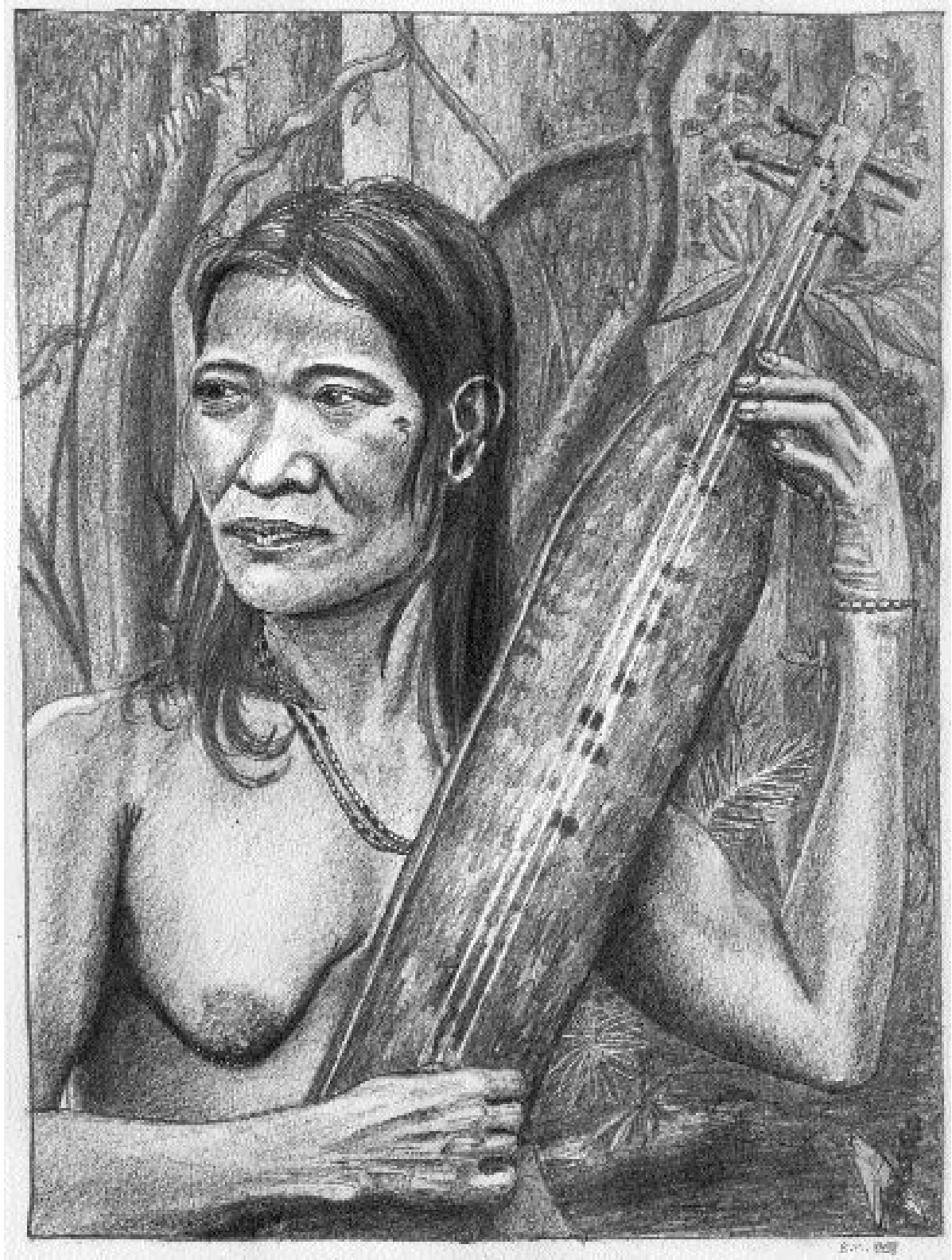


Tong Tana

December 1998

Journal of the Bruno-Manser-Fonds on the subjects of rainforests,
indigenous rights and timber trade



BMF, Heuberg 25, CH-4051 Basel, Switzerland

Editorial

The crisis as a chance

For years we have been committed to protecting the last remaining virgin forests and their inhabitants. We keep on struggling, the world moves on, but we are hardly budging: to this day the Penan in Sarawak have not been guaranteed a single square kilometer of their native rainforest territory as their own – and in 1997 alone 112,000 km² (1/3 of it rainforest) have been destroyed worldwide once more. Shall we, the BMF, dissolve our mini-office, throw away our commitment for lack of finances and efficiency? Where well-to-do gentlemen, sipping champagne at international conferences, are not capable of making the necessary decisions, violated nature herself has lent a hand: thanks to the catastrophic floods of 1989 the Thai government has prohibited commercial logging throughout the country. The flooding Yangtze River in China had to cost the lives of 3000 people, to destroy 5 million dwellings, and suddenly it is possible: China has put its last remaining virgin forests under protection from one day to the next. The Southeast Asian currencies' crash has slowed down the plundering of the forests due to the decreasing demand for wood, but 30,000 km² of forest succumbed to man-made fires. Pictures (see BMF on internet: bmf.ch) prove that development (e.g. roads) and the degradation of formerly intact forests by the timber industry are mainly responsible for the forest fires. How many people and animals have yet to die in forest fires and floods in Asia, Africa and South America before all logging licenses for virgin forests are withdrawn? At the end of the last century Switzerland went through a similar experience. As tropical countries have much more to lose in the form of cultures and different ways of life, the BMF wishes those in power much courage and luck for quick and heartfelt action, so that Sarawak may succeed better than Switzerland in preserving its legacy for future generations! We from the BMF have committed ourselves to giving the Penan and their rainforest a voice as long as our breath and finances hold out. The latter will not go far anymore without your help, our deficit being SF 40,000 for the past two years. We would like to thank everyone here for their contribution. Support our commitment with deeds and money. Work towards having your community refrain from using wood from virgin forests for

public construction. Buy mainly local products – even Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir issued this order. Do not buy foreign FSC products as long as logging in virgin forests is not yet clearly excluded. Work towards having the following regulations issued by the World Bank be realized on a national level in your country:

- Road construction and commercial logging in virgin forest is under no circumstances supported.
- The sustainable use of timber from natural secondary forests is to be encouraged.

We wish the Penan plenty of food and forests, we wish you a happy Christmas, and we wish Anwar Ibrahim, the imprisoned, mistreated ex-finance minister a correct and fair trial.

The BMF-team



Enough food is all the Penan need for a happy party – will this boy end up begging in the city?

Photo: BMF, 1998

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News from Sarawak

Travel report by Bruno Manser

The plan of bringing the Chief Minister of Sarawak and his wife the white lamb "Gumperli" as a symbol of peace for the festivities of the pilgrims to Mecca was thwarted. The 62nd birthday of the Chief Minister Taib Mahmud on May 21 presented itself as the second occasion for a positive dialogue. However, the airlines flying into the country had received the order "Top urgent: Bruno Manser not allowed to enter Kuching," and had to refuse my connecting flight from Singapore to Sarawak. A visit to Western Malaysia was also refused by the authorities. Haji Salim Bin Hashim, the Malaysian High Commissioner in Singapore, a friendly man, wanted to negotiate between the Chief Minister and me. What should become of the US\$ 10,000 which Erika and Jürg Binz (Ebipharm, Kirchliindach) had so generously donated as starting capital for a mobile dental clinic for the Penan and the Kelabit? As there was no answer for weeks, the money was deposited in a bank in Singapore and the Chief Minister was given a complete dossier of the "Secours dentaire international". The total costs of the project, which was welcomed by the Penan, would amount to approx. CHF 200,000 for 2 years. With the Chief Minister's blessing it could be realized. We are anxiously waiting for a reply! I also wanted to bring concrete help for Maleng, my best Penan friend: two years ago he had lost a leg in the jungle when felling a Nyiwung palm. James Ritchie, press officer of the Chief Minister, promised to take care of obtaining an artificial limb. We have just received the news that Dr. Judson Sakai of Ba Kelalan has procured the prosthesis. We thank all who have shown goodwill for their contributions.



Maleng
Photo BMF
1997

Penan reject German forestry project

The German organization for technical co-operation (Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit, GTZ) has signed a contract with Samling Co. and the Forestry Department of Sarawak for the sustainable use of a 1,680 km² lumbering concession (FOMISS project). It mainly consists of untouched virgin forest in native Penan territory which now, with help from the Germans, shall be exploited with bulldozers and chain saws within 10 years. Under the threat that the jungle has to give up its wood one way or another, the Penan are forced to agree with the project. Although a moratorium of three years for completing an inventory has been agreed upon, Samling has continued logging in several places. A concerned Penan stated, "We have been trying to save our jungle for so many years, how many of us have been arrested!¹ Some have even paid with their lives!² Our forest provides us with everything which we need for living. We are used to living with our own problems at the foot of the mountain – if only you would not disturb us! Don't force us to have to beg for food from you down in the valley! We reject the German project as it would restrict our living space." The responsible German federal ministry (BMZ) requires that tropical forestry projects be carried out in appropriate areas. Primary forests should only be included for the purpose of protecting them or for special investigations.³ In total contradiction to this, the GTZ encourages the development of virgin forest. Should German taxpayers' money be misused for development which takes from the Penan exactly what they would never give up: the trees in their forest!? Write your opinion to the minister,

Mrs Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, BMZ,
Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 40, 53113 Bonn,
Germany, Fax ++49(228)535 33 25.

Request the German government not to support, under any circumstances, roadbuilding and/or commercial logging in virgin forests. Request that German development aid projects should only encourage sustainable forestry practices in secondary forests and degraded areas – in clear agreement with the local population.

¹ Over 700 since 1987

² A 4-year-old child died during an attack with tear gas; there were four unsolved murders; a 12-year-old Penan girl was raped by members of the Police Field Force

³ BMZ, Entwicklungspolitik, Sektorkonzept Tropenwald, Nr. 014, 1992

The GTZ could very well offer aid in Sarawak. The BMF has suggested during two personal meetings and also in written form that the GTZ use their unquestioned technical knowledge on "reduced-impact logging" in secondary forests and to respect the traditional landrights of the indigenous people. Samling Co. is Sarawak's largest lumbering company and has received about 15,000 km² of forest as a gift. Most of the forests bordering onto the FOMISS area have already been selectively logged downvalley and are almost asking for sustainable management. FOMISS should realize its long-term project there. The GTZ has yet to return a constructive answer to this suggestion.



"Timber mining", Ravenscourt Co. (license 0294) is building a new road at the Tabun river in order to exploit the remaining primary forest. The erosion damage is polluting the waters, reducing fish stock, making it impossible for the Penan to produce their staple food, sago, which requires clean water. In the background the Batu Lawi.

Three villains

Three lumbering companies are destroying the land where the Penan live. Their names are Ravenscourt, Lee Ling Timber (formerly LTL) and WTK Co., the oldest logging company in Sarawak, with headquarters in Miri. It is allowed to plunder 4,000 km² of forest which it had received as a gift, whereas the native population not only remains empty-handed, but is also being intimidated: during a meeting with the nomads of the Magoh area who threatenend to blockade an approach road, the Chinese WTK forestry boss Pusui shot a salvo of 20 shots from two meters'

distance directly over the heads of Lakei Suti and his friends. Lee Ling Timber paid various settled Penan headmen a regular monthly income as well as MY 25,000 per year to distribute. In return they promised not to undertake anything against the lumbering activities. Many Penan have refused to accept their share, but are too tired after the many arrests to continue carrying on non-violent resistance. The company Ravenscourt is ravaging in the region of Ulu Limbang, which had already been proposed as a national park in 1984 due to its high species diversity. To date, this nature preserve has not yet been established (Pulong Tau National Park, 1,640 km²). Bulldozers are already churning up the ground at the foot of Gunung Murud, the highest mountain in Sarawak (2,560 m) and at the foot of Batu Lawi, the most beautiful legendary jagged cliff rising out of the land – both are home to the Penan nomads as well as the clouded leopard. The companies pollute the "Baa Pina Uwut", the "river of the many sago palms", one of the last remaining clear streams in the actual heart of Penan country. The immediate future will show whether these companies will change from villains into rescuers – by stopping the exploitation of the virgin forest within their concession. Will Ravenscourt dare to take the first step?



The headman of the Ulu Limbang nomads declares, "Until this day we have neither been respected by the timber companies nor by the government. We expect our Chief Minister Taib Mahmud to act like a true father towards us. We expect him to withdraw the logging concessions and to protect our remaining virgin forests so that we can continue to live as Penan in the forest."

Photos: BMF, 1998

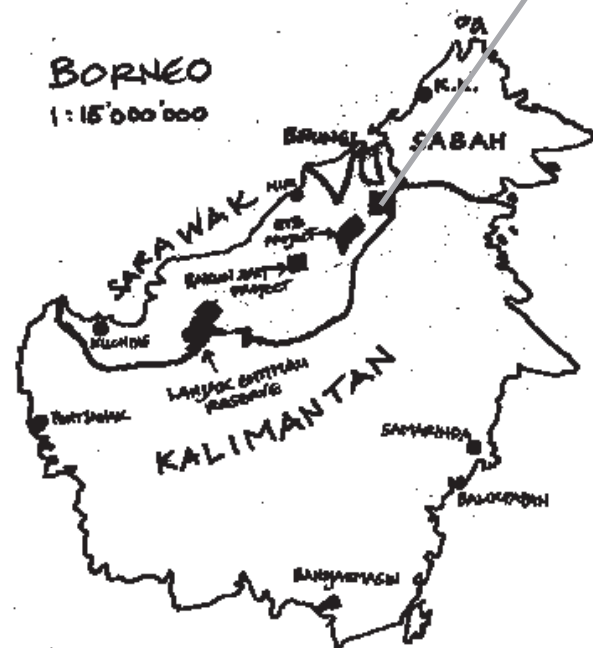
Settlement project for nomadic Penan has failed

Sarawak's Minister for the Environment and "timber king" Datuk James Wong had invited the nomadic Penan to settle in their homelands, which became his 3,100 km² large concession area, given to him by the Chief Minister. For this purpose he had a long-house built for them in Long Napir in the 1980's. Today the building is empty but for a few families – for you cannot eat a house: the immediate vicinity has been logged in the meantime, and the Penan cannot find enough food there anymore. Many families have therefore moved upstream step by step into untouched regions, building new settlements near the river where they can find a livelihood as farmers and hunters. In the meantime Datuk James Wong has sold his company LTL to the enterprise Lee Ling Timber Co. The failure of his policy has caused the pressure on the remaining intact rainforests – which have become so decimated that they cannot support too many returnees apart from the nomads – to increase.

Bakun Dam

According to reports in the "Borneo Post" (27 and 29/8/98) the construction of the Bakun Dam should be completed by 2006. The former prestige project was nevertheless redimensioned to half the originally planned capacity. The electricity is intended for Sarawak alone, as the underwater cable to Western Malaysia turned out to be too expensive. The cheap electricity – which has no use at present – should draw investors, especially in the wood-processing sectors such as the paper industry. High hopes have also been set in the palmoil and the aluminum industries. The resettlement of the 10,000 people is proceeding slowly but according to plan. The economic crisis is a hard blow, however, for the local population: now, when they have to depend on their gardens and plots of land more than ever, they are losing them. Many have fallen into debt in order to participate in the building of the dam in some form. The economic stagnation has ruined them. The admonishments of the responsables, still heard this summer, warning the afflicted to use the compensation money wisely, to invest it collectively in finance institutes and share funds sound strange in the face of harsh economic reality: the man in the street is not allowed to gamble, he has to help pay the gambling debts of the powerful.

- Estimated area of intact virgin-forest in the living space of the nomads, 1998.
- Penan movements.
- ➔ Logging companies.



Part Ulu Tutoh/Ulu Limbang





Chief Minister Taib Mahmud

Chief Minister Taib Mahmud and the Orangutans

90% of the Lanjak Entimau nature preserve in Western Sarawak consists of dipterocarp primary forest and has been put under protection especially as a habitat for approx. 1000 orangutans living in the wild. On the occasion of the "Great Apes of the World" conference, attended by 150 scientists from around the world in July 1998 in Kuching, Sarawak, the Chief Minister Taib Mahmud declared that a "peat swamp forest" would be set aside as an orangutan nature preserve. This would be a contribution to the scientists' efforts in stopping the orangutans



Orang Utan Baby «Happy»

from becoming extinct. Dr. Gary Shapiro, head of the International Orangutan Foundation and organizer of the conference was extremely pleased by this surprising offer. The Chief Minister had, however, not made any specifications as to when, where and how large the preserve would be. The BMF looks forward to the efficient realization of the announced preserve, congratulates the government and hopes that, after the orangutans, the Penans' land claims will now be heard by the Chief Minister.

Orangutans threatened

The number of orangutans living in the wild in Borneo and Sumatra has decreased by 50% during the past 10 years to an estimated 20,000. The reason is the destruction of their habitat by commercial logging, clearcutting and man-made fires for clearing land for oil palm plantations and huge development projects. The environmental investigation association (eia), London/Washington, scolds the corrupt regime of Suharto in its report "The Politics of Extinction" because it has permitted the timber and plantation industries almost unlimited access to the remaining intact forested areas. The driving force behind the environmental catastrophe, however, originates from our industrialized countries, as the following examples show:

- The American company Goldman & Schuster financed Indonesia's largest timber company, Barito Pacific with USD 500 million. The company is logging an area of 50,000 km² (Switzerland = 41,300 km²).
- Japan's Marubeni Corporation, the largest buyer of wood from Sarawak on a global scale, with a share in the Reebok shoes and Blizzard ski markets, is participating in the financing of huge cellulose and paper factories in Indonesia together with the Mitsubishi bank, Finland's Enso enterprise, Sweden's Cellmark, Germany's Export Kredit and many others.
- Germany, being the main European importer of palmoil (1997: 288,000 tons/ EU total: 878,000 t), is mainly responsible for the fires set by palmoil companies for gaining land. The worldwide demand in palmoil has increased by 32% in the past 5 years!

European, Japanese and American companies, banks and development aid organizations are financing industrial projects in rainforest regions; they are creating the rising demand for cheap tropical wood, cheap palmoil, cheap cellulose and cheap paper, making huge profits – as long as we buy their products.

The eia, which has presented a scheme for protecting the orangutans, rightly demands that every investment and financial aid concerning projects in Indonesia should be made dependent on adhering to strict environmental, social and economic conditions (eia, 69 Old Street, London EC1V 9HX, UK).

Sarawak: landrights of the indigenous peoples threatened

The government of Sarawak intends to change the status of 2,984 km² of land in the Baram area. The land will obtain the status of "protected forest". This mainly concerns Penan communities, but Kenyah, Kayan and Kelabit also live in the proposed area. The organization BRIMAS in Sarawak is very concerned about the change in status as the indigenous people thus lose the rights to their land, guaranteed by law. Furthermore, BRIMAS criticizes the fact that the government's explanations were not clear to the people involved and that precise details on the expanse and the borders of the area are missing. The status "protected forest" also contradicts reality, logging being carried out throughout the entire proposed area. The area also extends into the region that FOMISS (see article on GTZ) plans to exploit with its methods of "reduced impact". We can expect that after the change in status the decades-long protests against the doings of the lumbering companies will be combatted heavily. BRIMAS adds that the status of "protected forest" has already often been recalled by the government, especially in the Baram area, but also in the rest of Sarawak. The areas were then usually handed over to the plantation companies.

Commentary of the BMF: The status of "protected forest" has until now always meant "protected for lumbering". In the absence of a legal paper the indigenous people could not present any facts to support their land claims. Their claims are clearly legitimate, historically seen. Since the beginning of the 1980's the native people of the Baram and Limbang regions have submitted over 50 petitions for the acknowledgement of their traditional landrights according to regulations – to date not a single one of these petitions has been accepted!

Positive signals from the World Bank?

The president of the World Bank, James Wolfensohn, met in mid July with the general managers of Samling and WTK as well as the managers of the Sarawak Timber Association and the Malaysian Timber Board for an exchange of ideas. They spoke about the business practices of international timber companies in various countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Furthermore, questions of protecting biodiversity were discussed. The

World Bank emphasized its interest in supporting Sarawak within the frame of the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

An ITTO project in Penan country?

The Sarawak Timber Association is preparing a project to be financed by the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO). The project area includes the Magoh and Pulong Tau regions in the northeast of Sarawak, the heartland of the Penan. The aims of this project comprise sustainable use of the forest and the preservation of biodiversity in primary forests. The ITTO is already in charge of a big project in Lanjak Entimau in the western region bordering Indonesia.

Malaysian logging companies go international

As a result of the dwindling timber resources within Malaysia, 30 Malaysian logging companies are or have been participating in deals to get access to at least 222,000 km² of virgin forest in 23 countries all around the world. This means they are aiming to buy the right to log a surface equivalent to Great Britain (without Northern Ireland). Malaysian presence already controls 50% or more of the total concession areas in French Guyana, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Malaysian logging companies are present in Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, West Papua; in the Cameroons, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Guinea, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi and Zimbabwe; in Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, and Surinam; in Czechia, oriental Russia and in New Zealand (plantation).

The report "High stakes, the need to control transnational logging companies", 1998, 58 pages, by Forest Monitor Ltd. and the World Rainforest Movement, brings some transparency into transnational timber politics. It shows how host countries make little profit by offering their forests for exploitation. In many cases they are paid taxes amounting to less than 1% of the value of the timber exploited and exported by foreign companies. On the other side, the local populations whose economies and cultures depend fully on intact forests irrevocably lose their livelihoods. The report can be ordered from the Forest Monitor Ltd.,
114 Broad Street, Ely,
CB7 4BE, London UK,
email: fmonitor@gn.apc.org

OWNERSHIP AND SHARING AMONG THE PENAN

A CHILD OF THE AFFLUENT SOCIETY, TRYING TO FIND MY WAY BACK TO THE ROOTS IN THE JUNGLE OF BORNEO, I HAD A LITTLE BOTTLE OF SHARPOO IN MY BAG. I PROTECTED IT, SECRETLY, LIKE A SMALL TREASURE; I WANTED TO ALLOW MYSELF THE LUXURY OF SHAMPOONS ONCE A WEEK AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. ONE DAY I OVERHEARD MY BOY AND OFFERED THE PENAN, WHO SHARED ALL THEY POSSESSED WITH ME, TO HAVE SOME OF MY BELOVED SHARPOO. AS I FORGOT, THE LITTLE BOTTLE WAS EMPTY ON THE SPOT... BUT WHEN I SAW THE SMILING FACES OF THE CHILDREN AND FORTHY MEN, BEARING JOY WITHOUT ANY RETICENCE CALLED OFF ME. AFTERWARDS I FELT ASHAMED OF MYSELF: I, AN EDUCATED ADULT, HAD BEHAVED LIKE A CHILD THAT WOULD RATHER EAT A CHOCOLATE BAR SECRETLY THAN TO SHARE IT WITH MY COMPANIONS. FROM "PRIMITIVE" PEOPLES I COULD LEARN NOW WHAT SOCIAL BEHAVIOR WAS. LATER THE PENAN SHOWED ME THEIR JUNGLE SNACKFOODS: PLANTS CONTAINING OILS, SUCH AS THE "KEMERIT" WANA AND THE "PEYANG BEGUM", WHICH FORM IN WATER WHEN BOTTEN.

SHARING (TUHAT) IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE IN THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE PENAN: IF ONE FAMILY IS PROCEEDING'S SAGO, EVERY HOUSEHOLD RECEIVES A PIECE WARE GROUND FOR COOKING A MEAL. IN THE SAME WAY THOSE BACK IN THE SETTLEMENT CAN ENJOY THE FRUITS BROUGHT HOME. AFTER EVERY HUNT THE MEAT IS SPILT EQUALLY BETWEEN ALL FAMILIES WITHOUT THE SUCCESSFUL HUNTER CLAIMING MORE FOR HIMSELF THAN WHAT HE GIVES OTHERS. IN THIS WAY THE STRONGER BRING FOOD TO THE WEAKER AND EVERYONE CHANGES ROLES OF BEING GIVER AND RECEIVER SEVERAL TIMES IN HIS LIFE.

MESSAGE ON THE BATH:

"SEE THE BEAUTIFUL SAGO - BUT OVER THERE, FRIEND! IF YOU CUT IT, YOU WILL HAVE A RICH HARVEST!"

SMALL BRANCH OF A BRANCH:

SYMBOL FOR THE SAGO PROCESSING TOOL (DUM)

TWO SMALL PIECES OF WOOD OF SAME LENGTH:

OTHER SYMBOLS

(KUA KUHIN)

FOR SIX YEARS I HAD THE PRIVILEGE TO EXPERIENCE THAT THIS IS NO FAIR:

THE PENAN EVER SHARE WHEN EACH PORTION IS SMALLER THAN THE NAIL OF THE LITTLE FINGER!

THE FOLLOWING STORY SHOWS THAT SHARING IS NOT HEREDITARY, IT IS LEARNED CULTURE:

A BOY WAS ONCE SO HUNGRY THAT HE ATE A ROASTED SQUIRREL - AS SMALL AS A MOUSE - ALONE ON THE WAY INSTEAD OF SHARING IT WITH THE NEIGHBOUR'S CHILDREN. TO TEACH HIM A LESSON HE WAS GIVEN THE NAME OF THE SQUIRREL: "TELLE"!

POSSESSIONS ARE ONLY MEANINGFUL WHEN THEY MAKE DAILY LIFE EASIER. ALTHOUGH THE HUNTER MAY SAY "KAWUPUT KE" "IT IS MINE", TO INDICATE THAT THE WEAPON BELONGS TO HIM, THE PEKIN LANGUAGE KNOWS NO SEPARATE WORD FOR "POSSESSION". MENA EVEN LEFT SOME MONEY BEHIND WHEN HIS FATHER DIED: WHY SHOULD HE TAKE IT ALONG WHEN HE CAN'T, AS PLANNED, SHARE IT WITH HIS FATHER ANYMORE?



RESPECT FOR THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES IS PREREQUISITE FOR A PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE BETWEEN DIFFERENT PEOPLES AND TRIBES. WHOEVER IS NATIVE TO A REGION HAS THE PRIVILEGE OF USING ITS RESOURCES FIRST BEFORE ANY OTHERS, FOREIGNERS ARRIVING LATER AND NEIGHBORS. IN THIS WAY EVERY PEKIN TRIBE LIVES IN A CLEARLY DEFINED AREA AND RESPECTS THE BOUNDARIES. IN THE MAIN FRUIT SEASONS, WHEN THERE IS ABUNDANCE OF FOOD, A NEIGHBORING TRIBE CAN BE INVITED FOR A FRUIT FEAST. IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THE STOCK OF SAO BATHS, VISITORS WILL RESPECT THE HOSPITALITY AND DEPART IN DUE TIME.

WHOEVER DISCOVERS A RESOURCE FIRST CAN STATE HIS CLAIM

THIS RULE COUNTS WITHIN THE TRIBE. LIKE A CRYSTAL SEARCHER IN THE SWISS ALPS, WHO LEAVES HIS CROWBAR BEHIND TO MARK HIS CLAIM, THE PEKIN LEAVES SYMBOLS BEHIND. - A HUNTER MAY CHANCE UPON A LOVELY FAVORITE SAO BATH (LUNNET OTONG) SAO FROM HE WOULD LIKE TO CUT AND PROCESS SOON. OR A

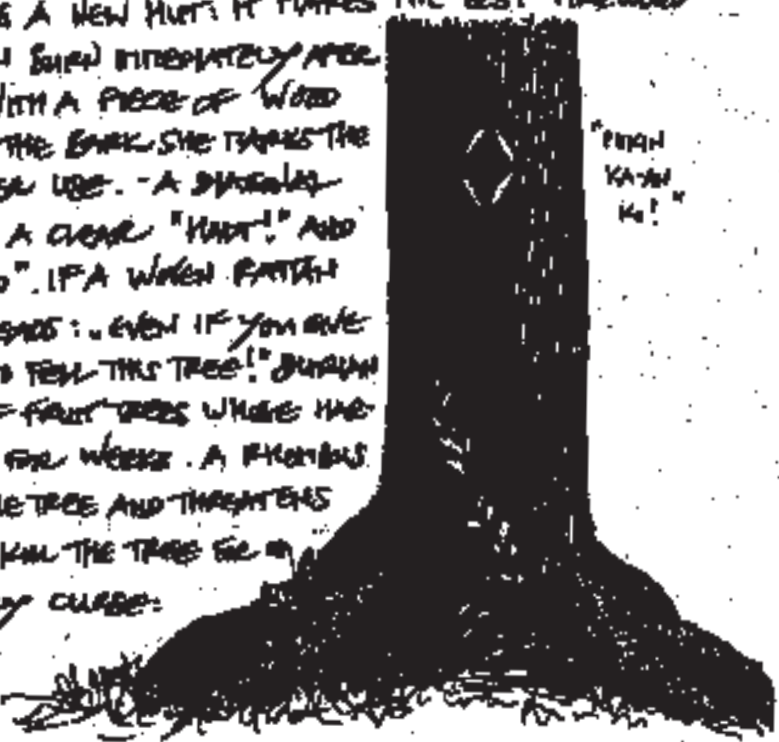
THE TOP OF THE BUNZUM IS BUMPY
POSSION OF SAO!
I HAVE RESERVED THIS BATH FOR ME!
SOME OF THE STOPS AT THE TOP OF THE SAO FROM BATHING - HOW DO I LOVE THIS BATH!

PEKIN WOMEN DISCOVERS A SAT TREE (KAYU KENT) WHICH WILL EVEN SHED IMMEDIATELY AFTER BEING CUT. WITH A PIECE OF WOOD PINNED INTO THE BARK SHE TAKES THE TREE FOR HER USE. - A DIAMONDED CROSS MEANS A CLEAR "HAT!" AND "USE PROHIBITED". IF A WOMEN PARTIAL



RING HANDS FROM IT THE MESSAGE READS: "EVEN IF YOU GIVE ME A GOAT I WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO FELL THIS TREE!" BUNZUM AND NAKAN BELONGS TO THE NORTH OF FRUIT TREES WHERE HARVEST SECURITY CAN MAINTAIN A FAMILY FOR WEEKS. A PROMISING CUT INTO THE STEM SHOULD PROTECT THE TREE AND THREATENS EVERY POSSIBLE SINNER WHO WOULD KILL THE TREE FOR HIS BATH OR WOOD WITH THE ANGRY CURSE:

"PEKIN KAYU KENT!"



News around the wood

Well done!

In Switzerland a total of 218 communities with a total of about 2,300,000 inhabitants (approx. 30% of the Swiss population) have pledged to refrain from using wood from primary forests for public construction (as of Nov. 98). The joining cantons are Appenzell AR, Baselland, Basel-Stadt, Solothurn and Schwyz.

Shame!

The Swiss "eco"-company Precious Woods admits to "silly error"

The organisation Pro Regenwald, based in Munich, found out that Precious Woods (PW) delivered non-FSC-certified acarihuara wood to the Baltic seaside city of Rostock, a breach of contract. The share of non-certified wood comprised 40%! Daniel Heuer, secretary of PW swore, "There was absolutely no intention to cheat – we just happened to make a silly error." The damage to the image of PW in Germany is considerable, however. The head of the state's Department of the Environment and Nature (StAUN) in Rostock, Hans Joachim Meyer, says, "I feel taken advantage of." His authorities would never have accepted a delivery of plundered timber (Rostock is a member of the Climate Alliance).

Commentary of the BMF: Originally Precious Woods wanted to reforest degraded areas in Costa Rica. This sounded good and Switzerland also participated in the project with SF 3 million in tax money, although environmental organizations criticized reforestation using teak trees foreign to the habitat. PW did not want to wait 25 years until the plantation was ready for harvesting and bought 800 km² of virgin forest in Brazil for immediate profit. This is not acceptable to the BMF, although PW declared that the Forest-Stewardship-Council (FSC) had certified their forestry practices as sustainable. (The BMF strongly criticizes the fact that the FSC even certifies wood from virgin forests. This paves the way towards plundering the last remaining virgin forests under a green umbrella!) Now it has been shown that PW also trades

in non-certified wood. Slogans such as "Buy these shares and protect the rainforest!" were used as bait to catch potential investors. The question is, how long will these shareholders tolerate such business practices in PW. The most recent events in any case do not instill much trust and one dares not think what will happen if PW buys additional thousands of square kilometers of rainforest. The fact that this Swiss company is registered in the taxfree British Virgin Islands and makes business in the Third World without paying taxes in Costa Rica or customs in Brazil, although an annual rise in value of 11–16% is projected, also sheds a bad light on PW's sense of social responsibility. The total profit is distributed among the shareholders; the local population only has the option of working as plantation workers or lumberjacks. PW calls this "development aid in the best sense of the word" and adheres to the opinion that the poverty of the local people – and not the industry which enabled the poor to penetrate into the degraded forests in the first place – was to blame for the destruction of the virgin forests. For the BMF, however, "development aid and protection of the rainforest" means something else, i.e. the protection of the traditional economic basis of the local population. After all, these indigenous peoples have been capable of managing the rainforests in a sustainable way for centuries by restricting themselves to using the secondary products (fruit, rubber, medicinal herbs, etc.) and leaving the trees standing. Only this way no money flows into the pockets of would-be rescuers of the forest.



**This Penan – like many other natives –
depend fully on intact virgin forests
to survive.**

Photo: BMF 1998

Books

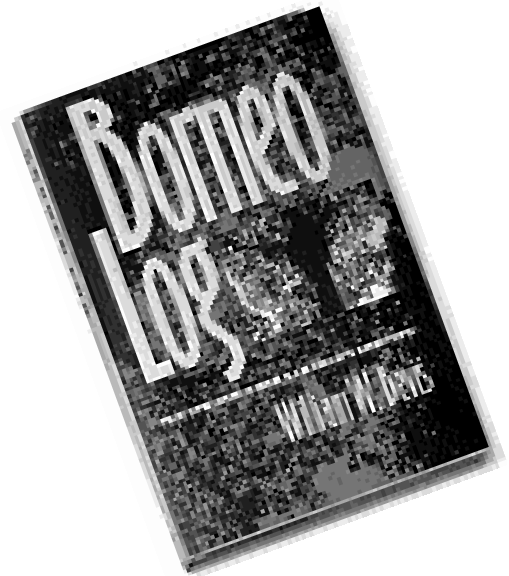
“Borneo Log: The Struggle for Sarawak’s Forests”

1995, 245 pages, by William W. Bevis, University of Washington Press, ISBN 0-295-97416-8

A personal account and environmental study by the American professor moving between indigenous peoples, Sarawak timber camps and Japanese interests. The following are some samples:

- Borneo is a dream ... of beautiful people who put a hand into yours as if placing the world’s last butterfly fallen and dazed, on a leaf.
- It was the policy of the white Rajas not to develop the country. They wished that the local people should plant their own rubber gardens, work their own timber, mine their own gold ... The result was that nobody was rich and nobody was poor.
- Suddenly the forest was declared property of those who had never seen it, who did not know it, who did not love it. But they were powerful people, and they intended to be rich.
- Existing customary rights can be extinguished by the government.
- The Constitution says native customary use establishes ownership. Therefore all timber licenses on customary lands are illegal.
- Spokesman of Samling Co.: “The natives do not have any right to the land. We operate entirely within the laws of Sarawak. We take no responsibility for those laws.”
- While looking at the mile-long rafts of logs the American author asks: “Are the buffalo being slaughtered again?”
- The tree produced three logs, graded at ten hoppus a ton, sold for US\$ 2,000.–, shipped by a Japanese agent to a plywood mill east of Yokohama ... The construction of the Shinjuku Building used 470,000 m² of plywood = 5,000 trees = 2000–3000 acres of hillforest in Sarawak, belonging to one longhouse or another.
- Japan uses 7 times more timber per capita than Europe and imports one third of the world’s production of tropical timber ... Buy it, use it, throw it away, buy another.
- Most of Sarawak’s timber is directed to the Japanese market. Therefore, the Japanese should be held responsible for the destruction of Sarawak.

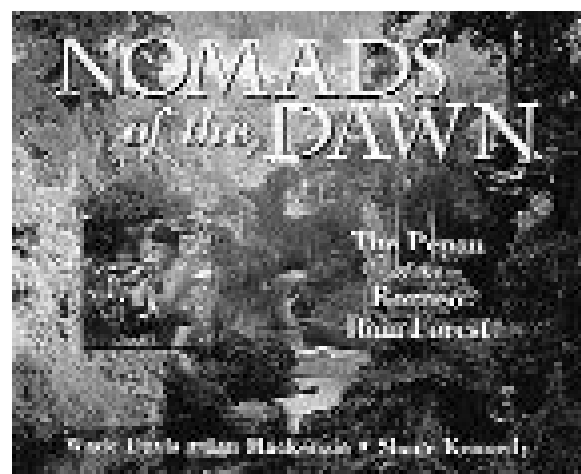
- Of all causes of forest destruction, the timber trade is the easiest to regulate. Although many of the problems of the Earth cannot be solved, this one can be!
- A world moratorium on tropical cutting would simply force a shift in construction techniques, a shift which all know is coming anyway in five to twenty years. It would force the shift before the rainforests are gone, instead of after.



Nomads of the Dawn

1995, 144 pages, by Wade Davis and Ian Mackenzie, Pomegranate Artbooks, Box 6099, Rohnert Park, CA 94927 USA, ISBN 0-87654-357-3

The most beautiful photo book about the Penan and their life in the rainforest of Borneo. A work of heart, in which the indigenous peoples themselves have a voice.



Photos: R. Habegger

**You tell a man
he has no rights
and that his land is yours.**

**You tell a woman
she has no place
whatever she endures**

**You take their land
you come and take
their place.**

**When they fight back
you say they have no
case.**

From Paul McMahon (12 years)
International School of Prague



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