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OVERVIEW OF THE BIDAYUH CULTURE

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INTRODUCTION

Dayak Bidayuh is synonymous to Land Dayak used in colonial time, meaning the indigenous inland people who live mainly in Serian, Kuching, Bau and Lundu Districts in the First Division of Sarawak. Dayak Bidayuh vary so much, not only in their dialects, but also in their contacts with other races. Their *adat* law, customs and culture are very local and bear a remarkable similarity to those of the Dayak Iban. The Iban's view of an offence as a disturbance of the balance of nature involving the whole creation is also held true by the living and the dead. The dead in this case include the inhabitants of heaven and the local spirits of the fields and forests, so to avoid being visited by the divine wrath.

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ORIGIN OF DAYAK BIDAYUH

According to legend, Dayak Bidayuh under their leaders, namely Tiraiah and Padat, first came to this part of Borneo from Sungkung via Empurum, Penrissen and Pedawan; and, on their way to the western most part of Borneo, stopped at ten halting places, first at Empurum, second at See Penrissen, third at Tingauh, fourth at Perok, fifth at Sekap Danda, sixth at Sapang Sambu, seventh at Ateng Misandung, eighth at Pedawan, ninth at Tanjung Kutud, tenth at Tanjung Abang not far from Simadang, and then proceeded to Tanjung Simadang. From there they visited Rabak Mikabuh and settled at Rabak Mikabuh for many many years.

When they left Sungkung, it was already 20 generations before the Karakatao eruption. According to the Sarawak Annual, the Karakatao eruption took place on 27th August 1883. Assuming Dayak Bidayuh life span then was 70 years in average because in those days Dayaks lived a very long life, they could have had come to Rabak Mikabuh in the year 373 AD. They called themselves Dayak Puruh and their dialect too was called "Pimiyyu Puruh" meaning Puruh dialect up to this day.

Life then was perfect. Meat, fish depended upon hunting, fishing and collecting honey bee from trees, and fruits from wild fruit trees. Sickneses and accidental deaths were seldom heard because the people then strictly