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SOME ASPECTS OF CHANGE AMONG THE BALUY KAYAN

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ABSTRACT

This article is based on field-work undertaken among the Baluy Kayan in 1986 and 1987⁽¹⁾. Within the pluriethnic milieu of Belaga District, the Kayan represent a major entity similar to the Kenyahor Kajang. But in contrast to the latter groups, the Kayan show a higher degree of homogeneity (cultural, linguistic, economic).

Research on a selected community, Uma Bawang at Long Murum, during the summer of 1987, did make use of the Socio-economic survey of the population (Department of Statistics) and the Agricultural survey of Belaga area (Department of Agriculture) which were both completed that year. A sample of ten households was retained as representative of the community. Thus, corrections and precisions to these data are given in the text. Besides, additional data from two other Kayan communities, Uma Belor and Uma Juman, complement the picture. The choice of Uma Bawang was obviously related to the pioneer study of Jerome Rousseau in this longhouse, in the early 1970's (Rousseau, 1974a). Comparative data on a Kayan community would thus give an historical perspective on their social and economic organization in a period of changes.

During the research, several dimensions of Kayan society were investigated: demography, social structure, history, ritual, agriculture and land tenure, economy (with special reference to the community of Uma Bawang). These topics are discussed normally in relation to social change. More broadly, the impact of the administration and modernization processes during the last 20 years, is considered. Although this article focuses on the socio-economic situation, the cultural context is included as much as possible. Of course, it could form the subject of a separate study.

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INTRODUCTION

Origin

The Kayan found in Belaga District migrated there from Indonesian Kalimantan about two hundred years ago (± 1780). Their traditional homeland, the Apo Kayan Plateau has been occupied since by Kenyah sub-groups. Only one Kayan sub-group, the Uma Lekan, still live there, in Datah Dian (*Kecamatan Kayan Hilir*). They have little contact with the Baluy Kayan since the confrontation period (1963—1966).

The Kayan communities In Belaga District

Roughly one can distinguish three major groups, based on geographical location:

- a. below Bakun rapids (5 communities)
(going upriver)

- Uma Lirung Amo, (pop. 116)⁽²⁾ just downriver of SMK Belaga.
- Uma Agieng (pop. 433)
- Uma Kahé (pop. 272)
- Uma Apan (pop. 158)
- Uma Nyavieng (pop. 131)

Total: 1110

The Belaga town with, a dispensary (Klinik Kecil), post office, schools (SRK, SMK), Agricultural headquarters forms the administrative center for these longhouses. This year (1987) a 6th longhouse, Uma Tevo' which had split in the late 1940's is being reformed again, below the Bungan rapids, their original place at Long Buyun. Uma Tevo' people had been living since then in two other longhouses: Uma Agieng and Uma Lirung Amo. Now they have just build a temporary longhouse (*luvung*) of about twenty doors, last month. An application for official recognition has been filled at the District Office.

- b. above Bakun rapids (8 communities)

In the upper Baluy, the Kayan live in two areas. Within each area, the longhouses are more closely related by inter-marriage and political affinities.

- I. Uma Bawang (pop. 301)⁽³⁾
Uma Nyavieng (pop. 112/250)
Uma Belor (pop. 191)⁽³⁾
Uma Baluy Long Liko (pop. 162)
- II. Uma Juman (pop. 313)
Uma Daro' (pop. 279)
Uma Baluy Ukap (pop. 302)
Uma Lesong (pop. 414)

Total: 2074 (2164 see below)
