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KELABIT-ENGLISH VOCABULARY

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GENERAL BACKGROUND. Kelabit is an important language spoken over a more-or-less continuous area in upriver portions of the Fourth and Fifth Divisions of Sarawak and in neighboring areas of Indonesian Borneo, generally at altitudes above 2,000 feet. Asmah (1983) estimates the total number of speakers at 3,000, but this surely excludes the Kelabits of Kalimantan, and probably underestimates the total in Sarawak.

Hudson (1977: 25), who groups Kelabit with Lun Dayeh and Lun Bawang in an "Apo Duat" dialect complex, notes that "several phonologically distinguishable dialects are discernible". Despite Hudson's extensive survey work in Borneo, however, the number and diversity of Kelabit-Lun Dayeh/Lun Bawang dialects remains unknown. In 1971 the writer recorded material in the speech of Long Semado, Bario, Pa' Dalih, Long Lellang, Long Napir and Long Seridan (the latter two almost identical). Long Terawan and Long Banga'. Long Semado speakers call themselves "Lun Bawang", Bario, Pa' Dalih, Long Lellang and Long Napir/Long Seridan speakers call themselves "Kelabit", the non-Berawan speakers at Long Terawan call themselves "Tring" and Long Banga' speakers call themselves "Sa'ban" or "Saban", yet it was clear from comparison among them that by at least a lexicostatistical criterion these language varieties form seven dialects of a single language. To facilitate further discussion I will follow Hudson in calling this language "Apo Duat".

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Apo Duat dialects fall into three fairly distinct clusters: (1) Lun Dayeh/Lun Bawang, (2) Kelabit, (3) Sa'ban. Wider comparison shows further that the Lun Dayeh/Lun Bawang dialects are both phonologically and morphologically the most conservative, and the Sa'ban dialects by far the most innovative, with Kelabit/Tring occupying an intermediate position.¹ Only in Sa'ban has phonological change greatly affected intelligibility. Although Long Banga' scores some 86% with Bario on the Swadesh 200-item lexicostatistical test-list Kelabit speakers in general claim little comprehension of Sa'ban, a consequence primarily of extensive phonological changes which have strikingly altered the phoneme inventory, canonical form and morphophonemics of the latter dialect.²

It is highly improbable that this limited sample of speech varieties, collected during less than eight months fieldwork, represents the full range of Apo Duat dialects. Indeed, Hudson's (1977) data for the Long Pala dialect of Lun Dayeh and the Pa' Mada dialect of Kelabit exhibit peculiarities of historical development that distinguish them from any of the dialects I recorded, and Clayre (1972: 148) notes that Sa'ban itself is dialectally complex. It appears likely, then, that the Apo Duat language complex includes upwards of a dozen fairly distinct dialects.

SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE. Little reliable information is yet available for any Apo Duat dialect. The major published sources are summarized below.

Roth (1896) includes a nine word vocabulary of "Kalabit" collected by Chas. Hose, Esq. and an Adang vocabulary of 165-170 words collected by Spencer St. John. Neither vocabulary specifies the longhouse at which it was recorded.

Douglas (1911) contains 767 English words and the equivalents in Kayan, Kenyah and Kelabit, with occasional gaps for the latter. The Kelabit dialect that is represented is not specified, and in fact Douglas claims (1911: 76) that both in Kayan and in Kelabit "dialects differ very slightly". Some of Douglas' entries resemble forms in Long Terawan Tring, e.g. *terol* 'egg', with "peripheral lallation" (Blust 1984). Others resemble no Apo Duat dialect known to me, as with *lechurr* 'woman', with initial l- for expected d-.

Ray (1913) contains 211 English words, plus numerals and pronouns and their equivalents in Kelabit, Bruang, Balait, Tabun, Adang and Trusan. Because of gaps less than this number of Apo Duat forms actually appears in his lists. Like Douglas, Ray provides no indication of the dialect described. His material, however, suggests a dialect in which Proto-Apo Duat *b^h became /p/ and *d^h became /c/, hence one that more closely resembles Long Terawan Tring than any dialect reported in Hudson (1977) or any other dialect recorded by myself.

Lees (1959) is the first attempt to apply linguistic principles to the analysis of an Apo Duat dialect. She recognizes 20 consonants and 6 vowels for a speech variety which she says is similar to the "Pa Kemalu" dialect of Lun Dayeh spoken in Kalimantan, without being identical to it. Two of the consonant phonemes, described as "complex consonants", are written with digraphs: bp and gk.

Labo Pur (1965) contains about 2,200 English words and the Lun Dayeh equivalents. Since the latter often correspond to more than one English word the number of Lun Dayeh morphemes is somewhat less than 2,200. This is the only substantial publication on an Apo Duat dialect to date that is written by a native speaker. Labo Pur does not explicitly indicate the dialect described, although his short introduction in Lun Dayeh bears the date October, 1961, and gives his location at the time as Long Tukon.

Blust (1969, 1974) presents limited data for Bario Kelabit. He argues for a series of voiced aspirates written /b^h/, /d^h/, /g^h/, which is phonemically distinct from the plain voiced series /b/, /d/, /g/ and is not matched by a corresponding series of voiceless aspirates.

B. Clayre (1972) contains material from the dictionary of Labo Pur (called "Lun Bawang" rather than "Lun Dayeh"), and from the Sa'ban dialect of Long Banga', while I. Clayre (1973) offers an analysis of the phonology of Hmeu Sa'ban.

Hudson (1977) lists ten words from the Long Pala dialect of Lun Dayeh and the Pa' Omor, Batu Patung and Pa' Mada dialects of Kelabit. Adopting the analysis in Blust (1969) he recognizes a series of phonemic voiced aspirates including at least b^h and d^h in the Pa' Omor dialect.

Asmah (1983) provides a brief description of the phonology and morphology of the Bario dialect of Kelabit and of an unspecified dialect of Lun Bawang. For the former she denies the existence of a phonemically distinct series of voiced aspirates, recognizing only seven stops: /p/, /t/, /k/, /ʔ/, /b/, /d/ and /g/. For both Bario and Lun Bawang she recognizes clusters of homorganic consonants of the type -bp-.