longhouse, and to cook and share meals with her parents and other siblings (who, although they also lived elsewhere, returned to Long Na'ah and their natal apartment when possible). This young woman's small house was very simply furnished. Finding cash to cover such things as children's clothing was difficult for her, and the expense of such things as trips away to the regional Christian conventions were not always possible.

This household may be contrasted to others at Long Na'ah which have supplies of rice sufficient for their own needs, and which are also sometimes able to sell rice (including to the timber camps). Households with both a good supply of rice and one or more men involved in regular timber work not only have little trouble covering the costs of such things as clothing, but in some cases are also able to purchase four-wheel-drive vehicles, televisions and sound systems; members of such households can travel to the towns more frequently; and children may be provided with a range of toys and other goods (prams, videos). Such households also have cash to spend on furniture and floor coverings and other additions to the interiors of their apartments or houses (though not all who have the resources spend in this way). Nevertheless, most households at Long Na'ah are somewhere between the two circumstances described here; even if subsistence

items are more than sufficient, many apartments are simply furnished, and spending on such things as travel and children's goods is limited; it may also be a struggle to cover the costs associated with children's secondary school education (in the downriver towns); and only a small number of households at Long Na'ah own such things as televisions (despite a strong desire to watch).

Apart from the longhouses and other Kayan residences, other buildings at Long Na'ah include the church and its adjoining rectory. These are located opposite the upper longhouse and near to the headman's and *Penghulu's* apartments. The health clinic and houses for health staff are located at some distance from the main part of the village, and are reached by a long concreted path running along a small ridge. (Concrete paths connect other areas of the village; one such path leads to a ravine behind the longhouses where village rubbish is dumped.) The primary school is located below the two longhouses on a large flat open area which fronts onto the river. A number of smaller buildings accommodate the male and female school teachers; a grass sports oval and a concreted basketball court separate the school from the rest of the village.

Once located in a relatively narrow band along the river and reached by longboat, many of the community's rice farms are now positioned in relation to the network of logging roads and are reached by four-wheel-drive vehicles. Five vehicles are owned by members of the community, and the owners of these provide a transport service to and from the farms (as well as to the logging camps and Miri). Journeys to the farms via the logging roads may take up to forty minutes. Some people commute between the farms and the longhouse each day, but others try to save the daily fare of five ringgit⁸⁶ by staying out all week. After a week at the farms, however, people enjoy the weekend sociability of the longhouse. During the busiest phases of the farming cycle, people stay away for longer periods, establishing themselves more permanently at their farm houses. The variable resources of households at Long Na'ah are also reflected in the accommodation that they are able to build at the rice farms. Accommodation can vary from little more than open shelters with enough sleeping space for four

⁸⁶ The exchange rate during the fieldwork period (1993-1995) fluctuated between 1.50 and 1.90 ringgit to one Australian dollar.

people (lying side by side), to solid elevated wooden huts with small but comfortable verandahs, and separate outhouses.

Directly across the river from Long Na'ah is a timber company depot where equipment, heavy machinery and vehicles are kept. There are also a number of small houses here which are occupied by people from Long Na'ah who work at the nearby logging camp, but who also do some work at this depot. Logs are sometimes brought to this point in preparation for being transported downriver (although most timber in this area of the Baram is trucked out, some logs are also rafted down the river). From the depot a logging road leads to the large timber base camp some half an hour away, and thence to the coastal towns. The journey from Long Na'ah to Miri takes around five hours via these roads.

Long Na'ah lies beyond the reach of public express boat services and is two days' river travel away from Miri. Although river transport has by no means ceased between Long Na'ah and downriver destinations, the option of faster, more direct, road travel means that the long winding river journey and the need to pay for overnight accommodation in one of the downriver towns is, for at least some purposes, no longer the necessity it once was. However, journeys to the hospital in the downriver town of Marudi would, for example, still be made by boat. For Long Na'ah the logging road, and greater access to cash which has enabled the purchase of vehicles, means that the community is no longer as geographically remote from downriver towns and the coastal cities as it once was.⁸⁷

The SIB Church at Long Na'ah

The church at Long Na'ah is an active one and its schedule has a marked effect on the ways in which people at the longhouse structure their activities throughout the week. Work at the rice farms is carried out from Monday through to Saturday, with most people having returned to the longhouse by Saturday afternoon in order

⁸⁷ It is possible that at some future time, when the timber companies wind down their operations in particular areas and consequently cease to maintain their roads, the present state of greater mobility and access to market centres and towns will be reduced (Chandler, 1991: 52-3). The state government points to construction of roads as one of the timber industry's contributions to the development of Sarawak, but at present it does not necessarily have the resources to take over the maintenance of such roads after timber companies depart.

to attend the 'public' church service (*Kebaktian Umum*) on Sunday morning. For most of the remainder of the day people visit apartments and relax. Men working in nearby timber camps may also return on Sundays to attend church and, if they do not have any official role in the church, to rest afterwards.

The weekly schedule of services entails four public services, that is, general services open to all members of the community. These include two evening services on Wednesday and Saturday; the main Sunday morning service held between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. (but often lasting until 2 p.m.) which is attended by large numbers of the community; and a further, less well attended, service on Sunday evening. Young people attend two or three meetings, of varying formality, on Thursday and Friday night, and Sunday afternoon. While some of these involve more formal instruction, others are largely for music and singing practice. Teenage boys and young single men provide music for the services (largely electric guitar accompaniment to hymns sung in Kayan and Malay). However, one of the young women pastors who arrived during my fieldwork was a skilled singer and guitarist and much of the musical direction of church services fell thereafter to her. The Women's Fellowship (the *Kaum Ibu*) and the lay church workers' group (the *Pelayan-pelayan*) each have at least one meeting per week, the latter generally early on Sunday morning, preceding the public service. This enables men and women who work at the farms or at the timber camps during the week to attend. The Sunday schedule sees the most dedicated members of the congregation – largely the male lay workers – spending as many as seven or eight hours in church services or attending to church business. Finally, there is one meeting a week for the Sunday school, held on Sunday evening.

When I first arrived at Long Na'ah, the church was led by a male Kayan pastor⁸⁸ from another Baram Kayan longhouse. Later he was transferred to another church and there was a time in which the community had to make do with the leadership of their church council. After several requests to the SIB administration, they received two young recently trained women pastors. The two

⁸⁸ Local SIB congregations such as that at Long Na'ah refer to their pastors as '*gembala*' (Malay: lit. 'shepherd or herdsman'; 'tender of animals'). If speaking English, they refer to them as pastors. At the big inter-community conventions, guest preachers who may come from Indonesia, or West Malaysia, are referred to as '*pendita*' (Malay: 'clergyman or priest'; 'scholar').

women were placed together to support each other in their ministry, but also to circumvent what might be seen as an inappropriate circumstance of having a single young woman occupy the pastor's residence. While these two young women are accorded the respect owing to them as pastors, they do not have the authoritative demeanour, or the breadth of discretion, of the former pastor. The largely male church council now takes a much greater role in the conduct of services at Long Na'ah.⁸⁹

While there are many dedicated church goers at Long Na'ah, and the flow of the longhouse week reflects their commitment, views of the church and participation in its program are by no means uniform. While almost everyone in the community would unhesitatingly identify themselves as Christian, this does mean somewhat different things to different people. Members of the church lay leadership who, along with the pastors, try to keep abreast of which members of the community have made a commitment to full membership of the church, and of each person's spiritual progress, are aware that some people have not accepted the teachings of the church. Not having made a commitment of this kind is expressed as 'not yet having accepted God or Jesus' (Malay: *belum terima Tuhan/ Yesus*), rather than the more general 'not yet having entered Christianity' (Malay: *belum masuk Kristen*) which suggests a more general commitment. Both within church services, and during community meetings concerned with secular matters, senior members of the church council lecture the community on the importance of church attendance. There is an expectation that the congregation will help support the local church economically and a system of tithes requires that people give rice and money.⁹⁰ In late March (the annual rice harvest is in January), the church at Long Na'ah holds a 'Harvest Celebration' (*Selamat Ngelunau*). This is not so much a community festival, as it is a firmly church-based service of thanksgiving. It is also the time when tithes due to the church are reckoned. The SIB church takes Scripture seriously concerning the duty of members of Christian

⁸⁹ Although the headman has a lay role in the church and does address the congregation on occasion, these addresses sometimes include matters to do with more general community affairs, as well as firmly religious matters.

⁹⁰ While these village-level contributions to the church are relatively modest, it does seem that at higher levels of its structure, the SIB church is able to command more significant sums of money. These include donations to the annual Easter *Irau* made by wealthier individual Kayan, by Kayan

congregations to pledge one tenth of their income to the Church. Some people who have a good supply of rice after harvest are able to pledge one tenth of this toward the provisioning of the village pastor(s). Those in the community who are quite poor, and who themselves lack sufficient rice to last them from harvest to harvest, give only as they are able. Cash may also be given, or pledged, instead of promising to supply rice, but this must be calculated in consultation with the Church leaders. These kinds of deliberations do take up a significant amount of the time and energy of the lay leaders of the church and, in a practical sense, are under lay jurisdiction.⁹¹

Levels of Commitment to the Church

While there is limited systemic, or overt, evidence at Long Na'ah of practices drawing on older Kayan religious beliefs, funerals are events which may express varying levels of attachment to the church. Some funerals are strongly informed by a Christian program, with performance of services led by the pastor (*gembala*), community prayers, the singing of hymns, and the construction of a large-scale wood and concrete cross to mark the grave. However, the Christian content of other funerals takes a much more truncated form, consisting of little more than a few brief prayers. In this case, the emphasis may be more on the comfort, and exhaustion, of prolonged sociability over the period of the funeral (something which may include consumption of alcohol in the latter stages, a practice which, whether associated with funerals or otherwise, is frowned upon by the church). Christian practice at Long Na'ah incorporates some aspects of older Kayan funerary practice. As in the past, funerals are held over a period of three or four days, and nights. The practice of very vocal public weeping and lamentation does, however, have a somewhat more tenuous position in the eyes of the church and of

communities, and even by representatives (Kayan or otherwise) of companies such as Shell Oil.

⁹¹ However, during the harvest celebration of 1995, one of the pastors offered a firmly didactic sermon on the duty of tithes. As if conducting a school lesson, Pastor Long tapped out the following, which was written for emphasis on a blackboard at the front of the congregation:

awi tam hipun pulu sut parei

if we have ten sacks of rice

kuri ma'uk Tuhan?

how many do we give to God?

In response to this the smaller children, grouped in the front pews, shouted '*Ji!*' (One!).

the more devout members of the local congregation. In this case, shows of sorrow and regret which are deemed to be extravagant may be countered with directives against grief. Given that the deceased is now understood to be with God, funerals ought not be occasions of unmitigated grief and regret. Similar disapproval is evident concerning belief in 'ghosts', something which emerges in relation to recently deceased people. These beliefs are seen as outside Christian orthodoxy by the most dedicated Christians.

If funerals are events which may express varying levels of commitment to the church by individuals and households at Long Na'ah, weddings are perhaps more clearly manipulated as symbols of membership in the SIB Church, and of Christian virtue; they also constitute somewhat punitive symbols. In the case of marriages between Kayan and non-Kayan, weddings may also offer some demarcation of Kayan identity, so far as 'Kayan' and 'Christian' or, more specifically, 'SIB', are mutually identified at Long Na'ah.

'White weddings' may only be enjoyed by couples who are not only full members of the church, but who have also remained chaste (described in Malay as '*bersih*': clean). A 'white wedding', or 'church wedding' (*kawin gereja/sidang*), indicates a marriage service conducted by the pastor inside the church building. Importantly, it entails the full sartorial repertoire of a white bridal dress, long white veil, silk flowers and satin pumps for the bride; and dark suit, bow-tie and corsage for the groom. Such weddings also generally involve a full complement of bridesmaids and groomsmen, also dressed respectively in white gowns and dark suits. A number of small girls, similarly clothed in frilly white dresses, complete the wedding group (see Figures 9 and 18).

A couple desiring a full church wedding must declare their engagement at a ceremony three months before they intend to marry. During those three months they must remain chaste, and demonstrate their loyalty to their chosen partner. At the expiry of the engagement period they must marry promptly. At one engagement ceremony which I attended, speeches outlining SIB rules stressed that the engagement should be 'no more, and no less than three months'. The church reserves the right to refuse a couple a church wedding if it is believed that the couple have had sexual relations.

Despite the reserving of 'white weddings' to full members of the church, and the emphasis on chastity, which suggest a rather strict Christian regime, most members of the community are quite matter-of-fact in their description of these things. After all, as one woman said to me, even couples who are full members of the church may opt to marry immediately if they 'cannot stand the wait'. (The SIB church rules have also been relaxed somewhat: in the past prospective couples faced a mandatory six month engagement). Hasty marriages do mean a couple must forfeit the (white) church wedding and the enjoyment of the accoutrements, which the couples themselves, their families and guests, find attractive. But there is no enormously heightened sense of shame in getting married at home – the alternative to the white wedding. These things may, however, be fair game for a certain amount of humour and gossip.

Marriages which occur between Kayan Christians and non-Kayan who are not Christian may also be conducted within the longhouse apartment of the Kayan partner, with the possibility of another ceremony being held elsewhere under the auspices of the non-Kayan family. During the time I was at Long Na'ah, a young Kayan woman married a Chinese Buddhist. The couple were married at Long Na'ah in the house of her family in a relatively brief ceremony. Although one Christian prayer was offered by a Kayan participant, and the formal addresses called on people to give thanks to God, the major part of the ceremony was taken up with more general speeches offered by representatives of the bride's and groom's families (many of the latter were from Miri and Kuching). The bride was dressed casually in patterned blouse and skirt, the groom in an open collared shirt and jeans.

Moving Beyond the Longhouse: Timber Camp, Town and City

Beyond the longhouse are the timber camps, where numbers of men, and some women, from Long Na'ah have found work. There are five different timber companies in the vicinity of Long Na'ah. However, the most significant for the community are the two which share the large camp less than half an hour by road from the longhouse. This camp (or one section of it) is referred to as *Kem*

Kilopuluh (Ten Kilometre Camp) (see Figure 2). Timber camps provide work primarily for unmarried men in their late teens and early twenties, and for married men up to around 45 years of age. Few older men from the community find employment in the timber camps, although there are some older non-Kayan men employed at *Kem Kilopuluh* in positions such as gatekeepers, who keep records of the exit and entry of laden and empty timber trucks. Young unmarried women constitute another (much smaller) group of people from the community who are employed by the timber companies. They work as cooks in the camp canteens and their periods of employment tend to be much more erratic than those of men.

Few Baram Kayan men gain management positions at the timber camps, although one Kayan man, originally from Long Tebangan, the community upriver from Long Na'ah, is a manager at the large base camp near Lapok on the Tinjar River. Men from Long Na'ah are generally employed as truck drivers and as heavy machinery operators in road construction and timber handling. One Kayan man from the longhouse immediately downriver from Long Na'ah, Long Keseh, has managed to establish a sawmilling operation close to his longhouse. This mill takes logs, which are rafted downstream from the companies near Long Na'ah. Although this man has built a large, comfortable, and startlingly white-painted house next to his home longhouse at Long Keseh, he employs a Chinese manager for his sawmill and spends much of his time at his home in Miri. Kayan ownership of such concerns is unusual, however, and management positions in the timber companies are often held by Chinese.

The sites of work and associated patterns of movement tend to vary for young single men and older married men with children. Younger unmarried men may have road building and maintenance jobs which take them to the more remote areas of the logging concessions. Consequently, they are more likely to be away for a full month before returning to the longhouse, or taking their break in Miri. At the end of the monthly work cycle there is an exodus of young men who, lacking the obligations of married men, go to spend money and enjoy the entertainments of town. In contrast, men who drive timber lorries on regular routes from *Kem Kilopuluh* are able to return to the longhouse once a week. Though not exclusively, the latter tend to be married men with young children.

Married men are also entitled to more substantial accommodation, and the wives and children of men who work from *Kem Kilopuluh* often join them there for several days at a time. Some married men from Long Na'ah are based at more remote camps, however, and are able to return to the longhouse only about once every two months. In these cases the opportunities for their wives and children to join them are also restricted. Although accommodation may be available at these more remote camps, the journey can be arduous, particularly with very small children. It might involve, for example, a one-day river journey with an overnight stop, followed by a five- or six-hour truck trip over steep, hazardous timber roads. In these cases, women choose only to join their husbands occasionally, usually during extended school holidays. Apart from the schedule of public and school holidays, the movements of men employed by the companies, and of their spouses, are also directed by the weekly schedule of the SIB church. Men working in the camps who are able to return on a weekly basis usually return on Saturday afternoon or evening (at the same time that people who have stayed at the farms all week are returning) in order to be in the community for the main public church service on Sunday morning.

Two Journeys to Miri, by Logging Road and by River

Beyond the movements involved in timber work, the expanded horizons of Kayan from Long Na'ah may be described by tracing two journeys, by river and by road, from the community to the district capital of Miri. At any time numbers of people from Long Na'ah are moving between the two, or to and from the timber camps. The journey by logging road to Miri, following the road which passes by *Kem Kilopuluh*, passes through the small market and transport centre of Lapok. Located on the Tinjar River, Lapok is around three to four hours travel from Long Na'ah by open-trayed truck, or air-conditioned Landcruiser. The logging roads from Long Na'ah offer either very muddy or very dusty travel over sometimes precipitous terrain, and among a heavy traffic of large timber-laden lorries. Despite the advantages of road access, road travel is regarded by some Kayan, particularly elderly people, as tiring, unpleasant, and on occasion, frightening. A remarkable number of people suffer from car sickness and this is, for some,

enough reason to choose the longer journey by river. Fear for one's safety on these roads is not unreasonable given the terrain and volume of timber traffic; fatal accidents do occur. Not long before I arrived at Long Na'ah a vehicle carrying school teachers from the community plunged off one of these roads into a ravine. Luckily none of the passengers were killed.

For people travelling by road from upriver longhouses, Lapok marks the beginning of the public road and transport system. An unsealed road connects Lapok to the now sealed main coastal highway which links the state capital, Kuching, and Miri. Made up of a group of shops and cafes in small unpainted wooden buildings, Lapok seems to huddle under a large new concrete bridge which sweeps across the river. Lapok is a connection point for river expresses and a pick-up point for buses to Miri. Its centre is a large area of churned mud where the numerous small trucks and landcruisers converge from logging camps and upriver longhouses. Lapok is also the site of a major timber base camp where some men from Long Na'ah have gained work.

A number of people from Long Na'ah have settled in Lapok. Only a short distance from Lapok, on the Tinjar River, is the Kayan longhouse of Long Teran. This community is partly the result of downriver migrations in the 1950s of Kayan communities on the Akah and Patah Rivers (tributaries of the Baram in the vicinity of Long Na'ah). These migrations represented a general move by Kayan at that time out of the more inaccessible rivers and toward the bazaars. People from Long Na'ah also took part in these earlier migrations. Long Teran is of the same dialect or subgroup (*Uma Pu*) as Long Na'ah, and shares its allegiance to the SIB church. Thus the two communities are historically and culturally linked. Marriages continue to occur between the two communities. This circumstance means that Lapok, in addition to the advantages of proximity to markets and transport, holds other attractions for people from Long Na'ah. Several middle-aged and elderly people from Long Na'ah who have adult children settled in or near Lapok, and who feel they can withstand the travel, divide their time between the Long Na'ah longhouse and this alternate location. It is another two hours to Miri from here, initially following unsealed roads, which pass through areas of oil palm plantation, and then on to the main coastal highway.

Miri is the main town in northern Sarawak.⁹² It promotes itself as the 'Oil Town' of the north and is filled with glassy luxury hotels bearing names such as Mega and Dynasty.⁹³ While these are patronised by wealthy Malaysian businessmen and tourists, and by oil industry expatriates, local workers in the timber industry frequent the numerous karaoke bars and pubs. The markets of Miri range from open-air produce markets, through rows of two-storey shop houses, to high-rise air-conditioned department stores. Only a short distance from the border with Brunei, and connected by a regular bus service, there is a steady flow of people between Miri and Bandar Seri Begawan. Miri is also the Sarawak headquarters of the SIB church (the sister headquarters of the church are in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah).

Just to the south of Miri is Lambir,⁹⁴ an area of semi-urban settlement consisting of a Malay 'village', an Iban and a Chinese area, and a small group of Kayan residences. Some households from Long Na'ah have kin here. Kayan living here maintain quite close contacts with their longhouses of origin, even though they may have lived on the coast for many years. They continue not only to visit during holiday periods, but also to participate in the upriver harvest. One woman from Long Na'ah, with her Kayan husband from another Central Baram longhouse, has raised her family at Lambir. She and her family maintain regular contact, however, with her aging parents at the longhouse, and her parents also join her from time to time at her house on the coast. Until they finished high school and found jobs in Miri, her daughter and youngest sister, who are contemporaries, often spent school holidays together at the longhouse. Her daughter, despite her kin connections at Long Na'ah, and the time she spends

⁹² With a population of 87,230, Miri is the third largest population centre in the state after Sibu (126,384) and the capital, Kuching (147,729). Note that these figures are for the city or town centres (e.g. 'Miri Townland') only. They exclude outlying areas such as, for Miri, the nearby Kuala Baram and Lambir Bazaars). The overall population figures for the Kuching and Miri Administrative Districts are 368,386 and 161,369 respectively, of which 277,346 (Kuching) and 102,969 (Miri) are reckoned to be 'urban' (Yearbook of Statistics, Sarawak, 1993: 17-23).

⁹³ The clientele of one new luxury hotel may stroll along a beach to the south of the city centre, dodging numbers of logs and odd bits of lumber: the flotsam of the hinterland timber industry. Young Kayan women from Lambir and Miri occasionally stroll there too, commenting, with a mixture of mockery and mild admiration, on the inappropriate footwear of the hotel guests (platform heels were undergoing a resurgence in Malaysia, as elsewhere, in the mid-nineteen nineties).

⁹⁴ Lambir Bazaar had a population of 2,352 in 1991 (Yearbook of Statistics, Sarawak, 1993: 23).

there, is nevertheless sometimes identified as an '*orang Miri*' ('Miri, or town, person'). This family still consumes some rice from the family farm at Long Na'ah. While Iban at Lambir cultivate rice, few Kayan do (they claim that they do not know how to grow rice properly near the coast). This family grows small amounts of vegetables, which they sell in the Miri markets; they also work for the local Chinese orchardists.

The journey to Miri by river takes people from Long Na'ah through the small town of Long Lama⁹⁵ which is around four hours away by speed boat, and as much as a day's travel away by motorised longboat (depending on the size of the boat and the capacity of its outboard motor). Although Long Lama is now connected by road to the coast, it is still an important centre for river travel and a stop-over point for upriver people. The town has a small row of waterfront shops and hotels, a large high school with boarding facilities for upriver children, the local branches of the Department of Agriculture and Information Office (the latter disseminates material on government policy), and a police station. There is also a large SIB church. Apart from the waterfront shops and government offices, Long Lama is largely formed by two communities: the *Kampung Kayan* ('Kayan Village') and the *Kampung Cina* ('Chinese Village'). Kayan settled in Long Lama come particularly from the large longhouses just upriver from the town: Long Laput and Sungai Dua. People from these close longhouses may have a house in town but also an apartment at their 'home' longhouse.⁹⁶

One Kayan household in Long Lama⁹⁷ has connections with Long Na'ah. From the townspeople's point of view, Long Na'ah is considered a rather distant upriver longhouse. Puyang, a daughter of this family, is married to Kajan at Long Na'ah, and resides, against the more common Kayan practice of uxorilocality, in his parents' apartment there. Nevertheless, she spends time with her own parents and her sisters at their house in Long Lama whenever she can, usually during

⁹⁵ Long Lama ('Long Lama Bazaar') had 108 households and a population of 605 in 1991 (Yearbook of Statistics, Sarawak, 1993: 23).

⁹⁶ A fire in the 1980s destroyed a large part of the Long Laput longhouse. As a consequence, some people from that longhouse have chosen to maintain long-term residences in Long Lama. (Gradual fitting out of the interiors of some apartments in the big new longhouse at Long Laput was still under way in 1995).

school holidays when she has a break from her job in the pre-school at Long Na'ah. Her downriver trips are also prompted by the need to admit her infant son, who suffers from asthma, to the hospital in Marudi. Before I left Long Na'ah, she had also decided to leave her older pre-school aged daughter with her parents and sisters in this household. Other in-marrying spouses at Long Na'ah, particularly if they are from more accessible downriver longhouses and towns, do spend periods of time at their 'home' communities.

Adults who suffer serious illnesses, parents with chronically ill children, and women in advanced pregnancy⁹⁸ may also spend time with kin in these towns or at other communities within reach of public transport. Another large group of people who move between the longhouse and downriver towns such as Long Lama are high school aged children who board at their schools during term time, returning home during school holidays. From Long Lama, express boats run to the larger downriver town of Marudi. This journey takes around three hours.

Marudi⁹⁹ is the administrative centre for the Baram and, importantly for upriver people, is the location of the district's hospital. It is also a centre for secondary schooling. Marudi offers a far greater range of goods than Long Lama and, as a transport centre for the Baram and its tributaries, is well served with hotels and cafes. Regular express boats link Marudi with Kuala Baram – the town and industrial area at the mouth of the Baram¹⁰⁰ – another journey of about three hours. Apart from being the departure point for upriver travel, Kuala Baram is the site of a new light industrial estate based largely on timber processing. Some upriver Kayan, including people from Long Na'ah, have obtained housing here and jobs at the estate, particularly at a plywood factory. Miri is half an hour's bus ride from Kuala Baram along a road which hugs the coast. Viewed from this road,

⁹⁷ My adoptive family in the field.

⁹⁸ Reflecting the public health policies of the state, particularly measures to lower infant mortality rates, women from Long Na'ah generally go to one of the larger regional clinics, such as that at the community of Long San a short distance upriver from Long Na'ah, or to the hospital in Marudi, to give birth. Women themselves are generally keen to take advantage of these facilities. Some women told me that they planned to go downriver in plenty of time before they gave birth, for fear of being caught where there were few medical facilities.

⁹⁹ In 1991 Marudi ('Marudi Townland') had 1,062 households with a total population of 6,628 (Yearbook of Statistics, Sarawak, 1993: 23).

¹⁰⁰ Kuala Baram ('Kuala Baram Bazaar') had a population of 1,558 in 1991 (Yearbook of Statistics, Sarawak, 1993: 23).

the waters of the South China Sea stretch away to a horizon filled with tankers and oil rigs.

People Who Have Left the Longhouse Permanently

Apart from those people from Long Na'ah who move between locations such as the logging camps, Lapok, the downriver towns of Long Lama and Marudi, and the district capital of Miri, there are also those who, through higher education and subsequent employment, or marriage outside the community, have left the longhouse permanently. Ties to their natal apartments, however, and to the longhouse community, remain strong for some of these people, even if they are able to return only infrequently. One woman from Long Na'ah who is married to a Baram Kayan man with a position in the Department of Agriculture has lived for many years in the state capital, Kuching, returning to Long Na'ah only once every year or two. In 1995, however, she and her husband became involved in starting a new bus company in the Baram District. It is the first to run air-conditioned coaches from Lapok to Miri. This woman also runs a business in Kuching selling arts and craft, including Kayan artwork. The couple's children also occasionally spend part of their school holidays at the longhouse. These children (whose plumpness, height, and pallor distinguish them from the longhouse children), are identified by Kayan at the longhouse as city people. Another man has gained an administrative job in the oil industry and also lives and works permanently beyond the community. He too maintains an interest in longhouse affairs and local politics. Rather than enrolling to vote in the Miri electorate, he has remained on the Baram district electoral role, and returned to vote for a Baram candidate in the 1995 federal election.

Although few people from Long Na'ah have qualified as school teachers or health professionals, one young woman is studying in Penang, West Malaysia, to be a dental nurse. She hopes to return to Sarawak after the completion of her course. Another young woman who anticipates finishing form six at high school intends to study to be a school teacher. While such jobs are dependant on government appointed posts, and new teachers and health staff must go where

they are sent, it is common for people to seek an eventual transfer back to their home area or community.

Some young men, who do not pursue jobs in the local timber industry, find work outside of Sarawak – in the Bruneian oil industry, or in Kalimantan. These men return to Long Na'ah only once or twice a year, most usually at Christmas. Women who have married Chinese men employed by the timber companies may also live more-or-less permanently away from the longhouse. However, they occasionally return to their natal apartments with their children for periods of time, particularly if their husbands move between jobs or job locations. The Long Na'ah woman who married a Scottish expatriate employed by Shell Oil at Miri ten years ago still manages to return to Long Na'ah from Scotland with her husband and two children every five years or so.

The Longhouse Remains a Centre for a Mobile Community

Despite the mobility of the population of Long Na'ah, there remains a substantial number of people at Long Na'ah whose lives are largely confined to the social and economic world of longhouse and farm. For these people, who rarely have the means to travel beyond the longhouse and who have fewer kin connections in downriver or coastal towns, the longhouse is a more permanent centre. There is, however, at least one avenue for movement beyond the longhouse for this group. The annual round of church conventions provides them with opportunities for travel to other communities. The Easter Celebration (*Irau Easter*), which is the largest of the SIB church's inter-community gatherings, is especially important in this regard. But other events, such as the annual youth convention and women's convention, are also well attended. Those people who take an active role in the longhouse church, in its ministry as lay workers (*Pelayan*) or in its administration, may also travel occasionally on church business. I have also argued that even those people who do not have the resources to travel beyond the community may, through knowledge gained from others who do travel, through access to radio and television, or through the globalising language of the local evangelical church,

imagine a world which extends well beyond their own relatively small community.

The diversity of trajectories followed by people moving out of the longhouse and the extent of extra-community networks does appear quite striking, but it should be noted that Long Na'ah continues to have the dynamics and atmosphere of a community geared determinedly enough to the agricultural year. Despite the numbers of people who leave the longhouse to gain work, either on a cyclical or more permanent basis (thus leaving a relatively high proportion of children and elderly people in the community),¹⁰¹ there remain sufficient women and men of working age to maintain this. It does not have the somewhat depleted air of some Baram communities where numbers of apartments are empty and bolted shut, left vacant by their occupants who have gone downriver.

¹⁰¹ In 1994/95 the school at Long Na'ah had an enrolment of approximately 150 children aged between 6 and 12.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE TIMBER INDUSTRY AND OTHER SOURCES OF CASH INCOME AT LONG NA'AH

Paid employment in the timber camps of the Baram District is a significant source of cash for people at Long Na'ah in the 1990s. It is timber money, in particular, which has enabled their increasing consumption of the goods and services of the industrialised economy. However, not all households at Long Na'ah have members with such employment, and for these cash is derived from a range of other sources.

Subsistence rice cultivation remains central to communities such as Long Na'ah, but it would now be somewhat misleading to locate the focus of production solely on rice farming. It would also be inaccurate to conceptualise Kayan economic endeavour in terms of a sharp contrast between an internal subsistence economy and 'the cash economy'. For Kayan households at Long Na'ah, gaining a livelihood means combining subsistence farming with participation in a wider cash economy. For some households rice farming may account for the bulk of their livelihood (and most of their labour), with the addition of some activities which yield small amounts of cash. For others, however, the balance may be more toward cash incomes. Processes of monetisation and commoditisation within the community of Long Na'ah also mean that some goods and labour may now be exchanged for cash, although there is some ambivalence in the community towards a thorough-going monetisation; cash remains less appropriate for some kinds of exchange.

The changing nature of the societies which anthropologists study frequently means that the sphere of production, even in 'small scale' societies, such as that of the Kayan, increasingly lies outside the intimate frame of anthropologists' face-to-face enquiries. For this reason it is useful to look more broadly at the timber industry in Sarawak before returning to consider timber

incomes, and other sources of cash, at Long Na'ah itself. The activities of local and transnational timber companies, and the role of the state in relation to these companies, are issues which Kayan themselves seek to understand, and which at times frustrate them. Widespread logging in the Baram has meant that Kayan land tenure, particularly relating to land for shifting rice cultivation, is increasingly under threat.

The Timber Industry In Sarawak

Malaysia is one of the largest producers of tropical hardwood in the world, and although domestic processing of logs has been increasing, it is still the world's largest exporter of unprocessed tropical logs (United Nations FAO Website, 5/01/2000). Timber processing in Malaysia is dominated by the primary processing activities of sawmilling, veneer and plywood production, with Malaysia being the second-largest exporter of tropical plywood (Indonesia is the largest, producing around per cent of the total) (High Stakes Website, 5/01/2000).¹⁰² Most of the nation's logs are produced in Sarawak, and a large proportion of Sarawak's timber is exported. However, the quantities of timber being processed within the state have increased in recent years. Between 1993 and 1999 the ratio of plywood to logs exported, for example, grew from around 1:8 to 2:5 (MTC Website, 5/01/2000).¹⁰³ It has been suggested that relatively high levels of raw log exports have continued from Sarawak partly because of the cessation of exports of unprocessed timber from the neighbouring countries of Indonesia and Thailand in the 1970s and '80s. The consequent high world prices for raw logs have continued to make these a lucrative export (Majid-Cooke, 1999: 89).

It should be noted here that the accuracy of official statistics on the timber industry, including data provided by industry bodies, may be open to question. The politicised nature of timber quotas and overall rates of production, and questions surrounding corporate timber profits may mean that the accurate

¹⁰² *High Stakes* is put out by Forests Monitor, a network NGO established in 1999 particularly to provide corporate information on forestry; it is based in the United Kingdom.

¹⁰³ The Malaysian Timber Council was established in 1992 to promote the development of the timber-based industry in Malaysia and the marketing of timber products. The MTC is governed by

reporting of production figures is compromised. Sarawak is a member of the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) which has a role in designating production quotas for timber producing nations. These quotas are promulgated in terms of 'sustained yield' management (Hong, 1987: 160-61; see also Majid-Cooke, 1999: 34ff on 'sustained yield' as discourse in Malaysian forest resource policy). From time to time the state government may issue directives to the timber companies to decrease production in order to meet these quotas. There is evidence, however, that one response to this is to stockpile logs and release them in the next accounting period. These directives may also affect levels of employment of local peoples in the camps, as they are often employed as truck drivers transporting the logs out of the camps (SAM Website, Sarawak Update 1992, 5/01/2000).¹⁰⁴ Given this, the figures offered in this section of the thesis (which largely deal with exports, and only cover the major timber products), are only a general guide to the size of the timber industry and its products. Figures for overall production would be much higher.

The major timber products exported by Sarawak are logs, sawntimber, plywood, moulding, veneer, dowels, and woodchips. Between 1993 and 1995 Sarawak exported around 11 million cubic metres of these products annually, at around 5.3 billion Malaysian Ringgit (RM) each year.¹⁰⁵ However, in the late 1990s the volume of these timber exports decreased from around 10.6 million cubic metres in 1996 to only 8.7 million in 1998. While the overall value of exports remained reasonably steady until 1997, in 1998 the value of these timber exports dropped¹⁰⁶ to around RM4.9 billion (MTC Website, 5/01/2000).¹⁰⁷

The reduction in the volume and value of timber exports from Sarawak at this time reflects the economic downturn associated with the Asian economic

a Board of Trustees appointed by the Minister of Primary Industries.

¹⁰⁴ *Sahabat Alam Malaysia* (SAM) – Malaysia's 'Friends of the Earth'.

¹⁰⁵ During this period the exchange rate for the Malaysian Ringgit was around 1.5 Australian dollars.

¹⁰⁶ However, figures for the first six months of 1999 indicate rises in the volume, and value, of timber exports from Sarawak.

¹⁰⁷ Other sources giving rates for log production indicate much higher rates of overall timber extraction than is suggested by these Malaysian Timber Council (MTC) export figures. For example, one NGO puts log production in 1996 at 19.5 million cubic metres (High Stakes Website, 5/01/2000). The MTC figure for log exports for the same year is only 6.8 million cubic metres.

crisis. The global trade in tropical logs and plywood was affected by the financial turmoil of the late 1990s. Decreased demand in the major importing countries of Japan, South Korea, the Philippines and Thailand had an impact on world-wide trade patterns and prices for tropical logs and plywood.¹⁰⁸ Consequently there has been some curtailment of production (and some closures) among plywood producers in Malaysia, probably as a result of both decreased demand and the availability of cheaper Indonesian plywood. In 1998 Malaysia responded to this situation by announcing that it would lift export taxes on plywood and various other timber products. Another response has been to target markets in other areas of the world, such as the European Union and North America. Some transnational Malaysian timber companies, including Rimbunan Hijau (one of the largest concession holders in Sarawak), have also been operating in countries such as the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea which have been badly affected by the economic crisis. These companies have consequently cut their production rates in these countries (High Stakes Website, 5/01/2000).

Between 1994 and 1996 Japan was the main destination for logs exported from Sarawak, receiving around 53 per cent of annual log exports. Japan remained the largest consumer of logs in 1997 and 1998, but the proportion of logs going to Japan dropped to around 43 per cent. Taiwan is the second largest consumer of Sarawak's logs, and between 1994 and 1999 received around 17 per cent of log exports. South Korea, China, Hong Kong and India are also major importers of tropical logs from Sarawak. The main importers of sawntimber from Sarawak are Thailand, Taiwan, the Philippines, Singapore, China, and South Korea (Japan is not a major importer of sawntimber from Sarawak). In the early 1990s Thailand was importing around 25 per cent of Sarawak's sawntimber, but towards the end of the decade this dropped to around 14 per cent. The main destinations for plywood are Japan, China, South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan. In the late 1990s the USA also became a significant importer of plywood from Sarawak (receiving around 14 percent of exports in 1998/99).

¹⁰⁸ China is a major consumer of tropical logs and other timber products, but has not been similarly affected by the crisis. There is also evidence that demand from China will grow (High Stakes Website, 5/01/2000).

Large transnational Malaysian-based timber companies are a feature of the timber industry in Sarawak. Two of the four largest timber interests in Sarawak are the Malaysian transnational companies Rimbunan Hijau Group¹⁰⁹ and Samling Corporation,¹¹⁰ both publicly-listed companies. The former has timber concessions in Sarawak covering 800,000 hectares, while Samling holds 1,500,000 hectares, including large areas in the Baram District. Samling is one of the companies operating in the vicinity of Long Na'ah, and men and women from the community have been employed at Samling camps. Another transnational Malaysian company operating in Sarawak is WTK Group, with concessions of 400,000 hectares (High Stakes Website, 5/01/2000).

Sarawak's timber resources are under state rather than Federal control, and consequently timber export duties go to the state government. The history of logging in Sarawak has been one of close association between state political bodies and the timber companies, and the process of awarding logging concessions has been implicated in systems of political patronage (Crouch, 1996: 54; Majid-Cooke, 1999: 90). In Sarawak the expansion of logging concessions has threatened local people's requirements for sufficient areas of forested land for rice cultivation. Although the Sarawak Land Code guarantees Native Customary Rights, recognition of areas of Native Customary Land by the state tends to be confined to those areas which are actually under cultivation. Tenure over areas of fallow land, which are an integral part of the shifting rice cultivation system, may be difficult to establish. In part because of the lack of clearly defined land tenure, cash compensation for indigenous inhabitants of land which has fallen within timber concessions is also a complicated one in Sarawak.

Systems of land tenure in Sarawak are connected to colonial categorisations of land, particularly those contained in the 1958 Land Code (Hong, 1987: 46-53). Within this system, Native Customary Land is constituted by land over which native customary rights have been established in law prior to 1958, or land which has become Native Customary Land by obtaining a permit on 'Interior Area Land'. Native Customary Land can also be created by the Minister

¹⁰⁹ Rimbunan Hijau Group also has logging operations in New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Vanuatu, Brazil, and the Russian Far East.

who may declare any areas of state land to be Native Communal Reserves. Questions of native land tenure in Sarawak are also located on shifting sands because a comparatively small amount of Native Customary Land or Interior Area Land in the state has actually been surveyed or adjudicated.¹¹¹

Timber Incomes for People at Long Na'ah

Wage labour for the timber companies is the most consistent source of cash for people in the community of Long Na'ah. There are five main timber companies in the region surrounding Long Na'ah. Two of these, Woodman and Samling, are of particular importance to the community. In addition to its logging operations in the Baram, Samling also has timber processing operations at the industrial estate at Kuala Baram, including a plywood factory where some men from Long Na'ah have found work. The companies are represented by numbers of individual camps throughout the timber concessions, including the big base camps, such as those near Long Na'ah itself, and at Lapok on the Tinjar River. There are also numbers of smaller, more remote logging camps. Men from Long Na'ah have gained work at the camps closest to the village, at the more remote camps, and at the big camp at Lapok.

Although men working as truck drivers may receive a monthly base salary of around RM700 (around A\$450), their earnings may be significantly more than this, depending on number of days worked and loads completed. (For accounting purposes, the entry and exit of laden and empty lorries is logged at the camps by recording vehicle registration numbers.) Work at the camps sometimes comes to a standstill in bad weather, and on wet fog-bound mornings at camps located on the ranges, the start of the working day may be delayed. However, timber handling may also continue well into the night. Some trucks and heavy machinery are equipped with high-power lights and the bigger camps have overhead lighting. At night this gives them the atmosphere of street-lit towns – if rather muddy and

¹¹⁰ Samling also operates in Guyana, Cambodia, and New Zealand.

¹¹¹ Interior Area Land is a catch-all category for land which does not fall into any other category. In 1985 the two categories of Interior Area Land and Native Customary Land together made up 68 per cent of the total area of Sarawak (Hong, 1987: 47-48; Zaidi, 1985).

strangely located ones, perched as they often are on steep ridges, surrounded by raggedly felled rainforest and skirted by the deep river valleys (see Figure 2).

Bulldozer operators receive rates similar to truck drivers, although the rough work involved in building new roads in the often mountainous terrain can result in higher rates of pay. It is possible for men (driving and bulldozing) to earn more than twice the minimum monthly sum of RM700 (some young men at Long Na'ah mentioned the possibility of monthly sums of around RM2,000).¹¹² Operating the heavy vehicles equipped with a fork-lift mechanism and used for handling timber at sites where logs are concentrated, and within the camps, is a lower paid job than lorry driving or bulldozer work.¹¹³ While some of the young men who can work away for the full month, or longer, may earn the higher wages, this may not be possible for older married men with other commitments. Food is also expensive at the camps. Young women are also employed as cooks in the camp canteens, but their employment tends to be for shorter periods, and is much more erratic than for men. These jobs are also less well paid than jobs for men; as cooks women receive only around RM300 per month.

In terms of the Long Na'ah community, gaining employment at the camps is not closely related to the Kayan system of rank (although men from the high ranking families may have access to other resources and opportunities, in some cases making timber work a less likely option for them). Differential access to education, particularly in the past, has tended to increase the chances of high ranking men obtaining outside employment.¹¹⁴ In general, timber work does not require high levels of education. One young man I spoke to at Long Na'ah who worked for the companies was somewhat derisive of the skills required to undertake the work,¹¹⁵ however, timber work does require some mechanical skills,

¹¹² As a comparison, a recruitment advertisement for metropolitan bus drivers in Miri (in 1995) promised potential earnings of between RM700 and RM1300 per month (for applicants with experience of driving heavy vehicles).

¹¹³ Reflecting Sarawak's British colonial experience, the big trucks used for transporting raw logs and lumber are referred to locally as *lori* (lorries). Trucks used for carrying and depositing construction materials and earth fill are referred to, in English, as 'tip trucks', while cars and smaller four-wheel-drive trucks are all called simply *kereta* (Malay: car or vehicle).

¹¹⁴ For example, a nephew of the Penghulu's had studied accounting in Melbourne, Australia, and one of the Penghulu's sons had an administrative job in the oil industry.

¹¹⁵ He had received five years of high school education which he felt was a 'waste of time' since it had not led to a 'good job', and had a somewhat bitter sense that there ought to be more

as well as the ability to handle heavy machinery and drive large trucks. The larger camps have big covered workshop and repair areas for which some men are employed specifically as mechanics. But better levels of literacy are an advantage in progressing in these areas, let alone in higher management jobs, which are out of the reach of most local Kayan men.

There was some indication at the time I was at Long Na'ah, that gaining a formal driver's licence was becoming an advantage in seeking work as a lorry driver. One family at Long Na'ah had raised the funds and sent their teenage son downriver to gain a licence in the hope that in the future it may enable him to gain work as a driver. Some men with better levels of literacy (and particularly some knowledge of English), sometimes expressed a discontent with timber work. One man who had left timber work, and who was trying to find other paid work outside the camps, commented to me critically that the reason local people had problems with machines and vehicles was that they couldn't read the instructions (he was referring largely to those in English) including the schematised instruction on gear shifts; he said people generally didn't have licences. When I asked another young man still working in the industry about training in the camps, he said few people would be brave enough to ask for training, it depended on being noticed for your diligence, and particularly for sobriety while at the camps as well as other indicators of good behaviour, like refraining from gambling.

Apart from driving licences, the need to have a Malaysian identity card may also limit some people's access to employment outside the village. Although all Malaysian citizens are required to have an identity card, the lack of one, or the need to replace one, can be a lengthy and expensive business occasioning a journey to town, a process which is of greater hardship for people with limited access to cash and low levels of literacy. These issues do have some bearing on which people are most likely to gain outside wage labour, and on which households continue to be largely supported by subsistence farming. It should certainly be emphasised, however, that not all men who are able to work for the

opportunities for him than only working in the timber camps. At one point in this conversation, in seeming emphasis of his point about his education, he asked me which was the longest river in Australia, and quickly proved the question rhetorical by supplying the answer himself: the Murray-Darling.

companies choose to do so, and some who have done so have opted to leave the work, preferring to find other means of earning cash, or return to farming as their main pursuit.

Baram communities also receive various forms of 'commission' money from the timber companies in their immediate area. These monies are referred to locally as 'commissions' (the English word is used). Commissions are usually conceived of by people within the community as belonging to the community as a whole, and are sometimes referred to in Malay as 'village money' (*duit kampong*). 'Village money' contributes to such things as the village power generators and fuel supplies. Not surprisingly, these are issues of some sensitivity within Baram communities, as is the administration of the income. According to anecdotal information I gained during fieldwork at Long Na'ah concerning other Kayan communities on the Baram, the communities and their headmen vary in their manner of dealing with 'commission' money. Some communities favour a system of more-or-less immediate distribution, while at other communities the headmen manage the money, sometimes by consolidating it in bank accounts in Miri.¹¹⁶

In the past the concentration of some community resources has gone toward supporting some of the activities of the headman and his family (such as the contracting of marriages and the provision of hospitality to guests). However, in the present circumstances at Long Na'ah there is some feeling that community resources, and particularly commission money, would not appropriately extend, for example, to financing the weddings of the Headman's offspring, and even less to the provision of such things as vehicles to members of his family. The visits of important guests to the community are now quite likely also to be couched in the paraphernalia, and flow of funds, associated with state and federal politics, rather than being characterised by the regional concerns of an earlier time in which the position of headmen, and their ability to command local resources, would have been of greater importance. During the campaign leading up to the 1995 Malaysian federal election, a delegation, including one of the candidates for the

¹¹⁶ There were some tensions in the community surrounding these issues, and it was not an easy one to approach. By the end of my fieldwork I did not feel that I had gained a detailed picture of the movements of such money, or of the amounts involved, and I would not want to give a partial view here of a complicated matter.

Baram, visited Long Na'ah and was indeed received by the headman. Rather than requiring his hospitality – apart from the decorative bunting on offer and the lines of people ready to shake the dignitaries' hands – it was the politicians themselves who provided a gift to the community of a group of live sheep.¹¹⁷

During the 1980s, as logging expanded in the Baram and its effects on indigenous land use systems increased, numbers of communities sought to gain some protection for areas of land close to their longhouses by petitioning the government to declare certain areas 'Communal Forest' or 'Communal Reserve'. During 1984 and 1985, Long Na'ah was among a group of seven longhouse communities on the Baram and its tributary the Patah, who made (apparently unacknowledged) requests to the government along these lines (Hong, 1987:94). Since that time, and in the light of the now widespread and entrenched logging operations in the Baram, at least some local opinion has shifted more to questions of compensation. Various criteria for compensation have come into play, or have been unsuccessfully floated, by local communities: these include upfront payments (sometimes characterised by local people as being for use of, or 'damage' to, land); payments for roads built through native land, or payments on the basis of timber extraction (Hong, 1987: 55-57, 108ff). In more recent times, communities such as Long Na'ah have also received, alongside general monetary payments, some smaller 'benefits' in the form of donations to village endeavours. For example, one company has donated books to the village school library at Long Na'ah, and fuel for the village electricity generator may be provided. On a regional level, Baram Kayan communities receive some donations, in the names of the various timber companies, for logistical support of the SIB Church's annual Easter convention.

Apart from the timber incomes associated with the operation of companies in the vicinity of Long Na'ah, some men from the community have found timber processing jobs (in a plywood factory and sawmill) at a downstream industrial

¹¹⁷ The slaughter of these sheep was a duty given the Malay school teachers from the community. Notwithstanding the frequent consumption by Kayan of quantities of richly fatted pork, and of pork fat alone, the mutton provided on this occasion was regarded by Kayan in the community as indigestibly fatty; and the animals themselves were generally considered to smell repellent. The day after the dignitaries' visit, the sheep had been judiciously tethered below the school house, at a distance from the longhouse. (They were to remain there, presumably for the school teachers' sole

estate. Men from Long Na'ah who work in the industrial area at Kuala Baram (located near the mouth of the Baram River, and not far from Miri) usually establish a more permanent residence either at Kuala Baram or in Miri. They return only occasionally to the longhouse. However, kin from Long Na'ah may visit their relatives at Kuala Baram throughout the year. The Kuala Baram industrial area has been a focus of the state development program in recent years, particularly with the aim of boosting industrialisation. Foreign investment has been involved in its expansion (something associated with Malaysia's policy of encouraging 'joint ventures'). Though largely based on timber processing, there are other enterprises at Kuala Baram, including food processing.

Other Sources of Cash Income

Apart from timber-related work, some people from Long Na'ah are gaining employment in the small downriver towns, and in Miri. While young men have greater access to employment in the upriver timber camps than do women, a small number of young women are seeking and finding urban-based employment. During the time I was in the community, one young woman from the longhouse found work in a supermarket in Miri. She worked there for only three or four months, however, before returning to the longhouse. She commented to me on her return that the wages were not very high, (around RM300 per month). Although during her time in Miri she lived with a relative in Lutong, an area of Miri, the money was only enough to just subsist in town. (Although she did return to the longhouse with some new gold jewellery and a permanent-wave hairstyle.) About the same time a friend and contemporary of hers, the headman's daughter, also went to Miri to look for paid work.

Two other slightly younger women who had recently finished high school, one from Long Na'ah and the other from the Kayan community at Lambir (which has kinship links with Long Na'ah), were also looking for work in Miri at this time. One of these women gained a job in the laundry of one of the big new five-star hotels, but she did not continue with the work long. Both women then hoped

enjoyment).

to get jobs as assistants in a doctor's surgery, though this did not eventuate before I left the field. Although the mother of one of these young women contributed to the income of her Lambir household by picking fruit for a Chinese orchardist, and cultivating and selling small quantities of green and leaf vegetables, and betel leaves, at the markets in Miri (small tied bunches of each sold for RM1), the two younger women did not often participate in this.

Few men from Long Na'ah have gained work in the oil industry, and those who have live outside the community. People in the village have a much vaguer notion of what this work entails, compared to timber work, and there is less discussion of how this kind of work may yield an income. One of the Penghulu's sons has gained work in the local oil industry, in an administrative position with a company which operates an off-shore oil rig near Miri. He lives in Miri and is a firmly urban man.¹¹⁸ There are also a small number of young men from Long Na'ah who have 'oil work' (*kerja minyak*) outside Malaysia, in Brunei or Indonesia. The experiences of these men, when they occasionally return, do provide people at the village with generalised information on the respective currencies and economies of these two other Borneo countries, something which sometimes fuels discussion of local conditions, including wage levels.

In the 1990s tourism in the Baram provides some very limited opportunities for gaining cash. In the mid-1980s, a time when the Central Baram was receiving more international tourists than it now does, two or three men from Long Na'ah gained some income by guiding tourist groups on camping expeditions. At the time I was there, however, this was no longer happening as the flow of tourists to points upriver from Long Lama was negligible. Most tourists, if they travel by river, go up the Tutoh River from Marudi to Mulu National Park. With the cessation of regular public river transport beyond the Kayan longhouse of Long Miri, Long Na'ah is now more inaccessible to tourists than it once was. In the previous decade, there was also greater international interest in conservation issues in Sarawak,¹¹⁹ and much interest in the nomadic

¹¹⁸ This man visited the longhouse during my fieldwork. He asked me if I had read Evelyn Hong's book *Natives of Sarawak: Surviving in Borneo's Vanishing Forests* (Hong, 1987), and commented that he felt the book was more of a 'survey' than an account of 'culture'.

¹¹⁹ Although in the 1990s issues surrounding the Bakun hydro-electric scheme in the Balui have

way of life of the Penan. (When I first arrived at Long Na'ah, some people I spoke to automatically assumed that I wanted to go and see the Penan on the Patah River.)

Some trade in forest products, such as rattan, continues at Long Na'ah, and is carried out in the context of ongoing relationships of economic and social dependency between Kayan and the nearby Penan communities of the Patah. This enterprise is largely carried out at Long Na'ah by one of the Penghulu's sons, who (in 1995) had a number of Penan working for him collecting forest products for sale downriver. Some cash is also derived from cash cropping. Department of Agriculture extension schemes have encouraged upriver participation in cash cropping, particularly pepper and cocoa. However, involvement in cash cropping at Long Na'ah is not extensive, though some households produce and dry small quantities of pepper which they sell in Long Lama. Cocoa is considered a difficult crop, the ripening pods being subject to the depredations of squirrels. Although there have been past plantings of rubber trees in the vicinity of the village, including some stands behind the longhouse, these mature trees are now largely unutilised. In the past they were tapped and the latex taken downriver for sale in Long Lama. In 1995, however, there were some plans to apply to the Department of Agriculture office in Long Lama for a new rubber scheme, possibly to be located on suitable land on the opposite side of the river. The terrain in this stretch of the Baram is quite rugged and much of the land near the river in the vicinity of Long Na'ah is too steep for rubber plantings.

Commodity Relationships and the Use of Money Within the Community of Long Na'ah

Along with gaining cash incomes from timber wages and other sources, processes of monetisation and commoditisation at Long Na'ah itself have also meant that some goods, and labour, may now be exchanged for cash within the community. There remains, however, some ambivalence in the community towards a

drawn international attention.

thorough-going monetisation, and cash is considered a less appropriate medium for some kinds of exchange.

Transport is commoditised to some extent at Long Na'ah. During my field period some of the four-wheel-drive trucks and Landcruisers owned within the community were used to run transport services to the farms and timber camps, and to Miri. Two men ran fairly regular services between Long Na'ah and Miri; a third vehicle was used less regularly in this way. Two other vehicles were owned by men from Long Na'ah, but the vehicles and their owners were often absent from the community. (The purchase of vehicles can involve taking a loan over several years, and necessitate seeking continuous timber work to pay it off.) Although women do not drive these vehicles, at least one woman at Long Na'ah has an interest in one; she also operates the most substantial shop at Long Na'ah. This vehicle, a landcruiser, is operated by her son, who is one of the drivers who transports people to and from Miri fairly regularly. The vehicle is also used to transport goods for her shop.

The fare to Miri by landcruiser is RM50 for a one way trip which takes five to six hours. The trip as far as Lapok, a journey of three to four hours, is RM30. Fares charged by the drivers transporting people to the forests, timber camps and farms included: RM6 for a return trip to the forest (for example, for a group of people to collect forest fruit from the vantage of the logging roads); RM2 each way for trips to and from *Kem Kilopuluh*, the nearby timber camp, (about 15 minutes away); and RM5 each way to the farms located on the logging roads some distance beyond *Kem Kilopuluh* (a journey of around 40 minutes). Fares for trips to the farms, logging camps, and to Miri did not vary over the time I was in the community and all drivers charged the same rates. Apart from the two men who travelled regularly between the longhouse and Miri each week with passengers and supplies, most truck owners and drivers did not devote all their time to transport activities. For men at Long Na'ah, the attractions of owning and driving vehicles did not lie solely in their potential as businesses. A certain masculine cachet attaches to trucks and driving, and the mobility they provide has an attraction, particularly for young men, and especially for those who already have experience of driving timber trucks. The fares charged by owners of these

vehicles would probably not have made their activities all that profitable, given the need to cover fuel costs and the expense of frequent repairs needed by vehicles travelling over rough, dusty and boggy timber roads.

River transport is less clearly commoditised than road transport. Toyota trucks and landcruisers are usually quite clearly identified as the property of particular individuals, even if they are habitually driven by another person. River journeys, in contrast, are often organised by family groups or jointly by members of the community; for example, when returning or collecting groups of high school children at the beginning and end of school terms. The longboats which ferry people across the river each day to meet the trucks also remain uncommoditised (no charge is made for this): whoever is there and able to run people across, will do so.

There are some limited circumstances in which people work for wages at the village itself, either through positions associated with the state education and health services, or more casual kinds of paid work in the form of commoditised domestic labour. During the time I was at Long Na'ah, the position of school grass-cutter and general maintenance man became available. Though a low paid job, this was seen as quite an attractive opportunity to gain paid work within the village. One woman from the community had a part-time position in the village pre-school, and some young unmarried women between the ages of around 17 and 20 gained work as paid childcarers for households other than their own. They are generally paid between RM200 and RM300 a month. One such woman cared for the infant of the woman who worked in the village pre-school.

At the time I was at Long Na'ah there were four well established shops in the community. Some of these were operated from small buildings separate from the longhouse, others from rooms within the longhouse apartments themselves. A fluctuating number of smaller shops were constituted by little more than locked cupboards within individual apartments. At Long Na'ah shops are largely run by women. The household of one of the main lay leaders of the church ran a well-organised shop located in a building opposite their apartment; this sold mainly foodstuffs but no alcohol. A second shop, run from an apartment, sold some foodstuffs and significant amounts of carbonated drinks and alcohol. The most

substantial shop stocked foodstuffs and a more extensive range of clothing, footwear, soaps and household items, as well as alcohol. The headman's sister also ran a shop located in a small building near the church and not far from their apartment. They sold a mixed range of foodstuffs, household items, and handicrafts, some of which the headman's sister had made herself.¹²⁰ Other shops were more sparsely stocked and often lacked the items people wanted.

One item which is sometimes bought in Miri or Marudi and resold at the longhouse, by people who do not necessarily run shops, is betel nut. Betel nut may be purchased quite cheaply in Miri (at RM1 for 10 seeds), transported back to the longhouse where it might be sold at RM1 for only five seeds. (Because I travelled quite frequently between the two places, people at both locations suggested that I should buy and resell betel nut in this way.)

A small number of locally made items and services are sold within the longhouse or to people at the timber camps near Long Na'ah. One woman, who has a refrigerator in her apartment and a generator which allows a more regular supply of electricity, occasionally makes and sells iceblocks to children in the longhouse. The '*aiskrims*' are made from cordials or Milo mixtures, sometimes with the addition of a salted plum, coconut milk, or green beans, and are frozen in tubes of plastic. A number of other women from the community occasionally bring icecream from the timber camps (transported to the longhouse in large insulated metal containers). Using manufactured icecream cones, they resell the icecream at the longhouse by the cone.

Massage is used quite extensively by Kayan at Long Na'ah as a therapy for a wide range of ailments from stomach upsets to influenza, fevers, headache and backache. Several women and one man at Long Na'ah are known to be clever at massage and are often called upon to treat people. Although some payment is usually made for these services, it is done with a certain hesitancy in comparison to more straightforwardly commoditised transactions. There is little sense of set fees for particular massage services, and patients usually provide their own liniment. The women are usually paid by someone who rather diffidently places

¹²⁰ Other shops also sell Kayan handicrafts, including beaded baskets (*ajat*), beaded Kayan sunhats, and beadwork necklaces. The Headman's sister hoped to sell an intricately beaded *ajat*,

the small amount of money (usually little more than RM2 for up to half an hour's massage) on the floor somewhere in the vicinity of the woman's hand.

While not all households gain a cash income through timber work, the majority of households at Long Na'ah continue to cultivate rice. The Penghulu and Tua Rumah, and members of their households, were less involved in the annual round of rice cultivation than other households, but the Tua Rumah's sister and her husband cultivated rice fields and had a farm house at Sungai Akem Jau, an area of rice fields and well established farm houses located some forty minutes from the longhouse via the logging roads. However, not all households produce a full year's supply of rice, and some have no more than six month's supply. People therefore bought rice (some of it imported) sold through the village shops. At Long Na'ah, hill rice produced within the community may itself be commoditised, though this is generally in the form of occasional sales of rice outside the community, often to the timber camps, rather than within the longhouse. One woman at Long Na'ah made a sale of husked rice (*beras*) to the timber camps from her 1994/5 harvest for a sum of RM340.¹²¹ Despite some pressure from people at the camps, this woman was, however, loath to sell any of her domestic pigs there, saying 'If I sell my pigs to them, I won't have any myself'. Small quantities of vegetables cultivated at the village farms, and forest fruits in season, are sold at the camps. Cultivated vegetables are not as clearly commoditised at the longhouse, even though they may sometimes be sold there. Vegetables are often given freely between households, and selling them is not always appropriate (the woman who sold rice outside the community often gave away quantities of cucumbers to other households in the village).

Wild and domestic pig meat, venison, the larger river fish, and other edible riverine animals, such as turtles, are sold for cash within the community. Throughout the period of my fieldwork wild pig meat (*bavui*) prices were uniform within the longhouse at RM5 for one kilogram of fresh meat. (Households with members who regularly hunt wild pig and catch fish for sale own sets of kilogram scales.) A kilogram of fresh wild deer meat was also RM5. Barbecued or smoked

which she had made herself, for RM300.

¹²¹ She told me that she sold the rice at RM9 per gantang (1 gantang = around 3kg).

(‘black’) wild boar meat, generally bought from visiting Penan, sold for RM6 per kilogram, and domestic pork (*uting*) for eight. Sales of pig meat are often accompanied by people calling out prices and, although there is little or no bargaining in these transactions, people sometimes make joking attempts at it. In some cases the price of each portion sold and the name of the purchaser is carefully recorded by the seller, and money is collected later. Larger river fish, particularly the prized red fish (*masik bela*), sell at the longhouse for up to RM15 a kilogram. People at the longhouse claimed fish such as *masik bela* could, however, be sold at the camps for as much as RM25 or RM30 per kilogram. Portions of turtle meat are sold at the longhouse for RM10 a kilogram; frogs are also sometimes sold, for RM12 per kilogram.

Compared to prices at the longhouse, wild pig meat, at RM14 a kilogram, is an expensive item for Kayan living in Miri or Lambir. People also pointed out to me the way chicken prices are reversed between the Miri and the longhouse. In Miri processed or factory chicken (called '*ayam cina*' – ‘Chinese chicken’) is about RM5 or RM5.50 per kilogram, but '*ayam kampong*' (‘village chicken’) can be as much as RM15 a kilogram. However, at the longhouse, processed chicken (*ayam cina*) was RM10 per kilogram, but village chicken (*ayam kampong*) was half this price. While many subsistence items are commoditised at Long Na’ah and people, often children, occasionally walk between apartments selling portions of fish or bunches of vegetables, it does not have the air of some of the larger downriver longhouses, such as Long Laput, where there is sometimes quite a stream of people selling such things as vegetables and freshly baked cakes.

Although there are a range of avenues for people from Long Na’ah to gain cash incomes, the main source of cash coming into the community is from the timber industry (from timber wages, timber processing work, and other timber monies, including ‘commissions’). Trade in forest products and cash cropping are not as significant for the community (although trade in forest products is significant to one individual there – one of the headman's sons). Urban-based wage labour of the kind gained on an intermittent basis by young Kayan women is

as important as an avenue for experiencing life beyond the longhouse community as it is for the amounts of cash it provides them and their families.

Wage labour within the longhouse, the commoditisation of some services within the community, and the sale of 'subsistence' items, within and outside the village, may be important to particular households but are not major or reliable sources of cash. While numbers of households within the longhouse also run small shops, the nature of these enterprises is quite variable. They range from the sale of a very limited quantity and range of items, from a 'shop' consisting of little more than a cupboard within an apartment, to the sale of an extensive range of household goods, clothing, food, and alcohol, from separate buildings specially dedicated to the purpose. The latter kind of enterprise is generally confined, however, to those households which already have some significant other source of income, such as timber wages, and who also own or have access to a vehicle. Similarly with the use of trucks and landcruisers as a source of cash income: it is only those households or individuals who have access to timber wages, or other significant and steady sources of cash, who are able to acquire such vehicles. And while they may be used as small transport businesses, particularly among young men, the motivation for owning a vehicle is also linked to desires other than establishing a profitable commercial concern.

Marketing

Shopkeepers at Long No'oh stock their shops either from Long Lama and Marui, which involves transporting goods using large, partly-covered longboats with diesel or outboard motors, or from Lapo' and Min, using four-wheel-drive trucks. While prices are generally lower in Min than in Long Lama or Marui

CHAPTER FIVE

MARKETING AT LONG NA'AH AND BEYOND, AND CONSUMPTION OF THE PRODUCTS OF THE INDUSTRIALISED ECONOMY

People from Long Na'ah travel to the downriver towns of Long Lama and Marudi, to the small service centre of Lapok, and to Miri, to shop. However, goods are also distributed to Long Na'ah for resale, both by members of the community and outsiders. Longhouse shopkeepers travel to these towns to buy stock for their shops, while longhouse people who do not own shops may travel to seasonal sales in Miri to buy such things as clothing and shoes. Traders from the large southern town of Sibu visit Baram longhouses to sell clothing, medicines, and videos; and women traders (some of them Kayan) from Indonesian Kalimantan also come across the border to sell beads at Kayan longhouses in Sarawak. Timber companies in the middle and upper Baram run shops and transport electrical goods to remote camps for resale to their local work forces. The opportunities for consuming, particularly manufactured goods, but also urban-based services, and the products of modern mass media, have increased markedly in recent times for Kayan in the Baram. At Long Na'ah itself, the capacity for consuming the products of the industrialised economy does vary between households and individuals, but even those people whose livelihood and annual round of work remain most closely tied to subsistence rice production, and who therefore have more limited supplies of cash, are participants in this process.

Marketing

Shopkeepers at Long Na'ah stock their shops either from Long Lama and Marudi, which involves transporting goods using large, partly-covered longboats with powerful outboard motors, or from Lapok and Miri, using four-wheel-drive trucks. While prices are generally lower in Miri than in Long Lama or Marudi

(where goods have already been transported upriver by launch), the cost of transporting supplies by river, especially heavy and bulky items, is generally lower than transporting them by road. Very bulky items, such as large drums of fuel and gas bottles also continue to be transported to the community by river. The choice of road transport depends, in any case, on whether shopkeepers own or have access to a four-wheel-drive vehicle.

The large shop located in the lower longhouse at Long Na'ah is operated by a household which owns a landcruiser, enabling them to stock their shop from Miri and Lapok (and even, on occasion, to bring goods such as clothing, sarongs and fabrics from Kuching). This shop stocks the most extensive range of household goods and clothing at Long Na'ah. Another shop, located within one of the lower longhouse apartments, stocks drinks (alcoholic and carbonated) and a smaller quantity of food stuffs and household items. It is run by Purai Ing whose household does not own a vehicle, this shop is stocked largely by longboat from Long Lama. People at Long Na'ah regularly contend with the dynamics of distance and upriver transport costs: the prices of goods sold in the upriver towns and longhouses are often much higher than at the larger downriver centres. Purai Ing commented to me that a carton of arrack (rice spirit) containing 24 bottles cost a little more in Long Lama (RM108) than in Lapok (RM105), but against this was her assessment of the high cost of transporting goods by road from Lapok.

Shopkeepers at Long Na'ah itself substantially mark up prices on the items they resell from Miri, Marudi or Long Lama. People at Long Na'ah who do not own shops often commented to me on the high price of items in the longhouse shops. Occasionally shop owners themselves comment critically on the prices of goods in their neighbours' shops.¹²² Although credit is available in some cases at longhouse shops, most purchases are small and paid for immediately in cash. One shopkeeper displayed a sign declaring that sales were 'cash only', and some of the sheds at the village, in which fuel is stored, also carry such signs. Shopkeepers often complained to me that people didn't buy very much, and that they were

¹²² One woman from a downriver community who sometimes helped her parents-in-law in their shop, particularly with the process of repricing items, commented with mild derision on the extent of the mark-up in the village.

called out of their apartments (for those with freestanding shops) many times a day to sell nothing more than a packet of prawn crisps.

Timber camps in the Baram also run small shops at which employees and their families may make purchases, in some cases against their wages. The big timber camp near Long Na'ah, *Kem Kilopuluh*, runs such a store. A number of Long Na'ah people working at this camp had, during the time I was there, also bought electrical goods, most usually televisions, through the company. (Just before I left the field, another shop was being established at the camp, to be run by Kayan from Long Na'ah.) A number of small shops and stalls are also located along the logging roads from *Kem Kilopuluh* to Lapok. Travelling towards Lapok, there are several roadside shops run by Kayan from various Baram communities. Journeys between Long Na'ah and Lapok are sometimes broken at these places to buy snacks and betel nut and to chat with the proprietors. These places sell drinks and packets of manufactured sweets and crisps. Some also sell local handicrafts such as beaded Kayan sun hats. These shops also act to some extent as pick-up points for people wanting a ride to town on one of the passing four-wheel-drive vehicles. Although vehicles owned by people at Long Na'ah are used primarily for the transport of people from the community, drivers will sometimes pick up passengers along the way for a fee. Closer to Lapok are roadside stalls run by Iban selling fruit and vegetables and Long Na'ah vehicles sometimes stop for people to make purchases here also.

Lapok itself is an important centre for shop keepers at Long Na'ah to buy bulk foodstuffs such as cartons of water biscuits, milk powder, cooking oil and cartons of drinks. But other people from the village also take the opportunity to make purchases of food items, and occasionally clothing, while on their way to and from other destinations. Even people who are travelling on to Miri, or returning from there, organise their trips around a break in Lapok to shop. There are a number of Kayan enterprises in Lapok, including a new bus company, whose proprietors have connections to Long Na'ah, and a combined grocery shop and small restaurant. There is also another small coffee shop and store on the Miri side of Lapok. Long Na'ah people travelling through Lapok may patronise these businesses but also make substantial purchases from the Chinese run shops.

Trips to Lapok and Miri, or to the downriver towns of Long Lama and Marudi, may coincide with state holidays when children from the longhouse are home from boarding school. The Gawai festival in June – a celebration for all indigenous Sarawakians, but generally identified by Kayan as an Iban occasion – is often a time to go to town, particularly Miri, not only for the festivities and to have a ‘holiday’ (the English word is used), but also to enjoy both looking in the shops and buying at the post-festival sales. Clothing and shoes are important purchases at these times, especially for children. At these times people from the longhouse may stay with relatives resident in Miri or at Lambir, which is a short bus ride outside the town. Miri is also a place to buy expensive electrical equipment, such as sound systems (with CD and karaoke functions). There are, however, several well-stocked electrical goods shops in Marudi where such purchases may also be made.

Trips to Long Lama and Marudi are likely to be connected with bureaucratic errands and with seeking medical services, as much as with purchasing goods at the shops and markets there. Business to do with the village school and health services is focused on Marudi. Long Na’ah people, apart from a few in-marrying spouses, do not have extensive kin connections to Long Lama; the Kayan population of the town has connections primarily to nearby longhouses such as Long Laput and Sungai Dua. In this regard, Long Na’ah has more links with Lapok. Marudi is an alternative to Miri for such things as purchases of gold jewellery (particularly for engagement and marriage gifts) and for hiring ‘white’ wedding clothes and accoutrements.

Some women at Long Na’ah told me that they felt a lack of confidence in their abilities at ‘city shopping’, including shopping in Marudi. For some this is an additional reason for shopping at the much smaller centre of Lapok. Miri itself, with a population of around 160,000, and with its rapidly growing complement of high-rise buildings, including the large department stores, can be somewhat daunting to those upriver Kayan who visit only once or twice a year. While the prices of items such as clothing, shoes and household furnishings in the big department stores puts shopping in these locations beyond the reach of some Kayan who visit Miri, people may prefer, and feel more comfortable in, the

atmosphere of the street-side shop houses or the market areas with their smaller stalls. Although the prices of some foodstuffs may not be very much higher in the supermarkets, for similar reasons some older Kayan are also less likely to shop there. During up- and downriver journeys between Long Na'ah and Miri, Kuala Baram is generally only a brief stopping point to wait for upriver expresses, or to seek transport into Miri. There are a number of coffee shops here and stalls selling fruit and cakes for travellers.¹²³ Kayan who live at or near Kuala Baram may shop in the central district of Miri, but also in its various suburban shopping centres.

Travelling traders, particularly clothes salesmen, visit Long Na'ah several times a year. One Chinese salesman from Sibul is a regular visitor at Baram longhouse communities, selling clothing, video cassettes, and a small range of medicines, such as patent cough syrups. When at Long Na'ah he regularly stays with the same household in the lower longhouse, using the front room of their apartment to store his stock, and the section of the verandah outside to display and sell it. This usually occurs through one afternoon and into the evening under the verandah lighting. If he stays for two nights, this trader sets up in the upper longhouse on the second night. Long Na'ah also receives occasional visits from Indonesian traders. During my fieldwork two Indonesian women (one of them Kayan) from the East Kalimantan city of Samarinda came to Long Na'ah selling antique and new glass beads and beadwork of the kind which Kayan in Sarawak also own and make. Finally, a minor mode of purchasing goods is by mail order. While I was at Long Na'ah, one woman promoted a brand of Chinese herbal medicine (based on a species of fungus called 'Ganoderma'). She showed people glossy brochures detailing the health benefits of the range of products and took people's orders.

Products and Services of the Industrialised Economy

The longhouse shops at Long Na'ah sell a range of tinned and dry foods including tinned fish (such as mackerel in tomato sauce and preserved fish in blackbean

¹²³ At the time I left the field, the markets at Kuala Baram were being reconstructed and enlarged, and may now constitute a more important site for upriver travellers to make purchases.

sauce), processed tinned meats, cooking oil (generally palm oil), rice, instant noodles, coffee (powder and essences), the chocolate drink Milo, sugar, powdered milk products (including formulas for infants and for older children), salt and monosodium glutamate (the latter is known generally by the brand name 'Ajinomoto'). Quantities of various brands of plain water biscuit are also sold. These are often marketed in Sarawak as 'Cream Crackers' and referred to by Kayan as '*loti*' – a Kayanised form of the Malay word for bread (*roti*). Along with weak, highly sweetened coffee or Milo, these crackers are the usual early morning breakfast fare for the longhouse. Manufactured dry sweet biscuits (including crackers with sweet peanut paste fillings), and Chinese red bean cakes are sold in lesser quantities. These are for special occasions and for entertaining guests, and are referred to as '*kuih*' (Malay: 'cake') rather than *loti*. Apart from alcohol, the shops also sell quantities of canned carbonated drinks (most frequently colas) and boxed drinks (typically chrysanthemum tea, sweet soya bean milk, or sugar cane juice). The shops also stock an extensive range of confectionery, such as candies and chewing gum, and savoury snacks, especially various kinds of manufactured and packaged *keropok* (prawn crisps). These items are largely bought for or by children.

Household items sold by the longhouse shops include such things as matches, candles, torches, batteries, personal soaps, toothpastes, shampoos, laundry powders, bleaches and dishwashing detergents, and women's sanitary napkins. The larger of the shops also keeps a small range of clothing, mainly blue work shirts, moulded plastic sandshoes, rubber slippers ('thongs'), and some women's blouses. Some small toys or amusements (including baby pacifiers) are kept for children. Patent medicines are also stocked, including various kinds of cough mixtures and camphor- and menthol-based liniments (the chest-rub Vicks is widely used for massage at Long Na'ah). International brand cigarettes and Indonesian loose tobacco are also sold.

Items purchased at locations beyond the longhouse include heavy electrical equipment, electrical goods and appliances such as food processors (used to grind rice into flour for cakes), televisions, refrigerators, chainsaws, power tools (such as electric planes used in boat building), and other hand tools.

Vehicles, sports equipment (basketball and soccer balls), sports bags, carry bags, and the occasional attache case are also purchased downriver. (The river town and transport centre of Marudi is remarkable for the number of shops crammed from floor to ceiling with displays of luggage items.) Sunglasses and clothing (particularly clothing for newborn babies and hard-to-find outside clothing), children's toys and other appurtenances (baby blankets, children's walking frames, hook-and-spring devices for suspended cradles, bicycles, disposable nappies, and the very occasional pram) come from the stores in the downriver towns and Miri. Other items purchased at downriver locations include cooking utensils, plates and cutlery; furniture (timber lounge settings, cupboards and tables), gold jewellery, watches, makeup, and wedding clothes. Coffins are also now generally purchased in Miri and transported to the community by road, in preference to constructing them at the longhouse.¹²⁴

Long Na'ah has a village generator which supplies some electricity for the longhouse. This provides some lighting for apartments and for the longhouse verandahs. A small number of apartments also operate their own generators, giving them more extensive and reliable lighting and enabling them to use some electrical goods, particularly refrigerators and televisions, but also larger sound systems. One woman at Long Na'ah owns a washing machine but the supply of power to her apartment is not sufficient to run it (the washing machine is an artefact of a previous time spent with her husband in one of the timber camps).

Television reception is not good at Long Na'ah, which is surrounded by hills and ridges, and few people have adequate aerials. However, several households own televisions which they use largely to watch videos (there are three televisions in the lower longhouse). The household in which I lived owned a television and video cassette recorder which were used mainly by children. Cartoons and animated films, especially Walt Disney children's films, were particularly popular. Occasionally videos of Indonesian and Malaysian comedies, and action and martial arts movies, were also watched. Large numbers of children, sometimes as many as fifty, came from the whole longhouse to watch. Sometimes

¹²⁴ This can mean waiting a day or more for the arrival of the coffin following a death in the community.

half-serious attempts were made to make the children pay a small fee to watch the television. One apartment, which does have an aerial, receives Radio Television Brunei (RTB) quite well, though not Radio Television Malaysia. On the regular evenings when RTB shows the classic Malay films of P. Ramlee, adults and children from nearby apartments often gather to watch. Although the majority of households do not own television sets at the longhouse, they may own sets at the nearby logging camp where, located atop a ridge, reception of all three Malaysian channels is good. For women, small children and adolescents, trips to the camp are often at least partly excursions to watch television.

At Long Na'ah many people also own battery operated radio-cassette players and a few have larger sound systems. One household (with an unmarried son working for a timber company) has a large, elaborate sound system with CD player and Karaoke. People listen to Indonesian and Malay rock music, as well as American rock and pop. There are also a very small number of recordings of Kayan popular singers available in Sarawak. Kayan singers who are lucky enough to record their songs for commercial release usually have to accept second billing on Iban-language recordings. A number of men at Long Na'ah also own small electric keyboards. Electric guitars are an essential element of church services, more so than the keyboards which are usually used by their owners in their own apartments, though they may occasionally be used to practise hymns in the lead-up to Christmas events, or at wedding and engagement celebrations.

Small portable radios are prevalent at Long Na'ah, although reception is not always good. These are used to listen to news broadcasts and sometimes music (but bad reception means that cassettes are more often used for this). The program most regularly listened to is the one hour Kayan service run each weekday afternoon. Broadcast out of Miri, this service is used by Kayan all over the Baram district to relay messages to relatives about family events and people's movements. In the absence of telephones upriver Kayan in Miri and in downriver towns can telephone the radio station to broadcast messages and rendezvous times and places to family upriver (people do occasionally use radio telephones at the

logging camps). People at Long Na'ah often tune in as a diversion and to keep up with news and gossip.¹²⁵

Kayan children in the small town of Long Lama, as well as in the larger towns, who are regular watchers of TV, are well aware of the connections between their favourite programs and associated merchandise, such as T-shirts and plastic replicas of TV characters. However, primary school children at Long Na'ah who have not spent any significant time outside the community, while becoming familiar with a range of television programs through their viewing at the timber camps, are less familiar with these kinds of things. An exception to this is the popularity of the animated children's program *Doremon* (a Japanese children's program dubbed variously into Malay and English and very popular all over Malaysia). The spin-off cartoon books from this series were something several upper primary school children were aware of and asked me to buy on trips to town. Malay language newspapers (such as *Utusan Borneo*, the Malay section of the English language paper *The Borneo Post*) are not often brought to the longhouse. Some magazines are obtained and read sporadically. Old issues of women's magazines and magazines chronicling the Indonesian and Malaysian pop music scenes are kept in some apartments to be leafed through from time to time.

Travel itself is something to be consumed, both within the community and beyond. Apart from the transport services provided by vehicle owners at the longhouse, people from Long Na'ah also patronise bus services from Lapok and the river express boat system running the route from the longhouse of Long Miri to Long Lama, and thence (by larger express boat) to Marudi and Kuala Baram. Fares for boat trips are between RM8 (for the express boat trip between Long Miri and Long Lama) and RM15 (for each of the journeys between Long Lama and Marudi, and Marudi and Kuala Baram). The bus from Kuala Baram to Miri costs RM2.50. Miri bus companies run services between Lapok and Miri, but between these destinations Long Na'ah people may now also use an air-conditioned coach service run by a Kayan group.

¹²⁵ During my fieldwork the Penghulu at Long Na'ah used this service to make an announcement about the death of one of his sons.

Although people still travel by boat to the downriver town of Long Lama, road travel has reduced the frequency of these trips. An express boat service which ran upriver as far as Long Na'ah ceased around three or four years ago, due partly to declining patronage, and to the company's unwillingness to run the boats beyond the more navigable reaches of the river. Apart from the rocky beaches and shallower water which begins around Long Na'ah, there are also an increasing number of logs and wood debris in the river due to logging. Although road transport has increased mobility, as a factor in the withdrawal of a daily boat service, it has also, paradoxically, decreased transport options. This is particularly the case for people with the most limited access to cash.

At Long Na'ah driving and vehicle ownership are actively monopolised by men, particularly by young men. Women are neither employed to drive timber trucks and heavy machinery, nor do they drive the smaller vehicles owned by community members. Motor bikes, which elsewhere in Sarawak are quite commonly driven by women, are unsuited to the terrain: the timber roads in the vicinity of Long Na'ah are steep, rough, and boggy in wet weather. Only one man at Long Na'ah occasionally uses a motor bike, and only close to the longhouse. However, some young women who are able to spend longer periods of time in town, and those who have moved more-or-less permanently to urban areas, are now gaining driver's licences. For women driving is an urban activity.

Services available in urban areas are now also more easily accessible for people at Long Na'ah, although their consumption generally means staying in town for periods of time, usually with kin in and around Miri. Some younger women and men are taking short courses, including computer courses and driving lessons. As I have already noted, for young men a driver's licence may be an avenue to employment by the timber companies. This may be particularly the case for those who do not progress beyond the first years of high school. For some young women from Long Na'ah, who spend extended periods in and around Miri, there is also an attraction in taking driving lessons and gaining a licence. Some parents of adolescent girls and young women at Long Na'ah have also encouraged their daughters to take short computer courses in Miri, usually spreadsheet courses for keeping computerised accounts. (At the time I left the community, I had not

heard of any instances in which such women gained employment on the basis of these kinds of qualifications, or indeed used them in any other circumstance.)

For people at Long Na'ah then, goods may be bought at the longhouse through the longhouse shops operated by members of the community or from travelling traders. Goods and services may also be purchased in the downriver towns, in Miri, at the timber camps, or at service centres and small shops located along the logging roads. Occasionally purchases may be made as far afield as the capital, Kuching. For Kayan in the Baram the opportunities for consuming manufactured goods, urban-based services, and the products of modern mass media have increased through the 1980s and 1990s. This summary account of commodities consumed by members of the community of Long Na'ah, focusing particularly on the products and services of the industrialised economy, indicates that in the 1990s this range of things is extensive.

²⁵ As I have noted previously, when people talk about 'Kayan work' (hard physical labour), they are often comparing it with what they take to represent the nature of downriver office-based tasks, usually identified with writing, or with manipulating papers. This is not to say that many people at Long Na'ah – including perhaps some older people for whom logging has diminished to be a side occupation and who have had little opportunity to travel – do not have a sophisticated understanding of the range of occupations in urban settings. Rather, these kinds of comments reflect some generalized local discourses on work, hard work relationships, and (consequently) on inter-ethnic relations: office work, or 'town work', may sometimes be characterized by Kayan as 'white people's' work, but as those Kayan who have had some high school and tertiary education, they are also increasingly aware of what they see as an uneasy complicity on 'white' jobs, particularly in the same hierarchy.

CHAPTER SIX

ATTITUDES TO ECONOMIC CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT, AND THE TEACHINGS OF THE SIB CHURCH

People at Long Na'ah explicitly discuss the changing economy of their village and region, including the growing use of money. In doing so they express a range of attitudes toward economic change. Some are enthusiastic about the expanding opportunities they feel are offered by cash incomes, others are apprehensive about the difficulties represented by a livelihood based primarily, and perforce, on cash. Few people would underestimate the arduousness of their annual round of hill rice farming (people often said to me that 'Kayan work' is hard);¹²⁶ however, there is also a feeling that life in town, being based entirely on cash, has its own difficulties in comparison to village and farming life. Other people in the community have moral objections to the growing monetisation of the local economy, and are critical of people who are 'always chasing money'. Despite this

¹²⁶ As I have noted previously, when people talk about 'Kayan work' (hard physical labour) they are often comparing it with what they take to epitomise the nature of town work (office-based tasks, usually identified with writing, or with manipulating papers). This is not to say that many people at Long Na'ah – excluding perhaps some older people for whom farming has continued to be a sole occupation and who have had little opportunity to travel – do not have a sophisticated understanding of the range of occupations in urban settings. Rather, these kinds of comments reflect some generalised local discourses on work, rural-urban relationships, and (occasionally) on inter-ethnic relations: office work, or paperwork, may sometimes be characterised by Kayan as 'white people's' work, but as more Kayan in Sarawak gain high school and tertiary education, they are also increasingly aware of what they see as the Malay monopoly on 'office' jobs, particularly in the state bureaucracy.

range of opinion, one of my early impressions of the community of Long Na'ah was a sense that people were prepared to reach out and take hold of what might be available to them in a period of quite rapid economic change, and in the context of the state's development program. This impression remained with me even after I had gained a more complex picture of the difficulties faced by communities such as Long Na'ah (including those relating to security of land tenure) which must deal with the demanding task of gaining a livelihood by balancing subsistence farming with participation in a wider cash economy.¹²⁷

Other studies of Borneo societies, which have considered the processes by which those societies are dealing with increasing incorporation into the world system, have argued that such societies may make efforts to restrict commodity relationships and the use of money (Alexander & Alexander, 1995). Although I would not say that commodity relationships and the use of money are strictly controlled at Long Na'ah, choices about the use of money are connected to local understandings about the value of certain categories of objects and actions. Certain things are less likely to be sold for cash within the community, including those things which are implicated in Kayan notions of hospitality and generosity. And, as I have already noted, there is a sense that focusing too much of one's effort and thought on the pursuit of money is to act in a less than admirable way. For the Kayan of Long Na'ah, however, it is also important to emphasise the part played by the SIB church – and the ways in which people there have taken in and used the messages of that church – in their responses to economic change.¹²⁸

The SIB church has a central place in the lives of Kayan at Long Na'ah in the 1990s. The church seeks not only to evangelise and to preach Christian doctrine, but also aims to guide its congregations concerning more temporal matters, such as economic and social change. On the issues of development and

¹²⁷ A recognition of this rather expansive approach to economic change, among at least some Kayan at Long Na'ah, is a factor in what may seem the rather positive tone of some of my descriptions of new modes of consumption in this community.

¹²⁸ Communities on the Balui, including the Lahanan, have had a different history of Christian missionisation than those in the Baram, and the SIB church, although present, has not the strength of following it does in the Baram. Up until 1986 members of the Lahanan community, where Alexander worked, were almost exclusively followers of the Bungan cult; after that time numbers of the community, including its headman, began to convert to Roman Catholicism (Alexander, 1990: 209).

economic change, the church combines an optimism for the benefits, such as the increasing availability of education, and even access to new technologies, with warnings about the dangers of an unfettered materialism, particularly to the Christian life. The church promotes its message not only through sermons and teaching in local churches, such as the small church at Long Na'ah, but also through a round of inter-community meetings or conventions which bring together large numbers of Baram Kayan, as well as other Baram peoples. Two such inter-community gatherings, the Youth Convention of 1994, and the *Irau Easter* (Easter Celebration) of 1995 provide examples of how the SIB church combines Christian teachings with a didactic approach to issues of development and economic change.

Attitudes to Economic Change and Development at Long Na'ah

When people from Long Na'ah speak in a negative fashion about ways of living based primarily on cash, they may express uncertainty about their ability to either obtain the necessary money, or to practically negotiate the everyday hurdles of such a way of life. (Cash-based living is often, but not always, equated with town life.) This is the case particularly, but not only, for those people whose main source of livelihood continues to be subsistence farming. Coupled with this view may be a rather sharp sense that money, as a means of sustaining oneself, and in contrast to subsistence farming, has an alarmingly finite quality.

In more positive terms, some people also express a feeling of satisfaction in the knowledge that they are able to sustain themselves solely via their own localised farming and other subsistence efforts. (In this context people primarily mention their supplies of hill rice, followed by wild and domesticated pigs. Cultivated vegetables and forest products figure to a lesser extent but are important as part of the range of subsistence efforts.) It should be reiterated here that not all households at Long Na'ah have a full year's supply of their own rice and must supplement this by buying rice. For at least some people then, rice itself may also be regarded as a more or less finite resource. However, despite the central position of hill rice to Kayan, both practically and symbolically, it is the

whole range of foodstuffs available through farming, hunting, fishing, and collection of forest products, which, in at least some people's eyes, make subsistence-based living a less precarious prospect than a seemingly finite cash income.¹²⁹ Another aspect of the move toward a reliance on wage labour and cash is the realisation on the part of men working in the timber camps, for example, and their wives, that while the income may be significant, such jobs may be lost.

It might be expected that the support to be gained from kin and social networks at the longhouse is a factor in community attitudes toward wage labour where this means permanent or long-term departure from the community, particularly given the feeling that a livelihood based on cash can be a precarious one. However, a rapid lessening of kinship networks in association with such changes should not be assumed. Despite the levels of mobility of the Long Na'ah population in the 1990s, the number of people who are absent for long periods in pursuit of paid work, and the fact that some people have established permanent residences elsewhere, most people who come from Long Na'ah (wherever they now reside) still regard the longhouse as their home community. They also maintain strong links with kin there, and in some cases this includes a continued involvement in the cycle of rice cultivation. People resident in town or urban areas may also continue to consume rice from the longhouse farms. If there is a group for whom movement to urban areas has meant a significant lessening of links with the longhouse, it is those people with higher education who have obtained better-paid jobs (in the state bureaucracy, for example). However, these people might be reasonably considered those with the least reason to see a movement to a cash-based livelihood as a precarious step.

As well as views which suggest a certain apprehensiveness about some aspects of economic change, there are also more directly critical attitudes within the community concerning a shift toward a thorough-going use of cash. These attitudes may be represented by the disparaging comments sometimes made about people who 'only think about money'. People who make these disapproving comments are suggesting, in part, that such behaviour indicates an unattractive,

¹²⁹ Gomes' (1990: 16) analysis of West Malaysian Orang Asli economies (particularly of the Semai) emphasises the importance of autonomy in production, and a diversity of economic

even rather obsessive, self concern (to the exclusion of more general concerns with family or community).¹³⁰ These kinds of criticism and disapproval occur both within households, and more broadly in the community. As might be expected, within households the criticisms cast the too-avid pursuit of money in terms of the perceived character faults of individuals, while criticisms on a community level, although sometimes also directed at individuals, invoked community politics more generally.¹³¹ In the former case, critical comments are sometimes emphasised by drawing comparisons between the seemingly poor behaviour of one person and the admirable behaviour of another. One person's concern with making money through the sale of goods at a village shop (to the extent of charging grandchildren resident in the same household for small items such as packets of prawn crisps and soft drinks) might be contrasted with the willingness of another person to help poorer people in the community by providing sums of cash for such things as downriver travel to the hospital in Marudi. At times these attitudes do also owe something to the Christian teachings of the SIB church (those relating to charity, for example).

Charges of 'only thinking about money' are sometimes also paralleled with criticisms of a person's lack of hospitality toward guests, whether relatives, neighbours, or strangers. A willingness to provide people with food and drinks, and (at least among kin and friends) an evident enjoyment of their company while partaking of these things together,¹³² is something which is admired by people at Long Na'ah, and which is important to Kayan notions of hospitality and generosity more broadly.¹³³ While I would not characterise criticisms of 'only

endeavour, to Orang Asli livelihood.

¹³⁰ Speaking of the regulation of consumption and exchange among the Lahanan, the Alexanders note that practice does not always match ideology: practice does not always 'accord with Lahanan conceptions of the good citizen, but such practices are recognised and criticised as divergences' (1995: 182).

¹³¹ The management of timber 'commission' money by the community's leaders is a case in point here.

¹³² In some contrast to the style of hospitality shown family and friends, hospitable demeanour toward strangers or lesser-known guests is characteristically more reserved and formal. This may entail rather controlled and gracious movements as well as the greater use of physical props, such as small tables and trays for serving refreshments. This is appropriate and not necessarily a cause for critical comment. While rank may be a consideration here, some degree of formality, or a more exacting etiquette, in these situations is not confined to those of high Kayan rank.

¹³³ Particularly at ceremonial and festive occasions such as weddings and Christmas, but even sometimes on simpler occasions of no specific significance, guests are repeatedly urged to eat and

thinking of money' as ubiquitous at Long Na'ah, they do reflect some more generally held sentiments about appropriate and even admirable kinds of social behaviour and demeanour.

Kayan notions of generosity, hospitality, and the fitting treatment of one's kin, also lie behind a certain feeling of shame which attaches to some kinds of cash transactions within the longhouse. Certain kinds of objects or goods, and some services, do seem to be less firmly commoditised within the community than others. For example, while some people are willing to sell a proportion of their hill rice harvest (if they have sufficient for themselves) outside the community, primarily to the timber camps, it is the already firmly commoditised (and often packaged and labelled) rice bought at markets downriver which is most readily sold within the longhouse (through one of the longhouse stores). In comparison to rice from 'downriver', or from 'the sea',¹³⁴ (that is, rice purchased outside the community) local hill rice does remain implicated in social relations in some more intricate ways than purchased imported rice. In general, offering generous quantities of rice to household guests, or to guests at large scale celebrations, is an important element of Kayan hospitality. More subtle, however, is the special celebratory piquancy to be had by inviting people to share in a meal of the fragrant and delicious 'new rice' (*parei maring*), that is, recently harvested hill rice.

Some people also express some hesitation about selling certain kinds of vegetables within the village that they have grown at their farms (even though bunches of vegetables are sold in this way). One woman told me with some enthusiasm about the advantages of growing sugarcane. It grew very quickly, and a metre-long stalk could be sold for RM1 at the timber camps. However, she said she would be embarrassed to sell it at the village. Vegetables such as cucumbers, which are sometimes used as gifts between kin and friends, including at holiday times, and which may be shared by friends as snack foods, are also less readily sold. Other subsistence foodstuffs, which in some ways are similarly implicated in

drink, sometimes to a point well beyond simple satisfaction. During Christmas festivities, this may take on the aspect of an almost comic test of endurance.

¹³⁴ Kayan, particularly those with the least experience of downriver towns, often refer in a generic way to things from outside the community by using the Malay word '*laut*' (the sea). Goods

hospitable relationships between households, are nevertheless quite firmly commoditised within the village: this is the case for wild pig meat. As a final example here, the labour of young women who care for the children of other wealthier families may be quite straight-forwardly commoditised (the position of child carer is well understood, and the wages are relatively standardised), yet the services of older women (and some men) who offer therapeutic massage is less clearly commoditised (the 'fees' are small, recipients supply their own liniment, and payment, though made, is offered and received rather diffidently). In a circumstance where the teachings of the SIB church have a significant influence on people's attitudes, these notions are ones which have the least to do with church ideology and teachings. They have more to do with a particularly Kayan sense of the appropriateness of certain kinds of behaviour, particularly within the longhouse community itself.

Apart from the charge of 'always thinking about money', there is another similar-sounding expression which people at Long Na'ah sometimes use: 'always chasing (or looking) for money'. In this case, however, although the comment may be a criticism of the behaviour of others (and therefore similar to the criticisms of people who 'think only of money'), it may also be a complaint about one's own circumstance. Individuals who find themselves to be (less than willingly) reliant on certain kinds of wage labour, particularly for the local timber companies, may feel themselves to be in a situation in which they have little choice but to continue to 'chase money'. In this case 'chasing money' may mean both that they must continue to do the work – in this sense the expression is more or less synonymous with the act of working for wages – but also that they must search for, or 'chase', more work if their current job comes to an end.

The experiences of one man at Long Na'ah, and the opinions he expressed, demonstrated some of the more pessimistic attitudes toward economic change, and particularly toward wage labour in the timber camps, which some men at Long Na'ah espouse. During the time I was in the community, Raymond waited for more than six months in the hope of gaining the permanent 'government' job of school grass-cutter (which involved not merely cutting grass, but also general

brought into the community might be said to 'come from the sea'.

repairs, including maintenance of school furniture). Raymond waited despite his wife urging him to find another much more highly paid job in the timber camps (where he had worked previously) and despite the fact that his family was short of both money and rice. On one occasion his wife described the long wait as 'very expensive'. She felt, even if he did not continue with timber work in the long term, that he could do some work in the camps until 'the letter' about the job arrived.

In Raymond's view the job was not only an opportunity for a secure, if small, cash income, it also meant a chance to stay in the village and work rather than living at the camps and travelling around the timber concessions. (Other men at Long Na'ah with experience of working for the timber companies expressed ambivalence about continuing with that kind of employment, despite the significant amounts of cash involved.) Raymond, however, saw in this job something more than a reliable and convenient source of material income, he saw the opportunity as a blessing from God. He told me that it was his 'chance', and that God had given this to him. These convictions were important to his determination to wait for the job.¹³⁵ Even though he intended taking this job on a permanent basis when it finally became available, rather than returning exclusively to farm work, his argument also involved an explicit critique of a way of life based on 'just chasing money'. The grass-cutting job meant he did not have to keep on looking for timber work, neither did he have to endure the tasks involved in that work. Raymond also rather pessimistically referred to the year 2020 – the date Malaysia has set as a goal for industrialisation – as the time when 'everything will be buying and selling, not like here, now'. A somewhat veiled undercurrent of his comments was his concern that, though more money might come, it might go only to some people.

Taken together, this man's views do not necessarily exemplify a widely-held complement of attitudes at Long Na'ah concerning economic change or wage labour (taken individually, however, his views were echoed by others). Other young men working in the timber camps, particularly those with a full high school

¹³⁵ He was perhaps also influenced in his desire for a permanent job based in the village by his background as the son of a school teacher from another upriver Kayan community. This may also

education, expressed similar dissatisfactions with it. More generally, people in the community were certainly exercised by the notion that the use of money was going to increase (though not necessarily with the same level of pessimism). Others worried about where money might be going and who had it. Finally, he was not alone in seeking a direction for his life through his membership of the SIB church and faith in the guidance of God in such matters.

Alongside views which emphasise the apprehensiveness people at Long Na'ah may feel at some aspects of economic change, and in addition to the more critical attitudes which I have outlined, there are also more optimistic views of what economic change may offer. For some, a livelihood based on cash suggests the desired corollaries of the ease of town life and a world of more expansive consumer choices (including such things as clothes, vehicles and various types of entertainments). As such, it may also signal an escape from the confines of village life. The possibilities for earning a significant cash wage, particularly while resident in the upriver communities, are significantly less for young women than for young men. Some young women are beginning to look to wage labour in the urban sphere as an alternative to an automatic involvement in village agriculture. In this they may be encouraged by their parents. Travel is something which is appreciated not only by young men, and for young women the attraction of finding paid work in town may also have the benefit of allowing them to move beyond the longhouse. While I was in the community, young women who had already married, had one or two small children, worked at the farms, and were consequently no longer in the relatively free position of young single women, sometimes bemoaned the fact that they were largely confined to the village, and that travel was now difficult for them.

While I have pointed out that not all men who are able to work in the timber camps are enthusiastic about pursuing the work, despite the possible cash earnings, their reservations do not necessarily reflect a critical attitude towards wage labour and cash. Particularly on the part of young men, it is not that they would prefer to return to a full-time involvement in subsistence agriculture, but more that they might hope for a greater range of choices in paid employment. For

have been a factor in his discontent with the hard physically repetitive labour of timber work.

other young men timber work does provide more than a cash income. The work itself may offer the chance of greater mobility, and the attractions – armed with wages and accompanied by friends – of the monthly work breaks in Miri. This may mean karaoke bars, beer, and hotel beds, but also jeans and sunglasses, sports shoes and fashionable haircuts. On the job, the chance to drive vehicles and operate heavy machinery also has a certain glamour for some young men.

Parents of such young men may not share their sons' appreciation of these aspects of timber work, but will nevertheless assist younger teenage sons in finding work by encouraging them to take driving lessons, for example. They may do so in the hope of helping them find a means of livelihood other than, or in addition to, rice farming. In these ways middle-aged people at Long Na'ah with adolescent or young adult children often have a keen sense of the economic and social changes occurring in their district and may look outside their community for ways to help their children find their way under these changing circumstances. Some older people whose livelihoods are based solely on farming sometimes described themselves to me, in somewhat negative terms, as 'just farming', and having no other job. One such man, who had tried to help his son find work, commented to me that it was hard for people from the village to secure jobs in town as they did not always get information on vacancies soon enough. Jobs were often already filled when people from the village applied. His son had unsuccessfully sought employment in the towns after finishing high school, and had eventually returned to the village to marry and pursue a livelihood based largely on farming, with some timber work.

Thus there are a range of views among people at Long Na'ah about the growth of wage labour and increasing monetisation of the economy. Some people are apprehensive about a future based on money, which they fear may be a difficult and precarious future, perhaps more so than a livelihood based on a range of subsistence activities. Others make moral judgements about the quest for money itself, and about those individuals who too ardently pursue money to the detriment of wider social concerns. In this connection a concern with cash is sometimes also seen as running counter to Kayan notions of hospitality and

generosity. Ideas such as this also lie behind the sense that some things are less appropriately exchanged for cash within the community than others; some things which are implicated in Kayan ideals of hospitality are not readily sold (yet, some of these things *are* quite readily sold). Some men in the community express dissatisfactions with wage labour in the timber camps, including the sense that, once embarked upon, the pursuit of work and wages becomes a continual round of 'chasing money'. Others have a sense of the advantages of paid work, but would hope for a greater choice of employment. Another issue which concerns people is the distribution of (cash) resources (there is a feeling that, on this issue, the future is difficult to predict). Despite these worries, however, many Kayan at Long Na'ah are keen indeed to pursue wage labour; parents may also help and guide their children towards gaining paid work, and those people who do not have ready access to it may wish for the opportunity to earn cash. Younger people, in particular, may positively desire paid work and its presumed corollaries of urban ease, the excitement of travel, the enjoyments of shopping and consumption, and freedom from the restrictions of a small community.

Two Inter-community Christian Meetings

In thinking about development and economic change, people at Long Na'ah may also look to the teachings of the SIB church, and their Christian faith, for guidance. In order to demonstrate some of the ways the SIB church combines preaching on Christian themes with a didacticism concerning aspects of development, I describe two of these annual inter-community gatherings: the Youth Convention of 1994, held at the Kayan longhouse of Long Laput (near the town of Long Lama), and the *Irau Easter* (Easter Celebration) of 1995, hosted by the community of Long Panai, a Kayan longhouse on the Tutoh (see Figures 6, 7 and 8). Descriptions of these two conventions also show how church administrative procedures, which are detailed, exhaustive and at times rather authoritarian, reflect processes of state bureaucratisation. A look at these large SIB church meetings also indicates that the church is a factor in the emergence of some new forms of regional identity.

The SIB calendar includes the *Konvensyen Muda-Mudi* (Youth Convention), which is held over a period of four days in November, and the *Konvensyen Kaum Ibu* (Women's Convention), held over the same period but generally at a different location. However, the major event in the annual schedule is the *Irau Easter* (Easter Celebration).¹³⁶ The task of hosting SIB conventions and the *Irau* falls to different communities in the Baram each year. With some help from other communities in the district, these communities handle the logistics of accommodating and, to some extent, feeding the participants. At smaller longhouses which do not have substantial church buildings, supplying a venue for the services themselves may involve the construction of new covered areas, or adding temporary extensions to existing church buildings to accommodate the large numbers of people who attend. (In 1994 this was the case at Long Keseh, a small community numbering only around 300 people.) The conventions and the *Irau Easter* can be large affairs; some people recall past *Irau* which have drawn together more than 2000 people. Around 1000 people attended the *Irau* of 1995.

While SIB church monies, including those drawn from church collections, support the *Irau* and the other conventions, donations are also forthcoming from businesses and individuals in the district.¹³⁷ It is usual for pastors from Indonesia or West Malaysia to be invited to give the key sermons of the conventions, and these sermons may consequently be delivered in Indonesian, Malay, or even English. The sermon for the annual Youth Convention of 1994 was delivered in English, with some Malay, by a West Malaysian Chinese preacher (another pastor provided simultaneous Malay translation). At the 1995 *Irau Easter* an Indonesian pastor addressed the congregation in Indonesian, in this case simultaneous translation was given in Kayan. The use of Bahasa Malaysia at the conventions for the formalities, such as speeches of thanks, reflects Kayan usage of the forms of Malaysian public life, but the Kayan language does have a central position in

¹³⁶ Often simply referred to as '*Irau*'.

¹³⁷ The 1995 *Irau* drew donations from thirteen Chinese men representing as many different timber companies; also a donation from Jacob Lau, a Kayan man who runs a sawmill on the Central Baram; five donations from Kayan men variously representing the petrol station in Piasau (in Miri); a machining tools company; Sarawak Shell Oil, and the state fuel company Petronas. Six individual Kayan men and three Chinese men from Bintulu made donations, the latter included a doctor and a representative of a Bintulu health clinic. Two individual Kayan men from Long Panai itself also made donations.

SIB conventions in the Baram. Printed programs and song books are produced for each convention with the official material in Malay and some songs in Kayan (see Figure 8). Bibles in both Malay and Kayan are used.

Although the formal organisation, and the charter, of the SIB church encourages people of all ethnic groups to participate in the inter-church activities of their district, in practice attendance at conventions tends to follow ethnic lines. Thus the *Irau Easter* in the Baram is largely a Kayan affair even though members of other groups (notably Penan at the 1995 *Irau Easter*) do participate. The various conventions bring together Kayan from longhouses of the Central Baram and its tributaries, but also draw on Kayan communities, and school groups, from in and around Miri, Marudi and Long Lama. Kayan from named settlements associated with timber camps, such as Temala Camp near Long Lama, also attend as groups.

The 1994 Konvensyen Muda-Mudi (Youth Convention) at Long Laput

The 1994 SIB Youth Convention was held at the Kayan community of Long Laput. It ran for four days during the long end-of-year school holidays in November. Groups of young people converged on the longhouse via longboat from upriver longhouses, aboard express boats from longhouses on the Tutoh, Apoh and Tinjar Rivers, and from Miri, Marudi, Long Lama, and the coastal town of Bintulu. On arrival people were assigned accommodation in the longhouse apartments according to their longhouse or community of origin. (The name of each group was neatly posted on their respective apartment doors.)

Long Laput is a large community near the town of Long Lama and has a population of more than 1,000 people. It is a mixed SIB and Catholic community. The SIB church at Long Laput is a large building which resembles the two imposing new longhouses in the community¹³⁸ and is designed with an eye to accommodating large congregations. (The windows along the sides of the building are framed to suggest round roman arches.) During the Youth convention of 1994 it comfortably held around 600 people (see Figure 6).

¹³⁸ The design and construction of these longhouses rather resembles shop-house architecture throughout Sarawak.

SIB conventions are firmly structured affairs with demanding programs formally set out in the printed convention booklets. At the 1994 Youth Convention the clearly articulated rules required participants to attend all the sessions over the four days, and urged them not to treat the event simply as an opportunity for socialising. The Youth Convention does tend to have a rather didactic air, and evinces a somewhat disciplinary attitude toward young people. However, in practice, and despite the church's rather bureaucratic rule-making, conventions such as this are indeed occasions for meeting up with friends and kin. And this is particularly the case at the Youth Convention as the experience of the centralised boarding school system means that Baram Kayan teenagers may have formed friendships with young people from all over the region.

The program of the 1994 convention ran from Monday to Thursday. During the convention participants rose at 6 a.m., or earlier, and conducted 'Morning Reflection' (*Renungan Pagi*) between 6.15 and 6.45 a.m. This entails group prayers held within individual apartments. The group from Long Na'ah (7 teenage girls, 3 teenage boys, and 2 adults acting as chaperones) gathered in the dark for morning prayers. After morning baths and breakfast between 7.30 and 8.30 a.m., communal services in the church began at nine. The first session of each day, 'Praises and Worship' (*Pujian dan Penyembahan*), consisted of prayers and singing from the convention song book accompanied by a small band of guitar, electronic keyboard and drums. Drawn by the music and the growing atmosphere of the meeting, the church was soon full. At 9.45 a.m. the first of the two mid-morning 'Workshops' (*Bengkel*) began. Workshops are dedicated to particular issues, or 'challenges' (*cabaran*), which face young Christians in the Baram. Two such 'challenges' treated in 1994 were 'the Age of Technology' (*Zaman Teknologi*), and the threat of nominal ('*nominalis*'), rather than genuine and heartfelt membership of the church. After the morning workshops, there was a break for lunch (between mid day and 2.00 p.m.), followed by a period up until 4.00p.m. when participants retired to the apartments for 'Rest and Personal Study' (*Rehat dan Belajar Sendiri*). The hour between 4.00 and 5.00 p.m. was designated for sport (largely sepak takraw¹³⁹ and basketball), with the evening meal

¹³⁹ *Sepak Takraw* is a game popular throughout Southeast Asia. The game uses a rattan ball, and a

scheduled from five to seven. Individual groups cooked their own meals from the provisions they had brought with them from their own longhouses, or which they bought in Long Lama before the convention began. The convention organisation itself does provide some rice for participants. (In 1994 there was also a celebratory communal meal, organised by the Long Laput headman's household, at the end of the convention). The main evening service was delivered between 7.30 and 10.00 p.m. and was followed, finally, by 'Rest and Sleep' (*Rehat dan Tidur*). The final day (Thursday) had a slightly altered program which included prayers offered by particular groups within the congregation for the sick, widows, disabled people and the poor. Prime Minister Mahathir was also acknowledged in these prayers.¹⁴⁰

Combined with the rather bureaucratised process of convention administration is the drama and excitement of the services themselves. SIB teachings at the Youth Conventions are given emphasis by the evangelical style of preaching. Sermons are punctuated with rhetorical questions and expostulations of 'Praise the Lord!' (*Puji Tuhan!*) and 'Amen!' In 1994 the West Malaysian Chinese pastor, the Reverend John Chin, delivered his sermons with great energy and dramatic gesticulations. He incessantly paced from end to end of the stage, firmly clutching his microphone. (The opportunities for humour and performance offered by the translation process meant that the congregation's attention remained fixed upon him. Occasionally, and in somewhat slapstick fashion, technical mayhem was caused when the leads to his microphone, and to that of his smiling but slightly bemused translator, became entangled. All these things were greatly enjoyed by the young Kayan audience.) Performances by a dance group from the SIB congregation in Miri added to the theatrical atmosphere of the 1994 convention. Dressed in long white satin dresses and blue sashes, and accompanied by an upbeat recorded hymn, the young women from Miri performed energetic synchronised dances, punctuating their movements with the beat of their beribboned tambourines. As the young women danced, a group of young men

court and net similar to badminton or volleyball. The ball is passed between team members, or over the net, by striking it with either the side of the foot, or with the head.

¹⁴⁰ The young woman who led prayers for the Prime Minister prefaced them by saying: 'We pray for him even though he is not a Christian, so that he will be guided by God'.

made their way up the aisle holding large coloured banners proclaiming Christian messages in English and Malay: 'Lamb of God', '*Putra Damai*' (Prince of Peace), and '*Yesus Raja!*' (Jesus is Lord!).

Intertwined with this fervour and spectacle, the sermons given at the 1994 Youth Convention sought to address the temporal issues of rapid change and development in Sarawak, particularly as these are understood to affect the lives of young SIB Christians. While the hazards of rapid change, and particularly economic development, are couched in terms of conventional Christian themes concerning the material versus the spiritual life, the frequency with which these themes arise in SIB preaching suggests that there is a special urgency to these issues in the 1990s. Using the Biblical story of Jacob and Esau, the pastor at the youth convention offered an exegesis in which Jacob emerged as the smart and flashy fellow whose success was only 'of this world', being gained through 'craftiness' and deceit. As a consequence, God must wrestle with the worldly Jacob, breaking his hip joint, curing his arrogance, and finally bringing him back to the Christian fold. Sermonising of this kind led into a number of other themes presented in the afternoon workshops.

Teachings presented through the workshops were delivered in more secular terms than the lessons of the evening services. In one such workshop the challenges presented by development in Malaysia and the 'Age of Technology', were presented in optimistic and encouraging terms. Much emphasis was laid on the opportunities for young people in Sarawak in the 1990s. The preacher urged the young congregation to gain an education, to 'listen and learn', and even to 'make notes' to help them learn about things which were new to them (such as new kinds of technology). However, the dangers of development were also highlighted. The primary danger being the loss of religion, or the increase of only nominal belief among Sarawakian Christians. Loss of belief was also presented as being intimately related to an embracing of a materialistic way of life. Various behaviours, such as drinking alcohol, smoking tobacco, and even chewing betel, were mentioned in connection with the pitfalls of development. The moral threat of pornography was also raised. The Reverend John Chin urged the congregation to approach the businessmen (*tokays*) who run express boat services on the Baram

and ask them to stop screening 'obscene' (*najis*) videos.¹⁴¹ If the *tokays* did not comply, he suggested people write to the authorities with formal complaints. Despite the warnings and exhortations of the preachers on these kinds of topics, the general message concerning development was 'to take what is good, and reject what is bad'. It is clear, however, that the SIB church feels a responsibility to help people choose correctly.

Charges of nominalism, that is, nominal allegiance to the church, but a lack of real faith, tend to be pitched at young men. There is a suggestion that young men may be less interested in questions of faith, than in coming to church to play the electric guitar. However, it is considered more likely that young women will accept Christian teachings and attend church regularly. Many teenage Kayan girls and young women are certainly enthusiastic church-goers and it is they who are most likely to be involved in the charismatic forms of worship, such as speaking in tongues (late teenage girls predominated in the group of young people from Long Na'ah attending the convention). Nevertheless, the 1994 Youth Convention was also well attended by boys and young men.

Teachings at the convention not only focused on the Baram and Sarawak, but attempted also to give a broader national view. Thus warnings were given about a turning away from religion more generally in Malaysia, towards the secular life, and mention was made of Muslims failing to attend the mosque. This kind of discourse reflects certain strands of national political rhetoric in Malaysia. However, despite this broad 'Malaysian' view, SIB teachings are certainly firm on such issues as inter-faith marriages. A workshop dedicated to 'boy-girl relationships' highlighted the dangers of marriage between Christians and non-Christians. A West Malaysian example was given here by the Reverend Chin concerning a marriage between a Christian woman and a Hindu man. Other illustrations given by the Reverend Chin also reflected a view from the Peninsula: few of the young Baram Kayan at the convention would perhaps have found a personal lesson in a lecture on the deleterious effects of golf on church attendance.

¹⁴¹ During my many trips up and down the Baram via these express boat services I did see some inordinately violent films, but rarely anything categorically pornographic. The most common programs offered for the entertainment of express boat passengers are All-American Wrestling and Chinese martial arts movies.

While there were many periods during the exhaustive (and exhausting) four day program of the convention when the congregation listened with only half an ear, the long evening services always culminated in enormously fervent worship. The swell of emotion in the Long Laput church at these times was such that many individuals in the congregation were overcome by it, their singing turning to weeping. It is at these points in the services that people understand the Holy Spirit to be literally, and most powerfully, among them. It is also at these times that a small number of people may begin to speak in tongues. Both men and women may speak in tongues, but at this convention it was young women who experienced this most intensely. Speaking in tongues begins during communal prayer sessions in which repetitive phrases are uttered by the congregation as they stand, their bodies swaying with emotion, their eyes closed. The intensity of the prayers increases until the utterances of a handful of people rise above the others in rapid broken cries. One young woman at the convention needed to be physically supported during this process and finally, close to unconsciousness, was unable to stand. It is also in this latter part of the late evening services that members of the congregation who have not yet accepted Christianity are called forward to declare their faith – to be born again. People who are ill also go forward at this time to receive the laying on of hands by the preacher and assisting pastors.

Singing and music also play a particularly important part in the Youth Convention and by the end of the four days, a core of five or six songs from the convention song book may have each been sung more than thirty times. The rousing and repetitive hymn 'God is great' (*Tuhan Berkuasa*) is often sung at the beginning of services. Singing is performed while standing and in some cases is accompanied by synchronised dance routines and the holding of hands (see Figure 7). The songs themselves are all short, with choruses which may be repeated again and again at the urging of the preacher. Late in the evening when emotions are high and people begin to move forward to be received into (or reaffirm) the faith, or to receive the laying on of hands, the hymn 'Holy Spirit You are Here' is often sung.

The impassioned preaching, the experience of being a part of a large congregation, and the emotive quality of the music, communal singing, and prayer, can be a powerful combination at the SIB Youth Conventions. Many young people are affected by these things during the services. It is a powerful arena for the church to deliver its range of more secular teachings, including those concerning aspects of development and change in Sarawak (even if the addresses on development are received by young people in a vein more scholastic than ecstatic).

The 1995 Irau Easter at Long Panai

The word *Irau* is a Lun Bawang word, not Kayan, and its use reflects SIB history: the Lun Bawang were the first group to wholeheartedly accept the teachings of the church's parent body, the Borneo Evangelical Mission (Deegan, 1973: 276). *Irau Easter*, on a large scale, were first celebrated by the Lun Bawang during the late 1960s and early 1970s. A notable event in the growth of the SIB church, and the *Irau Easter* phenomenon, was an *Irau* held in the Kelabit highlands in 1973. People in Northern Sarawak know of this particular Easter celebration, which was associated with an intense Christian revival in the highlands.

The *Irau Easter* in the Baram do not coincide precisely with international Easter celebrations. They occur instead during the mid-year school holidays in Sarawak, the period in which the Gawai Festival (the state sponsored celebration for all 'indigenous' Sarawakians) is held.¹⁴² In 1995 the mid-year holidays began on May 20 and ran until the middle of June. In that year the *Irau* was held from May 25 to 28, and the main day of Gawai (*Perayaan Hari Dayak*) fell on the first of June. In 1995 Easter, as it is recognised internationally, fell between April 14 (Good Friday) and April 16 (Easter Sunday). *Irau Easter* celebrations are distinguished from the international Easter celebrations in that the latter are referred to by upriver SIB people (in English) simply as 'Good Friday'. The

¹⁴² At the time I left Sarawak, there were some plans to reorganise the schedule of state school holidays in Sarawak. Some upriver people have found the schedule, which places the main end-of-year holidays in November, inconvenient. For the Central Baram at least, the harvest occurs early in the new year and this is the time when people most need to return to their longhouse of origin to assist relatives. Given that there is only a short break of a few days at Christmas, the holiday schedule has also been perceived by some Kayan as giving little consideration to Christians from

celebration of 'Good Friday' tends to demarcate upriver SIB adherents from their 'RC' (Roman Catholic) neighbours; and within SIB communities such as Long Na'ah, it marks Kayan off from non-Kayan teachers and health staff who are of other Christian denominations. The Good Friday and Easter Sunday of the international calendar are not important at SIB communities and at Long Na'ah they pass without special note.

In attendance at the 1995 *Irau Easter* were groups of Christians from seventeen Kayan longhouses; from one Kayan settlement associated with a timber camp; a nearby Berawan longhouse; the town of Long Lama; the SIB church in Marudi; and various district high schools. A group of Penan also attended. As with other SIB conventions in the Baram, the 1995 *Irau* was a tightly organised event with a full schedule and an extensive administrative structure. This structuring of events reflects the administrative organisation of the SIB church itself, but also suggests processes of bureaucratisation, in some ways reflective of Malaysian state building. Just as individual Kayan longhouses in the Baram have committees which implement policies proceeding from government directives, such as hygiene committees and mosquito (malaria) committees,¹⁴³ *Irau Easter* are run by a bevy of committees. Seventeen such committees ordered the progress of the 1995 *Irau Easter*.

At the apex of the *Irau* committee structure in 1995 was the 'Central Executive Committee' (*Ahli Jawatankuasa Induk Pengelola*). This committee included the Patron of the *Irau* (Temenggong Pahang Ding), two counsellors, a chairman, secretary, and treasurer, plus their deputies and twelve other members.¹⁴⁴ The remaining 'Work Sub-Committees' (*Jawatankuasa-Kecil (Kerja)*) dealt with the multitude of practical tasks considered necessary to the convention, such as the care of guests, the organisation of accommodation and the supply of uncooked rice, the running of food and drink stalls (*warung*), and other 'business management' (*urusniaga*) tasks. Other committees dealt with hygiene; the cooking of dishes to accompany rice; the making of decorations, especially for the

upriver longhouses who want to return to their communities at this time.

¹⁴³ There are also the various community cooperative work groups (*gotong royong*), which, among other tasks, carry out the practical work of the various committees.

¹⁴⁴ Only four out of the 21 officials were women.

church; producing convention souvenirs, and the production and printing of the *Irau* program and rule book. Yet other committees oversaw first aid requirements; scheduling and time keeping functions; technical matters, such as the operation of sound systems; ushering, and the provision of meals for the visiting pastors; the production of banners; and the availability of instructors and counsellors. A final committee, the 'Board of Discipline and Safety' (*Lembaga Disiplin dan Keselamatan*) completed this veritable army of organisational bodies.

Extensive lists of rules are also part of the management of Easter conventions.¹⁴⁵ They cover such things as orderly behaviour during services (no noisiness, no coming and going during prayers, crying children to be removed promptly by their mothers), hygiene (toilets to be used for both urination and defecation, no littering), discipline (the playing of sport to be kept to designated times), and prudence (no debts to be incurred at the convention shops). Participants were also urged to be asleep by 11 p.m. so as to have energy for the following day. Finally, shops were not to open during services (and were not to sell alcohol), and guests were to refrain from introducing political matters. While these rules reflect the regulatory aims of the church administration, it should be said that not all participants felt it necessary to consistently follow all these rules. Although people attending the 1995 *Irau Easter* did see the event as an important religious meeting, conscientiously attending services and participating in prayer groups, they also took the opportunity to enjoy socialising with friends and people from other communities. Sometimes this meant disregarding some rules (such as early bedtimes).

The 1995 *Irau* ran from Thursday through to early Monday morning, with the first official event being the service on Thursday evening. Longhouses on the Baram are early rising communities, but from the Friday through to the Sunday of the *Irau*, Long Panai awoke even earlier than usual: around four a.m. Before first light the village electricity generator leapt into life, flooding the apartments with light and rousing the rows of sleepers. (The group of around forty people from

¹⁴⁵ The church seeks to exert an influence, not only in spiritual matters, but also in areas of everyday practice. One expression of this may be seen in efforts to promote certain modes of behaviour, namely 'civilised' manners (in Elias's (1994) sense, i.e., modes of behaviour and bodily demeanour specific to Western European history), for example, 'table manners', appropriate

Long Na'ah, occupied two adjacent apartments.) At five a.m., before breakfasting, groups within each apartment gathered together to be led in prayer by a lay church leader from their own community. By 8 a.m. the food and drink stalls were open for the morning session, closing later while services were in progress. The first public service of the day ran from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, and was followed by a break to enable people to prepare and eat a cooked meal. In the afternoon from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. the *Irau* broke up into group workshops including the Men's Group (*Kaum Bapa*), the Women's Group (*Kaum Ibu*), the Youth Group (*Muda-Mudi*), and the Sunday School (*Sekolah Minggu*).

Once again the food stalls opened in the afternoon, after 4 p.m., and at the same time trestle tables were set up to display the large range of Christian literature for sale. Books and magazines were supplied by the SIB Christian book centres in Miri, and included the SIB's own publications, and translations of the works of international evangelists such as Billy Graham. During this break, and before the sun set, people took the opportunity to bath in the river, between the jostle of longboats moored by the bank. At six in the evening the distribution of rice was organised and between 6.30 a.m. and 7.15 p.m. people gathered in their apartments to eat together and then complete their preparation for the evening service. The *Irau* is enjoyed as an occasion to wear one's best clothes and both men and women dress smartly and with care: men in white or batik shirts and long tailored trousers; women in fitted long-line blouses and full length skirts, similar to the Malay *Baju Kebaya*. Following the main evening service, which often overran its scheduled three hours between 7.30 and 10.30 p.m., the stalls were open once again and people chatted and socialised until 11.30 (though there were some people who, disregarding the rules, continued on with the aid of portable lights).

Although labelled 'workshops', the smaller group meetings at the *Irau* usually involved oratory, or lectures, rather than group discussion. Themes similar to those covered at the annual Youth Conventions also emerge in *Irau* workshops, but were directed towards the concerns of the particular group (women, men, young people) being addressed. Women's meetings, for example, are concerned

attitudes and behaviour concerning bodily functions, and suitable demeanour between the sexes.

with the connection between being Christian and being wives, mothers, and managers of households. At one of the workshops for women at the 1995 *Irau* a female pastor from Miri raised the frequently treated theme of the secular in relation to the spiritual. In this instance Pastor Hinan Bulan Jok spoke in terms of physical well-being versus spiritual happiness. 'Comfort and happiness are not to be found in wealth but in God', she counselled the women. Interspersing her delivery with rhetorical questions, she asked the women 'Who thinks that the rich people have an easy, comfortable life; that they have happiness?' And drawing on apocalyptic images associated with the coming of Judgement, '...on the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror... of what is coming on the world...' (Luke 21: 25-26) (English New International Version Bible),¹⁴⁶ she argued that material well-being was to be seen as relatively inconsequential beside the greater need for faith and salvation. Thus the pastor went on to emphasise the great need for prayer in the women's lives, as an antidote to the workings of Satan. She advised the women, if they did not have time during their busy daily schedules to pray, to get up in the early hours of the morning (as early as 3 or 4 a.m.).

In the evenings all groups reassembled to worship together in the church. At the 1995 *Irau* the sermons at these services were delivered by the visiting Indonesian preacher Pendita Johanes Lilik Susanto. Pastors from churches in the district took the sessions on administrative matters, led prayers and singing, and provided translation. Groups from individual longhouses within the congregation also contributed to the services by leading prayers, 'witnessing to their faith in song', and making 'dedications of money'. Unlike the Youth Convention, much more attention was given to providing Kayan translations of the sermons, so that older Kayan who speak little or no Malay (let alone the formal Bahasa Indonesia of the Pendita) were able to follow them. (As with the youth convention, there was much laughter provoked by the process of translation).¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ People bring their own Kayan and Indonesian Bibles to such meetings and consult the readings to which they are directed.

¹⁴⁷ At one point Ibrahim, the gembala from Uma Bawang who was acting as a Kayan translator, provoked mirth among the congregation by laughingly, and rather self-consciously, translating the Malay/Indonesian word '*istimewa*' (special, extraordinary) into English with the addition of the Malay particle 'lah'; thus *istimewa* became 'special-lah'.

While sermons covered the Easter themes of sin and redemption, and the crucifixion, the emotional tone of the 1995 *Irau* was much less intense than that of the youth convention (and apparently did not reach the pitch of some past *Irau* which people recalled). Framing his discourse with verses from the gospel of Mark (8:36), 'What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?', Pendita Johanes' also raised the frequently treated theme, in SIB preaching, of the material versus the spiritual life. Preaching that 'Faith is more priceless than gold', he counselled the congregation to resist the temptation of 'being in love with money' or being overwhelmed by the desire for wealth and cars. Rather than the arrogance and conceit to be gained via the material life, people of the Baram should look to their spiritual well-being. (The *Irau*, he said, was an occasion in which faith could be fired up for the rest of the year.) The tone of Pendita Johanes sermonising grew threatening on occasion, with repetitive warnings about people lost in sin (described conventionally as lost sheep) and about the work of Satan. Punctuating the services were lengthy prayer sessions for the ill which sometimes lasted for almost two hours.

The final service also saw the acceptance of new converts and the giving out of baptism certificates¹⁴⁸ to people baptised at the 1994 *Irau*. The morning service on the final day, a Sunday, culminated in communion.¹⁴⁹ Broken water biscuits and red cordial were served to the congregation. SIB concerns with order and hygiene came to the fore during communion. For the drinking of the communion 'wine' (the cordial), small plastic straws were issued to each person in the congregation. Each person dipped their straw into a container of the bright red cordial and, in the manner of a pipette, withdrew a small quantity of the liquid. With tilted heads, they carefully released the cordial into their mouths. This final service on Sunday evening lasted well into the early hours of Monday morning and all but the very old, and people with small children, attended until at least midnight. The service itself did not draw to a close until after 2 a.m., and it was not until 3 a.m. that the community subsided into darkness and sleep.

¹⁴⁸ Called '*surat duh*'. '*Surat*' means 'letter' or 'certificate' in Malay, and '*duh*' is a Kayan word meaning 'to bathe by pouring water over one's head and body'.

The Influence of the SIB Church on Attitudes to Economic Change and Development

SIB teachings at both the 1994 Youth Convention and the 1995 *Irau Easter* indicate that the church sees a role for itself in guiding its congregations in both spiritual and temporal matters.¹⁵⁰ This role is taken particularly seriously in relation to young SIB Christians. In circumstances of rapid social and economic change, the church is concerned to encourage its members to pursue those aspects of development, such as education and new employment opportunities for the young, which it sees as beneficial. At the same time the church warns its congregations of the potential pitfalls of life in Sarawak in the 1990s, seeking to signal the deleterious aspects of development, as it sees them.

The message directed toward the young is often an encouraging one, suggesting there will be a growing range of opportunities for them in the 'age of technology'. This kind of message plays a part in the preparedness which some parents at Long Na'ah show, especially those with a firm commitment to the church, in encouraging their children not only to study at school but to also pursue vocational courses (for example, to gain a driver's licence or, more recently, computer skills), and to pursue paid employment beyond the longhouse. However, the church also frequently reiterates the fundamental need for members of the church to maintain the strength of their faith. This faith, grounded in Scripture, will ensure that the spiritual life is not overtaken by the temptations of material development (or by social ills such as divorce, or by practices such as inter-faith marriage.) Thus the frequent emergence of the theme of the spiritual versus the material in SIB sermons.

¹⁴⁹ Referred to in Kayan as '*Pahlung*': 'to eat together'.

¹⁵⁰ Writing on Christianity and colonialism in South Africa, Comaroff & Comaroff (1991) argue that the role of early Protestant evangelists as forerunners of industrial capitalism, and the historical agency of Christian missionaries, can be explained by apprehending the '...fact that their civilising mission was simultaneously symbolic and practical, theological and temporal. The goods and techniques they brought with them to Africa presupposed the messages and meanings they proclaimed from the pulpit, and vice versa' (1991: 9). Similarly, the influence of the SIB church in Sarawak is to be found as much in the arena of 'mundane, material practice' (p.9) as it is in its theology.

While 'faith is more valuable than gold', and the excesses of materialism ought to be resisted, the church certainly does not preach against economic development as such. The church recognises, especially for younger SIB Christians, that there will be an increasing movement away from agricultural work to wage labour, and that its congregations will become more urbanised in future. And provided cash incomes are not used to support habits the church regards as immoral and dangerous, cash in itself is not necessarily seen as inherently harmful. Forms of paid employment, if pursued in the context of a devout life, may be seen as a benefit of development. The warnings about materialism are to be understood more as an attempt to stave off the threat of the secularisation which the church fears may be the result of some aspects of social and economic change, and particularly urbanisation. (And hence the sermons which warn congregations about 'nominal' allegiance to the church and the Christian faith.)

Frequent mention of 'materialism' also tends to stand as a kind of shorthand for a great range of activities (vices), which are understood to be harmful to the morals of its congregations (from smoking and drinking alcohol, to wearing flashy clothes and hairstyles). Particularly for young people, the world of fashion and popular culture, as represented by clothes, music, and habits such as smoking, may be seen as a threat to moral rectitude. Some of these things may even be represented as redolent of sexual misdemeanour (this is especially the case for women, even more for young women, in relation to smoking). In line with these ideas, efforts are made within particular Kayan communities such as Long Na'ah to control the direction of consumption, particularly of such things as alcohol and tobacco.

The church's general message concerning an indiscriminate desire for material wealth is also reflected in some people's attitudes to economic change and monetisation at Long Na'ah. Although, as I have already discussed, Kayan notions of generosity and hospitality are implicated in attitudes towards the use of cash within the community, in some cases critical attitudes, for example toward individuals who are 'always thinking about money', also owe something to the SIB discourse on 'materialism'. In some instances gifts of cash between people at Long Na'ah may also be interpreted in the light of Christian notions of charity, and thus

also be seen to fit within the church's discourse on the spiritual versus the material life. (Rather than being considered primarily in terms of kin relations, for example). While I would not over-emphasise the frequency of such acts at Long Na'ah, the example I have already mentioned – the willingness of one man to give others money to finance trips to downriver hospitals – was clearly motivated in part by his strong dedication to the church and to Christian tenets. (The recipients were not necessarily kin in these cases.)

In addition to demonstrating the SIB church's concern with issues of development, descriptions of the SIB Youth Convention of 1994 and the *Irau Easter* of 1995 suggest some ways in which these events foster a sense of membership in a regional Christian fellowship and a new sense of regional identity for Kayan. The experience for Kayan Christians of coming together in such large meetings is an affective one for many of those who attend. In addition to their emotive power, meetings on this scale entail a significant material commitment on the part of the host community. The system of donations and help which such communities receive also means an ongoing, and year-long, organisational effort which brings together representatives of the various village and town churches. Although as Christians Kayan are given the sense that they are members of a world community, regional conventions also work in some ways to encourage a sense of membership within the more specific regional (Kayan) community. Thus *Irau Easter* in the Baram do not necessarily coincide with the Easter of the international calendar, and the SIB conventions of the Baram, despite including a number of local ethnic groups, are largely Kayan affairs. And even though some Baram Kayan are Roman Catholic – five of the nine Central Baram Kayan communities and one Kayan longhouse on the Tutoh owe allegiance to both the SIB church and the Roman Catholic church¹⁵¹ – there is a sense in which to be Kayan in the Baram is now also to be 'SIB'.¹⁵²

Beyond this regional emphasis, the fact that the church does depict its followers as members of an international community of Christians has an

¹⁵¹ The majority of Kayan communities on the Baram and its tributaries belong to the SIB church, including the large communities on the Apoh.

¹⁵² This may also be understood, to some extent, in the light of Kenyah adherence to Catholicism: to be Kenyah in the Baram is, in the main, to be Roman Catholic (or 'RC', as it is expressed

influence on how people at Long Na'ah may think about change. SIB discourse, even in the small community churches, shifts between an emphasis on localised community interests, and a much broader view. For a relatively isolated community such as Long Na'ah, these kinds of ideas provide at least some people with additional ways of thinking about the direction of change for their own community and region, including their increasing incorporation into a wider economy. In conversation with people at Long Na'ah, it was often those people who paid close attention to the teachings of the church who offered a far-ranging understanding of themselves and their community. They were well able to conceive of themselves and their community in relation to a wider world, even if they understood that they might only participate in that world in rather circumscribed ways. Thus people sometimes talked to me about their understanding that there were Christian people, Christian communities and Christian countries throughout the world. The 1995 *Irau Easter* and the 1994 Youth Convention also demonstrate how the administration of these conventions, with their rule-making and proliferation of organisational bodies, may be seen as reflective of processes of state bureaucratisation.¹⁵³ With its emphasis on schedules, time management and rules, the Youth Convention is a firmly structured affair. And, with its seventeen organisational bodies and an official for every function, from chairman to usher, the Easter meeting is, if anything, an even more bureaucratised event than the Youth Convention. In bringing together large numbers of young Kayan, the youth convention, in particular, also duplicates state-based structures, such as the system of boarding schools which cater for high-school aged children from upriver communities. The conventions are not, however, all rules and authoritarian regulations. The tenor of social interaction at the conventions, outside of the specifically organisational activities, is characterised by a friendly sociability which is much enjoyed by all; and, although people are diligent in attending all the sessions of a convention, and undertake

locally).

¹⁵³ The SIB church's support for aspects of economic development, its emphasis on the new opportunities to be pursued in the 'age of technology', and its enthusiasm for bureaucratic forms of organisation (all the way down to the local level, and even in the context of small groups) make its activities seem at times almost a caricature of Weber's concept of rationalisation (Weber, 1992: 24-26; 1978: 956-63).

private prayer as well, they do not feel ultimately constrained to heed all the rules and regulations. The progress of services, which include music, singing, and the often entertaining and even humorous performances of the preachers, are also enjoyable. More than this, however, is the undoubted strength of the spiritual experience which such conventions represent for many of the participants. Although people understand such conventions to vary from year to year, in terms of how strongly the Holy Spirit is felt to have been present, each such gathering offers many people a deep, and for some, ecstatic, religious experience.

and only small quantities of tobacco are grown. Almost all who smoke and drink at Long Nalah consume international brand cigarettes, such as Dunhill and Marlboro, and manufactured spirits and beer. Changes in the consumption of alcohol and tobacco at Long Nalah are connected with the homogenising influences of globalisation and commercialisation. However, in many ways the more overtly homogenising influence is countered by the teachings of the SSB church. The church presents the consumption of both tobacco and alcohol in a negative light, and discourages their use in various ways. In the 1990s smoking, at least, is comparatively limited at Long Nalah.²² The state has also played a role here through its public health programs. Whatever the strength of these largely external forces, however, people at Long Nalah are not simply the unresistant victims of processes of globalisation, nor the weak followers of church injunctions. Although the consumption of alcohol has changed in both form and manner, there has been some room for Kayan at Long Nalah to create and recreate aspects of local social and cultural identity through new modes of alcohol consumption. This is less the case, however, for the consumption of tobacco. Explanations which point to the homogenising forces of globalisation and the market economy, as well as the teachings of the church, are more persuasive in this instance.

At Long Nalah there is some variation between households and individuals, in the manner of consuming alcohol and tobacco. Different patterns of consumption are often connected to varying levels of commitment to the church and its teachings. In the case of alcohol, some households only take the

²² This is not the case at other Kayan communities in the Baram which belong to the SSB church, and is in contrast to some other upriver communities, including Kayan and Lahajan communities.

CHAPTER SEVEN

HARD DRINK AND CIGARETTES: RESTRICTIVE AND EXPANSIVE MODES OF CONSUMPTION AT LONG NA'AH

In the past Kayan at Long Na'ah produced and consumed their own supplies of tobacco and alcohol. Today the local production of rice wine (*borak*) has ceased and only small quantities of tobacco are grown. Almost all who smoke and drink at Long Na'ah consume international brand cigarettes, such as Dunhill and Marlboro, and manufactured spirits and beer. Changes in the consumption of alcohol and tobacco at Long Na'ah are connected with the homogenising influences of globalisation and commoditisation. However, in many ways the more overtly homogenising influence is constituted by the teachings of the SIB church. The church presents the consumption of both tobacco and alcohol in a negative light, and discourages their use in various ways. In the 1990s smoking, at least, is comparatively limited at Long Na'ah.¹⁵⁴ The state has also played a role here through its public health programs. Whatever the strength of these largely external forces, however, people at Long Na'ah are not simply the unconscious victims of processes of globalisation, nor the meek followers of church injunction. Although the consumption of alcohol has changed in both form and manner, there has been some room for Kayan at Long Na'ah to create and recreate aspects of local social and cultural identity through new modes of alcohol consumption. This is less the case, however, for the consumption of tobacco. Explanations which point to the homogenising forces of globalisation and the market economy, as well as the teachings of the church, are more persuasive in this instance.

At Long Na'ah there is some variation between households, and individuals, in the manner of consuming alcohol and tobacco. Differing patterns of consumption are often connected to varying levels of commitment to the church and its teachings. In the case of alcohol, some households may take the

¹⁵⁴ This is also the case at other Kayan communities in the Baram which belong to the SIB church, and is in contrast to some other upriver communities, including Kayan and Lahanan communities

teachings of the church very seriously, to the extent of choosing teetotalism. However, other households, often those whose members are less avid churchgoers, value the close association between the offering and partaking of drink, and certain forms of sociability and hospitality. The ways in which these households consume reflects this. Tobacco consumption, on the other hand, is most clearly differentiated in terms of gender, but age and position in the community are also relevant here. Although smoking in general is discouraged by the SIB church, it is seen as a particularly unsuitable habit for women, and even more for young women, for whom smoking now carries a strong sense of moral misdemeanour. At times, both smoking and drinking are represented as indicators of sin for men as well as women, and may even be taken to indicate a lack of Christian faith. However, alcohol and smoking occupy somewhat different positions in this proscriptive scheme. While the consumption of tobacco may have experienced a relative decline, there are occasions when alcohol is consumed at Long Na'ah, not only furtively and in small quantities, but also publicly, and in large amounts.

Tobacco

Tobacco is not a significant crop at Long Na'ah and, during the period of my fieldwork, only two people in the community regularly smoked the older form of hand-rolled cigars using local tobacco. In the lower longhouse, one late middle-aged man, an active farmer, was a regular smoker of local cigars (which he smoked both at the longhouse and at the rice farms). And in the upper longhouse one very elderly man was provided with tobacco which he smoked during his days spent seated on a bench on the longhouse verandah. Occasionally other people smoked local tobacco, particularly at the farms, but these two men were the only really regular public smokers of old style cigars at the longhouse. I did not encounter any women in the community who were regular smokers of local tobacco, or any young men.¹⁵⁵ At Long Na'ah, the powerful and distinctive aroma

on the Balui (e.g., Alexander, 1994.)

¹⁵⁵ During visits to other exclusively SIB Kayan longhouses in the Baram I only occasionally

of the local tobacco, because only occasionally present, always seemed immediately noticeable when it was. During my fieldwork, if someone nearby was smoking local tobacco, people remarked on it as something unusual, and even drew it to my attention. People sometimes distinguished the local cigars from manufactured, or international brand, cigarettes by referring to the former, in Malay, as 'Kayan cigarettes' (*rokok Kayan*), or sometimes by specifically using the Kayan word for tobacco (*jako* ʔ) or smoking (*na jako* ʔ).

In contrast to the old style cigars, mass-produced cigarettes are smoked more widely in the community, and are sold by several of the village shops. The smoking of manufactured cigarettes at Long Na'ah is, however, a male practice. Almost without exception, women at Long Na'ah do not smoke manufactured cigarettes, and there are no regular female smokers in the community.¹⁵⁶ Young men up to around 35 years of age, but especially men in their late teens and twenties, are the most visible group of smokers. A smaller number of men up to around fifty-five years of age are also regular smokers of manufactured cigarettes, but men older than this are generally not.

The contemporary and historical influence of the SIB church has a significant bearing on the levels, and differentiation, of tobacco consumption at Long Na'ah in the 1990s. Although the state has also played a role, over the last two decades, in discouraging smoking in the population,¹⁵⁷ at Long Na'ah it is the teachings of the SIB church which are the most constant source of proscriptive messages about smoking in all its forms. The importance of refraining from smoking has been an element of SIB teachings since the initial conversion of Kayan to Christianity in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Although the Borneo Evangelical Mission (BEM) seems to have focused much of its energy on dissuading communities from the production and consumption of rice wine, smoking also came within their proscriptive efforts. The missionary Southwell's writings from the period suggest that, for the evangelists, smoking formed something of a couplet with drinking. Although figures such as Southwell were

encountered smokers of locally-produced tobacco.

¹⁵⁶ Very occasionally, young Kayan women who have lived for long periods in Miri may be unabashed public smokers, but then only in urban surrounds.

¹⁵⁷ By controlling advertising and sale of tobacco products, and through education programs

concerned with the impact of smoking and drinking on the health of local communities, the renunciation of these two things seems to have carried with it a much more powerful symbolic message concerning the authenticity of an individual's, or a community's, conversion to Christianity (or desire to convert). Eschewing alcohol and tobacco, in these terms, represented both a rejection of the old 'pagan' ways, and an adoption of Christian 'behaviour' and ways of life.¹⁵⁸ Thus Southwell describes his baptism of a Kelabit group in 1947 in the following terms:

I explained baptism fully – both the obligation for believers to be baptised, and the conditions under which candidates could be accepted...I had a special meeting for those who desired baptism, and nine stayed. They were all most clear in understanding its significance, and all not only clearly believed, but had given up 'borak' [the local rice wine] and smoking. I was careful to explain that giving up these two habits did not make them Christians, but that I did not feel free to baptise any who had not made a clear break with old habits (Southwell, n.d.: 165).

Later in the same year, Southwell accepted a group of Kayan for baptism on the basis of their willingness to answer in the affirmative to two questions:

(1) Have you confessed your sins and asked for forgiveness from God and trusted in Jesus Christ for cleansing [you] from sin?

(2) Are you willing to follow Jesus Christ wholly, and give up drinking and smoking when God gives you that conviction in your hearts? (Southwell, n.d.: 178).

Southwell seems to have seen smoking and drinking as more pressing problems in his proselytising efforts with the Kelabit and Lun Bawang, than with Kayan and Kenyah:

Both smoking and drinking are difficult questions for them [the Kayan], as they were an essential part of their traditional hospitality. Among the Muruts [Lun Bawang] and Kelabits the issue was more clear cut, as they were definitely associated with sinful practices – not only drunkenness to excess, but also sexual promiscuity. But not so in the Kayan and Kenyah cultures. Indeed,

(particularly in schools) which emphasise the effects on health of smoking.

¹⁵⁸ I have already noted that the influence of the SIB church extends to everyday practice, including efforts to inculcate 'civilised' manners (i.e. those specific to Western European social history). Proscriptions against smoking, particularly for women, are linked to these efforts.

they say that my fault is that I will not drink with them! They consider that only evilly disposed, or surly people with something to hide, refuse to drink! ...I usually have to explain that if I drink with them, it is making the Muruts and the Kelabits feel that I am sinning; and the Bible tells us that we must not lead other people into sin (Southwell, n.d.: 197).

Whatever the BEM's views on the habits of different cultural groups in Sarawak, discouragement of both smoking and drinking, as 'things that cause and encourage sin in our lives' (Southwell, n.d.: 159), was evidently a constant theme in BEM missionising in Sarawak.

Today the contemporary consumption of mass-produced cigarettes is also censured by the SIB church. Although mass-produced cigarettes are not suggestive of older pre-Christian practices, smoking remains a morally doubtful habit, and more so for women than men. Smoking is sometimes represented as synonymous with a careless attitude toward the church and the requirements of being a Christian. A determination not to smoke is a characteristic of the most devout members of the church at Long Na'ah. Dedicated lay members of the church, largely men between the ages of around 35 and 55, are non-smokers, and the village pastors (both male and female) do not smoke. During the time I was in the community, the importance of church attendance was sometimes linked with statements against drinking and smoking. This message was delivered in the context of church sermons, but also in speeches given outside the church by the pastor and lay church leaders. On occasion, the headman's addresses to the community also covered the importance of church attendance and the advisability of refraining from smoking and drinking. For members of the SIB church, accounts of the renunciation of drinking and smoking may also be associated with the process of 'witnessing' to one's faith. Conversion, or rededication to the Christian faith, is understood to be manifest in the changed life and habits of individuals.

For women, mass-produced cigarettes carry an even more powerful sense of moral danger than local tobacco,¹⁵⁹ and may be suggestive of sexual

¹⁵⁹ The one woman I encountered (from the Kayan longhouse of Long Teran on the Tinjar River) who was a regular smoker of the old cigars was regarded at Long Na'ah with humour, rather than censoriously. Her daughter, who lived virilocally at Long Na'ah, referred to her mother's habit

impropriety. In the time I spent at Long Na'ah, there were only two occasions on which I saw women smoke mass-produced cigarettes. In one instance the cigarette was understood in quasi-medical terms as a curative, and in the second it played a somewhat theatrical role in the hands of a young woman preparing for her wedding day. Numbers of people from Long Na'ah suffer from car sickness when travelling along the rough timber roads, and on one occasion a woman with car sickness requested a cigarette from a young man. She said the menthol cigarette would be good for her nausea.¹⁶⁰ Despite protesting its curative purpose, the woman received the frowning, and muttering, disapproval of one of her female companions. These two women shared a somewhat antagonistic relationship, and on one occasion this expressed itself in allegations of a lack of sexual propriety. (Both women were in their thirties, married and had several children.) In the second case, a young woman preparing for her wedding accepted a cigarette from her visiting Iban sister-in-law. By village standards, the sister-in-law's behaviour was considered somewhat racy and not altogether respectable. (In the course of the wedding celebrations she was an enthusiastic participant, and motivator of others, in the 'disco' dancing, frequently requesting 'hot' music. She also smoked publicly and unconcernedly, and drank to the point of visible tipsiness.)¹⁶¹ During the preparations for the wedding she offered the bride-to-be a cigarette. The young woman's acceptance of the cigarette, indoors and among her friends, was a statement of mild daring; during her wedding and the following celebrations, she was suitably decorous. At Long Na'ah smoking does entail a certain moral danger, especially for women, and its practice may invite imputations of moral laxness.

On another occasion the association of smoking with sexual impropriety emerged in much blunter terms, as an element of SIB sermonising on sin and redemption. During fieldwork I attended an Easter play produced by the SIB church in Miri. It was entitled '*Who Framed JC?*' and was held in the ballroom of

with some amusement, and laughingly commented to her friends on seeing some photos of her mother and I smoking local tobacco at Long Teran.

¹⁶⁰ A large range of menthol and camphor-based liniments, oils and ointments are used at Long Na'ah as curatives (often during therapeutic massage) for ailments such as headache, stomach complaints, and influenza.

¹⁶¹ While numbers of women at Long Na'ah drink, few drink to the point of unequivocal and visible inebriation, and fewer still do so in public, that is, beyond the walls of their own, or a close friend's or relative's apartment.

a luxury hotel. I went with a young woman from Long Na'ah, and a female relative of hers who lived just outside Miri. The play treated the redemptive aspects of the Crucifixion through a dramatisation of human sins. The sin of adultery was represented by a sketch in which two young women dressed in black evening dresses posed sexily while drawing rather theatrically on (unlit) cigarettes of accentuated length. Soon they were 'picked up' by a preening young man, who escorted them off stage, one on each arm. (It should be said that this heavy-handed message was not received with excessive solemnity; the audience, including my friend from Long Na'ah, enjoyed the sketch a great deal and laughed at the actors' delivery.) Nevertheless, the feeling that moral dangers attend the habit of smoking, particularly for women, is real enough and the censure that accrues to the practice is a deterrent to most young Kayan women. In the context of this play, smoking was also associated with the moral dangers of town, including prostitution.

While the literature on smoking and gender has often noted that smoking is more common among men than among women, and that social disapproval of women smoking is widespread, one study of a Central Bornean community (a Lahanan community on the Balui River) presents a case in which women are both more likely to smoke, and smoke more heavily than men (Alexander, 1994). In this instance women also have control over the production and distribution of tobacco. Alexander notes that there are two common explanations of the cross-cultural observation that men are more likely to smoke than women. One explanation attributes this pattern to 'modernisation' and contact with dominant Western culture (included here are educational programs and the influence of Christian missionaries, both often directed toward women). The second explanation points to 'traditional' sex roles, including male power and greater access to resources (1994: 603-4). The latter argument notes the widespread disapproval of women smoking, and draws on the observation that, in societies such as the United States, increasing gender equality has led to an increase in the number of women who smoke. However, Alexander emphasises that disapproval of women smoking has often been directed specifically at cigarette smoking and has involved warnings about the moral dangers of Westernisation. As Alexander

argues, difficulties with these explanations include the observation that, in conjunction with increasing female access to formal education and wage labour, the media representations of women accompanying 'modernisation' may even encourage female smoking (as they did in the United States). It is also the case that, while differential access to resources may be a compelling explanation for gender differences in tobacco use in many societies, Alexander sees no reason to consider tobacco a scarce resource in subsistence economies where it is grown. However, in the case of subsistence economies, mass-produced cigarettes may well be expensive, and women are likely to have lesser access to the wage labour which would enable their purchase. Alexander notes that gender differences tend to accompany the commoditisation of tobacco products.

In addition to controlling the production, processing and supply of tobacco, Alexander says that Lahanan women in the Balui also prepare betel nut chews and rice wine. For the Lahanan all three things are involved in ritual and gift exchanges; in this community tobacco should not be sold for cash within the longhouse. Mature Lahanan women and men smoke the locally-produced cigars, while younger men smoke manufactured cigarettes, and younger women smoke the local cigars or do not smoke. For young people formal education has an influence on tobacco use, but Alexander also notes the role of symbolic values attached to the various forms of tobacco as a factor in gender and age differences in tobacco consumption. For example, for young Lahanan the local cigars are associated with other 'backward' customs such as indigenous forms of tattooing, while manufactured cigarettes represent a symbol of modernity for young men. In the light of this ethnographic evidence, Alexander argues that the two main explanations of gender differences in tobacco use outlined above 'should be linked and contextualised historically because Westernisation, or more accurately industrialisation, is simultaneously transforming both indigenous sex roles and local economies' (1994: 607-8).

These arguments, and the comparative ethnographic data, shed light on the sharp gender differences in tobacco use at Long Na'ah. In a community where: very little tobacco is locally produced; tobacco is almost exclusively consumed in the form of manufactured cigarettes which are firmly commoditised within the

community; women have less access to cash incomes than men; and there is a strong religious proscription of smoking, especially for women (something which has a history reaching back to the 1940s), it is not surprising that very few women smoke. Young women, in particular, form a uniform group in terms of tobacco consumption. In their shared experience of boarding school in downriver towns, as the recipients of messages about modernity (concerning appropriate clothing and habits), and as members of the Protestant SIB church, young women may be said to share certain 'dispositions' (in Bourdieu's sense). And, as he argues, those who share dispositions will want (or indeed reject) the same goods (Bourdieu, 1977: 63-64). Unlike the Balui community, tobacco is also no longer associated with indigenous ritual at Long Na'ah, and very rarely with gift exchange – two activities in which women played a fundamental role. Neither is the offering of tobacco a part of generalised hospitality – except in the form of the loose tobacco which women add to betel nut chews.

Patterns of tobacco consumption among men at Long Na'ah are influenced by their access to the cash which wage labour brings: male tobacco use at Long Na'ah reflects the age structure of men employed in the timber industry. However, the experience of work in the timber camps is itself also important. In conjunction with their value as a symbol of modernity, manufactured cigarettes (especially the internationally known brands) also have a certain masculine cachet which is related, among other things, to the driving of timber trucks. Smoking is one element in a complement of things: the wearing of sunglasses, jeans, and a 'pop-star' hairstyle. Combined with driving large timber trucks, these things define a certain kind of dash among young Kayan men. However, despite some elements of glamour, timber work also involves periods of tedious inactivity. Down-times at the camps can be characterised by boredom for young men, with little to do other than sit about in the camp canteen and smoke.

Recreational time spent in urban areas, particularly during the monthly work breaks, is also a factor in cigarette consumption by young men. Time spent in Miri is a factor in accruing knowledge about such things as brands and their connotations. Brand names, particularly 'Marlboro', and sometimes 'Salem', are occasionally used at the longhouse to designate manufactured cigarettes (although

these stop short of being generic terms). Young men are more likely, however, to clearly differentiate between brands. One young man gave me his analysis of the variable prestige attached to smoking different brands in the context of the monthly trips to Miri. In this milieu the 'cowboy' cigarette Marlboro won over the comparatively slick Dunhill. This was despite the fact that among town people Marlboro was sometimes denigrated as the smoking choice of 'the jobless'. This was the case, he remarked with a pointed irony, even though packets of Dunhill were at the time generally selling somewhat more cheaply than Marlboro. Despite controls on tobacco advertising in Malaysia, international marketing motifs such as the 'Marlboro Man' remain well known. As in other countries, advertising laws do not prevent tobacco companies producing bogus travel, or generalised 'lifestyle', promotions which use well-known cigarette brand names, but without mention of cigarettes or smoking. Young men at Long Na'ah sometimes also smoke Indonesian clove flavoured cigarettes, but for men under thirty these do not constitute a symbol of modernity, and lack the glamour of international brand-name cigarettes.

Parents at Long Na'ah and teachers at the primary school sometimes worry that the attractions of smoking, and other habits associated with timber work, will influence younger boys. Teachers occasionally deliver speeches to the community on issues to do with children's behaviour and health. Along with such topics as oral hygiene, good study habits, caring for school materials, and general bodily cleanliness, these speeches also address smoking, and particularly the danger that younger children (especially boys) may be influenced by the behaviour of their older siblings. Downriver high schools also take disciplinary action against students who smoke. Boys from Long Na'ah are occasionally suspended from the high school in Long Lama for smoking (and parents are sometimes required to accompany their sons on their return to school, to discuss their child's behaviour).

For a very small number of people from Long Na'ah, choices about smoking may intersect with socio-economic status in Sarawak more broadly. This may be the case for high ranking men, such as the headman, who spend a lot of time outside the community, and who, when absent, live middle class lives in Miri. Such men generally do not smoke. However, the role of the church is also

important here, and these choices about smoking may specifically reflect the style of leadership, and exclusive adherence to the SIB church, which are characteristic of Long Na'ah itself.¹⁶²

In marked contrast to smoking, the use of betel nut (*sepá*)¹⁶³ is neither an overwhelmingly male habit at Long Na'ah, nor a particularly risky one for women. Both women and men chew *sepá*, but women are more avid users than men. Despite the emphasis on dissuading young women from smoking, older women also heed the church's message on smoking. The requirement to refrain from smoking, and drinking in some circumstances, may be an element in the frequent use of *sepá* by older women at Long Na'ah. Betel nuts, although sometimes purchased outside the community, are also available from the *pinang* palms grown around the village. Lime to make up the betel quid may be bought, but some people still make their own supplies from a species of river snail, and betel leaves (pepper leaves) are usually picked from household or farm gardens. *Sepá* is therefore available even to women with little cash.

Sepá is an important ingredient in sociability among women, and very often accompanies their social gatherings. Sunday afternoons at the village, after the main morning church service, are times when women visit between apartments to chat and rest; at these times *sepá* is regularly consumed. However, there are some ways in which the use of *sepá* may be restricted. It is certainly not a habit to be taken into church services, and is less in evidence at the regional Christian conventions than at other times. At Long Na'ah, women's meetings, whether to do with church, or general community matters, are also less likely to be occasions for enjoying *sepá* than more straight-forwardly social events. While there is no overt censure of chewing *sepá* in public, the social events most likely to involve *sepá* are those held within the confines of the apartments.¹⁶⁴ Use of *sepá* is also much more common among women over thirty. Girls and young women

¹⁶² As a comparison, the SIB headman at the downriver longhouse of Uma Bawang is a smoker of the local cigars. This community maintained a loyalty to the Bungan cult into the 1970s and experienced a split in the community in the 1980s and 1990s between SIB and Catholic members. It is now represented by two headmen, one from each denomination.

¹⁶³ '*Sepá*' is the Kayan term for the betel quid as a whole, made up of the areca nut (*gahet*), pepper leaf (*ayep*), slaked lime (*apoh*), and loose tobacco (*sugi*).

¹⁶⁴ Women who work at the timber camps as cooks are subject to the same sorts of boredom as men, and some women told me that they chewed a lot more *sepá* while at the camps.

generally do not chew *sepá*, although they may occasionally chew the nut without the other ingredients. This is motivated by a desire to avoid the stained teeth of regular chewers (as it is the combination of ingredients which produces the typically scarlet juice of betel chewing). For young women, and young men, chewing *sepá*, and having stained teeth, is considered old fashioned and unattractive.

Sepá does not attract the overt forms of censure attached to smoking and drinking, but there are some points of intersection with both smoking and drinking. The betel quid contains tobacco, and the effects of chewing, though short-lived, approximate alcoholic intoxication: dizziness, a sensation of heat, and sweating. This sensation is referred to by Kayan as being 'drunk' (Malay: *mabuk*). The nuts themselves may vary in the intensity of their effect, but people also emphasise the role of the tobacco. Even older women who chew betel regularly make a point of how little tobacco they use within the quid, and cautioned other chewers of the strength of the tobacco. Although occasions for chewing *sepá* do sometimes coincide with drinking, combining the two is felt to be somewhat foolhardy, and likely to accentuate the effects of both substances. Being a little 'mabuk' from *sepá* is a sensation many women quite enjoy, however, and chewing is generally not accompanied by the furtiveness of drinking. One clear line is drawn, however, in the use of *sepá*: it is not something to be consumed by children, any more than are cigarettes or alcohol.

Alcohol

At Long Na'ah attitudes to drinking alcohol can be related to the nature of people's commitment to the theological and temporal aspects of the SIB church's program. Devout Christians do not drink, or drink only occasionally and moderately, and may counsel others to do the same. They are also concerned to point out to others the detrimental effects of drinking. However, those who take the teachings and routines of the church somewhat less seriously are also less likely to take a restrictive attitude to the consumption of alcohol. Such people positively value the sociability, and opportunities for offering hospitality, which are associated with

drinking. A typical argument is that 'a little bit is all right': an expression which seeks to highlight the enjoyable and socially beneficial aspects of drinking, while at the same time repudiating the frequent suggestion that drinking is necessarily a bad habit.

Patterns of alcohol consumption at Long Na'ah are subject to the homogenising influence of the church in a number of ways. The SIB church seeks not only to reinterpret drinking in the Christian terms of sin and salvation, drinking also comes within its wider program of promoting appropriate forms of behaviour. Thus Western European-derived notions of hygiene, manners, and suitable demeanour between the sexes are also implicated in SIB attitudes to drinking. Processes of homogenisation might also be seen, in rather straightforward terms, in the replacement of the locally-produced rice wine with bottles of manufactured rice spirit, and cans of stout and beer (including Guinness, Heineken, and other international brands). Homogenisation is not, of course, 'proved' simply by the presence of international brands; as Miller argues, 'identical goods may relate to quite different issues in varied local contexts', although he does own that brands (such as Coca Cola) 'are indeed global and gain their significance precisely as objectifications of a superordinate sense of global' (1995b: 21). For young Kayan at least, it is also clear enough that international brands do symbolise aspects of modernity. Despite these apparently homogenising influences, the practice of drinking at Long Na'ah has not been uniformly subsumed to the moral ideals of the church, and the replacement of old forms of (locally-made) drinks for new ones (the products of the industrial economy), has not been accompanied by an emptying-out of local meanings. The desire for certain things and the manner of their consumption continue to be linked to local social practices and classifications, and are not just the a product of 'a mechanical response to social manipulation...or the narrowing down of a universal...desire for objects to whatever happens to be available' (Appadurai, 1986: 29). There has been room for Kayan to use externally produced commodities in the creation (and recreation) of local social and cultural identity (Miller, 1995a: 156).

The emphasis on drinking in conjunction with certain modes of sociality and hospitality is an instance in which Kayan assert a local sense of appropriate

modes of consumption. Rather than being incorporated into everyday forms of hospitality, however, drinking is now more likely to be a part of events or occasions which have been specifically designated as celebrations. Relatively new cultural events, such as Christmas celebrations, provide an arena for the elaboration of a characteristically celebratory mode of drinking among Kayan. However, it is possible for more casual gatherings to adopt a celebratory mode, if the hosts so choose. In these decisions about the consumption of alcohol can be seen efforts to 'fix and challenge public meanings': those who value drinking in the context of events characterised by convivial sociality regularly draw together 'compliant fellows' for just such events (Douglas and Isherwood, 1979: 64-68). Those who do not value or promote convivial drinking (or drinking at all) demonstrate their own preference for a more ordered form of hospitality through the organisation of their own events.

The SIB church's agenda on alcohol has had a long history in the Baram and at Long Na'ah. As with tobacco and smoking, dissuading people of the Baram from the production and consumption of rice wine (*borak*) was a priority for the early BEM missionaries. In missionary writings, 'strong drink' tends to emerge as a greater evil than smoking. Southwell and the BEM regarded *borak* as both physically and morally harmful, and while arguments against smoking may initially have seemed somewhat obscure to people in the Baram, the missionaries found that the more manifest, and apparently injurious, effects of alcohol could be characterised with greater ease (Southwell, n.d.: 157). Scriptural authority against alcohol could also be invoked more unequivocally (Southwell, n.d.: 159). Most importantly, however, the renunciation of 'strong drink' operated as one of the markers of conversion to Christianity, and of the rejection of the 'old ways'. In his account of one visit to a Kelabit village in 1947, Southwell recorded the following:

...we had a good discussion on the usual points of Christian practice. I did not raise the matter of 'borak' till just at the end of the discussion, as I wanted the matter of forsaking sin to have time to sink in. Then I told them that next day I would talk about things that cause and encourage sin in our lives, especially 'borak'...That evening also I had another good meeting and spoke on Matthew 22 – the need to put off the old ways of superstition, and to follow the

teaching of God's word – the Bible, with special reference to strong drink (Southwell, n.d.: 159).

As with early processes of conversion to Christianity, the decision to cease making rice wine seems to have been taken on a community basis at some Kayan villages. Southwell records such a decision taken at Long Tebangan, the Kayan community upriver from Long Na'ah, in January of 1949 (the community had decided to embrace Christianity in 1947):

We had a meeting of the Deacons and village committee, and they decided officially to give up making 'borak' (rice beer), and they also decided to start taking up collections at the Sunday service (Southwell, n.d.: 222).

Today the community of Long Na'ah does not produce rice wine, although some Kayan communities downriver from Long Keseh, including Long Laput, do continue to produce it. Long Na'ah's exclusive membership of the SIB church is important in this.¹⁶⁵ To the best of my knowledge, the production of *borak* simply does not occur at Long Na'ah. It is not even made surreptitiously. During my fieldwork, there was only one occasion on which I was offered local rice wine by anyone from Long Na'ah, and on that occasion the wine was the Iban *tuak*. The bottle of *tuak* had been bought from an Iban man in Lapok, and was consumed, not at the village, but at the logging camp nearby. On one other occasion a bottle of *borak*, purchased from the local Penan community, was used to treat a young boy at Long Na'ah with a painful stomach ailment. The wine was administered sparingly to the boy as a painkiller/curative after a session of deep and obviously painful abdominal massage. (Kayan do not allow children to drink in other circumstances.) As with the local tobacco, BEM missionising and later SIB preaching have been decisive factors in halting the production and consumption of rice wine at Long Na'ah.

Nevertheless, people at Long Na'ah frequently consume commercially available forms of alcohol. These include the ubiquitous manufactured rice spirit (arrack); several brands of stout, including Guinness; a range of bottled spirits generally referred to as 'brandy'; and cans of beer. Bottles of arrack and cans of

¹⁶⁵ Alexander (1994: 607) notes that 'unlike tobacco, rice wine is positively valued in Malaysian

stout are the forms of alcohol most regularly sold through the village shops at Long Na'ah (the 'brandies' are not usually sold in this way, but are brought into the community on special occasions, such as Christmas). It is the manufactured rice spirit, mixed with a cola soft drink, which is the most commonly consumed alcoholic drink at Long Na'ah. One brand name has become a generic term for all such rice spirits: 'Old Chinese Man Brand' (*Cap Apek*) – this is Kayanised as '*Sap Apé*'.

At Long Na'ah, trends in the consumption of alcohol have followed patterns similar to tobacco. The consumption of the older forms of both (the local cigars and *borak*) have declined markedly, and all but disappeared in the case of *borak*. But the practices of smoking tobacco and drinking alcohol continue, via the products of an external industrial economy. However, in each case the shift does not represent an uncomplicated progression from consumption of locally-produced, handmade products, to consumption of mass-produced manufactured ones, in line with the seemingly inexorable pressures of commoditisation and expanding mass consumption. If this were the case, it might be expected that there would be little variation in the manner in which different upriver cultural groups now consume these things. Patterns of consumption do vary, however, including between Kayan communities themselves. And these differences seem to be associated with religious affiliation. Communities which have had a more mixed denominational experience of Christianity than Long Na'ah (and which now have both SIB and Catholic congregations), or communities which retained an allegiance to the revivalist Bungan Cult into the 1970s, have not repudiated *borak* to the same extent as Long Na'ah.¹⁶⁶ The preference for mass-produced cigarettes and alcoholic beverages at communities such as Long Na'ah can be related as much to the influence of early evangelical missionising, and some aspects of ongoing SIB preaching, as to processes of commoditisation and increasing mass consumption. Old-style cigars and *borak* carry with them the legacy of Christian preaching on the evils of the 'old ways', including those of the pre-Christian

media portrayals of ethnic minorities as a symbol of longhouse hospitality'.

¹⁶⁶ At communities where *borak* is consumed, people are aware of the proscriptive pressures against its consumption. This may emerge in a joking way – someone might lean over and look in another's cup of *borak* and joke: 'What's that? "sweet milk"?' (*susu manis*). (This example is from

'pagan' religion. In this instance it is the church which emerges as the overtly homogenising power.

Nevertheless, the preference for manufactured liquor over *borak* does owe something to the attractions of the modern. One man at Long Na'ah suggested to me that, although *borak* was no longer produced at Long Na'ah because of the conversion to Christianity, some people also looked upon the locally made rice wine as 'simple' and thus preferred the commercially available liquor. When I commented that some people elsewhere in the Baram and in the Balui still drank *borak*, he suggested that perhaps they didn't have any money. *Borak* does carry a sense of the past and 'old things' at Long Na'ah. Early community conversions to Christianity involved not only injunctions against alcohol and tobacco, but also dramatic programs of destruction of the community's 'fetishes and charms' (including objects associated with agrarian ritual) (Southwell, n.d.: 178).¹⁶⁷ This linking of a renunciation of alcohol and tobacco with the expunging of certain categories of Kayan material culture may have encouraged a sense that products from outside the community were somehow preferable, or at least safer. In the contemporary community of Long Na'ah, there is little material evidence of past religious practices. Those objects that do exist are often diffidently, or even derisively, referred to as 'old things' or 'former things' (*barang dulu*).¹⁶⁸

Despite the preference at Long Na'ah for manufactured forms of alcohol, there is a sense in which the most frequently consumed of these, *sap apé*, has taken on some of the qualities of *borak*, even though *sap apé* is without *borak's* associations with the past religion, and 'old things'. The label on bottles of *sap apé* (i.e., *Cap Apek*) depicts an elderly Chinese man with flowing beard and a staff. Other popular brands carry an illustration of a ginseng root, and thus have

Long Laput.)

¹⁶⁷ Some aspects of Kayan culture were actively encouraged by BEM missionaries, such as the graceful form of female dancing.

¹⁶⁸ Such as those to do with '*kayah*' (Kayan 'medicine' or 'poison'): a range of practices deriving from pre-Christian Kayan beliefs and including various kinds of malignant, protective, and amatory charms, involving use of a range of substances. Some village shops even sell odd collections of objects associated with past ritual practices: a plastic bag might contain a hornbill casque, an old-style man's earring carved from a similar casque, bears' claws and teeth, pigs' teeth, seed pods, shell discs, packets of mica-like stones, and other kinds of smooth dark stones. When I asked one shopkeeper about them she was diffident about the collection, saying they were just 'old things'.

associations with Chinese herbal medicine. In Sarawak arrack comes in two kinds: white arrack (*arrack putih*) which is clear alcohol, and 'medicinal' arrack (*arrack ubat*) which is a brown liquor. It is the *arrack ubat* – the additional ingredient being simply listed on the bottle as 'ubat' – which is most frequently drunk at Long Na'ah. 'Ubat' is a many-faceted word in Malay, and in Kayan usage. Most simply, it means 'medicine', (e.g. *ubat batuk*: 'cough medicine'). However, Kayan also use 'ubat' when referring to something with supernatural properties, such as various kinds of charms, or powerful herbal potions.¹⁶⁹ Beyond its alcoholic content, then, *sap apé* (as with the thick brown liquor, stout) holds the suggestion of an additional charge. At the least, *sap apé* has suggestions of health-giving properties for some drinkers at Long Na'ah. (I have already noted an instance at Long Na'ah where *borak* was administered specifically as a curative.) Although it does not occur at Long Na'ah, Kayan from other communities who do drink *borak* usually consider the intoxicating effects enjoyable and the following sleepiness beneficial. Others feel *borak*, and other forms of alcohol, may have a harsh effect on their stomachs, and find that their tendency to fall straight off to sleep after half a glass is a bit inconvenient.)

Restrictive Modes of Consumption

The moral-ideological program of the contemporary SIB church does not, of course, condone the consumption of mass-produced forms of alcohol. The church's proscriptive stance, though it is not successful in halting consumption of alcohol at Long Na'ah, does influence the manner of its consumption. Drinking is by no means an infrequent practice at Long Na'ah, but it is often characterised by various kinds of concealment and clandestine behaviour. There are occasions, however, when more public and celebratory kinds of drinking do occur. On the other hand, for very devout members of the community, including the lay church leaders, abstinence may be the logical response to the church's teachings on alcohol. Varying attitudes to alcohol consumption are also reflected in the choices

¹⁶⁹ The word is also used in Malay to refer to chemical preparations such as pesticides or toiletries, particularly those which have some 'active' ingredient.

people make about suitable ways of expressing hospitality and marking events which they feel call for celebration.

As with smoking, the church offers frequent lessons on the moral dangers of drinking and suggests that the practice is not only reprehensible in itself, but that it is also likely to lead to further sinful behaviour, especially if a person drinks frequently and to the point of inebriation. At Long Na'ah people who do not drink, and some people who do, make statements against drinking, or at least in favour of moderation. These statements have both a moral element and a concern that drinking to excess is bad for the health. There is also a feeling that drinking tends to compromise appropriate behaviour. Women, even if they themselves drink, may be annoyed with drinking husbands, particularly if their drinking interferes with a schedule – to travel, for example. Women with young adult sons may also express approval of their sons if they 'do not want to drink' and 'do not want to get drunk'. In the context of these comments, women may make pejorative comparisons with other young men in the community who they feel drink too much. On one occasion a man in the community commented that it was good I had come to Long Na'ah, as it was a 'safe place' with not too many drunken people. On another occasion after I had spent an evening with my adoptive 'aunt' and her friends, who liked to have a few drinks, her brother-in-law quietly admonished me for drinking 'hard' drink, which he considered a bad thing. As already noted, drinking and smoking, or abstinence in relation to these habits, may be taken as a sign of the strength or otherwise of one's Christian faith. An individual who rededicates themselves to Christianity and the church after a period of laxness is expected to show signs of their renewed faith in their everyday life, including in their drinking habits. Men at Long Na'ah sometimes said to me that they had been 'bad' in the past, meaning that they drank heavily, and made a point of their present moderate drinking behaviour. Children at Long Na'ah, echoing the lessons they have learnt from church services, sometimes grow indignant with their parents and other adults who they see drinking.

The relationship between specifically Protestant theological models and attitudes to alcohol and drinking have been treated by Antze (1987) in the course of his analysis of Alcoholics Anonymous. Some strands of SIB preaching on both

alcohol and smoking echo his observations of AA philosophy. Common to both is the Protestant emphasis on the sin of pride or egotism, and the notion that a realisation of one's miserable human condition, when accompanied by the saving message of the Gospel, leads to an awakening of faith. SIB preaching continually juxtaposes 'the terrors of "The Law" ...[with] the consolations of the Gospel' (Antze, 1987: 175). In contrast to AA, however, which does not treat drinking as a sin, the SIB church, with all its moral fervour and aim of 'rescuing sinners from the clutches of the demon rum' (Antze, 1987: 173) is firmly within the tradition of evangelical preaching.

Trends in smoking and drinking have in some ways followed similar trajectories at Long Na'ah, but the two things belong to differing proscriptive schemes. For women, drinking does not carry the same extreme prohibition which adheres to smoking. However, women at Long Na'ah are careful about where and when they drink, and may be mindful of their demeanour while drinking. Underlying this cautiousness is the wider program of the church concerning appropriate forms of behaviour. Included here are notions of femininity, derived largely from Western European traditions. That women who drink may be morally suspect is a notion of some longevity in Western cultural constructions of women, as is the figure of the secret female drinker (Gurr, 1987: 229). However, the SIB church is certainly not the only source of these ideas. In her treatment of gender difference and tobacco use in Central Borneo, Alexander notes that 'models of appropriate behaviour for women, created by the elite of modernising states and drawing on Islamic as well as Christian values, are disseminated through formal education and the media' (1994: 607). These models affect views of both smoking and drinking for women.¹⁷⁰

Drinking among women at Long Na'ah is largely a habit of mature women (who are over thirty, or who are married with children). Girls and young women, including those who are recently married, rarely drink. Despite the position taken by the church, drinking has associations, for at least some women in the

¹⁷⁰ However, gender differentiation in the consumption of alcohol, including the belief that the consumption of strong drink, and the associated inebriated behaviour, are less appropriate for women than men, is not confined to Western traditions or to those associated with the world religions (see for example Ngokwey, 1987).

community, with achieving the status of a mature married woman (with children). Even older women, however, are more likely to drink within the confines of their own, or a close friend's, apartment than in more public places. Women who drink often do so with a small group of female friends. Whether in the course of a usual week, or during seasonal community festivities, women and men may drink together, but drinking does frequently occur in single sex groups.¹⁷¹ In practice, knowledge of this kind of drinking cannot really be kept completely private, but women do take some pains to do so. Someone may say quietly to a friend 'do you want to drink something hard?' and then arrange, with a surreptitious air, the purchase of a bottle of *sap apé* and some Coca Cola. Since everyone knows which shops are the most frequent suppliers of alcohol, trips to these on a Sunday are easily observed and noted by others in the community. Attempts may therefore be made to conceal bottles of *sap apé*. When drinking quietly in an apartment, *sap apé* may be drunk openly enough, with bottles of the liquor and cans of Coca Cola resting on the floor beside the drinkers (each having her own cup of the mixed drink). But on other occasions, the alcohol may be purposefully mixed in an anonymous plastic jug with a lid. For women, trips to the logging camps where their husbands are working, and where they have accommodation, may also occasionally have a suggestion of getting away to have a few drinks. But men who work there must be careful of drinking too heavily at the camps, as drunken behaviour may not recommend them to their bosses; young men therefore wait for their monthly breaks in town to indulge in heavier drinking. Social rank also plays some role in drinking among women. High ranking women are less likely to join in the less inhibited kinds of drinking, including during festive times, such as Christmas. Time spent away from the longhouse at the farms during harvest does, however, provide an exception to this.

It should be noted here that *sap apé* is also drunk in less clandestine circumstances. It may be offered to guests at large public gatherings, such as during the speech-making at weddings. But even here there may be a formal kind

¹⁷¹ Although I did drink in mixed groups, and spoke to men about drinking, I more frequently drank with women. Consequently my account does focus mostly on women's drinking here. On invitation, during the convivial drunkenness of Christmas, I was occasionally an anomalous and slightly discomfited participant in men's drinking groups.

of concealment: guests who are likely to accept such a drink are judiciously targeted with a large lidded metal kettle containing the mixed drink. On these occasions, large quantities of boxed fruit juices and canned soft drinks are also invariably distributed to all guests. It would not seem quite right at these times to be handling the bottles of *sap apé* themselves, particularly if such speechifying is held in the public domain of the longhouse verandahs.

Although drinking may at times involve concealment, the times when people drink are often predictable, given that drinking at Long Na'ah is associated with the routines of the working week. In Douglas' volume on drinking, several writers address the notion that drinks and drinking may construct the social world. Gusfield (1987) treats the relationship between drinking and the 'division of time into periods of different quality as well as function' in modern, organisational society (p.73). Clearly distinguishing the weekend from the week suggests both a routinisation of time and a contrast between work time and leisure. Gusfield describes how drinks and drinking, and particularly alcohol, serve to mark off these different periods and activities. At Long Na'ah the working week and the weekend do have different qualities and functions. The schedule of the church contributes substantially to this routinisation of time, with the many church services and meetings being held at regular times and on the same day of the week (a written schedule is posted in the church). The work schedules of the timber camps also contribute to the weekly routine, and men return on Sundays if they can. Marked by Christian tradition as the rest-day, for the Long Na'ah community Sunday is a day for leisure when most people have returned from the rice farms and the timber camps to enjoy the sociability of the longhouse, and to attend the morning church service, (although not everyone is inclined to attend every such Sunday service). For some people Sunday afternoon is also a time for drinking and relaxation before the return to work on Monday. Some of the clandestine aspects of drinking can be attributed to the conjunction of the weekly work routine, which makes Sunday the usual day for relaxation, and the Christian symbolism of the day, which mitigates against public forms of drinking.

For younger men who work for the timber companies, the division between work and leisure is marked by the monthly work breaks which they

spend with friends in Miri or other towns. Drinking for them is thus often an urban activity. At Long Na'ah, young men in their late teens and early twenties are much more likely to drink (and drink to the point of visible inebriation) than other groups. In contrast, many young women do not drink at all. SIB preaching tends to see drinking as a special problem among young men. Sermons delivered during the 1995 SIB Youth Convention emphasised drinking and smoking as adverse symptoms of development. During one such sermon, the preacher amused the congregation by offering caricatures of the slouching, smoking young man and primping young woman who indiscriminately accept everything 'modern' and 'fashionable'. The SIB Easter play which I attended in Miri not only linked the sin of adultery with the vision of young women smoking, but it also dramatised the sins of drunkenness and murder by using a group of young men dressed in the 'loafer' style. In Malaysia 'loafers' are groups of young men who 'loaf' about shopping centres, especially the new highrise centres, wear big baggy clothes and baseball caps (backwards, in the North American style), and are generally presumed to harbour criminal intentions.¹⁷² They are a topic of some public interest and concern: during the time I was in Sarawak stories about loafers appeared frequently in the newspapers.

Expansive Modes of Consumption

Alongside the restrictive forms of alcohol consumption at Long Na'ah, which are connected to the proscriptions of the church, are some more expansive modes of consumption. During the festive times of Christmas and New Year, in particular, there is greater tolerance of drinking, people drink more, and drinking is more likely to occur in publicly convivial circumstances. Weddings may also be occasions for public drinking. Generally the longhouse verandahs are not considered suitable places to drink but they may become so at these times. However, public or community-wide celebrations, such as Christmas, are not the only occasions on which people enjoy less restrictive forms of alcohol

¹⁷² Analyses of the social, cultural and psychological roles and meanings of shopping malls, particularly in a North American context, have noted the importance of malls to adolescent

consumption. As I have already noted, attitudes toward alcohol consumption vary between individuals and households, and these attitudes may be attributed, in part, to differing levels of commitment to church teachings. Those people who do not feel the need to follow church teachings very closely may choose more convivial ways of expressing hospitality and marking events which they feel call for celebration. Alcohol is likely to be an important ingredient in such celebrations. However, more devout members of the community may choose more formal, and sober, modes of hospitality and celebration. In the context of the more expansive occasions, whether community-wide celebrations or convivial gatherings held in individual apartments, the offering of *sap apé* becomes a central element of hospitality. Descriptions of two households at Long Na'ah, one which follows the restrictive, and the other the expansive, mode of alcohol consumption demonstrates this contrast. An account of Christmas and New Year celebrations at Long Na'ah also reveals the nature of more publicly celebratory events which involve expansive modes of alcohol consumption.

Taman Kajan's is a middle-ranking household, and his apartment is located in the lower longhouse at Long Na'ah.¹⁷³ He is the eldest of several siblings who also have apartments among the fifteen which make up the lower longhouse. Taman Kajan is recognised as an important man in the community and as a prominent member of the local church. He is a lay leader in the church and is concerned with evangelising within the community, being aware that not all people at Long Na'ah have made a firm commitment to Christianity and the church. Taman Kajan never misses a church service and rarely leaves before the end of the lengthy services. Along with the village headman and the *Penghulu*, he often plays a significant role in the formal aspects of community events, such as the presentation of prizes at school sports days. He is also an active member of community committees, and is known at Long Na'ah for his generosity and acts of charity towards people of lesser means in the village.

Taman Kajan's household consists of he and his wife Ubung, their adolescent children Dennis and Sepai, and their primary-school-aged daughter

subcultures (Langman, 1992: 58-61).

¹⁷³ His is the apartment in which I was resident during the period of my fieldwork

Ronila. His adult son Kajan is absent much of the time working in a distant timber camp, but his wife Puyang, and their two small children, Unyang and La'ing, live in Taman Kajan's apartment, as does Ubung's elderly stepfather, Aban Ing. Taman Kajan also has four adult daughters, two of them are married to Chinese men with positions in the timber industry: these daughters no longer reside at Long Na'ah. The two single adult daughters are also away working in the timber camps.

The character of hospitality, and daily life, in Taman Kajan's household may be understood in the light of his dedication to the teachings of the church, and his consequent rejection of alcohol and smoking. Although Taman Kajan's apartment is at times the site of generously offered hospitality, this generosity is more often offered to people visiting the village than to close neighbours. Whenever SIB pastors, or other people connected with the SIB church, visit the community, Taman Kajan invariably invites them to his home, for cool drinks or a meal. Hospitality here is friendly and gracious, but could only rarely be described as convivial. When Penan families occasionally come to Long Na'ah to sell rattan baskets and other goods, Taman Kajan sometimes offers them accommodation in the front room of his apartment, although in these instances there is little formal hospitality involved, more an air of practicality.¹⁷⁴ Similar, if somewhat warmer, hospitality is offered to travelling salesmen. None of these occasions involve alcohol, and neither household members nor guests smoke inside Taman Kajan's apartment.

However, there is a slight relaxation of this regime during Christmas festivities. During the period I lived in this household, there was only one occasion on which alcohol was consumed in Taman Kajan's apartment, and this was during Christmas. Taman Kajan's son Kajan had returned to the longhouse for the festivities, and on one occasion *sap apé* was provided for a number of Kajan's friends. This was a genuinely convivial occasion, the drinking being accompanied by singing and joking. However, Taman Kajan did not participate in either the drinking or merry-making. Significantly, a (nominal) effort was made to conceal the alcohol on this occasion: the *sap apé* was decanted into a kettle. Bottles of *sap*

¹⁷⁴ Other households may offer Penan accommodation in one of their sheds, next to the longhouse.

apé were not left sitting openly by the drinkers' sides, as they may be in other households.

In contrast to Taman Kajan's household, the flavour of his much younger sister Purai's household is much less formal. Here there are frequent, warmly convivial gatherings which involve the consumption of generous quantities of alcohol. Guests at Purai's apartment also smoke if they feel like it. (Taman Kajan was never one of his sister's guests on these occasions.) Purai's more *laissez faire* attitude to alcohol consumption is reflective of a less rigorous attachment to the church, although she and her husband and children attended Sunday services frequently enough. Unlike Taman Kajan's apartment, which was often very quiet, Purai's apartment had a remarkable attraction for many people at Long Na'ah. Despite the frequent consumption of pork and alcohol there, this included several of the young Malay school teachers. At Purai's apartment the emphasis is on sociability with neighbours and friends, rather than on the requirement to offer formal hospitality to visitors. Both Taman Kajan and his sister run small shops, but while Purai sells alcohol and cigarettes, Taman Kajan does not. Purai's front room is often filled with visitors who sit in companionable circles around a dish of pork, glasses of *sap apé* beside them. On one occasion I was with a group of men and women who, over a few cans of beer, were discussing the topic of drinking during the up-coming Christmas festivities. They claimed, in a somewhat tongue-in-cheek fashion, that they would not drink too much, and laughingly invoked a 'one can, one person' maxim. Purai's small daughter admonished her mother and the other adults that drinking was bad. Purai attempted to soothe her daughter by reassuring her that 'a little is all right'.

Apart from the comparatively frequent occasions on which alcohol is consumed at Purai's apartment, it is also the site of a significant amount of butchering. (Purai's husband Anyie was one of the village's most successful hunters of wild pig; he also caught quantities of fish, deer, and other game.) During the time I lived at Long Na'ah, Purai and Anyie's apartment, in the local terrain of sociability, gradually came into view as something of an oasis. A forcible as well as hospitable woman, Purai also took some delight and pride in her unusual status as a woman who enjoyed pig hunting. This apartment was

defined in significant part by the person of Purai. Her husband, Anyie, was also a very well-liked man in the village, chiefly for his generosity and good humour. The nature of the household was also strongly defined by the relationship between Purai and her husband. To say that these two people, as spouses, operated as a more than usually close team in matters of livelihood, is to capture only one dimension of the bond between them. More than this, Purai and her husband shared a humour-filled and demonstrably affectionate bond of love. The nature of the hosts, and the promise of the relaxed (but also at times exciting) conviviality to be had in this household lie behind the desires which drew people to it.

At one point in *The World of Goods*, Douglas and Isherwood define consumption as a ritual activity, but one in which:

[T]he individual needs compliant fellows if she is to succeed in changing the public categories. She must ensure their attending her rituals and inviting her to theirs. [In this way she] obtains a judgement from them on the fitness of the choice she makes of consumer goods for celebrating particular occasions as well as a judgement on the fitness of the occasion to be celebrated (1979: 67-68).

At Long Na'ah, Purai's house provided a very different judgement of fit occasions to celebrate, and how to go about it, than did the house of Taman Kajan. Not the least of these differences was the generous supply of alcohol in one and the teetotalism of the other. And at Purai's apartment, a good day's hunting was certainly a fit enough occasion for drawing people together. Purai's household resisted those messages which threatened to compromise their enjoyment of a certain style of sociability, focusing on the preparation and consumption of food (largely meat), as well as the consumption of (alcoholic) drink. In this Purai and Anyie did indeed have, in the form of many guests, a good supply of 'compliant fellows'.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵ Sadly, the bond between Purai and Anyie came to an end with the death of her husband not long before I left Long Na'ah. Anyie's death from a stroke (at the conclusion of a successful pig hunt) came as a severe shock to the whole community. The days of mourning which followed his death were heavy ones indeed, but towards the end of this initial period of grief the atmosphere among the many mourners who came to Purai's apartment nevertheless returned gradually to one of quiet celebration.

Apart from households such as Purai's, a counterpoint to restrictive modes of consumption at Long Na'ah is also provided by a brief account of the community-wide festivities of Christmas and New Year. (Descriptions here are based largely on the Christmas of 1994.) During these occasions the usual checks on drinking are temporarily relaxed: alcohol consumption shifts to a festive mode. Weddings and engagements also provide arenas for more relaxed approaches to alcohol, but these occasions are not necessarily community-wide affairs, and the behaviour of guests may draw the censure of people not directly involved. A more expansive style of consumption is not, however, extended to tobacco during the festivities; those who smoke continue to do so, but there is no relaxation of the prohibitions on smoking for women.

Christmas at Long Na'ah is a time of homecoming and sociability; a time for people to return to the longhouse from work in remote timber camps, and from life and work in the towns. It is a time for reuniting with family and friends. It is also a prelude to the hard work of harvest, a labour shared to some extent by people returning to the longhouse for the annual Christmas celebrations. For a community in which the church occupies a conspicuous position, Christmas is far less of a religious event at Long Na'ah than might be expected, even though the church service on Christmas morning is a major and well-attended event, suffused with an air of occasion, for which people dress in their very best clothes.¹⁷⁶

Stretching over three nights and days (in the past it has lasted for more than a week) Christmas is a non-stop mixture of tournament, theatre, play and party. Basketball matches and *sepak takraw* tournaments compete for both spectators and participants with women's and men's dance competitions; party games coincide with comic sketches (including burlesques of the putative behaviour of the community's Penan neighbours), while eating, drinking and disco dancing take the celebrations into the night. Although there are services and other programs, such as carol singing, organised by the church, and some efforts are made to impose the bureaucratic forms of organisation so characteristic of other church events, at Christmas most of the community are concerned more

¹⁷⁶ Women wear necklaces of Kayan glass beads (and the heaviest of their gold chains) which for much of the year they store away; makeup also marks the occasion.

with general celebration. The extent to which people look forward to this annual time of festivities, and relaxation – closely connected to the freer consumption of alcohol – is indicated by the frequency with which, during the year, people nostalgically recall Christmases past and lament, with a certain self-deprecation, that they are ‘longing’ or ‘pining’ (Kayen *liveng*; Malay *rindu*) for the next period of celebration.¹⁷⁷

There were some bureaucratic elements to the Christmas of 1994 at Long Na'ah. A timetable of events, and list of rules to be followed, were posted outside the headman's apartment some days before Christmas – but the convivial flavour of the celebrations was not compromised. One of the central activities of Christmas is a continual round of visiting between apartments, which occurs concurrently with the organised program of sporting events and other entertainments. Accepting drinks and cakes (fried Kayan rice cakes and manufactured biscuits), or other snacks¹⁷⁸ is obligatory on these visits, and there is an expectation that guests will not move on to the next apartment before their drinks are finished. The fact that after even a very short stint of visiting it is understood that most visitors are near to bursting does not excuse one from making a valiant attempt to finish a proffered drink (this shared joke is, in effect, on everyone, and enjoyed by all). At least in the early stages of the three days of Christmas 1994, these drinks were as frequently boxed fruit juices or canned soft drinks as alcoholic drinks. But as the celebrations progressed, relatively formal hospitable processes gave way to more warmly convivial eating and drinking, and at this stage, it was alcohol which was more likely to be offered (most frequently *sap apé* mixed with a cola drink). The ‘brandies’ (neat or mixed with cola), which are not frequently drunk at other times of the year, are a specifically celebratory drink at Christmas. (High ranking men are more likely to drink these, or

¹⁷⁷ Hazan's (1987) account of the way drinks and drinking may construct ideal worlds has parallels with the experience of Christmas at Long Na'ah. Christmas provides a break from the everyday worries of gaining a livelihood, symbolises the warmth and excitement of convivial sociality, and is a prelude to the hard work of harvest.

¹⁷⁸ Jelly sweets, preserved Chinese fruits (plums and citrus), pumpkin seeds, small slices of sponge cake, layer cake (*kueh lapis*), coated peanuts, shredded dried fish, and prawn crisps. (Some Australian raisins which I had brought as gifts some time earlier were also added to this array of snacks.)

international brand spirits, than *sap ape*.) Stout and beer are also drunk at Christmas, but to a lesser extent.

Both women and men enjoy the opportunity to drink at Christmas without the usual prohibitions, but it is young men who are the most visibly inebriated group during the celebrations. They may still be subject to reprovals for this, however, especially if it is accompanied by overly disruptive behaviour, as opposed to merely effusive and humorous kinds of drunkenness. Other accounts of societies in which drinking has a central role in certain forms of sociality have also noted that, while tipsiness may be tolerated and even valued, the disruptive effects of thorough-going drunkenness are not (Ngokwey, 1987: 114-115). Similarly to Ngokwey's account of Lele consumption of palm wine, Kayan also disapprove of people drinking alone: alcohol is above all a social drink.

During the 1994 Christmas, the convivial atmosphere attendant upon drinking was echoed in the comic relief to be gained from the round of Christmas entertainments. These offered plenty of opportunity to dress in humorous costumes and perform in often ribald sketches.¹⁷⁹ Such sketches were provided largely by adults; however, a group of small girls also offered a display of rap dancing. These events were in contrast to the more scholastic atmosphere of the sports tournaments which were umpired by teachers from the village primary school.¹⁸⁰ With the aid of borrowed (stuffed) brassieres, beads and makeup, and additional absurd accessories, such as fish traps for hats, some men enjoyed the jokey exhibitionism of cross-dressing as they wandered about the village.¹⁸¹ Pig fat- and sugarcane-eating contests, balloon bursting competitions, and slippery pole climbing offered their own kinds of comedy, while Kayan dance and bead-threading competitions provided more sober forms of entertainment. During Christmas there is something of an expectation that even those groups of people, such as married women with children, who might normally maintain a comparatively reserved bodily demeanour, must participate in at least some of the entertainments. For shyer women there may be no escape. Along with this

¹⁷⁹ An element of masquerade was a common aspect of costumes worn at Christmas.

¹⁸⁰ The bureaucratic strand of the proceedings was also represented by periodic prize-giving ceremonies held throughout the three days of Christmas.

¹⁸¹ Women's cross-dressing was confined to one of the comic sketches.

expectation of public participation, and a loosened grip on one's inhibitions is a more moral sense that, however inept you may be, you will 'do your best'.

Humour laced with a tinge of horror (at least for children) is the aim of 'hudo': a form of pantomime in which the actors wear grotesque masks.¹⁸² Apart from the masks, one such performance involved the use of voluminous body-coverings made of cobbled-together sheets of hessian, and rice bags; stuffing provided the figures with lumpy hunch backs. Apart from the more meticulously carved and painted wooden masks, the *hudo*' performers also made improvised masks in the form of alarming faces painted onto upturned winnowing trays, or produced frightening eyeless visages by swaddling their heads and adding enormous snouts made of hessian. (In one case, a Coca Cola can provided a glowing red tip for one such snout.) To the syncopated beat of brass gongs and recorded *sapé*¹⁸³ music, a procession of five or six of these grotesque figures danced a shambling version of one of the Kayan dance forms (resembling a loose conga line). This was punctuated by the individual figures dancing a whirling, mock-frightening dance to the beat of the gongs. In addition to *hudo*', and the more organised comic sketches, Christmas entertainments also include a form of more improvised clowning (*kiso*), often involving two characters who play to each other to elicit the audience's laughter.

If anything, the New Year celebrations, which followed on from Christmas with but a few days' respite in between, were an opportunity for somewhat heavier drinking. Without the requirements of the more organised Christmas program, New Year was a more undelineated affair during which women, as well as men, found time to drink companionably with their friends (generally in same-sex groups). New Year's eve was an all-night occasion at Long Na'ah, with the generators running from dusk to dawn to light the village. A church service was held from around 8 p.m. until midnight, but was not well attended, and by 11p.m. only the lay leaders of the church, who were directly involved in the service,

¹⁸² The Kayan word *hudo*' refers to a form of wooden mask, as well as to the performance. Such masks were used by Kayan in the past both for entertainments and in the context of ceremonies associated with the old Kayan religion. *Hudo*' thus also has the sense of an image suffused with a supernatural charge. For examples of *hudo*', or 'monster faces' depicted on Kayan shields, see Sellato, 1992: 26-27, figures 46-48; also see Sellato, plates 37, 38 and 41.

¹⁸³ The Kayan/Kenyah stringed instrument

remained. The New Year itself was welcomed in with fireworks, the booming of an improvised canon, and by the deafening noise of an orchestra of screaming chainsaws. A group of seven or eight young men moved up and down the longhouse verandahs, a revving chainsaw apiece,¹⁸⁴ filling the air with the blaring sound and the acrid smell of oil. In a much more desultory fashion, the celebrations continued the following night. And one diehard group of drinkers were still imbibing on the second of January, at a time when the holiday was considered over by most people. By that time, some people had already returned to the farms and the harvest had begun.

Changes in the consumption of alcohol and tobacco at Long Na'ah have followed some similar patterns. The older forms of these things (cigars made from locally-grown tobacco, and the locally-produced rice wine, *borak*) are now rarely consumed at the community. Smoking and drinking now proceed largely via the products of an external industrial economy. These changes do not, however, represent an uncomplicated shift from the consumption of locally-produced, handmade products, to consumption of mass-produced manufactured ones (reflecting an apparently inexorable pressure from processes of commoditisation and expanding mass consumption). Importantly, contemporary patterns in the consumption of alcohol and tobacco at Long Na'ah may be linked to the past proselytising efforts of the Borneo Evangelical Mission, and to the ongoing teachings of the local SIB church. The consumption of both alcohol and tobacco fall within the proscriptive efforts of this church and, in the most vociferous forms of these prohibitions, smoking and drinking may be cast as indicators of sin, and even a lack of Christian faith. The older style of Kayan cigars, and the Kayan rice wine *borak*, also retain a legacy of past preaching concerning the need to break with old pre-Christian ways.

Although the consumption of both alcohol and tobacco are proscribed in various ways at Long Na'ah, they do occupy somewhat different positions in the proscriptive scheme operating there; and their consumption varies according to age, gender, and position within the community. Thus lay members of the local

¹⁸⁴ With blades removed.

church, as well as the pastors, are the most dedicated non-smokers and, in some cases, teetotallers; while young men who work in the timber camps are among the heaviest smokers and drinkers. For women, smoking is a habit which carries a greater moral risk than drinking. However, despite the influence of external forces, people at Long Na'ah are not simply subject to processes of globalisation, nor the obedient followers of church injunction. The consumption of alcohol may have changed in both form and manner, but there is still some room for Kayan at Long Na'ah to create and recreate aspects of local social and cultural identity through new modes of alcohol consumption.

for focus of consumption involved in the case of Kayan apartments (above). However, processes of nation building (e.g. the imposition of public health programs and state education) and Kayan notions of *adat* and hospitality are also factors in the choices people at Long Na'ah, and other Borneo Kayan longhouses, make about their homes. As with other forms of consumption, the styles of Kayan apartments express an intermingling of influences; changes may be connected to both homogenising 'external' influences (e.g. market, global capitalism, nation building) but may also suggest the continuity and retention of local Kayan social and cultural identity (linked to notions of *adat*, hospitality and a local aesthetic repertoire)¹⁹. For example, in the apartment at Long Na'ah and elsewhere, the choice and arrangement of furniture and other objects produces a recognisable and typical visual effect, such that those apartments look the same. On entering the third or fourth such apartment, the unaccustomed visitor is struck by consistency in the choices people have made, including their use of many commoditised objects and materials. It might be said that, since the 1970s, the style of contemporary Kayan interiors at the 1970s may be seen as a continuation of those of the 1940s and 1950s (see Morrison, 1952, 1956, 1966, 1983). One more interesting observation is that, in their newer forms and with revised contents, Kayan apartments continue to resemble each other.

¹⁹ For examples of the Kayan-Kenyah aesthetic repertoire, see Schickel (1997) and for participatory documentation of the Kayan-Kenyah repertoire from the 1970s and 80s, see Villiers (1997).

CHAPTER EIGHT

HOMILIES AND HYGIENE, LOUNGE SUITES AND DISPLAY CABINETS: THE STYLE OF KAYAN APARTMENTS

While some forms of consumption at Long Na'ah, such as the consumption of alcohol and tobacco, are overtly linked to the moral-ideological program of the SIB church, for others the influence of the church is more diffuse. This is the case for forms of consumption involved in the styles of Kayan apartments (*amin*). However, processes of nation building (e.g., the expansion of public health programs and state education) and Kayan notions of rank and hospitality are also factors in the choices people at Long Na'ah, and other Baram Kayan longhouses, make about their homes. As with other forms of consumption, the styles of Kayan apartments express an intertwining of tendencies: choices may be connected to both homogenising 'external' influences (Christianity, global capitalism, nation building) but may also suggest the creation and recreation of local Kayan social and cultural identity (linked to notions of rank, hospitality and a local aesthetic repertoire)¹⁸⁵. For example, in the apartments of higher ranking and wealthier Kayan, the choice and arrangement of furniture and other objects produces a recognisable and typical visual effect, such that these apartments look the same. On entering the third or fourth such apartment, the newcomer notices a sense of consistency in the choices people have made, including from a range of firmly commoditised objects and materials. It might be said that, although the style of contemporary Kayan interiors of the 1990s may seem a world away from those of the 1940s and 1950s (see Morrison, 1957, 1986; Roberts, 1993), the more interesting observation is that, in their newer forms and with revised contents, Kayan apartments continue to resemble each other.

¹⁸⁵ For examples of the Kayan-Kenyah aesthetic repertoire, see Sellato, 1992; and for photographic documentation of the Kayan-Kenyah repertoire from the 1920s and '30s, see Tillema (1989).

At Long Na'ah, as at other Kayan longhouses, a sense of consistency in the style of apartments does, however, intersect with social rank within the community and with variable access to resources (as well as with differing levels of commitment to the SIB church). Thus there is significant variation within the longhouses in the configuration, materials and furnishings of individual *amin*. Some *amin* at Long Na'ah are generously furnished, their interior walls are clad with plywood or laminated products and their floors have linoleum coverings. Other *amin* are sparsely furnished and have raw timber interior walls and scantily-covered or bare concrete floors. These variations between apartments are in addition to the conventional structural differences (e.g., wider apartment frontages) which distinguish the headman's or *Penghulu's* apartment from the rest of the longhouse apartments.

A close look at a single middle-ranking apartment at Long Na'ah (that of Taman Kajan) demonstrates an intertwining of apparently homogenising influences: the SIB church and evangelical Christianity, Malaysian nation building, and processes of commoditisation and mass consumption. The style of this apartment owes much to the choices of Taman Kajan, who is a devout Christian and dedicates much time to community committees and projects, such as the improvement of sanitation at the longhouse. Nevertheless, this example also indicates that, even for those people who firmly embrace the teachings of the church and take an active part in aspects of the state development program, room remains for a local sense of what a Kayan apartment should be. Kayan notions of hospitality and the quality of everyday life are important here. A contrast with the apartment of another, less devout Christian household, that of Taman Kajan's younger sister, Purai, and her husband, Anyie, provides a counterpoint to the style of Taman Kajan's apartment. Her household is characterised by frequent and convivial sociability with neighbours rather than by more formal types of hospitality, and the configuration and physical character of her apartment reflects this: it is comparatively less carefully furnished and adorned, and less concerned with self-conscious routines of tidiness.

The observation that the style of Kayan apartments suggests the creation and recreation of local Kayan social and cultural identity is also exemplified by a

characterisation of the apartments of high ranking Kayan, and those with greater access to economic resources. This characterisation focuses on the front rooms of these apartments, which are the internal living areas most directly concerned with Kayan conventions of hospitality and notions of rank. In the course of this, I highlight two typical elements of these interiors: lounge suites and display cabinets. As a centre-piece for a larger range of objects, these two items help to make up a distinctive collection of things which define a comfortable and appropriately appointed Kayan apartment in the 1990s. However, before moving on to these discussions, a brief description of the longhouse at Long Na'ah, and a general account of some changes which have occurred (and are occurring) in the layout and construction of Kayan longhouses provides a context for the discussion of apartments.

The Structure of Kayan Longhouses, and the Longhouse at Long Na'ah

Within Kayan longhouses the headman's apartment generally has a wider frontage than others; it may be deeper, and has a covered area at the front which extends beyond the alignment of the longhouse verandah, providing an expansive public meeting area. The frontages of lower-ranking (*panyin*) apartments are generally only half as wide as those of high rank. At Long Na'ah it is the *Penghulu's* apartment, located centrally in the upper longhouse, which has a frontage twice the width of other apartments, however, and an extension beyond the verandah area, providing the space for community gatherings.¹⁸⁶ Given its wide frontage, and unusual depth, the front room of the *Penghulu's* apartment itself supplies another generous space to accommodate large groups of people or to receive state dignitaries. The headman's apartment is immediately adjacent to the *Penghulu's* apartment and beside this is the apartment of one of the headman's sisters. These

¹⁸⁶ There are three other apartments, one in the upper house and two in the lower, which are also effectively 'double' apartments. But these reflect the requirements and preferences of close kin (including the partial partitioning of household groups), rather than signalling variable rank. Such apartments tend to present a public frontage which has the aspect of two apartments. In the case of one double apartment in the upper longhouse, it accommodates the families of two siblings (a woman and her younger brother), and although the front room runs the full width of two apartments, rooms behind the front room bifurcate into separate apartments.

three apartments are generally recognised as the main high ranking (*hipun uma*) apartments at Long Na'ah (though other people of high rank do live elsewhere in the upper and lower longhouses, and in separate houses).

The 'longhouse' at Long Na'ah is actually made up of two houses, one above the other on a site which slopes up from the river. The houses are referred to as the 'upper' and 'lower' longhouses (*uma usun* and *uma hida* respectively). The upper longhouse (see Figures 1 and 11), containing 35 apartments, is larger than the lower which has only fifteen (see Figure 4). From the front, the longhouses present a rather patchy facade, with each apartment either painted in a different colour or left untreated, and fittings such as window frames varying slightly from apartment to apartment, according to each household's preferences and the means at their disposal.¹⁸⁷ A few households in both upper and lower longhouses have chosen to insert windows in the ground floor facade, which is more usually left blank. These ground floor windows are in addition to the more standard practice of placing windows in the upper storey. One such household has also chosen to use small ceramic tiles, instead of the ubiquitous linoleum, as a flooring material. Some uniformity is given to the facade of the upper longhouse by many of the apartments, at the ground floor level, being painted white with a dark dado.

In addition to the two longhouses there are a number of separate dwellings (13 of these are presently inhabited), some of which are built on a substantial scale, either as two-storey structures set upon the ground or as one-storey houses on piles. There is also a group of much smaller dwellings of only two or three rooms each, and of meagre timber construction. These latter houses are significantly smaller than either longhouse apartments or the larger separate houses (which are roughly equivalent in size to longhouse apartments). Separate houses are, however, built more on a square, or wide oblong, floor plan, rather than the long narrow configuration of longhouse apartments. 'Separate houses' are sometimes referred to as such in Malay (*'rumah sendiri'*), but they are also sometimes referred to as *amin* (cf. Alexander, 1993: 33). The Kayan word '*amin*' has the dual sense of an 'apartment' in the physical sense (located within the

¹⁸⁷ Compare the new, highly uniform, longhouse at Long Laput (see Figure 5).

longhouse (*uma*) as a whole) and 'family unit' or 'domestic group'. The literature on Austronesian houses, which typically treats the relationship between spatial organisation and the social and ritual practices of the groups which reside in them, has noted that 'the category of "house" may be used abstractly to distinguish, not just households, but social groups of varying sizes' (Fox, 1993: 1). For the Kayan, for example, high ranking people are designated, in this abstract sense, 'owners of the house' (*hipun uma*). The referent of this term is the whole community of people.

In the past, Kayan longhouses were substantial timber structures built upon piles which set them some two to three metres off the ground.¹⁸⁸ In the Baram they are now largely constructed of timber and concrete (and, in some cases, brick) with tin roofs; they are placed directly on the ground, and have two storeys. The structure of Kayan longhouses and the configuration of individual apartments have both changed over recent decades. Being set on the ground, longhouses no longer have an uncovered wooden platform (*juhan*) extending out beyond the verandah, for drying rice. The verandah (*hawa*) is now constituted by a ground level concrete-paved area, located beneath the overhang of the upper storey (see Figures 1, 4 and 11). Each household has a bench or two against the front wall of their apartment, and these tend to mark off their apartment's frontage (see Figure 4); but the verandah, at least in comparison to the *amin* proper, is a largely uninterrupted public area.¹⁸⁹ In place of the drying platform (*juhan*), rice in the husk is dried on woven mats in front of the verandah (much of this is also done at the farm huts near the rice fields).

Lah Jau Uyo (1989: 67) offers a standardised plan of several *panyin* apartments in a 'traditional' Baram Kayan longhouse. As he notes, the *hilung*, a corridor leading off the verandah to the main living area of each apartment, and also in the (now distant) past serving as a toilet for at least some members of the household, is no longer present (Lah Jau Uyo, 1989: 67). At Long Na'ah the front

¹⁸⁸ Lah Jau Uyo notes the relationship between past Kayan longhouse design (e.g., elevation and limited access) and the need for security due to warfare between communities in earlier times (1989: 67-68). Apart from longhouse design, there were also defensive advantages in the usual placement of longhouses: on a bend in the river, or between the river and a small tributary.

¹⁸⁹ On the notion of public and private areas in Borneo houses and their relationship to social practice, see Helliwell, 1993; and Janowski, 1995: 88-94.

door of each apartment (*bah*) opens directly onto a large open front room; and toilets are mostly located in small outhouses at the back of each apartment. A small separate room to the front of the *amin* containing the cooking area and fireplace is also no longer a feature of Kayan *amin*.¹⁹⁰ Kitchens at Long Na'ah (*uma avo*) are also now placed at the rear of the apartment, either within the main structure of the building, or in an annexe. Gas-fuelled two-burner units are most often used for cooking, but fireplaces are also sometimes used. The latter are usually located in semi-open annexes along with the supplies of wood (commonly driftwood collected from the river banks), while the gas cooktops are located in internal kitchens.

The central room in Lah Jau Uyo's plan, the *usun awan*, which he describes as serving as a living and dining area for the household, as well as a sleeping area for its unmarried members, is similar to, but does not precisely coincide, with the main living room or rooms of most contemporary apartments at Long Na'ah. Although the downstairs main room may be used for sleeping, people at Long Na'ah also frequently use small separate rooms (*tilung*), often located upstairs. Daytime naps are usually taken in the downstairs room, however, as the heat is greater upstairs under the tin roof. Some front rooms have a raised area or platform (the concrete slab floor is simply raised by about 10 to 15 centimetres to produce this area). This is used specifically for sitting or lying upon. The platform tends to delineate an area which is not for general thoroughfare; both platform and thoroughfare areas may be covered with linoleum. The large front room may be used for eating, particularly when guests are present or at times of celebration, but otherwise people frequently eat in their kitchens (sometimes at a small kitchen table) at the back of the apartments. For those people who have televisions, cassette players and radios or CD systems, the main front room is usually the place to listen or watch.

People occasionally bathe in the river at Long Na'ah, but more usually they use the piped water supply at the back of each *amin* to bath and wash clothes.

¹⁹⁰ Lah Jau Uyo notes the past use of this room, the *pa'un atang*, for the Kayan practice of keeping women warm after childbirth. Kayan women of childbearing age generally do not follow this practice now, although their mothers may encourage them to keep warm by wearing knitted hats and thick socks.

Although piped water is available most of the time, large drums are kept filled so that water is always on hand. It is from these drums, or from a newly-filled plastic container, that people bathe by using a dipper. This bathing area is usually outdoors and close to the kitchen, but some *amin* have centrally-located open-air courtyards (between the front room and the kitchen) for bathing and washing. Where this is the case, cooking and dish washing still tend to be done at the rear of the *amin*. The area behind each *amin* (the *jenamin*, or 'back-of-the-house')¹⁹¹ may also contain a clothes-line, a small garden plot for vegetables, and a pig sty. Chickens may range around freely behind apartments, although not everyone keeps them there; both pigs and chickens are also kept at the farms.

Taman Kajan's Household

Taman Kajan's household is located in an apartment in the lower longhouse at Long Na'ah. Materially, his apartment is a relatively comfortable one by village standards: its walls are fully lined, the floor is covered, and it is furnished, among other things, with lounge chairs, cabinets, tables, a television and a refrigerator. The relative affluence of Taman Kajan's household is partly the result of income from timber wages – several of Taman Kajan's adult children work for timber companies. As has already been noted, Taman Kajan takes a leading role in the community and is a central figure in the lay leadership of the village church. He is concerned that people in the community should listen carefully to the teachings of the church and take the message of Christianity seriously by 'accepting Jesus' and attending church regularly. Taman Kajan himself is a dedicated church-goer. He takes an active role in formal community events; is a member of various committees and cooperative work groups (*gotong royong*) – such as the village hygiene work group – and is known as someone who is willing to help fellow villagers of lesser means. He also frequently represents the church and the community when it is necessary to conduct business on their behalf in Marudi or Miri. During the time I was in the village, he represented the community in its

¹⁹¹ The front of the apartment is referred to as the '*jenawa*' ('*jen*' literally means 'to extend, or enlarge').

efforts to lobby for a better bus service (particularly between Miri and Lapok, but also between Miri and Kuching), and for repairs to be made to the roof of the village school.

As previously described in Chapter Seven, Taman Kajan's household is one in which the consumption of alcohol and tobacco is restricted, and hospitality is of a formal and gracious, rather than highly convivial, kind. Visiting SIB pastors and other representatives of the SIB church are often the recipients of Taman Kajan's hospitality. Apart from he and his wife Ubung, Taman Kajan's household includes their two adolescent children, Dennis and Sepai, their small daughter, Ronila, their adult son, Kajan, his wife, Puyang, and their two small children, and Ubung's elderly stepfather, Aban Ing. Kajan is away most of the time, working in a remote logging camp. Two of Taman Kajan's grandchildren (Loren and Evelyn), the daughters of his eldest son, also spend time in the household when they are not at their mother's *amin* in the upper longhouse. These two girls are slightly younger companions to Ronila.¹⁹² Four other adult daughters are no longer resident in the apartment. Two of these daughters are married to Chinese men with positions in the timber industry; two are single and are away working in the timber camps. Despite no longer residing at the longhouse, these adult daughters do occasionally make return visits to their parents' *amin*; the married daughters bring their small children with them.

Taman Kajan, no longer a young man, is a tall and dignified figure, with an air of uprightness which he maintains despite a swayed lower back and bent shoulders (which cause him considerable pain at times). He wears heavy-framed glasses and keeps his hair in a neatly barbered short back-and-sides style (see Figure 3). When attending church or travelling on community business, Taman Kajan wears the Malaysian formal attire of long dark trousers and batik print or light-coloured shirt. He does not affect the safari style light-weight short-sleeved suits decorated with tabs and epaulettes favoured by Malaysian officials (and by the village headman at Long Na'ah). On official business, and when attending church meetings, Taman Kajan carries his papers, Bible, and hymn books in a briefcase.

¹⁹² Taman Kajan's eldest son was killed some years earlier, in a logging accident.

Taman Kajan's *amin* consists, on the ground floor, of a main front room which opens directly off the longhouse verandah. This large oblong room, which occupies the full width of the apartment, also extends for the full length of the main two-storey section of the apartment. Behind this room is the kitchen, which is an adjoining single-storey structure. A concreted outdoor area beyond the kitchen serves as a dish- and clothes-washing area, and is used for bathing. Pig pens, a shed containing the apartment's generator (previously a rice barn), and the outhouse containing two toilets are positioned towards the back fence which marks the extent of Taman Kajan's household domain. The outdoor areas to the rear of each apartment (*jenamin*) are also demarcated on each side by wooden or wire fences. The upper storey of the apartment, which is reached by internal stairs from the main front room, is divided into three main sections: a large front room overlooking the verandah, a central room around the stair well, and a rear section divided into three small rooms. These areas are used for sleeping and storage.

The usage of the various rooms and spaces within the apartment reflect the kin relationships of its occupants (including the more-or-less permanently absent members of the family). Thus the front room, at least in its capacity as a sleeping place, and as an area for the storage of personal items, is the domain of Taman Kajan himself, his wife, and their younger children. However, during the day the front room becomes a more public space for all occupants of the *amin*, and it is the main location for offering hospitality to guests. The upstairs rooms are divided between those rooms used by Taman Kajan's son, his wife and their children, and a room reserved for the storage of the remaining belongings of Taman Kajan's absent adult daughters. Although Taman Kajan's daughter-in-law Puyang, and her children, use the main downstairs room during the day, they use the upstairs rooms for sleeping at night, and for storage of the majority of their belongings. Puyang and her children use a large double mattress with sheets, bolsters and pillows, and protected by a mosquito net. Objects stored upstairs include pieces of furniture, such as a dressing table and a desk, old stereo equipment, some rolled split-cane mats, and a plastic Christmas tree. There is something of a demarcation between the upstairs and downstairs areas, as Taman Kajan, his wife, and younger children rarely enter the upstairs rooms used by Puyang. Finally, there is a small

room on the ground floor at the back of the *amin*, with internal access to the kitchen, which accommodates Aban Ing. His accommodation within the apartment reflects his somewhat peripheral position in the household.¹⁹³

Homilies and Hygiene: The Style of Taman Kajan's Apartment

As Douglas and Isherwood (1996) argue, the communicative, cultural aspects of consumption in human life may be evoked by building a picture of a character, their life history and their social standing through meticulous accumulative description of their possessions, and particularly of the interiors of their homes. Within this is the idea that the communicative power of goods is often most usefully understood by observing a whole range, or assemblage, of things. Collectively, goods present 'a set of meanings more or less coherent, more or less intentional' (1996: ix) and, as they argue, this notion takes an understanding of the uses of goods beyond the comparatively narrow concerns of welfare and display.

Understood in these terms, a close observation and description of Taman Kajan's apartment reveals many things. Together, the assemblage of furniture, decorations and fittings; the way these things are placed and used; and changes made in the configuration of household components build a picture which may not only be analysed in terms of its constituent parts, but may also be 'scanned' or 'read' as a whole (Douglas and Isherwood, 1996: ix; Bourdieu, 1984: 2). Order, propriety, piousness, and gracious hospitality sum up one reading of Taman Kajan's apartment. However, his apartment and the practices of his household also suggest other qualities: expansiveness and innovation, coupled with a firm sense of local identity.

The front room of Taman Kajan's apartment has already been introduced at the beginning of this thesis, through a detailed description of the furniture and decorations along its north wall (see Figure 22). Within this I have described the placement and use of objects such as the television and VCR, the row of cane chairs for watchers, the display cabinet near the front door, and the set of timber

¹⁹³ Aban Ing is now of an advanced age, is extremely hard of hearing and no longer does any agricultural work. However, he is often occupied making rattan fish traps and baskets. For the rest

lounge chairs. Other objects which I highlighted were a treadle sewing machine covered with a crocheted rug,¹⁹⁴ and a small round table used by Puyang for the daily storage of things to do with the care of her infant son. Further towards the back of the apartment, a set of glass-fronted cabinets were noted as the storage place of the belongings of Taman Kajan, his wife, and their youngest daughters. A feature of the family's belongings (e.g., clothes, toiletries and videos) is the neatness with which they are stored. An important element in the decoration of the room is the ubiquity of framed pieces of beadwork (see Figures 19 and 20). These pieces, reminiscent of nineteenth century samplers,¹⁹⁵ feature both images from a Kayan aesthetic repertoire, such as the characteristic *aso'* – the 'dog' or 'dragon' motif – and Christian iconography and texts, such as those which read '*Nothing is Impossible for God*' and '*God Bless Our Home*'.¹⁹⁶ Along with the Christian homilies are other beadwork messages which suggest commercial greeting cards (some of these read '*Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year*' and '*You are the melody in my heart, with love, Rabia*'). Calendars are another feature of this room, and these sit among examples of the large beaded Kayan sunhats (see Figures 12 and 23).¹⁹⁷ A deer's head, a home-made fishing net, a beaded walking stick, two carved and painted wooden shields of Kayan design (see Figures 10 and 21), and some colourful Kelabit baskets¹⁹⁸ are other objects which hang on the north wall of the front room of Taman Kajan's apartment.

A fuller description of the front room needs to include the opposite (south) wall and the front and back walls. Following this, descriptions are given of the

of the time he simply spends his days sitting on a bench on the verandah.

¹⁹⁴ Upriver Borneans have long been familiar with the sewing machine, as a photograph from the 1930s attests (see Tillema, 1989: 188, figure 179). The photo shows a woman in the *Apau Kayan* using a sewing machine, the caption reads: 'Western culture, which has killed the art of weaving, supplies a substitute! A Singer sewing machine in the wilderness.'

¹⁹⁵ Kayan women, who produce the beadwork, also crochet with coloured yarns, producing rugs and a range of other decorative objects.

¹⁹⁶ Figure 19 in this thesis depicts two 'double-headed dragons' or dragon dogs (*aso'*) flanking a human face. For comparative examples of such motifs from the Kayan-Kenyah repertoire, see Sellato (1992: 13-49), figures 12 and 13, for examples of the two-headed Kayan-Kenyah dragon motif; figure 20 for a representation of the Kayan dragon dog or *aso'* motif, and figure 23 for an example of the dragon dog's head arranged as a geometric pattern.

¹⁹⁷ For examples of (much more elaborate) sunhats from the 1920s and '30s, see Tillema (1989: 176) figure 159.

¹⁹⁸ For an example, see Munan (1989: 59, figure 28). This example is much more elaborate than the baskets in Taman Kajan's apartment.

kitchen, and the '*jenamin*' (backyard). Objects along the south wall include a box freezer near the front door and some additional chairs from the apartment's lounge suite. This wall is more sparsely furnished than the north wall and is broken by a set of louvred windows which look out onto the courtyard of the neighbouring apartment (that of one of Taman Kajan's sisters). On the floor to the back of the room is a large split-cane mat (*berat lapit*), and upon it the folded mattresses used by Taman Kajan, his wife, and their small children. The south wall also exhibits a range of decorative objects, including another extensive collection of framed beadwork, much of it produced by the adult daughters of the household. Two pieces combine variations on the intricate *aso'* pattern with Christian motifs (in one picture centrally placed crosses are represented as if radiating beams of light). A beadwork piece which asserts that '*Christ is the Head of this House*' is surmounted by the wedding photographs of a daughter of the household. Another beaded greeting-card message, decorated with paired love hearts, avers that '*Life Gives Us Seasons Without End, But Life's Nicest Gift is... a Special Friend*'. Interspersed with the beadwork on this wall are three miniature painted wooden Kayan shields (see Figure 21), and half a dozen of the smaller, less elaborate, palm-leaf sunhats (some of these are also in miniature). Beyond this row of decorative objects, the louvred windows are adorned with flower-like ornaments made from split aluminium soft-drink cans.

The back wall of the room, which is punctuated by the door leading into the kitchen, is lined with a row of small cabinets which serve as additional storage areas. On top of these are a pile of music cassettes and a radio. Taman Kajan often listens to the radio in the very early morning; others listen in the afternoon to the daily program broadcast in Kayan. There is also a large clock, and Taman Kajan's briefcase. This wall is also hung with an enlarged photograph of the wedding of another of Taman Kajan's daughters. The front wall of the room is decorated with a single category of objects: carefully displayed rows of sporting medals, won by the children of the household at village and regional school sports tournaments. Below them and near the door is a neat row of shoes and a door mat. (Shoes are removed inside the apartment. During the busy festivities of one Christmas a set of shelves was placed here to neatly accommodate the influx of visitors' shoes).

The display cabinet, which has already been noted, is placed next to the front door and contains an array of objects. In addition to the television and VCR, these include several carved Balinese trees (a banana and several coconut trees), three small beaded baskets (*ajat*) flanked by crocheted cushions in the shape of hearts, two small soft animals (one a foam rooster), some plastic roses and silk flowers, a box with a crocheted cover, a number of sporting trophies (also the product of school sports tournaments), three miniature Kayan shields, and a tiny ornamental 'white wedding' bride-and-groom.

At the back of the apartment is the kitchen, a large, roughly square room. It contains a two-burner gas cooktop placed near to the outside wall on a raised, waist-high platform; two small gas bottles sit nearby. This serves for all cooking done in the apartment. (Occasionally a 44 gallon drum with a fire lit in its base is used to smoke fish and meat in the outdoor area behind the kitchen.) A heavy pot with a lid, used for cooking the daily rice, is always on or near the stove, as is a large metal kettle. (It is Ubung who usually sees to putting on the rice shortly before dawn, while Puyang is responsible for most other cooking tasks.) In the centre of the kitchen is a small round wooden table, with a number of wooden stools, which serves as the day-to-day eating area for the apartment. Breakfast, the mid-day and evening meals are all eaten here, but quite often by several consecutive groups of people, rather than at one sitting. Taman Kajan sometimes eats alone, or with some of the children; a group of the smaller children may be provided with a meal, eating together quickly before school or play; Ubung often eats with her young daughter, and Puyang may feed her youngest child and eat her own meal at the same time. Near the table is a metal and plastic stand with racks for crockery. Beside this is a smaller round table where plastic drinking-water bottles (these are regularly filled with boiled water) and a plastic container for cutlery are kept. A cupboard sealed with wire gauze is used to store condiments and dry foodstuffs, and there is a refrigerator which is used occasionally for perishables, and especially when the household has a large supply of pork. Along one wall of the kitchen is a large set of shelves for storing dry foodstuffs, household and farming tools, rattan baskets, rope and a range of other items. A selection of umbrellas and plain utilitarian palm-leaf sunhats hang behind the door

into the kitchen. A group of large square metal tins are ranged along these shelves as storage containers. At the back of the kitchen is the door into Aban Lake's small room. He is the only person who does not use the kitchen table to eat: instead he uses a small low stool and eats his meals sitting in the doorway of his room.

Outside the kitchen is a large concrete-paved area. Early on in the time I was resident in the apartment, only a small section near the back door was concreted, and most of the *jenamin* (backyard) was covered with smooth grey river stones. The stones provided a clean surface with any debris washing away through the interstices. The smaller children in the household, who have not yet learned to use the toilets, use small plastic potties; but at a pinch, it was permissible for them to urinate on the river stones. In part because community efforts were underway to improve the concrete box drains at the back of some apartments, Taman Kajan decided to concrete a larger area of his *jenamin*, doing away with the river stone surface, except for a small path at the back leading to the pig sty, toilets and generator barn. The newly concreted area was subsequently kept clean by sweeping and hosing, with some debris in this case being disposed of in the drain. (Unlike the river stones, the concrete surface is considered a less suitable place for small children to urinate.) Sometime after the concreting was completed, Taman Kajan also decided to install some piping and a metal shower rose against the wire fence at one side of the *jenamin*, and close to the renovated drain, thus instituting a new form of bathing for the household. Previously, baths had been taken by dipping water from a large plastic container or drum just outside the back door (although a running hose was also used for bathing, especially by the small children). Despite the presence of the shower, some members of the household continued to use a basin and dipper to bathe. However, Taman Kajan used the shower once it was installed. After the installation of the shower, clothes-washing also moved to this area near the drain. Although running water is available most of the time, 44 gallon drums, a number of large glazed ceramic urns, and some larger metal tanks are also kept in the *jenamin* for water storage. A row of potted plants, some in ceramic pots and others in large Milo or milk-formula tins, add a little ornament to the *jenamin*.

Just outside the back door of the kitchen is a stainless steel sink used for washing dishes and cleaning teeth. After every meal each person of the household, including the small children, takes his or her plate outside to scrape off any leftover food into a bucket and washes their plate at the sink. Leftovers are fed to the household's pig. (The bucket is suspended on a rope to keep it out of reach of dogs.) There is also a large plastic garbage bin kept outside the kitchen door. Garbage is regularly collected from each household and deposited in a small ravine some distance from the longhouse. Near the garbage bin is a suspended cage containing the household's talking myna bird (*manuk tiung*),¹⁹⁹ a pet common to many Kayan households. Taman Kajan regularly poses the polite Kayan enquiry to the bird: 'Have you eaten yet?' (*Hu'uh kuman?*), a phrase which the bird has learned to mimic. For a time the household also included two hunting dogs. At Long Na'ah dogs are not indoor pets, and these dogs stayed in the *jenamin* or wandered about the village.

I have suggested two readings of Taman Kajan's apartment: the first emphasises order, propriety, piousness, and gracious hospitality, while the second suggests that the apartment may also express other qualities, such as expansiveness and innovation, coupled with a firm enough sense of local identity. Behind the first reading lies the devout Christianity of Taman Kajan. The adornment of Taman Kajan's apartment is a testament to his Christian values. Beadwork is a common element in the decoration of Kayan homes, but the walls of Taman Kajan's apartment are hung with more of the beadwork Christian homilies than most. Here even the pieces which depict Kayan designs, or motifs symbolic of aspects of the Kayan system of rank, usually incorporate Christian symbols such as crosses. Wedding photos, particularly of elaborate white weddings, and often professionally produced, are a common element in Kayan *amin* (see Figures 9 and 18). (Kayan also videotape weddings if they are able.) Such photos are suggestive of a household's adherence to Christian practice (in the SIB church white weddings are available only to those couples who observe

¹⁹⁹ *Gracula religiosa religiosa* (Southwell, 1990: 442).

the appropriate conventions and proprieties). It is significant that Taman Kajan's apartment displays several such enlarged wedding photos.²⁰⁰

A sense of order, and propriety, in Taman Kajan's apartment can be linked to both the SIB church's concern with bureaucratic forms of organisation and to its promotion of appropriately 'civilised' (in the Western European sense) modes of behaviour (e.g., concerning bodily functions and social demeanour). Also important here is the expectation that Christian faith will be expressed through everyday practice as well as through prayer and worship. However, these influences also intertwine with elements of the state development program (e.g., public health and hygiene measures, and the routinisation of time involved in school schedules). And many of these things are expressed through the firmly commoditised products of the industrial economy.

These influences come together in Taman Kajan's apartment in his concern with hygiene and sanitation (e.g., the new drainage system, the installation of a shower, and the replacement of loose river stone surfaces with concrete). Concerns with cleanliness, neatness and order are also expressed in objects such as the doormat and shoe rack inside the front door; in the neat piles of family clothes, and in the row of family toiletries below the mirror. In Taman Kajan's *amin* the daily laundry is neatly folded each afternoon, and any childish paraphernalia which collects on the floor during the day is also tidied up in the late afternoon when the floor is swept by Puyang. (Despite the air of order in this apartment, Kayan are pragmatic about mess caused by children, who are usually given a free enough rein in the open linoleum-covered spaces of the apartments, floors are easily cleaned up later. This is the case in Taman Kajan's apartment.) In addition to the other neatly displayed or stored objects, the rows of school sporting medals and trophies represent little emblems of Malaysian nation-building, and speak of Taman Kajan's keen interest in community events and encouragement of his children in the areas of endeavour open to them.

²⁰⁰ In his 'social life' of photography in India Pinney (1997) considers the relationship between photographic and wider cultural practice. As with Kayan, for people in the industrial town of Nagda in Madhya Pradesh, wedding photography and videography are 'privileged as evidence of internal and external states' (p. 10). While photos of Kayan white weddings suggest propriety and Christian virtue (as well as the enjoyments of consumption involved in the spectacle of the white wedding, with all its paraphernalia), for people of Nagda wedding photos dramatise 'the auspicious

Clocks and calendars in Taman Kajan's *amin* suggest concerns with timekeeping. I have already noted the role of both wage labour and the schedule of the local church in the growing importance of the division of time at Long Na'ah into regular periods of work and leisure (see Gusfield, 1987: 73-74). Lectures delivered by school teachers at Long Na'ah also urge a routinisation of time which would see school children adopt an ordered after-school schedule for meals, study and play.²⁰¹ The structuring of time is echoed in efforts to categorise and spatially locate different daily activities through the use of furniture. For example, school teachers also emphasise the beneficial effects of desks on pupils' home study habits. Furniture such as tables and chairs are also redolent of the kind of behaviour encouraged by the church, and are suggestive of 'development' in a way that sitting on the floor to eat, work or socialise is not. These things are expressed in Taman Kajan's apartment by the daily meals taken at the kitchen table. However, it should be noted that household members do also regularly sit on the floor to carry out tasks, talk with friends, and care for infants. Occasionally, when a larger number of guests are present and there is a more festive atmosphere, everyone will sit together to eat a meal served on the floor of the front room.

With his neat clothes, barbered hair, and briefcase, Taman Kajan himself projects an air of uprightness and careful organisation. To a remarkable extent this briefcase signifies the person of Taman Kajan; at the very least it signals his presence or absence. It should be pointed out that personal belongings such as briefcases are frequently used and understood by Kayan as embodiments or representations of individuals. Another example rather poignantly characterises the manner in which objects (including unequivocal commodities) may stand in, quite explicitly, for persons at Long Na'ah. Taman Kajan's eldest son, who died some years ago, is remembered through a range of objects placed on or near his grave in the village cemetery. A soccer ball in a net is hooked over the cross which marks his grave, a pair of soccer boots are placed neatly at the base of the cross, a pair of sunglasses are attached to the cross and, tied to the back of the cross, is his attache case. Nearby, an infant is represented by its rusting walking

state of ...wifhood ...[which is] the centrally important representation of marriage (p.118).

²⁰¹ Other themes here are the need for bodily cleanliness (especially to curb body odour), a neat

table, still adorned with a row of coloured plastic beads, and further away, tied to the cross on the grave of an eighty-year-old man, is the rotting body of an old wooden *sapé* – the only such musical instrument I ever saw at Long Na'ah.²⁰²

Some of the things I have just described may suggest a straight-forward enough picture of cultural homogenisation, associated with the influence of Christianity and processes of nation-building. The presence of a wide range of products of the industrial economy (television, VCR, freezer, refrigerator, neon lighting, linoleum covered floors, lounge suites and glass-fronted cabinets) might also suggest the homogenising forces of commoditisation and global capitalism. However, when the preceding observations are combined with others, and considered as a whole, a more complex picture emerges. For example, there is another quality involved in my first reading of Taman Kajan's apartment: a gracious hospitality. While this also relates to SIB understandings of proper and dignified behaviour (e.g., teetotalism and saying grace at meal times), the nature of hospitality in this apartment also closely reflects typically Kayan forms of hospitality. The hospitality offered at Taman Kajan's *amin* reflects particularly that practiced by high ranking Kayan, especially in the context of the more formal hospitality offered guests from outside the community. Kayan hospitality of this type involves a formal politeness, a gracious bodily demeanour, generous provision of food and drink, and typically, the use of physical props such as small tables, lounge chairs, trays, drinking jugs and glasses (a more detailed description of this mode of hospitality will be given in the following section).

An analysis which emphasises homogenising influences might also be questioned through a consideration of my second reading of Taman Kajan's apartment and its style. This second reading emphasises expansiveness and innovation, and at the same time recognises that Kayan apartments also express a firm sense of local identity. As I have already argued, Kayan at Long Na'ah are not uncritical of state development policy; neither are they simple-minded followers of church ideology. In line with this, apartments such as Taman Kajan's often reflect quite conscious choices. The kinds of things I have in mind here may

manner of dress, dental hygiene, and the care of school materials.

²⁰² See Munan (1989) plate 9, for an example of a large and elaborate Kenyah *sapé*.

be connected to a quality of the community (at least as I experienced it in the early 1990s) which I have noted before. That is, a willingness to look outward, to take hold of those elements of the state development program which they feel will be beneficial to them, to embrace the regionalising trends involved in membership of the SIB church, and to be open to new educational opportunities, technologies, and commodities. For example, despite having limited knowledge himself of new technologies, Taman Kajan encouraged one of his single adult daughters to take a computer course in Miri, something which involved a considerable cash outlay.²⁰³ Taman Kajan's household was also willing to experiment with new electrical appliances (such as small food processors) despite having a rather erratic electricity supply. Efforts to understand new appliances and other goods by reading accompanying instructions often involved finding someone to translate them from English, Malay or Chinese. In this context, Miller's (1995a: 150) observation that 'the most avid adoption of new modes of consumption may in fact occur among people on the periphery of the industrial world' seems apposite.²⁰⁴

However, this expansive enthusiasm for the new is not accompanied, for Taman Kajan and his household, by a waning sense of local Kayan identity. Rather, elements of church ideology, the rhetoric and practice of government development programs, commoditisation and mass consumption, and the local choices concerning these things combine with other local understandings to produce new modes of expression in everyday life. While Taman Kajan is an active member of the anti-malaria work-group at Long Na'ah (which attends to structures associated with mosquito breeding) and was keen to concrete his own back yard and introduce a new bathing regime, he does not willingly receive all aspects of development, and has a firm sense of belonging to a distinct cultural group. At parent and teacher meetings at the village he sometimes chided the teachers for lecturing to the community in Malay rather than Kayan (he felt, as they lived in the community, they should make the effort to learn the language).²⁰⁵

²⁰³ An MS Excel course costing between RM250 and RM300 for two months' instruction.

²⁰⁴ People in Sarawak, as with other Malaysians, have been very quick to take up internet technologies.

²⁰⁵ During my fieldwork at Long Na'ah, only one of the teachers at the primary school was Kayan.

While in some cases it does point to something real enough, one of the difficulties with the notion of cultural homogenisation is that it tends to mask the fact that there is still some room for choice at the local level.

Two groups of objects in Taman Kajan's apartment reflect the combining of external influences and local understandings about the meaning of things and appropriate ways of using them. Beadwork as a category of objects combines Christian elements (pious homilies and Christian iconography) with images and expressions deriving from the experience of modern media (the saccharine messages and images of commercial greeting cards), and with decorative themes from the Kayan aesthetic repertoire (e.g., the *asó* motif, and the representation of human faces or figures as symbols of the Kayan system of rank). The careful 'picture-framing' of beadwork might be seen in terms of cultural homogenisation, but the placement of beadwork (close to the ceiling and above eye level) should not. Kayan apartments are not usually cluttered spaces and furniture tends to be ranged around the perimeter of the room (this includes the TV which is placed neatly away in the display cabinet), leaving the centre free of objects. Decorations (such as beadwork) are also kept to the edges of the rooms by hanging them in rows high up on the walls. In their placement of furniture at least, Kayan resemble Löfgren's (1984: 46-47) early 19th century bourgeois Swedes: 'Furniture was often lined along the walls and rooms could be used for several different functions', rather than their late 19th century counterparts whose homes were 'overladen with heavy furniture, thick textiles and a multitude of bric-a-brac' (although late 20th century Kayan are fond of a little bric-a-brac, as the next example demonstrates).

As with beadwork, glass-fronted display cabinets combine a range of objects and represent various influences and sources: Malaysian industrialisation via joint-venture capital (the cabinets themselves are the by-products of the diversification of the Sarawakian timber industry), nation-building (school sporting trophies), Christianity (beadwork, crochet-covered boxes, a tiny plastic

Parents were consequently concerned that their youngest children, in particular (having yet to acquire sufficient Malay), did not have much help from a Kayan speaker and were having difficulty in understanding the lessons. (However, several of the non-Kayan teachers who had been at Long Na'ah for some years had become quite fluent speakers of Kayan.)

bride and groom), homogenising mass consumption (soft toys, red satin valentine cushions, the wedding couple again, plastic roses, and Balinese tourist art),²⁰⁶ and finally, objects from a 'Kayan repertoire' (beaded Kayan rattan baskets, miniature decorated wooden shields). In fact, all these things belong to a 'Kayan repertoire'. For anyone who has visited several Baram Kayan apartments, this is a familiar assemblage of things and its placement within a display cabinet is typical: after a while there is a sense of recognition. When Douglas and Isherwood (1979: 4) speak of a 'metaphorical appreciation' of the meaning of goods (in their assemblage), that is, '[A] pervasive kind of reasoning that scans a scene and sizes it up, packing into one instant's survey a process of matching, classifying, and comparing', or Bourdieu speaks of the operation of 'dispositions' and taste in the ability to recognise styles, it is this kind of recognition that they have in mind. And the process is circular: these dispositions or tastes feed back into the creation and recreation of Kayan styles. In this sense, what is involved is not so much homogenisation due to external forces, as homogenisation from within; as Bourdieu argues:

The homogeneity of the mode of production of the habitus (i.e. of the material conditions of life, and of pedagogic action) produces a homogenisation of dispositions and interests which ... incline those who are the product of the same conditions of production to recognise and pursue the same goods... (Bourdieu, 1977: 63-64).

More important than a seeking out of the 'authentic' Kayan pieces of the picture (within cabinets or apartments), is the need to see the whole range of things in use in contemporary Kayan apartments as the collective body of Kayan 'material culture' (including sunhats and VCRs, lounge chairs and shields, Christian beadwork and school sporting trophies).

Nevertheless, there are some ways in which objects, understood as 'traditional' material culture by Kayan themselves, are highlighted in their apartments. Kayan are familiar with and regularly practice forms of cultural objectification. Kayan sunhats and painted shields are two objects which are not only frequently displayed in Kayan apartments, but have also been rendered in

²⁰⁶ Such objects are generally not understood as souvenirs of Bali. However, Kelabit baskets may well be souvenirs of a trip to the nearby Kelabit Highlands.

miniature (see Figure 21).²⁰⁷ (This is the case in Taman Kajan's apartment.) Sometimes linked to the production of 'indigenous' art or artefacts for the tourist trade, miniaturisation is an aspect of cultural objectification: even tiny objects may stand for a cultural group and the experience of a holiday (Graburn, 1976). Used in this way, Kayan objects, such sunhats and shields, are involved in marking ethnic identity (see also Figure 10), a process described frequently enough elsewhere, particularly in circumstances where smaller cultural groups find themselves increasingly incorporated into nation states. For example, Gomes (1994: 186-89) notes the importance of blowpipes in Semai 'ethnic identity maintenance'. However, I would not draw a comparison between Semai 'nostalgia for tradition' and Kayan practices. Kayan in Sarawak are not in the position of the Semai in West Malaysia, who frequently define their ethnic identity in opposition to the Malay majority, and in the context of their historical experience of domination by them. Early on in the time I spent in the Baram, when I was still travelling between Kayan longhouses looking for a place to base myself, one middle-aged Kayan woman said to me, while showing me her own collection of beaded sunhats, that when I saw these sunhats, I would know that Kayan lived in that place. Later, when I took photographs at Long Na'ah, older women would request that I photograph them posed in front of their sunhats (see Figure 12). Even in the most sparsely furnished and decorated of Kayan apartments, there are several sunhats placed on the walls. Of course, sunhats do also continue to be utilitarian objects, particularly at farming communities such as Long Na'ah.²⁰⁸ But there is a distinction between hats for everyday use and the highly decorated ones, with their central medallions of fine glass beadwork. It is the latter which are typically displayed on apartment walls, where they are sometimes protected by clear plastic wrapping.

A brief look at another apartment at Long Na'ah provides a contrast to the style of his apartment. The household of Taman Kajan's sister, Purai, has already been described in Chapter Seven as one which takes a less serious approach to the

²⁰⁷ Miniature winnowing trays are another.

²⁰⁸ In contrast, baby carriers (beaded or plain) are infrequently used for infants at Long Na'ah.

teachings of the church, insofar as these concern restrictive attitudes to the consumption of alcohol and tobacco. Her household is characterised by frequent and convivial sociability with neighbours, and is rarely concerned with the more formal types of hospitality which Taman Kajan provides. The configuration and physical character of her apartment reflects these things: it is less carefully furnished and adorned, has few examples of beadwork exhibiting Christian homilies, and is less concerned with self-conscious routines of tidiness. The front room of Purai's *amin* is small, and further cramped by the presence of an area demarcated (by a half wall topped with metal meshing) for use as a shop. Despite the small space, this room is often filled with visitors. Though provided with a linoleum floor for comfortable seating, this front room is largely devoid of furniture. The other rooms in Purai's apartment are also sparsely adorned and reflect a concern for utility over order and tidiness. Beyond this front room is a central room which in many ways is the heart of the apartment, and a source of its particular style. Apart from the comparatively frequent and convivial occasions on which alcohol is consumed at Purai's apartment, she and her husband also frequently butchered the carcasses of wild pigs and other animals.²⁰⁹ I quite frequently visited Purai's apartment and there were times when this inner room – with its bare concrete floor, water supply, and strategically-placed drains – seemed to be in a state of zoological ferment. Here is a scene from one such occasion:

...blood drains away from a half-butchered wild pig which Anyie is reducing to jagged portions with great swings of a machete; a big bowl of bubbly blue-grey intestines is being carefully washed out by Purai; lying on its back, is a decapitated monitor lizard, its yellow stomach already neatly slit and entrails removed; two large grey whiskery catfish, sit top-to-tail in an enamel basin; and, grabbing a chance meal while it still can, a turtle snaps at the carcass of the fast disintegrating pig.

In the fruit season the butchery was also filled with an excess of rapidly over-ripening fruit: big pails of *langsats* and rambutan, and great spiky bunches of durian. On several occasions, the many guests in the apartment simply sat down in

²⁰⁹ As I have already noted, Purai's husband died during my fieldwork. He suffered a stroke while hunting for wild pig.

the middle of all the edible variety I have described above and ate durian, prising open the prickly cases at what seemed an accelerating pace. Rocking back on their heels, someone would claim to be completely full, then laugh and reach for another segment. At these times, the butchery had a rich and pungent aroma. On these and other occasions, there was a welcoming atmosphere to this apartment. Its unassuming appearance, and the promise of a relaxed conviviality, drew people to it. As I have noted in relation to alcohol and tobacco consumption, the physical and social character of this apartment represented a certain resistance to the kinds of choices (including of some consumer goods) evident in apartments such as Taman Kajan's, and those of high ranking households. Her household did not aspire to carefully placed display cabinets, and resisted those messages that threatened to compromise an enjoyment of a particular style of sociability which focused persistently on all the processes of preparing and consuming food, largely meat, as well as the consumption of alcoholic drink.

A final characteristic of Kayan apartments which expresses a local sense of what a dwelling should be, ought to be mentioned here. The literature on Borneo societies has in the past frequently down-played the communal nature of longhouse communities, arguing that longhouse apartments be understood as essentially discrete entities. This is a contention which has been challenged by some more recent studies which, focusing on the tenor of everyday life, have directed attention back to aspects of communality. Helliwell (1993) emphasises, for example, the permeability of apartment walls in a Dayak community in West Kalimantan. Sound and light flow from one apartment to another as do conversations, 'affirming and recreating the ties across apartments that [make people] part of the longhouse as a whole rather than a member of an isolated household' (Helliwell, 1993: 51-52). Despite demarcating walls and backyard fences, this sense of communication between apartments is also present at Long Na'ah. In Taman Kajan's apartment, Ubung frequently conducted conversations through the walls with Taman Kajan's sister while the latter was in her apartment next door. This is certainly one aspect of longhouse life that, as Helliwell (1993: 52) notes, 'distinguishes it most clearly from the western world'.

Lounge Suites and Display Cabinets: The Style of Apartments of High Ranking Kayan

A 'metaphorical appreciation' of the apartments of high ranking Kayan at Long Na'ah, and other Baram Kayan longhouses, also reveals a stylistic similarity between them. It is the distinctiveness of the collection of objects and materials they contain and a certain sensibility about how these things are to be placed, used or exhibited, which produces the characteristic style of high-ranking apartments. These things are connected to Kayan notions of hospitality, as well as rank. In the following description and discussion I focus only on the front rooms of high ranking Kayan apartments, which are the areas most often associated with more formal hospitality.²¹⁰ I also focus specifically on two kinds of objects: lounge suites and display cabinets.

In the Baram, a set of dark stained or painted timber lounge chairs with fabric-covered foam cushions, and one or more display cabinets (usually glass-fronted and containing a typical group of objects) are common elements of high ranking apartments. In association with the lounge chairs and cabinets are typically a number of small timber tables (stained or painted in the same style as the lounge suites). These, along with trays, glasses and jugs, are used in the serving of drinks to guests. A range of other objects characterise high ranking apartments. Photographs of family members adorn the walls or sit in the cabinets; however, in addition to the more usual framed snapshots, or studio photographs, of the weddings of adult children, family photos in these apartments are likely to include full-figure 'portrait' photographs of parents, or more distant forebears. It is only the households of headmen and *Penghulu* that are likely to possess photographs of some vintage, depicting kin of earlier generations. At Long Na'ah photographs of the previous *Penghulu* are displayed in the current headman's apartment (there is also a photograph depicting members of the household assembled in front of a landmark in the state capital).

²¹⁰ My descriptions in this section are based on visits to several Baram Kayan longhouses, in addition to Long Na'ah. At four of these I visited the apartment of the village headman.

Framed beadwork is also a feature of high ranking households, as are sunhats decorated with fine beadwork. Apart from a television set and VCR, the display cabinets in these apartments contain an array of small objects (many of which we have already encountered in Taman Kajan's apartment). These include china crockery and drinking glasses, which are not used on a daily basis; school sporting medals and trophies; Balinese wooden ornaments; Kayan beadwork necklaces;²¹¹ the smaller forms of beaded rattan baskets;²¹² miniature Kayan painted shields; crocheted objects; the occasional small stuffed toy animal; plastic and silk flowers; and a number of Kayan men's hats.²¹³ Another object typically present in more comfortable Kayan apartments is the (locally-produced) Kayan split-cane mat (*berat lapit*). These may be used for sitting or sleeping, and usually demarcate areas which are not to be walked upon, or at least which are not busy thoroughfares. (The laying down of *berat lapit* on the longhouse verandahs also renders these areas suitable for sitting and eating during the large festive meals which accompany weddings at the longhouse – see Figure 11.) However, linoleum, which may be decorated to suggest tiles, or be patterned with bright floral or geometric designs, has now taken up some of the functions of split cane mats, in particular in providing a suitable and comfortable surface for sitting and eating. As with floors, the interior walls of high ranking apartments are usually clad with a lining material such as mass-produced plywood sheeting. This sheeting may be painted or covered with a laminate depicting faux ceramic tiles (the walls of Taman Kajan's apartment are also treated in this way, see Figure 16).

While furniture is not used to break up the space in the front rooms of high ranking apartments, furniture does indicate demarcations in the use of space. The lounge suites and display cabinets (which are always placed in relation to each other) are often situated closer to the front wall of the *amin* than towards the back. Other more utilitarian storage cupboards are placed to the back of the *amin*, or in another room. The neat placement of collected smaller objects (including the

²¹¹ These are the necklaces made from glass seed beads, and not those strung with the very valuable large antique trade beads. The latter are put away in more secure places.

²¹² Consisting of Kayan beadwork on Penan baskets.

²¹³ Made of woven and moulded rattan, with a stiff fringe-like brim at the back and/or front of the hat; they are decorated variously with feathers, sequins and coloured cotton thread. See figure 9, the Long Na'ah headman and *Penghulu* (at far left and far right, respectively, of the wedding party)

television) inside the display cabinet contributes to the effort towards keeping the central area of the room clear. Other objects of decoration, such as sunhats and beadwork, are attached to the walls above head height. If small tables are used in conjunction with the lounge chairs for serving drinks, these are usually only placed in front of the chairs when needed, and are put away at other times.

Lounge suites and display cabinets tend to distinguish the apartments of high ranking households (and households with the means and desire to create similarly furnished interiors) from those of their lower ranking and poorer neighbours. Other objects, such as televisions, while indicating access to resources of cash, do not have the same resonance as the lounges and cabinets. Televisions have not acquired any particular connection to a Kayan sense of hospitality or rank. The important characteristic of televisions, as one element of the whole group of objects, is their usual placement within the display cabinet (see Figure 13). Televisions are not given pride of place, even if they are regularly watched. (For example, within Taman Kajan's apartment, chairs are not habitually placed in a convenient position to watch the television.)

Among the households which have lounge chairs, there may be an additional distinction between the apartments of headmen and the apartments of reasonably well-off lower ranking households. In the apartments of headmen, multiple sets of lounge chairs may line the walls, enabling the accommodation of quite large numbers of guests, while in the apartments of better-off households of lower rank, only a single lounge suite (e.g., a double-seater and two single chairs) may be present. At Long Na'ah the *Penghulu's* apartment provides a spacious open area furnished with several sets of lounge chairs. However, it should be noted that, in the 1990s, the longhouse apartments of Kayan headmen and the regional chiefs may now constitute only one of their homes. They may also possess houses in urban centres where they spend part of their time.

The cultural values attaching to lounge chairs may be further indicated by the fact that they sometimes cease to be functional objects. While at times they may be used in a relatively casual way by members of the family, including children, even in high ranking households the central floor space is also used for

are wearing such hats.

sitting. Lounge chairs are above all the focus of formal hospitality. Guests may be directed to use the lounge chairs rather than sitting on the floor (this is particularly the case for guests of some importance, or who are present on some formal business), and in this context the chairs become the appropriate place for offering drinks. Lounge chairs may also come into play during times of community-wide celebration, such as Christmas, when they become a part of festive forms of hospitality. At such times guests may sit on the lounge while receiving a drink and being offered a preparation of sweets and snacks. The special role of lounge suites in more formal modes of hospitality is also indicated by the common practice of removing, for everyday use, their covered foam cushions and storing these elsewhere, in some cases in an upstairs room. (However, lounge chairs and their cushions may remain in place more permanently in the apartments of headmen.) The removal of the cushions has the effect of temporarily cancelling the lounge suite as a functional object (see Figure 14). Without their cushions, the chairs offer a prospect of sparsely spaced hard wooden slats which are a great deal more uncomfortable to sit on than either an upright chair, or the floor. It is clear that in many Kayan apartments lounge chairs have not been purchased primarily because they offer a particularly favoured mode of everyday seating.

This use of lounge chairs, and glass-fronted display cabinets, is also echoed in Kayan households in the towns. The front rooms of these houses are furnished with both items, which are placed in relation to each other. Like their counterparts in the longhouses, people in these households do also frequently use the floor for seating, feeding children, or watching television, despite the presence of lounge chairs (see Figure 14). However, there is a tendency in these houses for sets of lounge chairs to be used more frequently, rather than being set off for use on more formal occasions (and the cushions are not necessarily put away). This was the case in the Kayan household in Lambir, where I frequently stayed while on trips to Miri. The capacity of these objects, in a more urbanised environment, to distinguish between households is in any case rather more limited. However, to the extent that these objects do serve this purpose, display cabinets are more important than lounge chairs (see Figure 13).

Significantly, certain objects of 'traditional' Kayan material culture, which explicitly denote rank, are sometimes placed near the lounge suites and display cabinets. In the Kayan visual system, the representation of the human face and body is used to denote rank: a full human figure with legs and arms denotes a higher rank than a depiction of a human face or head alone (King 1985: 139).²¹⁴ In contemporary Baram Kayan apartments these motifs are often incorporated into pieces of beadwork (see Figure 19), and these are generally hung in close proximity to the lounge suite and display cabinet. (It is perhaps significant that, in formal 'portrait' photographs, Kayan conventionally prefer full-figure shots. Photographs of this kind also offer the chance to be shown wearing a full-length elaborately decorated Kayan costume. For women, this includes a beaded rattan headdress and a skirt and sleeveless blouse made of a dark fabric and decorated with shiny sequins forming motifs from the Kayan aesthetic repertoire.)²¹⁵

At Long Na'ah, motifs from the Kayan aesthetic repertoire may also occur on beaded rattan baskets or the occasional beaded baby carrier. These may be hung on the walls of the front room or displayed in the cabinet. (These items also frequently incorporate Christian symbols such as crosses.) This visual system is also represented in wall painting at Baram Kayan longhouses: the more elaborate representations generally occur on the interior walls of apartments, although exterior walls may also be decorated. However, at Long Na'ah wall painting, except in the application of some decorative panels to the *Penghulu's* apartment, is uncommon. Among Baram Kayan communities, Long Na'ah has perhaps one of the plainest of longhouses in this respect. At least some of the minimisation of a Kayan aesthetic repertoire may be connected with the influence of the SIB church.

²¹⁴ Tattoos, particularly for women, are also a vehicle for the visual representation of rank within Kayan society. Women may be tattooed on hands, arms, feet and legs. Choice of motifs and extensiveness of coverage (for example, full tattooing of each joint of each of the fingers) denote rank (see Sellato, 1992: 34, figure 69 for an example of Kayan tattoo motifs). At Long Na'ah many women over the age of fifty are tattooed in this manner, but younger women may only be minimally tattooed, or not at all. Women at Long Na'ah emphasised to me the pain of the process, and some women who were partially tattooed said they had stopped halfway because of it.

²¹⁵ Pinney (1997: 8-10) has addressed the question of the 'different kinds of work that the "face" and the "body" are required to do within different photographic traditions'. He notes an example from his fieldwork in a central Indian town. In contrast to one of his own understandings of the work of photography (its capacity to capture 'candid, revealing and expressive' images of people), for the people of this town the main purpose of photography was to produce formal symmetrical full-length portraits in which people gazed passively at the camera.

The possession of some ranges of Kayan material culture, particularly those things associated with the rituals of the past Kayan religion, was certainly discouraged during the process of conversion to Christianity. There seems to be an understanding at Long Na'ah that, in comparison to the Kenyah, and even to other Kayan longhouses, relatively fewer members of the community have outstanding skills in Kayan art forms, excepting perhaps Kayan dance. In this, contrasts are sometimes drawn with the downriver Kayan longhouse of Long Pilah. On one occasion while I was in the community, the headman's sister sought advice and direction from a Long Pilah woman (the wife of the head teacher at the Long Na'ah primary school) on how to make one of the objects required for a performance of Kayan women's dancing.²¹⁶ The dancing was to be part of the upcoming Christmas celebrations. The head teacher's wife commented that, compared to Long Pilah, there wasn't much Kayan singing (*tekne*) and no traditional (*adat*) style weddings at Long Na'ah. To this the headman's sister smiled and mentioned the importance of Christian worship at Long Na'ah.

Despite these assessments, the presence of objects of 'traditional' Kayan material culture is important to the production of the kind of recognisable repertoire, or collection, of objects which define Kayan apartments. It is the combination of the lounge chairs and display cabinets (plus the cabinet's contents), as well as the selection of objects adorned with designs from the Kayan aesthetic repertoire (sunhats, beadwork, painted shields), which forms a distinctive centre-piece for the larger set of possible household objects. In each of the apartments of high ranking Kayan which I visited, although there were variations, very similar choices had been made, based on this core set of objects. It is the distinctiveness of this collection as a whole, and the manner in which these things are placed together, which defines it, and this distinctiveness identifies the collection as the requisite, if changing, group of things which bring into being a comfortably appointed Kayan apartment in the 1990s.

From the preceding descriptions of a range of Kayan apartments, it is clear that forms of consumption involved in the production of their style may be linked

²¹⁶ Circlets of hornbill feathers (*kirep*) to be attached to the hands of the female dancers.

to a range of influences. These include the teachings of the SIB church, processes of nation building and commoditisation and mass consumption. However, Kayan notions of rank and hospitality, and the continuing importance of a Kayan aesthetic repertoire, also lie behind the choices people at Long Na'ah, and other Baram Kayan longhouses, make about their homes. As with other forms of consumption, there is an intertwining of tendencies in the styles of Kayan apartments: choices may be connected to both homogenising 'external' influences (Christianity, global capitalism, nation building), but may also suggest the creation and recreation of local Kayan social and cultural identity (linked, among other things, to notions of rank, hospitality, and a local aesthetic repertoire). However, beyond identifying these interweaved influences or tendencies, what must be emphasised is the need to see all these things as ingredients in a contemporary Kayan style (among other things, there are choices to be made in their combination). Thus, in the apartments of higher ranking and wealthier Kayan, the choice and arrangement of furniture and other objects (including a range of firmly commoditised objects and materials) produces a consistent visual effect, making these apartments recognisable as Kayan apartments. As I have said, the differences between contemporary Kayan interiors of the 1990s and those of the 1940s and 1950s may be striking; however, the more interesting observation is that, in their newer forms and with revised contents, Kayan apartments continue to resemble each other. The ability to recognise this 'consistent visual effect' is what Douglas and Isherwood (1979: 4) call 'metaphorical appreciation'; and in scanning longhouse apartments at Long Na'ah, and elsewhere in the Baram, 'goods in their assemblage present a set of meanings more or less coherent, more or less intentional' (Douglas and Isherwood, 1996: ix), thus suggesting shared 'dispositions and interests' among Baram Kayan (Bourdieu, 1984: 2). At Long Na'ah, as at other Kayan longhouses, a sense of consistency in the style of apartments does, however, intersect with social rank within the community, and with variable access to resources (as well as with differing levels of commitment to the SIB church). Thus, at the same time as there is a 'coherency' of style, there is variation within the longhouses in the configuration, materials, and furnishings of individual apartments.

CHAPTER NINE

LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE: NEW MODES OF CONSUMPTION FOR YOUNG KAYAN WOMEN & MEN, AND KAYAN CHILDREN

For Kayan who are married and have children, balancing a combination of subsistence and cash-based forms of livelihood and weighing up attitudes to economic change are issues of great importance. But for young women and men in their late teens and early twenties, who have not yet married and established families, these questions are yet to be linked to the vital need of providing for such families. They are freer to optimistically imagine the possible benefits of pursuing a cash-based livelihood and its corollaries of town life, mobility, and a world of more expansive consumer choices. Particularly while they remain in upriver communities, the opportunities for earning a cash wage are, however, relatively limited for young Kayan women. Some of these women therefore look to wage labour in the towns as an alternative to an automatic involvement in village agriculture. They may be supported in this by their parents. This is more likely, however, if their families have firm kin connections in the towns, which will mean accommodation and a base for such young women. This is not to say that young women do not continue to feel a strong attachment to the longhouse community. For them, the attractions of town life, with its opportunities for entertainment and consumption, even if this amounts only to window shopping and freedom of movement, is counterbalanced by the satisfactions of spending time with friends and family at the longhouse. Young women who do pursue wage labour in the towns or timber camps often do so erratically, and return frequently to the longhouse. Young unmarried men from Long Na'ah who work for timber companies in the Baram have greater access to cash on a monthly basis than many other Kayan, and certainly than young Kayan women. Despite family obligations, the monthly cycle of work in the camps means that they may travel to town at the end of each month with a significant amount of cash. Miri is a

desirable place to be at these times. Here young men may indulge in a monthly splurge (on accommodation, beer, and entertainment) which may amount to an expenditure of as much as RM400. While work in the timber camps is indisputably tough and the living conditions more spartan than longhouse or town life, for young unmarried Kayan men, at least, there are also some elements of glamour to be gained from the driving of large timber trucks and the handling of heavy machinery. As I have already noted, hurtling along a timber road in a Mercedes truck with a huge load of logs, and sporting rolled-up sleeves and a pair of rock-star sunglasses has a certain style to it.

Even though some parents may encourage their young adult children to pursue wage labour, a strategy which may lead young people towards the towns, new patterns of consumption for young Kayan women and men do not escape the moral and political dimensions of local debate on development and monetisation. Young people may be warned, particularly within the rhetoric of the SIB church, of the dangers of too avid a pursuit of the fruits of 'development' and all things 'modern' – such as new clothes, fancy haircuts, rock music, smoking, alcohol, and even sexual promiscuity. As I have already described, at times the message of the church does, however, also seek to persuade young people, and their parents, of the importance of education, and of gaining an understanding of things which are new to them in the 'age of technology'. The analysis of SIB sermons at the large regional youth conventions has shown that the church addresses issues of economic and social change and offers an encouraging message for young members of the church about the opportunities which will be increasingly available to them. Significantly, the church does not assume that young people will only be subsistence farmers; it is accepted that they will probably be doing a greater range of things, and these will probably involve wage labour and some movement to urban areas.

If young women and men are increasingly in a position to consume a new range of things, children from Long Na'ah are becoming both a focus of consumption (for those parents who have sufficient cash), and consumers in their own right, in terms of the demands they make of their parents. For those who can afford it, an extensive range of babies' and children's products are available even

in the smaller towns of the Baram. Access to television, and time spent outside the longhouse community in downriver towns are decisive factors in the kinds of demands children are likely to make. Not surprisingly, this is especially the case for the products, such as T-shirts, comics, and toys, associated with popular children's television programs.

Young Kayan Women: Consumption and the Dual Attractions of Town and Longhouse

Opportunities for greater mobility and the chance to consume the attractions of town – whether in the form of actual purchases, or simply taking in the sights and atmosphere – are attractive both to young unmarried women, and to married women with young families.²¹⁷ In contrast, some older women told me that they find time spent in town, and shopping there, a rather worrying experience, claiming that they are 'not good at it'. They also worried about being robbed. Married women with young families sometimes expressed their regret to me that, with several children to care for, these opportunities had been significantly curtailed for them. They looked back to earlier times in their lives when they were freer to take trips to town or to the regional Christian conventions.

Married women also sometimes equate this reduction of mobility with the cessation of opportunities for study. During their teens, young Kayan women from upriver longhouses become accustomed to the mobility involved in attending high school in downriver towns, where they also board during term time. A regular movement between town and longhouse is the usual pattern for them at this age. Some young women who have recently finished high school are able to continue this pattern of mobility for a while, particularly if they have kin in the towns at whose homes they may stay for periods of time. However, they return often to the longhouse, especially at times, such as harvest, when their labour is required by their families there. They also return for community festivities such as Christmas. The longhouse is attractive to young women at these celebratory times

²¹⁷ Hew (1999), describing rural-urban migration among Bidayuh women, suggests that they are eager to escape the drudgery of village life and a lack of economic independence for the

as a satisfying, and even exciting, source of sociability and gossip (about potential romantic interests, among other things). Marriage does signal a significant break for young women from the patterns of unmarried life. Marital status is marked in village life in some rather bureaucratic ways: women's groups within the SIB church are organised on the basis of marital status, as are community activities such as dancing and sports competitions. (During one Christmas, it was remarked upon that one young woman was mixing her categories. She was participating in the married women's dancing competition, but also competing as a member of the single women's basketball team.)

Participation in wage labour, and the supplies of cash it provides, are factors in patterns of mobility and consumption for young women. Young women may work as childcarers for other families at the longhouse, as cooks in the timber camps (the most common form of wage labour for women), as cashiers in town supermarkets, or as menial workers in urban hotels.²¹⁸ Monthly cash incomes from all these types of work do not, however, usually exceed RM300. (Cash income from the running of village shops is something which is confined to older married women.) However, even young women who have had little opportunity to earn cash via these kinds of employment may participate more-or-less vicariously in patterns of consumption open to those women who do have sources of cash. They may do this by accompanying those who spend, or who own desirable objects, or by simply looking and imagining as they walk around the shops and markets of large towns such as Miri (all the while making only very modest purchases themselves). The attractions of town may be consumed, with or without cash transactions.²¹⁹ One woman at Long Na'ah, who is already married with two children, and who came to the longhouse from a small downriver town, told me that she often felt bored at the longhouse. At least in a small town, she said, one

excitements of 'modern' urban life.

²¹⁸ There are also a very small number of young women who are receiving, or anticipate pursuing, tertiary education. However, these women are also more likely to leave the village community permanently.

²¹⁹ Analyses of the sociology and psychology of shopping certainly take their object to be something very much wider than the activities surrounding discrete purchases; they explore notions of desire in consumption, deconstruct the psycho-social implications of the architectural settings of shopping (e.g., Ferguson, 1992), and analyse the place of shopping venues such as malls in the development of adolescent subcultures (e.g., Langman, 1992).

could go for a walk and look at things in the shops. The longhouse 'shops' – often located in a small section of someone's apartment, and having a minimal range of stock – hardly qualify as a source of that more engaging, and anonymous, pastime of browsing to which she was referring.

Clothing is one category of things which may be consumed by young Kayan women, both as a purchased good and as an object of window-shopping with friends. It is also an area where there are some emerging differences in taste between young women and their older married counterparts. In his discussion of goods as an instrument of change, McCracken (1988: 135) argues that goods can

[H]elp a group to create a new definition of itself and a revision of the cultural category to which it belongs. The meaning present in goods allows the group to engage in a process of definition that is sometimes parallel to and sometimes independent of the linguistic discourse with which they contemplate their self definition.

Young Kayan women are certainly concerned with the meanings present in certain items of clothing, and this lies behind their acceptance or rejection of such items (or at least in the manner in which they are worn). For example, young unmarried women at Long Na'ah do not wear sarongs, at least not as items of daily apparel. For them sarongs may be used for bathing, but to wear them otherwise would be to accept a self-definition which contained the rather old-fashioned meanings of sarongs. Young women overwhelmingly wear long pants, (loose baggy cotton pants; more fitted pants of stretchy materials; or track pants, often of a shiny synthetic silk). These pants are worn with loose-fitting T-shirts (see Figure 13). Stretchy pants are also a form of clothing favoured by older women, particularly for farm work; but here the choice is directed more by utility and comfort, rather than a taste for things modern, or pants, as such. However, sarongs are an item of everyday wear for older women at the longhouse. Women over forty may also evince something of a connoisseur's interest in the better quality sarongs, judging the fineness of the fabric and the design (and whether the latter is batik or print). Sarongs are also important as gifts (along with gold rings and other jewellery) in engagement ceremonies. Apart from these kinds of contexts, in which young woman do not, in any case, have a great deal of influence, young women do not choose sarongs as a favoured form of clothing.

On more formal occasions, such as church services, young women may wear calf- or ankle-length skirts with waistbands (but not the sarongs, or the suits with buttoned blouses and long fitted skirts of older women – see Figure 12). Jeans are desired as a symbol of modernity for young Kayan women, but they are generally only worn by those who have spent more time in town, away from the village. Jeans have an air of style and town life about them which stretchy or track-pants rather lack. Apart from these particular categories of clothing, women of all ages are interested in seeing and obtaining clothes that are ‘different’ in style and materials. Women whose purchases are largely confined to those made from travelling clothes salesmen, and only occasional trips to the smaller towns, complain that the clothes on offer are ‘all the same’.

Dresses are less frequently worn by young women (but are the frequent attire of small girls). When the range of styles and sizes of clothing are limited, it is easier to find elasticised pants and skirts, as well as T-shirts, of an appropriate size than well-fitting dresses. Along with jeans, dresses are, however, also desired by young women at Long Na’ah. At the village it is the two young female pastors who most frequently wear (well-fitting) dresses, or neatly tailored skirts, as opposed to skirts with elasticised waists. Their attire distinguishes them from most other young women in the village and, along with their neat, low-heeled pumps, indicates their position as preachers and representatives of the church.

In some cases young women and men at Long Na’ah may be influenced quite directly by wide-spread but quite ephemeral fashions in Malaysia. (These are examples of consumption where the influence of the media and advertising may play a greater role in local choices.) During the period of my fieldwork, uplift bras were very fashionable in Malaysia (and internationally). And at Long Na’ah one woman in her twenties told me her husband wanted her to wear such a bra – to give her that upward pointing shape, she said, (as she described a sweeping arc in the air with her finger). Most bras worn by women at Long Na’ah are generally of a simpler, less structured, kind. However, in whatever form, bras are an item which is in some demand. During fieldwork, women often asked me to look for bras on my trips to town (with an emphasis on finding the right size).

While I was at Long Na'ah clothing size emerged as an important, and much mentioned, aspect of its consumption, at least for older women. Although Kayan, both men and women, are generally not especially tall or large in build,²²⁰ a significant number of women over thirty at the village carry sufficient body weight to make finding suitably large (especially large-waisted) clothes a problem. This is compounded for larger, and weightier than average, men. Women with larger husbands sometimes asked me to search for extra large-sized men's shorts and trousers for them. Body weight is something which women at Long Na'ah comment on. One woman spoke to me about different people's propensities toward fatness and thinness by describing their bodies as 'wanting to be fat (or thin)' no matter what that person did. Of her own body she said it 'always wanted to be fat' no matter how hard she worked at the farm or in the house. Along with different tastes in clothing, preferences in body weight tend to vary between younger women, and women over the age of about forty. In general, gaining large amounts of weight (as one older woman did while I was in the community)²²¹ is not desirable among young women. (On one occasion a young woman at Long Na'ah somewhat disparagingly described a prospective sister-in-law of hers, of whom she did not wholly approve, as 'short and fat'.) Some young women who work as cooks in the timber camps do, however, sometimes return to the longhouse considerably heavier, but after periods of time spent in town, the same women return slimmer of body (and often wearing new clothes, such as jeans, and new, sometimes permed, hairstyles). Notably, the trimly attired young female pastors at Long Na'ah are also among the slimmest of young women in the village.

Gold jewellery is another item which is of much interest to young, as well as older, women. For younger women, an interest in gold jewellery has supplanted the interest older women maintain in collecting and appreciating strings of antique glass trade beads. (In the past these objects were much more important in systems of exchange and inheritance, and had a place in the Kayan religion.) Older women wear their glass beads on special occasions. The beads may now be worn set

²²⁰ At 159cm, I often felt surprisingly tall among Kayan women.

²²¹ Neighbours claimed that this woman had wanted to put on weight, and her dramatic weight

within gold earrings or finger rings, as well as in the conventional stringed necklaces. However, younger women have a preference for gold chain necklaces, small gold hoop earrings, and neat gold ear studs. Gold pendant earrings are less commonly worn, but, if so, are more likely to be worn by younger women. At Long Na'ah there are very few women indeed, young or old, who still have the old style of laboriously elongated ear lobes (produced by years of wearing weighted brass earrings). Many older women who had been through this process have opted to have their extended earlobes surgically removed. One older woman told me that it was better after her long earlobes were removed because they had got in the way when she was looking after her children. She also said that she had them removed because she was embarrassed when she went to town as people stared at her. Women who still have elongated earlobes are an object of comment even for Kayan at Long Na'ah. In part because of the form of their earlobes after the surgical procedure, these women often wear a style of earring made up of a gold rosette attached to a long hooked clasp, rather than earrings with posts, or the smaller hoop earrings. As a consequence, for young women this type of earring tends to be associated with the old-fashioned practice of earlobe extension, and is thus less desirable. In the gold shops of Marudi and Miri, the hooked earrings are also only stocked in small numbers, and are associated with 'upriver' people.

Although the purchase of some items may be financed by young women themselves, the consumption of clothes and other items is also funded by parents. This is the case for such urban-based services as computer courses and driving lessons. As with commodities like clothing and jewellery, the desire for such services may be fostered for younger Kayan women by the experience of time spent in an urban environment. Cars, driven in an urban environment, are certainly attractive to young Kayan women. Two young women, Lahai and Paya (one from Long Na'ah and the other a close relative from Lambir) developed an interest in cars and learning to drive towards the end of my fieldwork period. These two women are close companions and, having recently finished high school, spend their time between the upriver longhouse and Lambir, enjoying the various attractions of each location. While in Lambir they sometimes spend time

gain over a period of less than two months was aided by the use of a form of 'fattening medicine'.

in the company of an older married cousin of Paya's, Puyang, who owns her own car.

Puyang is proud of her small sedan which allows her to travel into Miri and to other places around the district. Puyang's car is for her a source of recreation, a pastime, as much as a practical source of transport. She enjoys driving her young relatives about, including on sight-seeing trips to the nearby Lambir National Park. She told me that she was often bored in her house, which is located in a slightly isolated position on the Miri-Bintulu road, outside of Miri. To stave off boredom, she drives into Miri to the shopping centres, or sometimes to the beach near a public park, not far from the town centre. Paya enjoys the experience of driving with Puyang and walking on the beach with her.²²² (Paya also appreciates the car from a more utilitarian point of view. Her family lives in a small house in Lambir which is located between a stream and a marsh and cannot be reached by car. Most usually she and her family must walk some distance to another area of Lambir which has sealed roads, and from there catch a bus into Miri.) At around this time Martha, another female relative of Paya's and Lahai's from Long Na'ah, was undertaking driving lessons with the aim of obtaining a license. Paya and Lahai took an interest in this also, and sometimes accompanied her to the lessons in Miri. Not long before I left the field, Paya herself had begun poring over a handbook of road rules with the hope of learning to drive. At this time Puyang also took up a computing course, saying it was just 'for interest' and to 'fill in time'. Puyang's lead, however, served to spur Paya and Lahai to also seek to undertake a similar course.

Puyang, who has long been resident in the vicinity of Miri, projects an air of ease and greater knowledge of things urban than other young Kayan women who have spent less time in the towns. Nevertheless, she is not blasé about her car which offers her a certain glamour. This sense of sophistication is also vicariously available to Paya and Lahai when they ride with her in the car. On one occasion when I was staying at Lambir, Puyang took her younger relatives for a sight-seeing trip to Lambir National Park. Accompanying them was Rose, a Bidayuh

²²² These outings also provide Puyang and Paya with the casual entertainment of observing, and commenting on, the clothes of the wealthy guests from the nearby luxury hotel.

friend of Puyang's from Kuching who was working in the Mega Hotel in Miri. Dressed in a silky, tight-fitting navy-blue T-shirt, a checked mini skirt, flesh coloured stockings, a pair of chunky high-heeled black leather boots – and checking her lipstick at intervals in a compact mirror – Rose, who told me she had spent time in 'KL', rather augmented the sense of sophistication already adhering to the car and the outing.²²³ It is clear that there is much to be desired by young Kayan women from upriver longhouses in the urban atmosphere of Miri. However, the longhouse also holds the attractions of sociability and gossip with family and friends. Coming from an upriver longhouse may even be an interesting thing to tell one's school friends about, and show photos of, if they do not have an alternative rural home themselves.

Young Men and Modernity: Marlboro, Machinery, Trucks, Travel and Coiffure

It is the significant sums of cash involved in timber work which enable the kinds of consumption that are now open to young Kayan men. It is also the nature of that work which forms a background to new kinds of consumption: the monthly work-cycle in the camps, with time off spent in the towns; the sometimes intermittent nature of the work itself; the use of heavy machinery, and the driving of trucks. The alternation of periods of hard work with times of little activity mean that young men at the camps seek whatever entertainment or pastimes might be available while there. At times of bad weather when trucks and heavy machinery remain idle, young men return to their quarters, or to the camp canteen to watch videos, listen to rock music, chat and smoke. During school holidays there may be numbers of families present, but timber camps, especially the more remote ones, are masculine places. Where television reception is good, young men may watch the programs, but videos are also popular, partly because they provide a better opportunity to gather friends together for a specific purpose, and allow some choice of what may be watched. Such videos include martial arts and action

²²³ Paya admired Rose's command of English – which included a fairly daring vocabulary by the standards of young Kayan women, if not of young Kayan men.

movies, and All American Wrestling programs; recordings of rock music concerts are also favoured.

A large variety of recorded pop and rock music is available in Sarawak, from the large Indonesian, and smaller Malaysian, rock music industries, and from the pool of North American and European pop and rock. Popular among Kayan at the time I was in the field were the 'slow rock' recordings of Richard Marx ('Please Forgive Me'); old recordings of the Eagles; the Australian singer John Farnham ('Hold Me in Your Arms'); Brian Adams, and the German rock group, the 'Scorpions' (ever popular in Indonesia and Malaysia, Scorpions songs regularly re-emerge in local cover versions). Local rap- and reggae-based pop music was also popular, as, occasionally, was '*joget*' – Javanese dance music (locally identified as Malay).²²⁴ The Hindi and Arabic influenced pop-music form, *dangdut*, is less popular. Recordings of local Sarawakian groups are also available, including a very small number which feature Kayan performers singing (if they are lucky) in Kayan. One Kayan singer from the Balui, Delly Amera, has produced a recording which is very popular in the Baram and regularly played by Kayan at Long Na'ah at parties and celebrations, as well as by young Kayan men at the logging camps. It is played in large part for the one track Delly Amera sings in Kayan. For the sake of gaining a larger Sarawakian audience he has been required to sing the remaining nine songs in Iban. There are also numerous recordings of local singers and groups performing Christian-influenced pop or soft rock. Dancing to rock and pop music (whatever the style) at the longhouse is termed 'disco'. However, older people often call dancing to all non-Kayan music '*joget*', this distinguishes it, for them, from Kayan dancing, which is always referred to by the Kayan term for it: '*nyiven*'.

The world of Indonesian and Malaysian (as well as American and European) rock and pop music is a source of sartorial, and hair, styles for young Kayan men, as are some television programs. One such program shown in Malaysia is the North American production *Beverley Hills 90210* (replete with its

²²⁴ Young Kayan men sometimes wear baseball caps, backwards in the Northern American rapper style. However, young women are also interested in rap and sometimes amuse themselves by parodying the rap style of dancing while listening to a tape of rap music. During the 1994 Christmas celebrations at Long Na'ah, a group of small girls offered a rap sequence as one of the

cast of fashionably manicured, made-up, and coiffured high school kids). (At one timber camp, the title of this program was painted over one door of the young men's accommodation, while another door was marked: 'God Bless this House'.) Many young Kayan men consciously pursue various forms of sartorial and bodily style, and pay for the kinds of clothes and haircuts they desire while on their trips to town. Personal choice of styles is, however, more often indicated by haircuts than by distinctive clothing (well-fitting jeans are *de rigueur*, and a pair of dark sunglasses a favoured accessory – see Figure 15).

Although hairstyles among the more consciously stylish young Kayan men are quite varied, they do tend to fall into three main groups: medium length, spruce, swept-back cuts (lacquered for formal occasions such as weddings); sharp, short, and spiky brush-cut hairstyles; and styles worn long over the shoulders and cut short at the sides (usually identified as 'rock star' haircuts). While many young Kayan men may be eager to consume those things which symbolise modernity for them (pop music, rock star haircuts, sunglasses, international brand cigarettes), at the same time they are concerned with their identity as Kayan. One young Kayan man, who worked as a surveyor for the timber companies, also described himself to me as a 'local Kayan singer' (he had recorded some songs and sung on local radio). He told me his long hair, and the earring he wore, indicated that he was involved in rock music, but also emphasised that, although he was prepared to sing live in any style or language, he would not record in any language other than Kayan, as Delly Amera had done. Along with his hairstyle, he had also adopted the name 'Romen' (short for 'romantic'). Romen is from the Kayan longhouse of Long Teran, but one of his songs, in particular, was popular with people at Long Na'ah. A 'sentimental song' (as he described it) the song is a tragic ballad about the death of his father in a logging accident when he was just two years old.

Writing of practices which socialise hair, Mercer (1987: 34) describes how hair can be '[a] medium for significant "statements" about self and society and the codes of value that bind them, or don't. In this way hair is merely a raw material, constantly processed by cultural practices which thus invest it with "meanings"

and "value". In some cases, the meanings of the hairstyles which young Kayan men choose serve to position them in relation to their understandings of modernity. For young men long haircuts, with their rock-music derivation, are clearly distinguished from the old style of Kayan men's haircut: cut bluntly at one length all around the head (at about the level of the person's ears), except for a long tail of hair at the back. Hair cut in this way falls forward over the forehead in a thick fringe. One young man, referring derogatorily to something more than their hairstyles, described some of the older men at Long Na'ah who still wear the old style of hair, as 'coconut heads'. As with young women and sarongs, the Kayan hair style symbolises undesirable old fashioned things to many young men. Some young men with short spiky hair cuts also sport a thin, long tail of hair at the back of their head, but such tails refer to styles prevalent in the rock music world, and not to conventional Kayan coiffure. Brush-cuts are worn by young men of varying ages, but the sharpest of these tend to belong to the youngest men, those in their late teens and early twenties. Although these young men may already work in the timber camps, these sharp hairdos are also favoured by some young men who are youth leaders in the SIB church. In this capacity, they often play the guitar for church services. Combined with the lean and muscular body gained through physical work or sport,²²⁵ these short haircuts can add to a certain masculine cachet. For guitar-playing church youth leaders these short haircuts enable them to be stylish without making the morally doubtful statement of the longer 'rock-star' haircuts. Rock-star haircuts are redolent of behaviour which the church frowns upon: drinking, smoking and sexual promiscuity. (While church youth leaders with short brush-cuts are fond of wearing stylish jackets, those with 'rock star' hair styles, and a muscular physique, frequently sport singlets.)

For young men working in the camps, the time to pursue the acquisition of clothing and new haircuts is during their monthly break, when many travel to Miri. It is on these trips that more expensive items such as CD players are purchased. While such young men may not frequent the luxury five star hotels of

²²⁵ Such young men may also be skilful *sepak takraw* players, an acrobatic sport which also promotes a limber and muscular physique.

Miri, some can afford the less expensive range of 'air-con' hotels, as well as quantities of beer (Carlsberg, or Heineken for the more stylish); cigarettes (Marlboro, with its lingering cowboy flavour, striking the right note in a way that Dunhill does not) and the entertainments of karaoke bars and Miri's 'cowboy saloons'.

As I have mentioned, the stylishness involved in the consumption of new hairstyles and clothes flows, in part, from the timber wages available to young men, but it is also seen against the background of the work itself. There is also the potential for a certain masculine glamour in the driving of timber trucks and in the handling of heavy machinery. On trips from the longhouse to Miri, the passengers of vehicles from Long Na'ah often catch sight of and wave to a familiar face as a young man (wearing dark glasses) flashes by in a truck. Older men, after driving trucks for the timber companies for some years, are sometimes keen to acquire their own smaller trucks or landcruisers. At Long Na'ah driving is a wholly male pursuit, even though women may own or contribute to the financing of vehicles. Women are certainly not employed in heavy timber work, but neither do they drive the smaller trucks owned by people in the village. Timber work also involves the use of machinery such as bulldozers, caterpillars, and heavy-duty tractors fitted with forks for timber handling. Across the river from Long Na'ah a road from the nearby timber camp descends a steep slope onto a cleared area. Logs are intermittently piled here before removal to other processing points. This is also the place where people from the village wait to pick up rides on four-wheel-drive trucks to the farms. At times when the timber is being moved, the waiting commuters may be treated to the entertaining spectacle of young men from Long Na'ah roaring down the slope, at a breakneck pace, in tractors with enormous tyres. Once, at a camp downriver from Long Na'ah, a young man pointed out to me one of the spectacles of Baram logging camps: wheeling around each other in a dusty expanse of chopped earth and scattered logs, then locking mechanical horns with a clash of metal, were two enormous roaring pieces of machinery. For the entertainment of their young drivers, and the spectators, the machines grappled in the manner of giant wrestlers (or perhaps giant All American Wrestlers).

Kayan Children and Consumption: Power Rangers' T-shirts and Little Lacy Dresses

Children's clothing and babies' products are in some demand at Long Na'ah, although the ability to afford these things varies considerably between households. Some households are able to supply their children with little more than a minimal range of simple clothing, often bought from travelling salesmen, and the occasional inexpensive toy or amusement purchased at the village shops. Other households are able to buy a greater range of clothing, some purchased in Miri or the other towns. In some cases purchases are made in response to the children's requests. Babies' products are also a focus of consumption for parents who can afford them, and particularly where a family has access to timber wages. One such family at Long Na'ah was able to provide their two small children with quite an extensive range of these things: a constant supply of milk formulas (formulated for toddlers aged from one to five, as well as for infants), babies' bottles and insulated bottle coolers, baby-sized blankets, disposable nappies, pacifiers, lacy sunhats, baseball caps, plastic toys, small electronic games, videos and a pram.

Two items of clothing which are particularly sought after for small children are elaborately frilled and lace-adorned dresses for girls, and T-shirts emblazoned with various motifs for boys. The latter are particularly desirable to small boys if they are adorned with a motif from a television show with which the child himself is familiar (such as *Power Rangers*, *Robocop*, or *Black Mask*) (see Figure 17). Emblazoned T-shirts, whether or not they are recognisable to the children, may be worn by girls as well as boys, but the small dresses are definitely feminine things. Such dresses may be given as gifts at Christmas.²²⁶ Toy guns, complete with the battery-operated sound of gunfire, are occasional gifts to small boys.

²²⁶ Once I gave a small girl in my adoptive family at Long Lama a polo style shirt with a collar which she objected to because she said it was a 'boy's shirt'.

Kayan children in the small town of Long Lama, as well as in the larger towns, who are regular watchers of TV are well aware of the connections between their favourite programs and the associated merchandise, such as plastic replicas of the TV characters. One boy aged four, from my adoptive family in Long Lama, often expressed a wish for *Ksatria Baja Hitam* (the Malaysian title for *Flashman*) T-shirts.²²⁷ When his mother made trips to Marudi, he and his small sister would also ask for their favourite brand of sweet, a type of sherbet not always available from the shops in Long Lama.

While primary school children at Long Na'ah may be becoming familiar with a range of television programs, particularly through their viewing at the timber camps, they are less familiar with these kinds of things than are children in down-river towns, although some children at Long Na'ah know of the animated children's program *Doremon* (a Japanese children's program dubbed into Malay and English) and its spin-off cartoon books. At Long Na'ah children watch videos more often than television programs. Although children are attracted to watch whatever is being shown (action and martial art movies, Indonesian thrillers and comedies), particularly popular while I was at the village were the animated films of Walt Disney. In the household where I lived a number of these were watched repeatedly. Some of the children were also aware of other such Walt Disney titles and asked me to buy these for them when I travelled to town. Having watched their copies of *The Little Mermaid* and *Peter Pan* repeatedly, one small girl in the household asked me to get *Aladdin*. Cartoons such as *Pink Panther* (a favourite of the smallest girl in the household) were also watched exhaustively. During the showing of these and other videos, the children of this household sometimes tried to limit the number of other children from the village who came to watch (by locking the front door to the apartment or trying to make the small viewers pay to enter). They were often thwarted in this, however, as children usually managed to enter through one subterfuge or other, including requests (shouted under the door) to buy the iceblocks made by Ubung. Once the door was open, they joined the growing crowd of children seated on the floor in front of the television.

²²⁷ He subsequently wore a *Power Rangers*' T-shirt and shorts set, which I gave him, almost on a daily basis.

Both small children and older school children at Long Na'ah make requests of their parents for cash. Small children ask for a few coins to buy crisps, lollies, and canned drinks from the village shops. One woman whose four-year-old child constantly pestered her for such things from the close-by village shop ultimately sent her child to join her sisters' household in a downriver town. Here she felt such demands could be controlled, the town shops being some distance away from her sisters' house. She also worried that her daughter's taste for crisps and carbonated drinks meant that she did not eat properly at the longhouse. Older children ask for much larger sums of cash than their smaller brothers and sisters to use during the school term at the boarding schools downriver. One woman in her thirties complained to me about how much cash children ask for now. She said, rather dramatically, that she only got RM5 or RM10 when she went to school, but now her children ask for two-hundred (she did add, however, that they might only be given between RM50 and RM100.)

Consuming Animals as Pets

A final example concludes my account of new modes of consumption at the Baram Kayan community of Long Na'ah. Not long before I left the community I observed an innovation in dog ownership which provides a striking example of the way in which the meaning of objects (in this case, a category of animal), and their consumption, may change in conjunction with people's shifting interests, experiences, and forms of livelihood. Before looking at dogs in particular, however, a brief over-view of pet ownership at the village provides some context for the ownership, and meanings, of dogs.

Kayan keep various animals as pets, such as the ubiquitous talking myna birds (and the occasional forest animal such as a monkey). The mynas often reside in a cage at the back of, or sometimes inside, the apartments, and are carefully fed and watered. They may even accompany their owners to the rice farms so they may be cared for and provide amusement. Mynas are gifted, and multi-lingual, mimics, and people gain amusement from instructing the birds. At Long Na'ah the mynas cackle and exclaim a repertoire of expressions in Kayan, English, and

occasionally one of the local Chinese dialects. (Most mynas can enquire 'Have you already eaten?' in Kayan, and proclaim 'I love you' in English.)²²⁸

Children at Long Na'ah regard a range of small creatures such as beetles, cicadas, small fish and crustaceans as ephemeral play-things. Large hard-carapaced beetles may be attached by a leg to a string and pulled about the longhouse verandahs; sometimes the beetles provide additional amusement by attempting to fly while the child holds one end of the string. Adults regard these animals as legitimate playthings, returning the escaping insects to their small children. There is little sentimentality concerning damage to such creatures. Cicadas, which are amusing for their loud clicking call, may be prevented from escaping by having their wings removed. Small riverine fish and crustaceans may also act as amusements for children who poke them and exclaim over them as the animals swim about in a glass jar or shallow dish. (These playthings are usually destined for an oil-filled wok; but the process of cooking them is also amusing to children.)

All these types of creatures are regarded as pets (*hulung*), animals kept largely for amusement. However, the small insects and fish have more the quality of toys, while caged mynas are valued companions of some longevity. Dogs, however, which are generally kept around the village or the farms in significant numbers, are not pets in the same sense. Dogs are not kept primarily for amusement, they are animals which work, being kept for the vital activity of pig hunting. At Long Na'ah cats are also kept, but have a somewhat intermediate position. They do have the practical purpose of keeping mice numbers down, especially in view of the quantities of stored rice. In this capacity they have access to the apartments in a way that dogs do not. Dogs are not permitted inside apartments, and if they occasionally get inside, they are ejected quickly. Cats tend to be tolerated. Despite their intermittent catching of rodents, cats are less clearly identified as animals with a specific task, and their habit of lazing about and sleeping during the day is sometimes remarked upon with some amusement. Cats

²²⁸ Birds are understood as repetitive mimics, but other animals are regarded as having a greater capacity to respond to human commands. A woman from an urban Kayan household outside Miri told me that one of her cats would only respond to commands in English, the language in which its previous owner had spoken to it. However, she described her other cats, which were less

are thus closer to being considered *hulung* than dogs. Unwanted kittens and puppies are, however, both disposed of dispassionately, sometimes by drowning in the swift-flowing river (children may accompany their parents to watch this process). Older dogs which prove to be ineffectual as hunters are not necessarily disposed of, but they simply do not receive the same food and attention as the better hunting dogs, and must fend for themselves. At Long Na'ah, at least, neither dogs nor cats are the focus of petting or fondling, although cats may be touched more readily in some domestic situations than dogs, which are considered to smell bad.²²⁹ Hunting dogs are handled, but in a rough-and-ready manner – such as when thrown bodily, one-by-one, into a longboat. Once dogs have reached adulthood, however, and proved themselves to be skilful hunters they are valued animals indeed (if not pampered ones). For example, their owners will go to considerable lengths to save the life of a valued dog which has been wounded in a pig hunt. One dog at Long Na'ah which had received a deep and life-threatening wound to its neck was treated with frequent applications of clear alcohol and, despite the wound suppurating dangerously, the dog survived and continued to hunt. Such dogs are neither pets, nor treated like 'toys', but are an important part of the village economy.

One dog which found its way to Long Na'ah in 1995 was neither utilitarian nor an asset for the village economy. Aren, the woman who owned this dog, had acquired it from her Chinese son-in-law. Aren told me, with some emphasis, that the small dog had cost RM80, she also said it did no work: it did not chase pigs. Being small, fluffy, and white, it stood out among the array of larger brown and black village dogs. (Its white fur had also been trimmed, in part to allow it to see beyond its shaggy fringe.) The dog's aberrant behaviour was a source of interest and amusement at the village: it steadfastly shunned the village dogs, preferring the company of people, around whom it snuffled, and wagged its

uncomprehending in the face of Kayan commands, as 'Kayan cats'.

²²⁹ At Kayan households in urban and semi-urban settings both cats and dogs (the latter here lacking the purpose of pig hunting) are more accurately regarded as pets, and cats in particular may be petted and played with by children. Dogs in these settings may be given Western names such as 'Frankie' (shortened, and Kayanised, as 'Ngkie'), and be figures of fun. Other dogs are known by straightforward descriptive names such 'Black' or 'Brown'. Cats at Long Na'ah may be given names, but these may amount to no more personalised tags than 'cat' (*seng*) or 'miaow'.

tail (decidedly undog-like behaviour, in local terms).²³⁰ Seated guests in Aren's house were taken aback by the animal's behaviour: its demeanour suggested that the apartment interior was its rightful domain (something which Aren diffidently allowed). It also nosed the guests in a friendly manner and threatened to hop into their laps. Aren's friends would push the eager dog away, but commented on its lack of a powerful smell (the dog had been shampooed). Aren and her friends also laughed at the dog's eating habits: unlike the hardy but thin village dogs, the 'Chinese Dog' (*aso' kina*), as it was called, turned up its nose at left-over rice, accepting instead only biscuits, cake and coffee. The *aso' kina* was definitely a pet (*hulung*), and barely a dog at all, in the local sense. Nevertheless, Aren's household, and her visitors, derived a great deal of amusement from the small, white fluffy animal. With the arrival of the *aso' kina* the village now contained two very distinct categories of dog: pig hunters, and an urbanised pet.²³¹ This example highlights the way in which a category of otherwise familiar and, in part, utilitarian animals can be recast, individually at least, as novelties, and consumed as amusements.

Looking Towards the Future

This thesis has offered an image of life, in the period between 1993 and 1995, for the upriver Kayan community of Long Na'ah in Sarawak. It has focused on new modes of consumption associated largely with the expansion of the timber industry in Northern Sarawak, and the concomitant growth in wage labour for local peoples. Aspects of social and cultural change, associated with the changing regional economy, have also been described. These include the growing mobility of people from Long Na'ah and the emergence of some new forms of more regional identity for Kayan in the Baram. The latter can be linked to religious change, and particularly to the history and contemporary activities of the local

²³⁰ At one wedding which I attended at Long Na'ah, between a Kayan woman and a Chinese man, the groom's relatives brought along their pet dog (another small fluffy terrier). One of my Kayan companions laughed at the animal, which ran about among the guests and sniffed at plates; she asked me what it was.

²³¹ However, there are more categories within the group of hunting dogs, and a body of knowledge relating to their abilities.

evangelical SIB church. An analysis of the teachings of this church, particularly as they emerge in large-scale regional Christian conventions, has shown that the church takes an active role in guiding its congregation in matters of economic development and social change. It is clear that its teachings are an element in the choices people make, and attitudes they express, about newer cash-based forms of livelihood, expanding opportunities for consuming (particularly the products of the national and global industrial economy), and aspects of the state's development program, such as education. Further, it has been also been argued that the influence of this church has two distinct but intertwined strands. For example, in relation to economic development and social change, church ideology acts variously as both a prescriptive and proscriptive force: the message on '*kemajuan*' (development) is to 'take what is good and reject what is bad', according to the judgement of the church.

In focusing on new modes of consumption, this thesis has engaged with arguments which see processes of globalisation and commoditisation as a source of cultural homogenisation, as well as with the alternative argument which urges a recognition of continued diversity, or emerging new cultural difference, in local cultural systems. This thesis does, in part, acknowledge the culturally homogenising effects of global capitalism. However, it also argues that it is the local form of evangelical Protestant Christianity which in some cases proves to be the more overtly homogenising power. Tobacco consumption at Long Na'ah demonstrates some aspects of the church's homogenising, or restrictive, influence. People in communities such as Long Na'ah are not to be understood, however, simply as unwitting victims of (assumed) processes of cultural globalisation, or the meek followers of church injunction. For example, the consumption of alcohol, although strongly proscribed by the church, emerges as an area of contested meanings within the community. Alcohol consumption at Long Na'ah is revealed to have both expansive and restrictive modes.

While alcohol and tobacco consumption at Long Na'ah may be linked overtly to the moral-ideological program of the SIB church, in the case of the forms of consumption involved in the contemporary styles of Kayan apartments, the influence of the church is more diffuse. A detailed analysis of the style of

Kayan longhouse apartments identifies a range of influences and, as with other forms of consumption treated in this thesis, there is an intertwining of tendencies in the styles of Kayan apartments: choices may be connected to both homogenising 'external' influences (Christianity, global capitalism, nation building), but may also suggest the creation and recreation of local Kayan social and cultural identity (linked, among other things, to notions of rank, hospitality, and a local aesthetic repertoire). It might be noted here that Kayan are not alone in such attempts to localise wider economic and social transformations. In his introductory article to a collection on modernity and indigenous minorities in Malaysia and Indonesia, Gomes (1999: 12) notes that 'the experience of modernity for indigenous peoples is not just a straightforward process of economic and social transformation as a result of the penetration of capitalism or nationalist ideology. It also involves cultural articulations as people attempt to localise the experience of modernity'.

Beyond identifying the interweaved influences or tendencies in the style of Kayan apartments, an important observation of this thesis has been that there is a need to look at the whole assemblage of objects within apartments, and the ways in which they are placed and used. By seeing the whole range of things in use in contemporary Kayan apartments (sunhats and VCRs, lounge chairs and shields, Christian beadwork and school sporting trophies) as the collective body of Kayan material culture, the manner in which they produce a 'consistent visual effect', and thereby express a particularly Kayan sensibility, is revealed. I have identified the ability to recognise this 'consistent visual effect' with the notion Douglas and Isherwood (1979: 4) call 'metaphorical appreciation'. That is, in 'scanning' Kayan longhouse apartments, 'goods in their assemblage present a set of meanings more or less coherent, more or less intentional' (Douglas and Isherwood, 1996: ix). This form of analysis also indicates that there is room, in at least some forms of consumption at Long Na'ah, for Kayan to '(use) goods that they (do) not produce, and that they experience only as consumers, in the creation (and recreation) of social and cultural identities' (Miller, 1995a: 156).

In some contrast to this, modes of consumption among young Kayan women and men, who frequently pursue forms of consumption which symbolise

aspects of modernity for them, might be seen more accurately in terms of cultural homogenisation. Yet young Kayan women and men do not lack a sense of local Kayan identity and many of them actively value aspects of the way of life which they understand to be part of being Kayan. Thus, young women who are attracted to urban life and the opportunities for consumption which it offers also value the quality of longhouse life with its opportunities for convivial sociality and gossip. Similarly, young men may enjoy the glamour and amusements of town and pursue the consumption of 'modern' clothing, hairstyles and music, but the longhouse remains a centre and base for them. The experience of work in the timber camps is indisputably tough, and frequently tedious, and for young men the longhouse provides a respite from this.

Kayan at Long Na'ah in the mid-1990s do not emerge in this thesis as a people either submerged by, or struggling against, a globalising tide, excessively afraid for their future (even if they are unsure of what it will bring) and troubled by an embattled sense of their own identity. To be Kayan in the 1990s is to possess a firm enough sense of membership in a group, and to distinguish oneself from other cultural groups in Sarawak. For Kayan, this sense of group identity exists alongside a preparedness to engage with a wider world. Kayan at Long Na'ah, and elsewhere in the Baram, exhibit a remarkable determination to reach out and take hold of what might be available to them in circumstances of change. There is a sense of looking outward, something reflected, for example, in the encouragement given to children to further their education and in the ease with which new commodities are adopted.

Nevertheless, people at Long Na'ah are frequently exercised by the difficulties of life in the Baram of the 1990s. The timber industry has brought cash incomes, but has also meant insecurity in relation to land tenure for local peoples. Kayan are well aware of their relatively powerless position in relation to the larger forces of the state and a wider economy. There are new hardships in seeking a living by juggling hill rice farming with participation in the cash economy. Kayan certainly do not take an uncritical approach to processes of development, or to their relationship to the Malaysian state.

A major concern of this thesis has been to describe and analyse the way in which quite rapid economic and social change has been coupled with an intense participation in both the spiritual ministry and bureaucratic structures of the SIB church. At Long Na'ah it is the individuals who are most dedicated to the teachings of the SIB church who exhibit the strongest support for controlling certain kinds of consumption within the community, who advocate a strict routine of church attendance, speak frequently in terms of Scripture, and who conduct themselves most rigorously in accordance with these things. But it is they who may also be markedly outward-looking in pursuing, or encouraging their children to pursue, the possible benefits of economic development. They may also take an interest in regional politics in a general sense, and be exercised by the knowledge of their position as a small ethnic group with limited power in the wider scheme of regional politics. In this way, the attitudes and demeanour of dedicated churchgoers at Long Na'ah combine rather insular, even somewhat authoritarian, responses, with a remarkable preparedness to engage with regional processes of economic and social change.

Exploring psychological responses to large scale change and upheaval in the twentieth century, Robert Jay Lifton identifies two seemingly opposed directions these may take: 'The self can respond to historical pressures not only by opening out but also by closing down' (1993: 160). He has termed these two directions respectively 'proteanism' and 'fundamentalism', and elaborates on the relationship between them in the following way: 'The dynamic between fundamentalism and proteanism has to do with how one copes with threat, confusion, and the psychological danger of fragmentation—and the degree of control one seeks to impose on historical forces' (1993: 187). Earlier in his discussion he notes that: 'the same historical forces that evoke proteanism – dislocation, the mass media revolution, the threat of extinction – evoke antiprotean reactions as well' (1993: 160). This notion of a combination of apparently opposed kinds of responses is a useful one in characterising the varied attitudes people at Long Na'ah, and particularly those who have a significant involvement in the church, have toward current processes of economic and social change.

If it were too sharply delineated, however, Lifton's protean/antiprotean (or 'fundamentalist') opposition might well be more obscuring than useful. Yet he does suggest a more complicated relationship between the two tendencies he identifies:

(there is) something close to an organic relationship between proteanism and fundamentalism, between transformationism and restorationism, between the self historically opened and the effort to close it down: in every fundamentalist assertion, there may well be some kind of protean underside, some potential for alternative imagery and symbolisation. Correspondingly, every protean exploration may require some protective structuring or even partial closing down of experience. Hence, proteanism is never absolute, and fundamentalism can never succeed in its agenda of complete purification. There is always an intertwining of tendencies, so that fundamentalist and protean selves each end up with compromises that are both necessary and fragile. (1993: 187).

It is this 'intertwining of tendencies' which is particularly suggestive for the circumstances I encountered at Long Na'ah. An argument which sees the intense participation in the SIB church, among Kayan of Long Na'ah and the Baram, as a relatively simple and direct response to the uncertainties of a quickly changing world, or even as a straightforward kind of response to Christian evangelism or church ideology, does not capture the kinds of on-going, sometimes flexible, sometimes dogmatic, but hardly static, responses and explanations which Kayan make and propound. Neither does it capture a quality of Kayan culture which, early in my fieldwork, I tried to reconcile with the seemingly thorough-going and intense involvement in evangelical Christianity. Though it exists alongside individual grievances and sorrows, the more ecstatic expressions of faith and broader political dissatisfactions, there is a kind of pragmatism to Kayan culture.

The early history of conversion to Christianity might also be seen in terms of an intertwining of emotive elements and pragmatism. Along with the apparent fervour of the community-wide conversions, there also seems to have been a certain pragmatism to the decisions people made at that time, such as the decision to disregard the more arduous obligations of the agrarian ritual cycle which were part of the older Kayan religion. Although I find Lifton's formulation useful, it is this sense of pragmatism which also suggests some caution be exercised in using

the term 'fundamentalist' (in his, or other more popular senses) in relation to contemporary Kayan religious experience. In Lifton's terms, it would also be less appropriate to see the initial large scale, and rapid, conversions of Kayan to Christianity in the late 1940s and 1950s as a 'fundamentalist' response. Accounts of the process of conversion at that time more accurately fit his idea of a 'protean' response: people reaching out for something new.

Finally, it is important to re-emphasise that this expansive quality which I saw in the Kayan community of Long Na'ah, and elsewhere in the Baram, is one which is firmly tied to this specific period of time. Between 1993 and 1995, national pride and optimism were hallmarks of Malaysian development schemes and nation-building efforts. And the orchestrated optimism of the Malaysian state, distilled in the slogan of its national sports tournament: 'Sure Can!' (*Yakin Boleh!*), was a familiar sentiment to at least some Kayan in the Baram at that time.²³² At village *Sukan Mini* ('mini' sports days) Kayan primary school children were urged on to greater efforts, and success in regional sports events, by teachers, parents, and village headmen. Such exhortations were accompanied by speeches on the importance of understanding the national language *Bahasa Malaysia*, and the children's efforts were situated within the context of Malaysia's 'Vision 2020', that is, the aim of achieving 'developed nation' status by the year 2020.

The sense of burgeoning opportunities and the belief in the rapidity of Malaysia's advance towards industrialised-nation status has, however, been somewhat dampened by the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s. For Sarawak, this has had an impact on the timber industry. In the later 1990s a decrease in demand for tropical logs and plywood on the part of countries such as Japan, South Korea, the Philippines and Thailand had an impact on world-wide trade patterns and prices for these products. In Sarawak there was a reduction in the volume and value of timber exports. The crisis also saw a stalling of large capital works such as the Bakun Hydro-electric scheme, which a few years previously

²³² For at least some of Malaysia's youth in the mid-1990s, particularly those from upwardly mobile urban families, and especially for those in the capital Kuala Lumpur, a sense of optimism about the future and the opportunities it promised went beyond the orchestrated optimism of national sloganeering.

had been promoted as a landmark in Sarawakian (and indeed national) development. Construction of the Bakun dam, by a Korean company, began in 1996, but faltered in 1997 (Alexander & Alexander, 1999: 73). An altered plan now proposes a smaller dam, generating less electricity.

Neither academic observers, nor Kayan themselves, can be sure of what may lie in the future for communities such as Long Na'ah. (International economic commentators offer differing predictions on the fate of the region.) In the course of analysing the impact of the financial crisis on forests and forest peoples, one NGO recently predicted the future in the following way:

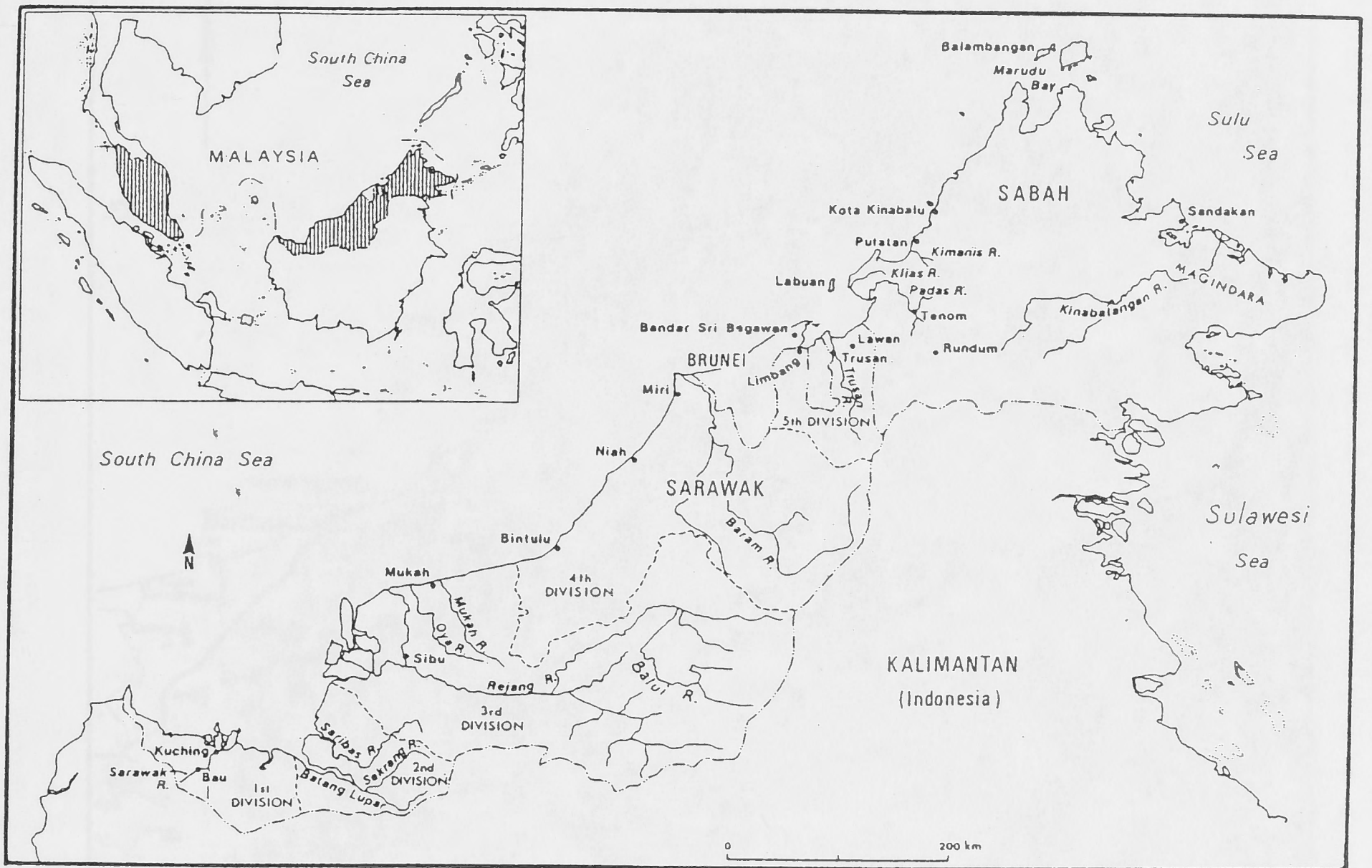
The slump in economic activity in South-East Asia has clearly affected a number of export-dependent countries around the world. Sooner or later, however, the demand for logs and timber will probably pick up again, pushing up prices and making logging a profitable business once more. Whether the consequences for forests and forest peoples will be the same as they have been over the last ten years will depend largely on the various forces influencing government policy changes over the next few years (High Stakes Website, 5/01/2000).

It is not clear whether or not the trends I describe in this thesis, including an expansive approach toward consumption, an embracing of new opportunities in circumstances of change, and a keen adherence to the guiding principles and practices offered by evangelical Christianity, will continue. Perhaps a circumstance of slowed national economic growth and some political instability will have an impact on the outward-looking attitude which I describe for Kayan of the Baram in the mid-1990s. Perhaps, if the operations of even some timber companies are wound down, sources of cash income, and some of the material conditions for greater physical mobility (including the company-maintained timber roads), will no longer be so prevalent. It is not easy to predict what localised cultural and political reactions might be were such changes to occur. Might the adherence to evangelical Christianity decrease, or intensify? Issues of land tenure may well become more pressing. Could an outward-looking approach be supplanted by a turning inwards to more localised strategies? What effects might these things have on a sense of identity for a small group such as the Kayan

into the future?²³³ These are questions to which this thesis cannot offer comprehensive answers, but which might well be of interest to anthropological fieldworkers now, and in the future.

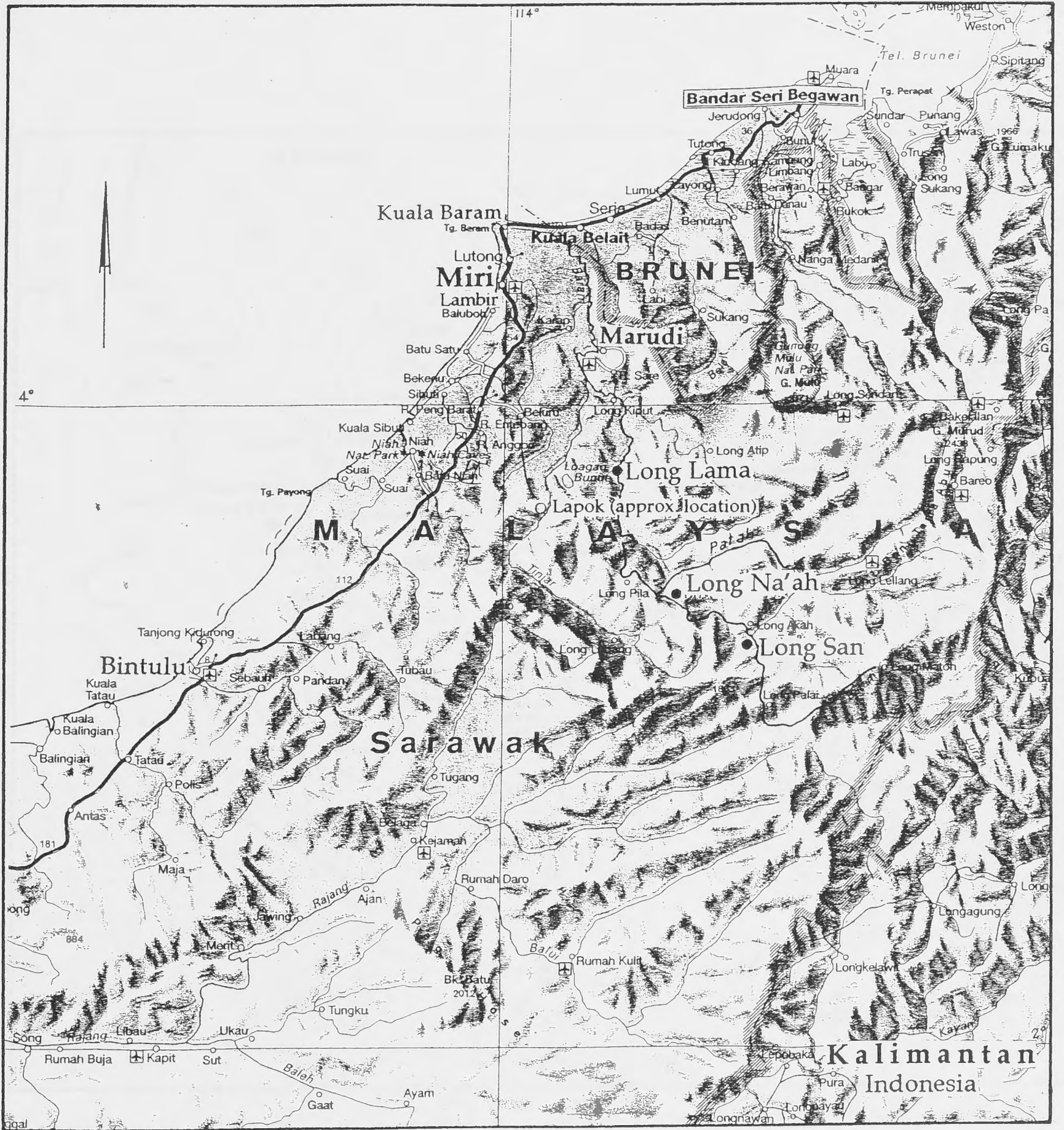


²³³ For Lahanan in the Balui, who are among those now facing relocation due to the construction of the Bakun dam, there are fears that the dam and resettlement will mean 'the destruction of their environment, the breakdown of communal work practices, and the inevitable loss of their Lahanan identity as they become identified as Kayan, Malaysian or Christian in the new, much broader, social contexts of the new settlements'. However, younger Lahanan, particularly women, are 'not adverse to moving closer to "civilisation", living in a multi-ethnic settlement, or even occupying individual dwellings rather than a longhouse' (Alexander & Alexander, 1999: 78).

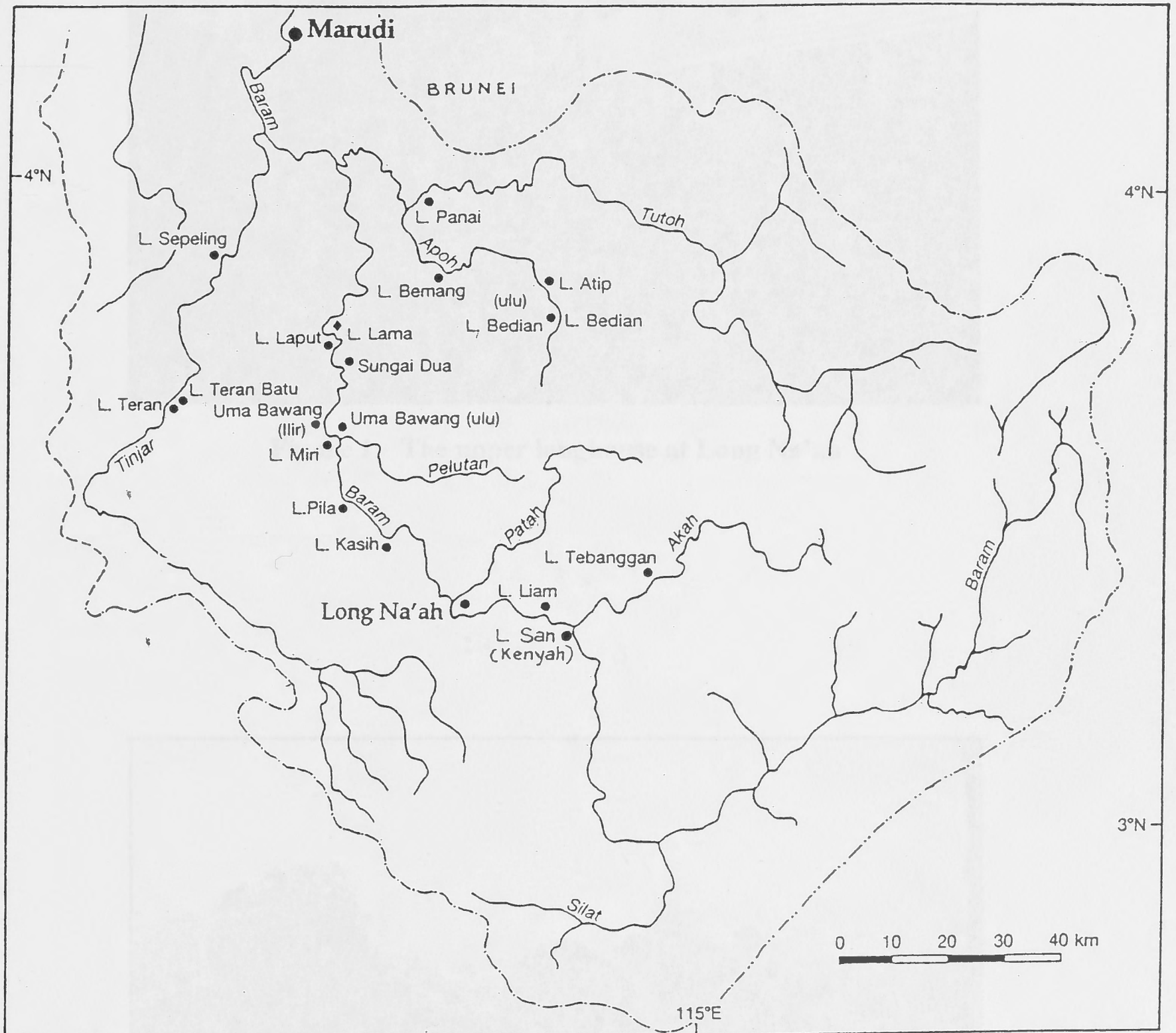


Map 1: Sarawak

(Source: Andaya and Andaya, 1982)



Map 2: Northern Sarawak



Map 3: Kayan communities on the Baram River and its tributaries

(Source: Rousseau, 1990)

(Kayan Share the Baram with other upriver groups. These communities are not shown.)



Figure 1: The upper longhouse at Long Na'ah



Figure 2: The timber camp near Long Na'ah



Figure 3: Taman Kajan

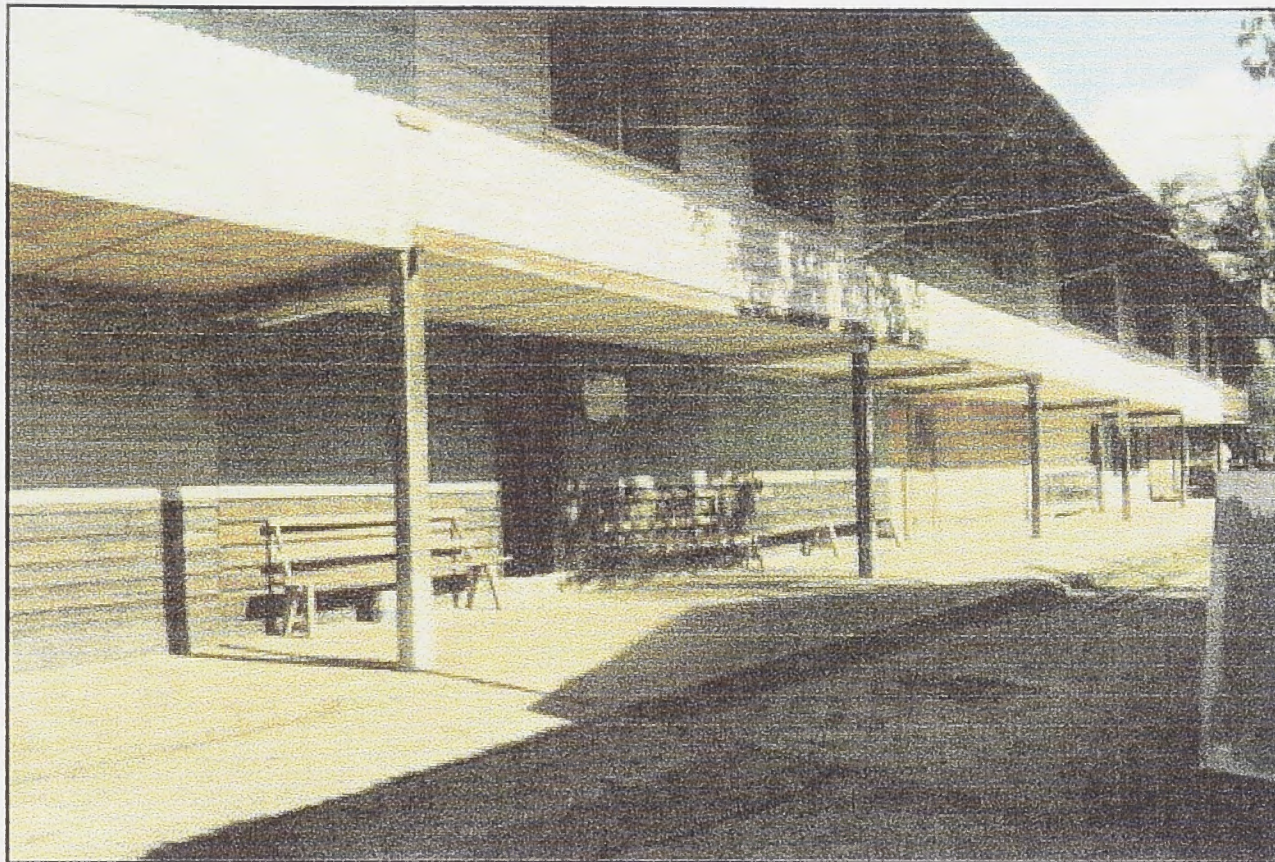


Figure 4: Front door of Taman Kajan's apartment in the lower longhouse



Figure 5: The new longhouse at Long Laput

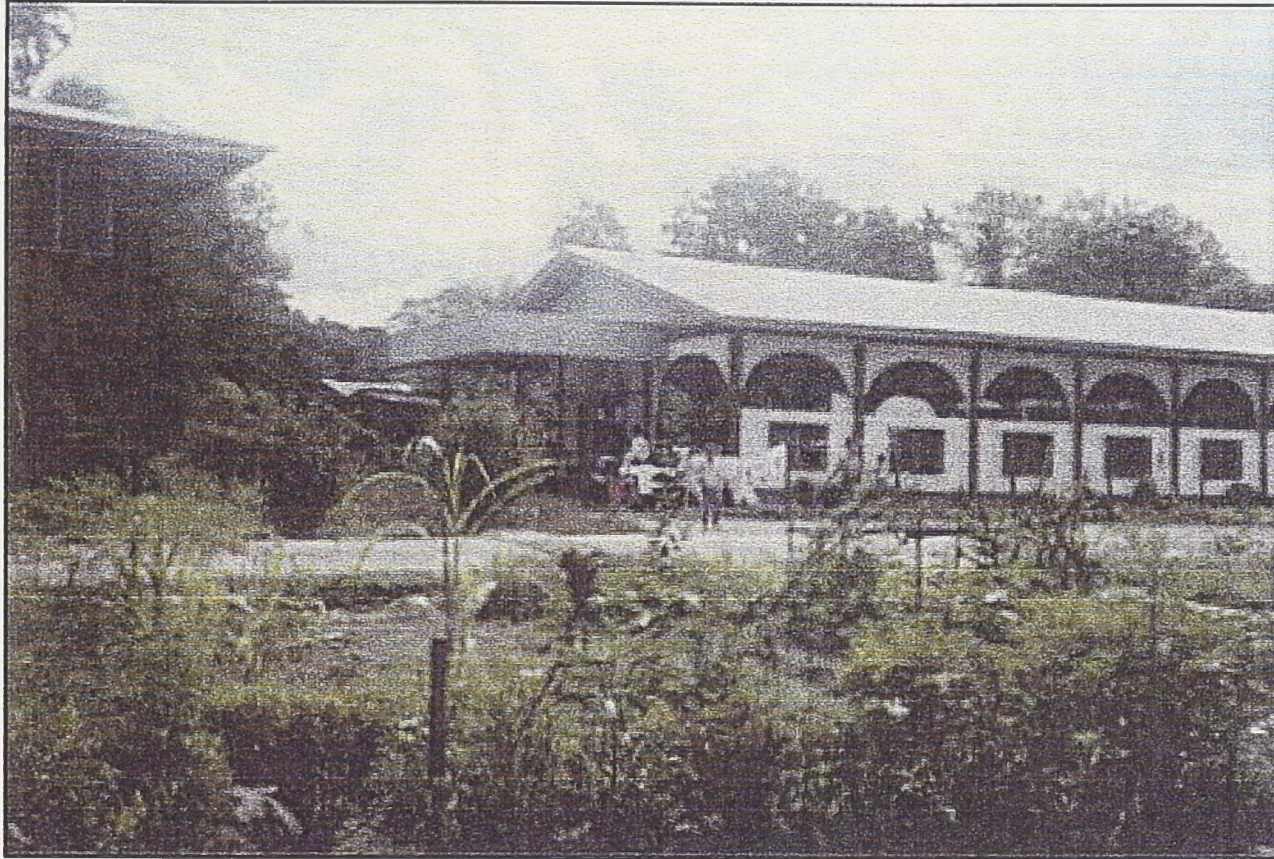


Figure 6: The SIB church at Long Laput



Figure 7: Praising the Lord in song at an SIB convention



**KEBAKTIAN
TAHUNAN IRAU
EASTER 1995**

**'BERGERAK DALAM KUASA ROH KUDUS'
(KPR:K)**

**PENGKHUTBAH: PDT. JOHANNES LILIK
SUSANTO (S. TH.)**

Tarikh: 25hb-28hb Mei 1995

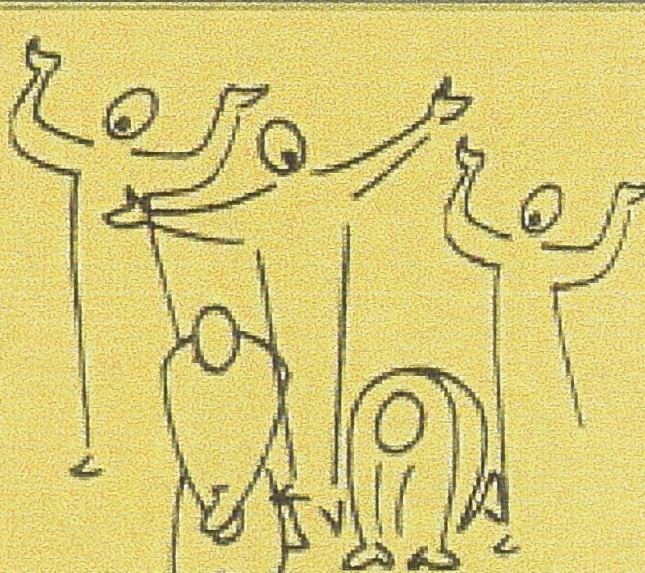
di
SIB, LONG PANAJ

**BUKU ATURCARA NYANYIAN,
PUJIAN dan PENYEMBAHAN**

JADUAL KEBAKTIAN

Hari	Khamis	Jumaat	Sabtu	Ahad
Masa	21.03.95	26.03.95	27.03.95	28.03.95
8:30 am 9:00 am	PERSEKUTUAN DOA			
9:00 am	KETIBAAN DAN PENDAFTARAN PESERTA	KEBAKTIAN UMUM		
		Prayer Gern. SIB	Prayer Gern. SIB	Prayer Gern. SIB
Lg. Wan		Lg. Bawang	Lg. Lerau	
Khabib		Khabib	Khabib	
Pdt. Johannes		Pdt. Johannes	Pdt. Johannes	
KEMALAM		KEMALAM	KEMALAM	
Lg. Panti		STP. Hesi	Lg. Masi	
Lg. Tronoh		Lg. Lapan	Lg. Serdang	
Lg. Perawang		Lg. Mui	Lg. Tronoh Samar	
Lg. Wan		Sg. Tau	Yeri Kemayan	
Prangmanan (10:30 am)	Prangmanan (10:30 am)	Prangmanan (10:30 am)		
Wang Perangmanan	Wang Perangmanan	Wang Perangmanan		
Ketua: Delapan	MAF SIB Lg. Panti	Sekonyak/Sibeng		
1:00 pm 2:00 pm	KEBAKTIAN KUMPULAN			
2:00 pm	KEBAKTIAN UMUM			
	Prayer Gern. SIB	Prayer Gern. SIB	Prayer Gern. SIB	Prayer Gern. SIB
Lg. Panti	STP. Hesi	Lg. Wan	Lg. Kramah	
Khabib	Khabib	Khabib	Khabib	
Pdt. Johannes	Pdt. Johannes	Pdt. Johannes	Pdt. Johannes	
KEMALAM	KEMALAM	KEMALAM	KEMALAM	
MAF Lg. Panti	Lg. Alor	Lg. Panti	Lg. Tronoh Kiri	
Lg. Deder	Lg. Kevah	Lg. Temah	Lg. Temah	
Lg. Lerau	Lg. Lerau	Uasa Bawang	Uasa Bawang	
SIB Kramah	Nahar	ISCT Lg. Lerau	ISCT Lg. Lerau	
Prangmanan	Prangmanan (10:30 am)	Prangmanan (10:30 am)	Prangmanan (10:30 am)	
Wang Perangmanan	Wang Perangmanan	Wang Perangmanan	Wang Perangmanan	
MAF SIB Lg. Panti	ISCT Lg. Lerau	Sekonyak/Sibeng	STP. Hesi	

**LAGU-LAGU
PUJIAN &
PENYEMBAHAN**



**K O N V E N S Y E N
M U D A - M U D I**

PPP SIB Bahagian Ke-4
21-24hb November 1994, SIB Long Lapat
Tema: "Hidup Bersenjata Dalam Ibadat" - Ibr. 10:25

Figure 8: Program and songbook from SIB conventions



Figure 9: A white wedding at Long Na'ah



**Figure 10:
Kayan dancing
entertains the
wedding guests**

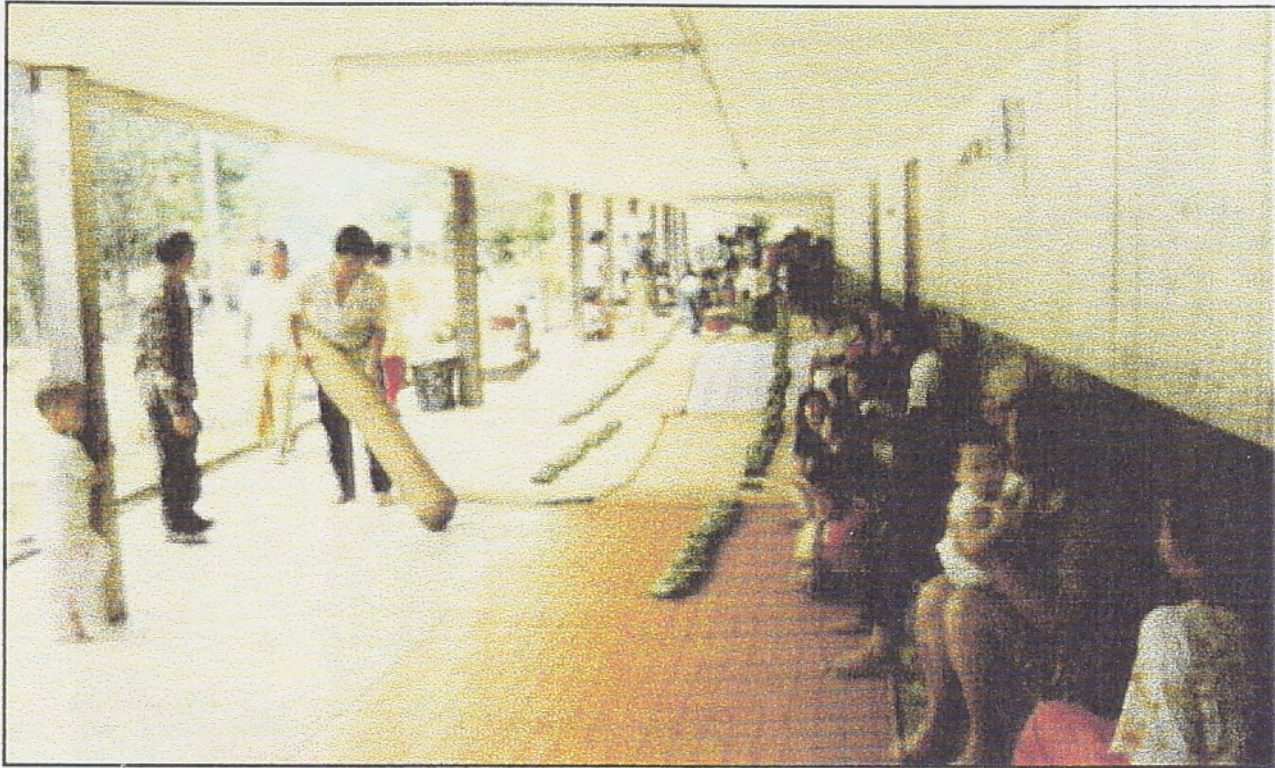


Figure 11: Preparing for a wedding meal at Long Na'ah



**Figure 12:
Two Long Na'ah
women asked to
be photographed
in front of
examples of
Kayan sunhats**

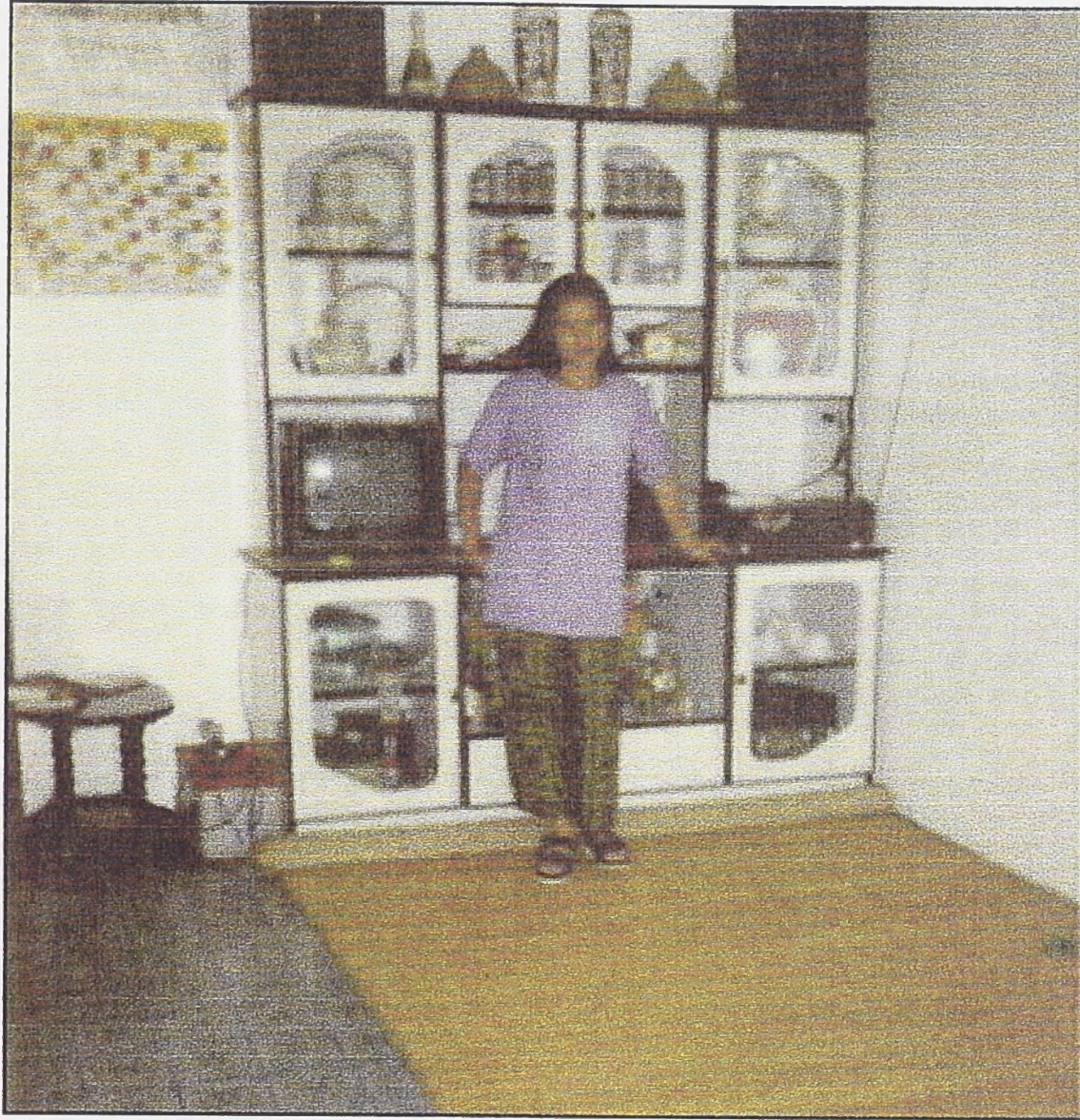


Figure 13: A suitable place to pose for a photograph: the display cabinet in the lounge room of a Kayan house at Lambir



Figure 14: Celebratory drinks and snacks in the house at Lambir

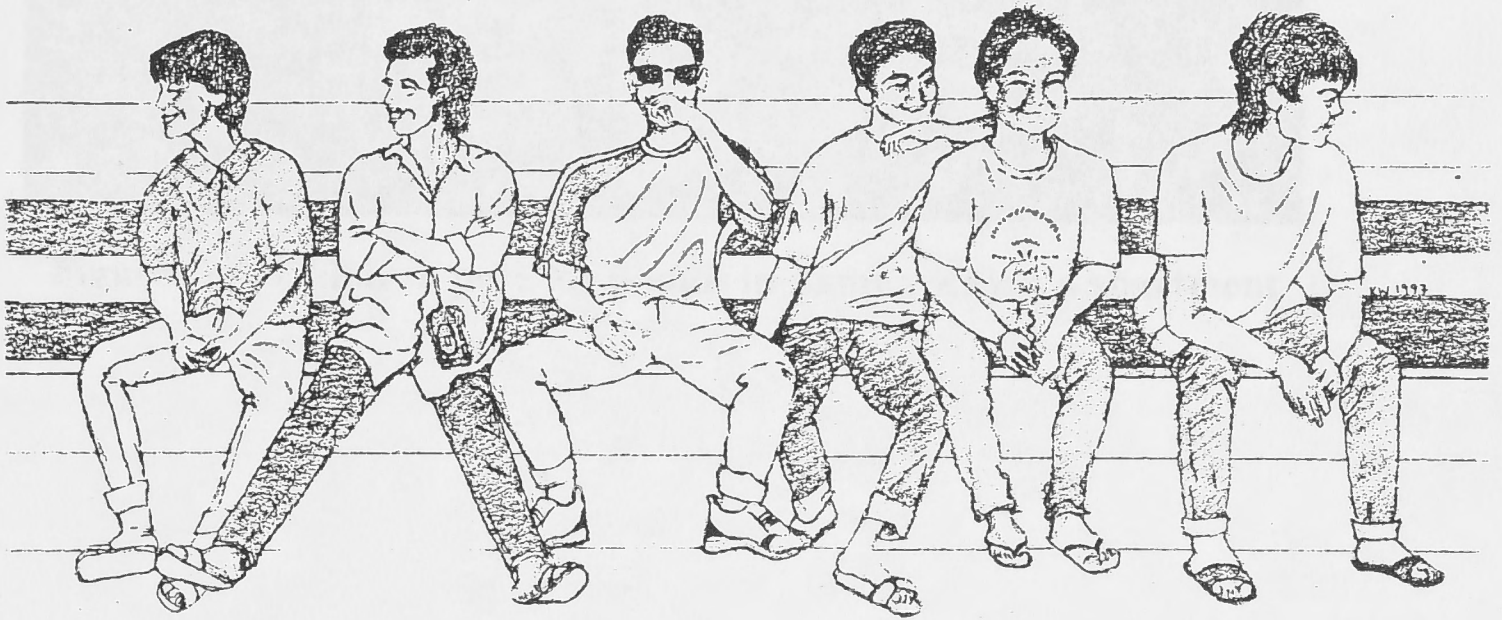


Figure 15: Young men at Long Na'ah



Figure 16: Children pose for photos in Taman Kajan's apartment



Figure 17: A meal in the house at Long Lama



Figure 18: Professional wedding photographs are popular among young Kayan. (This photograph was sent to me after my return to Australia.)



Figure 19: Kayan beadwork: an image from the Kayan repertoire



Figure 20: Beadwork messages

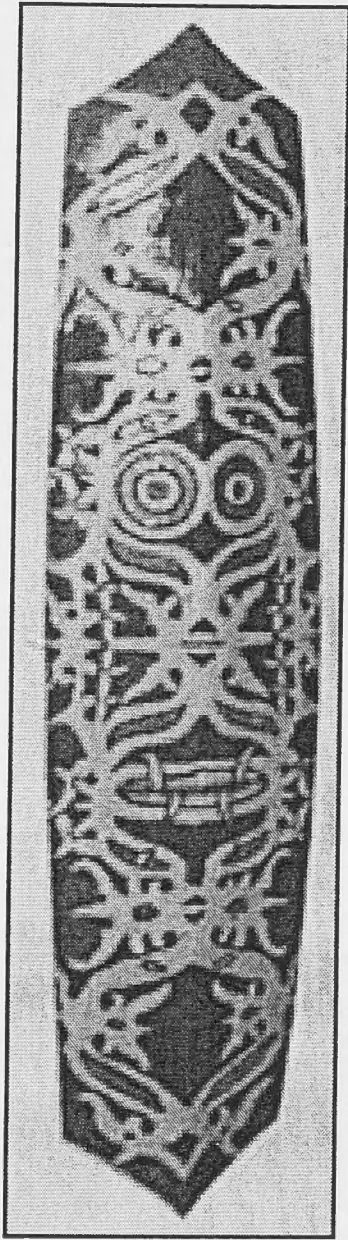


Figure 21:
A miniature
Kayan shield

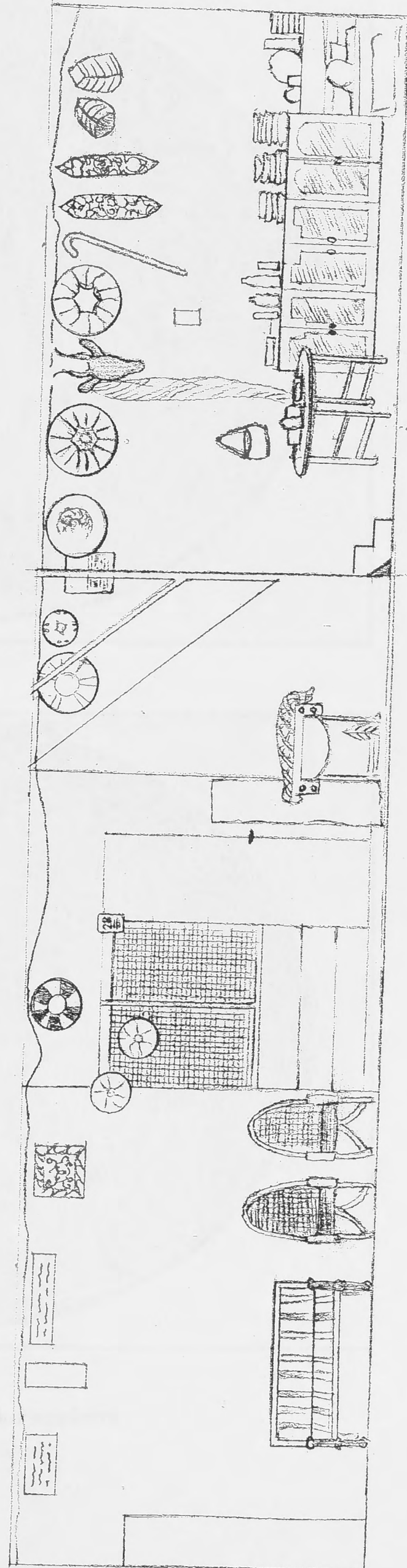


Figure 22:
The north wall of Taman
Kajan's apartment

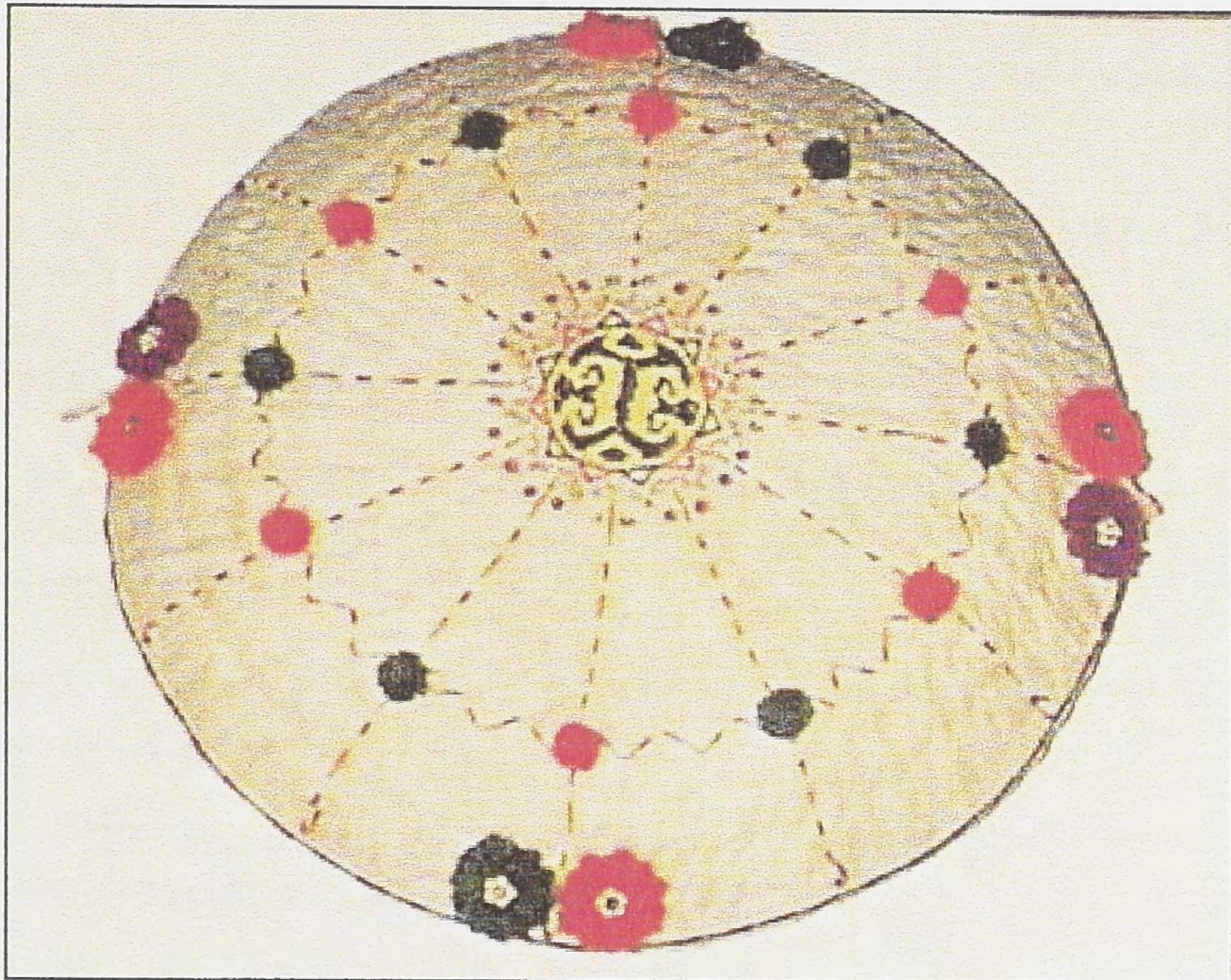
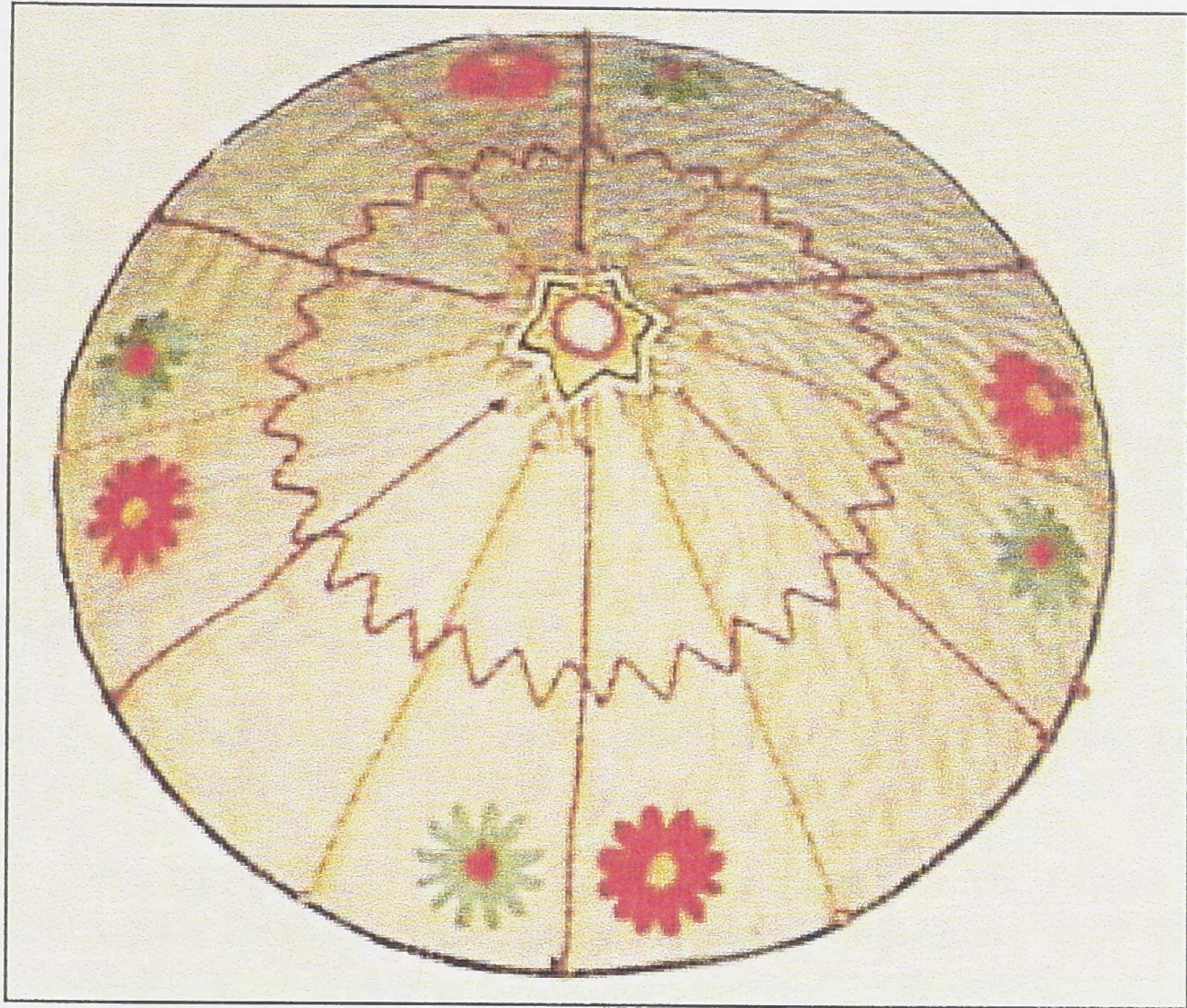


Figure 23: Kayan sunhats

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