D.Phil. Thesis

The social organisation of

T H E P E N A N

a southeast Asian people

Rodney Needham

Merton College

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'So far as our knowledge goes these are one of the most primitive and least advanced tribes in Borneo; but they are very gentle savages.'

- A.C. HADDON (1901)

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N O T E S

Orthography

Aside from scattered and usually short word-lists, often inaccurate even after allowance is made for inconsistent systems of spelling, the Penan language has not been recorded.

Within the limits of my typewriter I have written Penan words and names with reasonable phonetic accuracy. In the main, I write Penan as though it were Malay, with certain improvements on the normal English system. I represent the ĕ by the I.P.A. ə, and ch by c; double symbols are avoided by using j and y as in English. For 3 I write ā, but I have not attempted to represent the peculiar nasality by which this sound is normally accompanied. The Penan have no v as in English: this symbol represents approximately the sound of the Dutch w.

As the Penan now formally enter world ethnography I do not represent their name phonetically, viz. as Pənan; but for the convenience of printers and other people's quotations unrepentantly commit this inconsistency.

Place-names

I refer to Penan groups and to the place-names with which they

are associated by the names that the Penan themselves recognise and that are generally used in Borneo. Thus the river Nibong (as it is spelt on the maps) I represent as Nyivung, which is how it is pronounced. The Penan who are named after the Para river I call the Penan Paro, which is how they pronounce the name of that river and by which name they are known to other groups and peoples. I have not gone so far, however, as to give the main rivers the names that the Penan and other Bornean peoples use. To call the Baram the 'Kusan' or the Tinjar the 'Lemateng', as the Penan do, would lead to unprofitable confusion: it would not describe the Penan any better or help anyone to understand them.

References

References are included in the text within brackets. Where it is necessary to distinguish between two or more works of one author published in the same year the date of publication is followed by the serial number of the item in the 'References' in parentheses. E.g. '[Harrisson, 1949 (18), p.100]'.

Genealogies

Certain unusual features of the genealogies will be explained in

the text. I point out here that I block in the symbols in two cases: when I wish to indicate that they represent living individuals, and when I wish to point to the persons that a particular argument is about. I use a hyphen to indicate a genealogical level, or an individual whose sex is unknown or irrelevant, or a person whose sex is of no importance to the argument.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is based in fieldwork carried out in Borneo from May 1951 to May 1952. It describes something of the history and mode of life of the Penan, a nomadic people numbering about 2650, of whom about a third have settled and now live in a fashion similar to that of other more familiar Bornean peoples.

The nomadic Penan, with whom I am mainly concerned, live in the primary rain forests that densely cover the uplands and the rocky ridges of the interior. They wander in small groups of from thirty to forty individuals on the average, the extreme of which are separated on the map by about 140 miles of some of the worst country in southeast Asia. It is a harsh land and an exacting one; a land continually drenched with torrential rains throughout the year, folded into great ranges and broken hills and swamps, cut by fast muddy rivers and rocky streams. There is little in it to please a European who lives close enough to it to see it for what it is.

The quality of a report depends much on the way the ethnographer set about his work, and the reception given to what he presents as facts about a strange people depends to some extent on the reader's imaginative realisation (however far short this

may fall) of what it cost the observer to obtain them. 'A man must judge his labours by the obstacles he has overcome and the hardships he has endured, and by these standards I am not ashamed of the results.'

Practically nothing was reliably known about the Penan when I went to Borneo. The literature had confused them with peoples quite different, and the most conflicting of views were proposed in the various accounts that purported to describe them. The only recent account was a paper written in 1949 by T. Harrisson, the government ethnologist in Sarawak. I deal with this at a number of places in the text. The most thorough work on the Penan had been done in 1950 by I.A.N. Urquhart, an administrative officer who made long and arduous journeys to visit certain groups of Penan. This was presented in an admirable paper in the Sarawak Museum Journal with the publication-date of November 1951, but it did not appear until after I had left Borneo, and I was unhappily unable to make use of it. It is work of considerable competence, and the most detailed and complete account in any language of the life of forest nomads in Borneo. But for the rest the chaotic state of ethnography with respect to the Penan can be seen in ch.1. Most remarkably, their existence as a distinct people had been denied by an authority on the area.

Naturally, their language was unrecorded. There were a few word-lists, the longest being that published by Ray in 1913, but these also reflected the current ethnographic confusion and even if they had not been presented in different and sometimes inconsistent systems of spelling were of little use. No white man had ever spoken the Penan language; and those Borneans who claimed to do so had, I found in time, but very indifferent performances to support their boasts. My main entrance to Penan thought in the beginning was through Kenyah, of which I had a copy of Douglas's 1911 word-list. Once I had discerned the peculiarities of its orthography I was able (though knowing nothing of the Kenyah language otherwise) to obtain the equivalents of the more basic and immediately useful words. Later I found an elder who knew a little Malay, and eventually settled groups who could converse easily in that language, but I could make no use of these until I had done enough work not to need them. For the most part I had to sit as a child at the feet of the Penan and learn their tongue with what help they chose to give me. With the Eastern Penan (one of the divisions of the Penan that I name) this was hampered by their lack of imaginative effort in trying to see what I wanted. This was sometimes exasperating, but was never as trying as the sneers and general obstructive unhelpfulness with which the Western Penan

often met my earnest efforts to communicate with them.

For communication with the settled peoples while travelling and for eliciting outside information about the Penan I was able to use Malay, the lingua franca of the island. I had five years earlier acquired the elementary foundations of Malay and this came easily to me. Ultimately I was able to converse with people who had no Malay (from the far interior of Indonesian Borneo) through the simple Penan that they had learned from contact with one group or another. I was thus seldom barred from information by any difficulties of language.

From what a few of them had seen of white men and heard of them from the settled peoples the Penan did not think much of them. In their eyes they were fools, incompetent in the most simple demands of life. This was obvious, for the white men seldom seemed able to move without canoe-loads of equipment and special food, cared for by servants, and speaking either in an alien tongue or through interpreters. It was true that they were the makers of outboard engines and airplanes, could write and use guns, and possessed many other technical powers, but this was not accounted to their credit. It was all because they had 'medicine', some special secret power that had been given them in the same way as they had been covered with white skin. I did what I could

to offset this opinion in my case, but was scarcely very successful, I think. I doubt if I ever got credit for much more than just trying.

To see the people for what they were I reasonably decided to live with them as much like a Penan as I was allowed and physically able. The Penan made little difficulty about the first count: after the first objections that it was not only not the white man's way but would kill me they let me live as I chose. Unlike the Azande or the Nuer they would have let me live as an equal or as a superior without bothering themselves much about it. For the year that I spent with them I lived always as the member of one Penan family or another. I never had a separate hut built apart from the main camp, but by the grace of the Penan lived with them in their shelters, followed their daily regime, slept side by side with them on the untrimmed logs. I had no servant of any kind, and of course no interpreter. In any case, no servant would have stayed with me in such conditions. The Penan are commonly regarded as animals by the other peoples, and detested for their filthy camps and cooking. I had no clothes other than what I wore, and my few possessions I carried on my back in a Penan carrying-basket (which can now be seen in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford). To deny myself any solace but

what Penan life offered, to cut off any retreat, I took no books; and my only contact with them was when I had occasion to pass through my base at Long Akah on one journey or another. I locked my watch away in a distant trunk. Perhaps the greatest step was in eating nothing but Penan food. What this meant in a cultural sense will be seen later from the text and I doubt if the Penan would have regarded me as they did had I not eaten with them. More than eating with them, I lived off them. I paid for my keep with presents of tobacco and by constant medical care and I think they were content. But this meant that when they were hungry I had to go hungry, when there was little food I had only a little, and when there was plenty I had to gorge myself on food that at best was seldom more than barely palatable. My one inability was to share with them their prized food, pig; but I do not think I would be blamed if the reader could see the horrid mess of stewed flesh, white tendons, splinters of bone and chips of yellow teeth, or the glistening pig-embryos being charred over the fire. For the rest I did my part and lived on what the Penan lived on - indeed, lived on less than they had - but it exacted its price.

If these were difficulties they were in part balanced by the continual satisfaction of the medical work, the pleasure of seeing how much could be done with elementary skills and simple

medicines to relieve the many ills by which they were so afflicted. It is true, I think, that such help makes the position of the ethnographer easier; but there is more to it than that.

I could never pretend that to live with Penan was easy. A constant strain was the quite complete absence of any privacy or peace, for the Penan have neither and dislike both. This extends to their attitude towards sleep, and I think I could have counted on my fingers the nights of fair sleep that I was permitted to enjoy. These features of Penan life, combined with the disaffective attitude of the Western Penan, contributed in the end to attacks of psychological depression so severe as to disable me almost for work. What pleasure there was came mostly from the gentle simplicity and openness of the Eastern Penan. To live with Western Penan came hard to me, for their truculence and their quarrelling did much to stunt whatever sympathy I tried to find in myself. They were difficult people to live with. I left the Eastern Penan with regret, putting off my departure day after day, and went from them sorry that such 'very gentle savages' should be left to the terrible hardness of their life in the high wet forests. Western Penan individuals appealed to me (one of them stands in Plate 1), but I left them as a tribe with great thankfulness. Unfortunately, it is the Western Penan who are the more complex and the more

rewarding to ethnographic research, and it is of them that I know more. Perhaps because of my liking, I spoke Eastern Penan the better, but it was through the Western Penan dialect that I learned most of what knowledge I can value.

There may be lessons in the way I chose to work. One is, I believe, that to live so is by far the best way to go about one's work, if one can take it. But there are disadvantages. I do not mean merely the obvious physical and nervous ones. To take a small matter, but a recurrent one in a Penan study, it seems clear that you cannot concentrate best on the work if you are thinking about food for day after day, waiting for someone to return to camp with a basket of sago or a bunch of fruit. Also, you may deprive yourself by this way of living of information that later you long for. I should like to have met every Penan group (for extensive, not structural, information) but on my last journey I returned fevered and retching, scarcely able to walk. By living too hard a man can work himself to a physical standstill. This happened eventually to me, and it was physical incapacity that denied me the possibility of making the long weeks of travelling that would have brought me to the Penan in the Lua and the Linau. Feeding and living more carefully - and not like a Penan - I should not have brought myself to such a position.

This brings out a second lesson, that there is indeed very great advantage in breaking a study for a period of physical recuperation and theoretical stimulation, looking at the society from the outside and coming to know more clearly what one should seek. This would have enabled me to do all I wished and to learn more distinctly what is now just beyond the edge of my understanding.

This work is not about that facet of Penan life that is to me the most important and interesting, what one might call Penan philosophy. It comprises the fundamental ethnographic data whose prime importance work among the Penan taught me. What I present here is the essential beginning to understanding Penan: how many there are, where they live and in what sort of aggregates, what they live on, under what polity they order themselves, what sorts of relations hold between their various groupings - the very stuff of which the literature on Borneo is so exasperatingly bare. Here and there my inexperience as an ethnographer has left its marks on my knowledge, but even here I can claim indulgence. Like an infantryman, the ethnographer learns his job in the field, but in studying Penan there is a special difficulty. The petty map-distances of journeys in Borneo are in physical terms long and sometimes gruelling undertakings, so that when I failed to obtain some point of information from a certain group there was in practice

little chance of returning to redress my omission. Some groups I met only once and knew should never see again. This lent an air of irrevocability to the research, but it did not always, I am afraid, immediately repair my incompetence. Also I became gradually aware of certain problems of Penan society only after the possibility of investigating them in particular groups was gone; and I could not have followed a circular itinerary in perpetual pursuit of evidence about them.

The chaos of Bornean ethnography is such, and the misrepresentations and prejudices about the people I describe so many, that it would be pointless for me to correct all the errors in the literature. To those who know the literature they will be obvious, and to those who do not their exposure would be tedious. I shall confine myself for the most part to writing what is the case. Also this will deliver me, perhaps, from incurring enmities.

I can see now how I could have worked better, more quickly, grasping more surely the problems; but I believe that I give here a true picture of certain aspects of Penan life.

2 Eastern Penan (left) and Punan Busang

1 PENAN AND PUNAN

One of the major aims of research among the Penan and the settled peoples around them was to answer the puzzles raised by the terms Penan and Punan. A great deal of the comparative work and most of the travelling was devoted to delimiting the Penan people. I want to show here something of the almost unbelievable confusion that has surrounded these terms, and to present what the situation in fact is. The detailed evidence that minutely supports my conclusions will be published at length in another place: my present aim is to clear up the muddle and in doing so to make clear who it is that I am writing about.

In the ethnographic literature of Borneo one of the most recurring confusions has lain in the term 'Punan'. In Sarawak this has been compounded by the appearance of the term 'Penan. One might have supposed that in time the confusions and contradictions that surrounded these terms might have been cleared up, and that one of the major ethnographic problems of southeast Asia might have been solved. But it is remarkable that in recent years the situation has even worsened, and that there is still doubt about whether Punan actually exist as a separate people and whether, if they do, they are the same as the Penan are not.

Hose in 1896 presented his first classification of the tribes of Borneo [Roth, 1896, p.37] and listed among them under the name of 'Punans' the Punan Bah and ten other 'Punan' groupings including 'Coast Punans or Penans' of the Niah, Suai, Bintulu, and Bakong rivers. The name Penan appeared again later in an unitialled article in the Encyclopaedia Brittanica, where was written of the 'Punans':

> In their purity they are found almost exclusively in the interior, where there are also kindred groups such as the Ukits and Sians; but in certain parts of Sarawak "modified Punans" such as the Penans and Milanos are found.

Inconsistencies and contradictions in references too many to quote here (it would be wearisome and outside my present purpose to do so) marked the statements on Punan in Dutch and English sources until in 1945 they came to a head in a passage by Fay-Cooper Cole:

> It is certain that both these authorities [Hose and Haddon] and others did see people called "punan", but the writer is inclined to doubt their existence as a distinct people. In central Borneo any party gathering jungle products and making temporary camps is known as "punan" or campers. It is possible that in Sarawak and elsewhere there may be truly nomadic peoples of the type described, but it is also possible that the many abandoned shacks one sees in the jungle may, through misunderstanding, have led to the creation of a distinct people. [Cole, 1945, p.199.]

The year after this judgement Heine-Geldern commented on it in an article on research in southeast Asia:

> The merest outlines only are known of the nomadic and truly primitive Punan. ... Recently, even doubts of the existence of the Punan as a distinct people have been expressed by Fay-Cooper Cole.... These doubts are wholly unfounded. The Punan have been seen, described, and photographed by numerous observers. [Heine-Geldern, 1946, p.161.]

He then referred to works by Bock, Roth, Haddon, Nieuwenhuis, Hose and McDougall, Lumholtz, Andreini, Tillema, and Pauwels, whose writings deal with a very large area of Borneo and in all of which the Punan are mentioned.

Cole replied to this:

> Despite the fact that people called Punan have been seen and reported by reliable parties I still am inclined to doubt their existence as a separate people. ... I went to Borneo looking for Punan. While in Central Borneo I sought in vain for any such people, but I did find that any group which was away from home gathering jungle products and living in temporary camps was known as <u>punan</u>. I saw several such Punan groups but upon enquiry found they all related to fixed villages. Under the circumstances I believe that in Central Borneo the term has no other significance than out word "camper". It is possible that in Sarawak and elsewhere there may be truly nomadic Punan, but for the moment I think there is reasonable doubt that this is true. [Cole, 1947.]

In 1947 Leach had made a survey of Sarawak and in 1948 he presented his report [Leach, 1948], what was in effect the first competent basic ethnography of Sarawak. He pointed out in it that one of the peoples to whom the name Punan had been applied, the Punan Bah, were not nomadic but were:

> a relatively sophisticated people, living in Kayan-Kajang style in large plank built houses, while the Penan of the

> Jelalong are also a settled group though of more primitive organisation. ... Harrisson [assumes] that all, or at any rate the great majority of people known as Punan are still nomadic. But the facts are quite otherwise. The Punan Bah are a settled people, members of the Kajang group on the Rejang... ; the settled Penan are a group on their own; neither have any obvious connection (other than similarity of name) with the nomadic Punan. [Leach, 1948, para. 238.]

He then recorded the names and locations of twelve 'Settled Penan' settlements [para. 239] and the names and areasof eleven groups of 'Nomadic Punan', of which the first six were said to be known in the Belaga district as 'Punan' and the others in the Baram district as 'Penan'. This valuable account thus distinguished the Punan Bah from the settled Penan as distinct peoples, but had to leave open the status of the nomadic tribes known variously as Penan and Punan. The next problems for factual investigation, working from this foundation, were obvious.

But it is in the columns of the Sarawak Gazette that we must look for the most interesting discussions of the terms Penan and Punan, in letters and notes written by administrative officers in contact with the people concerned. These officers, however small their personal inclinations to ethnography might have been, were in many cases engaged in such matters in their employment as Assistant Superintendents of Census.

The discussion opened with the posthumous publication of

notes by Hudden in which he referred to the nomads in the Baram district as 'Penans' [Hudden, 1949]. His use of this name called forth an editorial note giving 'the final figures of the 1947 census' for 'Penan or Settled Penan' and 'Nomadic Penan (or Penan)' and concluding that 'There is some doubt regarding the names of these nomads ... but so long as the reader remembers that Mr Hudden's 687 Penans were nomads the position should be clear.'

This development of a first-class muddle was checked for a while by a letter from another officer, Urquhart, in which he called the Punan Bah a branch of the Kajang and reported that 'Jungle Punans have a completely different language from the Batang Rejang longhouse Punans'. He recorded a legend that ascribed one origin to the nomadic Punan and the longhouse Punan Bah, and then the attitude of the latter to the former:

> Some of these Jungle Punans told me that these house Punans put on side, and were ashamed of their lowly country cousins, and preferred to differentiate the latter from themselves by giving them the name "Penans". All the Jungle Punans that I met were very firm, however, that they were "Punans".

A Punan Bah headman was described as laughing at the legend, calling it untrue, and denying that the Punan in the jungle were any relations. He said that 'Penan' was another name for Jungle Punan, at which Urquhart noted 'though until that moment he had always referred to them as "Punans"'. He concluded his long letter with

an interesting linguistic observation:

> All wandering groups of Jungle Punans speak the same language except for one lot known as "Punan Busang", which speaks a language totally unintelligible to anyone else in the Belaga district. [Urquhart, 1949, p.207.]

To this useful and factual letter was appended an editorial note referring to an extract by Parker in the 1939 Enumeration Report:

> Enumeration reports from Kapit, Bintulu, and Baram show divided opinions as to what should be called Punan and what Penan. It appeared that the tendency was to classify the settled people as Penan and the nomadic people as Punan. The matter was eventually referred to the Secretary for Native Affairs, who replied "You have embarked on a sea of controversy here and it will perhaps be better to follow the classification adopted by each separate District Officer." For the purpose of the statistics it was decided to use the term Punan throughout, especially as the Curator of the Sarawak Museum used the name in his classificatory list.

The editorial comment continued:

> A very senior officer in the Fourth Division has written: "Regarding the Penan/Punan controversy in the Fourth Division, we call Punan those people who are asal Penan [of Penan origin] but have embraced Islam, such as the [village] at Pandan on the Bintulu river. These are no doubt asal Penan, and I suggest that the Penan and the Punan settled men be grouped together as one race.

The Pandan village referred to is the longhouse of Punan Bah, a people already clearly and empirically distinguished by Leach from other groups called Punan and from the Penan settled near them. As late as 1952 only three out of the twenty-one families in the

longhouse group had entered Islam; but apart from such a factual detail the officer's note still gave no indication of how he distinguished Penan from Punan (which was after all the main issue) or with what reason he decided that Punan were of Penan origin.

This note of ethnological speculation was maintained in the next contribution, a letter from another administrative officer:

> A view held by a former District Officer, Kapit ... was that they were one and the same but altered by pronunciation in dialect, and that Punan is the correct pronunciation. The Punan (Jungle) are proto-Kajang and the Punan (sophisticated), Bukitan, Sian, etc. of the Ballui and the Balleh are the results of a fusion of the Punan (Jungle) with the Kayan and Kenyah invaders.
>
> Slight alteration of pronunciation in dialect is not uncommon ... so why not Punan and Penan? The "e" is only a clipped "u". [Spurway, 1949.]

In spite of the advance in understanding offered by Urquhart's letter the muddle was as bad as ever and even worsened by uninformed linguistic conjecture. The issue was obviously ready for expert clarification by the Government Ethnologist, and in October 1949 he presented his views in a letter:

> Very few of the terms we now apply to native peoples originate from them or represent any social or cultural reality in terms of their own lives.
>
> The term Punan ... may be as loosely or as widely applied as the term Dayak.... In many dialects it simply means "upriver" or "the headwaters". The Murut village in the extreme headwaters of the Trusan is known as Punan-Trusan. Dialects differ, pronunciations of the word will vary; different ears even hear it differently.... The term as applied to the nomadic people of Sarawak, and to some who are settled, is

> simply an imposed term.... But there are of course a number of ways in which any group can come to be called Punan.... Thus the Penan Bah in the Belaga area, merely because they have that name, need not have any common origin with the nomad Punans in the Medihit tributary of the Limbang. They are in fact closely related to the Skapans....
>
> Therefore, in my view, these terms must be used as terms of convenience. If we try to define them, the definition is bound to be arbitrary.... It is useless to argue about exact spellings or exact meanings, since by their very origin and development these terms have never been exact, and have never had one simple origin. [Harrisson, 1949 (17).]

Whatever the merits of these views, it was certainly a gratuitous addition to the confusion to call the Punan Bah 'Penan'; for in spite of the letter ascribing Penan origin to them there had never been any question about their name.

In the next issue another officer put it on record that:

> In the Baram the upriver tribes refer to these nomads as Penans while Malays and Dayaks refer to them as Punans. The Penans-Punans, settled or nomadic in the Baram, appear to be one and the same race. [Griffin, 1949.]

It is hardly surprising that the author of the Sarawak Handbook cautiously wrote that the word 'Punan is very loosely used to cover a wide variety of peoples, and until more study has been made of them it is impossible to decide exactly who or what is a Punan.' [Hepburn, 1949, p.18.]

In the same year the Government Ethnologist published a paper on 'nomadic Punans' in which he restated the matter with some new applications of the terms. He wrote of 'The word Punan (and the

equation Penan)' and referred to settled 'Punans' on the Tinjar and other rivers [Harrisson, 1949 (18), pp.130-1]; and in another place later wrote of the 'Punans (Penans) of the Tinjar' [Harrisson, 1950 (20), p.218]. But neither of these writings helped towards defining the difference between Penan and Punan, though they indicated that in some cases at least there was no difference.

A census of Sarawak had been made in 1947 and the report on it was published in 1950. In the classification of 'cultural groups' on which it was based, under the heading of 'Other and indeterminate indigenous' there appeared as one item 'Penan and settled Punan' and as another sub-class on their own 'Nomadic Punan' [Noakes, 1950, p.32]. It seemed, then, that the nomadic Punan were a distinct people; and that the Penan (the groups listed by Leach as settled in the Bintulu district) and the Settled Punan (presumably therefore Punan Bah) were different people but could for some reason be considered for census purposes as one people. But later in the text they were equated as 'Penan (or settled Punan)' [pp.45-8], though in the Tables they were again separated as 'Penan and Settled Punan' but totalling one figure [p.84]. This inconsistency was not elucidated in the text, but there was another discussion of the term 'Punan' in an appendix by Harrisson:

> There has been much discussion as to whether Fourth Division Punans are the same as Third Division Penans [this reverses

> the application of these terms as recorded by Leach]; how nomadic Punans related to settled Punans; how these link up with the Punan Bah in the Belaga area, and so on. Such arguments are based on a misunderstanding of terms. In many dialects, including most of the inland ones, "punan" or its equivalent sound variant means the headwaters of the river, and by extension (or with a prefix) those who live in the headwaters. "Punan Trusan" in Murut equals "ulu Trusan" in Malay. As a descriptive term it may be applied to a wide range of peoples and places in different ways. There may well be other meanings, too. So great is the consequent confusion that a recent American authority, Dr Fay-Cooper Cole, has suggested that the whole thing is a verbal misunderstanding and that there are no nomads in Borneo at all.' [Harrisson, 1950 (21), p.273.]

But on the next page he admitted that there was after all a problem of ethnography connected with the word Punan, when he wrote of a term being applied 'in the absence of any exact knowledge as to whether or not those described are in fact one or several groups, as with Punan for instance'.

His final exasperated stand was made in October 1951:

> Heaven forbid that on top of all our difficulties in classifying the peoples of Borneo on some reasonably simple plan which can be applied to all four territories of the island, we now have to endure more silly arguments about the supposedly correct spelling of ... Punan versus Penan.... On such matters the last word has surely been said in the 1947 census. [Harrisson, 1951, (25), p.208.]

The latest contribution to the discussion was a paper by Urquhart in which he again commented on the terms:

> The Punan Lusong did not know the origin of the name "Punan" though they called themselves by it. Actually, "Punnan" (Malay pronunciation) would be a better version. The word

"Penan" conveyed nothing to them.
The Punan Gang ... pronounced their own name as "Pennan" ("pen" to be pronounced as in "happen")....
[Urquhart, 1951, p.499.]

The matter rests publicly there. There seems to be no doubt in the minds of those quoted that there are nomads in Borneo and that some of them are called Punan and some Penan, that there are certain settled people called Penan, and that other (or perhaps the same) people are called Punan Bah. Beyond this the issue is as confused as may well be. If the reader's head is reeling with Penan and Punan and he has not the faintest idea what they mean or to whom they should be applied, that is as it should be, for that is what the situation was at the beginning of this study.

II

These quotations should have given some idea of the chaotic nature of the ethnographic literature on Borneo and something of the reasons for such a very sorry and lasting state of affairs. None of the questions raised by the terms is difficult to solve; but to do so it is necessary to ascertain the facts about the peoples to whom the names are applied, and this is more exacting than ethnological and linguistic conjecture.

I wish to examine here the statements that can be taken seriously and to present the answers. Without going into detail, all I want to do now is to clear up some of the intolerable confusion that afflicts the reader of Bornean ethnography so that it will be clear who the Penan are not.

(1) The issue about Penan and Punan is not one of misunderstanding terms, nor of merely verbal argument (silly or otherwise), but of ethnographic fact. The cultural and historical relationships alluded to by Harrisson (pp.29-30) are real problems.

(2) The word 'Punan' is used by none of the peoples of the interior of Borneo with whom I have had contact as the equivalent of the English word 'camper'; nor is it ever applied by settled peoples to members of their own tribes or longhouse groups who are temporarily absent in the forest in search of natural products or game.

The relationship of 'Punan' to particular fixed villages that Cole writes of is one in which a dominant individual or class lays claim to trade in economic products gathered by the nomads in their neighbourhood. The nomads are in every case distinct from the tribe or longhouse group with which they have

this relationship.

(3) In no language of Borneo, so far as I have been able to discover, is the word punan used to mean 'headwaters' or 'upriver'. However, the Kayan of the Baram do use the word punang for the source-area at the headwaters of a river. And the Murut place-name that Harrisson cites is actually Punang Trusan [Borneo Evangelical Mission map, 1949]: it refers to the village at the very headwaters of the Trusan river, the Murut word for 'headwaters' being punang (not punan).

(4) In the one Bornean language in which punan occurs with a non-ethnic referent (see below, para.9) it means 'to quarrel' and has nothing to do with the headwaters or source of a river (the word for which is iot) or with upriver (the word for which is dayah).

(5) The word 'Penan' has no non-ethnic meaning in any language of Borneo that I know of.

(6) It is impossible to show that either 'Punan' or 'Penan' has been imposed upon any people, and it is consequently unreasonable to claim that it is the arbitrariness of such an imposition that

accounts for the ways these terms have been used.

(7) The Punan Ba (there is no h in Ba as pronounced by these people on the Bintulu river) are, according to themselves, a branch of the Kajang people, and, as Leach says, lead a sophisticated life of Kayan type in large longhouses. Their language is quite different from that of the people known as 'Jungle Punan', to whom they bear only the most general of cultural resemblances. There is no evidence that they have ever been nomadic and they themselves deny it.

(8) There is in Borneo at least one distinct nomadic people calling themselves Punan and referred to by other peoples as such. This people has been represented in Sarawak by groups known as Punan Aput, Punan Batu, and Punan Busang. The language of this Punan people is quite different from that of the Punan Ba.

(9) Aside from the groups mentioned in para.8 the people called 'Jungle Punan' in Sarawak are not Punan, do not normally call themselves Punan, and are an absolutely distinct people, in language and social organisation, from the Punan and the Punan Ba.

Their correct name - that is the name they call themselves

and by which they distinguish themselves from other peoples - is Penan (pronounced penan). It is in the Penan language that punan means 'to quarrel'. The 'Settled Penan' listed by Leach are literally onetime nomadic Penan who have settled.

(10) The Penan are always called 'Punan' by the Kayan of the Baram and Kayan rivers, who maintain that this is the correct name. There are probable ethnological reasons why they should do so, and it is extremely likely that their usage is the cause of Hose's constant error in calling the Penan 'Punan'. Hose was more closely connected with the Kayan than with any other Bornean people and may have learned this mistaken appellation from them. Also he spoke neither Penan nor Punan.

Hose's error was compounded by the facts that: (a) the Punan in certain circumstances refer to the Penan as 'Punan' although they recognise that their true name is Penan and that they are a different people; (b) in the same way and in similar circumstances the Penan may call the Punan'Penan'; (c) Penan are used to being called 'Punan' by the Kayan and have learned to recognise this as their designation when in contact with the Administration. Until 1951 no white man had ever spoken Penan, and when they are asked about the name 'Punan' the Penan laugh and say: 'The white

men do not know our language, and this is the name they have given us. The Punan are certainly a different people. We are Penan.'

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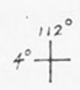
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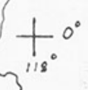
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2 ENVIRONMENT

I

The natural environment of the Penan is the tropical rain forest of the high interior of Borneo. The forest is primevally dense and luxuriant, and though progress through it is usually relatively unimpeded by tangled undergrowth vision is so restricted by the tree-trunks, and the skies so occluded by the leafy branches meeting overhead, that one lives in a green gloomy dank cavern from which there are no far views and no clear view of the heavens. To a European it is a depressing, slightly claustrophobic world. The noble savage and the primitive hunter of older writings lived in a gentle wood, wandering in bossy dells and sleeping on leafy floors by babbling brooks. This is the picture that the imaginations of Hose & McDougall [1912, ii, p.182] and Furness [1902, p.184] have painted of the Penan. The reality, though, is quite otherwise. It is a world of the greatest harshness, marked by grinding physical labour and squalid misery, vile and incapacitating diseases in the face of which the nomads are helpless, and precarious sustenance.

The land that supports the forest is folded into mountains and deep valleys, cut everywhere by streams and muddy rivers into

sharply convoluted triangles of muddy earth covered with a thick layer of rotting leaves. As the ground rises towards the moss forest and the limestone mountains it becomes rockier, the rocks slippery with slimy green growths and sharp-cornered. Everywhere there is the miasmal odour of rotten vegetation: the leaves and the fallen mouldering trees and the standing timber that is being slowly eaten away by damp and insect borers. Ornithologists have found many species of birds, but to the traveller in these forests they are very few. The damp silence is modified only by the dripping of rain from the leaves, the occasional bark of a deer or the whoop of a monkey, and sometimes the soggy crash of the fall of a rotten tree. Very rarely the air is beaten by the great sawing noise of huge hornbills labouring their way just above the trees.

In this largely silent world swarm the leeches and the ants, and in places mosquitos and sandflies. You can never get away from these, and the ankles of the Penan are continually bloodied by leeches. Constant companions of the Penan are thousands of small cockroaches, and these live and lay their eggs in every tiny crevice of basket, cloth, or container. In any one camp there must be literally tens of thousands of them. If a man stands in a shelter and jars the roof with his head a shower of them will

fall onto his hair and his shoulders and scurry down his body to the flooring; if a woman wants to prepare food she takes it from a roof-support where she has hung the container and then waits for a few minutes while the cockroaches pour out from it. But the Penan take no notice of these, and it is perhaps only squeamish Europeans whom they disturb.

Game is relatively plentiful, but this is not to say that it is easy to find. There are wild pig, deer, monkeys, turtles, ant-eaters, giant lizards, snakes, and many fish in the larger streams; but these are almost never seen unless you are hunting them, preferably with a dog, and it often happens that a hunter is absent from camp from dawn till night and return having seen nothing. (For professional details about animals in the forest, and fuller lists, see: Banks, The mammals of Borneo, Kuching, 1949.)

Every year, about August or September, there is a short fruit-season; and in this the Penan, by wide searching, or by journeying to where they know are many fruit-trees, can gorge themselves as at no other time of the year. But the fruits are not large and luscious like those most commonly thought of as eastern - like the durian, for example. For the most part they are small, consisting of a very large stone thinly covered with a translucent layer of tart flesh. In the fruit-season, too, the pigs are fat.

The staple of Penan diet is the sago-palm (see ch.4) that grows wild in the forest. It is widely scattered, singly or in small clusters, and in the closeness of the forest is difficult to find except by close search.

Most Penan material needs can be met by the resources of the forest: there are many timbers for different purposes, leaves for various uses, canes for making mats and baskets, creepers for tying roof-supports, barks for cooking-vessels, cloth, and even canoes, leaves for dyes and to replace salt, stones for knife-sharpeners and decoration and making fire, iron-ore for tools.

There have until recently been no detailed climatic records taken in the interior, but rainfallfigures collected at Long Akah for the twelve months March 1951 to March 1952 suggest that the rainfall is over 210 inches a year and very probably more than this in the surrounding mountainous areas where the Penan live. This rainfall is spread throughout the whole year in a 'double-monsoon' fashion, so that the forest is always wet and the atmosphere saturated. Every night there are torrential rains, and occasionally in the daytime as well. The skies are very often clouded, and after the late afternoon can usually not be seen. Even without the forest the moon and stars can seldom be seen for clouds.

These enormous and quickly-forming clouds and the terrifying thunder that seems to shake the tree-tops are some of the most impressive features of Borneo.

The temperature rarely goes above about 95 degrees in the shade and seldom falls below 75 degrees at night; but the damp heat in the forests is trying, and with the rain and the mists the drop in temperature at night is relatively severe cold.

II

Where the Penan live can be seen from the map (p.37) but there is no such thing as Penanland. To circumscribe the area within which Penan groups live is not to delimit 'their country'.

Along the banks of the larger rivers that run through the area are scattered the longhouses of the settled tribes who live by shifting cultivation of rice on the land immediately bordering the rivers. All the vast land between the rivers is the domain of the Penan. The main settled peoples, as far as the Penan are concerned, are the Kayan, Kenyah, and Iban; but they are also in contact with the Milano and Malays towards the coast, the Sebup and Berawan and Kajang peoples on the west, and the Kelabit on the east. Members of all these peoples may at times go into

the forest on hunting trips, and in the past on headhunting raids; but in the main the land the Penan roam in is all but untouched by any penetration or economic exploitation by the settled peoples.

The Penan are not negritos, or any other form of distinct aboriginal people, but are physically, linguistically, and in many cultural respects similar to the settled peoples. It is risky to make comparisons until far more is known about all the peoples of Borneo, but elementary parallels can be drawn.

The Penan are short mongoloid people with straight black hair and light brown skins. The men stand a little over five feet in height (I have made no measurements, but see Haddon, 1901 (14), p.12) and the women a few inches less. Their skins at birth are no lighter than those of the settled peoples, but the Penan confine themselves to the dim forests and retain a light colour that the others lose in their exposure to the sun. Among themselves the Penan vary physically almost as much as they do from the settled peoples, but they can often be distinguished on purely physical grounds. Without expert and thorough measurements of skulls and physique of the peoples of Borneo it is not possible to estimate on physical grounds to whom they are closest.

Language is an easier and surer guide to relationships, but variations of language and dialect are so many and complex in

Borneo, and so very little professional linguistic work has been done, that it is not possible to be much more than general. The Penan language bears certain similarities to Kayan but the relationship is not very close. In a draft dictionary of the Kayan language [Borneo Evangelical Mission, 1950] I found only 106 words out of about 4000 that were the same as Penan or obviously derived from identical roots; but there were many Kayan words for which I did not then know the Penan equivalent, so the total may well be higher. Relationship is closer to certain of the dialects called 'Kenyah' but until the Borneo Evangelical Mission have completed the study of the Kenyah language-family on which they are at present engaged it is not possible to say anything more precise. The nearest language of settled peoples to that of the Penan is Sebup (of a people of that name living in the upper Tinjar river), which is almost identical with what I distinguish as the Western Penan dialect and in general is much the same as the Penan language. In particular, Sebup kinship terms are identical with those of the Penan.

Something of the variations between languages or dialects, and of the varying degrees of linguistic relationship between the Penan and the settled peoples can be seen in Ray's vocabularies [Ray, 1913, pp.155-196]. Of the four lists that he presents as 'Punan',

however, only 'Bok Punan' and 'Nibong Punan' are Penan. The 'Bejang Punan' are Punan Ba, and the 'Manketa Punan' are another grouping about whom there is considerable confusion and who are not Penan.

III

Peacefully, there has always been an economic relationship between particular Penan groups and longhouse groups to which they are near. For a settled tribe the wandering Penan in its neighbourhood are a major economic asset, and the right to trade with them is jealously retained usually by individuals of the aristocratic class. Another longhouse trying to seduce the Penan into trading away from their economic overlords provokes serious trouble, and in the past the certainty of direct attack. More of this relationship will be seen in ch.4.

It sometimes happens that Penan are engaged by members of settled tribes as casual labour. Individuals from nomadic groups may choose to do such work for a few weeks in order to earn trade goods or perhaps to see what it is like to live in a settled way. They live in the room of their employer and spend their time cutting wood and fetching water, or helping about the house. They cannot

be persuaded to help in the fields because of their fear that the heat will rot their brains.

Members of groups that have begun to settle in camps near longhouses are always liable to demands on their labour, including work on the fields. In time they become for all practical purposes serfs, liable not only for unpaid casual calls and paid labour in the fields or in manufactures but for a specified number of days per year unpaid labour as part of the normal service due by commoners to aristocrats of the longhouse. From one camp men are even called to act as boat-crews on trading canoes going to Long Lama and Marudi on journeys that may last for weeks.

Either nomadic or settled Penan may be engaged as guides by settled people on hunting expeditions, collecting forest products, or going on long overland journeys.

IV

Today the Penan live in peace with their neighbours, but in the past it was very different. The Penan have never been headhunters and in their religion and daily life have none of the features of the headhunting cults of the other peoples. As far back as tradition allows us to speak of they have been the prey of the

headhunting tribes.

The Sarawak Gazette used frequently to report the taking of heads by settled peoples in raids on the Penan, and in 1894, for example, one headhunting party was said to have killed sixty-two Penan in one raid. There are many Penan today who can tell of headhuhting raids on their people, and who will speak of this uncle and that nephew and another cousin killed, and of children taken away into slavery.

Talan, a Penan elder, tells of a Kenyah raid in the eighteen-nineties on a Penan group in the Lurah river, a tributary of the Bahau. The raiders were Lepu Tepu Kenyah guided to the Penan by Punan Busang. (It helps to emphasise the distinctions drawn in ch.1 that these guides were of the same tribe that killed Jo, the father's brother of Lujang in the Penan Silat, in the Linau.) Talan was with a number of families separated by a mile or two from the rest of the group when the Kenyah attacked and was thus not involved. Eight people were killed and five children taken away as slaves. The Penan men retaliated with poisoned darts from their blowpipes and many Kenyah were killed. Tun, for example, shot one attacker in the right eye, and he died; others were killed by darts in the body. One child, Makave Gumak, was about eight years old when he was taken. He lived for many years with the Kenyah at

Long [the mouth of the] Iwan and married a Kenyah woman; and when he was about fifty years old was allowed by the Kenyah headman Lumai Bilung (at the instigation of the Dutch administration) to return to his own people. They were at that time in the Lurah, and with them was Makavo's sister, Saya. He stayed with them for about two or three months, but he was not used to the life - 'he did not know how to eat sago' - and he went back to the Kenyah. This is a particularly interesting story in that it is the only one that is reported by an independent source. Pauwels, clearly speaking of the same individual, gives the same story about a 'Poenan Menaloei' (ch.3 will show how this name clinches the story) called Toengan; and in his account he is said to have returned to live at another Kenyah longhouse, Ma Badang Paleran, with which his Penan relatives were in contact [Pauwels, 1935, p.352].

The Kenyah, according to the Penan, attacked in proper open fashion of war; but the Iban would make use of any shameful subterfuge, even eating with their intended victims and then falling upon them [cf. Hose, 1927, p.157]. The Iban were the greatest scourge of the Penan in the past (as they were of all other peoples) and today are feared and hated by them. In 1908 even the sophisticated Penan settled at Suai panicked at the very sight of some Iban because some twenty-five of their people had

been killed by Iban in 1883 [SG, 3 April 1908].

Twenty-five Penan were also reported killed by Iban in 1912. They were in the headwaters of the Tinjar and the Iban came from the Rejang. This probably refers to the Penan Paro. The Penan were in the Ilom, a tributary of the Paong river, and were visited by a party of Iban who ate with them and then killed as many as did not manage to flee into the forest.

Similar tactics were followed by Iban in the Balui, but the Penan on this occasion were not such an easy match. They allowed the Iban to enter certain shelters but not others on the plea that the inmates were observing certain ritual tabus on intercourse with strangers. 'But this was a lie, because they were being careful of the Iban.' The Iban were given fried sago by the Penan and ate with them. Then they attacked and killed many Penan, but men in the other shelters fired on them with their blowpipes and killed many Iban in return. This happened about 1920 in the Bunut river.

A measure of protection could be obtained in the past by concluding a blood-pact with individuals of the settled tribes. (The Penan terms for this are pasere and peseri.) The parties would sit together. One would cut the front surface of his left shoulder with a sharp bamboo edge, smear some of the blood onto

a native cigarette, and give it to the other to smoke. The latter did the same thing in return. There was no other ceremony, but if any known kin of one party then killed any known kin of the other the former would die. 'He is killed by the spirit of the bamboo. God says to the spirit: "This man is bad. He has done wrong. Kill him." And the man dies.' The parties to the pact addressed each other as _sebila_, which has no meaning in the Penan language outside this context. The Kenyah of the Apo Kayan use this word and Elshout [1926, p.159] translates it as 'friend'. The Kayan also use it in this sense, I believe. The parties to the blood-pact, it should be noted, did not address each other by any kinship term, such as 'brother', not by any other term or expression that implied some sort or degree or kinship.

Penan may still be put into a panic by rumours of headhunters today. In 1952 there were two cases of this sort in the Tinjar and the Silat when raiders were feared to be after the Penan. The settled Penan in the Buk pleaded in frantic messages for protection from headhunting Iban that they heard were approaching from the west. Later in the same year a group of Penan Silat near the Silat river dropped their forest products that they had collected for trade and fled for five days towards the Baram because of a similar scare. They had seen strange tracks,

strangers who did not answer their calls had been seen near their camps, and they were certain that a party of Kenyah headhunters had come to attack them from the Indonesian side of the border.

For people who have lost close kin to headhunters there can be little sense in waiting to see if the rumour is true or not, even after years of government-enforced peace. Dread of attack by settled tribes, even if not by those with whom they are in close contact, is still common among the Penan, still one of the things that mark them off apart, as Penan.

3 H I S T O R Y

The Penan have no elaborate myth of origin. They appreciate that the sorts of changes they are familiar with have probably been happening for a long time, and they understand the migratory movements of themselves and the settled peoples in search of food and land, but to them the world is essentially the same place now as when God made it. How this event took place they cannot say, but maintain merely that God made Penan and all other peoples that they see today. Nor do they point to any place where mankind was originally made. They trace the movements of their ancestors back to certain places, but they admit that the reslutant locations are merely the limits of their histories and not places where they were created.

It seems that the Penan are in the places where they now are after forming part of the great westward movement of peoples that brought the Kenyah, Kayan, and Kajang peoples into Sarawak. In the field of ethnological speculation it seems probable that the Penan originated in one people living contiguously in some part of the basin of the upper Kayan river. From there some split such as constantly chacterises the nomadic Penan sent two branches or stocks on separate westward paths. Within the boundaries of

what is now known as Sarawak these two stocks were separated by the large, fast-flowing, crocodile-harbouring Baram river; and from these two branches there developed the two tribes into which the Penan are divided today. Those living in the area roughly to the east of the Baram I call the Eastern Penan, and those in the area roughly to the west of the Baram I call the Western Penan.

Any group of Penan is known to others, and may refer to itself, as 'Penan' followed by the name of a river in whose valley they live or have at some time in the past lived. Thus the Penan groups in the Akah river-valley are known as the Penan Akah. These groups at one time lived in the valley of the Selungo river, or are descended from groups that did, and are referred to as Penan Selungo by the Western Penan. This latter name is commonly used by the older members of the Western Penan and derives from the historical fact that when the Western Penan came into the Baram valley and heard of the Eastern Penan on the other side of the river they learned that they were the Penan who had come into the valley by way of the Selungo, and that there were still many groups living there.

Similarly, when the Eastern Penan first heard of the Western Penan being in the Baram valley it was as the Penan who had entered it from the Silat; and all Western Penan groups they hear of may

be referred to by them as Penan Silat.

These distinguishing names enable one, within the short span of Penan tradition, to trace the past movements of the groups. This is what I shall do in this chapter, constructing the history of the Penan and marking the limits of tradition reliable enough to be called historical. This will also show something of the way in which the Penan are one people, distinct from their neighbours and from peoples with whom they have been confused. Most of what I want to convey is clearly depicted in the map 'Penan Migrations'. The text is for the record. The reader will perhaps not lose very much by turning straight to the last section of the chapter, where certain questions raised by the accounts of group-movements will be considered.

II

The Penan Solungo were earlier known as the Penan Payang. The Payang river is a tributary of the Pejungan, a branch of the Bahau. Its course is differently represented on different maps, but its general location is known, and the Dutchman Fischer in 1907 reported its course as running into the mountains on the border of Sarawak [Tochten...., 1910, p.394]. Although many

rivers in Borneo may be known by the same name this Payang river is the only one from which the Penan could conceivably have moved through the headwaters of the Baram and into the Selungo. It is to this valley that one may reasonably trace them. It is a pity that the Eastern Penan cannot remember what name was given to their ancestral groups before 'Penan Payang'; but to trace them thus far takes us back as far as the Kayan basin.

When they left the Kayan basin we cannot attempt to answer. It is certain that the Penan Akah have been in the area of the Akah for at least four generations. There is no evidence of any kind that would enable us to estimate how long before that they were in the area, and certainly there can be no indication of how long they were in the Selungo after leaving the Payang. What is clear is that the Eastern Penan moved into the Baram valley through the hills at the headwaters of the river above Lio Matu and up the valley of the Selungo. This can be deduced not only from group-names but from from bare memories among the Penan that their groups came from areas to the east or towards the Bahau, and for more recent times by ascertaining where the fathers and grandfathers of people died. From the highlands at the headwaters of the Selungo it seems that they split up to move down the main valleys of the Tuto and the Akah. The groups today in the Akah

say that their ancestors came from the very headwaters of that river, 'on the edge of Kelabit country'. Many years ago there used to be Penan in the Libun, on the eastward side of the Tama Abu Range [Banks, 1937, p.435; Harrisson, 1949 (18), p.138] but there are none there today. The furthest surviving groups of the northerly movement are that in the Medalam, which split from the Melinau, and that in the Mediit, which Harrisson has met [Harrisson, 1949 (18), p.131] but I have not. Low records meeting Penan as far away as 'the mountains of the Lawas river', eight individuals who represented themselves as survivors of a group of 'more than fifty families' [Low, 1894, p.171]. Unfortunately he gave no indication of where they came from, or whether there were other Penan near. There are no Penan today over in that direction, though Harrisson has reported that he has made 'the discovery of relic Punans in North Borneo' [Harrisson, personal communication, 27 March 1952]. There are no records of Penan ever having been in North Borneo [Rutter, 1929, p.20].

The general movements of the Eastern Penan are fairly clear, but except in a few cases it is impossible to tell where splitting of the groups occurred nor which groups split from which others. I indicate this on the map: ascertained fission and movements I represent by solid lines, general movements and conjectured fission by broken lines.

The Penan Akah split into six groups within twelve years. First Laeng, a cousin of Jengilan's, left with another family to join the group of his wife's father in the Tuto. This was about 1940, when the group was in the headwaters of the Pata river. Four years after this Maya went with a number of others towards the Belokun, and from this group Aje and two other families split off in 1948. Another group of seven men and their womenfolk also left Jengilan's group in 1944. The group that remained was still large, comprising about eighty-seven members, and in 1949 the scarcity of sago and game in the area of the Akah and the Pata rivers forced Jengilan to split from his brother Yen and cross the Baram (aided by the Kenyah) with half the group to live in the rich untouched country around Kalulong and in the headwaters of the Paong, territory that previously only Western Penan had lived in.

Word was then sent by Kenyah to Maya and his group urging them to leave the eastern side of the Baram and exploit the richer country around Kalulong. They were ferried across the Baram at Long Geneh by Kenyah, went up the Lasha to the south of Kalulong, and met with Jengilan's group in the headwaters of the Paong in February 1952. The resources of the area have also been reported to Yen and his group in the Pata, and they may also cross the

Baram to join Jengilan's group or at least to exploit the same general area.

The Eastern Penan group settled and growing rice at Long Buang in the Apo trace their movements from the Palutan (and indeed claim that all Penan came from there, even the Western Penan, but in this they are alone). From the Palutan they moved into the headwaters of the Apo and thence into the Melinau, a tributary of the Tuto. From there they went northwards into the Belait (in Brunei) and lived in the area of a tributary called the Paleh. Some time, apparently in the early years of World War I, after coming into contact with settled peoples on the Tuto, they were persuaded to settle down and build a longhouse near Linei. This caused a split in the group, and part returned to the Belait where they still are in the area of the Penipir. From Linei the settled group moved up into the Apo (about 1949, to judge from their account) with the charge from the Administration to keep in touch with the nomadic groups in the headwaters of the river. In 1952 some three families from one of the groups in the upper river had promised to come down and settle at Long Buang, which will probably be a focus for any future settlement of the nomads in this region.

These are not the only migrations and fissions that might be reported here, but they show the shallowness of tradition as well

as the individual events. For the rest of the groups the map gives an adequate enough impression.

III

To construct a history of the Eastern Penan is made very difficult by the shortness of their genealogical memories and their lack of concern with tradition; but the case is very different for the Western Penan.

The Western Penan have a tradition that traces their movements back to the area of a large and distinctive rock in the Lua river, a tributary of the Peliran in the area known as the Usun Apau. The name of this rock is Batou Keng Sian. I have not seen it, but it is described as being about twenty feet by fifty, having long clefts along its surface bearing some resemblance to the markings on the shell of a turtle. I do not know exactly what a <u>sian</u> is as I have not seen one in the company of Penan, but I believe it is a turtle. It is said to have a hard shell, to be bigger than the scaly ant-eater, and to withdraw its head inside its shell at the sight of man. <u>Keng</u> is the Sebup word for 'scale' (as on an ant-eater) but to translate it as the scale of a turtle would ring queer in English. The Western Penan word for scale is <u>lē</u>,

and the Penan term would then be <u>batou lĕ sian</u>; but I cannot say why a rock of such importance in Western Penan tradition should be known by a Sebup name. The Western Penan maintain that all Penan came from the area of this rock, but no Eastern Penan know of it or can assent to this story until they have met Western Penan and had it thrust upon their belief. The Sebup have a legend that they and the Penan came out of the ground near the Sebup, a tributary of the Lua, and that of the six children of the original couple two were told not to make fields but to live in the forest: these were the ancestors of the Penan [cf. Furness, 1902, p.185]. They found Batou Keng Sian and lived on its flat top: 'they copulated and copulated and there were so many children that they could not all live there, so they split from the rock and kept on splitting in order to find food'. This legend is not recounted by the Western Penan, but it makes two points. Firstly, it supports the historical character of early Penan migrations from the Lua, for it is certainly known that the Sebup came from there; and secondly it attributes a motive to the continual splitting (not merely migration) of the Penan.

All the Western Penan nomadic groups and many of those that have settled believe that it is true that they came from the rock. In the light of Penan thought this has more importance

than it might at first sound; for it is in clear distinction to their caution in believing, for example, cosmological speculations that have been handed down to them: 'they may be true, and they may not be'. This belief of theirs is supported by detailed accounts of the subsequent migration and fission, accompanied by genealogies and by stories relating to particular individuals and particular events in the movements they describe. There are, however, no legends about the Western Penan before the time of Batou Keng Sian, and there are no genealogies relating to this period.

From the Lua the Western Penan gradually worked their way westwards into the valley of the Sepeng river, where they split into two groups. The northern group became known as Penan Apat, from _apat_, a place where a tree has fallen across a river, and in this case halfway down the Sepeng. These Penan Apat later split again, one group moving into the Linau to the south, where they became known as Penan Geng after a river of that name. The other group moved north into the area of the Dapui, in the headwaters of the Tinjar.

This latter branch split into a number of groups of which one is represented today by the Penan Beluwei. These moved northwards to the Pa'an, a tributary of the Lobang river above Long Nyivung

(older people in other groups still speak of Penan Pa'an), and thence to the Lejok, just above Long Tekalet in the Tinjar. They were continually harrassed and hunted by the Berawan of the Tinjar and were eventually persuaded by Jangan, a Sebup headman, to enter his house at Long Nyivung. This is said to have happened about 1900. At that time they had moved from the Lejok into the Beluwei, a tributary on the left bank of the Lobang, just below Long Nyivung, and it is after this stream that they are named. They were then very few, and today number only eight adults, married with the Sebup.

Another group of this branch (or what remains of it), named to this day Penan Apat by the Sebup and by other Penan groups, is now settled with the Sebup of Long Nyivung, where the Penan Beluwei also are. Their story is an interesting account of how a group, after disasters at the hands of men and of nature, may be led to settle down and eventually disintegrate. For long they were in the valley of the Paong river, near the Ai, upriver from the Burou, and under the domination of the Sebup headman of the Lirong longhouse group, a man named Pingan. There they suffered greatly from headhunting Iban, and in 1927 or thereabouts were also struck by a severe epidemic that killed many, so that 'they had no fathers any more'. Then came a third type of disaster. Some time before

World War II Pingan told them to go into the Koyan and collect natural resin for him. Seventeen men went via the Pua, a tributary of the Lobang, over Dulit and down into the Koyan. On their return journey they slept a night in the headwaters of the Pua, under Dulit, and a great storm brought down on them a landslide of rocks and trees that killed eight and injured most of the others. They did not return to Pingan but represented to the Administration that they did not want to return to the Paong and be again under his domination. Instead they chose to live in the Sebup house at Long Nyivung, of which the headman was now Utung, the son of Jangan. Later the other members of their group came down from the Paong and settled with them.

After 'about four years' the group began to break up. One woman, Kaca, married a Penan Nyivung and settled downriver at Long Lobang, together with two others, Tiam and Kajunga, who married Chinese traders and rubber-planters. Baun, another woman, married a Chinese and went to live with him at his rubber-garden at Long Tekalet. Rabu married a Penan Tuyut and went with her mother to live far down the Tinjar with the Penan settled near the Tuyut river. Seven adults remain in the Sebup house: two married to Sebup, one to a Penan Beluwei, and one to a Penan Paro. The group is effectively broken up.

Harrisson has recently published a story about Penan and Sebup in the upper Tinjar. According to this account there were Penan in political subservience to Sebup and they were attacked by Sebup from downriver. (There are no names either of places or of individuals in this story.) They wished to return this attack but were prevented from doing so by their overlords, who did not want to allow an attack on fellow-Sebup. Incensed at this, the Penan 'ran away and went north across into the Tutoh. If this is correct - and the language parallels in the two areas confirm it - it suggests that these northern Punans are of one stock, a point on which there has been much uncertainty in the past' [Harrisson, 1950 (20), p.218]. This story is given neither by the Penan in the Tinjar nor by those in the Tuto, and there is no evidence to support it. As ch.5 will show, the linguistic and cultural situation denies it. As I am trying to show in this chapter, it is possible to reconstruct Penan history with some sureness, but nowhere in any culturally possible history of the Penan did Western Penan move north into the Tuto and establish there a stock indistinguishable from Eastern Penan.

There are two groups settled in the Nyivung, both presumably descended from Penan Apat stock, the Penan Paro and the Penan Nyivung. The Penan Paro, settled at Long Belopau, say that they

came from the area of Mount Kenavang, near the headwaters of the Seliu (Silat) and the Dapui, and northwards by way of the Menavan. They settled in the Para river (which name they pronounce, in accordance with their dialect, as Paro) in the headwaters of the Dapui river, and became through contact with settled peoples drawn into the cultivation of rice. They built a settlement at Long Ilem in the Paong valley but about 1917, after many casualties at the hands of the Iban, were ordered by the Administration to leave there and settle near the Penan Nyivung and the Sebup in the Nyivung river.

The Penan Nyivung, who know of no genealogical links in the past between themselves and the Penan Paro before their settlement, also came from the south via the Menavan. They settled at the persuasion of Hose, whose visit to the Penan of the Lobang (the Penan Nyivung, so named after the Lobang river) and Para is recorded in the Sarawak Gazette of April 1889. The movements of both these groups after their settlement in the Nyivung have been too many and too trivial to be recorded here.

Another line of movement went northwards to the west of the Tinjar, in the area of Dulit. The Berawan of the Tinjar say that many Penan came down the river with them. The oldest name for some of these Penan is Penan Temedoh, after a tributary of the

Tinjar downstream from the northern end of the Dulit range. Some of these learned to cultivate rice under the tuition of the Berawan and settled near the mouth of the Tuyut in the beginning of the century. These are the group today called the Penan Tuyut. Others in this line of movement went into the plateau area at the headwaters of the Merurong, Niah, and Buk rivers, where they are said first to have built houses and to have begun the cultivation of rice. From here they branched out to form rice-cultivating settlements in the Niah and Suai rivers, at Beluru on the Bakong, at Labang and Mesekat on the Kemena, and at the mouth of the Merurong in the upper reaches of the Jelalong The map of migrations gives possible dates of these settlements as inferred from Penan accounts. However little confidence one can have in them their general agreement in the individual accounts given by widely separated groups indicates that they are descended from one stock that descended from the Dulit area towards the end of the first half of the nineteenth century. As some of the accounts date the first settlement with reference to the annexation of the area by Brooke in 1861 they are fairly reliable. From this last group settled at the Merurong some Penan later moved over to join with the Penan at the Tuyut.

The longhouse groups at the Kemulu and Su'an rivers in the

Jelalong were not part of this movement through the Dapui area but came down into the Jelalong valley from the Belaga and Koyan rivers, settling first at Kemulu and splitting from there to the Su'an.

The Penan Buk, who form a settlement far down the Tinjar, also came from the Menavan and are descended from the Penan Temedoh who came down between the Tinjar and Baram rivers to the Lama. There were already Penan in the Lama area under an elder named Madang, and they joined with these before they moved on via the Tru river, down to the south of Lake Bunut, and thence (with the help of the local settled people) across the wide Tinjar to the Buk. Here they found another group of Penan under an elder named Ladong. All these events occurred many generations ago: the Penan can give no details about the Penan groups from whom they are descended, and neither Madang nor Ladong can be placed on any genealogy. Speculation about the Penan Buk history is therefore precarious, but a probable reconstruction is so interesting that it is worth the digression.

From linguistic and other cultural features of the Penan Buk it is reasonable to deduce that they are the result of amalgamation between Western Penan and Eastern Penan. That is, that the group in the Lama under Madang may well have been Eastern Penan who had been ferried across the Baram from the area between the Apo and

the Pelutan by a settled tribe in the same way as the Penan Akah were brought over to the Kalulong area. There is, as one might expect, no support for this idea in the traditions or genealogies of the Eastern Penan. If the events lie even beyond the historical range of the Western Penan they will certainly not be found in the memories of Eastern Penan. Nor do the Kenyah whose ancestors might have done the ferrying have any tradition to support the hypothesis: events of so many generations in the past are outside the traditions of most Bornean peoples.

This is not the place to give detailed linguistic evidence, but it should suffice for me to say that the Penan Buk use kinship terms and other names that belong to the Eastern Penan and that are not used by typical Western Penan, and that there are a number of distinctively Eastern Penan words in their speech. There is today no contact with Eastern Penan except when a few Penan Buk individuals may meet in Marudi market people from the settled group of Long Buang, and there was probably none in the past. Certainly there cannot have been contact long or frequent enough to lead to cultural diffusion extensive enough to account for the facts that lead to my hypothesis. Also, I believe the Penan Buk share with the other Western Penan an attitude of superiority to the Eastern Penan that would preclude any imitation in their

recent slight contact.

The Penan Tuyut share with the Penan Buk some of these terms and words, but these most probably arise from the constant intercourse and intermarriage between the two groups. Also there were Penan near the Tuyut before most of the ancestors of the present group came over from the Merurong about 1910 and joined with them. They were Penan Tamadoh, and though they may have been part of the posited amalgamation there is no possibility of reconstructing their movements and contacts before they settled at the Tuyut.

The Penan of the Kemulu and Su'an groups also use certain kinship terms that belong to the Eastern Penan, and occasionally use words that Western Penan do not normally use; but these are slight evidences that are much more likely to be due to borrowing than another cause. What genealogical material I have is too scant to help, and more intensive work was impossible at the only time I was able to visit these settlements.

It is the Penan Buk who stand out so remarkably. The indications that I have noted are strong enough evidence for us to pay considerable attention to the possibility of fusion between groups of Western and Eastern Penan. If this indeed happened it is the only case of fusion between the tribes. There are interesting corollaries to this assumption but they would form

too much of a digression.

IV

Let us return to the movements of the other branch of the Penan Apat, those who turned southwards. I was not able to meet Japi, the elder who could have given me the most detailed moves and the supporting genealogies, but the main movements are known to most Western Penan elders, whose account I reproduce here. Also I met young individual Penan Gong from different groups descended from the branch we are concerned with here, and they were of some help. Urquhart met Japi in 1949 and the material he presents in his paper [1951, pp.509-10] for the most part fits in with and corroborates mine.

The southern branch of the Penan Apat worked their way down to the highlands between the Peliran and Linau rivers, where they lived in the valley of the Gong, from which they derive their generic name. Penan told me that this is a tributary of the Danum, on its left bank and not far from the mouth. From this area one group split away to the Pejawei, described to me as being a tributary of the Betālui, a tributary on the left bank of the Kajang, but given by Urquhart [1951, p.497] as a tributary of the

Balui. Another group split off into the Keluan, said to be a tributary on the left bank of the Linau and about halfway down its course. The first group were known as the Penan Pajawei and still are on occasion, but they are normally known today as the Penan Lusong. Urquhart, who has visited them, reports that they in their turn have split into four groups in the Linau valley near the mouth of the Kajang. [Urquhart, 1950, p.67; 1951, p.515.] I do not know what happened to the Penan Keluan, but they are said to have intermarried with and eventually joined the Penan Bunut (see below) and the Pajawei. They do not form a separate group today, and their name occurs only in genealogies and stories. I can only report what I was told, but from Urquhart's paper it seems that the Penan Keluan never split away as a separate group. The Penan Gang, according to this paper, take their name from a tributary (given by Urquhart as the 'Gang') of the Keluan [1951, p.498]; so that mention of Penan Keluan in genealogies may refer merely to the Penan Gang at this point in their movements. This is a possibility, but it does not accord with Penan usage. The Penan Gang would not normally be known both by the name of the Keluan and by the name of one of its tributaries. (This will become clear in the next section of this chapter, where the evidence is much clearer and more certain.) It is more probable,

if Urquhart's location of the Gong is correct (as it is more likely to be than mine), that there was fission in this area, that one group stayed in the Keluan area and was named after it, and that the other moved away and was named after the Gong river from which it came.

The Penan Gong moved northwards into the Peliran, from where, (in the lifetime of the present elder, Japi, they split again. The group known today as Penan Gong went north under Japi, while the remainder went into the Lua and became the two groups under the present elders Laweng and Usang. These two groups are known as Penan Lua but may also be referred to as Penan Gong [Harrisson, 1951 (22-24)]. The Penan Gong under Japi moved during a period of several years from the Peliran to the Mecawa, then to the Sepeng and from there to the Belaga, the Para in the Dapui, and in the beginning of 1952 back to the Penyun, a tributary of the Belaga.

V

The most complete account of moves and fission comes from the branch of Western Penan that moved southwest from the Lua into the valley of the Balui. This group lived in the area of the Menalui, a tributary of the Balui on the right bank above the

Taman, and from which they are named the Penan Menalui. They were only one generation in this area, successively in the Nawai, Paran, Jaliat, Kolivan, and Palang, tributaries of the Balui. From here they moved northeast into the valley of the Linau. From a tributary of this river, the Bunut, a group split away. Descendants of it are known today as Penan Bunut, and from it split in their turn (possibly about 1895) the group known as Penan Talun and found today in the Balangan river, a tributary on the left bank of the Balui above the Linau.

About 'twenty families' stayed in the Lusong area of the Linau and are said eventually to have united with the Pajawei. Another group of about the same size moved on into the Danum, a rich area where they stayed for a long time. They had learned to make canoes from the Kayan in the Linau and used them in the head-waters of the Danum during their long stay. Here there was a further split (I omit the names of the individuals concerned, but shall record them with the relevant genealogical details in another place.) One group stayed in the Danum and the other went into the headwaters of the Paliran, five days journey above the mouth of the Lua. From there this group travelled over the watershed into the Badeng, a tributary on the right bank of the Iwan, that flows into the upper Kayan, and from there over into the Lurah

(Luda to the Penan). From there they went up into the Data, a tributary of the Silat, which runs into the Baram. This was very probably in 1898, when the Sarawak Gazette [1 July 1898] reported that 'several families of Punans under chief Tama Sok' had entered the Silat from the Rejang (referring presumably to the fact that they came of a stock found in the Rejang area). The 'chief' was the elder Sinan, whom we shall meet in ch.5. They remained here for a long period until a group under Mereng went back into the Luda, where they are now known as Penan Luda. This was after a meeting with Hose in the Silat, probably that recorded in 1907 [SG, February 1907]. It is reported by Kayan and Kenyah from the Kayan river that there is another group of Penan in the Bosahan, a tributary in the lower course of the Luda, under a man named Kila. The Penan Luda were a very large group even thirty years ago, and it is very probable that they have split and that this other group is headed by the only Kila in the Luda genealogies.

More members were lost to the Penan in the Silat when a party of eight men and their families went into the Paliran to collect natural rubber for trade. There they met Yat, the father of Japi of the Penan Gong, and joined his people. (Japi's father is given by Urquhart [1951, p.500] as Wing, but there is no doubt that the same individual is meant. Ch.9 will make this clearer.)

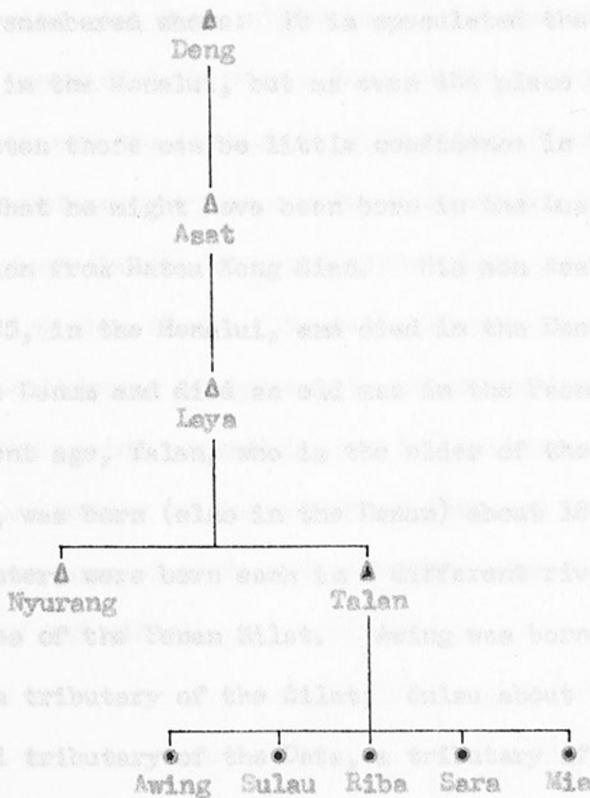
The remainder went into the Baram valley to the Mujan and then the Julan, both tributaries on the left bank of the Baram. One group stayed in the Mujan under Kemasa. This group was many years later ferried across the Baram by the Long Palai Kenyah, in 1942, and lived on that side of the river, in Eastern Penan territory, until about 1948, when they returned to the Mujan area.

There was another split in the Julan: one group went back to the Seliu, a tributary of the Silat, from where again there was a split to the Data, and from the Data to the Sekitan (in the Muh). The remainder of the Penan Silat in the Julan went on to the valley of the Paong, via the Lasha and the south of Kalulong, where they stayed for 'ten years' before returning to the Julan.

They now came under the influence of the most important of the Kenyah headmen on the Baram, who persuaded them to settle. First one group came out of the forest to settle at the mouth of the Savup about 1942 and learned to grow rice on Kenyah land. The others, including the present elder, Talan, followed later, possibly about 1946. From the Savup one group went to the Uke, near the Kenyah longhouse at Long Tap in the Akah, one moved further up the valley of the Savup, and the third went down the Baram and into the valley of the Kalame above Long Akah.

VI

It is difficult to realise by reading these abbreviated accounts and by following the easy lines on the map how very slow and arduous and devious were the movements concerned. To give some idea, and to infer some probable dates for the movements and the recurring fission, I append a genealogy from the Penan Menalui:



I have tried to give estimates of the dates of birth of the individuals included in it, and have also given the places where they were born and where some of them died. Penan take no account of the passing of the years and cannot tell their ages; so all I have been able to do is to estimate the ages of the younger members and work back from them, taking into account in each generation the order of birth of each individual.

Deng was probably born about 1810 (and quite possibly earlier), but it is not remembered where: it is speculated that he might have been born in the Menalui, but as even the place where he died has been forgotten there can be little confidence in this guess. Some also say that he might have been born in the Lua or near it after the fission from Batou Keng Sian. His son Asat was probably born around 1835, in the Menalui, and died in the Danum. Nyurang was born in the Danum and died an old man in the Paong. Judging from his apparent age, Talan, who is the elder of the Kelame group of Penan Silat, was born (also in the Danum) about 1885. His five surviving daughters were born each in a different river-valley during the moves of the Penan Silat. Awing was born about 1917 in the Seliu, a tributary of the Silat; Sulau about 1922 in the Serepa, a small tributary of the Data, a tributary of the Silat of the same order as the Seliu; Riba about 1925 in the Muh, a tributary

of the Baram above the Silat; Sara about 1929 in the Mujan; and Mia about 1932 in the Paong.

Some of the dates in the upper levels of the genealogy might reasonably be pushed further back, possibly making the year of Deng's birth to be as long ago as the end of the eighteenth century. How many generations elapsed between that date and the fission from the Lua there is no means of knowing. However, the main purpose of this section is not to establish the dates of early Penan history but to give some idea of the range and slowness of the movements of a nomadic stock over a long period of time and of the intervals between the instances of fission. Thus, Asat during his lifetime travelled over the country between the Balui and the Danum, separated on the map by about sixty miles, and saw his group split twice during this time. The map-distance covered by the group during the lifetime of Nyurang is about one hundred and fifty miles, and in the period covered he saw two instances of fission. This concentrates mainly on the aspect of time and events; but in ch.4 we shall see more of what such movements mean in terms of actual distances and effort.

VII

This account has been mainly historical, to show how the Penan are historically one people, how their traditions exclude origin or fusion with the peoples they have been confused with, where the widely separated groups came from, and which group split from which. The main questions that arise from this are: (1) why did this constant movement and recurrent fission take place?; and (2) how and why did any group split as it did?

(1) All Penan, when asked why the groups keep moving over such wide areas of very difficult country, answer that they went in search of food. The chapter on economy will tell more of this. When asked why fission occurred they answer similarly that it was in order to get food. The principle food of the Penan is the sago-palm: it is not plentiful, and to find a single palm requires constant observation and careful quartering of the country by hunters and travellers. A nomadic group never has a constant and assured source of food, and they depend on finding these sparsely growing trees. They live literally from hand to mouth and from day to day. Hunger is always near, and the older people can remember times when there was real starvation, when 'people were very thin, the children were always crying and their bellies were

swollen'. If they find themselves in an area poor in sago-palms, the land in their wake stripped of everything edible, and the hunters returning day after day without seeing new palms, then they will split. Large areas may be well capable of supporting a group of forty individuals but not one of eighty. It is impossible to state in general terms the balance between ecology and the size of the group. The resources of areas vary greatly from worked out parts like the Akah valley to practically untouched ones like the Paong valley. Also the composition of groups varies in that of two groups of the same size one will include many adult hunters and sago-workers, while another has a preponderance of young folk and children. All that one may say is that when any group is too large to be supported by the resources of the land that is within range of its exploitation it splits. [Cf. Urquhart, 1951, p.500.]

Among the Western Penan, but not among the Eastern, there may very occasionally be another cause of fission - quarrelling. But this, the Penan maintain, is never permanent. If there is an exceptionally severe quarrel one or more families may leave the group and live apart from it. It is possible that the sentiments aroused by the quarrel will even split the group evenly, much as though the fission had been caused by hunger. After about ten days the elder of the group or a responsible man delegated by him

will search for the party that has gone away. If they are in the right he makes them a present of a blowpipe, a parang (a large-bladed sword-cum-bushknife), and a cooking pan, and they will return at his persuasion. If the fault has been theirs near relatives remaining with the group will make the payment to whomever has suffered offence, and the elder or someone deputised by him will then go and bring the others back to the main group.

In the Silat, many years ago, Balan marked a sago-palm as his own, but Uan cut it down without asking permission. Balan was very angry and quarrelled with Uan, and left the group with his family. Some days later Talan was sent by the elder to bring him back. 'That was how it was. People quarrelled over sago and they quarrelled over fruit. They used to hit each other with blowpipes in those days and they threw their cooking pans onto the ground so hard that they broke.'

But this sort of split was never permanent and seldom lasted more than a month. Hose & McDougall write that permanent fission may follow a disagreement in which one or more members of the group 'refuses to accept the judgement of the leader and of the majority' and withdraws, together with women and children, to form a separate group [Hose & McDougall, 1912, ii, pp. 182-3]. I think this is a misinterpretation of what Hose heard about quarrel-fission.

In any case, a single family or even two would almost surely not be able to survive for long apart from the main group. If there is no necessity to split imposed by the environment there is normally no permanent fission.

(2) Why any group splits as it does is a question to which we can only begin to indicate an answer now. Ch.6 will make possible a more complete answer. I can only report that when one turns to genealogies to try to discern some principle based on kinship that would account for the presence of certain families and individuals in a given group and not in the one from which it parted, there does not appear to be any such principle. Or one might at first expect to find an answer in a status-system or in the demands of political organisation; but in fact, as later chapters will show, there are no such determinants of fission. The Penan, who in any case do not generalise, say in response to questions about the particular groupings that followed a split: 'Who knows what is in people's minds?' I have not been with a group during fission, nor did any group split while I was in Borneo.

The only solution that seems true to me becomes apparent by living in a Penan group. After a time, if you ask yourself 'Now supposing there were a split now, who would go with whom?' the

answer appears clear. In any group certain families have most to do with other families, and certain individuals will be found often in certain other individuals' shelters. Though there are certain obligations that an individual or a family owes without favour to all others, there are variations in the ties that they feel to individuals or families in the group. A Penan likes some people more than he likes others, and this is the basis of the division. I am aware that this is not a fashionable sort of answer, but I can see no other.

It is not possible, I find, to make a general elucidatory statement about the fission of a Penan group on the lines that would at first offer themselves. It is normally families that move, and as certain families will make their shelters close together, or will help each other with small tasks, or perform their other duties in each other's company, so - because they like to be together, in a way that can be seen every day - they stay together when the group has to split. The logically possible retort that they might feel the same towards all the other members of the group is not socially possible. Of course, there may be cases where there has to be some painful decision, where affections have to be balanced, or where interest must be considered before sentiment, when a strong desire to remain with certain people

cannot be met. A group of two large families headed by brothers may, in dividing, separate those brothers, who would much prefer to stay together; or women who have been used to working and talking together, and whose children have played together, may have to part; or a young man may have to leave his family to remain near a girl he wants to marry. This is what one would expect in such a situation, and something of the same sort can be easily imagined with reference to any small social group, a university department, perhaps, or a platoon. If you well acquainted with its members it is not difficult to predict braodly who would remain with whom if some imperative cause made it split in two. More of this matter, however, will be examined later in the text. This merely introduces the problem and suggests the most likely answer.

VIII

It has been maintained by Andreini [1924, p.77] that the Penan are being 'exterminated by the ravages of man and disease' and are 'fast dying out as a race'; Hose writes of the possibility of the 'dying out of the Punans' [1927, p.79]; and Baring-Gould & Bampfylde [1909, p.12] speak of the 'Punans and other fast vanishing tribes'. But the fact seems to be, on the contrary,

that the Penan have been increasing for at least a century and a half and that they still are.

The history of both tribes of Penan shows the continual fission of groups, and we know that usually no fission occurs until either the area is worked out or until the group is too big to be supported by any area. If we took a number of the groups of today and added them together it would be obvious that the resultant group would be very much too large to be able to support itself on the resources of any part of the Bornean interior. So from the increasing number of Penan groups and from the size of them today it seems probable that the total number of Penan has been increasing. There is against this the possibility that many groups that formerly existed have died out completely, but where this has happened the Penan say so. For example, the Penan under Jangun who lived in the headwaters of the Tinjar at the end of the last century [SG, 1 April 1889] have disappeared, killed off by the settled tribes and by disease. In the light of the usual readiness of Penan to say whether groups have died out or not, this is not an alternative explanation of the apparent increase in the number of groups and in the total population.

Another possibility is that the population has been maintained by the fusion of groups and the dying out of the group-names of

half of those that fused. But this is equally surely not the case, for when fusion occurs the Penan do not (have no reason to) try to conceal the fact, and in reality fusion is exceedingly rare. A certain example of fusion is that between two groups of Penan Akah (p.57), but in this case neither group had a distinguishing group-name of its own, and each was known merely as the Penan Akah at such and such a place. A possible example is that of the Penan Keluan; but the group-name has not been forgotten or concealed though the people are said to have united with other groups and the group no longer exists. The Penan accounts of the ancestral moves and of the various instances of group-fission are consistent with a steadily increasing population, and the detailed accounts they give of particular splits are convincing. But there is nothing in these stories to suggest that a parallel process of group-fusion and decrease of population has been going on at the same time.

I conclude that the total population of the Penan people has been increasing fairly steadily for the last century and a half and probably before that also. To enter the field of ethnological speculation for a moment, it seems very likely, on the model of the process and organisation of Penan life today, that originally (and no matter from whom they themselves split) and probably some-

where in the upper basin of the Kayan river the Penan people formed one group of the sort that we see today, and that the first fission of that original group was the beginning of the growth and recurrent fission of Penan society and the origin of the two tribes. To conclude otherwise is to assume either that Penan population has remained steady or that it was formerly greater and has since declined, but neither of these views is supported by the facts. Also, and more importantly, the cultural and physical variations among the Penan can be explained only by assuming an increasing population and the overall truth of the Penan traditions that comprise their history.

4 E C O N O M Y

I

Chapter 2 gave a sketch of the natural environment and ch.3 something of the effects of it on the distribution and aggregates of the Penan. This deals with the ways they exploit their environment.

The tools with which the Penan extract their livelihood and the other possessions with which they accomodate themselves to their surroundings are few and simple. The most important of these demand the use of metal. The parang is of course almost entirely metal, and the blowpipe that is their sole hunting weapon cannot be made without metal. They have no bows and arrows. The use of metal is one of the most important differences separating the two tribes. The Eastern Penan can neither smelt ore nor work iron once they have acquired it. Many of them cannot even replace a wooden handle that has split and broken away from a parang, and in general their manual skills are very limited. Their unhandiness in the repair and upkeep of their possessions, however important these may be to them, is immediately apparent: it increases their dependence on the settled tribes and the necessity of trading with them. Part of this unhandiness is due to lack of use in manual

crafts that require much forethought or minute skill; but more seems to derive from their attitude to such crafts. In the same way as they accept in their mild fashion the indifference, the rudeness, and the maltreatment that accompanies the lowly political and cultural status that is accorded them by the settled tribes, so they accept their lack of skills that might make their life easier. So much of their life is of a harshness and an intractability that they themselves recognise that they have acquired an attitude of stolid acceptance, a resignation in the face of everything that besets them; and when they reflect that other peoples can make parangs and blowpipes while they themselves cannot this appears to them just another of those hard things that are involved in being Penan. They will not devote themselves to the acquisition of manual skills that their ancestors did not possess, because they are Penan. For the most part they submit to the hardships that fortune brings them; and one of these is the inequitable trading-relationship that they must maintain with the settled peoples if they are to get the tools on which their lives depend.

At the trading-meetings their main purchases are parangs for all cutting jobs, such as felling trees, making shelters, cutting their way through difficult undergrowth, and all the other needs of forest-dwellers. Without these metal tools they could not

work the sago on which they live, and could hardly erect the most meagre shelter. But they cannot acquire them except through trade with the settled peoples. It is arguable that unless they were able to trade their lives would be no longer than that of their last parang.

The next most important item is the blowpipe. This is a solid and heavy shaft of hard timber that has bored throughout its length a small straight hole. It is not the sort of weapon that the forest nomads of Malaya use and which can be made almost without tools once the skill of it is known. Without metal this cannot be made. In terms of Malayan dollars a blowpipe may be worth about $25 to $50, while I have seen blowpipes that age has proved strong and use has made smooth-bored that were said to sell for $100. Very often a spearhead is bound to the end of the blowpipe. Sometimes ordinary spears are used, but the Penan prefers to use one all-purpose weapon, and this explains why the blowpipe has to be so thick and heavy. Strong as it is, it is frequently snapped or split when the spearhead is thrust deep into the side of a running boar. (There is such a blowpipe in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford.)

For the many household tasks that require cutting, such as dividing meat, opening certain fruits, or paring cane for basket-making, a small knife is often bought: usually every man will

have one, and very often too a woman will have her own, whereas a family together may possess only one parang.

So in the case of the Eastern Penan, shelters cannot be made, sago cannot be worked, game cannot be hunted, mats and baskets cannot be woven, even blowpipe darts cannot be made, unless they enter a trading-relationship with the settled peoples in which they may be cheated and exposed to sneering condescension. The same sort of dependence exists in the case of certain other goods also, but the above are the vital ones.

The position of the Western Penan is very different. All the nomad groups (including, I am told, the Penan Lusong) know the arts of smelting ore and working metal. Harrisson writes: 'After a very short training the upper Baram Punans [Penan Silat] learned to make steel swords (parang), for which they had previously relied on the resident peoples' [Harrisson, 1949 (18), p.132]. But the Western Penan deny that they were taught by the Kenyah, and describe working iron with stone hammers and anvils generations ago. I see no reason to doubt that they were long ago as capable as the settled tribes of working iron. (A spearhead obtained through Penan Paro from the Penan Gong and said to have been made by them in their nomadic camp may be seen in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford.) Their methods are the same as those employed by peoples such as the Sebup

and Kenyah. Briefly, they are these. In certain streams and small rivers there are found exposed iron-bearing rocks: these are taken back to the camp where the group lives and are smelted in a furnace made of shaped clay and boulders and blown by two large bamboo pistons worked by cloth-covered wads of feathers or fine wood-shavings. A large supply of charcoal is easily made by drying logs in the sun on a stream bank or in a clearing, and then firing them in a criss-cross stack. The molten metal collects in the bottom of the furnace and is worked out with hammer and anvil. The stone hammer and stone anvil are no longer used and I have not seen them, but the hammer is said to have been a rounded boulder from a river, flat on one side, and bound into a handle of pliant wood with cane. Today the Western Penan use imported articles that they have through trade: the hammer may come from England, the iron from Germany, and the technically advanced even use American files. With these materials they manufacture parangs, spearheads, and knives that are every bit as well-made as those of the settled peoples. The Penan Silat, particularly those of Kelame camp, make parangs that are incomparable in the Baram.

Western Penan also make their own blowpipes with sharp iron bits of their own manufacture. The process has been often described for other peoples and is no different. Once the wood has been

brought in an cut down to near size the hole can be drilled in a day or two, leaving the body to be tapered and smoothed later.

Both tribes used to make bark-cloth of a rather thick coarse kind, but today they do so seldom. For their clothes, the loincloth of the man and the skirt of the woman, they rely on imported cotton cloth obtained in trade, though during World War II they were forced to revert to the wearing bark-cloth.

An important part of Penan possessions is a piece of portable roofing made of the dried leaves of the fan-palm. These are so skilfully sewn together by the women that the light strong roofing is completely waterproof and very durable. The same technique is used to make a sort of bag that holds spare clothes and any other small oddments that might otherwise be easily lost.

Both men and women carry a large basket (kivah) made of cane. This is made by the men and is very strong and light. When a family moves baskets such as this contain all the household belongings. Different types of back to this carrying-basket today help to distinguish the Eastern from the Western Penan, but the Western Penan (whose basket is plain-backed) say that formerly they used to make patterned backs the same as the Eastern Penan do. Otherwise this article is the same among all the Penan, as are the other usual possessions.

For the rest, Penan possessions are simple and easily made; though dart-cases and tobacco-boxes may sometimes be obtained from settled peoples such as the Kelabit because of the superior strength and finish of the articles they make.

This summary account of Penan material possessions is enough to indicate the material simplicity of nomad life in the forests. It is evident that there is no natural necessity for the Penan to be dependent on the settled peoples, though their more demanding tastes (particularly of the Western Penan) lead them to be. Possibly the most important single change in the life of these hunters has been the acquisition of shot-guns during 1952. The few men that have them devoted the results of many months' labour to accumulating with traders the cash-reserves to buy guns and cartridges; and once they have the guns they must continue to collect jungle produce to buy the expensive ammunition without which they know their guns are useless. For them, each cartridge must kill one pig or other large animal, and they regard it as inexcusable waste that a shot should be fired unless there is near certainty of a kill. Very rarely is a cartridge spent on shooting an animal of such small meat-return as a monkey. In any case, they regard the shotgun as an inefficient weapon for monkeys: with the blowpipe they can make shot after silent shot at the same animal, or can kill more

than one, while one shot from a gun puts to flight every animal in earshot. This is a new and very hard demand on labour, particularly as world economic conditions force the prices of the guns higher every month. Fortunately the cartridges can be bought only through the Administration, defending the Penan from further exploitation by the settled peoples.

II

A major source of Penan income in trade-goods is the collection of forest products for which there is world or local demand.

One of the most important of these is the resin called damar [Burkill, 1935, pp.757-765]. This is found in high parts of the country (the Dulit Range is a well-known source) scattered in small pieces on the ground where it has been exposed or lying in large rocky deposits under the ground but near enough to be detected by probings with a spear-point. This is collected piece-meal as it is come across, or is worked systematically where a large deposit is found. When there is a large quantity it is either left in the camp, if that is conveniently near, or is left in a cache to be collected shortly before the date of the next trading-meeting. Bound into long baskets of split bamboo and cane it

makes large and unwieldy loads that may weigh as much as 130 lbs. In nothing more than in their ability to carry these terrible loads for days over mountains and through jungle where no step can be made without attention is shown the almost unbelievable strength and uncomplaining endurance of the Penan. The economic ramifications of the world today mean that this most arduous of labours is increased for Penan in search of tools on which their lives depend by speculations on the world markets, by steel-policies of European powers, and by strikes of American workers for 'better working conditions'.

The resin is the most important of the forest products and the greatest in bulk. Other things brought in by Penan are small blocks of wild rubber, tapped and then coagulated and smoked, and articles in local demand such as hornbill feathers (an important part of headhunting ceremonial dress), the casque of the hornbill (formerly in demand by Chinese artisans as 'Borneo jade' [Harrisson, 1951 (26)]), tiger-cat skins and teeth, and so on. For resale to the Chinese as medicines and aphrodisiacs they used to bring in the horn and other parts of the rhinoceros (now practically extinct), the scales of the ant-eater, the gall-bladder of the honey-bear, and, the most highly valued of finds, the shiny green gall-stones from the bezoar monkey that may fetch £15 an ounce or more. This

last item is not something that can be purposively collected, and only rarely is a monkey killed that contains a bezoar stone; but when one is found it may bring what is in Penan terms considerable wealth.

Penan women are expert mat-makers, weaving split cane into traditional complex patterns of red and black. These mats are used as as sleeping-mats by settled peoples right down to the coast and are in constant demand.

These natural and manufactured products are exchanged by the Penan for blowpipes, parangs, knives, spearheads, axes, cotton cloth, beads, tobacco, and modern household goods such as aluminium bowls and Chinese type cooking-pans.

The interchange of goods takes place at appointed trading-meetings at certain longhouses along the river. Once a group has been in contact with a trading longhouse it knows when the next meeting is by means of a date-string. This is a length of thin cane knotted to show the number of days to the next trading-meeting. In the forest one knot is undone each day until it is time to start on the journey to the river. The traders are members of the tribes of the river, usually Kenyah or Kayan. In the Balui area, where there are no regular meetings Iban traders travel inland in search of the Penan, living on the country and the groups they meet. These

roaming traders are a trouble to the Penan, sleeping with their women, abusing their hospitality, and driving very sharp bargains. At a time when resin was selling at $66 for 133 lbs such Iban were giving Penan in exchange for this weight lengths of cotton cloth worth at most $6.

Where there are regular trading-meetings, supervised by the Administration, only members of the settled tribes are allowed to trade with the Penan. These in their turn sell downriver to the Chinese (sometimes to Malays), who put the goods on the world market. The upriver traders jealously guard their right to trade with Penan. Even for one Kenyah to trade with one Penan is a worthwhile source of profit; and it happens that some members of a Penan group will trade with one individual, others with another, and still others with a third. In the past the Penan were mercilessly cheated, and even today they suffer to some extent. For example, a Kenyah trader of Long San in the Baram once wished to evade the supervision of the Administration. He called the Penan to his room the evening before the meeting, fed him, and made much of him as his 'brother'. He asked if there was anything important to sell. The Penan hopefully produced a large bezoar stone, but the Kenyah shook his head in commiseration, said that it was a poor one and worth nothing, and advised against taking it

to the meeting. He advised the Penan to throw it away, but as second thought took the stone and gave in return a handful of tobacco 'to make his heart easy'. He made as though to throw the stone away, but carelessly gave it to his wife instead. In this case the Penan later learned by river-gossip that he had been cheated of the equivalent of £50.

Such trading-meetings take place about three or four times a year. Long ago, and before the white administration, there were also meetings of this sort; but after so long it is impossible to find out with any accuracy how often the meetings were held. It seems, though, that they were similarly held about three or four times a year, and that then also there was considerable contact at these meetings between groups who otherwise would not have met.

III

The Penan group, comprising about thirty individuals (including children) among the Eastern Penan and over forty among the Western Penan, lives and moves together, wandering as the search for food forces them to. Ecological conditions are the same for the two tribes, tools are the same, and the mode of daily living

in every respect similar; but the economic organisation of the tribes differs, and it may be this difference that results in the ability of Western Penan to maintain larger groups than the Eastern. The difference can be seen firstly in the forms of their camps.

The Penan live in camps composed of shelters made from the materials of the area in which they find themselves, with the addition of the portable roofing that is carried with them wherever they move. The huts vary in solidity and in the care expended on them according to the length of time that it is expected will be spent in the area and according to its purpose, but the basic construction is the same. The men cut down saplings for the uprights, each for his own family, and helping only men who will share the same shelter. The frameworks are erected on a roughly cleared site and seldom more than a pace or two away from other shelters. In the immediate neighbourhood the men find lianas and creepers and canes for tying the lengths of wood together, and bunches of fan-palm leaves for the roof and what flimsy side-screens they may choose to make. Young children of either sex may help with the lighter collecting tasks, and sometimes women will gather leaves for the roof. While the men are erecting the framework for the shelters the women pin together the splayed leaves of the fan-palm to make relatively rain-proof pieces and tie them into

place. These supplement the roofing, which is unrolled and tied with cane to the roof-supports to make the main waterproofing.

Other women at the same time prepare food and cooking places. If the shelters are high on stilts, as they usually are, the women make fireplaces within them of damp earth patted onto a close framework of sticks. Nothing is trimmed for comfort or convenience and the workmanship of constructing the shelter is very simple and very quick. What the finished shelter may look like can be seen from the photograph (Plate 3).

When freshly erected a Penan shelter is tolerable enough, but not for long. Penan urinate underneath and around it, and defecate only a few paces away: dogs and young children do both anywhere. Animal skin and inedible guts are dropped through the floor to rot on the wet earth beneath, nasal mucus is continually wiped onto the uprights and the side-screens, and ill-aimed spittle and phlegm slimes the flooring. In some areas the camp is plagued by mosquitos and sandflies, which can only be kept off by burning smoky fires underneath the shelters: this, combined with the constant smoke from the cooking-fire inside the shelter, produces an inspissated interior that reddens weeping eyes and afflicts the lungs, though the Penan are largely impervious to it. Inescapable, too, are the thousands of scurrying cockroaches in roof, clothing,

3: <u>Eastern Penan temporary shelter.</u>

4: <u>Western Penan travelling shelter.</u>

and food. Of course, the Penan are very lousy, but this is not a feature of the shelter itself and may with luck be an avoidable feature of living in the camp.

All Penan divide camps into three types: main camp, temporary camp, and travelling camp. (These are not correct parallels to the native terms, except in one case, but they will do.) The Eastern Penan make a main camp that is strong and built high, near a constant source of water, and mounted on some ridge or small hill. They give no explanation for choosing such a site, and for years now that headhunting has been put down can have derived no advantage of warfare from it. It is their custom, and therefore they build so. It is erected in an area that has proved to be rich, and not normally in a place that is difficult country. The main camp of Jengilan was in the headwaters of the Paong, an area rich in sago and fruit trees, and the camp was built just off a large area of relatively flat ground that made easy marching, some way up a steep ridge on the lower part of the Kalulong massif. Some forty yards below it was a large stream running into a deep rock-bottomed pool. Such a camp, though more solidly built than the temporary camps, is nevertheless not necessarily lived in for a longer period of time than the smaller ones. It is used as a storehouse for baskets of resin and other produce, for manufactured articles such as mats,

and bamboo containers of pig-fat. When the time comes for the group, or some of its members, to attend a trading-meeting they return to the main camp and collect their goods. If the group's wanderings take it very far from the main camp a party may be sent back to it to collect whatever is of value, which will then be placed in the new main camp that is built in the area the group is now exploiting. The old main camp is then abandoned.

Temporary camps are those that are used by the group in its movements in search of food. The shelters may not be of any such strength nor built so high as those of a main camp; less attention is paid to the roughness of the area that it is built in; and it may be near a small or a fluctuating water-supply. It is known that less time is to be spent there, and none of the extra small amenities of the main camp will be provided. For example, in a main camp a notched log-way may be constructed down the slope to the water, and this may even be furnished with a hand-rail; but no temporary camp would normally be equipped with this.

The type of shelter that is built in a travelling camp is much flimsier than in other camps. It is built by an individual or small party having occasion to travel for some time apart from the group; perhaps on a hunting trip that lasts more than a day, or in quest of deposits of resin, or when goods have to be taken

down to a trading meeting. Logs are laid a few inches from the ground and a flimsy leaning shelter is erected as a roof and back: the cooking-place is made directly on the ground at the front. It is usually occupied only for one night, or at most a very few, and is meagrely constructed without great care or effort.

The Western Penan make the same linguistic distinctions between the three types of camp, but the forms and uses of them differ. The main camp is in the form of a village. The huts are usually well made, with strong roofs and walls often made of large expanses of tree-bark, grouped on easy ground near to a stream or small river. The Western Penan do not build on high ground and regard it as a characteristic of Eastern Penan to build on ridges and hills. Nor is their main camp one that is occupied only for a short time. It may be the main camp for a matter of months, or a year, or even (they say) for as long as two years. For example, the Penan Silat were at one time in the headwaters of the Paong, and for two years they used one main camp. If the main camp is by a river and the area is rich the Western Penan may make canoes there, and it is this that strongly distinguishes them in Eastern Penan eyes. [Cf. Urquhart, 1951, p.531.] The Penan Menalui are said to have first learned to make canoes from Kayan in the Linau, and whenever the circumstances are such that it is worthwhile to

make canoes for hunting-trips and for sago-parties they make them. In the past they also used to make bark-canoes that could be discarded after crossing such large rivers as the Linau.

The Western Penan camp is in effect a village, but less readily marked as such because the custom of the settled tribes in Borneo is to build enormous longhouses. Urquhart gives a good illustration of the main camp of the Penan Gang, in the headwaters of the Para river, when they 'had been nearly two years in the area ... and expected to remain there for another year' [Urquhart, 1951, Pl.XVa; pp.509-510]. As the illustration shows, the camp is of considerable solidity. It would be quite impossible to take it for an Eastern Penan camp. [Cf. also Furness, 1902, p.172.] Urquhart visited them in March 1950; in the fall of 1951 they were reported to be moving into the Belaga; and when I went in search of them in February 1952 they were said to be in the Penyun, a tributary of the Belaga.

The elder of the group normally remains in the main camp with other old people who no longer go hunting or collecting every day, many women and children, and the sick. While it is possible the hunters and food-gathering parties leave the camp every morning and return in the evening; but as time goes by the area is despoiled, and although hunters may not be forced so far

or long away the parties collecting fruits or working sago may have to stay away for days or even weeks, making temporary camps in the process very similar to the fashion of the Eastern Penan. But unless the group as a whole is moving from one area to another where it will make a new main camp this is the only use of the temporary camp. A family or a number of families make their temporary camps in much the same way as the Eastern Penan group does in its exploitation of an area; and they may then either move on and establish another temporary camp or will return to the main camp with what they have secured. The travelling camps, usually used for one night, are the same as those of the Eastern Penan and are used on the same occasions.

It is clear then that the methods of exploitation by the two tribes are very different. The Eastern Penan main camp is often little more than a cache, while the whole group - including old and sick and pregnant - moves from temporary camp to temporary camp. The Western Penan main camp is a village, a genuine base from which individuals or parties set out in systematic exploitation of the resources of the territory. It is a source of considerable security, a home that waits and to which well-known landmarks and trails lead. The Eastern Penan camp, on the contrary, is nearly always empty; and a hunter from even a temporary camp who has

been a few days away may well return to the camp he left to find it empty, and he will be expected to follow the tracks left by the group, as he unpeturbedly will.

It is this different method that seems to enable the Western Penan to maintain such large groups as they sometimes do. It is true that a number of Western groups are no larger than those of the Eastern Penan (see Appendix), but then no Eastern Penan group is (or, I think, could be) as large as that of the Penan Gong or the Penan Danum (reported to be as numerous as the Penan Silat groups of Kelame, Savup, and Uke put together). It is probable too that it is this mode of life that has led to so many Western Penan groups settling while only one Eastern Penan group has yet done so. Indeed, apart from their small and unreliable crops of rice and (more important) cassava, the settled camps of the Penan Silat live very much the same life as they used to only a few years ago in their main camps. (Those groups that have been settled for generations, as opposed to those that are still in camps and in the process of settling, live for the most part like the settled peoples near whom they have their houses.)

Though Western Penan do not usually have more food than the Eastern Penan and do not appear better nourished they do have certain advantages derived from their more efficient system of

economic organisation. The most obvious of these is that the sick need never have to drag their way with the group when it has become imperative (as it so often does among the Eastern Penan) to move on to another area, and pregnant women can the more easily bear the unease and the pains of their confinements. Among the Eastern Penan, in contrast, a person who is too sick to walk is carried: one lad, Man, in Jengilan's group, whose left thigh was being eaten away by an enormous stinking yaw, had been carried from camp to camp by his brother for over two years. A woman may have to accompany the group when she is near her time, and then three days after the birth have to walk again. (It is not true that Penan women are blessed 'in animal fashion' with easy pregnancy and labour. As her time approaches a Western Penan woman is very glad to assuage her sickness and pain by resting for days in the main camp, and she appreciates the security of the camp in the time of her weakness after the birth.)

Another possible advantage is the cultural one, for in a Western Penan main camp one might expect greater opportunities for the birth of specialised arts and crafts. I cannot however point to any evidence that such is the case, for although the Western Penan make blowpipes and work iron while the Eastern Penan do not I believe that the latter could be equally capable, with

their own economic system, of these technical works.

IV

The staple food of the Penan is the sago-palm, found scattered singly or in small clusters at wide intervals in the forest. It takes between nine and fifteen years to reach its limit of growth [Burkill, 1935, p.1460] and hunters note the position and degree of maturity of each growth they see for reference even years hence. It is not easy to find, in spite of its distinct form, because the view in the forest is so restricted that one cannot merely survey a large area and discern its fronded branches. It has to be searched for by a careful quartering of the land, and there is no knowing that the next slight ridge does not conceal a palm big enough to feed a family for a week. Next in importance, but first in the imagination of Penan, is the wild pig that is found everywhere in the interior. The natives say that it is subject to migratory tendencies and that whole herds of pig move across country together, but the only efficient way to seek it is with a hunting dog. The settled tribes sell dogs to the Penan, and a good one may cost as much as a good blowpipe. After the pig comes the monkey. All kinds of monkey are eaten, and in particular

a grey monkey with a white ruff and blackish face (probably _semnopithecus_) whose body may contain a bezoar stone. Other game consists of deer of various types and sizes, large snakes, lizards, and almost any bird or animal. The Western Penan have learned the use of the casting net for catching fish in shallow waters, and they also know how to make dams and use tuba root for the mass stupefaction of the fish by poisoning the water. Today they also acquire through trade modern European fish-hooks which they use on pliant fishing-rods, particularly the women. Once a year there is the fruit-season that has been mentioned earlier.

Of all these foods the most important, structurally as well as to the appetite of the Penan, is the sago-palm. The Penan can live without any sort of meat or fish, and fruit is not very important; but they cannot live without sago. The movements of the group are determined by where the palms lie and in essence a group moves about the country from one cluster of sago-palms to another. In answer to any query as to why a group went to certain places the Penan answer: 'Because there was sago there' or 'Because the settled peoples told us there was sago there' or 'Because we were looking for sago'. The constraint to move is not any form of political pressure, nor is it any sort of primitive wanderlust: it is the constant need to find sago. And, as we have seen in

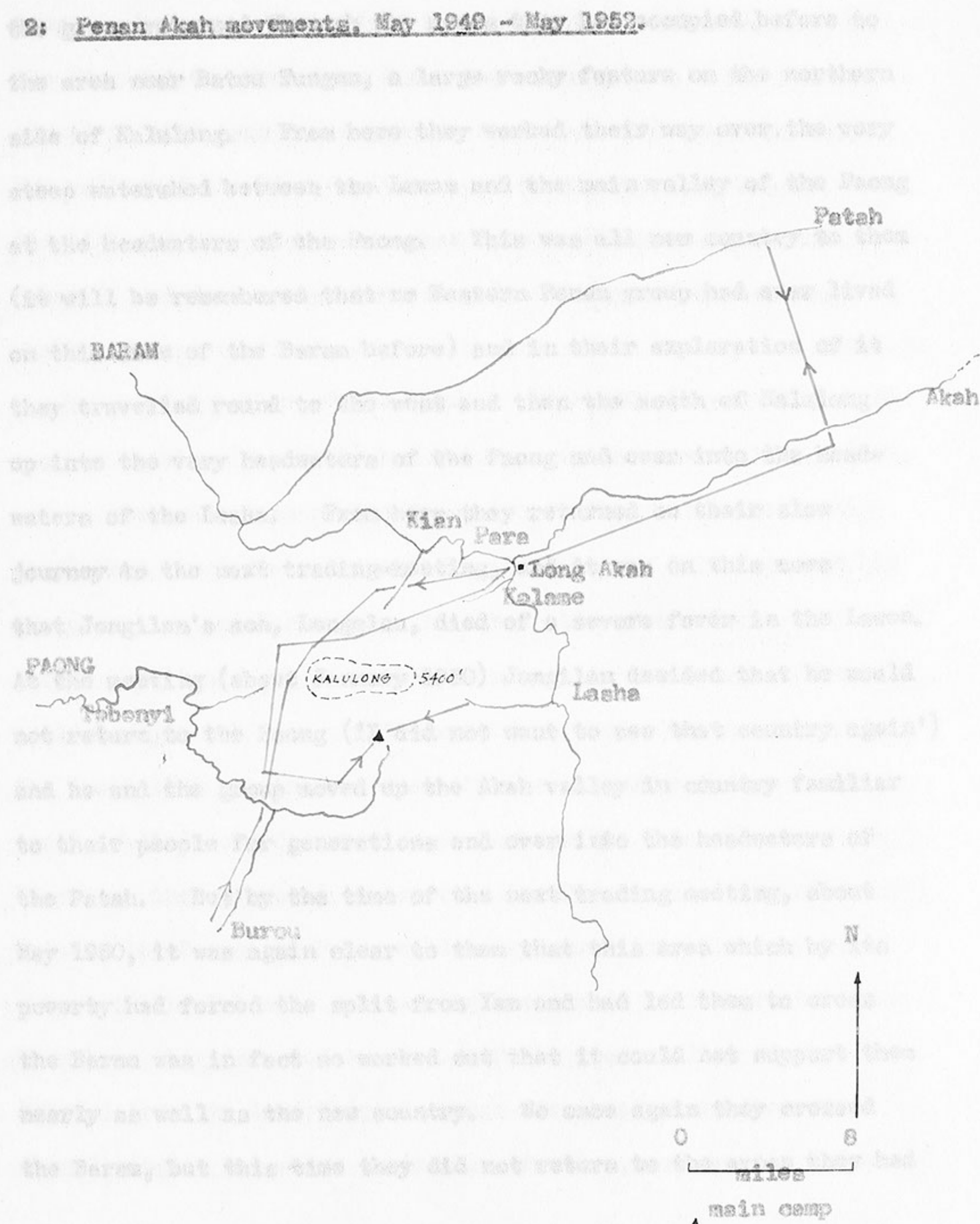
ch.3, the constant fission of groups that is such a striking characteristic and which has resulted in the form of Penan society as we see it today, is due to the quantity and the distribution of sago-palms.

The figure on p.112 gives a very highly schematised idea of the movements of one group of Penan Akah, that under the elder Jəngilan. According to Penan account these movements took place over a period of three years, from about May 1949 to May 1952.

After a trading meeting at Long Akah this group crossed the Baram with the help of the Kənyah and went up the valley of the Kəlame towards the north of the Kalulong massif. They lived in the area of Long Sungan for a time and then moved over the watershed between the Kəlame and the Kəluan, and from the Kəluan returned to the next trading meeting at Long Akah. These movements, then, in which they never camped more than eight miles (as a plane flies) from Long Akah, occupied about three or four months. This may help to give an idea of how greatly convoluted the land is, how eight air-miles may prove on the ground to be thirty or more, and how in areas that on the map are very small hunters may roam for days in their search for game and the sago-palms that may be hidden in any small valley.

From this meeting, which may have been about September 1949,

2: Penan Akah movements, May 1949 - May 1952.



the group returned through the areas they had occupied before to the area near Batou Tungun, a large rocky feature on the northern side of Kalulong. From here they worked their way over the very steep watershed between the Lawen and the main valley of the Paong at the headwaters of the Paong. This was all new country to them (it will be remembered that no Eastern Penan group had ever lived on this side of the Baram before) and in their exploration of it they travelled round to the west and then the south of Kalulong up into the very headwaters of the Paong and over into the headwaters of the Lasha. From here they returned on their slow journey to the next trading-meeting, and it was on this move that Jengilan's son, Lengalau, died of a severe fever in the Lawen. At the meeting (about January 1950) Jengilan decided that he would not return to the Paong ('I did not want to see that country again') and he and the group moved up the Akah valley in country familiar to their people for generations and over into the headwaters of the Patah. But by the time of the next trading meeting, about May 1950, it was again clear to them that this area which by its poverty had forced the split from Yen and had led them to cross the Baram was in fact so worked out that it could not support them nearly as well as the new country. So once again they crossed the Baram, but this time they did not return to the areas they had

lived in before. They lived to the north of Kelame valley, in the Liem not far from Long Para, and according to their account stayed in that area for a year. From here they moved on into the valley of the Kian, up this near to the Kalulong massif, over the high and very steep watershed into the headwaters of the Tebenyi, and down across the Paong (in all these reaches very shallow except in flood, and easily crossed at the rapids) into the large rich valley of the Burou. From here they went back to another meeting (May 1951) but returned to the same valley. Here, and in the headwaters of the Paong (where they built their main camp) they lived for some months. In February 1952 Maya and his group came up the Lesha from the other side of the Baram and joined Jongilan's group at this main camp in the Buang. They all went slowly north into the Tebenyi, from where they went over to the April 1952 meeting. After this meeting they followed the trail of their old deserted camps back up the Kelame, across the Liwen, up the watershed (which even the Penan call 'perpendicular') between the Baram and Paong valleys and over into the very headwaters of the Tebenyi, just on the Paong side of the great ridge. From here they intended to move down the great valley of the Tebenyi (via the Lawatlong, in whose very headwaters they were then living); but where their slow, devious, and cruelly arduous

travels would take them depended on where sago-palm shoots had happened to sprout ten years earlier.

Where ch.3 gave long-range movements covering a century and a half this brief account has tried to present something of the movements of one group over a period of two or three years. It is unsatisfactory, in that I cannot be certain of the dates and the moves may have covered two years rather than three. Also there are no detailed maps of this area. Though I have been in it I cannot therefore mark on the sketch-map where the Liwen is, nor can I mark the course of the Tebanyi.

To move onto a larger scale would describe where the Penan live and move from day to day and from week to week; but here the difficulty is that most of the small streams and ridges have no names even for Penan, and even if they did would not appear on any map. My description must stop here. For the moment all I can do is to emphasise again the terrible nature of this wild land, the difficulties and dangers even to Penan of constantly travelling over it, and to stress how slow and circuitous a process it is. The distances, represented on a map, appear petty; but in terms of steep ridges, muddy slopes, leeches on the mouldering deposits of leaves from generations past, crumbling limestone footholds above great drops, rotting moss-covered logs, and trails that

follow the stony beds of streams curving through the green dankness of the forest, they are anything but petty. And for the old, the pregnant, the sick, and women carrying household goods as well as small children, to move camp by even a few hours' or half a day's journey is an ordeal. No wonder that even the Penan, schooled to a life of affliction in this brutal land, say: 'Our life is very hard in the forest, and though we are used to it, it is very difficult'.

V

Hunters go out from the camp every morning unless there is very heavy rain or the high ridges on which they live are deep in mist. Sometimes they go in pairs, but usually singly, for this covers the country ahead more effectively. (Sometimes a group will be in an area known to it, or at least to the older members, but we will assume that in the course of its devious migrations it has come to unknown country.) The hunter with his dog will hope to get onto the track of pig or other game, while he without a dog will roam in pursuit of the whooping bands of monkeys and relying on his own sharp eyes for the detection of game. One thing that has not been exaggerated about such hunters is their ability to

perceive signs or animals that a European has great difficulty in seeing even when they are pointed out to him, and that while on the move through dense jungle. A hunter picking his way where there is no trail will, with no sound or movement to guide him, suddenly stop and point upwards to a small brown monkey nestling high against the trunk of a tall tree. He has been constantly grought up to such a standard of observation, but it is still amazing. While searching for game he keeps on the lookout for sago-palms or any other form of edible: maybe he will note the position of a fruit tree that will bear in a few months time, or he will cut down a spiky fronded plant that has an edible sappy heart that can be eaten as a vegetable with sago. He takes no food with him and usually intends to return to camp the same evening, with or without game; but he may be carried far afield in pursuit of an animal and find himself forced to shelter away from camp for a night. If he has a pig or a monkey he carries back to camp the whole animal. It is seldom that an animal that he kills will be too heavy for a Penan to carry, but a stag might prove so, and then part would be brought in and the rest hung in a tree to be collected the next day.

Any form of game is killed with a poisoned dart from the blowpipe. Untipped darts are used for small game such as monkeys, and

tipped ones for pig and deer. The tip is triangular and fixed to the dart with gum or wild rubber: it used to be made of bamboo, but today it is made of sharp triangles cut from kerosene cans that make their ways up the rivers to the longhouses of the settled tribes. The head is not only sharper and able to pierce thick skin and fur but also offers a greater surface for the carriage of the poison and easily detaches itself in the wound.

It is the reports of the hunters about distant sago-palms that guide the group in its next move from camp when the palms in its area are finished.

While the hunters are away small groups of men and women go out to the sago-palms in the area, equipped with parangs and axes, and the two types of mat used in the leaching of sago. If the palms are many and close together several men and women may go together, but often a man and his wife or mistress go alone to work a single palm. The man cuts down the palm and lops off the young branches that contain edible pith, and then splits the trunk into five-foot lengths. While he is doing this the woman erects a framework of sticks over or by the edge of a stream or a pool. In the bottom of this she puts a finely-woven mat, and in the top a looser-woven one. Some Penan in the Balui area have adopted an upper mat woven into a bucket-shape [Urquhart, 1951,

Pl.XVIa]. This is a new development, and is said to have been copied from the Punan Busang. The type in my illustration (Pl.6) is the traditional one. If they are accompanied by children these may help in these tasks in small ways, but they are more likely to nothing or to look for amusement in the vicinity. The man then either makes a sago-pounder or takes from the carrying-basket one that he has brought with him. This is a length of hard wood sharpened to a chisel-edge and fitted with a detachable handle at right angles on one end. With this, standing on or astride the half-trunk, he strikes at the softer inside of the palm, fraying it into a mass of separate coarse fibrous poundings (Pl.5). This is continued until only the scraped hard bark is left. It is very hard work, and not at all 'scooping out the soft pith' that a writer in an American geographical magazine has written of. The woman takes these poundings and puts them in the upper mat: over them she pours water from a bark container (or an aluminium trade-bowl) and leaches them by stamping on them and pressing them with her foot between the folds of the mat. From this mat the water runs through, carrying the starchy edible matter from the wood, which is then trapped by the fine mat in which it remains as a pinkish white deposit of coarse flour. The yield from one trunk ranges from 250 to 660 lbs but is said sometimes to reach 1200 lbs.

5: Sago-poundings stripped from bark of split trunk

6: Leaching sago-poundings

[Burkill, 1935, p.1461.] This is also work of the harshest nature, and it continues almost without rest from early morning to near dusk. The strain on a woman's back and feet of continually doing this work is so terribly wearing that it is no wonder that Penan women literally wear out quickly. But it is the only method of preparing their staple food that is open to them.

In the evening the man carries home the soggy solid mass of sago-flour. There it is prepared in a variety of ways of little importance to describe here, but usually as a stiff sort of porridge that is dark brown, very glutinous (it looks rather like fish glue), slightly gritty, and having little taste. It contains about 80 per cent starch (this may rise to 84 or 85 per cent), 16 per cent water, and 2 per cent nitrogenous substances with a very little ash [Burkill, 1935, p.1462]. It is eaten with an eating-stick: the Eastern Penan use a form that is split into four prongs at the end, and the Western Penan use an entirely different one that is bent at a hammered joint to make a sort of spatulate chop-sticks (specimens of both may be seen in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford).

Game is hunted, brought to camp, skinned and cut up by the men and cooked by the women. Although meat is sometimes grilled in a very rough fashion (snake, for example, nearly always is) the

usual method of cooking is to boil it for hours in a shallow cooking-pan. Formerly the pan was made of bark, curled up at the ends and pinned with wood into a rectangular vessel, but this could be used only two or three times before it burned through. Today the Chinese type iron cooking pan of varying sizes is used by all Penan, and the bark one is seen only when men on journeys choose to make it. There is no strict division of labour about preparing or cooking food: all the men can do what simple cooking is required, and will do so if their wives are ill or disinclined to. On hunting trips and other journeys men do all their own cooking unless they are accompanied by a woman.

In the fruit-season anyone may bring fruit into camp: returning hunters, or sago-parties, or older children who have been allowed to go to the nearer trees. Normally only two types of fruit are boiled or otherwise cooked: one because it is impossibly acrid to eat without boiling, and the other because boiling brings out its pleasant flavour and makes it softer. This is the only time of the year when Penan can really count on full bellies: not only is there the fruit in itself, but the pigs at this time of the year are also fat with it. There is some interest in a description of the Penan way of plucking fruit. They do not pluck the individual fruits, and when I suggested that they might replied

that no one could have the patience for such a slow task. Instead they pull off the complete branches that bear the fruit and carry them home like this. When it was pointed out to them that this was a wasteful method and that it prevented the tree from bearing in those places for years they replied that their ancestors had always gathered fruit in that way, and 'there is still plenty of fruit'. If the stones in the fruit are small enough the Penan swallow these too, in order to feel full. Judging from the evidences around any camp they manage to excrete them without harm.

In all the activities spoken of so far there is little strict division of labour according to the nature of the task. Men make those parts of carrying-baskets that require strength, and leave the women to finish them off with the woven back. Men normally pound the sago but there is nothing in the nature of it that would prevent a woman also doing this, if her husband hurt himself, perhaps. Similarly, Penan say that if the circumstances called for it men could even leach the sago-poundings, though it had never happened. Men are smiths (any men) and women do not have any part in iron-working, but there would be nothing against a woman working the bellows. Cooking, as we have seen, can be done equally by men or women. All the crafts that men perform are done by any man; and all that women perform, by any woman. Generally, division of

labour is according to the strength demanded in any stage of any task. There is no specialisation of any sort, no person practising iron-working or weaving of mats to the exclusion of all else, but all men and women are generally skilled in all the tasks broadly allotted to them.

VI

The two tribes differ slightly in their distribution of food, but the basic principle is identical: food of any sort is shared equally among all members of the group.

The Eastern Penan system is common to both tribes and is the simpler to describe. The most important food, sago, is normally obtained by the family that finds it, though if there is a clump of palms then others will also join the sago-working party to work the other palms. No man has the right to claim as his own property any natural source of food; so that when a hunter returns with report of sago-palms anyone may go and work them. As a matter of course he who first found them will go and work at least one, but there is neither necessity nor right nor advantage in the matter. However many palms are worked the sago-flour is immediately shared out on return to camp so that

each family receives an amount proportional to its size. This is not a precise sharing of course but in practice it is egalitarian.

Game of all sorts is similarly shared, and it is here that the meticulousness of the sharing is most evident. While a sago-palm always produces a large amount of food that divides into sizeable shares a small monkey or a lizard when divided among say fifteen families does not add much to the cooking-pan. The most valued type of game is pig, and its sharing may be taken as a type. The hunter who brings it in takes no part in its skinning or division, but it is etiquette for him to sit aside in silence while others who have had no hand in its killing prepare it for sharing. First the pig is skinned and the whole skin with the fat adhering to it put on one side. Then the carcass is cut into large portions, each consisting of meat of a particular quality. Thus the haunches are the most valued and are removed entire; the forelegs and shoulders are similarly detached; the lumbar region with the lower three sets of ribs; the chest and neck; and the head. The haunches then form masses of one quality of meat and a certain proportion of bone, and the other parts masses of other qualities and proportions. It would not be conceivable that the division should be such that parts of differing value were included in one section; for example, to cut off the lower part

7 & 8: Penan cooking (note pig-embryos, top left)

of a rear leg but to include the upper with the lower part of the of the spine, making an unbalanced division of the rear part of the animal.

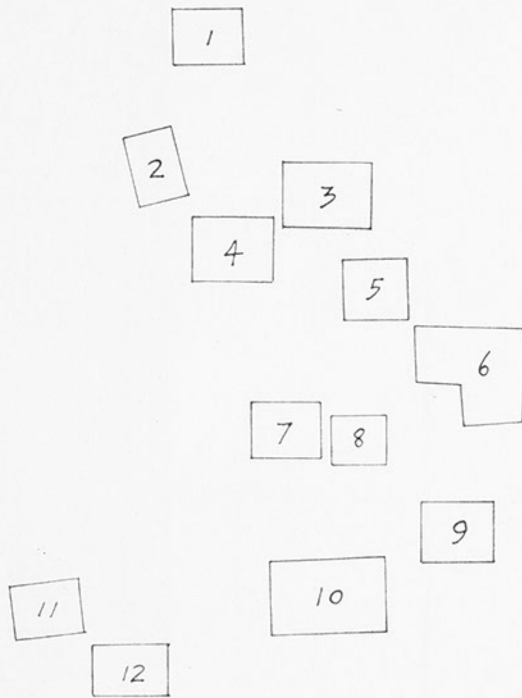
Each separate section is then divided into small parts of equal size and quality. They way in which this is done is seen more clearly with reference to a particular group, that of Penan Akah under Jengilan (see composition-diagram, p.130). In this group a pig is divided into twenty-seven shares, each of which consists of bits of meat from the several sections so divided that each share contains roughly the same amount of each part and quality: a piece of haunch and part of the knuckle, a piece of spine, some fragments of rib and attached meat, a piece of foreleg. The fat and the skin are similarly divided, cut into long strips from different parts of the body according to the thickness of the layer of fat. Each share of meat, fat, and skin is put on a skewer of bamboo or other wood. In the two tribes this has the different names of <u>solo</u> (E.) and <u>tĕdok</u> (W.). I call this 'a share', though it has nothing to do with the Penan word for 'to share', which is <u>petulat</u>. The shares are then distributed as below. In the first column I give the diagram-number of the shelter and the individuals living in it, and in the second the number of shares allotted to it:

Shelter	Shares
1	1
2	1
3	2
4	2
5	1
6	4
7	2
8	1
9	2
10	4
11	3
12	1
13	1
14	1
15	1

If we count the number of members in each shelter we see that what takes place is an efficient method of sharing and probably as efficient as could be devised without some form of weighing-apparatus. An apparently more accurate method of sharing would be to divide the first major sections into as many parts as there are members of the group, in this case into seventy-seven little pieces. But even with a large animal this would be a long, laborious, and difficult process; and with a small animal like a monkey or snake it would be practically impossible.

There are seeming anomalies in the above distribution: for example, shelters 4, 11, and 15 each have five members, but 4 gets 2 shares, 11 gets 3, and 15 gets only 1. The theory, according

LAWATLONG



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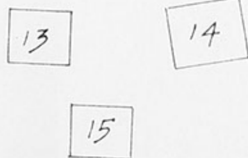

15

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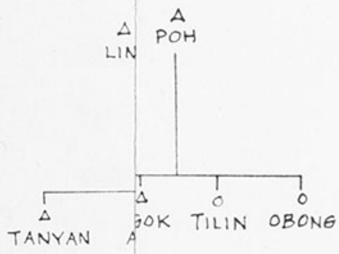
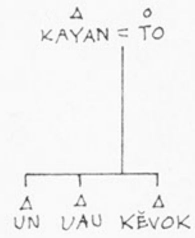


13

14

15



to the Penan, is that each individual gets the same amount of food, whether man or woman, old or young, adult or child; but in practice a child gets less and a shelter that contains a number of children will get less (fewer shares) than one that contains the same number of members but all adults. This is what has happened here. Shelter 11 contains only adults and receives more than shelters 4 and 15. Shelter 15 includes three very young children and thus receives less (one share) than 4, which comprises older individuals (two shares).

The hunter gets no more than anybody else and neither does his family as a rule. All he receives normally is a normal share of the meals. In some groups the hunter's mother is given the head of the animal but I do not know if this is agreed practice. In any case, whoever receives the head shares it after cooking, so there is still no great individual advantage.

This way of sharing is applied to any animal or to any other foodstuff that comes into the camp. One sago palm, one pig, and one bunch of fruit brought to the camp thus would give each member a meal of sago, pork, and fruit. Anything, no matter how small, is shared in this way; and I have seen a small bird the size of a sparrow broken into minute shreds and sent by children to each shelter. Usually a good day brings the group more than

the foods mentioned above: many blocks of sago flour, at least one pig, and numbers of monkeys and smaller animals such as snakes or lizards, and in season bunches of different kinds of fruit. All this will be shared, division being made by the families responsible for bringing the food in, and some of everything will be given to each member of the group.

There can be no question whatever of not sharing what food one has, nor of giving to a close kinsman more than to a more distant one, nor of favouring one individual before another for any reason of affection. Having only a little cannot be an excuse for not sharing. Tobacco is usually shared in a similar way; and a man who has begged from a Kenyah a small handful of native tobacco will pull it into the smallest of shreds so that each adult may have a pinch of it, leaving himself no more (or hardly more) than he has given to everybody else.

The goods obtained in trade are also shared to a certain extent but not in the equal way that must apply to food. [Cf. Hose, 1926, p.39.] If a man obtains a length of cotton cloth he first clothes his own immediate family, and only then makes gifts to others in the group, and then on any basis of kinship or affection that he may choose. If he gets an axe or a blowpipe this remains his private property and will not be given away merely because he

has acquired it in the same way as other things that he might be expected to share or give away. Metal bowls, beads and other trinkets, knives, and other household goods also remain inside the family whose labour earned them, though gifts from them may later be made. There is no obligation to share non-consumable goods. This is understandable, for while it may be assumed that hunger is undifferentiated other needs are not. One man may want another blowpipe to replace a split one, another may want a parang, one woman may have set her heart on a string of red beads while another prefers an aluminium bowl, one child may be old enough to ask for a knife while another is just entering the age when he should begin to wear a loincloth. All these types of goods remain private property over which the owner has uncontestable right and to which no one else can lay any claim. This is supremely shown in the case of what is today the most valued of possible possessions, a shotgun. To acquire one an individual will work to amass enough resin to meet the price, will eagerly search the guts of each monkey he kills in hope of finding a bezoar stone, and ma y even save money (left to his credit with the trader), putting off present satisfactions in order to be able to buy a gun in three or six months time. Once his, the gun is most carefully polished and lubricated with pig-fat: it is hung with care under

the driest part of the roof, and carried on the march only by its owner. Every cartridge is stored and counted, wiped with a cloth to keep it dry. No other member of the group has any claim on the ownership or use of the gun, nor would the owner lightly lend it. Even in a group where there are two guns (as there are in one) the situation is no different. But this is merely the strongest example of the principle that all material possessions, whether made by the owner or obtained through trade, are private property. The owner has sole rights in such property and to infringe such rights in any way is an offence to which Penan are very sensitive. Penan explain this difference in treatment of food and material things by saying: 'The hard things we worked for, but the food we just found'.

VII

The Western Penan share with the Eastern Penan the methods of distribution described above and their notions of private property; but in the matter of working and sharing sago they differ in certain ways. If the group as a whole has little food and one family works the only sago-palm known in the vicinity then the sago will be shared equally among all the families in the group, and to

this extent the method is common to both tribes. But this is not usually the case, and given reasonable fortune the group will have a number of palms to work, and then is seen the typically Western Penan custom of staking claims to sago-palms. A hunter sees a palm or a cluster of them and makes fronded sticks that, stuck in the ground by the palms, indicate to anybody else who should come that way that they are already the claimed property of someone else. If a man's family is hungry he will ask the owner of the palms for permission to cut one of the palms, and this permission will certainly be given. The claimant may put his mark on as many as twenty palms if he wishes, and other members of the group will not be angry at his claim, but will merely ask permission to cut what they need. He readily gives permission but 'two of the palms are really his, he will keep them, and no one may cut them down'. To cut down even one of many palms without asking the owner's permission is an offence, and to work one that 'really' belongs to the claimant without his agreement is an offence sure to lead to quarrelling and discord within the group severe enough to cause the sort of quarrel-fission that has been described in ch.3 (pp.80-1).

In a time of plenty each family finds and works its own sago palms and eats all it wishes, saving as much as it can (which is possible in a Western Penan camp); but it distributes token shares

among all the other families, sending by its children a handful or two of sago flour. Game is almost never as plentiful as it is possible for sago to be and is always carefully shared in the way described above.

This system is different, then, in that it allows persons of energy or mere fortune certain temporary advantages. In the end this does not amount to much of a practical difference, for even a Penan cannot eat when he is quite full, and if a period of scarcity comes then the reserve stock has to be shared with all the people to whom previously only token amounts had been given. But in terms other than of mere economic efficiency it is a system of more important differences, as will appear.

VIII

Allied to systematic sharing is the custom of continually making and begging for gifts. Gifts are made in any medium: the most common is food (over and above the organised distribution) but anything may be given or asked for. In a time of plenty it is one of the most striking features of Penan life that small gifts of food constantly pass from shelter to shelter. It should be appreciated that there are no regular times for meals during the

day, and that at any moment there is sure to be someone in some shelter either preparing or cooking or eating food; and whenever anyone eats he shares or at very least offers to share. Such casual gifts are not made to everybody or even in equal fashion but may be limited to certain close kinsmen or immediate neighbours or to any member of another shelter who happens to be very near. It would be very bad manners to eat without inviting anyone near to share.

Gifts of a material nature, such as beads or parangs, are not made as frequently or as casually as gifts of food are. A man who returns from a trading meeting with a fair stock of goods will always make gifts from it; but once formal gifts have been made he will in practice be immune from obligation to give more. But if he has two of anything then he is bound to be asked for one by someone and will be morally bound to give it.

An occasion of gift-making is the visit of a member of another group: it does not matter whether he is Eastern or Western Penan, settled or nomadic. Such a meeting, whether it is a single visitor or whether there is a meeting between two groups (as at a trading meeting) is always marked by an interchange of gifts. Typical such gifts are blowpipe darts (which are, incidentally, easily made by the hundred), particularly when the ties between

the parties are not very close; but on occasion the gifts may be of considerable value. It is by means of begging, for example, that members of groups that do not attend trading meetings can acquire blowpipes and parangs from groups that do, and to this extent it is possible for the former to be parasitic. Where the relationship is close enough nothing can be refused. In one case a member of the Penan Paro met Jengilan's group when he was on a hunting trip, claimed kinship as a fellow Penan, and was naturally accepted. One elder in the group had a very good parang, and the Penan Paro begged for it before he left. It was the only one that his new kinsman owned, and the Penan Paro could easily have acquired one by other means and this was known to the other. But the occasion was one that called for a gift, a kinsman had been visiting and was departing. Said the owner of the parang: 'He asked me for it, so what could I do?'

It is impossible to enter any sort of relationship with Penan or to live with them without submitting to incessant begging for gifts, and in particular any of ones possessions that happen to have caught their eye. Even Penan, I believe, get tired of hearing the word <u>monat</u>, 'give'.

There is one very important aspect of this. There is no word in the Penan language for 'thank you' and so far as it is

possible to ascertain such a thing they feel no gratitude. Gifts are concomitants of relationships and must be given. If you are a friend or a kinsman you must make gifts, and if you do this then you are behaving properly. It is no credit to you, but it would be greatly to your discredit if you did not make gifts. If you are in some sort of relationship with another person and he makes you a gift, that is how it should be; but if he does not make a gift then you are properly incensed at his aberrant behaviour. I once tried to ask an intelligent Penan elder if he felt gratitude when he received a gift. I asked him if he felt happy; but he could not understand the word 'happy' in such a context. I asked him if he felt easy-hearted (contented), and he said that he did, and I thought I had my answer. But he went on to explain: 'That is, I would not feel angry. I should certainly feel angry if I werent given it'. I asked why Penan did not say thank you in the way that was possible in languages like Malay; and he answered: 'Why should a man say anything when he was given something? He would certainly say something if he did not want it'.

IX

Sharing and gift-making go on all the time among the Eastern Penan

and in such an equable fashion that one soon ceases to notice it; and if one receives anything one automatically shares it with others as part of normal good manners. To Eastern Penan it is unthinkable that this sharing should not take place among themselves, and they speak with amused superiority of the settled peoples - as of people who do not know better - and their selfishness in not behaving as Penan do.

The Western Penan, though, are very different in their attitude to sharing. Part of the difficulty of living with them comes from their aggrieved air, their readiness to see in behaviour towards themselves a tendency to evade obligations, and their quarrelling that follows any imagined slight or unfairness in sharing. (While I am concerned primarily with the nomadic Penan this attitude is shared also by a number of the settled groups, by those who are still recognisably Penan and not assimilated wholly to Milano or Malay. It may be this attitude among them that partly accounts for the reaction of one administrative officer to the Penan settled at the Kemulu, when he found them 'almost loathesome in their appearance and habits' [Ward, 1909].) Furness writes exactly of Western Penan whom he met in the Nyivung that 'a tone of petulant but resigned remonstrance was the common and invariable intonation of each and all' [Furness, 1902, p.174];

but the resignation is shallow and the petulance very often breaks out into open quarrelling. It is very seldom indeed that a day among Western Penan passes without being marked by quarrels, very often of an hysterical violence. They say that this quarrelling is 'typical of Penan' and that all Penan quarrel, though it is quite untrue of Eastern Penan. It will be recalled, too, that there is no quarrel-fission among Eastern Penan (p.80). Its cause is most often about supposedly niggardly sharing or about failure to share or about the adoption of subterfuges meant to conceal that there is anything to share.

Similarly, when Western Penan make a gift I believe they keep a careful check on whether it is returned and then on whether the return is commensurate with the original gift. It is certain that quarrelling will break out over failure to make some gift in return or over a gift that is thought not to match what it acknowledges. This is an attitude that I believe to be quite foreign to the Eastern Penan. However, the Western Penan take it so much for granted that they believe such behaviour to be typical of all Penan, and say that even their ancestors used to quarrel violently over food, its claiming and its sharing: 'they quarrelled over sago palms and they quarrelled over fruit'.

I do not believe that the Eastern Penan try to evade their

obligations in these matters. A hunter who has been away for a day or more will bring in his kill to the camp but will say to the others that there had been another monkey but that he had been so hungry that he had eaten it himself. This cannot be called an apology in the formal sense, for the Penan have no word for apology and no expression to say they are sorry for some commission or omission, but in effect that is what it is. The Penan say: 'He has eaten apart from us, and he tells us so that we shall not be displeased with him'. It makes no difference that if the hunter had wished to conceal what he had done no one could have known of it.

The Western Penan, however, do try to evade sharing. They expect this of each other, and from this expectation derives, I suppose, their air of aggrieved suspicion. It is a common complaint of Western Penan old people that today the young people do not share in the way they ought to, even though they will admit that their forefathers quarrelled over a similar fault. Also it is possible to observe many acts of petty meanness in a Western Penan camp: a couple will rise in the middle of the night, for example, to cook and eat when no one else is awake to demand a share by their mere presence. It is true that Penan eat at any time and fairly frequently get up in the night to eat; but there

9: Western Penan main camp, interior.

are occasions when it is impossible to mistake the intent. Or a woman who has just cooked some sago-cakes will put them hurriedly away when someone else is seen to approach the shelter. Or a woman may say that she has nothing when she is requested to give a little pig-fat, though it has been certainly known to me that she was lying. (It is interesting that in such a case as the last there was never any shame before me when a subsequent disclosure of the pig-fat showed the lie. I was one of the family and therefore expected to share complicity in the concealment and the refusal to meet a proper request.)

The different attitudes of the two divisions of the Penan are also shown in their stated reasons for sharing. Both say that they share because it is Penan custom, what their ancestors did before them; but beyond that the Eastern Penan say 'We share because if we did not some people would go hungry while others had food', and the Western Penan say 'We share because if we did not people would be angry with us, and we fear their anger'.

X

The Penan method of sharing food is an efficient way of distribution that offers many advantages over other individualistic ways that

would place a premium on energy or skill or invention and reward this with a larger or more secure food-supply for an individual or for his family. It is in short a communistic system and the Penan are one of the probably very few societies that it is proper to describe so. By far the most important natural valuable is food, and all sources of food are common to all Penan. Exloitation of these sources is such that no individual profits from them to the deprivation of others. There is an immediately apparent possible disadvantage, that an individual might laze or feign sickness and thus live at the expense of the group. But the Penan have a ready answer that there are no Penan who would behave like that. This is not strictly true, for there is one Eastern Penan who is said to do no work and to live entirely off the labour of his father and the other members of the group; but no woman will marry him, and the Penan believe him to be mad. Generally, speaking, though, I believe their answer is correct, and that such conduct is impossible to anyone who would live an otherwise normal life. Among Western Penan I have, though, seen cases of sickness that seemed to me feigned, though not even those closest to me would admit that I might be right. In one case a relatively young man lay for days on his sleeping-place, sleeping and eating and making toys for his children, while his wife went out day after

day to work sago and collect fruit. But one day she turned on him and upbraided him for not hunting or working: she stood there trembling and spitting, screaming hoarsely at him: 'Whose hands got the sago that we eat, eh? Whose hands got the fruit that we eat? Whose hands, eh? Whose hands? My hands! My hands!' The next day he set out from camp early and was away all day, gathering canes for mat-making, and the day after that he was away half the day collecting fruit; but this wearied him, and complaining of sick weakness he took to his sleeping-place again.

It is not possible for the members of a group to deny to a drone as much food as they give to a working man, for it is impossible to deny food to a fellow-Penan. To eat apart is not only the worst of manners: it is to cut yourself off from your kinsmen. To deny food to anyone is to refuse to admit kinship, to cut him off as a stranger and worse. In this way there is obviously a 'meaning' to sharing beyond the economic effects, and one that Pena themselves recognise and can formulate.

Whether we can say there is any sociological meaning is another matter. Radcliffe-Brown says of the Andaman Islanders, a people in many respects similar to Penan and having also a system of sharing food (though less equitable than that of the Penan), that 'The social importance of food is not that it satisfies hunger,

but that in such a community as an Andamanese camp or village an enormously large proportion of the activities are concerned with the getting and consuming of food, and that in these activities, with their daily instances of collaboration and mutual aid, there continuously occur those inter-relations of interests which bind the individual men, women and children into a society' [Radcliffe-Brown, 1959, p.44].

The term 'social importance' is used in two ways, one of which might better be designated 'sociological importance'. Thus it might be true that the place of food in Penan life and the methods of sharing and obtaining it have for a certain sociologist a significance that accords with his abstract way of looking at this society, and this is its sociological importance, i.e. its importance within a sociological scheme and to the deviser of that scheme. The kind of importance that the members of the society attach to food and the significance they give the institutions connected with it is a matter of social importance.

Something of the sociological importance of food has already been given: viz. its part in directing the migration and determining the fission of any Penan group. It would be trivially platitudinous to say that the sociological importance of food in a Penan group is

that it satisfies hunger (and thus ensures the physical continuance of the members of the group). It is true that it is in connection with food that the greater part of inter-relationships occur among the Penan, but sociologically its role is as a medium through which are expressed the values of kinship and group-membership. It would be an over-emphasis to describe food as a determinant of these relationships and values, or as a social element without which they could not be of the importance that they are. But this cannot be seen yet, and the matter for the moment is that there is not much point in speaking of food as though its sociological importance could be that it satisfies hunger.

On the other hand, it is untrue that to the Penan the social importance of food (and this is what Radcliffe-Brown is speaking of) is that it provides opportunities for certain relationships binding the group together but not that it satisfies hunger. Radcliffe-Brown's 'social importance' underlies the 'social value' of food, and this value is one that is recognised by the members of the society [Radcliffe-Brown, 1939, p.22]. The Penan seek food and engage in the several relationships concerned in order to eat and avoid hunger. One of the easiest words on their lips is 'hunger' and it is a thought seldom far from them. Food is their most constant preoccupation, but it is because they have to

extract it from a difficult and uncertain economy that they occupy their minds so much with it. (This can be substantiated, I think, by reference to a group that has a secure rice-crop and other means of obtaining food.) I cannot see any way in which it could be truly said that the social importance attached to food by Penan derives from their appreciation of the value of solidarity (or any other value of group cohesion or stability) inhering in the relationships occurring in getting and sharing food. If Radcliffe-Brown had been hungry with the Andamanese he might not have found it so easy to propose such a view.

This is not a criticism of Radcliffe-Brown's views on the people he studied, but the Andamanese are similar to the Penan, and his interpretation of the place of food in their society ought to hold good to some extent for the Penan. At any rate the theory is testable in Penan society as it is not in most societies we know. If it were about sociological importance then it might reasonably be thought apt to the Penan material. But it is not, in the context (if it were it could not significantly be considered an alternative to a physiological truism) and therefore is about social importance. In this sense it is certainly untrue of the Penan.

5 T H E   T R I B E

I

The Penan people number fewer than 5000. A fairly certain minimum figure is 2626. This covers the groups in the Third, Fourth, and Fifth administrative divisions of Sarawak, in Brunei, and in Indonesian Borneo. The map shows where the groups are, and the Appendix lists them with their strengths and the names of their elders. (The 1947 census [Noakes, 1950] gave a total of 1852 'Nomadic Punan' and 2035 'Penan and settled Punan'; but these figures do not include the people in Indonesian Borneo and do include, through the shaky ethnography of the census, people who are not Penan, so the figures are not very useful.)

There are about 69 groups. I use the word 'group' instead of 'horde' or 'band' for a number of reasons. The word 'horde', in spite of its use by anthropologists working among Australian aboriginals, still retains connotations that make it to me inappropriate for the description of Penan. 'Band' might do well enough for the nomad aggregates but is unsuitable to describe a Penan settlement similar in size and organisation to the nomad aggregate. The word 'group', though it does not in itself say

anything about the nature of the aggregate, as 'band' does, can be used to indicate both a nomadic and a settled community.

I say that there are 'about' 69 groups because I merely assume (on the basis of reports from the Bahau region) that the Penan Luda now form two groups (p.74); and because just before I left Borneo I heard of a small group of Eastern Penan for the first time, so that there may well be groups that I have not heard of. Especially in the Tuto area there may be groups that I have not listed: Harrisson [1949 (18), p.154] writes of six groups of 'Tutoh Punans', while I have listed fewer than this. However, Harrisson neither names nor locates the groups he mentions, and any group may be now in the Apo and another time in the Tuto, so it is difficult to gauge how far inaccurate my list may be.

The Eastern Penan comprise 33 groups, of which one is settled. The Western Penan comprise 36 groups, of which 16 are settled (I count the Penan Beluwei and the Penan Apat at Long Nyivung as one group for this enumeratory purpose). In what follows I restrict myself to describing the nomadic groups in the main: the settled groups share much with their nomadic relatives, but it is in that they are nomadic that the Penan are distinctive and interesting as a society.

It will be noticed from consideration of the Appendix that

the average size of an Eastern Penan group is smaller than that of a Western Penan group: 30 as against 42. More significant is tha fact that the largest Eastern group (76) is much smaller than the largest nomadic Western group (158). Some understanding of this fact has been given in ch.4. (Without it affecting the main point, there is certain doubt about the exact size of the Penan Gang, the largest nomadic group recorded. My informants, Penan Gang and others who have visited this group and know it well, have given me names totalling 121 individuals, including very small children. This figure relates to early 1952. Urquhart, who has visited this group, gives very detailed material and makes the total to be 158 [Urquhart, 1951, p.515]. I mention my smaller figure because 158 is so very much bigger than any other group, and bigger than I should have supposed able to maintain itself. Also there are doubts raised by another account of Urquhart's. In 1950 he reported that 'Since the 1947 census this tribe ['Punan Gang'] has increased from 114 to 158.' [SG, June7, 1950, p.159], so there is obviously some factor other than natural increase affecting the discrepancy between the various totals.)

The two tribes, Eastern Penan and Western Penan, regard themselves as one people, as against other nomads and the settled peoples. This acknowledgement does not lie merely in the fact

that they call themselves 'Penan'. They may also call the Punan 'Penan' (p.35) and may even describe other nomads, such as the Ukit, as such. But they do not at all mean thereby that these others are one people with them. Although the word 'Penan' has no meaning of its own that the Penan can explain, and although they deny that it means anything except as the designation of themselves, it has the contextual significance of the word 'nomad'. More than this, it means people who have always been nomadic. Thus they will say that the Ukit are 'proper Penan, they have always lived in the forest' (I repeat, this in no way indicates that they regard themselves as one people with the Ukit) but they say of the Lugat, 'They are not proper Penan, they were formerly settled and then they became nomadic and lived in the forest'. The Penan who have settled, such as the Penan Paro, speak of the nomadic Penan as being Penan, but do not apply this name to themselves except in identification or in distinction of themselves from settled peoples such as the Sebup or the Kenyah. Thus when questioned about a certain custom common to the nomadic groups but which they have abandoned they say: 'We do not do that: that is what the Penan do' or 'That is what the real Penan do'. But in speaking thus they do not for one moment mean that they are not one people with the nomadic groups, for they specifically say that they are and align

themselves with the nomadic Penan as against all other peoples, nomadic or settled.

Their nomadism is that feature of their culture in which the Penan stand against the world. It unites them in a way with other peoples who are nomads, and it divides them from peoples who have always been settled. They say that a Penan is a person who lives in the forest and always has done, one who plants no crops and builds no house. A Kayan who learned Penan and lived with them in the forest could never be considered a real Penan, nor even could a Sebup. Though I was regarded as being 'one of our people' and 'like a Penan' I could never have been considered a Penan, even if I had acquired all their skills, spoken the Penan language without fault, and taken a Penan wife.

In contradistinction to the Penan are the settled peoples, all of whom are included in the terms vae (vai, W.) and ləbo (lōbu, W.). Vae includes all foreigners, such as Malays and Chinese and white men, as well as settled tribes such as the Kayan. It is a wider term than ləbo, which is applied to settled Bornean peoples and may perhaps be translated as 'people of the country'. In general, vae means a foreigner, while ləbo means a person or people culturally similar but still separated by the enormously important difference of settlement.

This distinction between nomad and settled is one that is of the greatest importance for the Penan, meaning to them far more than an economic difference. This is clearly seen in the constant resistance of the Penan to the urging of the Administration and interested longhouse groups that they should settle and grow the crops that (it is alleged) would give them greater security of livelihood than relying on the precarious resources of the forest. That they refuse to settle is not based primarily on a rational comparison of the features of the two economic systems, though they do make such comparisons often. On the whole they do not admit that a settled life offers them more security, and with much reason; but when they do they still cannot accept the inference that they should therefore give up their nomadic life.

As one would expect, they are greatly bound by custom, and they explain that they will not settle because it is not their custom, not what their ancestors did. (Which is the plea which was misinterpreted as 'because their ancestors would object' when Penan in the Melinau were under pressure from the Government to settle [SG, January 1927; Hose, 1927, p.78].) But their resistance is not based only on this: there is something much deeper. It is a natural feature of the world that there are nomads and settled peoples, Penan and lebo. This is the way, they say, that God made

the world. There have always been Penan, and nomadism is the essence of being Penan. This is demonstrated in the way they use the name, and not to be a nomad is in a sense not to be a Penan. To settle and build a house and plant crops is not merely a matter of rationally adopting another method of economic exploitation, nor is it alone the grave matter of breaking custom and leaving the ways of their forefathers. It means changing nature.

This is a very difficult matter to ascertain, almost as difficult to name, and more so to present as a part of what it means to live in a Penan world. It is almost impossible to present this attitude in an acceptably non-metaphysical way, or in a way that would not be foreign to Penan thought. One apprehends such a fundamental element as this in a very gradual and perhaps indefinable way, in a slow realisation of how the Penan see their world. But I believe that there is among the nomadic Penan this unexpressed sentiment (perhaps, to them, inexpressible) that their nomadism is a part of nature, of the ordained order of things, and that it is part of their own nature, without which they would not be what they are. It is a simple truth that not to be nomadic is not to be Penan; but it has levels of significance that involve the whole of the Penan world-picture.

10: Eastern Penan

II

The two tribes of Eastern Penan and Western Penan are distinguished by marked cultural differences, obvious for the most part to the Penan themselves and used by them in the opposition of one to the other. There is no word in the Penan language for 'tribe' or for all of either Eastern Penan or Western Penan as one sort of entity. The Western Penan refer to the Eastern Penan as 'Penan Selungo' and the Eastern Penan to the Western Penan as 'Penan Silat' (ch.3).

The most important and striking of the differences is in language. Although the tribes can converse without misunderstanding, on the very rare occasions when any of their members meet, and although the language they speak is broadly one, there are very wide differences between the Penan language spoken by the Eastern Penan and by the Western Penan. By selection of appropriate examples these differences can be made to appear so great that the eastern and western dialects seem two languages. When members of the two tribes meet they often have occasion to query words used by each other, and I have on occasion translated single words from one dialect into the other.

The following examples show something of what these differences are. The most obvious ones involve constant sound-shifts: e.g. an

Eastern Penan final a becomes ā in the speech of most Western Penan, and o among the Penan Paro and Penan Nyivung. Thus ala, take (E.) becomes alā or alo, and ba, water (E.) becomes bā or bo. Similarly, a final o (E.) becomes u, as lobo and lābu; final e becomes i, as in pane, to talk (E.) and pani; final ai becomes ei, as in matai, dead (E.) and matei. More abrupt differences are such as appear in the columns below:

long	kəbit (E.)	aru (W.)
bamboo	bulo	lāpok
bushknife	po'e	malad
angry	mərək	miah
to command	nyeho	monyu
mind, heart	kənin	kənep
fish	səluang	bətālu
beg	mənyat	mani
occasion	kole	liwət
dry	mapou	maang
no, not	be	yeng
can (able)	omok	cokat

These are easily chosen examples, and not at all far-fetched. They hint incidentally at one of the difficulties of working with Penan; and it often happened that when I returned from living with Eastern Penan a Western Penan elder would admonish me with: 'Now stop speaking like a Penan Selungo'. But they should not be allowed to conceal the fact that the language, in spite of such extreme dialectal differences, is one language and easily distinguished as such from other Bornean languages except Sebup (p.44).

The phrase for 'cannot' is seized upon by Penan to mark the Eastern Penan from the Western Penan, as those who say be omok from those who say yang cokat; and it is indeed a startling difference and one of the most frequently heard. (Incidentally, the Penan Buk say be omok. Cf. pp.67-9.)

Dialect is a matter of very little practical importance to the Penan, but they dwell on the differences when either tribe wishes to distinguish itself from the other. The Western Penan regard themselves as very superior to the Eastern Penan, and as part of this attitude say that they do not understand their dialect. Similarly the Eastern Penan express some of their distrust and uneasiness by saying 'We do not know their language'. In fact this is just not true, and if members of the tribes meet they can converse with ease, but these are attitudes easy to maintain because the tribes practically never meet, and it is only in the last few years, I believe, that meetings have taken place. Even today the only frequent meetings take place between Jengilan's group and the Penan Silat in the Kelame when the former are on their way to or from a trading meeting at Long Akah. Before World War II it is doubtful whether either tribe knew much more of the other than hearsay from the settled peoples.

The Penan also differ physically according to tribe and stock.

I shall not attempt to describe the features that distinguish them, but something of what I refer to may be seen in the illustrations. The Eastern Penan are of one type and easily identified. Urquhart's photographs, for example, are quite obviously not Eastern Penan [Urquhart, 1951, Plates XVb, XVIa and b], and the same is true of Furness's illustrations [Furness, 1902, p.173]. The Western Penan are of two main physical types: those stemming from the Penan Apat are large and heavy, while those stemming from the Penan Monalui are slighter, with smaller bones and a different facial structure. This is recognised by the Penan: 'The Penan Apat are very big and have always been so, the Penan Monalui have always been small'. Within broad limits it is often possible to assign a Penan to a particular branch of his tribe by his physique, before even hearing his dialect. Both tribes differ in the main from the settled peoples and can often be distinguished on physical grounds when in their company.

Cultural differences range from superficialities such as the Eastern Penan aversion to washing and the Western Penan cleanliness, the different eating-sticks of the tribes, and the lack of care in the toilet of Eastern Penan opposed to the Western Penan, to such religious differences as varying concepts of the soul. One of the most obvious is that many Western Penan have adopted tattooing while

no nomadic Eastern Penan tattoo. Also some Penan Silat and Penan Geng have adopted the penis-pin [Urquhart, 1951, p.504] but no Eastern Penan have. But the most constant difference is in personality. It is difficult to itemise and not really important for my purpose, but in general the Eastern Penan are slow, patient, open, friendly, and ingenuous, whereas the Western Penan are usually quick, impatient, sullen, suspicious, and much given to quarrelling. I do not wish to paint a black-and-white picture or to induce anyone to ignore the great general resemblances between the tribes (and which each shares with other peoples of Bornean culture), but life in an Eastern Penan camp is very different from that in a Western Penan camp, and their attitudes towards each other are very different. A practical identity of social organisation, that is, is embodied in very different ways of acting and psychological features, as ch.4 (sec.IX) has indicated.

III

There is no political organisation of the Penan people. The aggregation of groups is atomistic: any one may be taken away from or added to the totality of groups without any structural alteration. There is no such entity as Harrisson's 'band ("village") group,

loosely federated in an area group of several bands' [Harrisson, 1949 (18), p.139] and there is no such thing as federation on any basis.

Political organisation in other peoples and cultures is often expressed in warfare or other hostile opposition, but the Penan are perhaps unique in Borneo in that they have never been headhunters and do not make war. On only one occasion that is sadly remembered have Penan ever made war, and in this case it was confined to the two conflicting groups of Western Penan and to one clash.

Some time about 1890 (or before) a Penan Kaluan named Tui killed a Penan Menalui named Usat in a quarrel over a woman who preferred the latter. The Penan Menalui attacked the Penan Kaluan in revenge and 'many people' were killed. Two Penan Kaluan men, including Mosang, the elder of that group, were taken prisoner and given to the Kayan, who killed them.

This is the only example of one Penan group attacking another. There have been occasions when Penan have ambushed Kenyah and Kayan in retaliation for headhunting raids, but these are irrelevant to a consideration of the internal organisation of the tribe.

The connection made between Penan groups is that of traced or assumed kinship and cultural resemblance. The element of kinship is illustrated by the ritual prohibition on the murder of

kin. It is wrong to kill anyone who is a known kinsman, however distantly related he may be ('it does not matter if he is twenty times removed') and the offender is punished directly by God with a horrible and violent death in which he vomits blood. But it is not wrong ('God is not angry') to kill anyone who is not a recognised kinsman. This applies to a member of a settled tribe, and also to a member of another Penan group with which contact has not previously been made and whose antecedents are not known. This is a distinction in theory that has, as the Penan say, no practical consequences, for the Penan do not kill men. But the theory is clearly recognised and expressed. Thus the Penan Silat in the Kelame say that God would not have been angry if they had killed members of the Penan Akah when they first met them, for they did not know that they were kin. The fact that the Penan Akah looked like Penan and spoke like Penan would not have been a bar to killing them, for they were nevertheless strangers. They had to be recognised as kin before in theory they were safe. Once the groups had met and had eaten together the elder of the Kelame group persuaded the Penan Akah that they, as his kinsmen, also had their origin in the area of Batou Keng Sian. After this it would certainly have been impossible to kill them or to inflict harm of any sort on them: 'God would be angry'.

There is one inconsistency here. The Penan Silat have long known of the existence of the Penan Akah and had supposed them to have come, like all true Penan, from Batou Keng Sian. They would logically, therefore, have been kinsmen whether met and eaten with or not. But this is not recognised by the elder of the Penan in the Kelame, who says: 'We did not know that they were kin'.

IV

As we have seen in ch.3 any Penan group is named by other groups according to the river-area in which it lives or has lived in the past, or with reference to the movements of an ancestral group from which it stems.

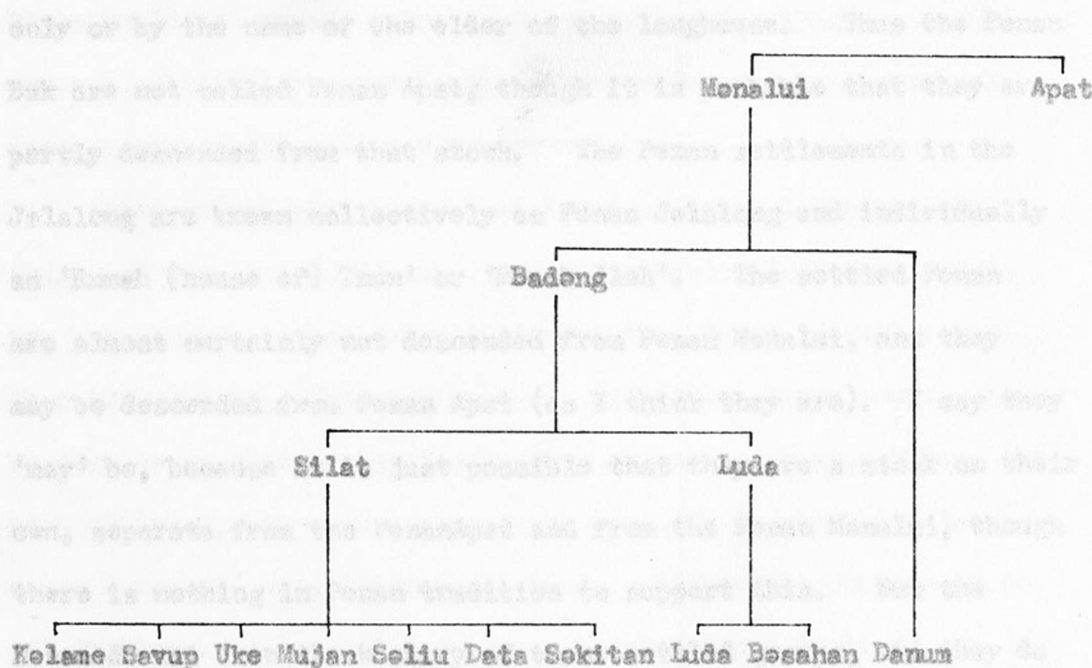
The Western Penan groups in the Baram, at Kelame, Savup, Mujan, and so on, are known collectively as Penan Silat when distinguishing them from other groups, after the Silat river where they were before they split into the present groups. The Penan Silat may also be known as Penan Badeng, after the tributary of the Iwan where they long were before moving on to the Luda and the Silat. Under this term are also included the two groups of Penan Luda, so that the Penan Silat distinguish themselves from the Penan Luda, while both sets of groups may be collectively known as Penan Badeng.

In their turn the Penan Badeng are united with the Penan Danum in that all these groups stem from the Penan Menalui and may be called by this name. The Penan Talun and the Penan Bunut are also Penan Menalui, for they too had provenance from the area of the Menalui. This take us as far back as the Lua and Batou Keng Sian, which is where the Penan Menalui are said to have come from. But they are not therefore named Penan Batou Keng Sian, for in Western Penan eyes all Penan came from there and the term would therefore be redundantly identical with the term 'Penan'.

Opposed to the Penan Menalui are the Penan Apat, the other main branch that came from the Lua. These are in their turn divided into Penan Apat (the group settled at Long Nyivung) and Penan Geng, while the Penan Geng are distinguished as Penan Lua and Penan Geng (the group in the Penyun under Japi). The Penan Lusong, also known as Penan Pejawei, are therefore Penan Geng, but I have not heard them referred to as such. This may be partly because they are said to be of mixed group-origins, being Penan Geng mixed with Penan Menalui and possibly individuals from other groups. (I have not met the Penan Lusong and cannot be more definite.)

These are the named division of the Penan according to their history, and it will be seen that the names are relative to an

order that is historical and not one of political structure. The Penan are not organised into groupings based on unilineal descent such as clans or lineages, and I use the term 'stock' to indicate the divisions that have just been marked off. Thus the Penan Apat are distinguished as one stock from the Penan Menalui as another stock; the Penan Danum (within the Penan Menalui) from the Penan Badeng; and (within the Penan Badeng) the Penan Silat from the Penan Luda. Diagramatically this may be represented as below:



One might also construct a similar diagram to show the order of fission and historical relatedness among the seven groups of Penan

Silat, but Penan usage would not justify it. They do not distinguish 'Penan Mujan' from 'Penan Paong' because of the fission at the Mujan. When they speak of these groups they call them 'the people in the Mujan' or 'the people in the Kolame' and so on.

It is important to note that the settled groups of Western Penan are not referred to by historically-derived stock-names such as these. The Penan Apat settled at Long Nyivung are the exception, but the other groups are known by the rivers of their present locations only or by the name of the elder of the longhouse. Thus the Penan Buk are not called Penan Apat, though it is probable that they are partly descended from that stock. The Penan settlements in the Jelalong are known collectively as Penan Jelalong and individually as 'Rumah [house of] Inun' or 'Rumah Ileh'. The settled Penan are almost certainly not descended from Penan Menalui, and they may be descended from Penan Apat (as I think they are). I say they 'may' be, because it is just possible that they are a stock on their own, separate from the PenanApat and from the Penan Menalui, though there is nothing in Penan tradition to support this. But the Penan do not know the history of these settled groups, and they do not give them names of the sort that I have been describing unless they have some traditional reason to do so.

A term without which we cannot understand the way the Penan

see their society is naan, meaning in some contexts 'a kind, sort'. When one speaks of a kind of tree or a sort of monkey it is this word that one uses. It is also the word used when distinguishing one stock from another, of whatever order the stocks may be. (I use this word 'order' in a way that I suppose is clear. On the model of the figure on p.167, and adapting from the clan-lineage societies that it calls to mind, one might speak of maximal, major, minor, and minimal stocks; but, apart from possible literary usefulness, there would not be any point in doing so because these groupings are not politically significant: their reference is historical, and sometimes cultural, not structural.)

Penan do not mark Kenyah and Kayan as being different kinds (naan) of people from Penan: they are already 'different people', ire beken, and are radically different from Penan in such a way that the word naan does not apply. Within the Penan people the Western Penan distinguish the Eastern Penan as jah naan Penan, one kind of Penan, but with a use of the word jah in which it also means 'another' or a 'different' kind. Within the Western Penan all the groups descended from Penan Menalui are 'one kind' of Penan, distinguished from the groups descended from the Penan Apat. In the same way the Badeng stock can be distinguished as one kind from the Danum stock as another kind, and so on after the divisions

shown in the figure above. It is clear then that the term naan is equivalent to what I call the 'stock'. Its features are mainly that the grouping distinguished is historically, genealogically, and sometimes culturally distinct from other groupings of the same order. If the two stocks in question are historically separated by a shorter or longer period of time, in general they are also genealogically nearer or more distantly related. With these sorts of distances there may also grow cultural differences, as there are between the Eastern and the Western Penan, between the Penan Apat and the Penan Menalui, between the Penan Paro and the Penan Geng.

The word naan is sometimes used within the group and with reference to it. A typical example is that the elder may have occasion to harangue the group about their obligation to share with each other, or upon the advisability of refraining from bitter quarrelling. In such a situation he urges upon them, to give force to his words, that they are one naan. This is an appeal of a clear nature to Penan feeling for the solidarity of the group. It is not as though there were laxity of behaviour between members of different groups or stocks, when lapses might be more easily accepted. Here the matter is one within the group, between people as genealogically and culturally as close as numbers of

Penan can be.

What I have distinguished as stocks, then, the Penan distinguish as naan by the same criteria: historical, genealogical, and cultural relatedness and distance.

V

There is no political division of the country into territories proper to the stocks or the groups that are associated with them. No Penan individual or group has any sort of right over land or its resources (except the formal claim on sago palms among the Western Penan). Hunting-rights are non-existent. No group can claim any area as its own by reason of occupation or historical association, nor can it properly (nor does it in fact) resist the entry into it of any other group or hunting-party.

Penan claim that if they meet another group in the forest they are well pleased; but as we have seen in ch.4 it is not normally possible for two groups to live of the same area that formerly supported one. And in fact such meetings do not occur. Normally one group will never meet another. The distances that divide them on the map may appear small, but as we have seen the nature of the country between them is of such a nature that to travel from one to

another is a slow and arduous affair. This difficulty of communication is a point of supreme importance if one is to have an adequate picture of Penan life. The nature of the country is indicated by what I have written, but it is difficult to comprehend to what extent it influences contact between groups and relationships between individuals without having experienced it. As an example, the distance on the map from the Penan Paro to the main camp of Jengilan is only about fourteen miles, yet it took me and a small party of Penan, travelling light and marching from dawn to dusk, two and a half days to cover. This is by no means an unusual example, and in the areas of high ridges and mossy boulder-strewn ground near Kalulong or Dulit travelling (measured in map-miles) is even slower and more difficult. The difficulty then of contacting another group when its whereabouts are not known, when they have been merely reported in a certain river-area, can be imagined. The traveller has to search for felled sago-palms or abandoned camps, and then follow tracks that may be very old until he finds fresher traces and finally the group. This is not a simple matter, even for a Penan who has spent his life in the forest hunting and tracking. It is commonly thought that such hunters as Penan never get lost and never lose a trail, but it is not true. While I have never heard of a Penan being finally and fatally lost as Europeans may be in such forests, Penan

hunters in strange country do sometimes lose their way and spend an extra day or two finding the way back to camp. This was especially likely in the days some years ago when a rhinoceros might be pursued across wild and unknown country for days and the hunter be carried far from his camp. (On one occasion a hunter pursued a rhinoceros for nine days without food before he killed it.) Similarly, I have often been with Penan who lost the way: true, they have always found it again sooner or later, and in this sense were not lost, but this is far from the infallible skill normally attributed to such people. Two Penan once guided me to where another group was reported to be, and after following a clear and recent trail left by about a dozen people we lost it at the end of the first day. We spent the whole of the next day fruitlessly wandering about in the mists on the high rocky moss-grown sides of Kalulong before we found the trail on the morning of the third day. (As a sidelight on the character of the Western Penan, which my guides were on this occasion: they asked me at one spot on our return a fortnight later whether I remembered the place, and when I said that I did not they smirked and said: 'You see? We remember it, and that is why we are never lost'.)

The groups that are so widely separated in travelling-time have, apart from political considerations, no ceremonial or ritual

occasion to bring them together. There are no periodic gatherings of the whole people, a stock, or any sets of groups. Penan, when asked about the possibility of such meetings, answer: 'No, why should there be?'

The contacts that are made between groups are visits made by individuals or small parties, when a man goes in search of a wife, or feels that he would like to see close kin of whom he has been told, or when a party goes to live with another group in whose area there is plenty of some natural product to be gathered. Talan, for example, the elder of the Penan Silat in the Kelame, has visited the Penan Luda (this was a long affair that took him from his group in the Silat for six months or more), the Penan Geng (with whom he has an uncle), the Penan Paro, and another group at that time in the Silat. But even such contacts are rare. The most regular form of contact is at the trading-meetings, and apparently was so in the past. Now that the meetings are held under the supervision of the Administration there are frequent and regular occasions for groups that attend them to meet each other. At each meeting there may be numbers of groups from widely separated areas, and it is then that gossip is exchanged, friendships are renewed, and that young people may look for mates. Some groups may attend regularly and thus be well informed about what is happening in other parts of the

Penan world. Others may let a year or more pass without making the long journey to a meeting, and others may almost never go to one. Certain groups in the Tuto and the Apo, and many of the Western Penan groups, never attend meetings at all. It seems that in the past meetings were more irregular than they are today, and contact between groups was probably less than it is now; though fifty years ago there were few groups to meet and to have news of.

It should now be clear in what way the Penan are an atomistic society: there is no political organisation, there is no alliance for war, and there are no regularised economic relationships. Each tribe knows almost nothing about the other, and within a tribe the members of one group have personal knowledge of only a very few other groups; while among the Eastern Penan (who cannot link their groups historically) one group may be quite ignorant of the very existence of numbers of other groups of the same tribe.

Ecology prevents the groups from living together as a compact people or in few and much larger settlements; and the nature of the country makes communications between them deterringly slow and difficult.

VI

To describe further the relations between the groups and in what

way the Penan lack political organisation as it is normally understood, we shall consider the office of the man who would normally be a focus of political relationships, the elder. In a politically organised society he might be called a 'chief' or a 'leader', but in Penan society these are what he is not.

Each group is headed by an elder, for whom the Penan word is pengejau. At first sight this seems to derive from pengah jaau, '[one who has] become big'. An elder is usually referred to and addressed as lakei jaau, big man, in the sense of an important person. Jaau, big, is also commonly used to mean 'old' with the connotation of 'experienced'. But the Penan deny that this is so, and in Eastern Penan the translation of 'one who has become big' would not be this but lepah jaau.

The elder is not always the oldest man in the group. For example, before the fission of the Penan Savup from the parent group Talan was the elder although his elder brother, Bit, was alive and healthy. The office of elder, such as it is, is always held by a man, and although there are no formal rules of succession tends to be passed down one line of males.

Although there are no social classes among the Penan the Western Penan make use of terms that indicate classes among the Punan Ba, a Kajang people with whom they were possibly in contact

in the Balui some time in the nineteenth century. The Eastern Penan do not use these class-terms or recognise them. [Cf. Harrisson, 1949 (18), p.141: 'There are distinct indications of a class structure among the Magoh Punans [Eastern, Penan Mago]'.]

They say of the elders that they are maren (the name for the aristocratic class among the Punan Ba and possibly among other Kajang peoples) and use pengaren as an alternative term for 'elder'. All other Penan are, in distinction, panyin, commoners. But these terms are normally never heard in conversation outside a discussion of or about elders. There is no term corresponding to the Punan Ba term for slave-class (dipen) but the Penan use the equivalent word ripen in the explanation that there are no slaves 'because the Penan do not make war'. So far as can be made out the Penan have never had classes, and it seems likely that the terms they use have been borrowed from the Kajang people. (It is an interesting point that the Western Penan do not use the same names for 'aristocrat' and 'slave' as the Sebup, whose terms are puun uma and ulun.) That there are no classes to correspond to the terms is shown in the matters of marriage and eligibility to become an elder. Maren can marry panyin, and without incurring the disabilities which commonly attend such marriages among the settled tribes. Such disabilities are inconceivable in Penan society and could only exist within a

class-system such as the Penan do not have.

A man's eligibility to become elder of a group does not consist in his being _maren_ (which would normally be understood to mean being a member of the aristocrat class), but he becomes _maren_ upon being acknowledged eligible to be elder. So a man may be _panyin_ (commoner) until he replaces an elder or is considered eligible to do so. Should he become elder his wife and children do not thereby become _maren_, and in fact a woman is never spoken of as being _maren_ anyway. The term therefore means something like 'leader' and is applied to individuals and not to a class defined by birth or wealth or similar criteria of class. But even 'leader' means things that are not meant to Penan by the term. What is meant to them will become clearer in a description of what an elder does.

Thus far, _maren_ seems equivalent to _pengejau_, but it is not. The _pengejau_ is the man who is actually elder; and although he is also considered _maren_ there may also be other men of experience in the group eligible to become elder and who are therefore _maren_. Thus in Kalame group of Penan Silat, where Talan is elder, Menadong was also indicated as _maren_, and Tului, who was dead and had never been elder, also.

That these class-terms exist in a society that has no classes, and that they are used in ways that genuine class-terms are not

and then by only one of the tribes, strengthens the supposition that they were borrowed during contact with the Kajang. Certainly they have very little significance in Penan estimation or organisation.

The conditions of eligibility to become elder are age (the elder is commonly spoken of as a man with white hair) and the experience that goes with it. This experience is not merely that of getting a living with competence. I once asked an old man of the Penan Akah why a man younger than he by about twenty years could not become elder. I pointed out that the latter was big and strong, that he was married and had children old enough to marry, and concluded that 'he knows everything'. This was vehemently controverted by the old man, who replied: 'He does not know everything. He knows how to hunt and get food, but he does not know enough, not as much as an older man. He does not know the hearts of men'.

The elder must know the 'stories from long ago': this means that he should know the genealogies of members of the group and their relationships to members of other groups. He should know how men have behaved in the past and what has been done when they behaved wrongly (that is, Penan law). Connected with this latter part of his knowledge is his ability to 'talk', *pani*. This seems to mean that he should be able to decide disputes, should be able to reason with people, calm them, and persuade them to right ways.

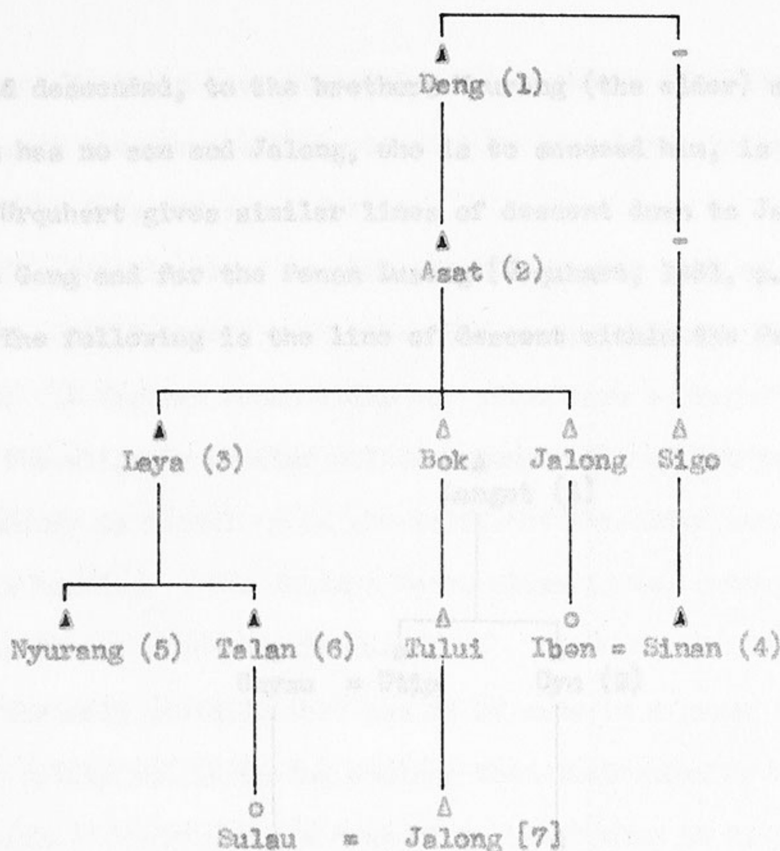
We have seen (pp.80-1) that part of this may consist in reuniting an offended party with the rest of the group from which a quarrel has separated them. If a man does not 'know the stories' and does not know how to 'talk' and 'look after people' he cannot be elder, no matter how grey his hair, how large his experience, or how expert his skills.

No man has a right to succeed to the position, but neither is he elected. Usually he is appointed by the elder whom he is to replace, with the consent of the members of the group. This consent is not formally elicited or expressed but is assumed to exist unless there is strong disagreement. No one could be elder unless he received the acknowledgment that in fact makes him so. Nor could any man by setting himself up in self-importance impose himself upon the group, for nothing constrains any family to remain with the group nor any individual to remain associated with others who are distasteful to him.

What will happen is that one man will commonly be recognised as being of the calibre of an elder, he will be much with the elder and may on occasion advise with the authority of his qualities, and it will be obvious that he will succeed. He may not be the next oldest man in the group, and in one case that I know may be comparatively young. In the Kolame group of Penan Silat, the elder,

Talan, has made up his mind that his son-in-law, Jalong, will be elder when he himself dies. There are older and more experienced men than Jalong in the group, but they do not concern themselves much with the affairs of others, and they do not know the matters that an elder should be familiar with. Lawe, for example, is old but doddering; Lujang is a constantly sick man with no family; Menadong is experienced and capable but not eligible otherwise, and not interested in being the elder; and the other adult males are either about the same age as Jalong or younger. Jalong is a proud and forceful personality: when there is a quarrel or a difference of opinion about behaviour it is he who harangues the group, giving a moral exhortation whose repetitiousness has little value but to emphasise the fact that it is he who gives it. He seems to want to be elder, and Talan thinks he should be. It is most unlikely that anyone will contest the succession.

Although succession is not formally hereditary, and is determined in accordance with the principles above, in fact it is probably usual for it to pass down through one line of males or so nearly so as to be characterised by Urquhart (speaking of the Penan Geng) as 'semi-hereditary' [Urquhart, 1951, p.500]. The line of succession taken from the Penan Silat and presented on the following page is probably a typical one:

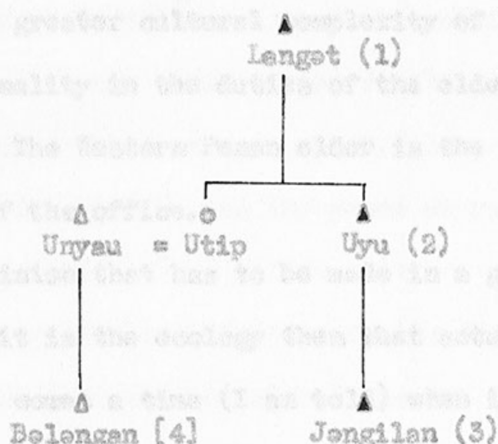


The reasons that led to the eldership being passed down from father to son through Deng, Asat, and Laya must be assumed to be that they were not only capable in so far as the office requires capability but that they were severally in a position to hear from their fathers the stories, the traditions, and the legal culture of the Penan that an elder is supposed to possess. On the death of Laya Sinan succeeded by personal claims (and possibly because of his marriage to Laya's niece); and when he died the office reverted to the line in which

it had descended, to the brothers Nyurang (the elder) and Talan. Talan has no son and Jalong, who is to succeed him, is his son-in-law.

Urquhart gives similar lines of descent down to Japi for the Penan Geng and for the Penan Lusong [Urquhart, 1951, p. 500].

The following is the line of descent within the Penan Akah:



Three generations do not make the same impression as the five of the Western Penan, but they show the same principle, and we are lucky (given the shallowness of Eastern Penan memories) to have even these.

VII

The office of elder is of little importance, for the holder has no

power. No Penan has authority over another. Nor does the elder represent the group either ritually or socially: he cannot command it and he does not speak for it.

The activities of an elder depend on what sort of a man he is, and to a small extent on whether the group is Eastern or Western Penan. A Western Penan elder may often have a larger group, and with the slightly greater cultural complexity of the tribe goes a tendency to formality in the duties of the elder and self-assertion in his bearing. The Western Penan elder is the clearer example of the features of the office.

The main decision that has to be made in a group is whether it shall split, and it is the ecology then that actually makes the decision. There comes a time (I am told) when it is obvious to everybody that the environment can no longer support a group of their size, and that according to the severity of the circumstances fission will occur sooner or later. There will be much talk about it in the shelter of the elder (where men usually gather to talk in the evening), but no elder could force a group to remain with him in privation so that he might have many people with him; nor could he force upon the group a split that neither the circumstances nor the wishes of the adult men had decided. His greater experience, and sometimes his greater knowledge of the area, will certainly

lend some authority to his advice; but a group only splits when it has to, and there is then nothing that the elder can do about it.

It sometimes happens that a family or two wish to leave the group and go to join themselves with another (practically always of the same stock) in order to be with closer kin or for some other desire to be there. In this case there is nothing the elder can do. He can plead with the heads of the families to remain, as others will do, but neither he nor anybody else, not even the rest of the group banded together, has any power or right to restrain them against their will.

A similar situation to group-fission is when a decision has to be made to move on to another area in search of food. And in the same way it is obvious to everybody when food is low and there are no sago-palms in the area. The group has to move on, and the elder has no power to advance or delay the move. His advice will be sought, especially if he has even once visited the area in which there may be food, but it is the general agreement of the adult men that determines the move and the direction of it.

I have spoken in terms of power, as though the elder and the other adults were in some sort of opposition, or at any rate in situations that could be described in terms of power. But this is

merely to make the point that one can speak of hardly any aspect of Penan life in terms of power, and that the elder has no power such as he might derive from any of the familiar forms of political organisation. When I speak of the elder forcing or preventing fission or a move it is only to make these points. In fact he would not think of trying to act in these ways. If he did try to impose his presence or his advice on the group, through some paranoid desire, he could be met with the treatment that the group could mete out to an obnoxious individual: they could leave him. Such a course is possible in that the elder normally possesses no special ability or knowledge without which the group would be in difficulties. However, this is merely what might, according to Penan theory, be done in such a case. No Penan will desert his kin, and certainly it would need the very greatest of provocation to induce people to leave their elder. Age is the object of the only sort of hierarchical respect that the Penan recognise, and even though the elder may behave badly he is still usually an old man and respected in Penan fashion.

These main decisions, then, do not in reality lie with the elder and his duties do not consist in making them. He is most commonly an arbitrator in disputes, whether between individuals or whether to settle a point of genealogy or history. His ability

to settle disputes is indeed said to be one of his qualifications, but here again he has no power. If there is a violent quarrel he normally says nothing and does not even look at the disputants (this would be bad manners in anybody) until he is asked to arbitrate. In my experience this is seldom, and the dispute flares and dies without the elder's intervention. But even if he is asked for his opinion that is all he can give: it is his opinion that is asked, not his judgement. It may be accepted, or it may be rejected by one of the parties. The elder has no power or right to enforce his decision. 'The elder cannot punish. He only talks. But younger people obey him.'

It sometimes happens that a quarrel goes on for so long that the elder's sense of etiquette breaks down with his patience, and he shouts at the top of his voice to the parties and the rest of the group about how people should behave. I have seen an elder shaking with passion and screaming himself hoarse in such situations, but all to no effect, and the disputants continuing to shout at each other and the spectators continuing to comment among themselves. In such a case the elder still tries to make himself heard, but not addressing anybody in particular or looking at anybody. Staring at the leaf roof or out into the night he continues his monologue to the accompaniment of shouting and chattering. Usually when he

begins to speak there is a small silence when people turn to look and listen for a moment, but they quickly return to their occupations and apparently pay no more attention.

Sometimes without such provocation, perhaps arising out of incidents of the day, the elder delivers a moral exhortation. This normally happens in the evening, when everybody is back in camp. Sitting in his own shelter he speaks loudly, and people in other shelters can easily hear him. He may speak about the virtue of sharing, how the ancestors of the group used to share, and even how other groups share properly; but after a while his listeners, once they have caught what he is speaking about, break into the usual chatter and quarrels that mark any evening among Western Penan.

I do not wish to convey a wrong impression about this treatment of the elder by his listeners. It is characteristic of all Penan that they observe no etiquette of discourse: they interrupt when they please, and when a thought occurs to them they speak it, so that it frequently happens that three or four Penan sit with each other, all talking at the tops of their voices and none apparently listening to the others. In this context, their behaviour towards the elder loses some of its first force in our eyes.

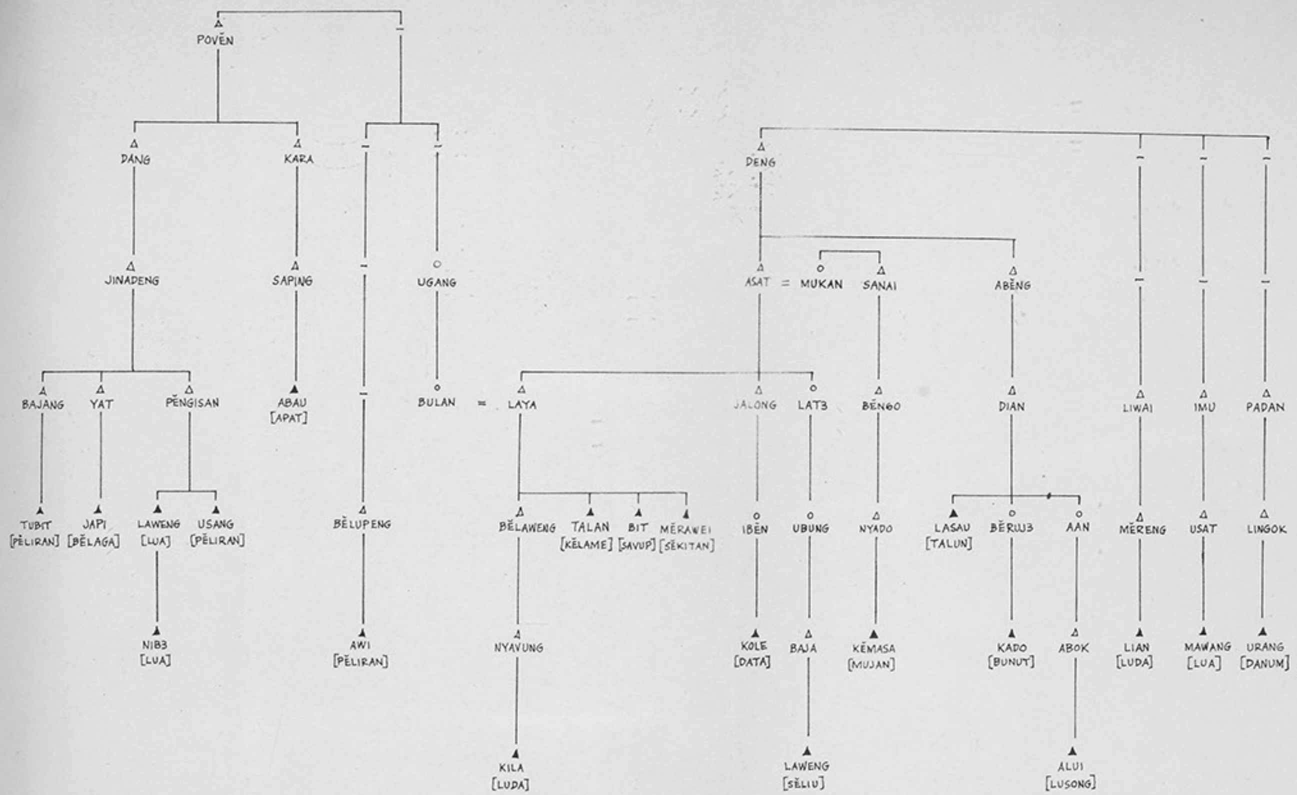
A man learning a point of iron-working or carving, or going on a long journey in country known to the elder, will ask for advice

or direction. The elder's age and experience and knowledge is recognised, and it is to him that men turn for historical or genealogical information, for practical advice, or confirmation of their views. Especially in the case of marriage it is the elder who knows the exact relationship between individuals, and in divorce it is usually he who settles the amount and form of compensation.

Between him and the elders of other groups there is no relationship of authority or administrative delegation of power, as will be obvious by now. They are in no formal or practical hierarchy, particularly such as is associated with centralised political organisation. The links that connect the elders are ones of kinship alone. The sort of connection is illustrated by the genealogy linking most of the Western Penan elders. This links twenty-one of the groups. I do not want to go into matters of kinship now that arise from consideration of this genealogy: the important thing is that these kinship connections are made by the Penan. I believe the links shown are substantially correct, though in the upper generations there may be duplication: e.g. the grandfather of Ugang might well have been Poven. The link between the two sides seems more tenuous than it is: but Bulan was connected to Deng through her fatherTokupei and Ugang through her father.

I have not shown these connections because of certain difficulties of the sort that I shall discuss in the next chapter. I am not certain of the names of the elders of the Penan Bunut and the Penan Talun, though I am of the lines of descent to the individuals I present as such. Information I have recently received [Urquhart, personal communication, 9 March 1953] makes Lasau the elder of the Penan Bunut and does not mention Kado. The elder of the Penan Talun is given as Gayu, but I cannot place him. However, what I have drawn is what Western Penan reported to me.

WESTERN PENAN ELDERS



R.N.

11: Western Penan

6 T H E G R O U P

I

The shelters of the group, whether Eastern Penan or Western Penan, are arranged according to the nature of the ground. They may be in an irregular cluster or they may be in a rough line along the bank of a river. As it is the custom of the Eastern Penan normally to build high on some ridge or hill they more usually arrange their shelters in a cluster, elongated sometimes and straggling down a ridge (p.129). The Western Penan, who prefer to build on even ground and near a river, often build in a line along a river-bank in such a fashion that each shelter is conveniently near water. In neither tribe are the shelters arranged in any fixed or desired relation to that of the elder, but in fact the elder's shelter is usually near the middle of the camp.

The Penan describe their camps and the composition of the groups in terms of lamin and shanan. Lamin refers usually to a shelter, no matter what its size of how many people live in it. In asking about the size of a group that one has not met one can ask how many lamin it consists of, and this often gives a near enough indication. The term also means the part of a shelter

where a certain individual usually sleeps: although there are no formal rights to areas of the flooring it is an acknowledged matter that each individual occupies a certain area. The wide meaning of lamin is thus 'sleeping place'. But the shelter known by this name may contain a large number of people or a small number, and the term is not a precisely descriptive one.

A narrower term is shanan. Primarily this means a married couple. One Penan put this in an extreme way by saying: 'If there were a hundred people here and only one married couple there would be only one shanan'. But though this emphasises the primary meaning of the term it is not accurate. The normal married couple have children, and the term also includes them and thus corresponds to the elementary family. It may also refer to other sorts of groupings, and the aggregate referred to may include an elementary family with an old grandmother, the sibling of one of the married pair, a close friend of the family, a long-staying visitor from another group, children that have been adopted by the couple, or it may even refer to a grouping that includes no elementary family. In the figure on p.130, for example, Tole and Nin are together considered one shanan; and Bemusan, Man, and Jaleng are also considered one shanan. So that while shanan primarily means an elementary family it may also cover a very wide variety of domestic

groupings.

A shelter may occasionally contain two 'families' (_shanan_) among the Eastern Penan, and among the Western Penan (whose shelters are often much larger and sometimes joined together) may contain more. To ask of Eastern Penan how many shelters there are in a certain group usually gives the numbers of families as well, but this is less likely to be the case among Western Penan.

The _shanan_ as an elementary family is the economic unit of Penan society, but this unit may include anynumber of various types of accretions such as I have just mentioned and that we shall examine further in this chapter. I shall refer to any of these aggregates as a family, with the note that the basic element is normally what the term _shanan_ means, the elementary family.

II

Any Penan group is composed of families in structurally the same way as the Penan people or a tribe is composed of groups. That is to say, there is no hierarchical or other formal ordering of the families. They cohere and enter into various relationships with each other, but to add a family or take one away would cause no structural change.

It is a psychological platitude that the families together cohere and compose the group primarily because their members were born into it, and forming ties of one sort and another within it have no thought to leave it except in exceptional circumstances. The most obvious of these ties is the economic one: the Penan say: 'We depend on each other for food and by ourselves would starve: this is why we stay together'. A single family foraging for itself would be hard put to it to live and probably would starve; but up to the limit imposed by the resources of the environment the more families stay together the greater the security of each family.

Another major tie between families is that of kinship. Whether this has any of the cohesive value of the economic relationship is a major problem of Penan society and one that we shall consider as we proceed.

Every individual in a Penan group describes any other individual within it by a term of kinship or affinity. How far this relationship is actually traced and how far it is based on other connections than genealogical linkage varies with the tribes.

The Eastern Penan have very short genealogical memories. It is very seldom that any man will know the name of an ancestor beyond his paternal grandfather, and rarely that two individuals

will be able to define their inter-relationship by reference to their ancestors. All Penan know the name of their father, for in this lies their 'legitimacy'; but few Penan in the Eastern tribe can tell the name of any ancestor, even that of the mother, whom they do not remember personally. Again, if two young men refer to each other as cousins and are asked in what way they are related they are almost never able to define the relationship, but say: 'Ask the elder, perhaps he knows'. This brings up a constant feature of Penan thought in both tribes, that whether genealogical memory is short (as among Eastern Penan) or longer (as among Western Penan) nearly all knowledge of history and kinship rests with the old men and particularly with the elder. It is easy to see how this happens. The fact is that, especially among the Eastern Penan, the tracing of relationship exactly through named links is generally not very important.

Naturally the Eastern Penan have no ways of expressing the distance of relationships in terms of removes, and speak merely of 'near' and 'far' relationships. Thus two individuals whose fathers were brothers will call each other 'near' cousins; or if they do not have a common grandparent they will call each other 'far' kin.

The Western Penan are strongly distinguished in this matter.

From the memories of old men it is possible to construct reliable genealogies covering a span of seven generations. Within such genealogies it is often possible to place all persons with whom a Penan has contact, tracing their connections to him through named links. For the description of relationships the Western Penan recognise removes of kinship and can often trace up to four removes with accuracy.

Whether the actual relationship is known or not Penan assign a status of kinship or affinity to all other Penan with whom they come in contact. They also address certain outsiders such as Kenyah traders or an ethnographer by kinship terms. In a way that will become clear it is possible for a Penan to claim some sort of kinship with all Penan he meets, and a Western Penan can travel through the tribe discovering kinship links as he goes, more easily and certainly among people of his own stock but also as far as the structurally and physically most distant groups. I have been able to place on one genealogy members of every nomadic and recently settled group of Western Penan. Every member of seven groups is on it, most of the members of three others, and varying numbers of individuals from other groups. If I had been able to visit every group I should be able to place every nomadic Western Penan with confidence. I have not been able to make any

reliable connection between the nomadic groups and such long settled groups as the Penan Paro, but elders have assured me that if they met the Penan Paro they would be able to establish genuine relationships. I have not been able to construct any such genealogy of the Eastern Penan. Indeed, it was not possible to trace genealogical relationships even between all the members of any one group. This difference between the tribes is not accompanied by any concomitant variation that I have been able to discover.

III

The Penan system of kinship is cognatic and relationships are traced ambilaterally. There are no divisions of the social order based on unilineally reckoned kinship.

The only previous record of Penan kinship terms is the list included by Leach in a comparative table of relationship terms under the heading 'Nomadic Punan (Tinjar)' [Leach, 1948, Appendix A, p.35; 1950, p.60A]. The people to whom the terms pertain are referred to in the text as 'Baram Nomadic Penan (Punan)' [1948, Appendix A, para.302; 1950, para.258]. These terms were had at second-hand and through an interpreter. The list is incomplete and largely inaccurate, but this is not at all surprising considering

the conditions in which the terms were obtained and the general ignorance of Penan matters even among the natives of Borneo. However, it was the first indication of what sort of kinship Penan recognised, and it correctly gave reason to think it the same type as found among other Bornean peoples.

There are two main sets of relationship terms, Eastern and Western Penan. Apart from one term the differences between them are dialectal. They are given below with their primary referents:

grandparent	tepun (E.)	tepun (W.)
father	tamen	tamen
mother	tinen	tinen
parent's sibling	ve	vi
sibling	pade	padi
elder sibling	[pade] tuken	[padi] tuken
younger sibling	[pade] tadin	[padi] tadin
parent's sibling's child	pade pata	padi pēsak
child	anak	anak
sibling's child	ahong	song
grandchild	ayam	ayam
parent-in-law	kivan	kivan
child-in-law	kivan	kivan
husband	banen	banen
wife	do	rēdu
brother-in-law	sabai	sabai
sister-in-law	lango	langu
sibling-in-law's spouse	ruai	ruai
sibling-in-law (after death of Ego's spouse)	liang	biang

All Penan can be included in these terms. I shall note certain

usages in respect of these and thereafter use the English words.

Tepun refers primarily to a parent's parent of either sex, traced through the father or the mother. A great-grandparent, similarly traced, is tepun lep. Lep means the knee in the Eastern Penan dialect, and the lower part of the thigh above the knee in the Western Penan dialect. The Penan do not however distinguish a class of kin when they speak of tepun lep: this term is used only when defining the position of a person in a genealogy, and then rarely. (In one Eastern Penan group certain young men had never heard it until I used it in conversation with the elder.) An equivalent term is tepun due liwet, 'twice grandparent'. In most contexts all forebears of and above the grandparental generation are known as tepun, and no matter how far back is the generation referred to. When Penan speak of 'the customs of our ancestors' they say: 'the customs of our tepun', adet tepun ami jin caau. There is no other word for 'ancestor'. Tepun also includes collateral relatives, the parents and all other lineal forebears of all the people one calls vi.

Tepun are addressed by Eastern Penan as 'Po' and by Western Penan as 'Pu'. He is never addressed by younger people with his personal name: to do so would be gross bad manners and would invite the ritual negative sanction of sickness for undue familiarity and

lack of respect for age. Though respect is supposed to attend it the term tepun cannot be extended to a person not entitled to it as a mark of respect, even if that person is old as a grandparent is.

The terms tamen and tinen refer primarily to ones genitors. No other person is known by these terms. With the suffix keruah either can mean a step- or foster-parent, as in tamen keruah, step-father or foster-father. A child addresses his step- or foster-father as 'father' but does not regard him as his 'true father'; and in conversation will refer to him as 'my father' with the qualification that 'he is not really my father, he married my mother' or 'he adopted me'. The father is addressed by his children as amam, ama, or mam among the Eastern Penan, and as amē among the Western Penan. The mother is addressed as e'e or i'i (rarely as ide) among Eastern Penan, and as inē among the Western Penan. Neither may be addressed by their personal name: this would be improper familiarity ritually punishable by sickness or weakness. (This should not be taken to imply that there is any great respect shown by children to their parents. I do not want to go into the Penan life-cycle and methods of child-education, but I should point out that the freedom and insolence, particularly among the Western Penan, of children towards their parents is very striking.)

A Penan's _ve_ or _vi_ are the brothers and sisters of his father and mother, all their cousins, and all their affinal relations of the same genealogical level. Similarly, the siblings of his wife's parents and all their cousins and affines of the same genealogical level are his 'uncles' and 'aunts'. ('Genealogical level' may be clumsy, but it avoids an ambiguity that in an examination of Penan kinship it is wise to avoid.) An uncle among the Eastern Penan is addressed as _ve_ or by his personal name if he is young. Among the Western Penan he is addressed as _luang_, a term that is not known by the Eastern Penan (but see ch.8, sect.IV), or by his personal name if he is not much older than the speaker. It would be improper in either tribe to address him by his personal name if he were the age of ones parents.

Pade or _padi_, sibling, includes true, half-, and step-siblings, and all cousins, however far removed. True siblings are known as 'siblings of the body' (_pade usah_, E., _padi usã_, W.). They address each other by personal name among the Eastern Penan, and among the Western Penan by personal name or by terms relative to age. In both tribes an older sibling is known as _pade/i tuken_ and a younger sibling as _pade/i tadin_. In reference one may say of an elder sibling: 'He is my _tuken_' and of a younger sibling: 'He is my _tadin_'. Similarly, a parent may scold a child and say: 'Look

after your _tadin_' or 'Stay with your _tuken_'. These words also have adjectival meanings as 'older' and 'younger'. There are no terms of address corresponding to them in the Eastern Penan, but the Western Penan have and constantly use two terms: _lobeh_ in addressing an elder sibling, and _ineng_ in addressing a younger.

I have said that _pade_ includes all cousins. 'Cousin' in Penan terminology means a person in only one level of a genealogy, that of the speaker. The full term in Eastern Penan is _pade pata_, and _pata_ means something like 'parallel': for example, a double-barrelled gun is known as a _selapang pata_, and to illustrate its meaning Penan place their forefingers or two sticks in a similar form. Among the Western Penan the word _pŏsak_ in _padi pŏsak_ has no meaning, as I am told, and so far as I can discover. These full terms, however, are only used when some precision is required. When asked about a relationship a Penan may say: 'He is my brother', but only after questioning will he add: 'He is a distant brother (_pade ju_), he is my cousin (_pade pata_)' or: 'He is not my true brother (_pade muun_), he is a distant brother, my cousin'. Everybody who is the child of everybody whom one calls _ve_ or _vi_ is ones 'cousin', and these are all known as 'siblings' no matter how far removed they may be. Among the Western Penan they are addressed by the terms _lobeh_ and _ineng_ in the same way as these terms are used to true

siblings. The words _pade_ or _padi_ are not used, however, as terms of address between siblings or between cousins. Only to outsiders are they so used, and this is 'in order to make them near'. Thus chance acquaintances or traders among the settled tribes are addressed sometimes as 'brother' if they are about the same age as the speaker. Once the relationship has become closer this term is no longer used, but some other appropriate to the circumstances comes to be employed.

All ones children are known as _anak_ and may be addressed so or by their personal names. An adopted child is _anak amung_ and is distinguished when necessary from _anak muun_, true child. A man would never introduce a child as _anak amung_ but as 'my child'. Old Penan may also use _anak_ as a term of address to outsiders young enough to be their children, though when speaking to Penan children they use personal names.

The children of siblings and cousins and siblings-in-law are known as _anak_ in general though the precise terms are _ahong_ (E.) and _aong_ (W.). They are addressed by personal name in both tribes, never as _ahong_ or _aong_. Among the Western Penan, but not the Eastern, the term of address for a nephew or niece is _elop_. This is not used to outsiders (who, if they are of appropriate age, are addressed as _anak_) but only to Penan of that genealogical level or to others who have been assimilated to kin.

The children of all those whom one calls anak are known as ayam. These are addressed by personal name, or collectively as ayam. All their children are known as ayam lep.

We shall consider Penan kinship further in this chapter and the next after we have examined the composition of a group and have seen what the relationships between its members are. The main points to remember at the moment are that all Penan kin are included in the same terms that describe primary kin in the elementary and compound families that Penan grow up in, and that all Penan with whom one has contact are considered as kin whether the actual links can be traced or not. Terminologically, the Penan people are one great family.

IV

Figure 6 shows the arrangement of the shelters of the Western Penan group of Penan Silat on the bank of the Kelame river, a tributary of the Baram. They had been in this location for some four months when I first went to live with them in the middle of 1951, and for over a year before that had been settling in the area and learning to raise small crops of cassava and rice. Their economy was thus different from that of a purely nomadic group, but the camp in every

major respect was otherwise the same as any Western Penan main camp. Agriculture occupied the group little and supported them little. For the main part the women followed their traditional occupations and the men went hunting, looking for sago and fruit, and collecting materials for manufactures. The kinship pattern is the same as that of any other Penan group; but I present them here because the group is a relatively large one, because it has certain features that make it interesting, and because I knew it better than any other.

Figure 7 shows the division of the group into families as they distinguish themselves by separate shelters or by separate living. The genealogical relationships between them and how these are traced may be seen in Figure 8. It can at once be appreciated how difficult it would be to speak of a typical Penan family. Certainly the elementary families can be distinguished, but they are combined with kin and affines in a variety of ways that are irregular although immediately understandable.

Kalang and Meruja, with their children, form a normal elementary family (1), but the next shelter (2) is more complex. The first feature of this family is that while Cului and Lai have moved into it to join their wives, Abok has remained with his mother, Ubung, and his wife has joined his family. (The next chapter will discuss

marriage: all I am concerned with for the moment is the diversity of family-composition that one finds among the Penan.) Bua is divorced from her husband, Cui, so that she and Ubung are two single females, with the addition of Lalu, a small child. Lawe and Tusang are brothers, and Usun and Tēning are sisters, which accounts for their presence together in the same shelter. Tusang is an expert smith and spends much of his time at the smithy next to the shelter. Both Usun and Tēning are barren. Gani and Riba live next door to shelter 3 because Gani is brother to Usun and Tēning. They say that they do not share a shelter with Talan and Riba's sisters because Dok is old and shelter 3 needs help with the preparation of food and the cooking. Usang and Lawan occupy a separate shelter (5) next to shelter 6 where Lewan's siblings are. They used to live with the members of shelter 6, but Lewan, a barren woman, is subject to hysterical fits of near-mad anger at slight provocation and seems to be epileptic. She is excessively difficult to live with, but she shares the same hearth as the women of shelter 6.

Lugi is a widow, and her conversational companion is her first cousin, Lujang. He is an adult male of about 45, but a liability to the family and to the group. Although there is nothing unusual in his appearance but a pot-belly and rather thin legs (which might

well be attributable to doing nothing but eat and sleep) and he has no patent signs of sickness, he complains of continual sickness and lies in the shelter all day. Since he was a young man he has done no hunting or sago-working. He is unmarried and has never had a wife. Ubung, the wife of Juk, came from the Lua. Apit is a widow with three children under the age of ten, and Sepai is a girl of about fourteen. As in shelter 2, all the women help in the getting of firewood and the common preparation and cooking of food.

The next shelter (7) is that of the elder, Talan, of whose family I was a member. Four married couples share the common tasks of the family, with no divorcess, no widows, no permanently sick. Talan has no son, and his sons-in-law have moved into his shelter. The men share tasks such as felling trees and bringing them to camp for firewood; the women share tasks such as splitting firewood, making mats and baskets, and cooking. Avun, though not considering himself quite incapacitated for work, often complains of weakness that prevents him going hunting or undertaking heavy labout such as splitting logs (cf. p.146). Lëshu is an orphan who lives in this shelter in order to be with her mother's brother, Jalong. Avun, her newly-married husband, has moved in from the shelter of his father, Lai.

In shelter 8, Cui (divorced from Bus) has married Sara, a

daughter of Talan. She has moved into the shelter of his family 'in order to help with the cooking'. Kilau is the son of Bovong in the last shelter and has joined his father-in-law's family. Bovong (9) is an expert blowpipe-maker. Apart from Tubung, married to Usang (brother to Cului and Lēshu), his children are small and contribute little to the tasks of the family.

It is difficult to discern any principle of family-composition, but I cannot see that this is of any importance. In any particular case it is possible to see why particular individuals are in this family and not in that. If there is really no such thing as a typical Penan family it hardly matters: this is how Penan live, and these are the sorts of grouping that they adopt. Looking merely at the diagrams it is easy to forget the reality they represent, to err in two directions. These sharply distinct units are rarely observable as entities except when everybody is asleep. The camp is very small and there is constant intercourse between one shelter and another. The children play together, women wander from shelter to shelter to gossip or to make mats in each other's company, men spend much time with others, begging tobacco, helping with the manufacture of a blowpipe, or working in the smithy. All the time, when there is plenty, there is an interchange of food between the families, and any family sitting

down to eat may be joined by a bystander from any other family. We have seen, too, the economic dependence of families on each other. In the case of the families 6, 7, and 8 the sharp division means even less, for they share one long shelter that has no physical divisions and in which one can see from end to end. When Sara married Cui, for example, all she did was to shift her sleeping-place by about one pace into the area occupied by the family of Menadong.

It must not be supposed, on the other hand, that there are not nevertheless real delimitations of the families that have been diagramatically separated here. The economic co-operation that provides all the families with fair shares of food is not extended to the construction of the shelters nor to the domestic labours of each family. This is particularly apparent in the case of the long shelter that houses families 6 to 8. Although the roof is unbroken and although there are no interior walls the part of the shelter occupied by each family was built by that family. When the framework was erected the menfolk made their sections coincide, but each man worked only on that part of the roof that was to shelter the family he belonged to. When this frame was up each woman similarly covered only the area occupied by her family. If the roof of Menadong's part sprang a leak neither Jalong nor Avun in

the next section of the shelter would concern themselves with it. One of Menadong's family group would have to repair it, however trifling the effort. In the same way, the men of each family split logs for only their own family and gather canes for only the women of that family. The domestic tasks of each family are performed only by the women of that family. Riba, for example, almost daily used to come into the shelter of her sisters to converse with them or to work on something of her own in the shelter, but she never lifted a finger to help her sisters make mats or prepare food, for she did these things in the family of shelter 3. She ignores, that is to say, the closest of kinship links in favour of economic ones with affines and more distant kin.

This introduces a large topic in contradistinction to the inter-familial co-operation and the constant emphasis on sharing. The Penan are individually extraordinarily egotistic. I do not refer to their egalitarianism or their individualism, of which we have already seen something. This is something different, a constant disregard for the comfort or convenience or feelings of others. I give a few examples out of hundreds. A man is very sick with a fever: he lies on a raised sleeping-place, sweating and moaning, complaining of a severe headache, almost delirious.

Other Penan are in the neighbourhood, but not to help him: they laugh and shout and even quarrel across the sick man, and one of them idly hacks with a parang and jars one of the uprights of the sleeping-place, shaking the sick man's head with every blow. A man constructs a new shelter, and in doing so he leaves projecting two palm-branch roof-supports: they stick out into the path that curves round the corner of the shelter, thin, difficult to see in certain lights, and sharply pointed. They are just the height of a man's eyes and in the dark could be easily run into. The man knows this but does not lop them off, unnecessary as they are. Another man builds so that his roof-supports project over the path the women take when they go down to get water; and afterwards they crouch and duck precariously with water-filled bamboos on their backs, avoiding the poles. Eventually they go round and wear another path, for the man does not cut the poles and they may not. Another man wants wood and fells a tree across the main track through the camp: this forces everybody to detour uncomfortably, but he does not think of clearing away his debris. A girl comes into the shelter and crosses it to place the water-bamboos by the hearth: her mother sits near the hearth, with her legs in the girl's path, but she does not move an inch out of the way, and the girl crouches awkwardly with the bamboos under the lowest part of the roof, nearly falling

because her way is not clear. Thousands of such incidents occur among all Penan, but none of them is remarkable to the people themselves. If they are questioned on some gross lack of consideration they appear surprised that anything should have been found noticeable in the behaviour in question. The same attitude is shown in their reactions to unhelpfulness or obstruction or dangerous selfishness: they accept the behaviour as absolutely normal, for this is how they themselves habitually behave. Unfortunately, this is also seen in their reaction to the questions of an ethnographer. If you want to ask Penan how they bury their dead, for example, you do not get an answer such as: 'Well, on the first day we dig a hole and line it with the bark and put him in it with a roof above, and on the second day....' and so on. Every separate point has to be dragged out by a separate question, and to this question the minimum answer ('yes' or 'no') will be given. There is almost never any effort at all made by any Penan to understand what his questioner wants. They are not accustomed to considering other people. I was seldom given a piece of information by a Penan without specifically asking for it: even those with whom I was most intimate would never think to tell me of some incident that they knew would interest me, but it was I who had always to listen to the gossip and keep asking questions. Even for another Penan, I do not think I have ever seen another

Penan put himself out in any way.

There are certain affective 'alliances' that become apparent over a period of time, particularly through the frequency of non-obligatory gifts of food. The children of these families play with each other more than with others, the women go from one shelter to another to gossip, bypassing the shelters of other families, the men smoke together and may go on joint hunting-trips. It is this sort of alliance that I mentioned in the section on group-fission: it does not at all mean that there is hostility between the families that have slightly less to do with each other, nor that there is not constant intercourse between all the families and members of the group. It is merely that certain families get along with each other better than with others, as one would expect in any society. On this sort of basis it is possible to say with some confidence how the Kalame group would divide if fission were forced upon it. Families 6, 7, and 8 would stay together, and so would families 1, 2, 3, and 9. This would divide the group into two groups of 36 and 35 (this latter also 36 if we include Lerang, the brother's son of Lai, on a long visit from the Mujan) respectively, with the choices of families 4 and 5 remaining less certain. Almost surely Usang and Lewan would stay with the family of Lugi, for Lewan is Lugi's daughter in spite of her unpleasantnesses, and Usang is

an outsider. Gani and Riba might stay with the former's sisters, or they might stay with the latter's: possibly they would be more likely to stay with Talan, the elder and Riba's father, but this is not at all sure and could be decided only in the event.

The natural pattern of alliances, then, as they appeared to me, would probably result in a fission into the ideal approximately equal groups. It would not happen, I think, that such a compound family as 2 or 6 would itself split: the fission would be an affair of families and compound families. This is only a hypothetical division, but judging from the alliances actually formed by the families of the group I consider it almost a certain one. It also points out that the split is unpredictable, as was indicated in the section on fission. One might assume a priori that as Bovong and Usong are brothers their families would remain together, and so I am sure they would. But to adopt this as a principle of fission would not do; for Gani and Tõning are full siblings, and so are Riba and Awing, and the parting of siblings is almost bound to occur somewhere in the fission of a group. However a group may split there are bound to be severances of relationships between parents and children, brothers and sisters, as well as between affines and between friends. No type-relationship is secure from such a severance of the group splits. If you maintain that families headed

by siblings are more likely to remain together than others you are still in possession of no principle that will enable prediction of how a group will actually split. The elder, as we know, has no power in the matter, and in the end there is no answer save in the facts of daily living, no sort of prediction reliably possible save based on observation of natural alliances of affection or interest.

V

All the members of the group are linked by ties of kinship and affinity, the genealogies for the most part being accurately known by the elder and his age-mates at least. Usang is the only individual linked affinally only, for he is a Penan Nyivung married into the group. As a previous chapter has made clear the Penan have no exact genealogical or historical knowledge of the connection between the settled Penan and the nomadic groups, and Usang cannot be placed in the genealogy with reference to any member of the stock's ancestors. We shall consider certain features of his position presently.

A note on the form of the genealogy. The living members of the group are blocked in in black. These compose what one might name, if it did not sound too farmer-like, the 'stock group' as

distinct from the stock (on the model of 'lineage group' and 'lineage'). In practice, however, there will be no confusion if we retain the terms used so far, designating 'stock' the sort of conceptual divisions, the branches, discussed in ch.5, and 'group' the living individuals descended from these stocks.

The method of indicating marriages is an unusual one forced on me by Penan material. Instead of representing marriages by the = sign, placing spouses side by side and crossing the descent-lines in an intolerable confusion, I have united the parties by the use of numbers. (The advantages of this will be clearer in the next chapter.) Thus, reading from the left of the genealogy through the numbers and the first member of each pair, Avun (2) is married to Lăshu (2), and Meruja (3) is married to Kalang (3).

The first general feature to note is that although Penan trace kinship ambilaterally, in fact most of the names in and above the level of the elder, Talan, are those of males. This reflects partly the Penan method of claiming legitimacy and partly the superior status of males. A Penan is legitimate only if he knows the name of his genitor, and it is with reference to him that he primarily indicates his descent. The status of men is indicated, among other ways, by Penan usage when they are asked how many people there are in a certain group: they will at once answer 'nine' (or

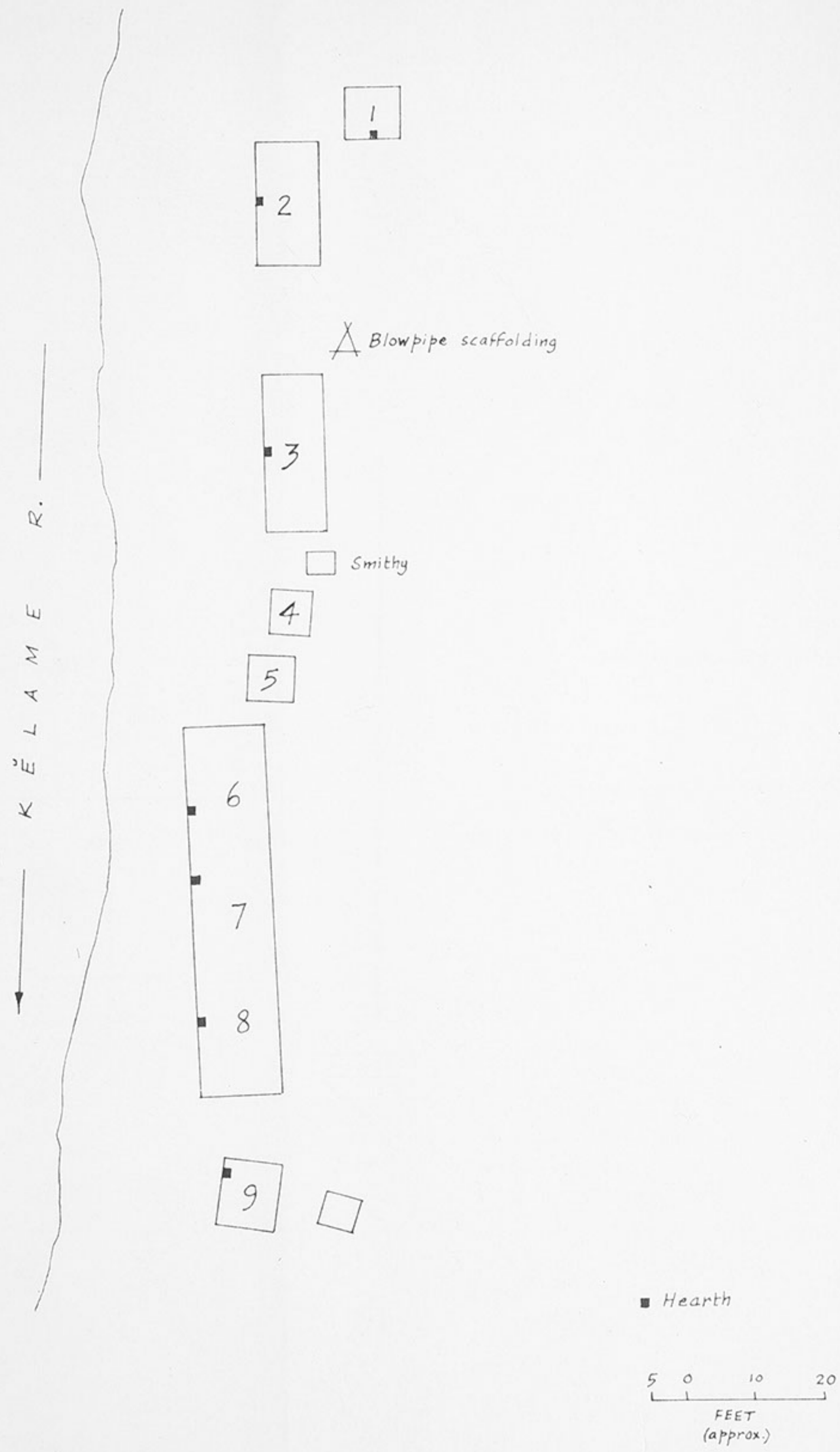
whatever the figure may be) meaning by this merely the number of adult men in that group, but they may have difficulty in recounting the number or the names of the women. It is consistent with these usages that the names of males should persist in the genealogies. But in spite of this slight patrilineal emphasis there is no more value attached to a relationship reckoned through a male than to one reckoned through a female.

An objection to this genealogy (and to that of almost any Penan group) is that certain links are unnamed: e.g. while the father and grandfather of Leya are known the names of the father and grandfather of Kebuau are not. This leads to the possibility that the relationship is fictitious and that Leya and Kebuau are not in fact represented truly. There are two replies to this. Firstly, although the names are no longer remembered the relationship in which Leya and Kebuau stood to each other is remembered. Asat is remembered as being first cousin to the father of Kebuau, and therefore, the Penan say, Leya must have been second cousin to Kebuau, and therefore Talan is third cousin through Deng to the children of Kebuau. In this particular case the reckoning cannot be checked, but where kinship-assignment on such a basis is made in other cases one can sometimes check and confirm its exactness. Similarly, the position of Padan and of Liwai is assigned with

confidence even though the names of their forebears are forgotten. Secondly, although the Penan assign fictitious kinship-status to Penan whose relationship is not known they never try to fit the individual into their genealogies. Thus Usang is reckoned a distant cousin of Lawan, whom he married, but he is not included in the genealogy of the stock into which he married: the Penan Silat say: 'We do not know that he is really a cousin or how far he is removed'. The Penan never assign a line of descent to any of the settled groups of the Jelalong area even though they claim them as fellow-Penan, and if they do not graft a group or a stock onto their genealogies still less do they construct a false named link to an individual outsider. Even if these points were not so, and the relationships between individuals were not in fact as they are represented cognatically, for most individuals it would not matter, since they can be satisfactorily linked through affinal connections, and these are as valid as cognatic ones.

VI

Penan do not formulate what the behaviour between categories of kin should be with the readiness or precision that is apparently found in other societies. This comes partly from their unspeculative


KĔLAME
CAMP
1
2
Blowpipe scaffolding
3
Smithy
4
5
6
7
8
9
KĔLAME R.
Hearth
5 0 10 20
FEET
(approx.)

KÈLAME

1

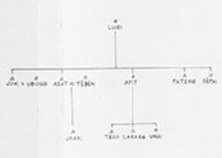
2

3

4

5

6



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8

9

cast of mind and the fact that they very rarely generalise about anything; but to the larger extent it is due to the fact that to an outside observer there is little consistency of kin-behaviour to be formulated. Where they do speak of what a certain relationship should be (as between a man and his _ayam_) they refer not to an ideal way of behaving that is looked for between all members of each of the categories _tepun_ and _ayam_, but primarily to a man and his child's child, or to individuals in these categories whose ages approximate those of such primary kin. When you ask what behaviour is expected of a _tepun_, that is, Penan always understand you to be speaking of a _tepun muun_, a true grandparent, not all members of the category irrespective of age or remove.

Towards 'true' kin there are certain attitudes that can be elicited from Penan: e.g. that a grandparent should be treated with respect and obeyed 'because he is old and you are young', that he in return is 'soft' with his grandchildren where the father is 'hard'. But to start by describing such attitudes would be misleading.

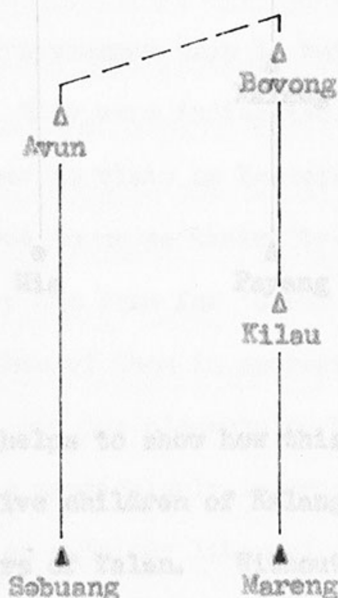
When asked what the positive obligations of 'good kin' are the Penan, whether Eastern or Western, readily reply, giving the same answer: 'If I have no blowpipe or parang, or loincloth or tobacco-box, he will give me what he has. If he smokes he gives

me some tobacco. If he eats he shares with me. If he gets a lot he does not eat it all but shares it with his kin'. And if there is occasion to describe 'bad' kin then their badness is always in terms of sharing. If you ask Penan what each separate type of kinsman should do to be good kin, then you are referred to the original description of sharing: 'It is the same for all of them: if they are good they share'. For all Penan the defining quality of kinship is not authority, or status, or instruction, or affection, but sharing.

Where there is such a wide range of kinship recognition as among the Penan it is bound to be the case that there will be considerable variation of age among the members of any kin-category, and conversely that any age-group may be scattered over a number of kin-categories. In such a situation it is possible to ignore the age differences and to concentrate on defined attitudes between kin, or it is possible to ignore the kin-categories to a large extent and concentrate on the relative ages of individuals. The latter is what the Penan do. In most relationships it is age and not kinship that determines their character.

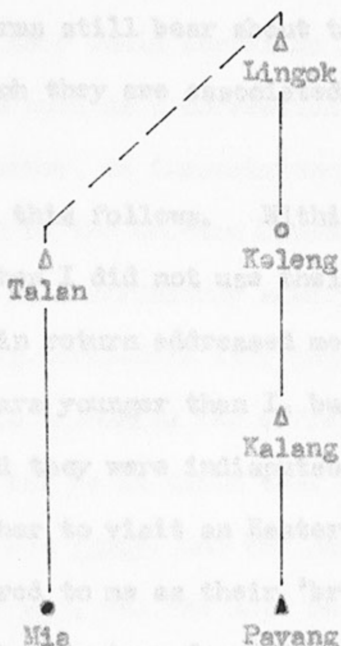
Let us look at the case of Sebuang, the young son of Avun. He is only about three years old, yet he numbers among his cousins (<u>padi</u>) not only children of more or less his own age such as Ujan

and Sida, but young adults in their early twenties such as Kilau and Cui, but people old enough to biologically his grandparents such as Kalang and Meruja. Mareng, the little son of Kilau, is about the same age as Sebuang, but they stand in the relationship of aong and vi, nephew and uncle. This is a common situation. It becomes clear if we indicate the relative ages of individuals by drawing kinship diagrams in which the levels are not genealogical ones but are based on age alone:



A more striking case, though admittedly a rare one, is one in which individuals of the same age stand in the relationship

of tapun and ayam. Payang is perhaps two or three years older than Mia, yet genealogically he is her 'grandson':



The full genealogy helps to show how this comes about. Payang is the eldest of the five children of Kalang, and Mia is the youngest of the five daughters of Talan. Without intensive searching in genealogies I can think of two other such cases, of 'grandparent' and 'grandchild' being the same age, one in the Penan Paro and one in the Penan Danum.

Certain correlated features of this will be brought out in

the next chapter, that on marriage. The main point here is that age is the determinant of behaviour between kin (and that means all Penan) far more than the kin-categories to which the parties belong. But the kinship terms still bear about them something of the attitudes with which they are associated in their primary application to 'true kin'.

An example of this follows. Within the group I always addressed Avun and Lorang (when I did not use their personal names) as _elop_, 'nephew' and they in return addressed me as _luang_, 'uncle'. They were only a few years younger than I, but I was accounted the nephew of Talan and they were indisputably his grandsons. But when we went together to visit an Eastern Penan camp in the Tebenyi they referred to me as their 'brother' (i.e. cousin) and even addressed me by the term for 'elder sibling', _lobeh_. This was after I had spoken of them in conversation with the elder as my nephews. There are two elements to be noted in their behaviour (and this example is particularly instructive, for it could only have happened with an outsider like me). Firstly, there seem to me to have been attached to the word 'uncle' something of the respect or deference due to a parent's sibling, and similarly there may have been to them something of patronage in the mere use of the term 'nephew' to them. On this journey away from the

group they felt themselves free to avoid this interchange of terms and to address me by a term more fitting to my age, as they would have done if they had casually met me. If they had tried to do this in our group they would certainly have been reprimanded by the elder: not so much as a correction of manners, as a pointing out of a factual error, an inconsistency. Secondly, the Eastern Penan are despised by the Western Penan, and on this visit Avun and Lerang behaved in an insufferably superior fashion in the Eastern Penan camp, bearing themselves like insolent young lords and in every way trying to emphasise the differences between the two tribes. They even went so far as to claim that the Western Penan term for 'grandparent' was not tepun, and the same as that used by the Eastern Penan, but uko, and the same as that used by the Kenyah (by implication culturally superior). It was as part of this attitude, I suppose, that they addressed me as a cousin. There was some prestige attached to being so intimate as they were with me, and I think they did not wish to diminish this by accepting their normally proper position of nephews.

This was a striking example to live through, and it shows that even where age is by far the most important determinant of behaviour the kin-terms still convey something of the superiority of genealogical superiors to whom they are primarily applied as 'true' relatives.

When there is a choice between two applicable kinship terms (as there often is) a Penan may choose to use that which is more appropriate to the age of the person he addresses, thus acknowledging some of the content of status that we have seen may lie in the terms. But these connotations of kinship terms (as they are most strongly seen in the circle of primary relatives) can never over-ride the status of age. While Penan say that a grandparent (true, by implication) should be obeyed, they vigorously deny that one should obey a 'grandparent' (or any other genealogically senior kinsman) who is of the same age. 'It is not possible for one to command the other. They are the same age.'

Kinship behaviour, then, is defined in terms of sharing, not status. Status is defined in terms of age, not kinship.

VII

It is not in any significant sense true that wheh two persons are addressed by the same term there is similarity of behaviour towards them. What we have to examine in the course of these latter chapters is whether there is any other sort of correspondence between the kinship terms and the rest of Penan culture and organisation.

The kinship terminology is bilaterally symmetrical, and this is paralleled by purely cognatic recognition of kinship. There are no rights or offices derived from unilineal reckoning of descent. This is an example of what is called 'consistency' but this says little about the sort of correlation between the terms and anything else. If we found a kinship terminology of Omaha type with Penan institutions we should indeed have occasion for surprise. I shall return to this matter in ch.9.

To take a more particular example, parents' siblings are not terminologically identified with the parents; but to try to explain why they are not is a vastly wider and more difficult matter than trying to link such an identification with the rest of the institutions of a society in which it does occur. What this difference is appears if we look at the terms for siblings and cousins. Here we have a clear and constantly used distinction between older and younger siblings and cousins, and this is paralleled by the emphasis Penan place on age in personal relations. It may be that the attention to age derives from (as far as the individual is concerned) and is strengthened by the early relations of children within the elementary family. Here the use of terms that in themselves mean 'older' and 'younger' and of others that are used according to relative age focuses attention on age as a

sign of status at a period when the individuals are the most impressionable.

Or take the term anak. This is applied to everybody who is genealogically junior and younger than oneself. As it is primarily used by parents to their children within the elementary family it might plausibly be maintained that the use of the term is related to a vaguely paternal protective attitude towards all individuals younger than oneself. Once again, all it seems one can say in this instance is that the terminological usage is consistent with the recognition of the age-principle. How satisfactory this is, or what more one could usefully say, is a matter that I shall return to later.

There remains one very large question. The Penan often talk for hours about the genealogical connections between Penan past and living, and even though there are no disadvantages in assigning a fictitious kinship status to a strange Penan will ascertain the correct relationship if they can. As kinship terminology does not in the main determine behaviour between persons it is difficult to account for the emphasis that is laid on it.

Rivers [1906. p.464] writes of the peoples of the Torres Straits that the reasons for the preservation of genealogies were the

complex and far-reaching nature of the marriage regulations and the transmission of property; and of the Toda that since their marriage regulations are simpler the chief motive is in the inheritance of property. We shall see in the next chapter the simplicity of the marriage regulations and that there is no functional advantage in remembering genealogies in connection with it. Penan property is very little and rules of inheritance almost non-existent. In these two spheres where it would be reasonable to expect some correlation with the interest in kinship there is none. Perhaps we must look in another direction.

It seems to me that the emphasis on undifferentiated kinship can be linked with the little of the Penan political world that has emerged earlier. Always the Penan have been the politically despised, the economically exploited, and the prey of headhunting tribes. They are a meek people and possess their earth only because it is worth nobody's while to take it from them. They have always been a peculiar people, standing against the world. Only concluding a blood-pact could bring some security from attack by a settled tribe. Though this pact was not symbolised by the reciprocal use of kinship terms its breach entailed the same ritual punishment as for killing a kinsman. Perhaps this may lead us to understand the Penanpreoccupation with kinship.

To enumerate kinsmen in other groups is in a way to define one's world of safety, the world within which one is safe from the major dangers of life. The limits of kinship are the limits of security. Without attempting to say that kinship talk has a particular psychological function, that it reassures or some such thing, it may still be true that it draws a map of security, that it delimits the Penan world from the alien world. Asked if he has 'kin' in a certain river-area a Penan often replies, whether he is Eastern Penan or Western Penan: 'Yes, there are Penan there'. And this is what I mean by delimitation of the Penan world, for there he will be recognised as a kinsman, will be within his own people, and able to rely on them for the same support as in his own family. This is not the sort of matter one can prove - it is very seldom that in anthropology one can prove or explain anything - but once again it is a view that at least coheres with the rest of Penan thought.

12: Eastern Penan mother and child.

7 M A R R I A G E

I

A Penan may have sexual intercourse with anyone he may marry and may marry anyone with whom he may have sexual intercourse. Choice in marriage is limited only slightly limited by the concept of incest. The Penan have no myth in the usual sense of imaginatively elaborated story about the origin or purpose of the incest ban. They say firstly that what they believe is what their ancestors have believed from long ago, and secondly that their ancestors observed their incest rules because they feared God's anger if they broke them. But there is no story of Penan comitting incest in the past, giving names and relationships and recounting their sin and the punishment of God. The Penan do say that Penan in the past have committed incest, but as some of them say: 'Of course there were incestuous Penan long ago, and that is how we know about incest. If no one had been punished for it we should not know that it is wrong'. They are not much concerned about the matter and will discuss it with clinical detachment, on any occasion, and without reserve. There is none of the 'sense of grisly horror' that Murdock writes of.

[Murdock, 1949, p.288.]

The concept of incest is defined by degrees of relationship, not by categories of kinship. Marriage or sexual intercourse is allowed between members of any two kinship categories, even those of 'grandparent' and 'grandchild'. Only the degree of relationship between two individuals determines whether intercourse or marriage would be incestuous.

The primary referent of each term of relationship is forbidden. This means what the Penan call 'true' kin, so that while a parent's sibling ('true' vi) is forbidden and congress would be incestuous, the parent's first cousin (also vi) is not forbidden. In the case of the term for 'cousin' there is a difference between the tribes. The Eastern Penan treat a cousin (pade pata) as included in the one incest-category of 'sibling' (pade): one's true sibling is forbidden, but a cousin is a 'distant sibling' and may be married, even if a first cousin. The Western Penan treat padi as one category and padi pĕsak as another, so that the true sibling is forbidden and the first cousin is also forbidden. There are no other differences between the tribes. The one exception to the above principle is that a ruai is not forbidden in this way: intercourse would be adultery but not incest. (The term liang or bieng I regard as a special case and shall deal with later.)

In only one instance that I have been able to discover has the incest-ban been broken within living memory. This was the marriage between two Western Penan, Menadong and Bala, now in the Kelame group of Penan Silat.

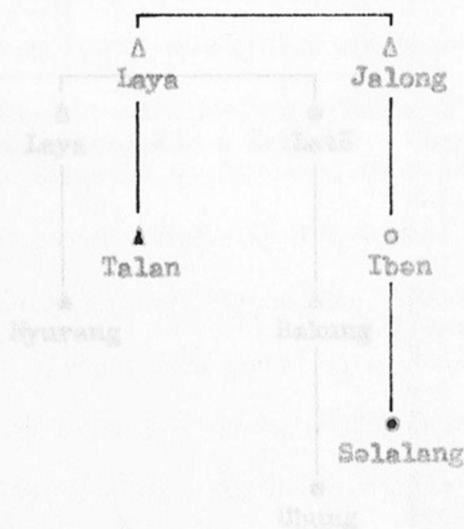
```
   Δ   (1)  o   (2)   Δ
 Padan  =  Lawi  =  Liwai
   |                  |
   Δ                  o
 Lingok             Julan
   |                  |
   ▲                  ●
Menadong  ______=_____ Bala
```

Menadong's father, Lingok, was the son of Lawi by Padan; and Bala's mother, Julan, was the daughter of Lawi by Liwai, Lawi's second husband after the death of Padan. By Penan reckoning Lingok and Julan, maternal half-siblings, were full siblings (<u>padi usē</u>), and Menadong and Bala were therefore first cousins. Their marriage was thought unwise, but just possible in that their parents were not 'siblings of the body with one father and one mother' and that they were connected through a woman. Had they been first cousins

through full siblings, or had they both been descended from either Padan or Liwai (by different mothers) they could never have married. They had ten children, and six of them died because, as the Penan calmly say, 'it was incest'.

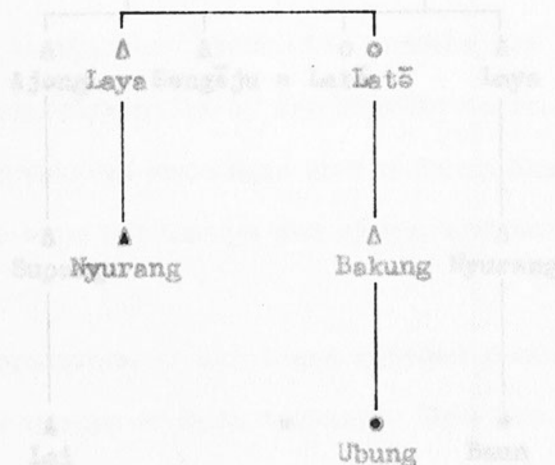
This case is also instructive in that it illustrates the status of women in genealogies. On the one hand Julan is reckoned in the genealogy as equivalent to a man, but on the other it was only because the connection between Lingok and Padan was through a woman that Menadong and Bala were allowed to marry at all.

Another interesting matter is that marriage is allowed between a man and his 'niece once removed', e.g. between Talan and Selalang:



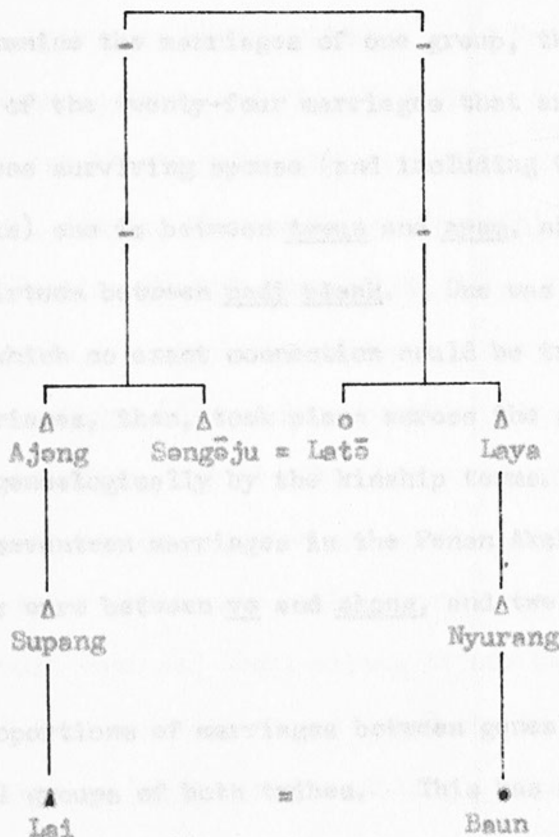
Talan could not have married Iben (disregarding ages for the moment),

for this would have been first cousin incest, but he was allowed to marry the daughter of his first cousin. The Penan see the analogy between marrying the daughter of a true sister (which is incest and where marriage to the girl's mother would also be incest) and marrying the daughter of a first cousin (which is not incest, although marrying the girl's mother would be) but they have no explanation of the matter any more than they have of the purpose of the incest rules. Here the fact that Talan was connected to Selalang through a woman, Iben, was of no importance. Such a marriage is a perfectly proper one, and quite common. Had Selalang's father been the son of Jalong the marriage would still have been unexceptionable, as is seen in the case of Nyurang and Ubung:



It might be thought that the female link through Latē lessen's the force of the example, but other examples that might be presented show that this is not the case. (Cf. Abok and Jengin, p.225.)

It is when calculating relationships for marriage purposes that the features of Penan kinship reckoning come out most clearly. An interesting case is that of Lai and Baun:



Cognatically, Lai and Baun are fourth cousins, 'distant siblings',

and thus well outside the incest degrees. Through the marriage of Sengēju and Latō, however, Laya and Ajeng became brothers-in-law (sabai) and thus addressed each other's children as 'nephew' (aong), and these were thereby cousins. The children of Supang and of Nyurang were therefore second cousins and only just able to marry, in spite of the fact that the genealogical link that makes them so is an affinal one.

If we examine the marriages of one group, that of Kalame (p.223), we find that of the twenty-four marriages that are still represented by at least one surviving spouse (and including the engagement of Payang and Mis) one is between tepun and ayam, nine between vi and aong, and thirteen between padi pāsak. One was an inter-group marriage in which no exact connection could be traced. Nearly half the marriages, then, took place across the generations as represented genealogically by the kinship terms.

Of the seventeen marriages in the Penan Akah group under Jengilan five were between ve and ahong, and twelve between pade pata.

Such proportions of marriages between genealogical levels are common in all groups of both tribes. This has an important consequence when we consider the relationship between kinship categories and behaviour. For not only may individuals of a great

range of ages be included in one kinship category, and not only may individuals of the same age be spread over a number of kinship categories, but through such marriages and the alternative links open in the tracing of relationship any two individuals may stand in different categories of relationship to each other.

For example, let us take Vang in the Kelame genealogy and see how she can be related to Rimau. Vang and Rimau are about the same age, both very young children. If Vang traces kinship through her father, Gani, and Rimau's father, Abok, then Rimau is her 'uncle'; but if she makes the connection through Gani and Rimau's mother, Jengin, then he is her 'cousin'. Again, if she makes the connection through her mother, Riba, Rimau is her cousin. She may also make the connection through other more devious links such as through Ubung (8) and thus consider Rimau her cousin. This is a common situation, and it often happens that a Penan will state one relationship on one occasion and another on another occasion. In this case the relationship would normally be traced through the fathers, through Gani and Abok, making it one between 'uncle' and 'niece'; but Vang may well choose (when she is old enough to care) to address Rimau as <u>lobeh</u>, 'elder sibling', thus in effect making the connection through her mother.

Where alternative kinship status is so common it is no wonder

that criteria other than kinship categories should operate as guides to behaviour.

II

Outside the prohibited degrees there is complete freedom of sexual activity, and young people choose their mates in sexual experimentation from the time of puberty. There are no complex or imaginative forms of courtship such as are found in more sophisticated societies, but the Penan have their own graces and conventions about choosing spouses, and these vary with the tribes. However, the term used by each tribe to indicate that state of affection existing between two young people who are lovers and wish to marry has the same meaning. In each dialect it means that they are of 'one heart' or 'one mind', and judging from the way this expression is used, and by the way the young people behave, I should call this 'being in love'.

Beyond the incest degrees the strongest limitation on the choice of marriage partner is age. Penan regard with great distaste the idea of a man marrying someone either much older or much younger than himself. That people marry across the genealogical levels is of no importance: what does matter is that they should be of

roughly the same age, the man being preferably slightly the older. It does not matter that the woman should be a little older than the man, but the disparity must not be large. A man may thus not be forbidden by the rules of incest from marrying a 'granddaughter' in a certain remove, but by the disparity of his age with hers. 'He cannot marry her, because he is old and she is young'. Even outside the incest categories, then, to know that a girl is genealogically eligible is not to know that it would be possible for a given man to marry her. The kinship category is not a guide to eligibility.

The young people choose their partners without interference from their parents or other relatives. It would be impossible for any of them or anybody else to force a marriage upon an individual or a pair. If it should happen that a young man wanted to marry a girl who is known to be sexually loose then his father will make what protest he can and notice will be taken of his opinion. A man knows that he wants to marry a girl partly through sleeping with her, but nevertheless he would not be accepted if he tried to sleep with every girl in the group, and neither would a girl risk the disapproval incurred by profligacy. Similarly, a girl who wished to marry a man who had a bad temper or who was lazy would be warned by her parents. But, as Penan

say, there are no lazy Penan, and any man after a wife will do all he can to prove that he is worth marrying. Briefly, he will work hard at the manly tasks within the camp, hunt as successfully as ability and luck allow him, prove himself strong in sago-working, and in general show himself to be tough, capable, and even-tempered. A girl will have to show herself strong for sago-leaching and carrying household goods from one camp to another, and able at such domestic tasks as cooking and mat-making. A good humour is valued, and it is pleasant if she is pretty, but 'if she is pretty lots of men will want to have intercourse with her, but if she is lazy what is the good of her being pretty?'

There are no rules of group-exogamy, and the incest rules and personal considerations indicated above are the chief guides of marital choice. Normally a man marries within his own group if it is possible. (Cf. Hose, 1924, p.41: 'Endogamy within the group is not countenanced'; and Harrisson, 1949 (18), p.142: '[the man] then makes a separate hut either in his or her "village" group. If neither will go to the other's group, they divorce....' - implying that marriage normally takes place between groups.) But as Eastern Penan have told me: 'If there are two women whom a man may marry, one of them in his own group whom he does not love and another in a different group and whom he does love, he will be sorry to leave

his own people but he will marry the woman he loves'. It is not a favoured course, however, that marriage should take place between groups: whatever the rule of residence neither wishes to lose a working male or a woman.

Marriage is within the tribe, and the Eastern Penan and Western Penan do not intermarry. They have been too little and too recently in contact for there to have been much opportunity, and now that it is more possible they do not desire it because of cultural differences. The Eastern Penan say of the Western: 'We are afraid of them. They speak a different language, and they make canoes, and they tattoo. We do not want to marry with them'. And the Western Penan say of the Eastern: 'We do not want to marry with them. Their customs are different, they are always on the move. They do not bathe and are very dirty, and they stink'.

Though there has been considerable intermarriage between Penan of the settled groups and the settled peoples the nomadic Penan very seldom marry outside the tribe. When they have done it has been with nomadic peoples. There have been three marriages at least with the Punan Busang. The wife of Langat, Jongilan's paternal grandfather, was a Punan Busang. She was one of a party of Punan who went visiting down the Baram from their own area in the neighbourhood of the upper Danum. They met the Penan Akah at

Long Akah and Langat, then a young man, took one of their young women as wife. From the Penan Silat two men married Punan Busang women. Yungit married into a Busang group, but his first child died and he left his wife to return to his own people in the upper Silat. Another man Lemado married a Busang woman and lived for about ten years with them before returning with his Punan wife and child to live with his own people in the Danum, where he now is. Other Punan Busang came down the Baram at the end of the second world war and met the Penan Silat at Kelame. One of them wanted to marry Sara, Talan's daughter who is now married to Cui, but Talan refused to allow the marriage as it would have taken Sara very far away and he would never have seen her again. These marriages underline the distinctions drawn in ch.1 between the Punan and the Penan. First we saw that on several occasions the Punan Busang have killed Penan. Now we see that although the two tribes of the Penan do not marry each other the Punan Busang will marry with either. Without the detailed material I have on the differences between the two peoples even, these two points would go far to indicate that the Punan are a distinct people from the Penan.

In sum, a Penan will marry within his own tribe and within his own group if it is possible. The bases of his choice are

the economic capabilities of the woman and that quality of special affection that we may indicate by the word 'love'.

III

The normal Penan marriage is monogamous, but in a very few cases a man has two wives. Harrisson writes [1949 (18), p.142] that 'A few of the leaders may have two wives'; and Urquhart [1951, p.517] that 'only a tua rumah [elder] can have two wives at the same time'. It is true that among the few cases of polygyny among Eastern and Western Penan it is nearly always the elder, but there is no rule or strong feeling about it, and any man may have two wives. Neither the elder nor any other man has claim on any women to the marital detriment of other men. (Urquhart also writes [1951, p.517] that the Penan Geng elder is not allowed two wives, but I do not know why they should be different from the rest of Penan in this matter. From Penan reports it appears that men in the Penan Geng have had two wives.) I have not heard of a man having more than two wives at one time and Penan say that it would not happen.

Hose has put it on record in a number of places that the 'Punan' allow polyandrous marriages and are alone in Borneo in

this [Hose, 1894, p.158; Hose & McDougall, 1912, ii, p.183; Hose, 1926, p.41]. This assertion has been echoed by many writers on Borneo but it is quite untrue, and the Penan react very vehemently to the suggestion that it has ever been their custom. The idea of a woman having two husbands is one of the few that in my experience have ever shocked Penan. They will dismiss calmly or jocularly the possibility of a man marrying his mother, but are outraged at the idea of a woman marrying more than one man.

I shall describe here firstly the normal Penan marriage, one between members of the same group. Penan normally marry at an age that I should estimate to be about 18. Neither a youth or a girl who was not physically mature and capable of an adult's full duties would be allowed to marry. Sometimes when a man is a few years older than the girl it happens that she is not considered big enough and marriage is postponed on this account. After a period of association that may last a few weeks after they have become lovers or may be a year or more the couple decide that they wish to marry. Normally the man asks the girl if she will marry him, but sometimes the girl asks the man. Older people sometimes deny that this happens and appear to dislike the idea, but young people say that it happens quite often. I believe that it may happen more frequently among the Eastern Penan than among

the Western. One Eastern Penan man told me that he had been asked directly by three women whether he would marry them. Among the Western Penan it is more seemly for the girl's brother to approach the man and ask him in her name whether he would marry her. This agreement, whether among the Eastern or the Western Penan, is a purely personal agreement that carries with it no defined rights. It is not an engagement, which is the outcome of the parents of the girl giving their consent. The man consults his own parents but there is no formality about this, nor do they receive the girl to make formal acquaintance with her. (It should be remembered throughout how small the Penan group is. Among only thirty or forty people of all ages the characters and capacities of all eligible young people are known intimately to everybody.)

Among the Eastern Penan the young man goes one evening to the shelter of the girl's father and formally asks him for her hand. This is known as the 'asking', mutou. There is no rule about giving anything to the girl's parents, but the man usually and perhaps always makes some sort of present: a blowpipe or a parang would be ideal, but he will give what he has, even if it is only a handful of tobacco. There is no name for this gift: 'the settled peoples call it sirin'. The parents may refuse to allow the man to marry the girl, and it is then almost impossible for

him to do so. The only way out is to elope and take the girl away to another group, which would certainly not turn them away even though they would disapprove. But the attachment of a man or a woman to the natal group is very great indeed and such a course would be very hard to the couple. In fact it very seldom indeed happens that the parents of the gilr refuse her hand. No case of elopement is remembered.

After the parents have been asked (irrespective of whether any gift has been made) and have consented the couple are considered engaged. Their is no ring or ornament worn by either to be a sign of this state. Once they are engaged they lose their sexual freedom and neither may have any form of sexual intercourse with another. For anybody to have sexual intercourse with one already betrothed is for him to 'steal' her and to be liable to a fine of blowpipe or parang that is due to the offended party. I have no record of any such fine being paid within living memory.

The pair openly show their feelings and will sit with their arms around each other and saying no words for long periods. 'This is how you can tell that they are in love: they sit together and they walk together, they are always together.' It would be impossibly improper for them to make any erotic advances in public but their mutual affection is clear and not hidden.

Among the Western Penan the matter is in certain respects different. The man asks the girl's father for her hand and makes the betrothal-payment of a parang. This payment is called sirin (cf. p.251). The Western Penan are commonly richer in material posessions than the Eastern Penan, and the young man may be able to put on a clean or newer loincloth and ear-rings and what beads the family possesses. His air before the girl's parents is one of proud carelessness, he preserves a wooden rigidity of expression that is the ideal in Western Penan etiquette on formal occasions or in the presence of strangers. The gilr takes no part in the proceedings, and if she is present at all sits with her mother in a dark corner with her face averted. With the formal permission given by the father the betrothed stand in the same relationship as do the Eastern Penan, but there are great differences in their behaviour. The Western Penan avoid the expression of any sort of affection between adults: it is not merely that no erotic approaches are allowed but that the slightest sign of caring for each other is improper. Even when (perhaps especially when) the couple have been lovers for months they do not look at or speak to each other in public. The girl sits as though she were unaware that her lover has entered the shelter, while he wears his most haughty and supercilious expression. After the engagement this

public avoidance is perhaps even more pronounced, though they will be having sexual intercourse at night even within the parents' shelter. Those Western Penan who have seen or heard of it despise and ridicule the Eastern Penan open affection, the soft glances, the arm around the waist, the clasped hands.

There is one point about the betrothal-payment. It is regarded as a sign of the permission of the girl's parents, in a way as a ratification of the union: a woman is said to be ashamed if it is never paid, and although it may be put off for a year or two neglecting to make it at all is analogous to not taking out a marriage certificate. The Western Penan woman feels she is not properly married. In three marriages that I have observed in one group not one man made the gift, but it was said of each that he would 'some time later' or 'when he has it'.

In neither tribe is there any public announcement or acknowledgment of the betrothal, but in these small communities it is soon generally known.

IV

The marriage may be recognised immediately after the betrothal, especially if they are mature adults: 'that is the marriage'.

But sometimes they are considered too young for all the duties of a married couple, or the man lays claim through a betrothal to a girl yet too young to be a wife. Normally the marriage follows fairly soon after the betrothal: in general it is very soon among Eastern Penan and may be a longer period among the Western Penan.

The Eastern Penan terms for 'marriage' are ala do, to take a wife, and ngedo, a verb made of the active prefix ng and do, wife. The Western Penan also use the former expression, alē rēdu, and the verb pēdu, formed of the active prefixal consonant p and the latter part of rēdu, woman or wife. There is no word in either tribe such as might be used by a woman in which the action goes the other way: viz. a word derived from banen, husband, indicating that the woman chooses or takes a husband.

There is no marriage-ceremony and no sign of the marriage such as a feast [cf. Hose & McDougall, 1912, ii, pp.183-4; Hose, 1924, p.41]. The marriage consists in the change of residence of one of the couple and terminologically in the adoption of new forms of address between the couple and their parents-in-law. Among the Eastern Penan the son-in-law addresses his wife's parents as kei and they in return address him as nak. Among the Western Penan the man may address his father-in-law, for example, as amē, father, or as luang, the term used in addressing parent's siblings. He is

addressed in return as nak.

Among the Eastern Penan, whether the marriage is recognised at the same time as the betrothal or not, there is no formal gift made as marriage payment. The rule - in so far as one can speak of a rule among the Eastern Penan - is that the man should leave the shelter of his parents and go to live with his wife in the shelter of her parents. (Cf. Harrisson, 1949 (18), p.142: 'The wife theoretically enters the hut of the man at first'.) With this change of residence the marriage exists. The man no longer works as a member of the economic unit based on his parents' shelter but contributes all that a man may to the members of his wife's parents' shelter. The girl's parents are now his kivan. The change in residence is called nyivan, derived from the term for parent-in-law. He stays in that shelter until a child is born to his wife, and he may then move out and make his own separate shelter for himself and his wife. As may be seen in the composition-diagram of Jengilan's group (p.130) this is what most of the married couples have done, but in certain cases the couple has stayed in the shelter of the wife's parents. In this diagram it can be seen how far the 'rule' is adhered to. In most cases it describes reality, but Nipa the husband of Ceramin has stayed with his mother-in-law Pai even after the birth of two

children, because she is old and a widow and Belengan is old and cannot hunt or help with heavy tasks such as felling trees. Yutang, the son-in-law of Jengilan, stays in the shelter of his parents-in-law. Jengilan, the elder of the group, says that it is because he wants to stay, but it may well be that Jengilan wishes him to stay so that he may have a large family and lots of people round him. Siwai, the son-in-law of Poh has no child and remains in the shelter of his father-in-law.

In other groups, however, the rule is not so expressed and it seems that many couples have not followed it. When asked where the couple should live, whether in the wife's or the husband's parents' shelter, they answer: 'It depends on how they feel'. There is no desire on their part to impose the ideal rule of residence with any strictness: if it conflicts with the interests of the people concerned then it is not adhered to. No Penan would leave his own shelter to join his wife's parents if it meant leaving his widowed mother with young children and no adult male; and on the other hand no man would think of making difficulties about living in his wife's shelter if taking her from her parents would impose any difficulty on them. So the common Penan statement 'It depends how they feel' means that where the couple take up residence depends on the features of the particular case; though given no extraordinary

determinants within it the husband will go to live with his wife in the shelter of her parents. Whether he and his wife leave that shelter to establish their own once the birth of their first child gives them the right to do so will, once again, depend on the circumstances.

The case is similar among the Western Penan. There is no marriage-ceremony, no communal recognition of the event, and the husband should in theory go to live with his wife in her parents' shelter. If the marriage takes place some time after the betrothal the husband may be expected to make another gift of a parang, but this is not at all necessary to the validity of the marriage. To the outside observer there is nothing to mark the marriage except that one day the man leaves the shelter as a mere visitor returning to eat or sleep with his family, and the next day he does not leave but occupies a certain part of the flooring with his wife. Although there are no great signs of mutual affection between the young couple there is none of the avoidance that formerly marked their behaviour when they were merely lovers. In two cases that I have observed, although the man became a member of his wife's family and during the day worked in or returned to that shelter as his own, he and his wife retired at night to a sort of 'honeymoon shelter' built apart from the others. The Western Penan do not

speak easily or willingly of these matters, but this arrangement appeared clearly made to free the couple of the restraints that their early nights together as married lovers would be subject to in the crowded family shelter. After some nights spent there the couple return to the shelter of the wife's family and remain there until the birth of their first child.

The composition-diagram of the Kelame group of Penan Silat (p.222) shows the pattern that may actually exist. Some of the reasons that can be found for the particular distribution of the individuals we have seen in pp.207-10. I need only underline certain points here. Gani originally moved into the shelter of his father-in-law ehen he married Riba, but he left and made his own shelter next to that of Lawe after the birth of his daughter Vang. The reason given for moving was that Riba's help was needed in the shelter of Dok, an old woman. Whether there was anything more to the move I cannot say. Talan's shelter is an example contrary to what the rule would lead one to expect. It is true that his sons-in-law moved into his shelter, but they have stayed even after the birth of many children. Talan explains this as due to his wishes: 'The usual thing would be for them to move out, but this way is because I wanted it. Among other Penan such as the Penan Lua and the Penan Luda the son-in-law moves out when

he has a child, and this is the way of our ancestors. But I wanted to have my daughters and grandchildren near me. It is just my own wish [idea]'. Yet when Sara married Cui she left her father's shelter to join Monadong's family and help with the domestic tasks there. I do not know of any other probable reason, though as the case is contrary to the rule and also to Talan's wishes on other occasions one would seem called for. However, as I have said, Sara moved only one pace away from her normal place when she married, so she was in a way near enough to satisfy Talan. This again is an example of that flexibility that characterises all Penan thought and action: the rule may indicate certain ways of behaving, but if it conflicts with expediency it is not followed.

V

Marriage outside the group brings out stronger differences between Eastern Penan and Western Penan. An Eastern Penan man who cannot find a wife in his own group (as he would nearly always prefer to do) travels to another group. Since this is probably the nearest it is almost certainly one from which his own group has split in the past and may contain kin as close as in his own group. Meeting the other group may have been frequent and fairly easy, at the

trading meetings. In this way the man may have had a certain girl in his mind for some time, and can merely wait until the next trading meeting in order to meet her again and ask for her from her parents. But if this is not the case he journeys to a nearby group and stays with them to see if there is a woman free whom he wants to marry. If there is he stays there and observes her, to assess her industry and ability: it is pleasant if she is good-looking but not important. (However, by my esthetic standards, it is usually a handsome man that marries a pretty girl, and on the whole the Penan and I agreed in our esthetic appraisals.) He becomes the girl's lover and makes her small presents of beads or tobacco if he can. If they get on well he moves into the shelter of her family and helps them as though he were a member of that family. He may stay there a month, or more or less, and will then ask the girl's parents if he may marry their daughter. When they agree the decision has to be made whether the couple will stay with the girl's group or go to the man's. Here again the rule is that the man should stay with the girl's group at least until his first child is born, when he is free to return to his own group and take his family with him. He may sometimes take the girl to his own group before this if the father agrees. There is no question of a marriage payment in any case,

whether he stays or takes the girl away: no material transaction of any sort influences what shall be done. It is regarded as the normal thing that a man should remain with his wife's parents unless there is some strong reason why he should take the gilr to his own group. If his is a strange group with which there has been little contact and in which there are no close kin of the girl's parents he is not allowed to take her away. 'He cannot take the girl to strangers'.

It may be that the girl's group, through accident or disease, has not enough men for its adequate support, and in this case the man will be kept; or if his own group is in a similar position then he has a strong case for being permitted to return to it with his wife. The merits of each case have to be weighed and the claims of each group compared, to see which would suffer the more if the couple stayed or left. If the man stays with the girl's group it may be only until the first child is born, and he is then said to be free to return with his wife to his own group; but by this time he may well have grown attached to his wife's group and become used to separation from his own. In most cases of this sort the man has eventually stayed with his wife's people. Also there may be other factors affecting his decision to stay or return. The area of the wife's group may be richer in sago or

game than the one he came from, or it may be in easier or nearer communication with a trading-point and thus offer more opportunity to obtain manufactured goods. In effect, provided the two groups are not strange to each other, ultimate marriage-residence depends on circumstances, on 'how they feel'.

The Western Penan are very different. They too much prefer to marry within the natal group, and they prefer that the girl should not be taken away to another group, but with them the situation is complicated by a marriage payment. If the man wishes to stay with the girl's group he makes the payment of a parang as he would in his own group; but I believe he would be more punctilious about it and would not be allowed to put of its payment as he would be in his own group. After this there is no formal payment or gift, and he lives in the shelter of his wife's parents until the birth of his first child. He then has the opportunity to take his wife and child back to his own group, if he can. In most respects the situation is much the same as among the Eastern Penan, and each party can press the effects on their groups as being such that one course or the other would be too burdensome. But the Western Penan can make themselves much more unpleasant and do not hesitate to scream their protests when there seems conflict with their interests: they would certainly try to prevent the girl

and her child being taken from them and would try by every means to persuade the man to remain with them. Also, as far as the man is concerned, there is his wife to be persuaded. If she refuses to go with him and live with his group there is nothing that he can do to force her. He will not want to leave her (no Penan lightly parts from his wife) or his child, and if the child is small he cannot in any case take it with him without its mother. When the child is old enough to look after itself the matter is different, for then it may decide to follow its father and leave its mother's group.

If the circumstances are such that the girl's group gives in and she herself consents to go with her husband to his group that is all there is to it. There is no further necessary gift or payment: the Penan say 'He has worked for us for a long time', and he is within his rights if he leaves after the birth of his child. In any later contact that there might be between the two groups the man would be expected to make gifts to his parents-in-law, but this has nothing to do with the decision to return with their daughter to his group.

Urquhart [1951, p.518] writes of a marriage between two Penan Lusong groups in which there was alternating residence, the couple spending 'a month or two in turn with each of their relations'.

Variation is so much to be expected among Penan, and rules are so capable of being turned, that where two groups are very close such an arrangement might be made; but it is the only case that I have heard of, would in any case be very difficult, and would normally be impossible.

It may happen that the man wishes to take the girl from her group very soon, and he then has to make a large marriage payment. This is called by the same name as the betrothal payment within the group, sirin. It is said to amount to something like ten blowpipes, twenty parangs, bolts of cloth, cooking pans, beads, and tobacco. There is no fixed payment, but it must be large and the group that gives it takes pride in making it as large as they can. Although there are features of this transaction that the Penan realise distinguish it from a normal purchase they say of giving a marriage payment to take a girl from her group: 'We buy her'.

Talan, when his group was in one tributary of the Silat, went to another tributary of that river to take a wife from a group there. He stayed in his wife's group for over a year but nevertheless wished to return to his own group and therefore made a marriage payment. This consisted of ten blowpipes, twenty parangs, two cooking pans, three bolts of cloth, and ten spears. His father-

in-law did not ask for all this, but Talan gave as much as he could collect, as well as staying for long in his wife's family, because it was a good way to behave.

No man could have so much property of his own, and when a woman is to be 'bought' the whole group contributes: more will be given by very close kin and generally less by the more distant. But the other members of the group will not contribute if they know the woman and do not want her. This leaves the man no alternative but to leave and settle with her group. If general contribution is made the man does not pay back the individual gifts and is not liable to any other form of payment or service in recompense. If anybody else wanted to take a woman from another group he would be called upon to give as much as he could, but this is a very rare occurrence and he is not likely to be open to such a charge. It is also said that where two close groups are very near kin they may unite their resources (which means in effect that the members of one group will beg from the other) so that a man from one of them might take a wife from another group. In this case also there would be no repayment either by the individual or by the group, though they would be liable to give similar help in return to the other group. However, this is hypothetical and there is no record of such a case.

In Talan's case his father, uncles, and cousins contributed to his marriage payment for Selalang. There is no set pattern of duties in this matter and each gives what he can; and similarly there are no defined rights in the receiving group, but the payment is shared among those who need it. Other things being equal, though, it is the closest kin of the woman who have the strongest claim on the marriage payment goods. In Selalang's case the marriage payment was shared among her three brothers and two sisters (whose husbands had the use of the articles), with other gifts being made to two first cousins and other more distant kin. One person cannot be given more than one blowpipe or parang, for no person can use more than one of these things. Other members of the woman's group who are the most distantly related to her may be given shares if there is enough (it is proper that they should be) but they have no right to any part of the marriage payment merely because they are members of the group.

The Western Penan illustrate that a woman is paid for by the goods given by saying of a marriage within the group: 'My son-in-law does not give me a lot of things like that because he enters my shelter and works for me'. Except in cases where circumstances demand other ways of acting, some recompense for the woman is always made in either goods or services.

In both tribes a marriage is a true and valid one from the moment the woman's parents have agreed and the change of residence has been made. The validity of the marriage does not depend on making a gift or a payment (of any sort, ranging from the undetermined gift of the Eastern Penan to the full-scale marriage payment of a Western Penan inter-group marriage) or upon the birth of a child. Despite the complete lack of ceremony or of symbol in dress a marriage is clearly known as such from the day it is contracted, and the sexual and economic rights of the partners in each other exist from that time.

VI

Divorce is reprehended by all Penan. It is a common way of denigrating or merely distinguishing another tribe or group to maintain that its members 'are always divorcing'. Group after group will say this of each other, but as one travels it turns out that it is never this one but the next one that is so remarkable for the number of its divorces. In fact, of all the groups that I have met only one is marked by numerous divorces: this is the settled group of Eastern Penan and in many ways untypical so that I shall not discuss them here.

Penan are never in my experience liars or deliberately evasive, and what they will make the effort to present to you is fairly certainly what they believe to be true. In the matter of divorce within the group I believe they are no different; and when each Penan denies having had more than one wife, and when the elder says of the group that he can remember no divorces within it, I believe them. Also in the groups where I know there have been divorces it is the Penan who have disclosed them to me, not I who have uncovered what they would have wished to conceal.

The Eastern Penan have a saying that is often heard: 'Once we are married we stay married'. Not that divorce is made difficult by anything in Penan culture: there is no one with power to prevent a divorce nor whose permission is required to make it legal. The word for 'to divorce' is 'to separate' and the same as is used to describe the fission of a group, the parting of groups of people. To divorce is merely to separate. When asked about the procedure or the formality of divorce they reply: 'There is no difficulty. If I wanted to divorce [leave my wife] I would just leave her. We would separate' or 'If my wife wanted another man we would separate, I would not stay with her'.

There are two sorts of divorce: 'divorce by consent' and 'divorce by fault'. If the divorce is of the first sort the

the man takes back from his father-in-law any major gifts that he may have made. Divorce by fault is occasioned by adultery or by cruelty. Neither man nor woman would divorce the other for barrenness or lunacy or sickness. If the woman commits adultery her family makes a payment of blowpipes and parangs (there is no set amount, but the elder might advise a certain number of either) to th injured husband; and if it is he who has committed adultery and his wife divorces him he has to make a similar payment to her family. 'But' said one Eastern Penan elder, 'this is what my father told. Myself, I dont know. Such things happened in the days of our ancestors, but not today'.

There is one exception to all this that the Penan Akah regard with a certain wry amusement. A man named Wan is said by them to have had 'ten' wives, one after the other, discarding them as he pleased. There are two women in Jengilan's group who have been married to him, there are others in the Pata, and today he is married to two wives. He lives apart from the other groups with these wives and his children, hanging on to the fringes of settled peoples in the upper Akah river. It seems probable that one of his long visits to the Kayan house at Long Tebangan will culminate in him settling there and becoming absorbed by the Kayan. The other Penan say of him that he is mad, and indeed he gives that impression.

They also say that he is 'naughty' (not using the word for bad or wicked), that he does not know the right thing to do. This is said to be the reason why he lives apart from other people, a thing that no normal Penan would think of doing and which would be a punishment. The name by which he is known commonly is Wan Asou. Asou means 'dog'. In form this would indicate that he is 'Wan, [the son of a] dog'; but here the force of the word is adjectival, meaning that he is dog-like in his promiscuous mating and his careless discarding of successive mates. When asked about the gullibility of the women who married him the elder smiles and replies: 'Each one thought that she was the wife for good, that this time it was the real thing'.

In divorce the children hypothetically would go with the mother if they were very small and needed suckling or constant maternal attentions. If they are older they go with the father. When they are of an age of responsibility they are said to make their own decisions about whom they will stay with.

There are very few divorces among the Western Penan, but there is practically no difference in the occasions or procedure. No validation of the separation is required from any person, and neither the elder nor anyone else has any power to advance or to hinder the divorce of a couple who have decided on one. The same

distinction as is made by Eastern Penan is drawn between divorce by consent and divorce by fault. The procedure is the same. If the spouses come from different groups and there has been marriage payment for the woman then this also must be returned to the husband if he has cause to divorce his wife. If she leaves him because of his adultery or cruelty he forfeits the marriage payment. Children follow the husband or the wife as among the Eastern Penan. Urquhart records such a case: Alui, elder of a Penan Lusong group, was married to a woman from the Penan Geng. When they divorced she returned to her natal group and their son, Sigi, went with her.

There is one case of divorce to report from the Kolame group. Cui committed 'some slight fault' and insisting on separating from his wife, Bua. At that time they already had a small son, Lalu, some months old. I was not able to find out directly what Cui's small fault was, but in one of the frequent quarrels Bungan screamed at Bala, Cui's mother, '*My* child doesnt go copulating!' Bala had no rejoinder, and from this I conclude that Cui probably committed adultery and was discovered. Whether this was within the group or not I do not know. Talan, the elder, tried to persuade him not to leave his wife and impressed on him that it was a bad thing to do, particularly when there was a small son to be considered. Bua was willing to forgive him and have him back, but 'he was

ashamed' and would not agree. He therefore had to make compensation to Bua and gave her father two blowpipes and two perangs. Bua returned half and again asked him to return, but again he was ashamed and would not.

In this case Talan, who would normally have settled the amount of compensation, was considered unable to, for Bua was his true niece, his brother's daughter. Instead, Menadong, Cui's father, decided on a proper return. After this Cui asked Sara to marry him, but she refused because his first wife was her first cousin and 'she was ashamed'. However, about nine months later she did marry him after all. A few weeks later he went with Jalong into the Silat to live with another group of Penan Silat and gather resin to make money. Weeks passed and still he did not return: it was speculated that he had another woman there, and when I left Borneo he had still not come back to Sara.

It would be very wrong for Cui to have sexual intercourse with Bua after the divorce, but while he was in the camp he was on very friendly terms with her family. He often used to go to their shelter and borrow his son, Lalu, to take back to his own shelter and proudly exhibit him.

Another case of divorce among the Western Penan was taking place in mid-1952. Menadong's daughter, Sam, was leaving her

husband, a Penan Lua into whose group she had married, because he insisted on marrying a second wife. Of the four children two were to remain with her and two with her husband.

Ubung, the wife of Juk, was formerly married to Egan in the Penan Lua group of Nibā. When she and her husband visited the Penan Silat before they split to settle on the Baram she left him to marry Terujun, the son of Talan's elder brother, Bit. But she had no children by him, and also she met Juk and fell heavily in love with him: she and Terujun divorced by consent and she married Juk, but she still has no children.

I have no other divorces to record; but these make the points that divorces are very few and that they may result from adultery, the wish of the husband to marry a second wife, or the wish to try to have children by another man. (It should be remembered that this last case was a divorce by consent: she could not have 'thrown away' her husband because he gave her no children, nor could he have divorced her on the same count.)

VII

There are certain problems arising from the preceding sections of this chapter. One is the term kivan. This is remarkable

in that it is the only such reciprocal term, being used of both the parent-in-law and the child-in-law. But the problem is no sooner raised than it seems we have to abandon it. One might expect, on on theory, some similarity between the behaviour of these persons to one another, and also something that would distinguish their behaviour from other persons standing in similar age-relationship. But there is very little to distinguish behaviour towards a father-in-law from that towards a father on one hand and a 'parent's sibling' on the other. The father-in-law is addressed either as amē, father, or as luang, the term by which all uncles are addressed. The father-in-law may address his son-in-law as nak or by personal name, and refers to him as anak, as 'my son'. There is no avoidance between the two. When questioned about his behaviour or attitude towards a father-in-law a man replies that 'he is like my father'; and the father-in-law similarly says 'he is like my son'. In a similar way the conduct between mother-in-law and son-in-law is in every observable respect the same as that between a woman and her own son, and they address each other by the same terms. The behaviour between a man and his son-in-law is in no way 'similar' behaviour any more than there is 'similar' behaviour between a man and his own son. The same is true of a woman and her son-in-law.

There is Leach's suggestion, writing of relationship terms in general in Sarawak, that the term 'apparently has the force of our "in-law"...' [Leach, 1948, Appendix A, p.34; 1950, p.59]; but as he points out it does not form part of the other 'in-law' terms such as sabai and langu, so the parallel is to this extent not exact. It is supported, however, by the Penan usage in referring on occasion to a father-in-law as tamon kivan, and to a son-in-law as anak kivan. I believe that this is the interpretation of the term kivan that accords best with the facts.

Another problem of terms lies in sabai and langu and in the term that replaces them on the death of the connecting spouse, lieng (E.) or bieng (W.) Let us consider the case of the sister-in-law, langu. She is quite forbidden as a sexual or marital partner. To sleep with her is incest, and to marry her while the first wife (her sister) is alive would (if it could ever happen) result in that wife's death. But when a man's wife dies her sisters who have been his sisters-in-law become his bieng. And a bieng may be married and sexual intercourse with her is not incest.

Bieng (or lieng) has no meaning in the Penan language other than 'sibling-in-law after the death of the connecting spouse'. Nor is it derived from any other Penan word whose meaning might give some etymological understanding of it. When Penan are asked

about it they have no answer but that it is the custom of their ancestors of long ago.

The postulation of some sociological meaning is a precarious business, and perhaps especially so in an example so attractive to some ways of thinking as this one is. Part of the attraction lies in the fact that with Penan a man's sister-in-law is usually a member of the same small group, is a constant visitor to the shelter, is familiar with the children, and may even (if her sister is ill) help with certain domestic tasks. On the death of her sister she may (the Penan say that it is 'good' that she should) take upon herself the care of her brother-in-law and his children and perform for them the domestic duties that his wife (her sister) had previously done. The temptation then is for the sociologist to formulate some explanation such as the following to claim that the <u>biang</u> term indicates a special relationship, that of preferred mate.

We must start from the puzzling fact that while the Penan terms of relationship make no sex-distinction (except to add 'male' or 'female' as a qualifier if the need arises) there is a distinction of sex between the term for brother-in-law and that for sister-in-law. This (the formulation might go) emphasises the sexually forbidden character of this woman who is so near the man's wife, may resemble her closely, and may be almost as familiar a presence

in the shelter as the wife, and who may even live with the couple and to some extent be subservient to the husband as his wife is. The sex-distinction in the term may also point to the sexual and marital promise of the sister-in-law, for when her sister dies she is no longer under an incest-ban but may be married. The reference is then ambivalently to the forbidden character and to the promise of the sister-in-law. On the death of the man's wife the status of his sister-in-law abruptly changes. Whereas the moment before she was known by one term and sexual intercourse with her would have been incestuous, now she is known by another term (by which she reciprocally refers to the man) and is a possible partner released from the incest ban. The situation has been symbolically restored to a sexual and marital status quo; one in which a special sort of relationship is recognised in the use of a term other than cognatic terms. There are no such special terms applying to other relatives-in-law after the death of the connecting person. Symbolically the forbidden character of the sister-in-law is lost with the loss of the previous term, and her promise is realised in the adoption of a terminological identification with her former brother-in-law.

The matter has only to be set out in this way for its attractiveness to be seen. This is the sort of formulation that might be made, and which it is reasonable to make on the assumption

that terms of relationship have a certain sociological significance, that they are symbolic of features of the social structure belonging perhaps to what Levi-Strauss calls its 'unconscious reality' [Levi-Strauss, 1953, p.527]. But there are very serious objections.

The first lies in the nature of the symbolism that is assumed to feature in such a terminological institution. To deal adequately with this matter would require discussions of symbolism (on a purely philosophical level), social symbolism, and sociological symbolism. This is a complex of large matters that I cannot deal with here; but it is necessary to point out that until there exists a coherent account of just what sort of process this symbolism is then one cannot as confidently expose the 'meaning' of the institution we are concerned with as my hypothetical explainer has.

The main factual objections (and these are certainly enough for us in this matter) lie in these observations: (a) Any biang that a man might have after the death of his wife and her sister is normally married with children and a husband of her own. This objection alone is enough to forestall the kind of explanation that has been proposed above. It is reinforced by the fact that by the time a man's wife normally dies, at an advanced age, the man's sons and daughters (and sons-in-law) will be supporting him in so far as his basic needs are not met by the group as a whole. His children

being assumed old enough to care for themselves and for him, there is no reason to require the biang to join him for the care of either. He being old and his economic needs met there is no need for him to be presented with a preferred mate.

(b) In the very few cases where the biang has been eligible she has not been married, so there is no reason to think her in fact a preferred mate. It is very difficult to find a case where the biang has been eligible for marriage, that is where she has no husband already. In the two cases that I have been able to find the parties say that they do not want to marry.

(c) The Penan do not maintain in any way strong enough to support the explanation that she is a preferred mate. Although this is not the strongest attack on the type of explanation put forward it remains important that the Penan themselves should attach to the terms no more significance than the facts that sexual intercourse with a langu is incest and with a biang is not.

If it is untrue that the biang term indicates a special sort of relationship between the parties such that they are preferred mates, it is still possible that there should be some other sort of relationship outside marriage that gives a similar significance to the term. I can merely report that so far as it is possible to ascertain the relationship between a man and his sister-in-law has

no special quality after the wife's death that distinguishes it from relationships with other former affines.

Lastly, perhaps it should not be assumed that such a significance can be read into terms unless there is something elsewhere in Penan terminological usage to justify it. Primarily one would look for an indication in the terms of the sexual and marital status of the persons referred to; but this is just what we do not find. It may be incest, for example, to sleep with a padi pĕsak or it may not: you cannot know until you have more facts about the nearness or distance of the relationship designated by the term. The term itself tells you nothing about what we are interested in. The same is the case with nearly all the other relationship terms. Within the social range of reference only facts can give information about sexual and marital status: the terms alone cannot give this. There is no reason on these grounds why a term like bieng should be any different, why it should have a type of significance that is not shared by the other terms. If we assume that there must be some sort of principle behind the forms and application of terms of relationship, something that we can understand in terms of 'sociological significance' then it is surprising if bieng (which is a remarkable term) has none. But that is the point. Certainly there is some correspondence between relationship terms

and the social structure (after all, the bilaterally organised Penan do not have an Omaha terminology); but I doubt the validity of inferring from them a sociological significance in which the terms 'express' or 'symbolise' anything.

VIII

One of the problems of Penan society is that within the one people the Eastern Penan allow first cousins to marry while the Western Penan forbid it as incestuous.

It seems obvious that biological and psychological reasons cannot be concerned here. They might give some understanding in the consideration of incest within the elementary family, but they clearly cannot in this case, where there is an extension of the incest range within one category of kinship.

There are two main sociological theories to be considered. Levi-Strauss [1949] maintains that the prohibition of incest is less a rule that forbids certain marriages than a rule that enjoins giving possible partners to others in a long- or short-range reciprocal alliance with other social groups. Murdock similarly maintains that the extended incest taboos have the effect of leading to friendly group-relations and binding groups together

into larger political units [Murdock, 1949, p.299]. I do not think this sort of theory can throw any light on our problem. In each tribe the group is composed of the same sorts of relatives, many of the groups are of the same size and the same kin-composition, and extra-group marriage is disliked and avoided. No Penan marries willingly outside his group, no group wants to lose an adult male or (among the Western Penan) make a marriage payment, and no group unprotestingly allows one of its women to leave it. Extra-group marriage is the rare exception, not the rule. Marriage-alliances are not regularly formed between groups, and there is no reciprocal exchange (even ideally or theoretically) of women between any groups within stocks of any order. Whatever the marriage-residence in any particular case a marriage between two groups brings no advantages to either. All the groups live at peace, so there is no relief from attack to be brought by making an inter-group marriage. You do not make friends or military allies by marrying outside the group. There is no political system binding the groups together into tribal or stock organisations: contacts between groups are very rare and almost always on an individual basis. As there are thus no political relations between groups there can be no political advantages to be gained by inter-group marriages.

Each group is economically independent and relies on no other

for support of its economy. It is true that certain more inaccessible groups do obtain goods through groups that attend trading-meetings, but there is no necessity to do so and any group can itself contact traders if it takes the trouble to do so. There would be no great advantage in marrying with another group, for if it were near enough to be married into it would be fairly close kin anyway, and all kin are required to make gifts and exchanges. There is thus no form of economic alliance when there is marriage between two groups, and there is no economic advantage to be sought in making such a marriage.

Alliance and reciprocity are not principles that at all enable us to understand the incest-status of first cousins in the two tribes. When we consider the relationships between the members of a group there is as little possibility of understanding the matter on these lines.

The other main sociological theory is that proposed by Linton [1936, p.126] and by Evans-Pritchard [1951, p.46]: namely, that incest regulations prevent conflicts in the statuses held by individuals, that they prevent confusion between one relationship and another and the contradictions such confusion would cause between the patterns of behaviour in which the relationships are expressed. Radcliffe-Brown also writes: 'the rules [relating to marriages between

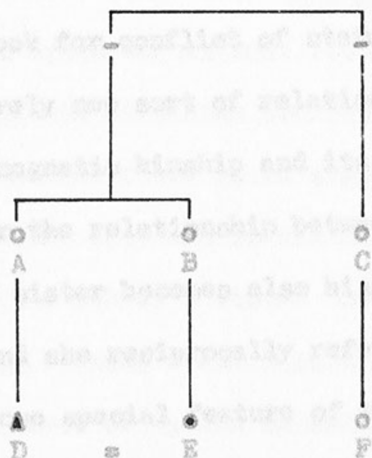
related persons] have for their function to maintain the continuity of the general system of institutional relationships, either by preventing marriages which would be disruptive or by encouraging marriages which reinforce the existing arrangement of persons.' [Radcliffe-Brown, 1950, p.71.]

As we are considering this view as a relatively recent development in sociological theory it is interesting to note that in Chinese the word for 'incest' is luannluen. This, when analysed, means disorderly or confused human relationships (the 'five relationships' on which rest the order and stability of the state). The connotation is thus quite different from that of sinful unchastity with which etymology and association have invested the English word. And compare, too, the cry of Oedipus, 'begetter of brother-sons', reminded of his children and the confusion of his relationships to them and to Jocasta: 'Incestuous sin! ... Father, brother, and son; bride, wife, and mother; confounded in one monstrous matrimony!'

The theory common to these ancient and modern views is, as Radcliffe-Brown writes [1950, p.72], one of social structure and of the necessary conditions of its stability and continuity. We have now to see whether there is any variation in the necessary conditions for the stability and continuity of the Penan tribes which can account for the difference in the incest-status of the first cousin.

The most obvious source of instability in a politically atomistic society like the Penan is in the economy. The economic unit is nearly always the elementary family. Once the family is established as a functioning economic unit it does not matter what the previous kinship of its members might have been, for there are no ties of an economic nature that are formed through specific kinship links of its members. The stability of this unit, whatever the accretions to the elementary family that is its foundation, is not affected by whether the wife is the first or second cousin of the man.

Similarly, the stability of the family itself is independent of the cognatic relationship of the husband and wife to each other, but in the relations of the family to the group there is room for conflicts of status. Let us take a case from Western Penan:



Suppose that D were to marry his first cousin E instead of his second cousin F.

D and E address each other by the same kinship terms as do D and F: they are generally known as 'siblings', _padi_, and both E and F are _padi pēsak_, cousin, to D. When D marries, five times out of ten he marries a cousin, and this cousin becomes, without evident (or conceivable) conflict of status, his wife. There is then no continuing pre-marital relationship that could conflict with that of husband and wife. In any case, as the earlier text has made clear, relative status derives in the main from age. D (if he is older than E) addresses her before marriage as _ineng_, 'younger sibling', and she addresses him as _lobeh_, 'older sibling'. This is the same sort of relationship, terminologically and socially, as holds between D and F. It is not then in the relationship of D to E that we must look for conflict of status if they marry. They then assume an entirely new sort of relationship which rests on other grounds than cognatic kinship and its duties or even age.

Let us consider the relationship between D and B. If D marries E than his mother's sister becomes also his wife's mother. He refers to B as his _kivan_ and she reciprocally refers to him as _kivan_, and we might look for some special feature of this relationship that would conflict with that of mother's sister to D. But he addresses

her as luang, and this is the same term as he applies to any of his other aunts such as C, and on the other hand he may also address her as inā, the same term as he uses to his mother, A. Even though she is his mother-in-law, then, D terminologically assimilates her on one hand to his mother, and on the other to C, who in fact is the mother of a legitimate possible spouse. In her turn B would address D as anak, child [son], or nak, and refer to him as 'my child', only on questioning qualifying this precisely by saying anak kivan ki, 'my child [son]-in-law'. If E should die D would be forbidden to marry B 'because she is like his mother'; and B could not marry him 'because he is like her son'. These are exactly the same reasons for forbidding marriage between D and B in the normal state of affairs, when they are the reasons for fobidding D to marry his mother's sister; and in this the similarity between mother's sister and wife's mother is again emphasised. It is clear on these grounds that there is no conflict of status between 'mother's sister' and 'wife's mother'; and that there is no significant difference in this context between the aunt who is the mother's true sister and the aunt (C) who is the mother's sister 'once removed' to D.

The relationship between A and E is very similar to that between B and D. E is the niece of A, and in marrying D becomes daughter (-in-law), and in this she is in the same position to A as F is.

The same terms, changes of terms, and relationships relate to A and E as to A and F.

The last source of possible conflict of status lies in the relationship of A to B. This is similar to that of A to C when there is a normal marriage between D and F. The Penan have no special term of address or of reference to mark this relationship. These persons continue to use the same terms of address to each other as before the marriage, there are no special duties and no avoidances. If both B and C are older than A, then A in case of either marriage continues to address each as 'elder sibling'.

In these possible sources of status-conflict the banned person B is equivalent to the permitted person C, and the banned person E is equivalent to the permitted person F. The theory that a certain marriage (here, D with E) would lead if permitted to a conflict of statuses which would disturb the stability and continuity of existing relationships is not, I think, applicable to the Penan. It is not difficult to see how it was true for the Greeks of the fourth century B.C. or how it is true for the Nuer, but the Penan are beyond the scope of the theory.

Let us glance at another view held by Murdock, that 'The distance to which incest taboos are extended appears to be primarily a function of the time which has elapsed since the establishment of

of the kin groups that have channeled them. It is presumably also correlated with the functional significance of the kin groups in question....' [Murdock, 1949, p.304]. Later [p.309] he concedes that this view is only 'rendered probable' by the evidence he examines. It is difficult to see how one could examine this theory as it relates to the Penan unless one had more detailed historical evidence than we have; but there is certainly nothing in the evidence we do have, nor in the inferences that we might reasonably make from the present numbers and sizes of the groups of the two tribes, that would lead us to believe it true.

Murdock's view is that 'Patterns of sex behaviour [specifically, incest taboos] neither reflect "historical accident" nor constitute a closed system within human cultures, but are everywhere molded and directed by the prevailing forms of social organisation. So marked is their dependence upon the latter, indeed, that they can be predicted to a notable degree if the structural forms are known.' [Murdock, 1949, p.313.] Now the Eastern Penan, according to Murdock's terminology, practise 'bilateral non-extension' of incest taboos, and the Western Penan practise 'minimal bilateral extension'. Yet both tribes, I should maintain, are structurally almost identical, and from the forms and processes of their social life no prediction of this variation in forbidden degrees could be made. If it is

true that 'extended incest taboos do commonly have genuine social utility' [Murdock, 1949, p.299] it is very difficult to see in what manner or sphere the Western Penan possess any advantage over the Eastern Penan.

There is the possibility that the Western Penan borrowed their mode of extension from another people since their fission from the Penan of the eastern tribe. The cultural variations among the settled peoples are so great and so complex, however, that until a great deal more study has been done it is not feasible to make useful comparisons between the Western Penan and them. A much more certain ethnological picture than any we can construct now is also necessary.

There is yet Kroeber's comparison of the formation of social institutions to 'the play of earnest children' [Kroeber, 1952, p.224] and the possibility that in this sort of random variation may lie the source of the difference between the tribes in prohibited degrees. But this is so imprecise and undetailed an 'impression' and so insecure an analogy that in spite of Levi-Strauss's earnest consider-ation of it [Levi-Strauss, 1953, pp.537-8] I shall leave it aside. Even if it were stated precisely as a hypothesis the issues that would seem to be involved would be problems unanswerable of the Penan.

IX

Another interesting difference between the two tribes is in the matter of marriage payment. We have to consider briefly whether there is anything in the constitution of the groups of each tribe that would enable us to understand why the Western Penan make a marriage payment in inter-group marriages and the Eastern Penan do not, and whether previous theories about the function of marriage payment are applicable to Penan material.

The answer to the first issue is clearly that there is nothing in the other differences between the tribes that determines whether marriage payment shall be paid or not. This can be seen in a consideration of the function of the Western Penan marriage payment.

The major difficulty - and much of our answer - is that nearly all marriages are between members of one group and that it is seldom that a marriage takes place between two groups and that marriage payment has to be made. Where there are so few instances to report it is difficult to speak of their general characteristics. When a marriage does occur between two groups it seems, from the limited data there is, that nearly always the man remains with the group of his wife's parents, and that therefore even in these cases marriage payment is rare. I therefore find it difficult to begin

even to ask whether, for example, the marriage payment increases the stability of the marriage or whether it is a recognition of it [Evans-Pritchard, 1951, p.96]. As far as one can judge from the extremely few instances of divorce that I know of I should say that stability is not a criterion of its function. The Western Penan, who make marriage payment, have more divorces than the Eastern Penan. The one case on pp.273-4 in which marriage payment is an element does not help us to decide. Sam is not 'legally' entitled to a divorce because her husband wants to take another wife, as she would be entitled to divorce him if he committed adultery. There is no question, therefore, of the husband's group repaying the marriage payment that they made to Menadong when they took his daughter into their group. (The husband does, it appears, recognise some fault of his in the matter and is said to be making a payment of a basket of resin to Menadong; but this is something quite different from the return of a marriage payment.)

Nor can the function of marriage payment among the Western Penan be seen as forming an alliance between two groups [Radcliffe-Brown, 1950, p.54]. To have this significance, marriage payment and marriages between groups would have to be much more frequent, and alliances should be observable in which a part might be attributable to marriages between the groups concerned. In fact, Penan groups

almost never meet, and they do not form alliances of a military or political or economic nature such as might be implemented or strengthened or expressed by marriages between them.

To draw a parallel between marriage payment and bloodwealth does not help us either [Radcliffe-Brown, 1929; Evans-Pritchard, 1951, p.98], for the Penan have no recognised payment for blood-guilt. No Penan that I have met can remember a case of homicide by a Penan and there is no even hypothetical rate of compensation. When asked what compensation would be made if one Penan killed another they stumble helplessly in their speech and say: 'But it could not happen. We Penan do not kill people. No Penan has ever killed another.' The only parallel is in the compensation that might be paid if a Penan raped a woman from another group. (I ought to point out that no Penan can remember such a thing happening, nor do even the settled peoples maliciously report it of them.) In this case the compensation paid would be the same types and quantities of goods as the marriage payment; and one elder even revealingly remarked: 'It is very bad. It would be like killing a person.'

The only reasonable answer seems to lie, after all, in what the Penan express by saying: 'We buy the woman'. The marriage payment is a direct compensation to the woman's group for the loss of a member. In a small group of thirty or forty individuals the number of working

females is small and the loss of one of them severe. In particular, the parents of the woman at the time of her marriage will be beginning to age, and it is to both their male and female children that in their eventual helplessness they will look for care. By neither their nor our standards can a number of blowpipes and parangs be adequate compensation for such a major loss, but their is no greater payment within the resources of the Penan. (Similarly, even if the husband should remain with the woman's group until the birth of the first child, the common benefit of his labour to the group cannot be great compensation for the loss of a group-member if he takes his wife back to his own group.) It is true that there is then a continuing relationship between the two groups in that the woman's group retains certain rights over her, and that the husband's group can claim return of the marriage payment if the woman misbehaves, but this is merely an instance of latent rights and very far from being an alliance.

In the case of the token marriage payment within the group the answer seems clearly that the parang is an 'objective instrument by which a "legal" marriage is established' [Radcliffe-Brown, 1950, p.53] analogous to the validation of a contract [Fortes, 1937, p.11].

But all this gives us no clue to the source of the variation between the two tribes; why the Western Penan demand compensation

when a woman is taken from a group and the Eastern Penan do not; why the Western Penan recognise a formal validation of the marriage within the group and the Eastern Penan do not. Unsatisfactory though it may seem, I am of the opinion that there is nothing in the form or process of social life among either tribe that can give us the answers to these puzzles.

13: Eastern Penan.

8 N A M E S

I

In the general extreme simplicity of Penan culture the types of names and the usages connected with them stand out with surprising complexity.

Every Penan has one personal name that in a sense we shall see later is considered not merely a designation but a part of him, whose appositeness or otherwise determines (or may at any time determine) his fortunes. This is given to him within a few days of his birth by his parents and close kin, but if the child is sickly and there is anxiety about its life the naming may be put off for a month or more. This does not imply that there is a 'social personality' that is acquired with the name, for if an unnamed child dies the loss still produces the same mourning-observances as for a named one, and its death is considered a loss as severe (or otherwise) as if it had been named. In no respect is there considered to be in the child any sort of change coinciding with the change from unnamed to named status.

The name, once selected, is given to the child without any ceremony or ritual or communal recognition. Only in the normal

way of gossip in these small groups will the name of the new member become known. This is shown by one incident in which I asked Talan, the elder of the Kalame group, whether a newly-born baby had been given a name. He answered that it had not, but was immediately contradicted by one of his daughters, who said that it had and gave the name.

There seems to be an almost infinite variety of names among the Penan, and in many hundreds recorded in genealogies it is seldom that the same name is held by two people. It is impossible, I find, to detect any principle by which a man's name may be distinguished from a woman's. One observer, indeed, professes to find in the women's names 'softer sounds, in general, than the male' [Harrisson, 1949 (18), p.139] but this has escaped my discernment. As one so seldom comes across the same names it is nearly all the time necessary to ask 'Male or female?', and this may happen even to Penan. The sorts of name that are used can be seen in previous chapters. There are a number of names that one may find in both tribes, but in the great variety of names they are not many. There are many names that I have found only among Eastern Penan and many others that I have found only among Western Penan; but there is no principle to enable one to tell from a name itself whether it is one typically used by one tribe or by the other. There are some names that one can place

but they form only a small class. When a name has a glottal stop between two vowels it is practically certainly an Eastern Penan name, but in general this is not much help. In the composition-diagram of Jengilan's group, for example, only two names occur with this phonetic feature; and in any case this is a guide only in names that possess double vowels, and they are relatively few.

A fairly frequently met source of name for a child is that of a senior kinsman, whether alive or dead, whose life was long and as reasonably free of gross misfortune as a Penan may hope for. Thus the little boy La'eng in Jengilan's group was named after the adult La'eng; Jalong in Kelame group was named after the brother of Leya; and Sara was named after the wife of Nyaring.

Another source of names is events of any striking sort connected with the early days of the child. Thus in one group a man was named Avun because at his birth the place where the group was at the time was covered in mist (avun) - but it should be remembered that there are other men named Avun who were not born in mist, and that in the Western Penan there are men named Avun though their word for mist is aput. One small girl in the Silat was named Sanam because soon after she was born she was bitten by ants (sanam). Other events that may suggest names are visits by strangers of other tribes, or even hearing about an important visitor to a place

far away. If a group should meet some Punan Busang shortly after the birth of a male child it would almost surely be named Busang, or if they met Bukitan then the child would be Bukitan. One group heard of a visit to the headwaters of the Baram of a Catholic missionary and named a child Pada (after the usual Bornean pronunciation of 'Father'). Another child was named Dato because of a visit to the headwaters of the Tinjar of a senior Malay administrative officer; and another was named Pisha after a European officer called Fisher. Yet another child was named Lidem (which is anyway a genuine Penan name) because I lived in the group shortly after he was born. Or the name may be even more capriciously chosen. When the son of Aren in the Kalame group was born no one could agree on a good name for him, and in the confusion Bala suggested: 'He is newly come, he is new (mareng). Let us call him Mareng' and this is the name that he was given.

But the great majority of Penan names have no individual meanings and do not refer to individuals or to events. They are part of a very large stock of names that the elders retain in their memories from stories and genealogies and contact with other groups. It is always possible to present a Penan with genuine Penan names of which he has never heard. One Penan in the Tinjar asked me to help him choose a name for his small son, and to many of the names that I

recollected from other Penan groups he queried: 'Is that a Penan name?', accepting without any surprise my answer that it was even though he had never heard it. For interest I also made up names that sounded Penan-like to me (without claiming that they actually were that) and each time the man considered the new name as seriously as the others. He made his choice eventually without the help of anybody else, from the names that I gave him, and partly at least on the basis of whether the sound of the name struck him pleasantly or not.

Many of the Eastern Penan groups have adopted since 1946 a form of Christianity that has filtered to them from the Borneo Evangelical Mission through the Kelabit with whom some of their groups are in touch. These have now begun to give their children 'Christian' names ('worship names' as they call them, or in another translation of the same phrase, 'names of the new religion'). Such names are Yam, after Meriyam (Mary) 'the wife of Jesus'; and Min, after _amin_, the thunderous 'Amen' the Christian Penan end their communal prayers with.

In addition to the personal name an individual has the name of his genitor as sign of his descent and legitimacy. Not to know the name of one's genitor is to be illegitimate. Thus Talan is Talan [the son of] Laya, and Jalong is Jalong Tului, and so on.

This applies to women as well as to men. Normally this way of naming will not be heard unless the speaker wishes to distinguish between two men of the name Egan, for example, or two women named Ubung (as Ubung Bakung and Ubung Tajan in the Penan Bilat of Kelame). There are other ways of naming and distinguishing that are very much more common, as we shall see, so this occurs still less often than one might expect.

The genitor's name is not discarded when an orphan is adopted: Lōshu did not become Lōshu Jalong when she entered his family on the death of her own father Jawa. Although Jalong might properly refer to her as 'my child' he would always, if pressed, answer 'not my real child'; and if he were asked whose child she was then he would certainly reply 'the child of Jawa'. Urquhart writes that an adopted child 'usually took its new father's name' among the Penan Geng and cites the case of a boy who took the name of his stepfather when his widowed mother married again [Urquhart, 1951, p.516]. Variation is to be expected among Penan, and what is true of one group may not be true of another, so I hesitate to controvert Urquhart's statement as far as this one group is concerned; but it is not generally true that this would happen.

This name may be used, however, only when the genitor is also the father. If a girl's lover left her in pregnancy and she bore

a child, everybody knowing its begetter, the child would still be illegitimate so long as the man refused to acknowledge it as his. Not that this is a matter of shame for the child, 'he knew nothing of it', or any handicap in normal life (though the Western Penan say that an illegitimate child could not become elder of a group no matter what his capablities). It is merely that his genitor will not own him and be recognised as his father, and the child thereby has no father's name to bear after his own name. This is the only form of illegitimacy: no child is illegitimate merely because his parents are only betrothed and not actually married, or because no marriage-payment (of any sort) has been made.

II

Though a Penan always has one personal name it may not be the same one throughout his life, during which he may be known by a fairly large number of names. There are two occasions of name-changing.

When a Penan is severely or continually sick he changes his personal name. 'He is very sick, so he knows that it is not his right name.' All illness is brought by spirits (or by a spirit of a certain class) and commonly because the sufferer's name is disliked by them. I cannot go into the deep and mysterious matters of Penan religion here; but this is the only statement made by

Penan and they can give no reason why spirits should object to a name. Changing the name removes the source of the spirit's displeasure and ends the sickness, but only if the new name that is chosen is one that does not similarly displease the spirit. In the typical case a person suffers from a severe attack of some sickness and shows no signs of improving soon. The spirit-medium, if there is one in the group, is consulted and he ascertains from certain spirits what new name would be acceptable. This name is adopted without ceremony or formality by the sufferer, who is then expected to get well. But it may happen that there is no spirit-medium in the group, or that if there is one he has erred in some way and has not relayed an acceptable name. In this case the invalid may continue to be ill, and a new name will have to be chosen again. If the invalid dies then it is assumed that the correct name was not found: if he lives it is thought due to the assumption of a better name. Old people, however, are exceptions to this procedure: when they fall ill they do not resort to name-changing. 'They are sick because they are old, and they die because they are sick.' In their case illness and death are thought to be always near in a way that is entirely natural, and no special interference on the part of spirits is assumed.

There is no reason given by Penan why the name is so important.

They merely reiterate the fact that one discards a name in order to recover from sickness. 'Because the name is wrong. If you use the same name after a sickness you will be sick like that again.'

This matter raises many questions that I do not wish to consider here. They belong to the order of Penan thought that one might call their philosophy: their cosmological ideas, their theology, and their moral values. On some of these matters I am not clear and have acquired no coherent understanding, and in any case they are a type of material that falls outside the limits I have set myself in this work (cf. p.18). All that I am concerned to show at the moment is that a Penan may have many personal names throughout his life, and what the main occasions of these changes are.

The other occasion of name-changing is the death of one of the primary referents of the relationship terminology: viz. those whom the Penan call 'true' kin, such as father (but not the father's cousins), first cousin (but not second cousin), sibling's child (but not cousin's child). We shall examine this sort of situation much more fully in a later section of this chapter. The new personal name in this case may be chosen either by the individual concerned or by the spirit-medium. It is not necessarily chosen at the death of any close kin, such as that of a grandparent or a nephew, but it

may be. In the case of the death of a parent it is nearly always changed. Some Penan say that this is because the former personal name was always used by the dead person and that to continue to use the same name is saddening. When you are addressed by someone after the death of your father by the same name your father used to you then you are sad anew that he is dead.

Both men and women change their names in these cases. Usun of the Kelame group has also been known in her life as Kumang and as Boshon; and Talan has been known as Levang, Nyali, Perayung, and Nyire. There is no rule that new names must be adopted in these cases we have seen. In any case a Penan may choose not to change his name, though when he is ill this is unlikely unless he is subject to short attacks of fever from which he habitually recovers. In the case of death of kin a man may decide to change his name for one individual's death and not for another's. There is no way in which one can systematise the variation: 'It depends on how he feels'.

Any of many names may be recalled in giving genealogies. One man may say that his father was A, while his brother on another occasion (or perhaps in another group) says that his father was B. It is only through discovering other relationships to both of these men that one discovers that A and B were names of the same man. This may happen at any level in a genealogy, and different individuals

represented in it may often be identified only by deductions from certain relationships and by similarities in the patterns of other names. This is not a difficulty only for the ethnographer (and we have hardly begun yet to see what confusion faces him) but it is sometimes a source of misunderstanding for other Penan not familiar with the nominal histories of the members of the group.

III

Any married Penan with children may be known by a teknonym as well as by a personal name. By a teknonym I mean a name that indicates that the person designated by it is the parent of a child.

On the birth of a child to them both parents acquire teknonyms, and it is by these names that they will thereafter be known until there is occasion to change their names in one of the ways set out in the course of this chapter. The constants in these names are 'Tama', which is assumed by the man and means 'father [of]', and 'Tinen', which is assumed by the woman and means 'mother [of]'. I had hesitated a little to call the latter a teknonym in that it is the same as the ordinary word for 'mother', and because it could be maintained that to call a woman by it is merely a biological description and not a form of title (whether or not the title is

thought to have any honorific significance). But the word Tinen is subject in this context to the same changes as Tama, which I shall describe presently, and I shall therefore consider it a teknonym.

Tama can be adopted only by the man who is the begetter and father of the child, what the Penan call the 'true father'. If a man has merely adopted the child he is not known as 'Tama' but as 'Tamen', which is the ordinary descriptive term for a father. This points the fact that he is the social father of the child but not its begetter.

The teknonyms are not used by themselves but are always followed by another name. While the child is unnamed the father is known as Tama Ukat if it is his first son, and as Tama Alō for any of subsequent sons. The father of an unnamed girl child is known as Tama Itong, whether it is the first or any subsequent unnamed daughter. One Penan elder explained that Tama Alō comes from the word <u>balō</u>, red. Any new-born child may be known as <u>anak</u> <u>balō</u>, red child, 'because its skin is red', and it is maintained that Alō comes from this. But no explanations are given for the names Ukat and Itong, which are used only in this context and do not seem to derive from any other Penan word.

With the naming of the child the teknonyms become more specific. The father of Awing, for example, becomes Tama Awing (and the mother,

Tinon Awing). This is the type of name that is most often used in address and in reference. The personal name is very seldom used, and the kinship terms more frequently, but if a man is entitled to it he is addressed by his teknonym.

The teknonym is used during the life of the child named in it and is discarded at its death. In this case the parent is not known by another teknonym until the birth of another child. It does not count that he or she still has a number of other children: their names cannot be used in teknonyms, and the parent cannot bear another teknonym until he has another child. We shall see more of this matter in the next section.

The Penan say that not to be able to assume a teknonym, not to have a child, is not a matter of shame, and that to address a man by his teknonym is not to honour him. 'If you have no child that is the will of God, because he does not want to give you one. It is not your fault. You are sorry because there is no one to replace you, no one to remember your name [as father]. But you are not ashamed. Why should you be?' Nevertheless, it is felt that a man with children is in some way superior to one who has not, and a childless man or a barren woman (in particular) feels the unease of a certain inequality. This fact does not contradict the Penan statement that the teknonym is not an honorific. To address a man

by his teknonym is to use the form of address to which he is entitled. It is not used on occasion to 'make him feel good' or to indicate whatever superiority he may be conceded to possess. Its use cannot be withheld in any significant fashion, and to address him by other names is not to deny him any quality or to insult him.

A somewhat similar name is 'Lakei', prefixed like a teknonym to a personal name. In itself the word lakei means simply 'male'. It is used in a vaguely honorific fashion of any man who is a grandparent, but it is not necessarily applied to all men who have grandchildren. Usually the man named so is not only old and a grandparent but respected (what Penan call 'big'). The name is not subject to discarding as the teknonym is, though it may be. There is no equivalent name for a woman. Former elders are typically called by this name, as Lakei Anan, or Lakei Asat.

Both the above types of name, the teknonym and the honorific, are precisely used with the personal name of the individual: a man is not only Tama Awing but he is called, if precision is needed, Tama Awing Talan. But whereas a teknonym can be used in itself as a term of address and a man can be called to as 'Tama Angit' the honorific 'Lakei' can never be used so and it would sound ridiculous.

IV

A few observers in Borneo have reported of peoples other than the Penan that they use complicated systems of 'teknonyms' that are adopted on the birth of children and at the death of certain relatives. Elshout has recorded a number of these 'voorvoegsels', prefixes, as used by the Kenyah of the Apo Kayan [Elshout, 1926, ch.II]. Pollard and Banks have described with admirable detail the so-called teknonyms used by thirty-eight longhouse groups of the Baram district [Pollard & Banks, 1937]. They use this material, however, for the purpose of establishing ethnological connections between the peoples they deal with, and they do not attempt to describe their use or make any interpretation of them.

No data concerning these names among the Penan were presented either by Elshout or by Pollard and Banks. The only reference to such names among the Penan is Harrisson's observation: 'The naming of persons is also less complex and variable than most Borneo peoples, and although a few big-shots, like Tama Laje, have followed the beginning of the Kenya name-changes (Tama prefix on having a child, etc.), nearly all Punans in this area [viz. Eastern Penan in the headwaters of the Tuto river] have fixed names....' [Harrisson, 1949 (18), p.139].

The Penan use very many names of the sort that Pollard and Banks recorded, but I do not call them 'teknonyms'. The true teknonyms are those that I have described in the last section, and these names are different from them. They form one terminological system with the teknonyms, to which they are complementary, but they are not teknonyms. The occasions on which they are used are the deaths of relatives, while teknonyms are used in connection with births. One set of names deals with death and the other with life. I shall therefore call the names to which this section is devoted 'death-names'.

The principle is that on the death of a certain relative a Penan adopts a name according to his relationship to the deceased. For example, if a boy's father dies he 'enters' (as Penan say) the death-name Uyau, 'father dead', and will be addressed by this name by anybody whom he meets. If a girl's father dies she is known as Utan, the death-name for a father dead that is applied to women.

The death-names used by the two tribes of Penan are listed on p.313. In addition to these basic terms the following may also be used: Tāshu, father dead while away hunting or visiting ('you did not see him'); Lenga, wife and all children dead; Beluwei, second wife dead; Tevan, father and father's brother dead ('because you are twice Uyau'); and Lavat, a man living long after many of

	Eastern Penan	Western Penan
grandparent dead	tupou	tupou
father (m.)	uyau	uyau (pasi)
(w.)	utan / benah	utan (benah)
mother	ilun / apah	apah
uncle (m.)	ulat	ilun
(w.)	ulat	ulat
aunt (m.)	ulat	ilun
(w.)	ulat	ulat
elder sibling	lineng / lubet	lineng
younger sibling	lineng / lubet	lubet
elder cousin	lineng / lubet	–
younger cousin	lineng / lubet	–
nephew	lu'ang	belēbui / bui
niece	lu'ang	belēbui / bui
first-born child	oyong	uyung
second	sade	sadi
third	–	mewat
fourth		sawang
fifth		larah
sixth		akam
seventh		ukat
eighth		lut
ninth		lumai
grandchild	–	piat
husband	balou	balou
wife	aban	aban
parent-in-law	–	ilun (m.), ulat (w.)
child-in-law	–	–
brother-in-law	–	abing
sister-in-law	–	gelang
ruai	–	–

his children have died. These additional names are used only by the Western Penan and are unknown to the Eastern Penan, who have no names for the deaths of persons in these positions.

One point must be made here. The column given as the death-names of the Eastern Penan is not that used by any one group, but is constructed out of the names given me by many groups. For example: many groups give Lineng as the death-name for siblings and cousins, others give Lineng and Lubat as interchangeable names, and one group even gives Abeng as the death-name for an elder-sibling dead. Similarly, for 'second-born child dead' two groups give the name Uan or U'an instead of Sade, and another group gives U'an as the death-name used at the death of any child after the first-born. Most groups have no names for 'nephew dead' or 'niece dead', but one group (that which uses U'an for all the children) gives Lu'ang for the death of either (cf. p.203).

All the nomadic Western Penan groups use identical death-names, but the settled groups (with whom, however, we are not for the most part concerned) have sometimes adopted death-names used by the settled peoples they are close to. The longer settled groups do not use the death-names and most cannot remember what they were. It is only the old people who recognise them, while younger people do not understand them at all.

The death-names are terms of address in themselves, so that a man whose grandchild has died may be addressed as 'Piat', or a man whose first-born child has died may be addressed as 'Uyung'. They are also terms of reference when prefixed to the personal name in the way that teknonyms are, so that a man may be referred to as Piat Talan or Uyung Jalong. They are adopted successively on the deaths of true kin and true affines only. On the death of his father a man will 'enter' Uyau, but will discard this on the death of his mother, when he becomes Apah, and so on. If a 'true vi' dies he adopts Ilun, but he does not adopt this name if the vi is not a true sibling of one of his parents. He adopts the name Tupou at the death of his father's father but not at the death of his father's father's first cousin, who is also a 'grandparent'.

The alternative term Pasi in the Western Penan column is the name given to a younger child when his father dies. Of two sons the elder will be known as Uyau and the younger as Pasi; of three sons the two elder ones will be Uyau and the youngest Pasi; and this same principle holds of all numbers of sons, that the majority of them will be Uyau and the minority of younger sons Pasi. The case is similar for daughters, who are known as Utan and Banah.

The Western Penan use the more complex system of death-names, and it is with them that I shall deal now, though the same principles

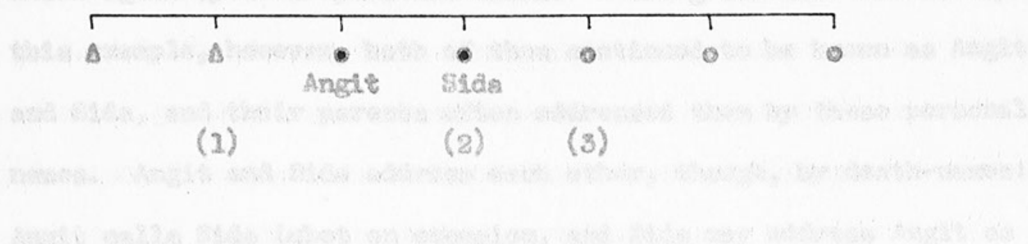
apply among the Eastern Penan.

There are differences in the adoption of death-names by children, childless married couples, and parents. Children adopt at the appropriate deaths any of the death-names of true kin except those of affines and children. Married people who have no children use these death-names and are also liable to adopt death-names for affines as well. People who have children no longer use any of the death-names for true kin such as they adopted before the birth of their first child, nor do they use terms for the death of affines. They then adopt death-names only at the deaths of their own children or at the death of either husband or wife.

Commonly a Penan will first become Tupou as a small child when one of his parents' parents dies. He retains this name (so long as deaths of other kin do not intervene) through the successive deaths of the other grandparents. Perhaps the father's brother may then die, and at this the child becomes Ilun and discards the name Tupou. This death-name may then be discarded at the death of a sibling. In this way a Penan may enter a series of names before he has a child, such as: Tupou - Ilun - Tupou - Uyau - Ilun - Apah - Linong - Belōbui - Ilun - Abing - Lubat ... and so on.

The matter is a little more complex at the deaths of siblings, and another name may appear. Let us take the case of Angit and Sida

to illustrate the use of death-names in the sibling-series:



The age-order of the siblings goes from left to right. The first boy died, then the second was born and after him Angit. While Angit was still small the second brother died. She did not at that time have a death-name because the first child had died before she was born, and death-names are only adopted at the deaths of kin after one is born. At this death Angit became Lineng, 'elder sibling dead' (1). Then Sida was born and Angit dropped Lineng and became again known by her personal name (2). After the birth of Sida another sister was born but died while very small. At this death Sida became Lubat, 'younger sibling dead'. Angit could not have become Lubat as well because, as Penan say, it would have been wrong while she still had a younger sibling, Sida. At this death she became Mela (3), the death-name for a younger sibling dead used in just this situation. After the assumption of these names two more sisters were born, but they both died as babies and Angit

and Sida retained their death-names. Had the last-born sister lived they would have discarded their death-names and would have been known again by their personal names. During the time covered by this example, however, both of them continued to be known as Angit and Sida, and their parents often addressed them by these personal names. Angit and Sida address each other, though, by death-names: Angit calls Sida Lubat on occasion, and Sida may address Angit as Mela. Most often it is their parents who use these terms to them, while they address each other by ordinary kinship terms of address. Neither has discarded a death-name at the birth of one of the latter-born sisters. Penan wait an unspecified number of days (some say ten) after a birth to see whether the child will live or die. If it lives they discard their death-names (if they are in the appropriate positions to do so) and adopt either personal names or, if they are the parents, teknonyms. The discarding of a death-name does not wait upon the naming of the child. I believe that during these days of waiting the death-names that might be affected by its life or death are not used. Particularly Sida's death-name of 'younger sibling dead' would be considered uneasy augury for the life of the new child.

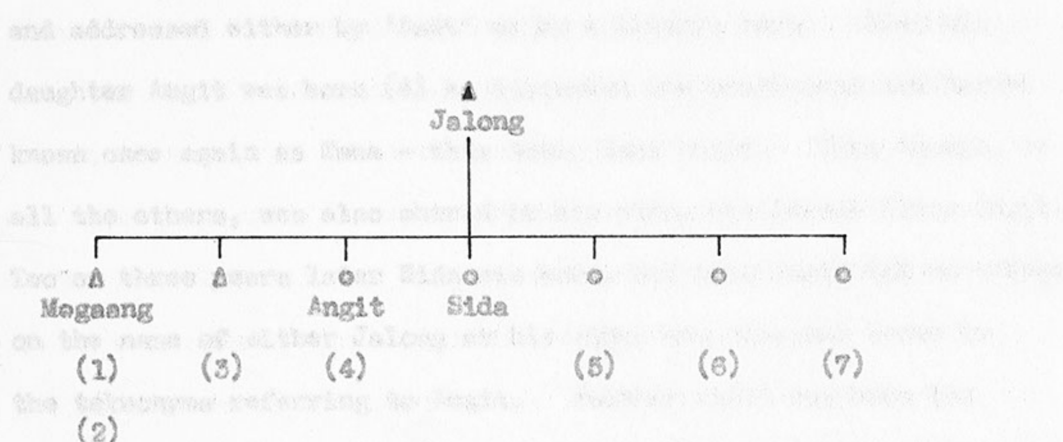
This brings out a point that was absent in the use of the death-names we saw at first. In their series one death followed another,

and the only changes were from death-name to death-name. In the sibling-series we see that when a new birth occurs in the series the death-name is discarded altogether and a personal name solely used. In the former cases there could hardly have been the birth of a new grandfather or even of a new uncle to break the successive adoption of death-names. We shall see more of this matter when we come to the death-names used by parents.

Although the Eastern Penan use sibling death-names on the deaths of 'true' (i.e. first) cousins the Western Penan do not. It is said that this is because if on the death of an elder first cousin you assume the name Linong then your own elder sibling (to whose death the name also refers) may die. As the list shows there are no names for deaths of cousins of any remove.

All the above names are used by even married people so long as they have no child; but after the birth of their first child they enter the child-series of death-names and no longer enter death-names for grandparents, parents, siblings, or affines. On the birth of their child the parents adopt their teknonyms, but on its death (or the death of any of their subsequent children) they enter the child-series of names. These death-names for own children are assumed according to the order of birth of the child that dies, not according to whether it is the first to die or the fifth to die.

Thus, if a man has nine children and of them the first to die is the ninth-born, then he does not assume the name Uyung but becomes Lamai. And if his fifth child is the second to die he does not become Sadi but assumes the death-name Larah. If another child is born to him after he has adopted a death-name for one of his children he discards the death-name and becomes known again by a teknonym incorporating the name of the new child. The following is the case of Jalong:



With the birth of his first child, Megaang (which, incidentally, means 'strong'), Jalong became known by the teknonym of Tama plus the name of his son: Tama Megaang. He could still have been referred to by anybody wishing to be precise as Tama Megaang Jalong, but in everyday intercourse he would be known merely as Tama Megaang. His close kin, however, would usually address him by the appropriate

kinship term. Then Megaang died, and Jalong became Uyung Jalong (2). In address he was merely Uyung, but as at any time there may be a number of men using the death-name Uyung he would not have been referred to merely as Uyung (except in a very small domestic circle) but as Uyung Jalong. At the death of his second son (I regret I neglected to record his name) he discarded 'Uyung' and became Sadi (3). In the same way as with Uyung he was known as Sadi Jalong and addressed either by 'Sadi' or by a kinship term. When his daughter Angit was born (4) he discarded the death-name and became known once again as Tama - this time, Tama Angit. This change, as all the others, was also shared by his wife, who became Tinen Angit. Two or three years later Sida was born, but this birth had no effect on the name of either Jalong or his wife, who remained known by the teknonyms referring to Angit. Another child was born but died small, and Jalong and his wife again discarded their teknonyms and 'entered' the death-name for 'fifth-born child dead', Larah (5). After this two other daughters were born and died as babies a few days old, and according to custom Jalong ought to have become Akem (6) and then Ukat (7) at their respective deaths. But it shows well the lack of rigidity in Penan institutions that Jalong said Larah was enough, that he had had enough death-names and would adopt no more. This declaration of his determined what he was to be called,

Another interesting aspect of death-names appears in this case. They can be adopted even by people who are themselves childless, who have adopted children or who have been promised children to adopt. Usun, who is barren, had been promised the latest of Jalong's children and was to have adopted it. Had she done so she would have been known as Tinen (whatever the child's name would have been), which is the same term as a genuine teknonym applied to a 'true' mother. Her husband, Usong, would have been known as Tamen plus the child's name, indicating that he was merely the social father of the child and not its begetter. In the event they were not able physically to adopt the child, for it died in its mother's care eighteen days after birth (and during this period was given no personal name, cf. section I). Neither Jalong nor Sulau assumed new death-names ('What is the use?') with reference to its position in the child-series of names. But Usun and her husband, who were by promise and acceptance the child's foster-parents, adopted the names Uyung at its death as though they had begotten it. This was done merely on the basis of Jalong's promise to them, for they had in no way taken care of the child. This is an uncommon case, but it is not irregular. Even here, though, it would also have been perfectly proper for Jalong and Sulau also to adopt the death-name appropriate to the child's position. Thus for the death of the same

child Usong and Usun adopted the death-name Uyung ('first-born child dead'), for they were its foster-parents and it was their first child; and Jalong and Sulau could have adopted the name Ukat, for they were its parents and it was certainly their seventh child.

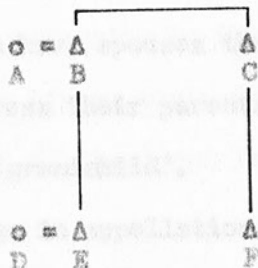
We have seen here that a death-name is discarded at the birth of another child. This principle of a new life giving one the right to discard the death-name is also seen in the case of widows and widowers. A widower discards his death-name Aban only when a new child is born to him, not merely when he remarries. Similarly, a widow retains the name Balou after her remarriage. It may thus happen that a man bearing the name Aban ('widower') may be the husband of a woman bearing the name Balou ('widow'). Both retain these death-names until the birth of a child to them, or until they adopt a child, when they assume teknonyms with reference to it. Also, in such a marriage, the children of the couple will continue to bear the death-names relative to their dead parents: the children of the widower will be 'motherless' and the children of the widow will be 'fatherless'.

It is common that when a man's close kin die he not only assumes a death-name but also changes his personal name. This is the case in both tribes. For example, when the child of Belengan died he changed both his death-name and his personal name, from Aban Belengan

to Oyong Beshiai. There is no obligation of religion or of etiquette to force a man to change his personal name also, and it rests with the individual whether he does or not. It is most common in the case of a parent or an eldest child dying (cf. pp.306-7).

There is another custom connected with death-names that I shall name the Pu-usage. This is an awkward and uninformative name, but I have not found such a terminological institution in the accounts of any other people and a name has to be given to it.

'Pu' is the term of address to a grandparent, but at certain deaths it is used in addressing persons not in the grandparental generation, who were not before the death known as tepun. It is a usage of the Western Penan and is unknown to the Eastern Penan. (The Sebup have the identical institution.) The following are the situations in which it is seen:



If B, the father of E, dies, then B's siblings address E as 'Tupou'

and refer to him as _ayam_, grandchild. E addresses C as 'Pu', grandfather, and refers to him as _tepun_. This applies only between a man and the true siblings of the deceased parent, and not between him and the siblings of the surviving parent. E also addresses the surviving parent (in this case, his mother, A) as 'Pu' and refers to her as his grandparent; while she in return addresses him as 'Tupou' and refers to him as her grandchild. F, who is the nephew of A, also addresses her as 'Pu' and is addressed by her as 'Tupou'. If E has a wife, D, she is counted as a child of A and B and is included in the same terminological usages as E.

This is the usage as it appears in the parent generation. It is also seen in the child generation. When a person dies the surviving siblings address their parents as 'Pu' (grandparent) and are addressed in return as 'Tupou'. The children refer to their parents as 'grandparents' and are referred to them as 'grandchildren'. If any of the children have spouses these are also included in the same terms: they address their parents-in-law as 'grandparent' and are addressed as 'grandchild'.

There is no change in appellation between the child generation and their true grandparents. That is to say, they do not refer to their grandparents as great-grandparents, making them distant by one generation as they have done to their parents. Nor do the

parents of the dead child refer to their true grandchildren as great-grandchildren.

One may thus hear a man address his sister's son as 'Tupou' and refer to him as his _gyam_, grandson, though when questioned he will say: 'He is not my real grandson, but his mother has died'. Or another may introduce has 'grandmother' and say: 'She is not really my grandmother, she is my mother, but my father has died'. This usage does not affect the application of the death-names and is employed in addition to them.

The _Pu_-usage is maintained for about a year after the death that occasioned it, but there is no set rule. Firstly, there cannot be, for the Penan take no exact account of years; and, secondly, individual Penan behave in different ways about the same custom. For example, more than a year after a daughter of Talan had died he was no longer addressing his daughters Awing, Sulau, and the others as 'Tupou' nor referring to them as 'grandchildren'; but while they referred to him as their father (not grandfather) Sulau addressed him as 'Amā' (father) and Awing continued to address him as 'Pu' (grandfather).

It will have seemed queer that a man should address his grandchild by a term that we have seen means 'grandparent dead'. The term in question, Tupou, is one of a number of the death-names that

are used not only as such but are used as terms of address by those persons with reference to whose ultimate deaths they will be used as death-names. These terms are Tupou, Uyau (Pasi), Utan (Banah), and Apah. A grandparent, and not only a true grandparent, may address a small boy in the _ayam_ generation to him as 'Tupou' and in this context the term means merely 'grandchild' as a term of address. Similarly, a man may address his child as Uyau or Utan, and a mother may address the child as Apah. These are then terms of address to children and are used usually by the true kin, but they may be used by any kinsmen standing in the proper genealogical relationship and of the appropriate age. Normally they are used in coaxing endearments or when the child has suffered some small hurt. Strangers may not use 'Uyau' to a child, or 'Tupou', and I have been told that this would harm the parent so that he may even die, but I cannot say whether this is a general belief. A man can, however, call even a distant nephew Uyau, the term that is primarily and most correctly used by the child's own father. On occasion even Solalang and I were connected in this way: although I usually addressed her as Luang and she would address me as Elop (nephew), she sometimes called me 'Apah', particularly if she was asking for something or was urging me to eat. But in general this use of death-names as terms of address is extremely seldom heard, and it was

months after my interest in the matter was first aroused before I first heard this usage or knew it was possible.

It should not be assumed that the Penan can present or use the death-names of the child-series with either ease or accuracy. Occasions of their application to new bearers of them are relatively infrequent, and to use the name once it has been assumed by an individual requires no thought about the principles behind its use or about the other death-names that with it form the complete system. Unfortunately, I have not been with a group when one of its members has died, and I cannot say what sort of deliberations take place before the correct names for the true kin of the deceased are decided upon. In most names there would probably be no hesitation at all, but when a child dies there may well be.

The Penan, when questioned about the names, are very often confused about their correct use. Within one group different answers ~~answers~~ will be given by different individuals and even by the same individual at different times. For example, an elder was asked what the death-name was for 'ninth-born child dead' and, after thinking and mumbling names to himself, said that he did not know. Later he used the name 'Lumai' in conversation, prefixed to the name of another man in the group; and when he was questioned about this he turned to his daughter, recounted with her the births

and deaths of the children of the man in question, and eventually turned back with the answer that Lumai was the death-name for the ninth-born child.

Although death-names are commonly used as terms of address it is improper and disrespectful to address an older man by one. It does not matter that a man is merely genealogically superior, and a man who is of the same age but in the kin-category of tepun may properly and normally be addressed by the death-name he has adopted. But to address an old man who is known to his siblings by a death-name by that name is disrespectful, even if the kin-category to which he belongs is that of cousin. Such an older man will always be addressed by a kinship term such as amõ or luang, or if he is the elder or otherwise venerable as lakei jaau, never by his personal or death-name. For example, Talan is always addressed by his wife, Selalang, as 'Piat' (grandchild dead); but neither I nor Jalong nor any of us younger men could have used this name in addressing him.

V

There is another type of name among the Penan. The settled Eastern Penan at Long Buang in the Apo call such a name ngaran ait, 'ait name', and to apply it 'to make ait'; but I have not been able

to obtain a word for this naming-usage among the nomadic Penan, Eastern or Western, and the nomadic groups do not recognise the name _sit_. (The only other meaning that this has is 'sand' among Western Penan.) I shall call the _sit_-name 'alliance-name'.

The most complex uses of alliance-names are found among the Long Buang Eastern Penan mentioned above, and the examination of them as they are used by this group may elicit some principles by which they might be understood; but this group is in many ways not typical of Penan, and I shall make such an analysis in some other place (it would be a lengthy business not appropriate to a work such as this) and meanwhile present the usages of the nomadic groups.

The alliance-name is one that is chosen with reference to some activity shared by two Penan and then used reciprocally by them and by no one else. It is not used with a man from one of the settled peoples as one of the parties but only between Penan and Penan of the same sex.

The two men who use an alliance-name are usually fairly distantly related or cannot trace any relationship at all. The name can be used by two men of the same group, particularly when one of them has married into it, or between men of different groups when they have been visiting or have met while hunting. It is

not used with 'people who are close [kin]'. It may often be used between affines, who are considered (even if cognatically they are fairly close) to be separate, a little different. Brothers, or true uncle and nephew, or first cousins, would not assume alliance-names. Women may use them, but 'not many, because they do not travel' and, by implication, do not meet strangers. Generally speaking, then, alliance-names are used between Penan of one sex who are considered in a sense distant, strange to each other, and who ally themselves one to the other with reference to some activity that they have shared.

Balengan, an Eastern Penan, has been allied in name to a number of men, with each of whom he shared one distinct name: with his brother-in-law, for example, he once ate a very large amount of sago porridge (na'o) and thereafter they addressed each other as Kena'o. This name was not used by either of them with anyone else. It was not in any way a secret name, and most other people in the group would have known it. However, it would be taxing even a Penan to expect him to remember the hundreds of alliance-names that a small number of men may share. A Penan does not normally know the alliance-names of all the other men in the group, and he does not address any man by an alliance-name that he does not share with him. Thus Balengan was Kena'o only with his brother-in-law, Kuyang,

a man of the same group. No one else could have addressed either him or Kuyang as 'Kena'o' nor would anyone have referred to either of them by this alliance-name of theirs. Belongan also went hunting with a distant nephew and got a pig, and from this event they took the name (a very common one) of Kebabui (from _babui_, pig). With another distant nephew, Gung, he went hunting and got a deer, and from this event they took the alliance-name Kepayau (_payau_, deer). Other names that can be used are: Kebayuh, when two men go hunting all day and return empty-handed (I do not know the etymology of this word: it commonly refers to this situation, but _bayuh_, so far as I know, is not used by itself in other contexts); Kebua, from finding or eating together a great deal of fruit (_bua_); Kemedok, from hunting monkeys (_medok_); Ketorok, from eating or killing a snake, (_torok_); Kesigo, from eating a certain kind of fried sago (_sigo_) together; and so on. In each case the name derives from an activity or an event in which both have been concerned together. The only alliance-name that I share is Kemareng. I went with an Eastern Penan to look at a poison-tree, and when we returned he said to me: 'You are newly come, and we have been to see the tree together. We shall be Kemareng' - from _mareng_, new. This is an instructive example. Kemareng is not an alliance-name that would normally be used among Penan, but in this case I had not shared in

a normal Penan activity such as hunting or gorging, so my friend just made up a name. Now the tree we went to see was a poison-tree, kayou tajem. At first sight one might expect the alliance-name to be made from the usual prefix Ke plus tajem: and this would give an alliance-name of Ketajem. But tajem, poison, has connotations of death for the Penan. When they want to say, 'Suppose you should die' they do not use the word matai, dead, for this is unlucky and might cause the actual death of the person spoken about. They say tajem kamu, literally 'poison you'. Obviously, then, we could not have shared such an inauspicious (if not actually dangerous) name as Ketajem.

Women will normally, if they have occasion to coin alliance-names, use merely 'Bakeh' (friend) with each other, but they may have alliance-names of the sorts that men do. Purai, in the same group of Eastern Penan as Balengan, is Kelieu with Keling the wife of La'eng, because they once travelled together very slowly (lieu); and she is Kebayuh with Jalan, the wife of Turit, because they went fishing together all day and got no fish. Women do not have alliance-names with men, even with their lovers.

The Western Penan, so far as I have been able to discover, have only one alliance-name, Keliang. This is used only between affines, not between lineal or collateral kin. I cannot give any

etymology of this word. It might have something to do, at first sight, with the term of address to a sibling-in-law on the death of the connecting spouse, liang; but this term is Eastern Penan, not Western Penan.

The Penan have no explanation of alliance-names, but that they commonly say of them that they are 'only play' leads one to suppose that they may be signs of joking-relationships. Joking-relationship, however, is probably not an appropriate term: there is no sort of privileged familiarity between the partners, and they derive no special rights or duties from the relationship. Functionally, the alliance-names are similar; and the Penan describe them by saying that they are pabakeh, which I should translate variously as 'to call people friend' or 'to behave as friend towards someone' or as 'to make friends'. This last seems to me to be probably the nearest way of putting it, and I therefore retain my original term of 'alliance-name' as indicating that its users ally themselves through the terminological remembrance of a shared friendly activity.

VI

There are yet two other names used by Penan. They believe that to mention the name of a dead person, particularly when he has been

dead for less than a year, is to incur his displeasure and to provoke through his agency certain misfortunes. I do not intend to go into the religious connections here: all that need concern us is that the name of the dead person is avoided. This means not only his personal name but also his teknonymic style. The Western Penan, therefore, when they wish to refer to a dead person use the word _mukun_. This normally means 'aged', not merely 'old': it implies weakness and decrepitude. This word is prefixed to a term indicating the relationship of the deceased to the speaker. Thus a man may refer to his dead sibling as 'Mukun Padi' (literally, aged sibling), to his uncle or aunt as 'Mukun Vi', and to his cousin as 'Mukun Sak' (from [_padi pō_]_sak_).

The Eastern Penan express the same avoidance in a different way. The term by which they refer to a dead person is _dulit_. I do not think that it is used in any other context, and I could not extract from Penan any meaning of the word other than as it is used in this context. It is used prefixed to the name of the river-area in which the individual died, not to a term indicating his relationship. So that if a man dies in the area of the Tebanyi river he is referred to afterwards as 'Dulit Tebanyi'. If two people die in the same river-area they may be known by the same name; but this probably leads to no more difficulty or confusion

than the Western Penan custom of using only a few terms referring to relationship instead of to rivers.

VII

The names in the above sections are not all the kinds that Penan use. There are certain others that I might present, but they are not very common and seem unimportant. But this chapter has so far given the main forms of one of the main facets, and one of the most striking, of Penan life. It has given some idea of the large variety and number of names by which any Penan may be known throughout his life. Apart from his personal names and his teknonyms a Penan may be known by all the death-names (except those for females) at one time or another throughout his life, and even his genealogical status may be changed. When to all this is added the complication of ambilateral kinship tracing then something of the terminological difficulties attending what is fundamentally a very simple kinship system may be appreciated.

The main features of the use of personal names and teknonyms are not peculiar to the Penan or to any Bornean people, and I do not feel that I can add anything significant to their interpretation. But as far as anthropological theory is concerned the death-names

are a new matter, and the Hu-usage (I believe) is quite new. They demand some sort of interpretation.

Something very slightly similar to death-names is seen much nearer home in the older English use of 'widow' as a title [1576, - S.O.E.D.] and the contemporary French and Belgian use of veuve. But these are so far from death-names in most respects that they can provide no pointers to understanding.

The Andaman Islanders also have what appear to be death-names. Radcliffe-Brown mentions that they have 'certain terms' but unfortunately does not give a list or say how many terms there are. He cites one term for 'orphan' and another for a person who has lost a sibling [Radcliffe-Brown, 1933, pp.111-2]; but in his interpretation of Andamanese names he does not consider them. In any case, they are certainly different from Bornean death-names, for they are used during a period of mourning in which the personal name of the bereaved is avoided; whereas the Penan names do not replace the personal name, and this is not avoided by those who would normally use it. This is not the place to make a comparative study, but the point is that Andamanese names are in most important respects different from Penan death-names. The principles (judging from the little that Radcliffe-Brown has written) are very different.

Elshout gives a long and very detailed account of the sorts of

names that the Kenyah of the Apo Kayan use [Elshout, 1926, pp. 156-180] but he offers no explicit interpretation. His choice of a name to describe them, however, indicates the way he regards them: he uses the word <u>rouwnamen</u>, 'mourning names', thus proposing a view of the nature of the death-names that we shall consider later.

Neither have Pollard and Banks made any analysis of the many series of death-names ('teknonyms') that they have recorded. Their article [Pollard & Banks, 1937] offers no clues of the sort that one might expect from neighbouring tribes who are culturally so similar to the Penan. But there is a point of another sort of interest that their article brings out: the Eastern Penan death-names are of the type that is the more common among the complex of tribes that use them, while the Western Penan share their system of names exactly with a small number of longhouse groups, notably the Sebup. I have visited the Sebup longhouses and have confirmed that the identity exists, but I have not been able to obtain from the Sebup any sort of interpretation that had not occurred to me among the Penan.

I want to consider now certain hypotheses that might be advanced in explanation of the death-names, and which certain facts may be considered to support:

(1) That society symbolically replaces for the bereaved person

the kin-referent of the death-name.

For example, a man addresses his grandson as 'Tupou' and when he dies society in general (that is, the group) replaces the grandfather 'symbolically' by becoming in a terminological way a collective grandparent by addressing the bereaved person as 'Tupou'. This is an obvious, pleasing, and plausible hypothesis; but there are a number of objections.

Most of the death-names are not used as terms of address before the kin-referents of them are dead. If the hypothesis were a valid one an uncle should address his nephew as Ilun (the death-name for an uncle dead), and then after his death the rest of the group would 'replace' him by also calling the bereaved person Ilun. But in fact the term used is Elop. Similarly, a man does not address his younger sibling as Linong but as Lobeh; and the younger does not address his elder sibling as Lubat but as Inong; a grandparent is not addressed as Piat but as Pu; and the same is the case for Abing, Golang, Balou, and Aban, for these cannot be used as terms of address by the persons in the kin-positions to which they refer as death-names. In particular, the names of the child-series (which is the one which affects an individual through most of his life if he has children and which is therefore possibly the most important) are never used by the

children to their parents. The fifth-born child, for example, does not address his father as Larah. The majority of the death-names, then, cannot be used as terms of address in the way that is the case with some of them and from which the hypothesis derives its first plausibility.

Another difficulty is that it is easy to accept that Tupou might be used as a death-name since it is used as a term of address by grandparents of both sexes. Both men and women address a boy who has lost his grandfather as Tupou, and there is nothing inconsistent in this since grandparents of either sex address their grandchildren by this term. But it is less easy to accept that when a man uses Apah to a child he is in any way replacing the woman who used it as a term of address. Conversely, the same difficulty arises when a woman addresses a bereaved boy as Uyau, the term by which his dead father used to address him.

Another difficulty is that the death-names that are used as terms of address are very seldom so used, whereas all death-names are constantly used and often replace all other possible forms of address.

In the face of all these difficulties I do not see that the hypothesis can be accepted, and in fact neither do the Penan.

(2) That the death-names are a collective expression of mourning for the loss of a member of the group.

As we have seen, this is the interpretation implicitly made by Elshout [1926, p.161] in calling them 'mourning names'.

Mourning means either of two different matters: to feel sorrow in lamenting the death of someone; and to show the conventional signs of grief for a period following a person's death. These have to be considered separately.

If we concern ourselves with the sorrow that is supposed to be felt and expressed through the death-names there are many difficulties. The sorrow might be supposed to be evoked in the bereaved by the use of the names in addressing them, or it might be supposed to be expressed by the users of the names. In some kin-groups the users of the names and those to whom they are applied may be the same persons, in which case the sorrow might be supposed general and the distinction unnecessary; but this is not usually so, and most members of the group are not true kin of the dead person, so that they use the names but are not addressed by them. In fact, going by what Penan themselves say, the names are not vehicles or evokers of sorrow at all, but merely classes of persons with reference to deaths of true kin. If they are asked why deaths should be the points of reference they can tell

you only that it is their custom.

Again, in some cases it is possible and in others certain that no sorrow accompanies the use of death-names. Within one group a man has two parent's siblings: one is familiar and well-liked, and the other is estranged and disliked. If either dies the man assumes the same death-name, Ilun, and is addressed by it by individuals whose feelings toward the deceased might have differed greatly. Suppose further that a man has a father's brother in another group, a man whom he has never seen. If this man dies his nephew in the former group assumes the death-name for him; but it cannot be thought that he immediately has an accession of sorrow on hearing the news, nor that other people who have also never met the deceased should be sorrowing in addressing him by the death-name.

The issue is very confused when we consider the sorrow that may attend the use of death-names, but to consider them as conventional signs of mourning does not make the matter much clearer. The main objection to this is that in what are clearly mourning-observances the group as a whole has no part. After a death the group abstains from all manufacture for a period of a month; but this is said to be because if they make blowpipes and mats the deceased can be expected to be angry and bring misfortune

on them. The conventional signs of grief are assumed only by very close domestic kin of the deceased: his wife, true siblings, and children. Without going closely into the matter, these consist for both sexes in shaving and cutting certain parts of the hair. Once this has been done the signs have been completed: there is no set period during which they must be maintained. The death-names, however, are used by everybody outside the number of true kin toward them, and within the true kin to each other. How long they are used depends on the accidents of birth and death. There is a great discrepancy between death-names and conventional signs of grief if they are classed together as mourning-observances. I do not wish to maintain that any society's institutions need exhibit the functional or esthetic fitting-together of overall consistency, but such an inconsistency in Penan culture as this hypothesis demands makes its validity doubtful.

Unless the sense of the word 'mourning' is greatly extended in some convenient way to cover the matters we have been speaking of it is unacceptable that the death-names are mourning-observances, whether we consider sorrow or whether we consider conventional signs of grief.

(3) That death-names are a usage for the remembrance of deceased

Penan.

Against this there is primarily the fact that no deceased Penan is remembered by name in a death-name. In names that refer to only one kinsman there can be no ambiguity, but in most death-names there may be a great deal. When the name Ilun is used it may refer to any number of dead parent's siblings. If the person being remembered through the use of the name is not distinguished from others with reference to whom the name is also used it can hardly be a case of formal remembrance. It might, however, be maintained against this objection that in fact classes of dead kin are being remembered; but it then has to be shown that Penan either do so or wish to do so.

Penan in general have short memories for genealogies and concern themselves hardly at all with the past. Those individuals who remember anything of tradition are usually the elders, and those who remember long genealogies are usually old people who have themselves lived through much of them. The Penan are concerned to remember and locate as fully as possible the living members of their tribe (cf. pp.232-34), but they do not concern themselves much with the past. Though they justify their customs with reference to their ancestors they do not have to remember their ancestors to know what their customs should be.

Penan do not like to speak of recently dead individuals, and when they do they refer to them not by name at all but by the use of the terms _mukun_ and _dulit_. Nothing resembling a death-name is used when they wish to recall either the recently dead or their ancestors to mind.

(4) That death-names are reminders to other members of the group of the economic or other needs of the bereaved and of their duty to meet them.

But when a member of a family dies the contributions of food to it may often remain the same. If the family comprised eight members it would not occur to Penan to reduce their share of any food by one-eighth, and they could not do it if they wanted to. If there are other needs besides food, such as for a man to cut down trees or to erect a shelter-frame or collect can for mat-making, then either a close kinsman (out of the number who use death-names in addressing the members of the family) helps occasionally, or the family allies itself to another family, shares economic duties with it, and from it gets the specific help it needs because of the death. The death-names themselves do not influence the matter. Between close kin and the normal contributions of the group the needs of bereaved persons are met independently of

the application of death-names.

In some cases, too, the economic position of the bereaved family may even be improved - if an old person or a permanent invalid should die - but the death-names are still used. Also a Penan visiting a far group will use the death-names of the people there, and these names will also be used by his own group when he reports them; but the latter group has no economic duties or relationships to the other.

When a person uses a death-name he does not imply: 'X is dead and I shall to an extent replace for you the work of X'. In the case of names for the deaths of children this is obvious, and in the case of death-names referring to kin who made no special contribution of labour or goods to the bereaved it is also clear.

Or take the case of a couple with children living in the same shelter as the father of one of them. Here the father will, unless he is old or sick, contribute to the domestic group in the shelter all that a Penan male can contribute: daily labour and the fruit of his trade in forest produce. But if he dies the couple, although they have suffered an economic loss, do not adopt death-names because they have children and take death-names only from their deaths.

(5) That the death-names symbolise the struggle between life and death and the necessity to maintain the group and the Penan people in existence.

This has an attractive plausibility in that in the application and the discardment of the names there is an alternation between death and life. This is not true of all the names but it is of many. If a man's father dies nothing can replace him, and the name Uyau is retained until another death or until the man has his first child. Within the sibling-series, however, there is this sort of alternation: death is marked by the application of the death-names, and life is marked by their discardment in favour of the personal names. In the child-series the alternation is even more strongly seen: first the teknonym is assumed at the new life, then it is discarded for a death-name when a child dies, then the death-name is itself discarded for a new life, and so on. Figuratively, there is a marking up of points in names: first a point to life, then a point to death. In the sphere where it is possible a death-name may not be discarded until the dead person for whom it was assumed has been replaced by a new life.

But, sadly, it will not do. The Penan are unspeculative, and they do not in fact conceptualise life and death in this manner, their opposition and their 'struggle'. Although they

say: 'It is good to have children because they replace us' they do not, so far as my understanding of them goes, link this attitude to the death-names. Also Penan do not, and perhaps cannot, conceive of the extinction of the Penan people. It is not a subject of speculation with them, and in their world-scheme there have always been Penan as part of the natural world and there always will be: this is the way God made the world. In any case, even if Penan could or did think in this way they would still regard it as ridiculous that they should be reminded by death-names of the desirability of the continuance of the group or the people, of constant vistories in life over the conquests of death that are expressed in the names. They say that the birth of children depends on God's will, and this cannot be affected by anything that they do: it is a matter of fortune, not a matter of names and willing.

It can of course be said that this hypothesis is conceptually the most meaningful even if it does not accord with what Penan say and what they say they feel. If one were devising a system of names to symbolise the struggle of life and death then it might very well be like this. But what validity this has to the Penan, in what way it could be presented as an understanding of the Penan, I cannot see.

I have been discussing Western Penan usages in the main, and although the principles of application are the same in the two tribes it must be remembered that any hypothesis must also try to account for the different usages of the Eastern Penan. For example, they have no death-names for affines, and they have no _Pu_-usage, in spite of practically identical social organisation and culture.

The _Pu_-usage is not susceptible of even the sort of hypotheses that I have presented in possible interpretation of the death-names. I can offer no hypothesis concerning it that covers and is supported by the facts.

The point to which we have come in our examination of the death-names is this: We cannot invoke sociological laws to explain death-names, for one can maintain either that there are none, or that what some anthropologists consider such are of no use in this matter. We cannot use expressed purpose to explain them, for this is just what the Penan cannot state, and we cannot properly indulge in sociological teleology. We cannot invoke psychological laws because there are none that are general or useful enough. We cannot speak of the symbolic function of the death-names; because the lack of consistent usage of all

the names precludes one type of symbolic relationship that would satisfy, and because they do not symbolise either to the Penan (that is, in a social symbolism) or to the anthropologist (that is, in a coherent relationship of the symbols to function or structure) either replacement (1), mourning (2), commemoration (3), economic obligation (4), or the perpetual struggle between life and death.

I do not pretend that I have presented and examined all possible hypotheses, but I think the five that I have examined are, by their immediate plausibility, the major ones that might be offered, and by their congruence with certain facts possibly true. I cannot see that any of them should be accepted.

9 CONCLUSIONS

In this final chapter I want to discuss briefly certain matters that have been raised in the text, and to suggest certain theoretical implications of what I have presented. Some of these matters, to be dealt with on the general scale of anthropological theory, demand full comparison of all known societies of similar form to the Penan, but this would be a major undertaking that cannot find its place here. Even a limited comparison of the Siriono and the Penan, to test Holmberg's hypotheses about hunting and collecting societies of their type, would be too narrow and specific a task to form part of an ethnographic monograph [Holmberg, 1950, pp.98-9]. It would bring out no lessons about the Penan that the reader is not already familiar with, and I shall undertake it in another place. I shall, however, make elementary comparisons of isolated facts from different societies to bring out points in the sections that follow.

(1) An issue that ought to be dead but may not entirely be so is that between historical (I do not mean ethnological) and functionalist anthropologists about the place and value of history in the study of a people. The Penan offer an instructive example from which to

draw inescapable conclusions. The Eastern Penan have short genealogical memories and do not concern themselves much with the historical movements of their ancestral groups and the constant fission that has resulted in their present separation into groups. They regard themselves as being linked to each other cultural identity and by a general assumption of kinship. The picture that one can draw of them is therefore almost a synchronic one. There are the groups, and such are the relations that hold between them.

But from the memories and traditions of the Western Penan it is possible to draw an entirely different picture, a diachronic one. This gives us two important types of information: it tells us how the various groups are where they are, and it tells us why they are there. It would have been unsatisfying if I had presented a picture of all Penan society on the model of what it has been possible to discover about the Eastern Penan: there would have been a shallowness to it that a description of the relationships between the groups today would not have deepened. More important, though, is a second matter. Group-fission is sociologically one of the most important features of Penan society, and without the history that I have constructed it would for the most part be hidden from us as a process. It is true that among the Eastern Penan certain splits over short periods of time can be discovered

(and with time and favorable circumstances I could have discovered more), and that they themselves say that groups have to split sometime; but this is not nearly as satisfying as the way the process can be clearly depicted in the history of the Western Penan.

It is true also that there appears to be little functional significance in the historical events I am speaking about, but this is an accident of the society (there are societies in which historical knowledge does illuminate their functioning). What we derive from Penan history is another kind of knowledge that is important in itself. Group-fission is a process which cannot be observed except in the most fortunate of circumstances, and in which the instances are separated by very long intervals. The range of movement of the ancestral groups and the long periods covered by the migrations are similarly unobservable by the visiting ethnographer. A synchronic functional picture of Penan lacks these elements of process. It is the history of the Western Penan that gives us the deeper understanding we crave and provides us with crucial information without which we could not, in a sense, really understand Penan society.

Another point is that these interconsistent traditions (which I have thought reliable enough to call history), common to all the nomadic Western Penan groups, help to delimit the Penan people (which was a basic task). In one way they are delimited by their

structural and cultural similarity, and historically they are delimited by showing how peoples with whom they have been confused do not appear in their traditions.

(2) One of the major points in this account of the Penan is the place of kinship in their society. What I have written runs quite counter to what Murdock and Radcliffe-Brown have written so certainly and with so much apparent justification:

> 'That kinship nomenclature is closely correlated with culturally patterned norms of behavior toward relatives must be assumed. This assumption accords with a priori reasoning, with the overwhelming testimony of the data surveyed ... and with the experience and the declared or admitted views of nearly all competent anthropological authorities. ... Relationships and terminology ... always maintain their essential integration.' [Murdock, 1949, p.112.]

> 'The classificatory terminology ... is used as a method of dividing relatives into categories which determine or influence social relations as exhibited in conduct. The general rule is that the inclusion of two relatives in the same terminological category implies that there is some significant similarity in the customary behaviour due to both of them....' [Radcliffe-Brown, 1950, p.9.]

Before we consider Penan material again there are two points to be made. The first is that Radcliffe-Brown immediately admits that there is a 'complication' in that there are necessary distinctions between near and distant relatives. But this is not a complication of the general rule: it is a denial of it. Either Radcliffe-Brown's

formulation is a general rule or it is not. Let us take a physical law on which type Radcliffe-Brown would wish sociological laws to be modelled. Light travels in straight lines, but there may in precisely predicted cases be precisely determined complications due to diffraction. This is a genuine complication of a rule, but there is no parallel between it and the 'complication' of the sociological rule. It is not as though there were certain typical societies where the rule had been found to hold irrespective of distance, but that in others of other types distance entered as a complication. Here the case is that wherever there is classificatory terminology there distance affects attitudes and behaviour. Although in some societies the kinship categories and the behaviour relative to them may be consistent with this rule, in probably all of them distance may complicate the consistency to a greater or lesser degree, and may even entirely deny it. It may be true that whatever the distance there is still a constant relative difference between behaviour towards different categories, but this is not stated in the rule and may well not be true. We are only now working to find out whether it is the case in all societies or not.

A second point is that the rule has been specifically controverted. Schapera, who certainly cannot be thought inconsiderate of current theory, writes of the Tswana: 'The same term of relationship is

sometimes used for people with whom mating is forbidden and for those who may be married'; and 'among the Tawana there is apparently little causal connection between kinship terminology, mating regulations, and the other rules of kinship behaviour, i.e. we cannot say that one of them necessarily "determines" the others' [Schapera, 1950, p.161].

In the face of such complication and contradiction less temerity is required to controvert Radcliffe-Brown's 'general rule'.

But now we come to a more immediate and important matter. I have made many statements about Penan kinship, but are my facts right? (It is commonly regarded as contrary to academic etiquette to be so blunt about others, but I feel secure enough to raise the charge against myself.) If I have failed to make correlations between terminology and behaviour then perhaps it is because I have got things wrong. After all, there is Murdock's own example, where he went to the Tenino and reported after a month's work that there was little more than 'an irreducible minimum of patterned behaviour' but found on another trip to the same people that there was more. [Murdock, 1949, p.111.] My account, too, has indicated 'the inevitable differentiation of relationships within the nuclear family and a few behavioral norms obviously correlated with age and sex', and, beyond these, 'specific denials of relationships'

[Murdock, 1949, p.111.] Eeven though the conditions of fieldwork were apparently vastly different, perhaps I have misunderstood the Penan.

This is an alternative which does not commend itself to me. It assumes that I am such a poor observer that I failed to find a correspondence that I had learned should exist, that I expected to find (and at first wrongly thought I had found), and that I constantly looked for. Now I am willing to admit my inexperience and inefficiency as an ethnographer, but I cannot believe that I misunderstood something so fundamental and to which I directed so much attention. But this is not enough. I do not think, either, that my account shows the inconsistencies that ought to betray me if I am wrong. Kinship behaviour is most easily and constantly seen in mating regulations. Penan may marry in any kinship category. It does not seem so likely that I should have gotten these regulations wrong as well; and if they are as I have said then the lack of correspondence between kin-categories and behaviour is at the very least consistent with them. More than that, I should say that given the Penan marriage regulations as they are it is very difficult to see how Penan kinship behaviour could be much different from as I describe it, or nearer to the proposed 'general rule'.

Radcliffe-Brown writes that 'Some anthropologists make a great

point of real or supposed exceptions to this rule, but they seem to forget that there can only be an exception when there is a general rule to which it is an exception' [Radcliffe-Brown, 1950, p.9]. But it is a great point. I am not claiming that the Penan are an exception: I am claiming that the rule is not a general one. Penan kinship certainly has meaning to Penan, and certainly has a function. But it is undifferentiated kinship that is important. It is a frame beyond whose limits is an alien world, and within which behaviour is guided by values other than those of kinship categories, and primarily by relative age.

(3) A recent theoretical work has made much of the concept of purpose in anthropology. 'We are forever on the look-out for purposes which must somehow be realised and which account for the varying modes of behaviour as for so many means appropriate in different circumstances.' [Nadel, 1951, p.269.]

There are two main aspects to this concept of purpose. It may be either there is a coincidence between the observer's and the participants' teleological ideas [Nadel, 1951, p.266], or there is assumed to be a sociological teleology that involves ulterior purposes [Nadel, 1951, p.371]. The first, where it can be applied, leads to common-sense generalisations that may easily degenerate

into platitudes. Take, for example, the movements and fission of a Penan stock and regard them in terms of purpose. If you ask why they move and why they split they answer that the purpose is to find food, and that the prupose of fission is that an imbalance between the size of the group and the ecology should be restored. If you ask what the purpose of this is then they answer that it is to satisfy hunger, and the purpose of satisfying hunger is to stay alive. Here is degeneration into the ultimate platitude. We shall come to a possible next step in a moment.

The alternative way of regarding phenomena in terms of purpose is to seek or assume ulterior social purposes. A note here on the way Nadel looks at this: 'the integrative effects appear conspicuously as ulterior and ubiquitous purposes. Modes of action realising them also realise an aim which Society writ large seems to set itself.... This is the "function" concept formulated by Radcliffe-Brown.' [Nadel, 1951, p.371.] But it is clear from Radcliffe-Brown's writings that when he speaks of 'function' he does not mean ulterior purpose. To speak of the effects of an activity as its contribution to survival, stability, and so on, is to say how it actually does work (function), not that it was meant to work for any purpose. So when I speak of an ulterior purpose I do not mean 'function' nor do I refer to Radcliffe-Brown.

The concept of ulterior purpose is even less valuable than immediate recognized purpose. It is difficult to see how we could reasonably understand any aspect of Penan society better than we do now by looking for the ulterior purposes of it. This is the case with the major elements that we have considered: migration, fission, teknonymy, death-names, the Pu-usage, marriage payment, the incest regulations, and so on. I should not try to do anything of the sort but that Nadel has written that 'the social enquirer inevitably turns into a philosopher and must posit absolute aims or purposes, and some self-reliant worth-whileness of actions, since without these assumptions his subject matter makes no sense' [Nadel, 1951, p.273]. But this inevitably leads either to assumptions outside our normal scientific processes, or to the tautology that since Society (as it may be defined) always and everywhere exhibits certain features then these are the effects of ulterior purposes whose aims were these effects. This, even if accepted, as there is no reason for it to be, still does not help us to understand the Penan or any other particular people. Even if we make a guess about a particular people or institution (as on pp.347-8) we remain bounded merely by the consistency of our formulation with the facts. In the case of the death-names we cannot even discern their effects, and still less can we attempt to posit ulterior purposes aiming at whatever the effects

(if any) might be. All this is a very complex matter, far beyond the scope of these notes; but I hope it will conceded that the text has at many places shown the futility of trying to interpret Penan institutions in terms of purpose.

Where it seems to me that Nadel has possibly gone wrong is in the use of the word 'why'. We are indeed on the look-out for purposes, in a sense, for we constantly ask people 'why' they do certain things, perpetuate certain customs, respect certain institutions. But the point of this is two-fold. The first and obvious one is that on a causal level (appreciated both by the participants and the observer) the question 'why?' gets answers that are particular, certain, and final. This is particularly so of technological processes, military and political activities, certain types of law, and so on. 'Why do you use cane instead of creeper to bind on a spearhead?' brings the answer that cane is durable and strong, and that creeper is not. There is the purpose of part of this technical activity: you have it and there is nothing more to ask. When there were headhunters about and the group split into very small parties, to meet on the far side of a ridge or a river, why did they act so? The answer is that the purpose was to divide or confuse pursuers. Here is another short-range purposive activity, in this case a tactical maneuver. This is all obvious, and examples many.

But there is another range of matters about which we ask 'why?'. These are not technical, they are not short-range, and there is no observable nexus of purpose and effect. But when we ask the purpose of these things, when we ask, for example, 'Why do you use death-names?' we do not expect such answers as we received to our other questions, nor yet do we hope for glimpses into a realm of ulterior purposes. What we are doing is eliciting from the people the way they view their world. Asking 'why?' is the only way we can actively do this. Following the train of questions above (p.361), if we ask Penan 'why' they pursue activities whose acknowledged purpose is to keep them alive, what is the purpose of living, they give you illuminating answers which are of an entirely different kind to the answers of the other questions. In doing this we are learning to interpret their view of the world so that we shall be able to translate from their culture into our own. [Evans-Pritchard, 1951, (83) pp. 61-2.] We are forever on the look-out for insights into how a people see their world, and to do this we ask the same question as when we elicit purposes on the causal level. But we should not let the form of our questions mislead us into imagining that we can receive the same sort of answers, or that we shall be introduced to another order of motives.

(4) A common phrase in anthropological writing today is that a certain institution is 'consistent' with a certain other institution or complex of institutions. Evans-Pritchard holds the view that social anthropology 'demonstrates consistency and not necessary relations between social activities' [Evans-Pritchard, 1951 (83), p.62]. Now whatever it is that we oppose to consistency I believe that merely to demonstrate that there is consistency is not to demonstrate much. If the possibility of permanent social inconsistency were greater then we might be saying more in constructing statements of consistency. As it is, inconsistency is so rare that when we find it we feel bound to search for some extraordinary reason; and consistency is so usual that we employ it as a criterion in judging the relaibility of an observer's account of a people [cf. Lewis, 1953, p.467].

Suppose you say: 'In hunting and collecting societies killing or abandoning the uneconomic aged and the incurably sick is consistent with an economy based on precarious sources of food' then you are not saying very much. It is perhaps impossible to imagine how it could be inconsistent. But if you say instead: 'Wherever you have a hunting and collecting society dependent on precarious sources of food there you will find that the aged are killed off or abandoned' you are saying something that is interesting and useful,

whether it is true or not. In this case you look at other societies of similar type, and you find that among the Bukat of central Borneo [Bouman, 1924, p.176], the Siriono [Holmberg, 1950, p.85], the Tasmanians [Roth, 1890, pp.73-4], and the Eskimo [Weyer, 1932, pp.137-9] it is true; but that among other peoples such as the Semang [Murdock, 1934, p.100] and the Penan it is not true.

Now any of these peoples might behave differently. The Tasmanians might have regarded with horror the idea of abandoning their aged, and the Penan might take the view that it is a very practical thing to do; and in each case it could be reasonably maintained that their postulated mode of behaviour is consistent. It cannot be objected that in a particular society this would be inconsistent with the attitude towards the older members of the community. First, the readiness to abandon or kill the aged is part of that attitude, and to postulate the readiness is to assume the complex of related attitudes that make up the attitude in general towards the aged. Second, we know that in a society that reveres its aged (e.g. the Eskimo) they may nevertheless be abandoned or killed when it is thought advisable or imperative. We know that in many societies the most varied configurations of institutions and attitudes occur, and in that they occur together they are presumably consistent. To pursue this issue we should have to examine minutely a large number

of societies in order to consider the possibility of a postulated change being inconsistent with other institutions of the societies concerned. This is the obvious and the normal thing to do. But if anyone expects to find an inconsistency then he is not in fact employing consistency as a criterion nor can he maintain that its demonstration is the aim of anthropology.

However, the point that I have been trying to indicate (though it would need a long exposition to demonstrate it) is that in this case, and in probably any case, the idea of consistency does not help us very much. Its usefulness lies in the fact that consistency then marks the limits within which we may expect to find understanding.

It may indeed be true that there is a certain advance in understanding human society when we are enabled by experience to state that wherever institutions co-exist they are generally interconsistent. But it is certain that Evans-Pritchard's own book The Nuer would not be the eminent book that it is if he had substituted (out of a hundred possible examples in that book) 'Nuer movements and the directions of these are consistent with variation of water-supplies and vegetation' for what he actually and illuminatingly wrote: 'Variation of water-supplies and vegetation thus forces Nuer to move and determines the direction of their movements' [Evans-Pritchard, 1940, p.61]. Rather than statements of consistency, I should

maintain that we must formulate statements that are more useful, more interesting in themselves and in their consequences, and much more likely to be untrue.

(5) If we cannot understand society in terms of purpose, and if we are not to claim merely that certain phenomena are consistent with others, we must then speak in terms of causation, of determinism, or of functional dependence. Briefly, the subject is again laws of society.

Evans-Pritchard thinks that 'the effort to discover natural laws of society is vain' [Evans-Pritchard, 1951 (85), p.58]. To this Nadel makes the softly reasonable rejoinder that 'it surely remains to be seen whether or not regularities or "laws" can be discovered' [Nadel, 1951, p.12]. Does the Penan material help us at all in this matter? An ethnographic monograph is not the place for intensive comparison, but we can perhaps make some points by comparing Penan with other societies of similar type. The defining term is probably most easily found in the economy: this is the most easily described element whose effects are the most easily checked. We have already seen that we cannot frame a 'law' about the treatment of the aged and the sick in such societies as the Penan. Certain other matters are defined enough also to permit of

fairly sure answers.

The Penan share all types of food equally; the Andamanese share but give more to seniors [Radcliffe-Brown, 1933, p.43]; and the Siriono avoid as much as they can any form of sharing [Holmberg, 1950, p.36]. Penan kinship reckoning is purely cognatic (ambilateral), but that of the Siriono is para-matrilineal and marked by cross-cousin marriage [Holmberg, 1950, pp.54-6]. Penan have no political authority and the elders no power; but Nambikwara chiefs have authority and bear considerable responsibility [Levi-Strauss, 1948, pp.86-90]. Polygyny is seldom found and rather disliked among the Penan, but common among the Siriono [Holmberg, 1950, p.82] and the Nambikwara [Levi-Strauss, 1948, pp.60-62]. Penan very rarely divorce; Siriono more frequently [Holmberg, 1950, p.83]; and the Semang commonly [Evans, 1937, p.254; Schebesta, 1928, p.215]. There is no hostility or warfare between Penan groups and they regard each other with amity, and the same is true of the Siriono [Holmberg, 1950, pp.62-3]; but Andaman groups do attack each other [Radcliffe-Brown, 1933, p.85], and it seems that the Tasmanians were in a state of perpetual hostility and warfare among themselves [Roth, 1890, p.83].

There certainly seems to be nothing law-like about the combinations of these well-defined elements of the societies dealt with, and I think that a thorough comparative study of forest nomads

and societies of similar type would show that there is no functional dependence between any of them, and that no one can be shown to be determined by any others. (I speak of the aggregation of social elements in this type of society, not of their cohesion in any one particular society.) If at one end of a conceptual scale consistency is not enough, and at the other end there is no case for laws of association or functional interdependence, what must we look for?

On the basis of Penan material and societies of similar type I can see a case only for a form of determinism. I say 'a form' of determinism for this reason. Determinism is commonly understood in the precise sense as in physics, where it is identical with causation. (Cf. a discussion of determination and causation by The University of California Associates: 'Determination and causation are identical concepts.' [Feigl & Sellars, 1949, p.602]) But there is another sense in which it means 'to set bounds to, limit' [S.O.E.D.], and although it has been called a 'sens primitif, qui n'est plus en usage' [Lalande] I prefer its resuscitation as a useful alternative to consistency and to functional dependence. In this sense it does not mean to cause, but sets limits within which specific causal or functionally interdependent factors may or may not operate. This use has the advantages of clarity and delimitation: at least you know where you are and what your next

problem is, whereas the concept of consistency does not set any problems at all. Having drawn attention to this sense of determinism, which may be just as precise and useful in its way as the concept of causation, perhaps it might be clearer to distinguish this 'negative determinism' as 'delimitation'.

This does not mean that one no longer asks whether one social feature is caused by another, or whether it is functionally related to it. On the contrary, causal factors must be sought before you can know where the limits are, but in a way that is different from concentration on precise determinants. Let us take the example of political organisation. Penan groups have to be small, and they have to be widely separated in space because of the sparsity of food and the inability of any area to support more than a group of a certain size. These are causal phenomena, fairly precisely determined by the ecology. Larger and more powerful aggregates, living more close together, are not possible in such ecological conditions. But these, although forming Penan political organisation to a certain extent, do not determine what sort of political authority there shall be. A Penan elder might well possess the power and bear the responsibility of a Nambikwara chief, and he might also be privileged to have three or four wives to the detriment of other men. So far as I can see among the Penan, and from the material Levi-Strauss

has recorded, there is nothing in either society to determine the presence or form of political power and privilege. Whether these are in fact indeterminate we are not in a position to say, but although certain institutions may be indeterminate (as they appear to be) we should never know this unless we had asked ourselves if they could possibly be determined.

Obviously the concept of consistency is of no help here. Ask whether Nambikwara chieftainship is consistent with the ecology and with other elements of Nambikwara society, and the answer is that of course it is. Ask if the Penan lack of powerful and privileged chieftainship is consistent, and the answer is that of course it is consistent. But ask if either form of political organisation is determined and you get a more profitable answer.

Now if we turn to the other sense of determinism, to delimiting factors, we approach the society and its problems from the opposite direction. Given Penan ecology, numbers, and mode of life, certain forms of political organisation are impossible. The nature of the country makes communication between the groups so slow and so difficult that overall political organisation, the delegation of administrative power, and the centralised courts and authorities of other societies cannot come into being. From this point of view it is possible to define precisely the social features that are

negatively determined, the limits of possible development of Penan institutions. (On an economic level Evans-Pritchard has done this sort of thing: cf. 'A full sedentary and a full nomadic life are alike incompatible with Nuer economy, which demands transhumance.' [Evans-Pritchard, 1940, p.93.])

Delimiting factors, then, indicate what forms of political organisation are impossible or very unlikely, and therefore are not alternatives to the existing form. Identifiable causal factors account in a more positive way for certain existing forms. Between the positive determinants and the negative delimiters there lie those elements or institutions which appear to be, or may be, indeterminate. These are crucial matters, and in them rest most of our problems.

This is not particularly striking, yet the concept of delimitation (determinism in its negative sense) does seem to offer some sort of satisfaction in trying to understand Penan society that concentration on causal factors does not. I shall return to the negative aspects of understanding presently.

(6) We are led from the above notes to the problem of whether Penan or any society is a system, and, if so, what sort of system.

There are many meanings of which the word 'system' is susceptible, but that which is the crux of most discussions on this matter is one

that assumes functional interdependence of elements that may not be changed or otherwise disturbed without violence to the elements and to the system [Radcliffe-Brown, 1948, pp.11-12, 70].

Do the various institutions of Penan society form a system in this sense? I think they do not. For example, the two tribes are in structure, mode of life, and general culture almost identical, yet there are variations between them that seem not to be of a systematic character. If the picture I have drawn of each tribe represents a system then the variations ought to be accompanied by concomitant differences. But this is what we do not find. The differences in marriage payment and in incest rules stand by themselves. The Penan are not alone in this feature, and Schapera writes about variation in incest regulations of the Tswana tribes: 'These variations I am at present unable to explain; they do not seem to be related to other differences in the social systems of the tribes concerned.' [Schapera, 1949, p.119.]

Or if we ignore the variations between the tribes and concentrate on the relations between institutions in one tribe, do we find a functional interdependence between them? If you make the imaginary experiment of allowing Western Penan to marry first cousins does it appear that other institutions would be changed? Or if you abolish all trace of death-names and the Pu-usage would Penan society as a

system be different in the way that Radcliffe-Brown means? (Obviously it would not be the same system in that it would then be other than it was; but that is not the point.) These last two institutions also make the point that it is impossible to see any sort of functional dependence when you cannot understand the elements in the relation. You cannot say whether death-names and incest rules are related in a system unless you can understand each element to the extent of assigning distinct functions and discerning certain effects. Until we can do this sort of thing with Penan material, understanding in this way the several major elements of Penan society to which this thesis has been devoted, I cannot see how the society could be reasonably considered a natural system of functionally interdependent elements.

I see no reason why the institutions of Penan society should not vary independently, why one tribe should not adopt first cousin incest and the other not, one adopt death-names for affines and the other not, one have the <u>Pu</u>-usage and the other not, one have marriage payment and the other not, and yet the tribes remain practically identical in other respects. The facts certainly seem to indicate that such happenings have occurred, and that there have occurred with them no systematic changes either between the two tribes or between the institutions of either one.

If we assume Penan society to form a system, does it appear to be a natural or a moral system? If we take a typically moral matter and we find that some sort of precise determinism affects it then we have good reason (on the model of natural systems whose elemental functions and relationships are known) to think that the system is a natural one. If we cannot detect precise determinism then we must continue to recognise moral indeterminacy and must regard a society as a moral system. But this does not mean the recognition of some sort of independent 'moral reality'. If we concede this, as we have no scientific justification to do, we are faced with the myriad answers of the religions and other mystic views of mankind and the universe. It merely means that we continue to use the word 'moral' as we have done so far. So long as the facts allow us to speak in this way, there are matters concerning us closely and whose decision appears free that we call moral.

Incest might be taken as a test case, but perhaps it is too confusing (or too good) an argument, for there is a strong possibility that in certain societies at least the forms and range of incest regulations are determined [Murdock, 1949, chs.9 & 10]. The treatment of the aged that we considered briefly above seems a fair example. If Penan society were a natural system we should be able to predict (or see some possibility of predicting) that, given the ecological

and other conditions, Penan will or will not kill or abandon uneconomic old people and incurably sick. But we cannot do this for the Penan or any other society, nor is there any indication that it might be at all possible. This appears to be primarily a moral matter, one that is neither determined nor delimited by environment, economic factors, political organisation, or any other element of Penan society. (And can one imagine what sort of systematic relation there might be between this moral decision and the death-names, or between it and the ban on first cousin marriage?) It is one of the most vital differences between the Siriono and the Penan, yet it would be as commonsensical an act among the Penan to abandon their old and sick as among the Siriono, and they would certainly derive some advantage from it. For the moment it is not only impossible to see that anything in the respective societies has determined their moral decisions in this matter, but it is impossible even to imagine plausibly what such a determinant might be.

So long as there are such matters as this, matters which are apparently indeterminate and which we call moral, then the case that society is a natural system is not made. So far as we can see today (and without making assertions about the ultimate nature of society or predictions about eventual discoveries) society is a moral system, not a natural one. We have no rational alternative

to studying society as though it were a natural system, but to assert that it is a natural system is unscientific dogmatism.

(7) It might be objected that my several conclusions are too negative, that I do not know the answer to this and do not understand that, and some may find this unsatisfactory. But I do not agree. If I do not understand and cannot explain, then obviously I can only say so; but I hope it will be conceded that I have at least tried to understand Penan society through the eyes of other anthropologists whose theories I have tried to apply to it. If it is thought a sad affair that I should have found current anthropological theory so little applicable, again I should disagree. I share (with qualifications) Popper's view that 'it is clearer to formulate the task of scientific method as the elimination of false theories (from the various theories tentatively proferred) than the attainment of established truths' [Popper, 1945, i, p.242]. It is in accordance with this view that I see advantages in stressing delimitation ('negative determinism') as much as causality or functional relations. In testing various theories I have made a theoretical delimitation to the understanding of Penan society. I find this as worth-while in itself, as satisfying and as profitable, as any other approach aiming at the extraction of precise explanations. In theory, one

negative conclusion from the Tswana or the Penan is the master of a hundred positive ones from other societies, and so long as the former is admitted to be negative the theory is still not right. Every refutation of a theory is one step nearer to whatever is ultimately the truth about human society.

A P P E N D I X

THE PENAN GROUPS

I have marked with an asterisk those group that I have had any sort of direct contact with. I have met nearly all of these as groups, but I have met only one individual from the Lua group of Nibĕ, though this was enough to assure me that they were culturally and structurally Western Penan. Similarly I have met a number of individuals from the Penan Gang group under Japi. With groups such as the Penan Lusong I have had no direct contact, and derive what knowledge I have of them from other Penan (for example, the mother of Lujang in the Kelame group was a Penan Lusong) and from Urquhart's material [Urquhart, 1950 (62); 1951].

The figures for the groups that I have met are for the most part accurate, though in some cases (in the early days of my work) I neglected to find out how many people there were in certain groups when I had the chance to do so. For most of the other groups I have had to rely on reports of Penan who knew them, and where checking has been possible these have been near enough.

Eastern Penan

	river-name	elder	numbers	
1	Apo	Avun	- (few)	
2	Apo	Tule	- (few)	
3	Bahau	Kade	75	
4*	Belong	Jabu	16	
5	Bengan	Yat	40	
6	Beleit	Tiung	29	Noakes, 1950, p.84.
7	Belekun	Bayan	11	
8*	Iman	Lebang	40	
9*	Iwan	Bela'et	28	
10*	Iwan	Ida	22	
11*	Iwan	Laweng	48	
12*	Jawi	Bengau	19	
13*	Lera	Ingan	18	
14*	Linau	Atom	21	
15*	Long Buang	Julong	85	Settled on the Apo River.

16*	Mago	Cheng	35	Harrisson's 'Magoh Punans' [1949 (18)]
17	Medalam	Sigak	30	
18	Mediit	-	-	Harrisson, 1949 (18), p.131.
19	Meleng	Ju'an	15	
20	Melinau	Amat	30	
21*	Paong	Jengilan	76	
22	Pata	Yen	46	
23	Pata-Tuto	Nyidin	18	
24	Pelutan	Keleng	70	
25*	Sebatou	Parung	23	
26	Sedam	Alat	50	
27*	Sekita	Iling	125	
28	Sela'an	Au	20	
29*	Selega	Lidam	26	
30	Selungo	Osong	-	
31*	Tebangan	Aje	25	
32*	Tudan	Tukin	13	
33	Tuto	Laeng	12	
	Total number:	+906 [1000]		
	Average group:	30.		

Western Penan

34	Bunut	Kado	28	Urquhart, 1951, p.496.
35*	Danum	Urang	100	
36*	Geng	Japi	158	Urquhart, 1951, p.515 (Cf. ch.5.)
37	Lua	Laweng	55	
38*	Lua	Mawang	25	
39*	Lua	Nibã	30	
40	Luda	Idan	75	
41	Luda	Kila	25	
42	Lusong	Alui	33	Urquhart, 1951, p.515.
43	Lusong	Ageh	19	"
44	Lusong	Boeng	38	"
45	Lusong	Keju	-	"
46	Peliran	Awi	35	
47	Peliran	Tubit	40	
48	Peliran	Usang	40	
49*	Silat	Kemasa	30	
50*	Silat	Kole	18	

51*	Silat	Leweng	53	
52*	Silat	Merawei	26	
53	Talun	Lasau	34	Urquhart, 1951, p.495.

Total nomads: +852
Average group: 42

(Settled groups)

54*	Apat	Abau	23	L. Nyivung. Includes Beluwei (pp.61-2)
55*	Beluru	Samat	80	
56*	Buk	Lewing	103	
57*	Kelame	Talan	76	
58*	Kemulu	Inun	33	
59*	Labang	Mejiwei	50	
60*	Long Tap	-	21	No elder.
61*	Merurong	Medirui	35	Scattered in Jelalong and Tinjar 1952.
62*	Mesekat	Upau	60	
63*	Niah	-	12	No elder. Plus many intered Islam.
64*	Nyivung	Nagan	105	
65*	Paro	Baceng	82	
66*	Savup	Bit	32	
67*	Suai	Uso	47	
68*	Su'an	Ileh	31	
69*	Tuyut	Weng	78	

Total settled: 868
Total Western Penan: +1720

<u>Total Penan population: +2626 (including +1673 nomads).</u>

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NOTE ON REFERENCES

As ch.1 has made clear the Penan are referred to in the literature on Borneo as 'Punan'. Any work mentioning Punan in Sarawak may be talking about Penan or Punan or Punan Ba, or about any combination of these. None of the very extensive Dutch literature on 'Poenan' except Pauwels [1935] deals with Penan. I have therefore abstracted the references dealing with Penan and have listed them under the heading 'Penan'. I have not included references that deal only with Punan or with Punan Ba, though information on these peoples may nevertheless be confused with Penan material in the references I give.

I cannot say that this is a complete list of Penan references, though if I knew of any other major item it would be here. But I have not included every mention of Penan that is to be found in the columns of the Sarawak Gazette, but only those in themselves of major character or of interest in my text. Nor have I included any secondary references that draw upon the ones I list and that add neither new information nor interesting comment.

References marked '[K]' are included in Kennedy, Bibliography of Indonesian Peoples and Cultures, 1945, p.100, under the heading 'Punan'.

Abbreviations

AA	American Anthropologist
AAE	Archivio per l'Anthropologia e La Ethnologia
GJ	Geographical Journal
J[R]AI	Journal of the [Royal] Anthropological Institute
JRASMB	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Malayan Branch
JRASSB	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Straits Branch
KT	Koloniaal Tijdschrift
M	Man
SG	Sarawak Gazette
SMJ	Sarawak Museum Journal
TITLV	Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde
TNAG	Tijdschrift van het Koninklijk Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap.

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II: M A P S

66 BORNEO EVANGELICAL MISSION: MAP OF FIELD, SARAWAK
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n.p., n.d. [1949]

[Locates Penan Long Buang, settled on the Apo river; 'Punans'; and Punang Trusan (cf. p.33).]

67 BORNEO: INDONESIAN PEOPLES AND CHRISTIAN MISSIONS
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[Shows four areas marked 'Punan', one in Sarawak, as in Kennedy, 1945.]

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[Map locates 'nomadic Punans', i.e. Penan and Punan. No names or other identification, no strengths.]

69 HARRISSON, T.
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[P.156 includes first map - taken from aerial survey - of Menavan and Lua, with two 'Punan camps' located as met at mouth of Lua and below mouth of Danum in Paliran.]

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[Contains at p.10 map 'Distribution of races in Sarawak', 60 miles to 1 inch, Sarawak 1949, locating four areas inhabited by 'Nomadic Punyans (sic)'.]

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[Two maps at back of vol.ii locate 'Punans', i.e. Penan and Punan.]

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[Locates 'Punans' - i.e. Penan, Punan, and Punan Ba - and 'Punan' - i.e. Penan - villages in Jelalong.]

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[Map at back locates 'Punans' and 'Punan village' as in Hose, 1924.]

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[Map, p.86, locates four areas of 'Punan' as in item 67. Indonesian Punan (and possibly other peoples) and Punan Ba.]

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Approx. 7 miles to 1 inch
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[Silk map compiled for wartime use in Borneo. Locates 'Poonans' in Belaga, Tinjar, Tuto, and Lurah districts. All Penan areas.]

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[Editorial compilation of topographical reports by patrols. Includes sketchmap, p. 394, made by Fischer in 1907 showing position and course of the Payang river. Cf. p. 54.]

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NOTE ON MAPS

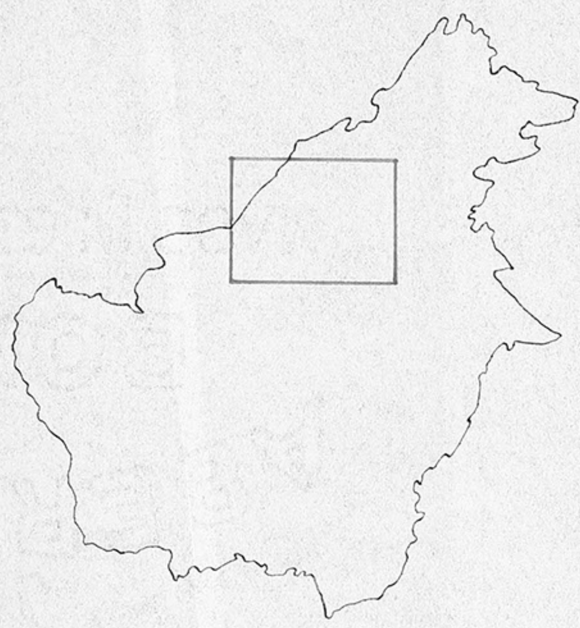
The sources of the topographical map are those listed in 'References II: Maps' with the addition of the Sarawak 1:1,000,000 map of 1949 and the 2 miles to 1 inch preliminary sheets of the aerial survey, 1952. The locations of the Baram longhouses are taken from the Borneo Evangelical Mission 1949 map. Longhouses on other rivers have not been accurately mapped and are not represented here. The representation of rivers is selective: only main ones and others that are frequently mentioned in the text are shown.

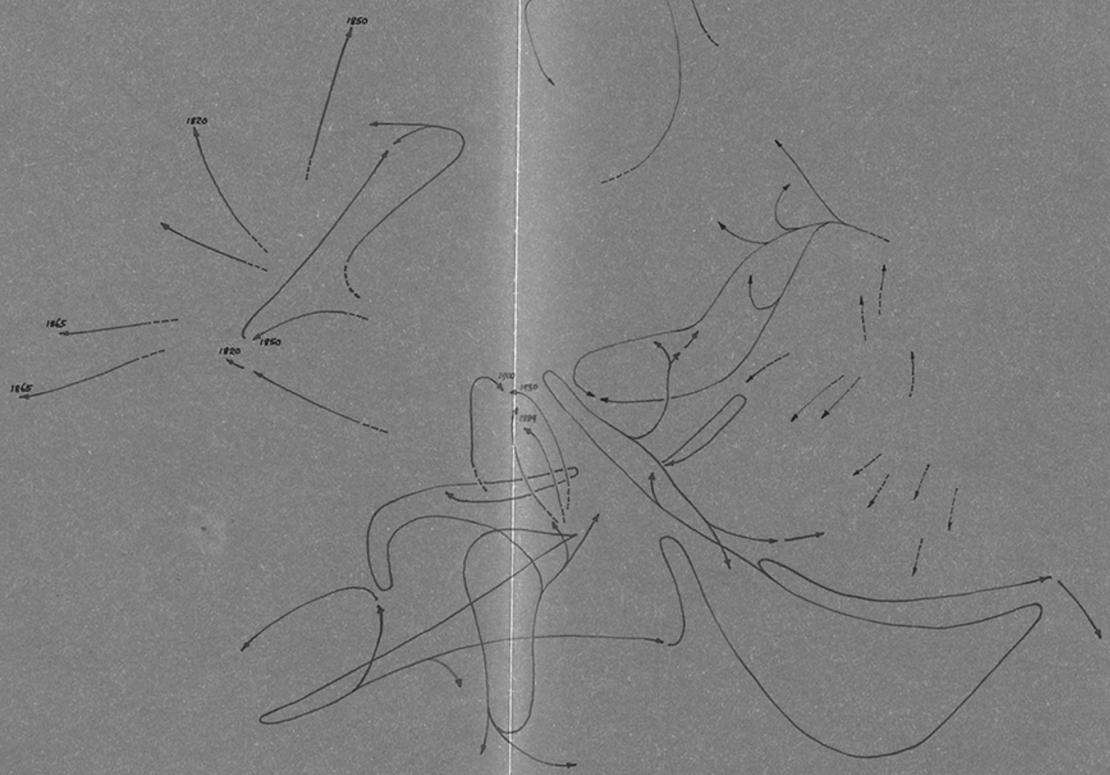
Red symbols represent Western Penan and blue ones Eastern Penan. Square symbols are settled groups, round ones nomadic. 'T' stands for a trading-point at which Government-supervised trading-meetings are held for the nomadic groups. The figures under the symbols refer to the numbered list of Penan groups in the Appendix.

The degree of representation in the migration-map varies from almost pure schematism, as for the Penan Bunut and Talun, and some of the longer-settled groups, to substantial historical accuracy, as for the movements and fission of the Penan Manalui stock. Nothing is shown of the movements or provenance of certain groups in the Peliran and the Linau: their histories are either too confused to be simply represented or are too little known.

The location of the settled groups is accurate, but of the nomadic groups cannot be. Any symbol representing a nomadic group refers to a large area in which the group was reported or met in 1951-2. However, although any group may in fact be a long way from where it is represented as being the approximate areas and the relative positions of the groups are accurately enough shown. After I had compiled and reproduced the maps I learned [Urquhart, private communication, 29 March 1953] that the Penan Bunut had moved from the Belepeh into the Linau; but they are nevertheless still in the relative area that is referred to by the symbol that represents them on the map. Again, group 39 (Penan Lua) moved far into the headwaters of the Silat in April 1952, intending to collect resin in the Badang, but they turned back into the Lua when the sister of the elder died. Even had they continued on their journey they would almost surely have returned to 'their' area, the Lua.

AREA COVERED BY DISTRIBUTION MAP

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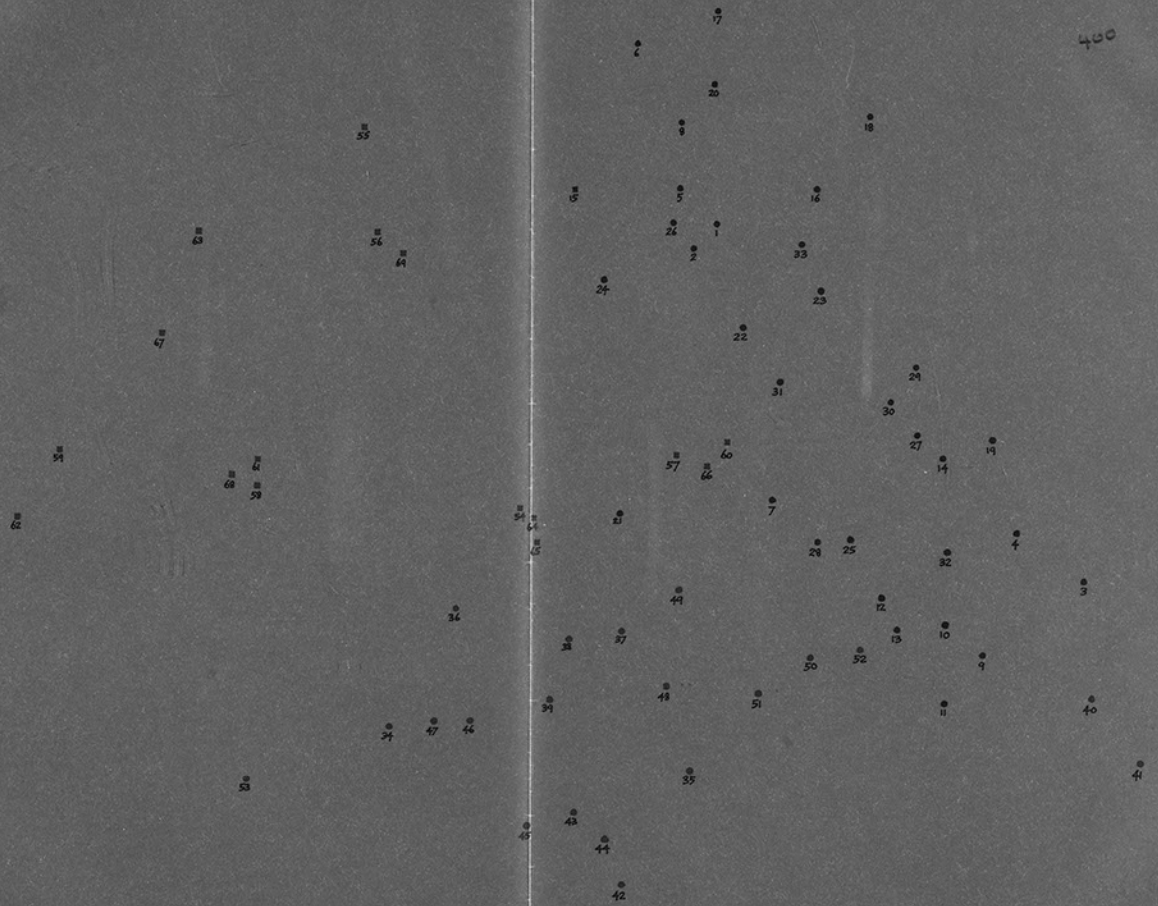

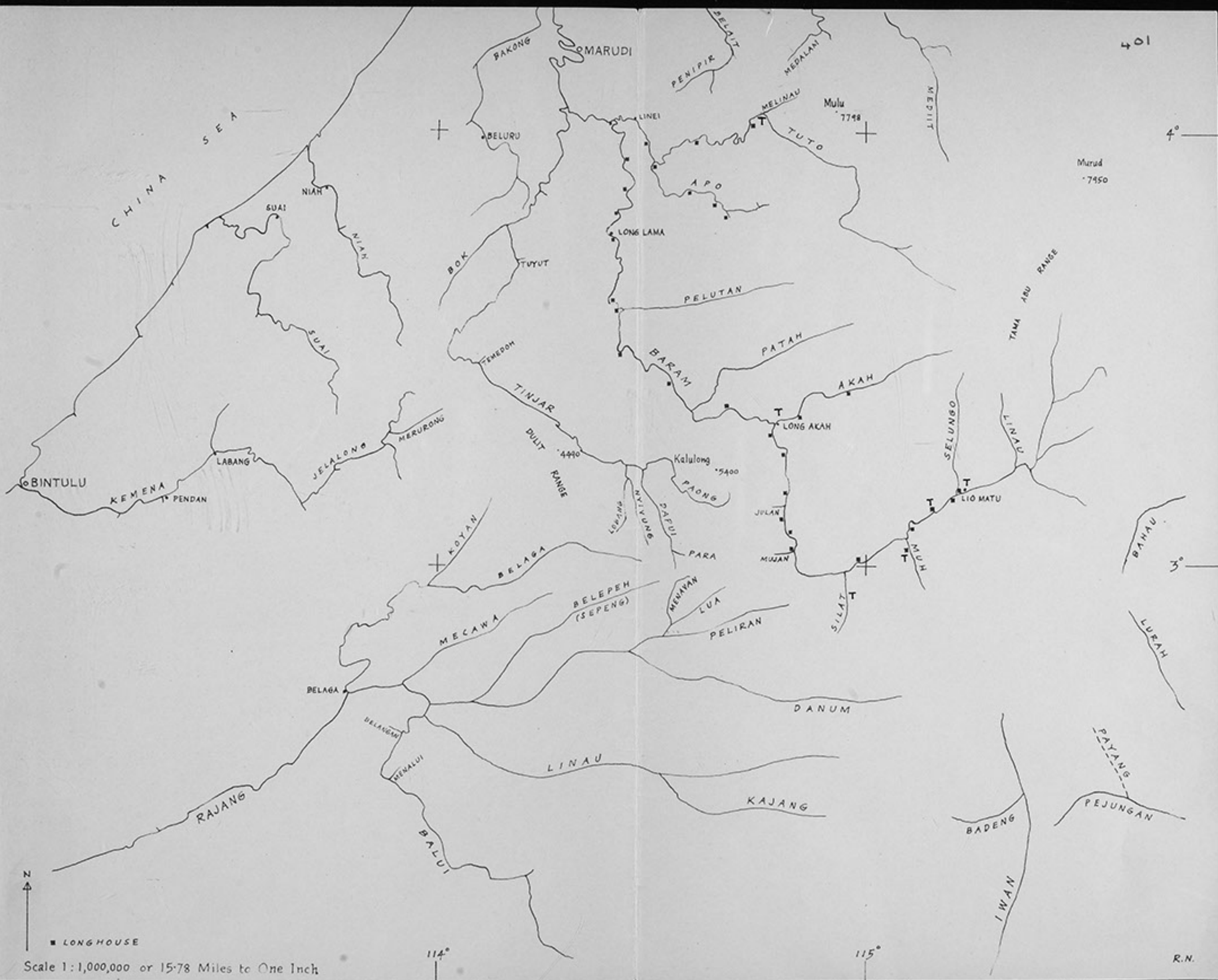
MARUDI
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PENIPIR
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Mulu
7798
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LINEI
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Murud
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CHINA SEA
NIAH
SUAI
LONG LAMA
TUTUT
BOK
PELUTAN
TAMA ABU RANGE
PATAH
BARAM
TEMEDOH
TINJAR
AKAH
SELUNGO
LINAU
LONG AKAH
MERURONG
JELALONG
LABANG
BINTULU
KEMENA
PENDAN
DULIT RANGE
4440
Kalulong
5400
PAONG
LIO MATU
JULAN
MUJAN
PARA
DAPUI
NYIVUNG
KOYAN
BELAGA
MUH
BAHAU
BELEPEH (SEPENG)
MENAVAN
LUA
PELIRAN
SILAT
MECAWA
LURAH
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MENALUI
LINAU
KAJANG
PAYANG
PEJUNGAN
BADENG
RAJANG
BALUI
IWAN
4°
3°
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■ LONGHOUSE
Scale 1:1,000,000 or 15·78 Miles to One Inch
114°
115°
R.N.

A B S T R A C T

The Penan are forest nomads of the interior of north-central Borneo. They number fewer than 5000, of whom about 500 have settled down over the last 150 years and now cultivate crops in the same way as the settled peoples.

Practically nothing has been reliably known about the Penan. They have been previously known as 'Punan' and references to them have been confused with information about the genuine Punan, who are another and distinct forest nomad people, and with the Punan Ba, who are a settled people also quite distinct in language, culture, and social organisation. As 'Punan' even the existence of the Penan has been questioned as late as 1948 by an authority on southeast Asia who had himself visited central Borneo in search of such a people.

The Penan people are divided into two tribes, the Eastern Penan to the east of the Baram river, and the Western Penan to the west. They are distinguished in their respective dialects of the Penan language, in many cultural respects, and slightly in physique. There is no Penan word for tribe, but these groupings are recognised by the Penan as entities defined by dialect, culture, and history, and there is a certain opposition between the two. In spite of marked differences the tribes are indubitably one people, distinct from the

A B S T R A C T

The Penan are forest nomads of the interior of north-central Borneo. They number fewer than 3000, of whom about 900 have settled down over the last 150 years and now cultivate crops in the same way as the settled peoples.

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other peoples of Borneo, nomadic and settled.

They seem to have reached the area where they now are from the southeast, and to have originally lived contiguously as one people possibly in the Bahau area of the upper Kayan river. Since their entry into their present areas they have been divided by the large and fast Baram river, and also by apparently increasing cultural differences. The two main features of their history and the process of their normal life are their constant movement and the fission of the groups into which they are divided. The movements are due to constant search for the sago palms on which their economy is based; and the fission is due to the increase in the size of any group beyond what the area can support, or to the impoverishment of the area in which any group has been living. With the fission have occurred cultural changes that vary with the period since stocks split from each other.

The economy of the nomadic groups is based on the sago palm and on the game of the forests. The sago palm provides the staple flour, and game and fruits provide minor forms of food. The economic unit is the 'family', an aggregate consisting of or centred about the elementary family. The labour of each family is undertaken separately from other families, but the sago flour and the game and all other forms of food are shared equally among all the

families that compose the group.

For certain goods the Penan variously rely on the neighbouring settled peoples or produce their own manufactures. The Eastern Penan, who are technologically less advanced than the Western Penan, do not know how to work iron and cannot make the tools or the blowpipes with which they exploit their environment. These they obtain from the settled peoples, such as the Kenyah, in exchange for forest products for which there is world or local demand, such as resin and natural rubber, or hornbill feathers and parts of certain animals. The Western Penan can make their own tools and weapons, but also obtain through trade such things as cotton cloth (in place of their own bark-cloth), tobacco, and beads.

The Penan are divided into 69 groups, of which 17 are settled. There is no political organisation binding any of these groups into political entities, nor are there relations that can properly be called political between the tribes or between the groups. Though regarding all Penan as forming one people, many Penan groups are ignorant even of the existence of others. Nor is there any form of economic organisation, each group being economically independent.

There are 33 groups in the Eastern Penan, and 36 in the Western Penan. Each of them is normally headed by an elder. Corresponding to the lack of overall political organisation the elder has little

authority within the group and no political functions in relation to other groups. He is generally chosen by the preceding elder on grounds of experience and knowledge of the customs of the Penan. Although there is no formal rule of succession, in fact it is usually semi-hereditary, and the office passes down one line of males. The elder may be asked for arbitration in a dispute or about the compensation to be paid for an offence, but the major decisions that affect the group are not his responsibility. The migration or the fission of the group, the major events of Penan life, are decided on by the general agreement of the adult men under the imperative pressure of the environment.

The groups which compose each tribe regard themselves as linked by cultural identity and common historical origin. They also assume (among the Eastern Penan) or can demonstrate (among the Western Penan) kinship between the members of all the groups. The Penan distinguish stocks of an historical order, marked by cultural and dialectal differences, and between the various orders of stocks there is a certain opposition, a sense of distinctness. This is not accompanied by significant differences of behaviour towards groups of different stocks, but all Penan owe equal duties to all other Penan, primarily of an economic nature. There is no hostility between the groups, which regard each other, even if strange, with amity. There is no

feuding or other fighting between groups, and no cases of homicide or assault are known, apart from one isolated clash between two groups in the past. The Penan are not headhunters and have never made war on other peoples, though they have on occasion ambushed parties of the settled tribes in retaliation for headhunting raids by them.

The group is composed of families in the same loose way as the tribes are composed of groups. There is no structural relation between them, and to increase or decrease the number of groups would make no structural change. The members of the families are linked together by kinship that is partly traced and partly assumed among Eastern Penan, and nearly always accurately traced by Western Penan. The Penan say that the more families cohere to form a group the greater the economic security of each. Apart from economic advantage there is no exclusive type of kinship tie to bind a family or an individual to one particular group, for as a result of the form of group-fission the surrounding groups often contain kin as near as in the natal group and in the same proportion of categories.

Kinship is purely cognatic and there are no divisions of the social order, and no functions, based on unilineal descent. Tracing of kinship is made ambilaterally, the status of a woman in most circumstances being equal to that of a man in a genealogy. The kinship terminology consists of nineteen categories of kin and

affines into which all Penan can be fitted. Between the terms used by the two tribes there are differences of dialect, and in one case of term. The categories of kinship do not determine or influence behaviour significantly outside the range of what Penan call 'true' relatives and to whom the terms are primarily applied. Behaviour is guided, and status assigned, almost entirely on the basis of relative age. Within one kinship category there may be a very wide range of ages, and persons of the same age may be scattered over three generational levels of kinship categories. An old woman and a very small boy may both belong to the same category; and two individuals of the same age may be respectively 'grandparent' and 'grandchild'.

Marriage between nomadic Penan and members of settled tribes almost never occurs. Where there is marriage with a different people it is usually with another nomadic people such as the Punan, but instances even of this are exceedingly rare. There is no marriage between the Eastern Penan and the Western Penan. In the past it has not been possible because of their geographical isolation, and now that in certain cases it has become possible cultural differences prevent it. Normally a man marries within his natal group, but if there is no suitable mate he marries a woman from a neighbouring group, though he would normally much prefer not to do so. The bases

of choice are industry, economic ability, and mutual affection. The young people choose each other in free sexual experimentation from puberty onwards. Marriages are not arranged or normally guided by parents or by the elder.

Choice is only narrowly restricted by incest rules. The Eastern Penan may marry first cousins, but the Western Penan may not. Beyond this difference a Penan in either tribe may marry anyone who is not a primary referent of a kinship term (e.g. the mother's sister, called 'aunt' may not be married, but the mother's first cousin, also 'aunt' may be married.) Choice of mate is not restricted to any category of kinship, and marriages occur not only between cousins of the same genealogical level but also between 'uncle' and 'niece', and even between 'grandmother' and 'grandson'. No marriage is deprecated because of the kinship categories involved, but marriage between individuals of disparate ages is reprehended strongly and does not occur.

There is no marriage ceremony nor any communal recognition of the union. The marriage exists from the time of change of residence. Normally the man enters the shelter of his wife's parents, but the rule is very flexible and may be easily waived because of circumstances. The Eastern Penan normally make no formal gift at the marriage; but the Western Penan make a token payment of a large knife in a marriage

within the group. If a Western Penan marries outside the group he lives with the wife's group until the birth of his first child, when he has the right to claim his wife and child and take them back to his own group. If he wishes to take the girl from her group at once he has to make a large marriage payment to her parents: this is contributed by all the members of his own group, but he does not repay it. Marriage between groups is very rare, and it is not possible to discern functions of the marriage payment such as seem to feature in other societies.

Penan almost never divorce and examples are difficult to find. When a divorce occurs it is normally by consent.

A very few Penan, mostly elders of groups, have two wives each; but polygyny is not liked by Penan and little practised. There has never been (contrary to report by Charles Hose) any case of polyandry among Penan, and there certainly could not be today.

In the extreme simplicity of Penan culture there is a striking wealth and variety of types of name. A Penan has a personal name, but this changes throughout his life, when he discards it at severe sickness (which is thought to bring relief) or at the death of a close relative. He may also have a teknonym referring to his child. A main feature of Penan culture is the use of 'death-names'. These are a series of names which are adopted by Penan at the deaths of

what they call true kin. These are then used as terms of address and reference to the exclusion of the personal name or prefixed to it. When a death-name is adopted the teknonym must be discarded, and in this and other cases there is a limited alternation between teknonym and death-name. With the birth of a new child to the bearer of a death-name the name is discarded and a teknonym assumed. There is also a type of naming which is used by two individuals of the same sex reciprocally with reference to some activity that they have shared in a friendly fashion. This sort of name, which has been called 'alliance-name', is used between two individuals who feel themselves to some extent strange or distant, and who ally themselves by a common activity and the sharing of a name to which no one else is party. There are also two names (one in each tribe) used for referring to dead persons, whose personal names may not be spoken for fear of misfortune.

Penan society does not seem to be susceptible of understanding through the various theories which have been applied in other societies to incest rules, marriage payment, kinship terminology and behaviour, etc. Its study points lessons about the use and value of history in ethnography, the method of anthropological theory, the lack of value in the concepts of purpose and consistency in understanding society, the value of negative delimiters of structure and function, the case

against society forming a natural system, and the case for the social indeterminacy of morality. One of the simplest of societies in structure and culture, the Penan pose new, complicated, and important problems of anthropological theory.

412 leaves, really 414

because 102 & 311 are

both doubled.