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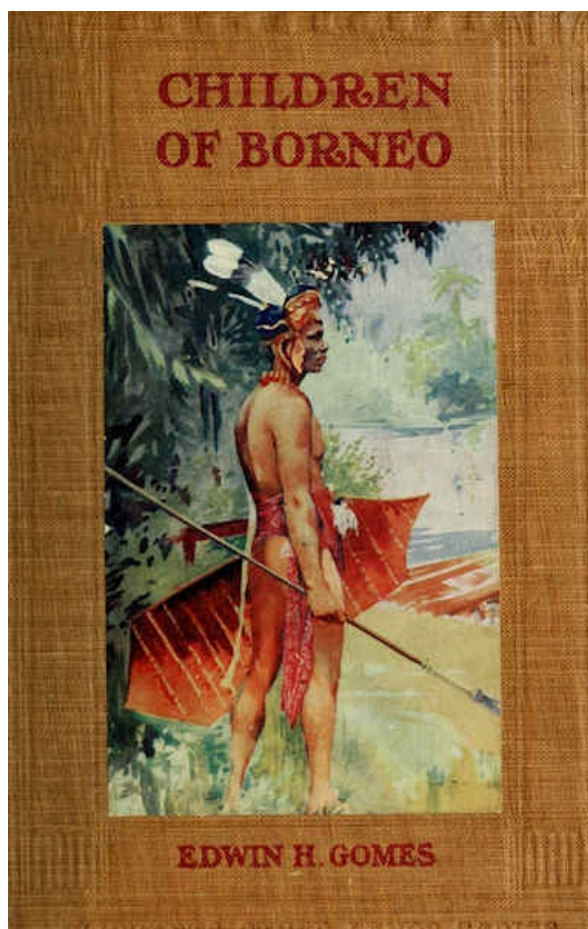
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CHILDREN OF BORNEO

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DYAK CHILDREN

CHILDREN OF BORNEO

BY
EDWIN H. GOMES, M.A.

AUTHOR OF
"SEVENTEEN YEARS AMONG THE SEA DYAKS OF BORNEO"



WITH EIGHT COLOURED ILLUSTRATIONS

EDINBURGH AND LONDON
OLIPHANT, ANDERSON & FERRIER

I gratefully acknowledge the permission readily granted by Messrs Seeley & Co. Ltd., to make use of much matter that has already been published in my book, "Seventeen Years Among the Sea Dyaks of Borneo," and I would recommend that book to those who wish for more information about Borneo and its inhabitants.

EDWIN H. GOMES.

TURNBULL AND SPEARS, PRINTERS. EDINBURGH

To
LITTLE PAUL

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CHILDREN OF BORNEO

[9]

CHAPTER I

THE ISLAND OF BORNEO—JUNGLES—THE DYAKS—DYAK LIFE IN THE OLD DAYS

Away down in the Indian Ocean there is a long chain of islands that stretches from Burmah to Australia. One of these is New Guinea which is the largest island in the world (leaving out Australia), and Borneo comes next in size. It is nearly four times as large as England. One quarter of it—the States of Sarawak and British North Borneo—is under British influence. The rest is all claimed by the Dutch, excepting one small State, Brunei, between North Borneo and Sarawak, which is governed by a Malay Sultan, who is a Mahommedan. Sarawak is governed by an English Rajah, or King, Sir Charles Brooke, who succeeded his uncle, Sir James Brooke, in 1868;—British North Borneo is owned by an English Trading Company, called the North Borneo Company, who appoint an Englishman as Governor to rule it for them.

If you look at a map of Borneo you will see that the Equator divides the island into two parts, so that Borneo is right in the middle of the Torrid Zone. The climate is therefore tropical, that is to say there is no spring, autumn or winter, but only summer, and it is always much hotter in

Borneo than it is in the hottest summer in England. So, if an English boy went to live in Borneo, he would find his English clothes too thick and warm for him to wear there, and he would have to have thin cotton garments.

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Most of the country of Borneo is covered with thick jungle, where large forest trees grow close to each other, many of them with trunks over six feet in diameter. These trees are often loaded with creepers and ferns, and from the branches, high up overhead, beautiful orchids hang.

The natives of Borneo are called Dyaks, and these tropical jungles are their home. Let me try and describe to you what these people are like. They are not black like negroes, but have a brown skin. They are not as tall as Englishmen, but are slightly bigger than the Malays. The Dyak men and women wear very little clothing because of the great heat. The Dyak men wear a waistcloth which is made either of the soft inner bark of a tree, or else of cotton cloth. It is about one yard wide, and from eight to eighteen feet in length, and is twisted round and round their waists and pulled up tight between the thighs, one end hanging down in front and the other behind. Dyak women wear a short petticoat which is drawn tightly round the waist and reaches down to the knees. Round their bodies the women wear hoops of rattan, a kind of cane, and these are threaded through small brass rings placed so close together as to hide the rattan. Both men and women wear necklaces, bracelets, and ear-rings. The men wear their hair long, and they blacken their teeth and often file them to a point, or bore holes in them and insert brass studs into them.

Let me tell you something of the kind of life the Dyaks used to live in the old days. You have heard of the head-hunters of Borneo. Seventy years ago the Dyaks were one of the most savage and cruel people in the world. In those days there was constant warfare between the different tribes. The Dyaks therefore lived together in large numbers in long village houses, and round these houses they built strong stockades, as a defence against any sudden attack.

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In those old days a party of Dyaks would often attack some neighbouring house. Such of the men as were at home would repel the attack as best they could, for defeat meant certain death. The women and children would be crowded together in the verandah of the Dyak house, and the men, armed with swords, spears and shields, would form a circle round them. Large brass gongs would be struck in a peculiar manner, to let the neighbours know of the attack, and to implore their help. The fight would continue till one party was defeated. If any came to the rescue, the attacking party would retreat, pursued by such of the inmates of the house as dared to follow them; but if no help came, the house would be rushed, the men and women cut down, and the children killed or taken captive. The heads of the dead would be cut off amid wild whoops of joy, and carried off in triumph.

The Dyaks thought it a grand thing to be able to bring home a human head to hang up as an ornament in their house. The man who succeeded in securing a human head was looked upon as a great warrior, and so very often the young braves would make an expedition against some tribe simply because they wanted to bring home the ghastly trophy of a human head.

Not only were the Dyaks head-hunters in those days, but many of them were pirates. There was a great deal of piracy, and it was secretly encouraged by the native rulers, who obtained a share of the spoil, and also by the Malays who knew well how to handle a boat. The Malay fleet consisted of a large number of long war-boats or *prahus*, each about ninety feet long or more, and carrying a brass gun in the bows, the pirates being armed with swords, spears and muskets. Each boat was paddled by from sixty to eighty men. These terrible craft skulked about in the sheltered coves waiting for their prey, and attacked merchant vessels making the passage between China and Singapore. The Malay pirates and their Dyak allies would wreck and destroy every trading vessel they came across, murder most of the crew who offered any resistance, and make slaves of the rest. The Dyaks would cut off the heads of those who were slain, smoke them over the fire to dry them, and then take them home to treasure as valued possessions. If you visit some of the Dyak houses to-day, you will see some of these human heads, taken in piratical raids in old days, hanging in bunches over the fireplaces.

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The whole country in those old days was in a great state of disorder. The Dyaks were constantly at war, tribe against tribe, and no Dyak village was safe from sudden attack. Many human lives were sacrificed because the Dyaks wished, not only to obtain booty, but to satisfy their lust for blood, and indulge in their favourite pursuit of head-hunting, and gain glory for themselves by bringing home human heads to decorate their houses with.

CHAPTER II

[13]

THE COMING OF THE WHITE RAJAH—THE MISSIONARIES

I have told you, in the last chapter, what kind of people the Dyaks were, and how in the old days a great deal of their time was spent in piracy and in warfare against neighbouring tribes. Now I want to tell you of the coming of the White Rajah—James Brooke—to Borneo, and what he did there. I think every English boy and girl should know the remarkable and romantic story of how

an Englishman came to be a King in Borneo, and to rule over the part of it called Sarawak.

James Brooke was born on April 29, 1803. His father was a member of the Civil Service of the East India Company, and spent a great many years in India. He followed his father's example, and entered the Company's service, and was sent out to India in 1825. Not long after his arrival, he was put in command of a regiment of soldiers, and ordered to Burmah, where he took part in the Burmese war. He was badly wounded, and had to return to England on leave. For over four years his health prevented him from rejoining his regiment, and when at last he started, the voyage took such a long time, owing to a shipwreck and other misfortunes, that he found on his arrival that his furlough had expired, and that his post had been given to someone else. He quitted the service in 1830.

In that same year he made a voyage to China and was struck by the natural beauty and fertility of the islands of the Indian Archipelago, and he felt sad when he thought of the tribes who inhabited these beautiful islands. They were continually at war with one another, and many of them were pirates. James Brooke conceived the grand idea of rescuing these races from barbarism, and of putting down piracy in the Eastern Archipelago. [14]

On the death of his father he inherited a large sum of money, and found himself in a position to carry out his schemes. He bought and equipped a yacht, the *Royalist*, and for three years he cruised about, chiefly in the Mediterranean, training his crew of twenty men for the hard work that lay before them.

On October 27, 1838 he sailed from the Thames on his great adventure, travelled slowly on the long journey round the Cape of Good Hope, and reached Singapore in 1839. It took the *Royalist* five months to reach Singapore, but that was in the days before the Suez Canal was made. The journey from England to Singapore can be made in a steam-ship at the present time in less than a month.

On arriving at Singapore, James Brooke met a shipwrecked crew who had lately come from Borneo. They said that they had been kindly treated by Muda Hassim—a native Rajah in Borneo—and they asked Mr James Brooke to take presents and letters of thanks to him, if he should be going thither in his yacht. Mr Brooke had not decided which of the many islands of the Eastern Archipelago he would visit, and he was as ready to go to Borneo as to any other; so, setting sail, he made his way up the Sarawak river, and anchored off Kuching, the capital, on August 15, 1839. The country was nominally under the rule of the Sultan of Brunei, but his uncle, Rajah Muda Hassim, was then the greatest power in the island. As he was favourable to English strangers, Mr Brooke paid him a visit and was most kindly received. The Rajah was at this time engaged in war with several fierce Dyak tribes who had revolted against the Sultan, but his efforts to subdue them were vain. He told Mr James Brooke his troubles, and begged him to help him to put down the insurgents, and implored him not to leave him a prey to his enemies. James Brooke consented to help him, and began the difficult task of restoring peace in the country. With his help the rebellion, which the Malay forces were too feeble to subdue, was brought to an end. Brooke led the crew of his yacht, and some Malay followers against the insurgents, and defeated them. Muda Hassim was very pleased to see that order was restored in the country, and he conferred on James Brooke the title of Rajah of Sarawak. It was some little time before the Sultan of Brunei would consent to confirm the title, but in 1841 the Government of Sarawak and its dependencies was formally made over to James Brooke, and he became the first English Rajah of Sarawak. He ruled till 1868, when he died and was succeeded by his nephew, Charles Johnson Brooke, who is ruling Sarawak to-day. [15]

When James Brooke became king, he set to work to improve the condition of his subjects. He saw clearly that the development of commerce was the best means of civilizing the natives, and, in order to do this, it was necessary to put down piracy, which not only appealed to the worst instincts of the Dyaks, but was a standing danger to European and native traders in those seas. In the suppression of piracy he found a vigorous ally in Captain (afterwards Admiral) Keppel, who, in command of H.M.S. *Dido*, was summoned from the China Station in 1843 for this purpose. The pirates were attacked in their strongholds by Captain Keppel. They fought desperately, but could not withstand the superior forces of their enemies. Many of them were killed, and many escaped and fled into the jungle. In this way James Brooke put an end to Dyak piracy. [16]

The practice of head-hunting was also dealt with by James Brooke. He declared it to be a crime. As soon as he heard that a party had gone on the war-path, a force was immediately despatched by Government to endeavour to cut them off and to fine them heavily. In the event of their having secured human heads, these had to be given up, and the Dyaks were asked to pay a large fine. Some refused to follow the directions of the Government. These were declared enemies, and were attacked and had their houses burnt down. This course he steadily pursued for years, and by his rigorous treatment of head-hunting parties, James Brooke dealt the death-blow to this horrible national custom.

After his strenuous life in Sarawak, James Brooke paid a visit to England in 1847, when many honours were showered on him. He was graciously received at Windsor by Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort. The British Government recognizing the work he had done, appointed him Governor of Labuan, and made him a K.C.B.

The putting down of piracy, and the suppressing of the terrible custom of head-hunting among the Dyaks, were the first steps that Sir James Brooke took in civilizing his subjects. But he knew that as long as the Dyaks held to their old superstitious beliefs in evil spirits, there would always [17]

be a danger of their returning to their evil ways. So he began to think of establishing a Christian Mission in Sarawak. He knew that it was not enough to put down evil customs: if the Dyaks were to improve, they must have the true Faith planted in their hearts.

When Sir James Brooke was in England in 1847, he appealed to the two Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and also to the two great Missionary Societies—the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and the Church Missionary Society—to help him, but none of them were able to do so as they had not the funds. So a new Association, chiefly supported by his friends, was started, called the "Borneo Church Mission." This Association sent out a few missionaries, the first of whom was the Rev. F. T. McDougall, who was consecrated the first Bishop of Labuan and Sarawak in 1855.

After a few years the Borneo Church Mission flagged for lack of support, and in 1854 the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts came to the rescue, and took up the work, and has ever since been responsible for the Mission Work in Borneo. My father, the Rev. W. H. Gomes, B.D., worked under Bishop McDougall as a missionary among the Dyaks of Lundu from 1852 to 1867, and I myself have worked, under Bishop Hose, as a missionary in Sarawak for seventeen years.

When McDougall arrived at Kuching, the capital of Sarawak, in 1848, the Rajah welcomed him kindly, and gave him a large piece of ground. On this site were built a church, a school house, and a house for the Bishop to live in.

Rajah Brooke was anxious that the Dyaks, who lived far from the town and had their home in the jungles, should also be taught. Both he and Bishop McDougall were sorry to think of their heathen state, and they wanted to save them from becoming converts to Mohammedanism. So they sent for more helpers from England, and these missionaries went and lived among the Dyaks in the jungles. They built their houses, churches and schools at distant up-country stations, and they won the love and esteem of the Dyaks, who came to them, not only to learn to read and write, but to listen to the wonderful "Old, Old Story" the missionaries had to tell of a God, Who loved them, and came to earth and died for them, and rose from the dead, and ascended up to Heaven, and Who wanted the whole world to learn of His love and become His faithful followers.

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CHAPTER III

A DYAK VILLAGE HOUSE

Among the Dyaks a large number of families live together under one roof. A small village would consist probably of one long house, in which twenty or thirty or more families live. This village house is built on posts of hard wood, which raise the floor from six to twelve feet above the ground. It is wise of them to build their houses in this way, because the ground, even on the hills, is very damp in the rainy season, and, besides this, there are snakes and scorpions and centipedes crawling about, which would trouble the Dyaks if their houses were built on the ground. Another reason for building their houses in this way is that if they live together in large numbers, high above the ground, it is not easy for their enemies to attack and overcome them.

[19]



A DYAK VILLAGE HOUSE

The entrance to this house is made by a notched trunk or log, which serves as a ladder; one is fixed at each end of the house. The length of the building varies according to the number of families inhabiting it, but as the rooms occupied by the different families are built on the same plan, the whole presents a uniform and regular appearance.

The long Dyak house is built in a straight line, and the walls and roof are thatched with dried palm leaves. There is a long uncovered verandah where the paddy^[1] is put out to be dried by the sun; afterwards it is pounded to get rid of its husk, and so converted into rice. Here, also, the clothes and a variety of other things are hung out to dry. The flooring of this part of the house is generally made of laths of hard wood, so as to stand exposure to the weather. The flooring of the rest of the house is made of split palm or bamboo tied down with rattan or cane.

Next to the long uncovered verandah comes the long open hall, or covered verandah, which stretches without any partition along the whole length of the house. It is a cool and pleasant place, and is much frequented by men and women for conversation and indoor pursuits. Here the women do their work—the weaving of cloth, or the plaiting of mats. Here, too, the men chop up the firewood used for cooking their food, and even make boats, if not of too great a size. This long hall is a public place open to all comers, and used as a road by travellers, who climb up the ladder at one end, walk through the whole length of the house, and go down the ladder at the other end. The floor is carpeted with thick and heavy mats made of cane, interlaced with narrow strips of beaten bark. Over these are spread other mats of finer texture, when necessary, for visitors to sit upon, for you must understand the Dyaks do not use chairs or forms, but always sit on the floor.

[20]

On one side of this long public hall is a row of doors. Each of these leads into a separate room, which is occupied by a family. This room serves several purposes. It serves as a kitchen, because in one corner there is a fireplace where the food is cooked. It also serves as a dining-room, because when the meal is ready, mats are spread here, and the inmates squat on the floor to eat their meal. It also serves as a bedroom, and at night the mats for sleeping are spread out, and here the inmates sleep.

Round three sides of the room—the fourth side being occupied by the fireplace—are ranged the treasured valuables of the Dyaks—old earthen jars, some of which are of great value, and brass gongs and guns. Their cups and plates are hung up in rows flat against the wall. The flooring of this room is the same as that of the public hall outside, and made of split palm or bamboo tied down with cane. The floor is swept after a fashion, the refuse falling through the flooring to the ground underneath. The room is stuffy and not such a pleasant place as the open hall outside. The pigs and poultry occupy the waste space under the house.

Each family has its own portion of the long public hall outside, and the length of this corresponds to the breadth of the room occupied by the family, and in each of these portions there is a small fireplace which consists of a slab of stone, at which the men warm themselves when they get up, as they usually do, in the chill of the early morning before the sun has risen.

[21]

Over this fireplace in the open hall hangs the most valuable ornament in the eyes of the Dyak, the bunch of human heads. These are the heads obtained when on the war-path by various members of the family—dead and living—and handed down from father to son as the most precious heirlooms—more precious, indeed, than the ancient jars which the Dyaks prize so highly.

The posts in this public part of the Dyak village house are often adorned with the horns of deer and the tusks of wild boar. The empty sheaths of swords are hung from these horns or from wooden hooks, while the naked blades are placed in racks overhead.

If you can imagine a long house built several feet above the ground on posts, with walls and roof of palm leaf thatch, and this house divided into two parts, one a large public hall common to all the inmates, and the other divided into separate rooms each occupied by a different family, then you have some idea of the kind of house in which the Dyaks live.

The women are earlier risers than the men, and retire to bed earlier. They generally go to the river as soon as they wake, carrying their water-gourds with them. They have a bath, fill their gourds with water, and return to the house to cook the morning meal.

The principal article of food is rice, which is cooked in brass or iron pots. With their rice they eat either vegetables or fish. Sometimes they have the flesh of wild pig or deer, but that is not usual. Nearly every animal is eaten by the Dyaks; fish, venison and pork are eaten by all, and many tribes eat monkeys, snakes and even crocodiles. A favourite method of cooking is to put the proper quantity of fish or vegetables or meat, with sufficient water and a little salt, into a newly-cut bamboo. The mouth is then stopped up with leaves, and the bamboo is placed over the fire, resting on a stone at an angle of forty-five degrees or more. By the time the bamboo is thoroughly charred, the contents are sufficiently cooked, and it is taken from the fire and emptied out into a plate. Sometimes rice is cooked in bamboos, and when it is ready to be eaten, the bamboo is split and torn off in strips, and the rice is found well cooked inside—a stiff mass moulded in the form of the bamboo.

[22]

When the food is ready and put out in plates, the men are asked to come into the room and eat. Sometimes the women eat with the men; but if there are too many to eat comfortably at one sitting, the men have their meal first, and the women eat with the children after the men have done.

The Dyaks all sit on the floor, which also serves as their table. They have their rice on plates, or sometimes upon clean leaves. They eat with their fingers, dipping the hand when necessary into the common stock of salt or common dish of meat or vegetables. They eat with the right hand, compressing the rice into portions of convenient size.

When the meal is over, they wash the crockery and put it away. The mats are swept and taken up, and the refuse thrown through the open floor for the pigs and poultry under the house to eat. [23]

The floor of the Dyak house is clean enough because all the dirt falls through on to the ground underneath; consequently this is covered with rubbish, and perpetually wet from the water thrown down from the floor above, and, being the favourite resort of the pigs and fowls of the long Dyak house, often smells horribly.

Footnotes:

[1] Paddy—rice in the husk.

CHAPTER IV

DYAK BABIES AND CHILDREN

A Dyak baby is much like any other baby in being a little helpless human thing that spends most of his time in sleeping and feeding, worrying its mother with its constant wants, but yet loved greatly by her, and as it grows up, making its parents proud of it, and amusing them by its cunning little ways. Its colour varies from a light brown with a tinge of yellow to a dark chocolate, and it wears no clothing at all until it is five or six years old.

Until a civilised government interfered to prevent such cruel murders, there used to be a custom among the Dyaks that if the mother died when her child was born, the poor babe should pay the penalty and be buried with the mother. The reasons given for this cruel act was that the child was the cause of the mother's death, and that there was no one to nurse and care for it. No woman would dare to nurse such an orphan, lest it should bring misfortune upon her own children. Therefore the poor child was often placed alive in the coffin with the dead mother, and both were buried together. That was the old cruel Dyak custom, but I am glad to say it is a long time since it has been carried out. I have myself known many cases among the Dyaks where the mother has died, and the orphan has been adopted and brought up by some friend or relative. [24]

When a child is born a fowl is waved over it as a kind of offering to the gods and spirits. This fowl is then killed, cooked, and eaten by the parents, and any friends that may be present.

During the first three days the child receives its bath in a wooden vessel in the house, but on the fourth day it is taken to the river. Some curious ceremonies attend its first bath in the river. An old man of some standing, who has been successful in his undertakings, is asked to bathe the child. He wades into the river holding the child in his arms. A fowl is killed on the bank, a wing is cut off, and if the child be a boy this wing is stuck upon a spear, and if a girl it is fixed to the slip of wood used to pass between the threads in weaving, and this is fixed on the bank, and the blood allowed to drop into the stream, as an offering to propitiate the spirits supposed to inhabit the waters, and to insure that, at any rate, no accident by water shall happen to the child. The remainder of the fowl is taken back to the house and cooked and eaten.

At some period after the child's birth—it may be within a few weeks or it may be deferred for years—a ceremony is gone through in which the gods and spirits are invoked to grant the child health and wealth and success in all his undertakings. This ceremony is generally postponed for some years if the parents are poor, in order to enable them to save a little to pay for the entertainment of their friends and relations on the occasion. Where the parents are better off, the ceremony is held a few weeks after the birth of the child. Several witch doctors are asked to take part in this performance. A portion of the long open hall of the Dyak house is screened off by large hand-woven Dyak sheets, and within these the mother sits with the child in her arms. The witch doctors walk round and round singing an incantation. Generally there is a leader who sings by himself for a few minutes, then he pauses, and turns round to his followers, and they all sing in chorus. Then the leader sings by himself again, and so on. They all walk round, first turning their feet to the right, and stamping on the floor, then pausing a moment, and turning their feet to the left, still stamping. This ceremony begins in the evening and goes on for several hours. When it is over, food is brought out to the assembled guests, and all partake of the provided feast. [25]

The proceedings differ very much according to the wealth and standing of the parents. Among the poor, it is a very quiet affair—two or three witch doctors attend, and only the near relatives of

the child are present. On the other hand, among those who are rich, this ceremony is made the occasion of holding a great feast, and inviting people from all parts to attend. Pigs and fowls are killed for food. Jars of *tuak* (a spirit obtained from rice) are brought forth for the guests to drink, and all are invited to rejoice with the parents.

The naming of the child is not made the occasion for any ceremonies, and it is not unusual to meet children of seven or eight years old who have not yet received a name. They are known by some pet name, or are called *endun* (little girl) or *igat* or *anggat* (little boy). [26]

Even when a name is given to a child, it is often changed for some reason or other. The Dyaks have a great objection to uttering the name of a dead person, so, if the namesake of a child dies, at once a new name is chosen. Again, if the child be liable to frequent attacks of illness, it is no uncommon thing for the parents to change the name two or three times in the course of a year. The reason for this is that all sickness and death are supposed to be caused by evil spirits, who are put off the scent by this means. When they come to take the child's soul away, they do not hear the old name uttered any more, and so they conclude he no longer exists, and return without him!

Dyak children do not have many toys. Little girls are sometimes seen with rudely-carved wooden dolls, and little boys play with models of boats. The boys are fond of spinning tops, which they make for themselves.

The Dyaks are very fond of children, and treat them very kindly. They rarely if ever punish them. The children have a great deal of liberty, but are not often unruly, disobedient or disrespectful. They are generally very fond of their parents, and when they grow older, do as they are told from a desire to please them.

Dyak children have very soon to make themselves useful. A little boy of ten or eleven accompanies his father to his work and helps him as best he can. A boy is very proud when he has succeeded in making his first dug-out canoe, which he sometimes does at fifteen. I have often, when on a visit to a Dyak village, been asked by some boy to see the first boat he has made, and I have been shown, not a toy boat, but a canoe in which three men could sit comfortably. [27]

The girls like to help their mothers and learn to become useful at an early age, and to do the different kinds of work a woman is expected to do. When a woman is plaiting a mat of split cane, or of reeds, she often gives the short ends, which she has cut off, to her little girl, who sits by her and tries to make a little mat with them. I have often seen little girls of ten and eleven being taught by their mothers how to weave cloth.

It is sad to think of these Dyak children in Borneo living in constant fear of evil spirits, and not knowing anything about God. The missionaries try to teach the little ones, and at each up-country Mission Station there is a small school for Dyak boys. Here they are taught about God, and are cut away from all the superstitious customs which they would constantly see in their Dyak homes. Many of these boys, after being at school for a few years, return to their own people, taking back with them the good lessons they have learnt, and in many cases influencing their friends and relatives for good, and leading some of them to become Christians. A few of these schoolboys are sent on to the larger school at the capital to be taught English. These are the boys who, one hopes, will in after years become teachers and catechists among their own people. There are so few Dyak books that it is necessary that a Dyak teacher should learn English in order to be able to educate himself by reading English books. [28]

CHAPTER V

MANNER OF LIFE—OCCUPATION

The Dyaks are industrious and hard-working, and in the busy times of paddy [2] planting they work from early in the morning till dusk, only stopping for a meal at midday. The division of labour between the men and the women is a very reasonable one, and the women do their fair share of work. The men do the timber-felling, wood-cutting, clearing the land, house and boat building, and the heavier work generally. The women help in the lighter part of the farm work, husk and pound the rice they eat, cook, weave, make mats and baskets, fetch the water for their daily use from the well or river, and attend to the children.

With regard to paddy [2] planting on the hills, the work is divided between the men and women in the following manner. The men cut down the jungle where the paddy is to be planted. When the timber and shrubs have been burnt, the men and women plant the grain. The roots and stumps of trees are left in the ground. The men walk in front with a long heavy staff in the right hand of each, and make holes in the ground, about a foot apart. The women walk behind them and throw a few grains of seed in each hole.

When the paddy has grown a little, the ground has to be carefully weeded; this work is done by the women. When the crop is ripe, both men and women do the reaping. They walk between the rows of standing grain, and with a sharp, oddly-shaped little knife, they cut off the heads one by one, and place them in their baskets which are tied to their waists in front of them. The carrying home of the paddy thus reaped is mostly done by the men, who can carry very heavy loads on their back, though the women help in this work to some extent. The next thing is to separate the grain from the little tiny stems to which it is still attached. This is done by the men. The grain is placed on a large square sieve of rattan or cane, fixed between four posts in the verandah of the Dyak house, and the men tread on it and press it through the sieve. The paddy that falls through is taken and stored in the loft in large round bins made of bark.

When rice is wanted for food, the paddy is dried in the sun, and then pounded by the women in wooden mortars with pestles five feet long. As a rule two or three women each use their pestles at one mortar, which is cut out of the trunk of a tree. I have seen as many as six girls use their pestles in quick succession at one mortar. In this way the grain is freed from husk, and is made ready for food.

The Dyak marries at an early age, and lives in a long village house with many other families, and does his best to get as much paddy as possible each year. He rises on work-days early in the morning, partakes of his frugal meal of rice and salt, or rice and fish, varied by a piece of wild pork or venison, which he may have received as a gift or bought from some hunting friend. His wife wraps up his midday meal for him in the spathe of a Pinang palm, and he goes to his work of cutting down the jungle for planting, returning home in the evening.

There are days when he does not go to work on his paddy farm, but spends his time in getting firewood, or mending things in his room, or in sitting about in the common verandah chatting with his friends.

When the paddy is planted and has grown a little, and the time of weeding draws near, the family remove to the little hut put up in the paddy farm. When the weeding is done, the family return to the long Dyak house and remain there for about two months. Then they go back to their hut to watch the ripening paddy, and guard it against attacks of birds and beasts.

Paddy planting is the chief occupation of every Dyak, but he has plenty of time for other things, and his life is not quite so monotonous as may be supposed. The actual work of paddy planting, and everything connected with it, such as the building of farm huts, and the getting ready of farming implements, takes up seven or perhaps eight months of the year. The Dyak has therefore a certain amount of time during which he can visit his friends, make boats, or earn a little extra money by hunting for such jungle produce as canes, gutta, or camphor.



GIRLS WEAVING

The ordinary boats of the Dyaks are cut out of a single log. Some of my schoolboys, under the

guidance of the native schoolmaster, once made a small canoe for their own use, so I saw the whole process. A tree having a long straight stem was felled, and the desired length of trunk cut off. The outside was then shaped to take the desired form of the canoe. Then the inside was hollowed out. The next thing to do was to widen the inside of this canoe. This was done by filling the boat with water and making a fire under it, and by fastening large stone weights on each side. When the shell had been sufficiently opened out, thwarts were placed inside, about two feet from each other, to prevent the boat getting out of shape when the wood dried. The stem and stern of the canoe are alike, both being curved and pointed, and rising out of the water.

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This is the usual type of Dyak boat, and the method of making a smaller or larger canoe is exactly the same. Even a war-boat, ninety feet long, is made from the trunk of one tree. In the longer boats planks or gunwales are stitched on the sides, and the seams are caulked, so as to render the boat water-tight.

The only tool used for making a Dyak boat of this kind is the Dyak axe or adze (*bliong*). This is a most excellent tool, and is forged of European steel, which they procure in bars. In shape it is like a small spade, about two and a half inches wide, with a square shank. This is set in a thin handle of hard wood, at the end of which there is a woven pocket of cane to receive it. The lower end of this handle has a piece of light wood fixed to it to form a firm grip for the hand. The *bliong* can be fixed in the handle at any angle, and is therefore used as an axe or adze. With it the Dyaks can cut down a great forest tree in a very short time, and it is used for cutting planks and doing their carpentering work.

While the work of the men is to build houses and to make boats, the work of the women is to weave cloth and make mats and baskets. The women plant their own cotton, beat it out with small sticks, and by means of a spinning-wheel make their own yarn. This yarn is not so fine as that of English manufacture, but it is stronger and keeps its colour well. At the present time, however, a great deal of the cloth woven by the Dyaks is done with yarn of English make. The warp is arranged in the loom, and the weaver sits on the floor and uses her hands and feet, the latter working the treadles. The threads of the woof are then passed backwards and forwards. The work is very slow, and Dyak weaving very tedious. They use vegetable dyes, and the women blend the colours in a pleasing manner, though there is a great sameness in the designs. The cloth they make is particularly strong and serviceable.

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Mats are made either with split cane or from the outer bark of reeds. The women are very clever at plaiting, and some of their mats are very fine in texture. They also make baskets of different shapes and sizes, some of which have coloured designs worked into them.

Footnotes:

[2] Paddy—rice in the husk.

CHAPTER VI

HEAD-HUNTING

The custom of head-hunting at one time prevailed to a great extent among the Dyaks. In the old days no Dyak chief of any standing could be married unless he had been successful in obtaining the head of an enemy. For this reason it was usual to make an expedition into the enemy's country before the marriage feast of any great chief. The head brought home need not be that of a man; the head of a woman or child would serve the purpose quite as well.

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There were certain ancient customs which necessitated the possession of a human head. When any person died, the relatives went into mourning. They put away their ornaments and finery, and these were tied together in bundles. At the feast in honour of the dead, these bundles were all undone, and the men and women were allowed to wear their ornaments again. Some man cut the string with which they were tied up, but before he could do such a thing, it was necessary that a human head be brought into the house, and it was usual for the man who had obtained that head to take a leading part in the ceremonies and cut open the bundles. It was also customary to make an offering of a fresh human head to the spirits when a new village house was to be built.

But these customs are not now universally observed. At the feast in honour of the dead, the headman of the house generally cuts open the bundles of finery that have been put away, and at the building of a new house, the killing of a pig is supposed to satisfy the demands of the spirits.

It is presumed that a man, who has secured a human head, must necessarily be brave. But this need not be the case at all, for, as I have already mentioned, the head may be that of a woman or child. Again, the heads need not be obtained in open warfare. Very often the head of an enemy is

taken while he is asleep. Nor is it necessary that a man kill his victim alone with his own hand. Frequently many of his friends help him to kill some unfortunate man whom they have waylaid.

In the old days an expedition, that one tribe intended to take against another, was announced at one of their feasts, when the village was thronged with guests from far and near. Some great chief would advance his reason for the desired attack. Either some of his people had been slain and revenge was called for, or else they required a human head to enable them to put off their mourning. Or perhaps they wished to build a new house, and required some human heads to offer to the spirits of the earth. Or, possibly, he himself wished to marry, and wanted a head as a proof of his valour in the eyes of his lady-love. Among the crowd who listened, there would be many who wished to follow him on the war-path. The women would urge their husbands, or lovers, or brothers to go. The chief would choose a certain number to form a council of war. These would discuss the matter, and it would be decided when the party was to start for the enemy's country, and how much food each man was to take with him.

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Then the War Spear would be sent round to the neighbouring villages, to let all know of the expedition. A man would bring the spear to a long Dyak village house, deliver his message, and return, leaving the spear to be carried on by one of the men in that house to the next village, and so on. At once the men in that house would get their war-boats ready. They would furbish up their arms, and sharpen their weapons, and decorate their helmets and war-jackets.

The costume a Dyak wears when going on the war-path, consists of a basket-work cap, decorated with feathers, and sometimes with human hair, a sleeveless skin or cotton jacket, and the usual Dyak costume of the waistcloth. For weapons, he has a sword. This may be of foreign or of their own make. It is a dangerous weapon at close quarters. He also has a spear consisting of a long wooden shaft of some hard wood with a steel spear-head, which is tied on firmly to the shaft with cane. For defensive purposes the Dyak has a large wooden shield, about three feet long, which, with its handle, is hollowed out of a single block of wood. It is held in the left hand, well advanced before the body, and meant not so much to receive the spear-point, as to divert it by a twist of the hand. It is generally painted in bright colours, and often decorated with human hair.

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Sometimes the shaft of the spear is a *sumpit* or blow-pipe. This is a small wooden tube about eight feet long. The smoothness and straightness of the bore is remarkable. The hole is drilled with an iron rod, one end of which is chisel-pointed, through a log of hard wood, which is afterwards pared down and rounded till it is about an inch in diameter.

The dart used with the *sumpit* is usually made of a thin splinter of the *nibong* palm, stuck into a round piece of very light wood, so as to afford a surface for the breath to act upon. These darts are sharpened to a fine point, and are carried in neatly-carved bamboo quivers.

The poison for these darts is obtained from the *ipoh* tree (upas). Though the wound made by the dart is very slight, yet so potent and deadly is the poison, that death follows in a very short time.

The Dyaks do not attack a village if their approach has been discovered, and the people are on the defensive. Under these circumstances, they content themselves with cutting off stragglers, or hide near the water-side for people who are going to bathe, or on their way to examine their fish-traps. These they attack unawares, cut down, take their heads, and escape into the jungle before the alarm is given.

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When fighting, the Dyak warriors gather round their chiefs and defend them bravely. Relatives often cluster together for mutual help. When one of them is killed, rather than allow the enemy to take his head, they decapitate him themselves, and bring his head back.

On the return from a war expedition, if the people of any particular boat have secured a human head, word is sent up to the Dyak village house, as soon as the boat reaches the landing-stage. The men remain in the boat, and wait there, till all the women-folk come to it dressed in their best. The excitement is great, and there are continual shouts of triumph as the women, singing a monotonous chant, surround the hero who has killed the enemy and lead him to the house. He is seated in a place of honour, the head is put on a brass tray before him, and all crowd round him to hear his account of the battle, and how he succeeded in killing one of his foes.



ON THE WARPATH

The Dyaks value very highly the heads taken in war. They hang them over the fireplaces in the long open verandahs of their houses, they make offerings to them, and they believe that the souls of those whom they have slain will be their slaves in the other world. I look upon it as a remarkable fact worthy of record, that two great Dyak chiefs, who became Christians—one the Orang Kaya of Padih, Saribas, and the other, Tarang of Krian—should have taken such a decided step as to refuse to treasure their enemies' heads any more. They were both men of position, with a great reputation for bravery. Two of the grandchildren of the Orang Kaya were at my school at Temudok for some time. A son of Tarang, Tujoh by name, worked as my Catechist in Krian for several years. While so many Dyak Christians are most unwilling to give up all their old heathen customs, these two Christian Dyak chiefs happily took up the right attitude, in such an important matter in the eyes of the Dyaks as head-hunting.

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CHAPTER VII

BIRDS AND BEASTS IN BORNEO

The animal life in Borneo is akin to that of Sumatra and Java, but with certain differences. Borneo is free from tigers, and this is fortunate, for travelling through the jungles would be dangerous indeed if tigers were likely to be encountered. The only wild animals to be found are the small and comparatively harmless tree-tiger, and the little brown honey-bear, but neither of these are much feared. Wild boars abound, but these never attack travellers, and are not a source of danger.

There are many varieties of snakes, varying in size from the python downwards. The python is a dangerous animal, and can kill a deer or a wild pig, and swallow it whole. After a meal of that kind, a python is unable to move for several days.

Monkeys of various kinds abound, and are often seen among the branches, sitting, hanging by hands or tails, leaping, grimacing, jabbering. There is the great man-like ape—the *orang-utan*, or *maias* as he is called by the Dyaks. As a rule this animal does not exceed the height of four feet two inches, though there are stories told of its attaining a far greater size. The height, however, gives a poor idea of the animal's bulk and strength. The body is as large as that of an average man, but the legs are extremely short. Its arms are of great length, and measure over seven feet in spread. The whole body is covered with long red hair. It rarely attacks man, but when

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provoked is very ferocious, and as its strength is very great, it is a foe not to be despised.

Ferocious crocodiles abound in the rivers, but the number of human lives taken by them is not great. For the most part crocodiles live upon the animals and fish they catch.

For superstitious reasons, the Dyaks do not interfere with the crocodile until he has shown some sign of his man-eating propensity. If the crocodile will live at peace with him, the Dyak has no wish to start a quarrel. If, however, the crocodile breaks the truce and kills someone, then the Dyaks set to work to kill the culprit, and keep on catching and killing crocodiles until they find him. The Dyaks generally wear brass ornaments, and by cutting open a dead crocodile, they can easily find out if he is the creature they wish to punish. Sometimes as many as ten crocodiles are killed before they manage to destroy the animal they want.

Wild pig and deer are to be found in the jungles, and these are often hunted by the Dyaks. The Dyaks subsist more on a vegetable and fish diet than on an animal diet, so hunting with them is only an occasional pursuit. A Dyak village swarms with dogs, but most of these are of no use for the chase, and only prowls about the premises, and consume the refuse food. But some of their dogs, though small in size, are plucky little animals, and will attack a boar three or four times their size. Such dogs are of great value to the few Dyaks in each village who care for hunting. When the dogs are good and know their work, native hunting is not difficult. The hunter loiters about, and the dogs beat the jungle for themselves, and when they have found a scent, give tongue, and soon run the animal to bay. The hunter knows this by their peculiar bark, hurries to the spot and spears the game. The boars are sometimes very dangerous when wounded, and turn furiously on the hunter, and unless he is nimble and climbs up some tree near at hand, or is assisted by his dogs, he might fare ill in spite of his sword and spear. The dogs are very useful, and by attacking the hind legs of the animal keep making him turn round.

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Deer are more easily run down than pigs, because they have not the strength to go any great distance, especially in the hot weather.

A favourite way of catching deer is to send a man to follow the spoor of a deer, and to find out where it lies to rest during the heat of the day. Then large nets, made of fine cane, are hung around, and the deer is driven into these. The hunting party divide into two parties, some to watch the net, the others, accompanied by a large crowd of women and children, drive the deer towards it by yelling and shouting. The startled deer springs from its covert and makes towards the forest, and gets entangled in the meshes of the net. Before it can extricate itself, it is killed by the watchers.

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Lizards of all sizes abound. There is a small lizard which is seen on the walls and ceilings as soon as the lamps are lit. It eats up any mosquitoes or moths that it can find. What happens to this animal in the daytime, I do not know, but as soon as the lamps are lit several of them always make their appearance.

There is a large lizard, about a foot long, found sometimes in the Dyak houses. It makes a loud uncanny sound at night, and cries "*Gok-ko!*" at intervals. This animal is named after its cry, and is called by the Dyaks "*Gok-ko.*" The natives consider that these lizards bring good luck, and portend good harvests, so they never kill them.

Many other kinds of lizards are found, but the most remarkable is the chameleon, which is often seen on the branches of trees. This animal can change its colour. When in the sun, it is generally a bright green, in the shade, it is brown in colour, and when dead, its body becomes quite black. These are the principal colours of the animal, but often its body is a combination of these colours, and it looks very beautiful.

Of birds there are to be found many varieties of wood-pigeon, as well as parrots of different kinds, which fly about in large flocks. There are also tiny humming-birds with feathers of a bright metallic hue. These look very pretty as they hover over flowers.

Many other birds are also found in the jungles of Borneo. Some of these are looked upon by the Dyaks as the agents of the gods and spirits, and they pay great heed to their cries. The Dyaks know nothing of the God of Love who cares for His children, and has sent His Son Jesus Christ to earth to tell us how to live, and so they listen to the voices of these omen birds, and think that by doing so, they can find out the will of the higher powers.

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CHAPTER VIII

SOME CURIOUS CUSTOMS

There are many curious customs to be met with among the Dyaks of Borneo. They have the trial by ordeal, by diving, in which two men keep their heads under water as long as they can. This is their way of referring disputed questions to supernatural decision. They believe that the gods are sure to help the innocent, and punish the guilty. When there is a dispute between two parties, in

which it is impossible to obtain reliable evidence, or where one of the parties is not satisfied with the decision of the headman of the Dyak house, this ordeal is often resorted to.

Several preliminary meetings are held by the representatives of both parties to decide the time, and the place of the match. It is also decided what property each party should stake. This has to be paid by the loser to the victor.

For several days and nights before the contest, they gather their friends together; they make offerings and sing incantations to the spirits, and beg of them to support their just cause, and help their representative to win. Each party chooses a champion. There are many professional divers, who, for a trifling sum, are willing to take part in this painful contest. [42]

On the evening of the day previous to that on which the diving match is to take place, each champion is fed with seven compressed balls of cooked rice. Then each is made to lie down on a nice new mat, and is covered with a beautiful, Dyak-woven sheet; an incantation is made over him, and the spirit inhabitants of the waters are invoked to come to the aid of the man whose cause is just.

Early the next morning the champions are roused from their sleep, and dressed each in a fine new waistcloth. The articles staked are brought down from the houses, and placed upon the bank. A large crowd of men, women and children join the procession of the two champions and their friends and supporters to the scene of the contest at the river-side. As soon as the place is reached, fires are lit and mats are spread for the divers to sit on and warm themselves. While they sit by their respective fires, the necessary preparations are made.

Each party provides a roughly-constructed wooden grating, to be placed in the bed of the river, for his champion to stand on in the water. These are placed within a few yards of each other, where the water is deep enough to reach the waist, and near each a pole is thrust firmly into the mud for the man to hold on to while he is diving.

The two divers are led into the river, and each stands on his own grating, grasping his pole. At a given signal they plunge their heads simultaneously into the water. Immediately the spectators shout aloud at the top of their voices, over and over again, "*Lobon—lobon*," and continue doing so during the whole contest. What these mysterious words mean, I have never been able to discover. When at length one of the champions shows signs of yielding, by his movements in the water, and the shaking of the pole he is holding to, the excitement becomes very great. "*Lobon—lobon*," is shouted louder and more rapidly than before. The shouts become deafening. The struggles of the poor victim, who is fast losing consciousness, are painful to witness. The champions are generally plucky, and seldom come out of the water of their own will. They stay under water until the loser drops senseless, and is dragged ashore, apparently lifeless, by his companions. The friends of the winner, raising a loud shout of triumph, hurry to the bank and seize and carry off the stakes. The vanquished one, quite unconscious, is carried by his friends to the fire, where he is warmed. In a few minutes he recovers, opens his eyes and gazes wildly around, and in a short time is able to walk slowly home. Where both champions succumb at the same time, the one who first regains his senses is held to be the winner. [43]

The Dyaks have a curious superstition that if food is offered to a man, and he refuses it, and goes away without at least touching it, some misfortune is sure to befall him. It is said that he is sure to be either attacked by a crocodile, or bitten by a snake, or suffer from the attack of some animal.

When Dyaks have been asked to stay and have a meal, if they do not feel inclined to do so, I have often noticed them touch the food before going away. I have never been able to discover the origin of this curious superstition, but innumerable tales are told of those who have disregarded it, and have paid the penalty by being attacked by some animal. [44]

The Dyaks are very truthful. So disgraceful indeed do the Dyaks consider the deceiving of others by an untruth, that such conduct is handed down to posterity by a remarkable custom. They heap up a pile of the branches of trees in memory of the man who has told a great lie, so that future generations may know of his wickedness, and take warning from it. The persons deceived start the *tugong bula*—"the liar's mound"—by heaping up a large number of branches in some conspicuous spot by the side of the path from one village to another. Every passer-by contributes to it, and at the same time curses the man in memory of whom it is. The Dyaks consider the adding to any *tugong bula* they may pass a sacred duty, the omission of which will meet with supernatural punishment, and so, however pressed for time a Dyak may be, he stops to throw on the pile some small branch or twig.

A few branches, a few dry twigs and leaves—that is what the *tugong bula* is at first. But day by day it increases in size. Every passer-by adds to it, and in a few years' time it becomes an imposing memorial to one who was a liar. Once started, there seems to be no means of destroying a *tugong bula*. There used to be one by the side of the path between Seratok and Sebetan. As the branches and twigs that composed it often came over the path, on a hot day in the dry weather, I have more than once applied a match to it and burnt it down. However, in a very short time, a new heap of branches and twigs was piled on the ashes of the old *tugong bula*.

DYAK FEASTS

The Dyak religious feasts may be divided into the four following classes:—

Those connected with—

1. Head-taking.
2. Farming.
3. The Dead.
4. Dreams, etc.

Though the Dyak feasts differ in their aims, there is a great deal which is common to them all. In these feasts the religious aspect does not seem of great importance. There is little real, reverential worship of gods or spirits. It is true that food is offered to some higher powers, but this is done as the mere observance of an ancient custom. There are also long incantations made by men chosen for that purpose, who have good memories and can recite in a monotonous chant the special hymns of great length connected with each feast. But the guests do not share in this as an act of religious worship. They are generally sitting round, talking, and laughing, and eating. While these incantations are sung, topics of common interest are discussed, and plans formed, and in all Dyak feasts, sociability and the partaking of food and drink seem to take a more prominent place than any religious worship.

The preparations for all these feasts are much alike. They extend over a length of time, and consist for the most part in the procuring of food for the guests. The young men go to their friends, far and near, and obtain from them presents of pigs or fowls for the feast, and as cock-fighting is loved by the Dyaks, they at the same time procure as many fighting cocks as possible. The women busy themselves with pounding out an extra amount of rice, both for the consumption of the guests, and also for the making of *tuak* or native spirit. [46]

The special characteristics and religious aspects of these different feasts must now be noticed.

1. *Feasts connected with Head-taking.* All these are given in honour of Singalang Burong, who is the ruler of the spirit-world, and the god of war. These feasts are not held as frequently as those connected with farming, but when any of them take place, a great deal is made of the event. The most important is the *Bird Feast*.

The *Bird Feast*. This feast is also called the *Head Feast*, because part of the ceremony connected with it is the giving of food to some human heads taken in war, or the *Horn-bill Feast*, because carved figures of the horn-bill are used. It lasts three days whereas other feasts only last one day. In the old days it was only held on the return from a successful war expedition, when the heads of the enemy were brought home in triumph. But in the present day this feast is organized when they get a good harvest, and when the people of the Dyak house seem so inclined, and if no new heads have been lately brought home as trophies, some old smoked heads that have been in the house for years are used.

Among the preparations for this feast is the making of the carved wooden figure of the rhinoceros' horn-bill. This wooden figure is set on a high pole, which is fixed into the ground in front of the house. An offering of Dyak delicacies is hung up under it for food. Sometimes several of these figures are used. [47]

Some human heads are placed in large brass dishes in the public hall of the Dyak house, and to these offerings of food and drink are made. Some of the food is stuffed into the mouths of these heads, and the rest is placed before them.

There are also certain erections called *pandong* put up at regular intervals in the long public hall, and to these are hung war-charms, swords and spears, etc. The men who are chosen to make the incantations walk up and down, going round the *pandong* and the heads in the brass dishes, singing the particular incantation that is used at this feast. This singing lasts the whole night, beginning at 8 P.M. and continuing till the following morning. Except for a short interval for rest in the middle of the night, the performers are marching and singing all the time. The killing of a pig, and examining the liver to find out whether good or bad fortune is in store for them, is the last act of the ceremony.

2. The principal feast connected with *Farming* is the *Gawai Batu* (the "Stone Feast"). It takes place before the farming operations begin, and is held in honour of Pulang Gana, the god of the land, who lives in the bowels of the earth, and has power to make the land fruitful or unfruitful. In this feast invocations are made to this god, and he is asked to give them a good harvest. The whetstones and farming implements are placed in a heap in the public part of the Dyak house. Offerings are made to the whetstones with a request that they may sharpen the tools and thus lighten the labours of their owners. After the feast is over, the whetstones are taken to the different farms, and the work of cutting down the jungle for planting begins. [48]

3. The *Great Feast connected with the Dead* is the *Gawai Antu* (the "Spirit Feast"). No definite

time is fixed for the celebration of this, and it may be held one or two years after the death of a person. All those that have died since the last time the feast was held, are honoured at the same time, so that the number of departed spirits remembered at this feast is sometimes great.

The preparation for this feast is carried on for many weeks. Distant friends and relatives are visited, and asked to help with gifts of food or money. Hard wood memorial monuments for the graves are got ready by the men. The women weave, with finely-split bamboo, small imitations of various articles of personal and domestic use, and those are hung over the graves, and in this way given to the dead for their use in the other world. If the dead person be a man, a bamboo gun, a shield, a war-cap and such things are woven; if a woman, a loom, a fish-basket, a winnowing fan, etc.; if a child, bamboo toys of various kinds.

Before the feasting begins in the evening, there takes place the formal putting off of mourning. The nearest male relative of the dead person in whose honour the feast is held, comes dressed in an old and shabby waist cloth. This is cut through by some chief, and the man puts on a better garment. In the case of female relatives, also, their old shabby garments are cut through and thrown aside, and they resume the use of bright clothing and personal ornaments. The bundles containing finery, that were put away at the death of their relative, are brought forth, and the string tying them cut through, and the owners put on their bright garments again. As the feast is in honour of several who have died since the feast was last held, this kind of thing goes on in several of the rooms at the same time.

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The professional wailer sits on a swing in the verandah outside the rooms, and in a monotonous voice invites all the spirits of the dead to attend this feast given in their honour.

The morning after the feast, the last duty to the dead is performed. The wooden monuments, the bamboo imitation articles, and food of all kinds are arranged upon the different graves. Having received these gifts, the dead relinquish all claim upon the living, and depend on their own resources.

4. A superstitious people like the Dyaks, living in constant dread of unseen powers, naturally hold a feast when anything unusual takes place. As the gods and spirits are supposed to communicate their wishes to human beings by means of dreams, it naturally follows that if a man dreams that some spirit is hungry and asks for food, at once a feast is held, and offerings are made to that spirit. As the omens of birds are observed and obeyed by the Dyaks, and the omen birds are looked upon as messengers of the great god Singalang Burong, when a bird of ill omen comes into a Dyak house, a feast is held, and offerings are made to the gods and spirits. When a man has recovered from a long and dangerous illness, very often a feast is held to thank the spirit of disease for leaving them, and to beg him to stay away a long time.

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To all these feasts the whole neighbourhood for miles around are invited. Some weeks before the day appointed for the feast, small parties of three or four are despatched in different directions, and these go from house to house and invite people to the feast.

The men and women come to a feast dressed in the brightest colours and wearing many ornaments, and the whole assembly has a very gay appearance. For amusements they have dancing, cock-fighting, and trials of strength among the young men.

The Dyaks have two dances—the *Mencha* or Sword Dance, and the *Ajat* or War Dance. In the former, two swords are placed on a mat, and two men begin slowly from the opposite ends turning their bodies about, extending the arms, and lifting their feet and planting them down in grotesque but not ungraceful attitudes. After moving about for some minutes, they seize the swords and pass and repass each other, now cutting, now crossing swords, retiring and advancing. The main idea of this Sword Dance seems to be the posturing in different attitudes, and not so much the skill displayed in fencing. I have often watched a Dyak Sword Dance, where neither has touched the other with his sword, the movements having been so leisurely that there has been plenty of time to ward off each attack.



A DYAK GIRL IN GALA COSTUME

The *Ajat* or War Dance is danced by one man. He is generally fully armed with sword, spear and shield. He acts in pantomime what is done when on the war-path. The dancer begins by imitating the creeping through the jungle in cautious manner, looking to the right and to the left, before and behind, for the foe. The lurking enemy is suddenly discovered, and after some rapid attack and defence, a sudden plunge is made upon him, and he lies dead on the ground. The taking of the head of this invisible enemy ends the dance. Both kinds of dancing are accompanied by the striking of brass gongs and drums.

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Cock-fighting is a favourite sport, and there is a great deal of it at all Dyak forests. The cocks have artificial steel spurs which are very sharp.

CHAPTER X

THE WITCH DOCTOR

The children of Borneo are taught from their earliest years that there are evil spirits everywhere—in the air, in the trees, in the rocks and in the streams—and that these cause disease and death. And so when sickness comes, the witch doctor or *Manang* is sent for, because he claims to have mysterious powers over the spirits.

Every disease is believed to be caused by the touch of some demon, who wishes to carry off the soul of the sick man into the other world, and the witch doctor is the man who has power to charm or kill the evil spirit, and rescue the soul of the sick man from his cruel clutches. When called in to attend a patient, he in company with other medicine men go through a ceremony, which, though agreeing in the main points, differs in details according to what the disease is, and the amount of fees paid.

The witch doctor always possesses a *lupong* or medicine box, generally made of bark skin, which is filled with charms, consisting of scraps of wood or bark, curiously twisted roots, pebbles and fragments of quartz. These charms are either inherited or revealed to their owners by the spirits in dreams, as possessing medicinal virtue. One important and necessary charm is the *Batu Ilau*—"stone of light"—a bit of quartz crystal into which the witch doctor looks in order to see the soul, so as to be able to catch it and bring it back to the body it has left. It is believed by the Dyaks that in all cases of serious sickness, the soul leaves the body and wanders about at greater

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or less distance from it; if it can be caught before it has proceeded too far on its journey to the other world, well and good; if not, the patient dies. Whether the patient recover or not, the witch doctor is rewarded for his services. He makes sure of this beforehand, and demands his fee before he undertakes the case.

The *Manang* never carries his own box of charms; the people who fetch him must carry it for him. He arrives at the house of the sick man generally at sunset, for he never performs by daylight, unless the case is very serious, and he is paid extra for doing so. It is difficult and dangerous work, he says, to have any dealings with the spirits in the daytime. Sitting down by the patient, after some inquiries, he produces out of his medicine box a pebble, or a boar's tusk, or some other charm, and gently strokes the body with it. If there be several medicine men called in, the leader undertakes the preliminary examination, the rest giving their assent.

The witch doctor now produces his *Batu Ilau* ("stone of light") and gravely looks into it to see where the soul is, and to discover what is the proper ceremony for the case. When there is serious illness, the witch doctor affirms that the spirit of the afflicted person has already left the body and is on its way to the other world, but that he may be able to overtake it and bring it back, and restore it to the person to whom it belongs. He pretends to converse with the evil spirit that troubles the sick man, repeating aloud the answers that the spirit is supposed to make. [53]

There are many different ceremonies resorted to in cases of illness, but the following is what is common to all *Manang* performances.

In the public hall of the Dyak house, a long-handled spear is fixed blade upwards, with a few leaves tied round it, and at its foot are placed the medicine boxes of all the witch doctors who take part in the ceremony. This is called the *Pagar Api* ("fence of fire"). Why it is called by this curious name is not clear.

The *Manangs* all squat on the floor, and the leader begins a long monotonous drawl, the rest either singing in concert, or joining in the choruses, or singing in turn with him. After a tiresome period of this, they stand up and march with slow and solemn step in single file round the *Pagar Api*. The monotonous chant sometimes slackens, sometimes quickens, as they march round and round the whole night through, with only one interval for food in the middle of the night. The patient simply lies on his mat and listens.

Most of what is chanted consists of meaningless sounds, it being supposed that what is not understood by man is intelligible to the spirits. But some parts of it can be understood by the careful listener. The witch doctors call upon the sickness to be off to the ends of the earth and return to the unseen regions from whence it came. They invoke the aid of spirits, as well as their own ancestors, and spin out the invocation to last till early morning. Then they rush round the *Pagar Api* as hard as they can go, still singing their incantation. One of their number suddenly falls on the floor and lies motionless. The others sit down round him. He is covered over with a blanket, and all wait, while his spirit is supposed to hurry away to the other world to find the wandering soul and bring it back. Presently he revives, and looks vacantly round like a man just waking out of sleep. Then he raises his right hand clenched as if holding something. That hand contains the soul, and he proceeds to the patient, and solemnly returns it to the body of the sick man through the crown of his head. This "catching of the soul" is the great end to which all that has preceded leads up. One more thing must be done to complete the cure. A live fowl must be waved over the patient, and as he does so, the leader sings a special invocation of great length. The animal is afterwards killed as an offering to the spirits, and eaten by the *Manangs*. [54]

The witch doctor is supposed to be called to his profession by a revelation made to him in a dream by some spirit. He therefore claims to have a familiar spirit, whom he can call to his aid when necessary. He must also commit to memory a certain amount of Dyak incantations to take part in the ceremonies in company with other *Manangs*. In addition to this, before he can accomplish the more important feats such as pretending to catch the soul of a sick man, he must be initiated by other witch doctors. There are three different grades of *Manangs*, and the higher the grade is, the larger the fees the aspirant has to pay the other witch doctors. There are some differences in the ceremonies connected with the admission into each of these three grades, but in all of them the aspirant sits in the verandah of the Dyak house, and a number of witch doctors walk round him singing incantations during the whole night. The other *Manangs* pretend to endow him with mysterious powers, and to make him able to "touch" the maladies of the body, and also to see the soul wherever it may be wandering. [55]

From what has been said it will be seen that the Dyak witch doctor uses much deceit and trades on the ignorance of others. He pretends to be able to "catch the soul" of a sick man, and is paid for doing so. When Dyaks have given up their old beliefs and superstitions, and have accepted the true Faith, they naturally give up their belief in the witch doctor's mysterious powers. For this reason the greatest opponents to the advance of the Gospel in Borneo are the *Manangs*. I am glad to say, however, that some Dyak witch doctors have listened to the teaching of the missionaries and have seen the wickedness of the deceitful lives they have led. These have become Christians, and have openly confessed to their evil practices in trading on the superstitions of the Dyaks. Some have become Catechists and teachers, and are teaching others to renounce the belief in evil spirits which they at one time taught, and are undoing the evil they did in the past by bringing people to God.

SOME ANIMAL STORIES

The Dyaks of Borneo, both young and old, are very fond of listening to stories, and often in the evening in the public hall of the long Dyak village house, a crowd of men, women and children may be seen seated on mats, listening to a legend or fairy-tale related by some old man. They have a large number of stories about animals which the Dyaks are never tired of listening to; and though they know them well, still they love to hear them retold again and again. These animal stories correspond to the adventures of Brer Rabbit, or our own tales illustrating the cunning of the fox. In the Dyak stories the mouse-deer, one of the smallest animals to be found in Borneo, is represented as very clever, and able to outwit with his cunning the larger and stronger animals. Here are two animal stories which I have myself heard related by the Dyaks themselves:

THE STORY OF THE MOUSE-DEER AND OTHER ANIMALS WHO WENT OUT FISHING

Once upon a time the Mouse-deer, accompanied by many other animals, went on a fishing expedition. All day long they fished, and in the evening they returned to the little hut they had put up by the river-side, salted the fish they had caught, and stored it up in large jars. They noticed, when they returned in the evening, that much of the fish they had left in the morning was missing. The animals held a council to decide what it was best to do, and after some discussion, it was decided that the Deer should stay behind to catch the thief, while the others went out to fish.

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"I shall be able to master him, whoever he is," said the Deer. "If he refuses to do what I wish, I shall punish him with my sharp horns."

So the others went out fishing, leaving the Deer at home. Soon he heard the tramp of someone coming to the foot of the ladder leading up into the hut, and a voice called out:

"Is anyone at home?"

"I am here," said the Deer. Looking out he saw a great giant, and his heart failed him. He wished he had asked one of his companions to stay with him.

"I smell some fish," said the Giant. "I want some, and you must give it to me at once. I am hungry. Let me have what I want."

"It does not belong to me," said the Deer, in great fear. "It belongs to the Pig, the Bear, the Tiger, and the Mouse-deer. They would punish me severely if I gave any of it to you."

"Don't talk to me in that way," said the Giant, impatiently. "If you do not let me have what I want, I will eat you up."

The Deer was too frightened of the Giant to refuse his request, so he let him eat the fish, and take some away with him.

When his companions returned, the Deer gave them his account of the Giant's visit. They blamed him for his cowardice, and the Wild Boar said he would keep watch the next day.

"If the Giant comes," said he, "I will gore him with my tusks, and trample him underfoot."

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But he fared no better than the Deer, for when he saw the Giant, who threatened to kill him if he refused to give him some fish, he was afraid, and let him take as much as he wanted.

Great was the disgust of the others to find on their return that their fish had again been taken.

"Let me watch," said the Bear. "No Giant shall frighten me. I will hug him with my strong arms, and scratch him with my sharp claws."

So Bruin was left in charge the next day, while the others went out to fish.

Soon he heard the Giant who came to the foot of the steps, and shouted: "Hullo! Who's there?"

"I am," said the Bear. "Who are you, and what do you want?"

"I can smell some nice fish, and I am hungry, and want some."

"I cannot let you have any," said the Bear. "It does not belong to me."

"Let me have some at once," said the Giant in a voice of thunder, "before I kill and eat you."

The Bear was too much frightened to interfere, while the Giant ransacked the jars. When he had had enough, he bade the Bear "Good-bye!" and went off.

On the return of the other animals, the Tiger said he would put a stop to this state of things. He would stay at home the next day and keep watch. It would have to be a very strong Giant indeed that would dare to fight him!

The Giant paid his visit as before, and told the Tiger that he was hungry, and asked for some fish.

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At first the Tiger refused to give any to him, but when the Giant threatened to attack him, he was afraid, like the others had been, and let him have as much as he wanted.

On their return, again the animals found their fish had been stolen.

Then the Mouse-deer spoke. "I see," he said, "that it is no use depending on you others. You boast, but when the time comes for action, you have no courage. I will stay at home, and secure this giant of whom you are all afraid."

When his companions had gone away the next morning, the Mouse-deer tied a bandage round his forehead and lay down.

Soon the Giant came, and shouted: "Who's there?"

"Only me," said the Mouse-deer, groaning with pain. "Come up, whoever you may be."

The Giant climbed up the rickety ladder, and saw the Mouse-deer lying with his head bandaged.

"What is the matter with you?" asked the Giant.

"I have a headache," was the answer.

"Whatever has given you the headache?" asked the Giant.

"Can't you guess?" said the Mouse-deer. "It is the smell of this fish in these jars. It is so strong, it is enough to make anyone ill. Don't you feel ill yourself?"

"I think I do," said the Giant. "Cannot you give me some medicine?"

"I have no medicine with me," said the Mouse-deer, "but I can bandage you, as I have bandaged myself, and that is sure to do you good."

"Thank you," said the Giant. "It is good of you to take the trouble to cure me."

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So the Giant lay down as he was bid, while the Mouse-deer bandaged his head and fastened the ends of the bandage to pegs which he drove into the ground under the open flooring of the hut.

"Don't you feel a little pain in your ankles?" anxiously suggested the Mouse-deer.

"I think I do," said the foolish giant. "Suppose you bandage them also."

So the Mouse-deer, chuckling to himself, bandaged his ankles, and made them fast to the floor of the hut.

"Do you not feel the pain in your legs?" asked the Mouse-deer.

"I think I do," was the foolish Giant's reply.

So the Mouse-deer bandaged his legs and made them secure, so that the Giant was quite unable to move.

By this time the Giant began to get uneasy, and trying to get up, and finding himself securely bound, he struggled, and roared in pain and anger.

The little Mouse-deer sat before him and laughed, and said:

"You were a match for the Deer, the Pig, the Bear, and the Tiger, but you are defeated by me. Don't make so much noise, or I shall drive a peg through your temples and kill you."

Just then the others returned from their fishing. Great was their joy to find their enemy securely bound. With shouts of triumph they fell upon the Giant and killed him, and praised the Mouse-deer for his cleverness in securing him.

THE STORY OF THE MOUSE-DEER, THE DEER, AND THE PIG

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A Mouse-deer, wandering in the jungle, fell into a pit. He could not get out, so he waited patiently for some passer-by. Presently a Pig passed by the mouth of the pit. The Mouse-deer called out to him, and he looked in and asked the Mouse-deer what he was doing at the bottom of the pit.

"Don't you know what is going to happen?" said the Mouse-deer. "The sky is going to fall down, and everybody will be crushed to dust unless he takes shelter in a pit. If you want to save your life, you had better jump in."

The Pig jumped into the pit, and the Mouse-deer got on his back, but he found he was not high enough to enable him to leap out.

Next a Deer came along, and, seeing the two animals in the pit, asked them what they were doing there.

The Mouse-deer replied: "The sky is going to fall down, and everyone will be crushed unless he hides in some hole. Jump in, if you want to save your life."

The Deer sprang in, and the Mouse-deer made him stand on the back of the Pig; then he himself got on the back of the Deer and jumped out of the pit, leaving the other two to their fate.

The Deer and the Pig were very angry at being tricked in this way by such a small animal as the Mouse-deer. They scratched the side of the pit with their feet until it sloped, and enabled them to scramble out; then they followed the trail of the Mouse-deer, and soon overtook him.

The Mouse-deer saw them coming, and climbed up a tree from the bough of which a large beehive was hanging. [62]

"Come down," said the Pig and Deer angrily. "You have deceived us, and we mean to kill you."

"Deceived you?" said the Mouse-deer in pretended surprise. "When did I deceive you, or do anything to deserve death?"

"Didn't you tell us that the sky was going to fall, and that if we did not hide ourselves in a pit we should be killed?"

"Oh, yes," was the reply. "What I said was perfectly true, only I persuaded the King to postpone the disaster."

"You need not try to put us off with any more lies. You must come down, for we mean to have your blood."

"I cannot," said the Mouse-deer, "because the King has asked me to watch his gong," pointing to the bees' nest.

"Is that the King's gong?" said the Deer. "I should like to strike it to hear what it sounds like."

"So you may," said the Mouse-deer, "only let me get down, and go to some distance before you do so, as the sound would deafen me."

So the Mouse-deer sprang down and ran away. The Deer took a long stick and struck the bees' nest, and the bees flew out angrily and stung him to death.

The Pig, seeing what had happened, pursued the Mouse-deer, determined to avenge the death of his friend. He found his enemy taking refuge on a tree round the trunk of which a large python was curled. [63]

"Come down," said the Pig, "and I will kill you."

"I cannot come down to-day. I am set here to watch the King's girdle. Look at it," he said, pointing to the Python. "Is it not pretty? I have never seen such a handsome waist-belt before."

"It is beautiful," said the Pig. "How I should like to wear it for one day!"

"So you may," said the Mouse-deer, "but be careful and do not spoil it."

So the foolish Pig entangled himself in the folds of the Python, who soon crushed him to death and ate him for his dinner, and the clever Mouse-deer escaped, having outwitted his enemies.

CHAPTER XII

OMENS AND DREAMS

The Dyak is conscious of his ignorance of the laws which govern the world in which he lives. He feels his weakness and the need of some guidance from unseen powers. He has no knowledge of God and the revelation He has made in the Bible, and so he has devised for himself a system of omens.

There are seven birds in Borneo whose native names are: *Katupong*, *Beragai*, *Kutok*, *Embuas*, *Nendak*, *Papau* and *Bejampong*. These are supposed to reveal to the Dyaks the will of the great god Singalang Burong. These birds are beautiful in plumage, but, like most tropical birds, they have little song, and their calls are shrill and piercing. They are supposed to be the seven sons-in-law of Singalang Burong, and the legend which tells of how the Dyaks came to know them and to listen to their cries is given in [Chap. XIV](#). ("The Story of Siu"). [64]

The system of bird omens as carried out by the Dyaks, is most complicated, and the younger men have constantly to ask the older ones how to act when contradictory omens are heard. The law and observance of omens occupy a great share of the thoughts of the Dyak.

Some idea of the method in which the Dyaks carry out their system of omens may be learned from what is done at the beginning of the yearly rice farming. Some man who has the reputation of being fortunate, and has had large paddy crops, will be the augur, and undertake to obtain omens for a large area of land, on which he and others intend to plant. This man begins his work some time before the Dyaks begin clearing the ground of jungle and high grass. He will have to hear the cry of the *Nendak*, the *Katupong* and the *Beragai*, all on his left. If these cries come from birds on his right, they are not propitious. He goes forth in the early morning, and wanders about

the jungle till the cry of the *Nendak* is heard on his left. He will then break off a twig of anything growing near, and take it home, and put it in a safe place. But it may happen that some other omen bird or animal is first to be seen or heard. In that case he must give the matter up, return, and try his chance another day.

Thus, sometimes several days pass before he has obtained his first omen. When he has heard the *Nendak*, he will then listen for the *Katupong* and the other birds in the necessary order. There are always delays caused by the wrong birds being heard, and it may be a month or more before he hears all the necessary cries. When the augur has collected a twig for each necessary omen bird, he takes these to the land selected for farming, buries them in the ground, and with a short form of address to the omen birds and to Pulang Gana—the god of the earth—clears a small portion of the ground of grass or jungle, and then returns home. The magic virtues of the birds have been conveyed to the land, and the work of clearing it for planting may be begun at any time.

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The sacred birds can be bad omens as well as good. If heard on the wrong side, or in the wrong order, the planting on a particular piece of land must be postponed, or altogether abandoned.

I have mentioned the omens necessary before planting the seed. In a similar manner, before beginning to build a house, or starting on a war expedition, or undertaking any new line of action, certain omens are required, if good fortune is to attend them and the Fates be propitious.

The worst of all omens is to find anywhere on the farm the dead body of any animal included in the omen list. It infuses a deadly poison into the whole crop. When such a terrible thing happens, the omen is tested by killing a pig, and divining from the appearance of its liver directly after death. If the liver be pronounced to be of good omen, then all is well, but if not, then all the paddy grown on that ground must be sold or given away. Other people may eat it, for the omen only affects those who own the crop.

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It is not only to the cry of birds that the Dyaks pay heed. There are certain animals—the deer, the armadillo, the lizard, the bat, the python, even the rat, as well as certain insects—which all may give omens under special circumstances. But these other creatures are subordinate to the birds, from which alone augury is sought at the beginning of any important undertaking.

The Dyak pays heed to these omen creatures, not only in his farming, but in all his journeyings, and in any kind of work he may be engaged in. If he be going to visit a friend, the cry of a bird of ill omen will send him back. If he be engaged in carrying beams from the jungle to his house, and hear a *Kutok*, or a *Bejampong* or an *Embuas*, he will at once throw down the piece of timber. So great is the Dyak belief in omens, that a man will sometimes abandon a nearly-finished boat simply because a bird of ill omen flies across its bows. The labour of weeks will thus be wasted. I have myself seen wooden beams and posts left half finished in the jungle, and have been told that some omen bird was heard while the man was at work on them, and so they had to be abandoned.

There are many omens which make a house unfit for habitation. If a *Katupong* fly into it, or a *Beragai* over the house, or an armadillo crawls up into it, the Dyaks leave the house and build another for them to live in. Sometimes, however, they sacrifice a pig, and examine the liver, and only abandon the house if the liver is considered by experts to be of bad omen.

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DREAMS

The Dyaks place implicit confidence in dreams. Their theory is that during sleep the soul can hear, see and understand, and so what is dreamt is what really takes place. When anyone dreams of a distant land, they believe that his soul has paid a flying visit to that land.

In dreams, also, the gods and spirits are supposed to bring charms to human beings. The story is often told of how a man falls asleep and dreams that a spirit came to him and gave certain charms, and lo! when he awakes, he finds them in his hands. Or else he is told in a dream to go to a certain spot at a special time and pick up some stone there, which will have some mysterious influence for good over his fortunes.

Dreams are looked upon by the Dyaks as the means the gods and spirits use to convey their commands to men, or to warn them of coming danger. Houses are often deserted, and farming land, on which much labour has been spent, abandoned on account of dreams. Newly married couples often separate from the same cause. It is no unusual thing for a man or a woman to dream that the spirits are hungry and need food. In that case the inmates of the Dyak house organize a feast, and offerings are made to the hungry spirits.

CHAPTER XIII

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MARRIAGES AND BURIALS

Marriages in all countries are occasions of rejoicing, and it is the same among the Dyaks. The principal part of the ceremony is the fetching of the bride from her father's to the bridegroom's house. The women-folk of the village, who are friends of the bridegroom's family, set out in a boat, gaily decorated with an awning of parti-coloured sheets, and with streamers and flags flying, to an accompaniment of gongs and drums and musical instruments, to fetch the bride to her future home.

When the boat arrives at the landing-stage of the bride's house, they all walk up—a gaily dressed crowd—and are welcomed into the house. Here they sit down and talk over the future prospects of the young couple, chewing betel-nut and *sireh* (a kind of pepper leaf) all the time. A portion of these chewing ingredients are carefully set aside to be used later on. The Dyak with his great love for divination, cannot allow such an occasion to pass without some attempt to find out the secrets of the future.



IN WEDDING FINERY

The company all sit down in the long common hall of the Dyak house, and the betel-nut, *sireh*, etc., specially set aside for the ceremony, are brought forward. A betel-nut is split into seven pieces by one supposed to be lucky in matrimonial matters, and these, together with the other ingredients of the betel-nut mixture, are all put in a little basket, which is bound together with red cloth, and laid for a short time upon the open platform adjoining the house.

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The Master of the Ceremonies, who splits the betel-nut, then makes a little speech, telling the assembled guests that if either party should desert the other without sufficient reason, the offending party shall be fined such an amount as has been agreed upon.

The basket containing the split pieces of betel-nut is then brought in and uncovered, and the contents examined to ascertain the will of the gods. Should the pieces of betel-nut, by some mystic power, increase in number, the marriage will be an unusually happy one; but should they decrease, it is a bad omen, and the marriage must be postponed or relinquished altogether. But, as a matter of fact, they neither increase nor decrease, and this is taken to mean that the wedding is one upon which the spirits have pronounced neither a good nor a bad verdict.

This action gives the name to the marriage ceremony. The Dyaks call marriage *Mlah Pinang*—"spitting the betel-nut."

The contents of the little basket, used to discover the will of the higher powers, is chewed by those present just as other *pinang* and *sireh*, and the marriage ceremony is over; the young couple are lawfully man and wife.

For the wedding, the bride decks herself out in all the finery she possesses, or can borrow from her friends. Her wedding-dress consists of a short petticoat of Dyak-woven cloth, which reaches to her knees. Along the bottom edge of this there are sewed several rows of tinsel, and of silver

coins, below which probably hang some rows of hawk-bells, which make a tinkling sound as she walks. Round her waist are several coils of brass or silver chain, and two or three belts made of dollars or other silver coins linked together. From her hips upwards, as far as her armpits, she wears a corset formed by threading split cane through a great number of small brass rings, arranged so closely together as to completely hide the cane. To this corset may be fixed two or three bands of silver coins. Her armlets of brass or silver extend as far up as her elbow. As many rings as she possesses are on her fingers, and she wears necklaces of small beads, worked in very beautiful patterns, and finished off with a tassel of beads, or else a large number of big silver or brass buttons strung together round her neck. Her ears are decorated with filigreed studs of silver gilt, with a setting of scarlet cloth behind the filigree work to show them off.

In her hair is a towering comb of silver filigree work, to which are attached a number of silver spangles, which glitter with every movement of her head. She wears her hair in a knot into which are stuck a number of large brass hair-pins, decorated with beads and little tags of red and yellow and white cloth. She possesses a bright coloured jacket of Dyak-woven cloth; but she does not wear it, it is slung over her right shoulder.

After this detailed description of the bride's dress, it is disappointing to learn that the bridegroom takes no special pains to ornament his person. The men wear a great deal of finery when they attend a feast, or when they go on the war-path, but on the occasion of his wedding, the bridegroom takes no extra trouble over his apparel.

BURIALS

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As soon as a man dies, the professional mourner sits on a swing near the head of the corpse and sings a long dirge, blaming the different parts of the house, beginning with the roof-ridge and proceeding downwards, for not keeping back the soul of the dead man.

Then the corpse is carried out into the public part of the house, and is covered with a Dyak sheet. By his side are put his belongings—his clothes, his implements of work, his shield, his sword, his spear—which are to be buried with him, or placed on his grave.

Early the following morning the body, wrapped in mats, and secured with a light framework of wood, is carried on the shoulders of four men, and, accompanied by their friends, they go to the jungle. When they come to the spot where a tree is to be cut down for the coffin, a halt is made. A fowl is killed, and the blood collected in a cup, and mixed with a little water. Each person present is touched with the blood, to propitiate the gods, and to secure safety from any evil consequences to the persons engaged in the funeral rites. They now set to work to make the coffin. A tree is felled and the required length cut off. This is split in two, and each half is hollowed out. The corpse is then placed inside this rude coffin, the two parts of which are now firmly lashed together with cane.

They then proceed either on foot or by boat to the place of burial. The trees in a Dyak burial-ground are not cut down, so there is nothing to distinguish it from any ordinary jungle. The Dyaks regard a cemetery with superstitious terror as the abode of spirits, and never go to it except to bury their dead, and when they do this, they do not stay longer than they can help, but hurry away lest they should meet some spirit from the other world.

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The graves are rarely more than three feet deep. The Dyaks dare not step into the grave to deepen it, because, according to their superstitious ideas, any one who does such a thing will die a violent death. They use no spade or hoe to turn up the earth, but cut the soil with their choppers, and throw up the mould with their hands. They dig the grave as far as their arms will reach, and no farther.

When the corpse is buried, there are placed either in the grave or on it, for use in the next world, various articles of clothing, personal ornaments, weapons of warfare, implements of farm work, and even instruments of music, according to the sex and natural proclivities of the dead. Some of these belong to the departed; others are given by friends as tokens of affection.

When the grave has been filled with earth, it is fenced round, and food and drink are placed in the enclosure, and at either end something is put to indicate the sex and favourite occupation of the deceased. If the grave be that of a warrior, it is roofed and decorated with streamers, and such of his weapons as are not buried with him are hung about, and the ground around is palisaded and spiked. The grave of the hunter is distinguished by his spear, his blow-pipe and quiver, together with the trophies of the chase—stags' antlers, and boars' tusks. Some articles of feminine attire or work—spindles, petticoats, waist-rings, or water-gourds—indicate the graves of women.

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CHAPTER XIV

A DYAK LEGEND

There are many fairy-tales and legends known to the Dyaks of the present day. As they have no written language, these have been handed down by word of mouth, from generation to generation, from ancient times. These tales and legends may be divided into two classes: 1. Those which are mythical and related as such, which are simply meant to interest and amuse, and in these respects resemble the fairy-tales familiar to us all. 2. And those believed by them to be perfectly true, and to record events which have actually taken place. These form in fact the mythology of the Dyaks. The following legend is related by them as explaining how they came to plant rice, and to observe the omens of birds:

THE STORY OF SIU

Many thousands of years ago, before the paddy plant was known, the Dyaks lived on tapioca, yams, potatoes and such fruit as they could find in the jungle. It was not till Siu taught them to plant paddy^[3] that such a thing as rice was known. The story of how he came to know this article of food, and how he and his son, Seragunting, introduced it among the Dyaks is here set forth.

[74]

Siu was the son of a great Dyak chief. His father died when he was quite a child, and at the time this story begins, he had grown to manhood, and lived with his mother, and was the head of a long Dyak house in which lived some three hundred families. He was strong and active, and handsome in appearance, and there was no one in the country round equal to him either in strength or comeliness.

He proposed to the young men of his house that they should take their blow-pipes and darts and go into the jungle to shoot birds. So one morning they all started early. Each man had with him his bundle of food for the day, and each went a different way, as they wished to see, on returning in the evening, who would be the most successful of them all.

Siu wandered about the whole morning in the jungle, but, strange to say, he did not see any bird, nor did he meet with any animal. Worn out with fatigue, he sat down to rest under a large tree, and, feeling hungry, he ate some of the food he had brought with him. It was now long past midday, and he had not succeeded in killing a single bird! Suddenly he heard, not far off, the sound of birds, and hurrying in that direction, he came to a wild fig-tree covered with ripe fruit, which a very large number of birds were busy eating. Never before had he seen such a sight! On this one tree the whole feathered population of the forest seemed to have assembled together!



KILLING BIRDS WITH A BLOW-PIPE

Siu hid himself under the thick leaves of a shrub growing near, and taking a poisoned dart, he placed it in his blow-pipe and shot it out. He had aimed at one bird and hit it. But that bird was not the only one that fell dead at his feet. To his astonishment, he saw that many of the other birds near it were killed also. Again he shot out a dart, and again the same thing happened. In a very short time, Siu had killed as many birds as he could carry.

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He tried to return the same way he came, but soon found himself in difficulties. He wandered about, and walked several miles, but could not find the jungle path which he had followed early in the day. It was beginning to grow dusk, and Siu was afraid he would have to spend the night in the jungle.

Great was his joy, just as he was giving up all hope, to come to a garden and a path leading from it. Siu followed this path, knowing it would lead him to some house not far off. He soon came to a well, and near at hand he saw the lights of a long Dyak house. He stopped to have a bath, and hid the birds he was carrying, and his blow-pipe and quiver in the brushwood near the well, hoping to take them with him when he started to return the next morning.

He walked up to the house, and when he came to the bottom of the ladder leading up to it he shouted: "Oh, you people in the house, will you allow a stranger to walk up?" A voice answered, "Yes; come up!"

He walked up into the house. To his surprise he saw no one in the long public hall in front of the different rooms. That part of a Dyak house, usually so crowded, was quite empty. All was silent. Even the person who answered him was not there to receive him.

He saw a dim light further on, and walked towards it, wondering what had happened to all the people of the house. Presently he heard a woman's voice in the room say: "Sit down, Siu; I will bring out the *pinang*^[4] and *sireh*^[5] to you." Soon a young and remarkably pretty girl came out of the room with the chewing ingredients, which she placed before him.

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"Here you are at last, Siu," she said; "I expected you would come earlier. How is it you are so late?"

Siu explained that he had stopped at the well to have a bath, as he was hot and tired.

"You must be very hungry," said the girl; "wait a moment while I prepare some food. After you have eaten, we can have our talk together."

When Siu was left to himself, he wondered what it all meant. Here was a long Dyak house built for more than a hundred families to live in, and yet it seemed quite deserted. The only person in it appeared to be the beautiful girl who was cooking his food for him. He was also surprised that she knew his name, and expected him that day.

"Come in, Siu," said the voice from the room; "your food is ready."

Siu was hungry, and went in at once. When they had done eating, she cleared away the plates and tidied the room. Then she spread out a new mat for him, and brought out the *pinang* and *sireh*, and bade him be seated as she wished to have a chat with him.

Siu had many questions to ask, but before he could do so, she said to him, "Tell me of your own people, and what news you bring from your country."

"There is no news to give you," Siu replied. "We have been rather badly off for food, as our potatoes and yams did not turn out so well this year as we hoped."

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"Tell me what made you come in this direction, and how it was you found out this house."

"While I was hunting in the jungle to-day, I lost my way. After wandering about a long time, I found a path which I followed and came to this house. It was kind of you to take me in and give me food. If I had not found this house, I should have had to spend the night in the jungle. To-morrow morning you must show me the way back to my village. My mother is sure to be anxious about me. She is left all alone now that I am away. My father died a long time ago, and I am her only son."

"Do not go away as soon as to-morrow morning. Stay here a few days at any rate."

At first Siu would not consent, but she spoke so nicely to him, that she persuaded him to stay there at least a week. Then he went out to the verandah, and she brought out a mat for him to sleep on, and a sheet to cover himself with. As Siu was very tired, he soon fell sound asleep, and did not wake up till late the following morning.

Now, though Siu knew it not, this was the house of the great Singalang Burong, the ruler of the spirit-world. He was able to change himself and his followers into any form. When going forth on an expedition against the enemy, he would transform himself and his followers into birds, so that they might travel more quickly. Over the high trees of the jungle, over the broad rivers, sometimes even across the sea, Singalang Burong and his flock would fly. There was no trouble about food, for in the forests there were always some wild trees in fruit, and while assuming the form of birds, they lived on the food of birds. In his own house and among his own people, Singalang Burong appeared as a man. He had eight daughters, and the girl who had cooked food for Siu was the youngest of them.

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After Siu had been in the house seven days, he thought he ought to be returning to his own people. By this time he was very much in love with the girl who had been so kind to him, and he wished above all things to marry her, and take her back with him to his own country.

"I have been here a whole week," he said to her, "I want to say something, and I hope you will not be vexed with me."

"Speak on; I promise not to be angry at anything you say."

"I have learnt to love you very much," said Siu, "and I would like to marry you, if you will consent, and take you with me to my own land. Also, I wish you to tell me your name, and why this house is so silent, and where all the people belonging to it are."

"I will consent to marry you, for I also love you. But you must first promise me certain things. In the first place, you must not tell your people of this house, and what you have seen here. Then you must promise faithfully not to hurt a bird or even to hold one in your hands. If ever you break these promises, then we cease to be man and wife."

"Yes," said Siu, "I promise not to speak of what I have seen here until you give me leave to do so. And as you do not wish it, I will never hurt or handle a bird."

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"Now that you have promised what I wish, I will tell you of myself and the people of this house," said the maiden. "I am known to my friends as *Bunsu Burong* (the youngest of the bird family), or *Bunsu Katupong* (the youngest of the *Katupong* family). This house as you noticed seems very empty. The reason is that a month ago many of our people were killed by some of the people in your house, and we are still in mourning for them. As you know when our relatives have lately died, we stay silent in our rooms, and do not come out to receive visitors or entertain them. On the morning of the day on which you arrived, all the men of this house went on the war-path, so as to obtain some human heads, to enable us to put away our mourning. With us as with you, it is necessary that one or more human heads be brought into the house before the inmates can give up sorrowing for their dead relatives and friends. All the people in this house, when at home, are in the form of human beings, but they are able to transform themselves into birds. My father, Singalang Burong, is the head of this house. I am the youngest of eight sisters. We have no brothers alive; our only brother died not long ago, and we are still in mourning for him, and that is the reason why my sisters did not come out to greet you."

Siu heard with surprise all she had to say. He thought to himself that it was lucky he did not bring up to the house the birds which he had killed in the jungle, and that he had hidden them with his blow-pipe and quiver containing poisoned darts in the brushwood near the well. He determined to say nothing about the matter, as probably some of her friends and relations were among the birds that were killed by him.

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So Siu married Bunsu Burong, and continued to live in the house for several weeks.

One day he said to his wife, "I have been here a long time. My people must surely be wondering where I am, and whether I am still alive. My mother too must be very anxious about me. I should like to return to my people, and I want you to accompany me. My mother and my friends are sure to welcome you as my wife."

"Oh, yes, I will gladly accompany you back to your home. But you must remember and say nothing of the things you have seen or heard in this house."

They started early the next day, taking with them enough food for four days, as they expected the journey would last as long as that. Siu's wife seemed to know the way, and after journeying three days, they came to the stream near the house, and they stopped to have a bath. Some of the children of the house saw them there, and ran up to the house and said: "Siu has come back, and with him is a beautiful woman, who seems to be his wife."

Some of the older people checked the children, saying: "It cannot be Siu; he has been dead for a long time. Don't mention his name, for if his mother hears you talk of him, it will make her very unhappy."

But the children persisted in saying that it was indeed Siu that they had seen. Just then Siu and his wife appeared and walked up into the house.

Siu said to his wife: "The door before which I hang up my sword is the door of my room. Walk straight in. You will find my mother there, and she will gladly welcome you as her daughter-in-law."

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When they came into the house, all the inmates rushed out to meet them, and to congratulate Siu on his safe return. They asked him many questions: Where had he been living all this time? How he came to be married? And what was the name of his wife's country? But Siu answered little, as he remembered the promise he had made to his wife, that he would not speak of what he had seen in her house.

When Siu hung up his sword, his wife pushed open the door and walked in. Siu's mother was very pleased to see her son, whom she had mourned as dead, alive and well, and when told of his marriage, she welcomed his wife with joy.

In process of time Siu's wife bore him a son, whom they named Seragunting. He was a fine child, and as befitted the grandson of Singalang Burong, he grew big and strong in a miraculously short time, and when he was three years old, he was taller and stronger than others four times his age.

One day as Seragunting was playing with the other boys, a man brought some birds which he had caught in a trap. As he walked through the house, he passed Siu who was sitting in the open verandah. Siu, forgetting the promise he had made to his wife, asked to see the birds, and he took one in his hands and stroked it. His wife was sitting near, and she saw him hold the bird,

and was very vexed that he had broken his promise to her.

She said to herself: "My husband has broken his word to me. He has done the thing he promised me he would never do. I cannot stay in this house any longer. I must return to the house of my father, Singalang Burong."

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She took the water-vessels in her hands, and went out as if to fetch water. But when she came to the well, she placed the water-gourds on the ground, and disappeared into the jungle.

In the meantime, Seragunting, tired with his play, came back in search of his mother. She was very fond indeed of him, and he expected her to come to him as soon as he called out to her. But he was disappointed. No one answered his call, and when he looked into the room, she was not there. He asked his father where his mother was, and he told him she had gone to the well to fetch water and would soon be back.

But hour after hour passed and she did not return. So Seragunting asked his father to accompany him to the well to look for her. They found the water-vessels there, but saw no signs of her. So they both returned sadly to the house, taking back with them the water-gourds which Siu's wife had left at the well.

Early the next day Seragunting and his father went in search of her. They took with them only a little food, as they expected to find her not far off. But they wandered the whole day, and saw no signs of her.

They spent the night under a large tree in the jungle. Early the next morning they were surprised to find a small bundle of food, wrapped up in leaves, near Seragunting. The food was evidently meant for him alone, as it was not enough for two, but he gave some of it to his father, who ate sparingly of it, so that his son might not be hungry. They wandered on for several days, and every night the same thing occurred—a bundle of food was placed near Seragunting.

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After journeying many days, they came to the sea-shore. Siu suggested to his son that they should return, but Seragunting, who during the journey had grown up into a strong lad with a will of his own, would not consent to do so, as he was determined to find his mother.

After waiting by the shore a few days, they saw a dark cloud come to them over the sea. As it came nearer, it took the form of a gigantic Spider, carrying some food and clothes.

"Do not be afraid," said the Spider, "I have come to help you and your father. I have brought you food and clothing. When you have eaten, and changed your clothes, I will take you to the land on the other side."

They were told to follow the Spider. They did so. Strange to say, the water became as hard as a sand-bank under their feet. For a long time they were out of sight of land, but towards evening they approached the opposite shore. They saw several houses and one larger and more imposing than the others. To this house the Spider directed Seragunting telling him he would find his mother there.

Seragunting's mother was very glad to see her son and embraced him.

"How was it you went away and left us?" he said. "We missed you so much, and have travelled many days and nights in search of you. Now our troubles are over, for I have found you."

"My dear son," she said as she caressed him, "though I left you, I did not forget you. It was I who placed the food by you every night. I left your father because he broke his promise to me. But you are my own son, and I have been wishing to see you ever since I left your house. It was I who sent the Spider to help you and show you your way here."

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Then she spoke to her husband Siu, whom she was glad to meet again. All three then went out into the verandah, which was now full of people.

Seragunting was told by his mother to call the sons-in-law of Singalang Burong his uncles, but they refused to acknowledge him as their nephew. They proposed several ordeals to prove the truth of his words that he was indeed the grandson of Singalang Burong. In all these Seragunting came off victorious, and they were compelled to admit that he was a true grandson of the great Singalang Burong.

But Siu was unhappy in his new home. He could not help thinking of his mother, whom he had left alone, and he was anxious to return to his own people. He begged his wife to accompany him back to his old home, but she refused to do so. It was decided that Siu and his son should stay with Singalang Burong till they had obtained such knowledge as would be useful to them in the future, and that then they were to return to the other world, taking with them the secrets they had learnt.

All the people of the house were now most kind to Siu and his son, and were most anxious to teach them all they could. They were taken on a war expedition against the enemy, so that they might learn the science and art of Dyak warfare. They were taught how to set traps to catch deer and wild pig. They were shown the different methods of catching fish, and learnt to make the different kinds of fish-trap used by Dyaks of the present day, and they remained in Singalang Burong's house that whole year for the purpose of acquiring a complete and practical knowledge of the different stages of paddy growing.

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When the year was ended, Seragunting's mother took him and Siu to see her father. Singalang Burong was seated in his chair of state, and received them most kindly. He explained to Siu who he was, and the worship due to him, and they learnt also about the observance of omens, both good and bad.

"I am the ruler of the spirit-world," said Singalang Burong, "and have power to make men successful in all they undertake. At all times if you wish for my help, you must call upon me and make offerings to me.

"You have learnt here how to plant paddy. I will give you some paddy to take away with you, and when you get back to your own country, you can teach men how to cultivate it. You will find rice a much more strengthening article of food than the yams and potatoes you used to live upon, and you will become a strong and hardy race.

"And to help you in your daily work, my sons-in-law will always tell you whether what you do is right or wrong. In every work that you undertake, you must pay heed to the voices of the sacred birds—*Katupong*, *Beragai*, *Bejampong*, *Papau*, *Nendak*, *Kutok* and *Embuas*. These birds, named after my sons-in-law, represent them, and are the means by which I make known my wishes to mankind. When you hear them, remember it is myself speaking to you, through my sons-in-law, for encouragement or for warning. I am willing to help you, but I expect due respect to be paid to me, and will not allow my commands to be disobeyed."

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Siu and Seragunting bade their friends farewell, and started to return. As soon as they had descended the ladder of the house of Singalang Burong, they were swiftly transported through the air by some mysterious power, and in a moment they found themselves at their own house.

Their friends crowded round them, glad to see them back safe and well. The neighbours were told of their return, and a great meeting was held that evening. All gathered round the two adventurers, who told them of their strange experiences in the far country of the spirit birds. The new seed, paddy, was produced, and the good qualities of rice as an article of food explained. The different names of the sacred birds were told to the assembled people, and all were warned to pay due respect to their cries.

And so, according to the ancient legend, ended the old primitive life of the Dyak, when he lived upon such poor food as the fruits of the jungle, and any yams or potatoes he happened to plant near the house; the old blind existence in which there was nothing to guide him; and then began for him his new life, in which he advanced forward a step, and learnt to have regularly, year by year, his seed-time and harvest, and to know there were unseen powers ruling the universe, whose will might be learnt by man, and obedience to whom would bring success and happiness.

Footnotes:

[3] Paddy—rice in the husk.

[4] *Pinang*—betel-nut.

[5] *Sireh*—a kind of pepper-leaf which the Dyaks are fond of eating with betel-nut.

CHAPTER XV

[87]

DYAK BELIEFS AND SUPERSTITIONS

The Dyaks do not worship idols, but they believe in certain gods and spirits, who are supposed to rule over different departments of life, and to these deities they make offerings and sing incantations at certain times.

The following are the more important gods among the Dyaks.

Singalang Burong takes the highest position in honour and dignity, and is the ruler of the spirit-world. It is doubtful what the word *Singalang* means, but *Burong* means "bird," and probably *Singalang Burong* means "Bird Chief." The Dyaks are great observers of omens (see [Chapter XII.](#)), and among their omens the cries of certain birds are most important.

Singalang Burong is also the god of war, and the guardian spirit of brave men. He delights in fighting, and head-taking is his glory. When Dyaks have obtained a human head, they make a great feast to the honour of this god and invoke his presence. He is the only god ever represented by the Dyaks in a material form—a carved, highly-coloured bird of grotesque shape. This figure at the *Head Feast* is erected on the top of a pole, thirty feet or more in height, with its beak pointing in the direction of the enemy's country, so that he may "peck at the eyes of the enemy."

Next in importance to Singalang Burong is Pulang Gana, who is the god of the earth. He is an important power according to Dyak ideas, and to him offerings are made and incantations sung at all feasts connected with *Farming*. They are entirely dependent upon his goodwill for a good harvest.

Salampondai is the maker of men. He hammers them into shape out of clay, and forms the bodies of children to be born into the world. There is an insect which makes at night the curious noise—*kink-a-clink, kink-a-clink*. When the Dyaks hear this, they say it is Salampondai at his work. When each child is formed, it is brought to the gods who ask, "What would you like to handle or use?" If it answer, "A sword," the gods pronounce it a male; but if it answer, "Cotton and the spinning-wheel," it is pronounced a female. Thus they are born as boys or girls according to their own wishes.



A DYAK YOUTH

The Dyak believes in the existence of spirits, and he thinks that innumerable spirits inhabit the forests, the rivers, the earth, and the air. Any unusual noise or motion in the jungle, anything which suggests to the mind some invisible operation, is at once attributed by the Dyak to the presence of some spirit, unseen by human eyes, but full of mighty power. Though generally invisible, these spirits sometimes show themselves. The form they assume then is not anything very supernatural, but either a commonplace human form or else some animal—a bird, or a monkey—such as is often seen in the forests. There is, however, the chief of evil spirits, Girgasi by name, who, when seen, takes the form of a giant about three times the size of a man, is covered with rough, shaggy hair, and has eyes as big as saucers, and huge glittering teeth.

There are innumerable stories told by Dyaks of their meeting with spirits in the jungle, and sometimes speaking to them. Such stories generally relate how the man who sees the spirit rushes to catch him by the leg—he cannot reach higher—in order to get some charm from him, but he is generally foiled in his attempt, as the spirit suddenly vanishes. But some men, it is believed, do obtain gifts from the spirits. If a Dyak gets a good harvest, it is attributed to some magic charm he has received from some kindly spirit. Also, if he be successful on the war-path, he is credited with the succour of some mysterious being from the spirit-world.

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The spirits, according to the Dyaks, rove about the jungle and hunt for wild beasts, as the Dyaks do themselves. Girgasi, already mentioned, is specially addicted to the chase, and the Dyaks say he is often to be met hunting in the forest. There are certain animals who roam about in packs in the jungle. These are supposed to be the dogs which accompany the spirits when they are out hunting, and they attack those whom the spirits wish to kill. I have never seen one of these animals, but to judge from the description of them, they seem to be a kind of small jackal. They will follow and bark at men, and from their supposed connection with the spirits, are greatly feared by the Dyaks, who generally run away from them as fast as they can.

The spirits are said to build their invisible habitations in trees, and many trees are considered

sacred, as being the abode of one or more spirits, and to cut one of these trees down would be to provoke the spirits' anger. The tops of hills are supposed to be the favourite haunts of spirits. When Dyaks fell the jungle of the larger hills, they always leave a clump of trees at the summit as a refuge for the spirits. To leave them quite homeless would be to court certain disaster from them.

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From what has been said it will be seen that the spirits are much the same as their gods, and have power either to bestow favours, or cause sickness and death. They rule the conduct of the Dyak, and therefore receive the same religious homage as their gods do.

The Dyak worships his gods. He has good spirits to help him, and evil spirits to harm him. He makes sacrifices to the gods and spirits, and invokes their help in long incantations. He has omens and divination and dreams to encourage or warn him. He believes he has a soul which will live in another world, a future life differing little from his existence in the flesh.

CHAPTER XVI

CONCLUSION

I have tried to tell you in the preceding chapters what the Dyaks of Borneo are like, how they live, and what their religious ideas are. It is sad to think of them living in constant fear of evil spirits, and believing in such things as the omens of birds. All Christians must wish these people to be taught about God. Christ came to earth to teach us the Truths of the Gospel, and before He returned to Heaven, He told His disciples, and, through His disciples, all Christians: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." In obedience to this command, missionaries have gone out to Borneo, and many people in England, who are not able to go out to Borneo themselves, help in the good work by subscribing money to the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," which sends missionaries to Borneo. Many of these missionaries live up-country at some mission station far from the town. Here there is a mission house where the missionary lives, a church where regular services are held, and a school house where boys live and are taught.

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As many of the long Dyak village houses are built at great distances from each other, the missionary, who wishes to do good work among the Dyaks, must not always live at his mission house, but must travel from house to house. Only by visiting distant villages, and living with the Dyaks as their guest, can the missionary learn to understand the people.

Let me tell you a missionary story. A missionary in Borneo visited a Dyak village house to teach the people there about God and our Lord Jesus Christ. A crowd of men, women and children listened to him, and many a long evening did the missionary spend, sitting on a mat in the long public verandah of the Dyak house, and teaching those poor ignorant people. A Dyak boy present asked the missionary if he might go back with him to his school. The parents gave their consent, and the little boy accompanied the missionary on his return to his mission house, and attended the mission school. There, with other children, the boy was taught the Truths of the Christian Religion. After being in school for a few years, this boy returned to his Dyak home.

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Years passed. The boy did not forget what he had been taught at school. He saw the Dyaks among whom he lived, ruled by a fear of evil spirits, and carrying out many superstitious ceremonies, which he knew must be displeasing to God. As he grew older, he felt sad to think of the ignorance of his relatives and friends, and of the Dyaks in other villages. So he went back to the missionary and asked that he should be taught more, so that, later on, he might teach his own people, and bring some of them into God's Kingdom.

This is a true story of what has happened more than once in Borneo. A boy learns about God in some up-country mission school, and on his return to his Dyak home, is sorry to see the ignorance of his people, and asks to be taught more, so that he may become a Catechist and carry God's Truth to them.

When the seed is sown, it lies in the ground, and God sends the sunshine and the rain to make it grow. So the Good Seed of the Word of God is sown in the hearts of the Dyaks in Borneo, and we pray the Great Giver of the Water of Life to refresh it with His Life-giving Holy Spirit. Some seeds fall on the wayside, and the birds of the air devour them; some fall on a rock, and are scorched by the heat of the sun; some fall among thorns, and are choked; but, thank God, some fall on good ground and bring forth good fruit.

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Transcriber's Notes:

Pg. 29, "istaken" changed to "is taken". (that falls through is taken)

Pg. 37, "Afer" changed to "After". (After a meal of that kind)

Pg. 42, "silmultaneously" changed to "simultaneously". (plunge their heads simultaneously)

Pg. 58, "we" changed to "me". (Let me have some at once)

Pg. 60, added closing quote. (you bandage them also.)

Pg. 64, X IV" changed to "XIV". (given in Chap. XIV.)

Advertisement, book title "THE TRANSFORMATION OF HAWAII", "btween" changed to "between". (but the contrast between the Hawaii)

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