CHAPTER VI

The rituals of the annual cycle

Lali or organized rituals

In a previous chapter, we looked at the rituals of daily life. We now turn to public rituals which are set apart from ordinary life. These are called *lali*. *Lali* include the annual ritual cycle (this chapter), the *dayong* (Chapter VII), major life cycle rituals (Chapter IX), and some curing rituals (Chapter VIII). With a few exceptions, *lali* are celebrated by priests. At the beginning of each *lali*, the officiant tells spirits why the ritual is taking place. Most *lali* are scheduled when the moon is auspicious.[1]

[1] Hose states that 'There are four words used by the Kayans to express the notion of the forbidden act, *malan, lali, parit,* and *tulah* [...]. *Malan* and *parit* seem to be true Kayan words; *lali* and *tulah* to have been taken from the Malay, and to be used generally by Kayans in speaking with Kenyahs or men of other tribes to whom these words are more familiar than the Kayan terms.' (Hose and McDougall 1912, II:14.) '*Malan*' is a Kenyah, not a Kayan word. I have never heard it in the Baluy; neither Barth (1910) nor Southwell (1990) mention it. The other three words are used regularly by the Kayan, and there is no reason to believe that they are recent borrowings. '*Lali*' may be a cognate of '*malï*' (pregnant). Both involve ritual practices and prohibitions which contribute to the effectiveness of the outcome. The *lali* call for ritual implements (*daven lali*).

In Kayan, it is inappropriate to translate '*lali*' as 'taboo'. This may be its meaning in Lepo' Tau Kenyah (Galvin 1967:31, but see Elshout 1923:34). Barth (1910:110) also glosses '*lali*' as 'forbidden according to religious beliefs'. On the other hand, Southwell (1990:125) glosses it as 'rituals, ceremonies and taboos practised by Kayans formerly'. All the examples he gives are consistent with the Baluy meaning. All organized rituals (*lali*) call for specific acts and specific prohibitions, but '*lali*' does not focus on these prohibitions. Furthermore, it would be incorrect to use '*lali*' to refer to the prohibitions of daily life. In the Baluy area, it would be incorrect to label '*lali*' the prohibition on a man handling a woman's skirt, as Barth does (1910:110). Nieuwenhuis (1904-07, I:109) also translates '*lali*' as 'taboo', but most of his examples are consistent with the Baluy meaning. From Nieuwenhuis and Barth, one might make the hypothesis that the meaning of '*lalï*' is somewhat different in the Mahakam; however, Sombroek (n.d.1) uses the term with the same meaning as in the Baluy. I suspect that '*lali*' was misinterpreted as 'taboo' because it is a cognate of the Malay *pemali*, which Hose, Nieuwenhuis, and Barth would all have come across before they learned to speak Kayan.

In each community, different phases of the moon are considered to be auspicious or inauspicious (Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, II:220; Barth 1910:38). In most cases, no reason is provided to explain why a particular moon is auspicious or not. In other cases, an interpretation is provided: the harvest ritual should take place when the moon is waning, otherwise people will eat without restraint and exhaust their supplies. I did not succeed in getting a clear list of the phases of the moon. Some designations apply for a single day, others for more than one day. The terms are not used commonly and no informant could provide a sequential list. Most people did not know the names of all the phases of the moon. It should be noted that the

The *lali* create a contrast between sacred and secular moments of life; they require participants to avoid profane activities. The separateness of the *lali* is marked by specific taboos and ritual observances. A household sponsoring a *dayong* or a life cycle ritual abstains from agricultural work on that day. The village is closed off during the *lali* of the annual cycle; one may not work in the fields, in the jungle, or on the river. Participants may not leave the longhouse after the ritual has started and outsiders may not come in; fresh produce (food, tobacco, fresh fish or meat, jungle materials) may not be brought into the house. (Village members who fail to return to the longhouse before the beginning of the *lali* are also denied entry.) People may not go to the river or to a barn. When the house is completely closed, people defecate through cracks in the floor rather than in bushes. If the autonomy of the community were breached, it would invalidate the ritual and the harvest would be endangered. If individuals are hurt while a *lali* is in progress, this is not considered an ordinary mishap, but the consequence of a breach of taboo.

Except for a bead bracelet which identifies the officiant, people do not wear special clothing at the occasion of rituals. What they wear depends on the setting. If the ritual takes place in the fields, they use work clothes; if, as with most rituals, they are in the longhouse, they wear everyday clothes. Nowadays, most men wear cheap cotton shorts without pockets and T-shirts or long-sleeved shirts. When in the longhouse, they sometimes put a sarong over their shorts. A few people, especially young men who have been influenced by outside fashions, may wear long trousers when they are not working. Those who

observation of the moon is less important in Uma Bawang than in other Baluy Kayan villages: Uma Bawang uses a sun-dial to set the time of the ritual sowing, while other villages follow a lunar calendar. Ultimately, this gap in the ethnography follows from my unwillingness to drag people outside the house every evening and ask what the moon phase was called. For what it is worth, I constructed the following sequence from informants' accounts: *bovuin* (new moon); *bulan musit* ('the moon appears'; auspicious for planting and sowing); *bulan ipen lejo* ('the moon like a tiger's tooth'; auspicious); *bulan petlen* (auspicious); *dang* (half-moon, or a bit more; inauspicious); *butit halap* ('the belly of the *halap* fish'; auspicious. It is first 'small', then 'big', *butit halap ok, butit halap aya'*); *kelo'ong payang* (according to Sellato, pers. comm., this means 'the circle like a *payang* fruit, Pangium edule, which is elliptical; it is first 'small', then 'big'; inauspicious); *teloh manok* ('bird's egg'); *beliling jia* ('superior round', in other words full moon; auspicious); *kamat* (inauspicious; on the 17th day, according to Barth 1910:38); *pe'un dem* ('beginning of darkness'; inauspicious); *beliling jia uli* ('superior round returns'); *kelo'ong payang ji'ek* ('bad circle moving sideways'. It is first 'small', then 'big'); *butit halap uli* ('the returning *butit halap* [small and big]; see above); *teloh manok* ('bird's egg'; auspicious); *dang* 3 days (inauspicious). In the Mahakam, *dang* means 'don't' (Sellato, pers. comm.)

The moon is believed to affect various natural phenomena: at the end of the waning moon and at the new moon, the flesh of the mousedeer is at its most tender, while it is toughest at full moon. Weather conditions are linked to phases of the moon: *bulan musit* is thought to be associated with rain and is a good period for planting and sowing. *Pe'un dem* is a good time to plant sugarcane because this is a plant with liquid. Tapioca would rot if planted then. In Uma Bawang, the moon's phases called *kamat* and *dang* are usually inauspicious; they are called 'Dipuy's moons' (*bulan Dipuy*). If, for instance, one erected a hut during *dang*, it would be destroyed by fire. By contrast, *dang* is an auspicious moon for marriages in other villages.

can afford them wear chequered shirts with collars and pockets.

This chapter illustrates a noticeable feature of Kayan rituals: their elaborateness. Rituals are lengthy; they specify a large number of procedures which require the attention of both religious specialists and lay people. Ritual component is piled on ritual component. Each action has a meaning, which is often explicated by the officiant as it is performed. The mountain of details in this chapter and the next may overwhelm the reader; this is the effect the Kayan seek to achieve in relation to the spirits. They hope and expect that the volume, elaborateness, and specificity of rituals and prayers will cajole, seduce, and hopefully compel spirits to bestow their blessings.

In *adat Dipuy*, the *lali* were burdened with many inconvenient taboos. It was necessary to store water and food for the whole duration of the *lali*. Communal *lali* lasted several days; visitors from other villages were allowed to visit the longhouse on days when no ritual was in progress (*'lali'* refers to the whole period from the beginning to the conclusion of the ritual, including moments during which no rituals are taking place). Visitors placed a wood shaving on the tips of their spears in order not to offend spirits. Longhouse members were also allowed out of the house at those times, as long as they did not visit the farms. The following foods were tabooed during *lali*: bear, sambhur deer, mushrooms, the spice *meke*, monkeys (*brok* and *umang*), snakes, tortoise, civet cat, and scaly anteaters. In *adat Bungan*, the longhouse is closed off only for an hour or two during the actual ritual. In Uma Bawang, there is some flexibility in allowing entry to latecomers, but other communities are stricter. In Uma Juman, people are not allowed to go to the river to bathe during the whole *lali* (Fr. Straussberger, pers. comm.).[2] If desired, the segregated status of the longhouse can be signalled by tying sticks together to form an X and placing this sign on the river bank. The day after a communal *lali*, village members 'come out' (*musang*), in other words they go about their business in and around the longhouse, but people from other communities are still not allowed to visit. If they did, the opposite movements of villagers and visitors would cancel each other out and weaken the efficacy of the ritual: as the Kayan say, the visitors would 'oppose the coming out' (*nyura' usang*). Not only must the community be together, it must be united: quarrels invalidate rituals. This happened in Uma Lesong, where a communal ritual had to be repeated. (The quarrel was fuelled by the presence of two religious factions in the village, one led by Lake' Huluy, a priest of high repute in the region, the other by Lirong Apo Token, who fostered a heterodox version of Bungan.) The culprit was ordered to provide a tray (*talam*), a sword, a sacrificial pig, and a few other things to Lake' Huluy, the priest in charge of the second ceremony.

[2] In the Mahakam region, there was a prohibition on bathing right after a meal the day following a ritual. One could do so an hour or two later, after the priests had gone down to the river (Sombroek n.d.1:6.34).

On the day of a communal *lali*, Ajang, an Uma Bawang man, went fishing, to the ire of the priest Avun Imang, who burst into a furious speech. Most listeners thought he was overreacting because Ajang was living in his farmhouse, therefore his actions would not affect the longhouse. Avun Imang's anger was triggered by another factor: Ajang and his family regularly stayed away from communal rituals and Avun Imang believed this could endanger Ajang's fellow workers. In other words, Avun Imang felt the absence of Ajang's family weakened the wholeness of the community. His view was not generally shared, but most people agreed that Ajang's family should mingle more with their fellow villagers.

The annual cycle

The annual ritual cycle promotes a successful rice harvest and its structure corresponds to the agricultural cycle. The centrality of rice is emphasized in a myth of origin.

> In the beginning, people did not need to work for their subsistence. Doh Tenangan gave them all the food they wanted. Bo' Dale' Sirang and his wife Bo' Lire' Gerang had four boys and four girls. In a dream, Doh Tenangan told Bo' Dale' Sirang to kill his children. He was reluctant to do so at first, but eventually he killed his sons and buried them. From their tombs appeared two species of trees [*aro*, a Ficus, and *bengeh*, unidentified], the thunder, and the tiger. Doh Tenangan asked him why he had not killed his daughters as well. Reluctantly, Bo' Dale' Sirang killed three daughters. From their tombs appeared cucumber, tobacco, cassava, maize, Job's tears, sugar cane, taro, banana, pumpkins, and gourds. Finally, Doh Tenangan insisted he kill his last child. He gently put to sleep his beloved daughter, singing to her while carrying her on his back in a sarong. During her sleep, he killed her by pricking her fingertip with a needle. From her grave sprouted *padi*.
>
> 'From now on,' said Doh Tenangan, 'you must work for your food, because I want to live by myself and do not want to feed humans any more'. She told them how to grow these plants and explained how good workers would have plenty while idlers would go hungry.

This myth, which clearly emphasizes the rice's female nature, also conveys Kayan feelings towards rice. It is cherished like a beloved daughter and it is well worth the toil. Rice is not only the staple, it is animate: we will see that many agricultural rituals aim to prevent the soul of rice from going away. The rice has feelings; one must be careful not to upset it, hence a series of prohibitions. The rice can be cajoled; offerings are made to it.

Each year, the Baluy Kayan cut a new swath of secondary jungle which they allow to dry. They set fire to it and clean up some of the debris. After the earth has cooled, they sow the rice. This is followed by two months of weeding and two months of harvest. After a year of cultivation, the land is left fallow in order to allow secondary jungle to regenerate (Rousseau 1977). The annual agricultural cycle is regulated by monsoon patterns: the felled vegetation must be

burned before the rainy season. The year is defined by the agricultural cycle and the current year is 'the year which we are eating' (*duman en kame' kani*).

Every phase is accompanied by rituals which protect the rice and make it fruitful; they are the occasion to ask spirits for their help in providing health and prosperity. The soul of rice is easily scared away; the ritual cycle helps in managing it, but unusual circumstances may require further intervention. Thus, after a landslide, one must call back (*nawi*) the soul of rice, otherwise it might go away. The ritual cycle (Table 10) includes three kinds of rituals: communal

Table 10. The annual cycle (*adat Bungan*)

	Agricultural activities	Communal rituals	*Dayong* rituals[a]	Other rituals[b]
April	Clearing the undergrowth			
May	↓			
June	Felling trees	*Bungan tana*		
July	↓			
August	Repairing implements			gnomon*
	↓	*Lali nugan*		
	Burning fields			
	Building huts			
	Sowing			first sowing
September	↓			
October			*Nawi bluan pare*	
	Weeding	*Pelah pare*		*pusang navo*
November	(rice grains appear)			
December	↓			ritual scarecrow*
	(rice is ripe)	*Lali ketam*		
January	harvest			first harvest
	↓		*Nawi bluan ugo'*	
February				
March				end-of-harvest ritual
April		*Bungan pang Ledoh*	*Dayong duman lebo*[c]	
	Selecting new fields	*Kayo*		

[a] Each domestic unit sponsors a *dayong*; these are spread over a period of days or weeks.

[b] Rituals marked with an asterisk are performed by one person on behalf of the community; each domestic unit carries out the others.

[c] The sequence of rituals is immutable, except that the *dayong duman lebo* can take place before or after the *kayo*; the *kayo* can be held before all households have held their *dayong*.

rituals, *dayong*, and private rituals. Communal rituals bring the whole village together. Every year, each domestic unit sponsors three *dayong*. Other rituals are carried out privately by each household at the farm or in the longhouse. Finally, two rituals are each performed by one individual on behalf of the community: the observation of the gnomon and the preparation of a ritual scarecrow.

People start to clear the undergrowth after the harvest. *Bungan tana* is the first ritual of the new year during which the community asks Bungan for fertile earth. One may start felling trees as soon as *Bungan tana* has taken place. The date of the sowing ritual (*lali nugan*) is set with the help of a gnomon, a post which serves to observe the meridian altitude of the sun. The *lali nugan* must take place at specific dates (see below); however, fields must be burned when the felled vegetation is dry and before the rainy season. Consequently, fields may be burned either before or after the sowing ritual. While the sowing is in progress, each domestic unit sponsors a *dayong* (*dayong nawi bluan pare*) for the well-being of its rice. After the rice has been sown, the community participates in a curing ritual (*pelah pare*) in order to restore the health of rice. Although it is a curing ritual, the *pelah pare* is part of the annual cycle. Even if the fields look gorgeously productive, how can one be sure there is no hidden disease? Weeding starts immediately after the *pelah pare*. When weeding is completed, the community proceeds with the pre-harvest ritual (*lali ketam*), after which the harvest can start. During the harvest, each domestic unit performs a *dayong* for the well-being of its rice (*dayong nawi bluan ugo'*). The end of the harvest – which is the beginning of the harvest festival – is marked by a brief communal ritual (*Bungan pang*). The harvest festival (*ledoh*) is the sum of the *dayong* sponsored by every domestic unit (*dayong duman lebo*).

Ritual years may not overlap. If some domestic units are tardy about holding their end-of-year *dayong*, they are coaxed to do so. However, one may select the new fields and start clearing the undergrowth before all households have held their end-of-year *dayong*: households which have completed their harvest early are in no mood to rest while others are working. This exception is justified on the grounds that clearing the undergrowth is an unobtrusive activity of which spirits remain unaware. The yearly ritual cycle emphasizes community unity and social stratification. Among the Kayan, rice cultivation is a cooperative activity: several domestic units get together to form labour groups. The rituals of the annual cycle push the principle of cooperation to its logical limit by involving the whole community. This ritual unity is also a consequence of the political structure: Kayan communities are firmly under their chiefs' controls

Table 11. The ritual cycle, *adat Dipuy* and *adat Bungan*

	Adat Dipuy			*Adat Bungan*	
Agricultural cycle	Communal rituals		*Dayong*	Communal rituals	*Dayong*
Clearing the undergrowth (April)	*Lemirik mati payo*	seeking auguries		*Bungan tana*	
Felling trees (June-July)					
Sowing (Aug.-Sept.)	*Lali nugan*			*Lali nugan*	
			Nawi bluan beni		*Nawi bluan pare*
	Pelah pare			*Pelah pare*	
Weeding (Oct.-Dec.)	*Lali pare hagit*	seeking auguries		*Lali ketam*	
	Lali ketam				
Harvest (Jan.-March)			*Nawi bluan bulit*		*Nawi bluan ugo'*
(April)	*Tevuko'*			*Bungan pang*	
	Ledoh		*Dayong lebo duman*	*Ledoh*	*Dayong lebo duman*
	Kayo			*Kayo*	

and this finds an echo in religion, as chiefs control the ritual calendar.[3]

Communal rituals are performed by priests. The village chief has the authority to set the date of these rituals, but may delegate the decision to the senior priest (*dayong aya'*). In some villages – but not in Uma Bawang – priests receive a fee when they carry out communal rituals. In Uma Aging, every household contributes to the cost of a sword, a bead bracelet, and a gong (*agong*) (Baling Avun 1961:52). In the upriver village of Uma Daro', each household pays M$2 to the priest. All communal rituals of the annual cycle, as well as the rituals performed by lay people, are in the Kayan vernacular; however, prayers do not sound like ordinary speech, because they are memorized texts uttered in a monotone and marked by repetitions and rhyming. The poetic language is used for songs of praise (*parap*), epic poems (*long*), and part of the *dayong* ritual (Chapter VII). Kayan ritual language and oratory have the characteristics described in Fox (1988) of being formal, formulaic, and parallelistic, with meta-

[3] The Kayan can be contrasted with, for instance, the Luangan of Central Kalimantan. Among them, 'Agricultural production is a function of the household, as are rituals of the agricultural cycle [...]. The Luangan are a highly individualistic, one might even say anarchistic, people. Households work their fields and carry on daily activities independently of their neighbours. Kaharingan [religion] reflects this cultural characteristic, while at the same time providing the social focus which creates the community out of otherwise disparate households.' (Weinstock 1987:88, 97.)

phors, repetitions, and indirect descriptions.

The structure of the *adat Bungan* annual cycle duplicates the *adat Dipuy* sequence (Table 11), except for the absence of auguries and the disappearance of the *lali pare hagit*. For each phase of the cycle, I describe first the rituals of *adat Bungan* as I observed them, then those of *adat Dipuy* as I reconstructed them. While this order reverses the chronological sequence, it is ethnographically preferable. I have a clear knowledge of current rituals, while the rituals of the old religion were described through the prism of the new religion.

Cutting the forest: adat Bungan rituals

Given the soil's limited fertility in the Baluy river area, fields are left fallow for twenty years or more after one year's use. (In rare cases, a field may be cultivated two years in a row.) Every year, new farm areas are selected at a communal meeting which brings together representatives of all domestic units. Almost all farming takes place on old secondary jungle; primary forest is rarely cleared, unless a village moves to an uninhabited area – which does not happen nowadays – or if there is a population increase. In each community, fields are concentrated in two or three blocks; this facilitates burning the felled vegetation and makes it easier to protect crops against pests. In the past, farm concentration also served a strategic purpose because it afforded better protection against head-hunters.

When farm areas have been chosen, boundaries of individual fields are marked after consultation between neighbours. Natural features – such as brooks, boulders, and variations in slope – serve to identify boundaries; wooden markers can be used when necessary. In *adat Dipuy*, the spirit Lake' Batang Hang was in charge of boundaries. If neighbours had a boundary disagreement, a two-metre strip was left uncultivated between the two fields. At the end of the year, a member of the household which was in the wrong was sure to die, which is why this no-man's land was symbolically called 'the place to bury people' (*avan tanem kelunan*). In order to mark a boundary, one could notch a tree on both sides. If there was a disagreement while the vegetation was being felled, the only way to change the boundary was to uproot the tree and throw it in the river. Supernatural punishment awaited the person who pulled out a neighbour's boundary posts. The posts invisibly pierced the culprit's eyes or caused deadly chest pains. After a disagreement, one party might erect a wooden fence to mark his claim. If his opponent kicked the fence, its builder felt pain in the ribs. This was a form of sorcery and only a powerful priest could restore harmony.

Farm boundaries were relevant in another way. If a farm was boxed in (*sektip*, lit. 'pinched') by another farm, those who were surrounded would die unless they took action. Sometime before the Bungan reform, the farm of the leading priest Lake' Lirong was surrounded by the fields of the chief's slaves. In secret, he went to the farm with four eggs and four pieces of iron and prayed to the spirit Bua Julan, asking her to 'fence in' (*ngelahan*) his neighbours. He then placed an iron bar at each corner of their farm. I was told he was forced to carry out this ritual otherwise his own family would have suffered. He had warned his neighbours against acting in a harmful fashion and they ignored him.[4]

After farm boundaries have been marked, the undergrowth is cut first, then the trees. Seen from a distance, the jungle keeps its wild appearance while the undergrowth is removed; spirits do not notice the activity and this task can start without any ritual. By contrast, tree-felling transforms the area into a human domain. During this first phase of the agricultural cycle, workers do not sleep at the farm but return to the longhouse at the end of the day. Farmhouses will be built or repaired later.

Rice cultivation is a cooperative activity. Members of several domestic units join in work teams which work in rotation in the members' fields, making sure every participant receives exactly the same amount of labour. This is called 'exchanging days' (*pala do*). Members of the same domestic unit may belong to different teams; the composition of teams changes from year to year, indeed within the year, as the different agricultural phases have distinct personnel requirements. On average, work teams bring together members of six or seven domestic units. During the clearing, teams have an average of nine members; cooperation teams are larger during the sowing, with an average of twenty workers and about ten workers per team during weeding and harvest times. Except for clearing, both genders are represented fairly equally at every phase of the cycle. The stronger men participate in tree felling. Every able-bodied adult and adolescent participates in sowing the rice; the requirement for strict balanced reciprocity is relaxed at that time in order to complete the sowing in the shortest time possible, thus reducing depredations by birds. Weeding and harvest are the work of adult men and women; the composition of work teams remains stable during these two periods. Kinship plays no role in the selection of team-mates (Rousseau 1974:330-3).

There are two phases in forest clearing. A few young women participate in cutting the undergrowth, but only men cut trees. At this time of year, men mostly wear draw-string long trousers; some wear T-shirts, others long-sleeved shirts. Women wear sarongs and long-sleeved shirts, as they will for the rest of

[4] Fields are normally square or rectangular, so one would not expect a field to be surrounded by another one. I suspect the situation arose as follows: the chief had several slaves, each of whom had a separate field. They happened to select fields so that, together, they touched more than one side of Lake' Lirong's farm. They presumably saw themselves as distinct domestic units, while Lake' Lirong considered all the chief's slaves to be part of the chief's domestic unit. Lake' Lirong, who played an important role in the conversion to *adat Bungan*, strove to reduce the chief's control over religion and there was bad blood between them. This context made it easier for Lake' Lirong to interpret the chief's slaves action as hostile.

the agricultural cycle. By contrast, men will rarely wear long trousers later in the year; at this stage, they cover themselves in order to protect themselves against falling branches. Nowadays, everyone wears store-bought cotton clothes, except for sun-hats, which are still made in the traditional way and worn by men and women. Sun-hats are fifty to sixty centimetres in diameter, made of palm with a rattan ring to give it rigidity; the underside is fitted with a rigid plaited headband which makes it fit snugly on the head (Plate 4). Everyone owns several sun-hats; some are plain, others are decorated with cloth patchwork or bead designs. The plainest hats are used for work. People always walk barefoot; rubber thongs are now available, but they are worn only by a few people within the longhouse. Outside the village, one needs to walk barefoot to gain purchase in the slippery soil. Outside the longhouse, all men and many women wear a sheath with a sword and a long-handled knife, which are all-purpose tools (Plate 18). Men carry tobacco pouches made of bamboo and secured at their waist. Women carry rattan baskets on their back in which they place tobacco containers and other necessities.

Ritual at the farm of the dayong' aya'

In Uma Bawang, a ritual takes place about every three years in the field of the senior priest (*dayong aya'*) in order to pray for a good harvest. Unlike the other rituals described in this chapter, it is not a required element of the annual cycle. Representatives from all households participate in corvée labour (*mahep*) for the benefit of the *dayong aya'*; by their presence, they gain spiritual benefits. The *dayong aya'* provides meat to feed participants, in this case a wild boar and a sacrificial pig. We arrived at the farm around 10 am, somewhat later than the start of a normal day's work. The chief's household was not represented; because of their exalted status, they cannot be expected to participate in corvées. Avun Ngo, the *dayong aya'*, was absent; he was in Kuching recording myths of origin for the Kayan programme of Radio Malaysia-Sarawak. To the annoyance of the participants, five households had failed to send a representative. The officiating priest, Avun Imang, was in a conciliatory mood and proposed that portions of the sacrificial animal be set aside for them. His suggestion was received with a marked lack of enthusiasm.

People prepared a cooking space and made temporary benches. Standing in the middle of a clearing, surrounded by freshly-cut vegetation, the priest placed egg offerings on poles (Plate 1) and prayed for a few minutes, asking for fertile soil, good weather conditions, and general prosperity. Squatting beside the sacrificial pig, he repeated his prayers, then killed the pig. Like the other workers, he was dressed in work clothes.

While a few people cooked the meal and helped themselves generously to rice beer, the rest cleared the vegetation. Someone suggested that work should cease after lunch. This would follow the logic of *adat Dipuy*, according to which one could not stay in the fields in the afternoon until all auguries had been obtained; *Bungan tana*, which is the *adat Bungan* substitute for auguries, had not yet taken place. Informed of this self-serving suggestion, the priest countered that work should continue after lunch: Avun Ngo had incurred a significant expense in providing a large pig and he deserved to receive enough work in return. In any case, the officiant argued, it did not matter what one did in *adat Dipuy*: auguries do not have dominion over them any more. The men ate lightly and returned to work until 4 pm, when they ate again. We returned home an hour later. This was a short day's work; those who wanted to break off early were satisfied, the others felt they had worked long enough to reciprocate adequately for Avun Ngo's generosity.

As we returned to the boats, an elder, Lake' Ajang, asked whether the whole village ought to observe a period of ritual inactivity the next day; this had been a requirement in *adat Dipuy*. After mulling this over for fifteen minutes, they decided *adat Bungan* did not call for it. With an egg in his hand, Avun Imang told Bungan the ritual had taken place and they would not stay home the next day.

Bungan tana

After cutting the underbrush, but before felling trees, the community asks Bungan to 'give' them fields. *Bungan tana* takes place in the longhouse when the moon is auspicious.[5] It starts in the afternoon. Beforehand, a container with fertile soil has been brought to the chief's gallery. Community members gather there around the senior priest. A trussed piglet and a plate with eight eggs have been placed in front of him. As they arrive, people touch the offerings to signify their participation. From the moment the priest starts praying, nobody may enter the longhouse, including community members who failed to return on time. Breaking this prohibition would invalidate the ceremony and pests would attack the crops. The priest stands up, holding the plate of eggs, and prays:

> Now, Bungan Malan, Penyelong Luan, we ask you to get rid of the bad lands, the lands where people were killed, where incest was committed, where people died from swellings or from war.

The priest digs into the earth with a sword:

> Now, you are good earth, black earth, fertile earth, fields without problems. Rice will be plentiful. We will be happy on this land. We will live well, we will have children, large pigs, and good dogs.

The priest lifts the plate of eggs, then sits besides the piglet:

5 As we have seen, '*Bungan*' can mean 'public ceremonial [of *adat Bungan*]'. '*Tana*' means 'soil' and 'land'. Both meanings are relevant here. Baling (1961a) calls it 'the ritual for cutting the farm' (*adat miteng luma'*). For *Bungan tana*, auspicious moons include *butit halap*, *butit halap uli*, *beliling jia*, and *teloh manok* (see note 1).

> You are the payment for the land [...]. We ask for a shirt, for a sun-hat [for protection], as we are about to start clearing the farm with swords and axes [...]. Look after us so we do not cut or hurt ourselves with swords [...]. Trees might fall on us, [so make sure this does not happen].

Having asked for Bungan's protection, the priest slits the piglet's throat and lets its blood drip into the earth. The corpse is thrown away in front of the house. Normally, animal sacrifices are cooked and eaten, but it is unwise to partake of offerings to dangerous spirits. In such cases, chicks or small piglets are killed, as it would be a shame to waste good meat.

Next, the priest performs a protective ritual (*pelah*), first for the chief's household, then for the rest of the community. People huddle on the gallery, touching an unsheathed sword with their right hand. The priest brushes their hands with a wood shaving smeared with the pig's blood. He waves a sword around them in order to form a fence against supernatural dangers, then holds a plate or gong above their heads in order to shield them. This procedure is repeated until everyone has undergone the *pelah*. In order to expedite matters, other priests assist the *dayong aya'* and several *pelah* take place simultaneously. The chief's family receives precedence; otherwise, community members undergo the ritual in no particular order and without regard to household membership.

The earth in which the pig's blood has been poured is divided equally between all households. Later that day, one person from each unit scatters it on one of its fields while uttering prayers. In the evening, when everyone is back in the longhouse, the priest returns to the chief's gallery where he tells Bungan the ritual is completed; from then on people are free to travel and the house is open to outsiders. From the next day onward, people work on their fields without any special rituals except that members of the Uma Daro' section of Uma Bawang place four egg offerings at their farm after *Bungan tana*. There are minor rituals during the clearing. A worker who gets hurt must return home for the day and make an egg offering. Also, 'in clearing a patch of jungle in preparation for sowing *padi*, it is usual to leave a few trees standing on some high point of the ground in order not to offend the Toh [spirits] of the locality by depriving them of all the trees, which they are vaguely supposed to make use of as resting places' (Hose and McDougall 1912, II:23). While the people of Uma Bawang followed this practice, they had no explanation for it. When I mentioned Hose's explanation, they neither confirmed nor rejected it.

Cutting the forest: adat Dipuy rituals

Bungan tana is a ritual of *adat Bungan* which replaces the observation of auguries in *adat Dipuy*. As with *adat Bungan*, people started to cut the underbrush without any ritual. They were particularly eager to start on the new fields before seeking auguries, an activity burdened by inconvenient and time-wasting taboos. They worked discreetly so that omen animals would not notice. Until all auguries had been observed, workers kept their eyes on the ground in order not to see omen birds; a team member might also strike a gong in order to deafen people and to make sure the muntjac could not be heard. (The din probably frightened away any inconvenient muntjac!) At this stage, a bad omen would have required that the clearing be abandoned. If this happened after most of the undergrowth had been removed, it caused a catastrophic delay; I heard of cases when villages were prevented from cultivating rice for a year, during which they lived on other crops such as sweet potatoes and maize.

This period was called 'cutting the underbrush to fence the sambhur deer' (*lemirik mati payo*). The expression '*mati payo*' had the magical effect of keeping this deer away from the fields and served as an invisible fence until real fences were built later around farm areas.[6] During this period, workers were not allowed to eat in the clearings. They went there after breakfast and came home for lunch. One could eat at the farm only after obtaining all necessary auguries and leaving egg offerings at the farms.[7] This taboo provides a clue about the significance of eating: fields did not belong to people until the auguries had provided them; hence, while clearing, people were not working in their fields, but in the forest. Eating there would have been a sign that people felt at home and such presumption might have brought supernatural retribution.

Seeking auguries

Under *adat Dipuy*, one could cut the underbrush without rituals, but the permission of auguries had to be obtained before felling trees. The ritual year started officially with the observation of auguries (*ilo nyeho'* or *pedo nyeho'*). While auguries were being sought, the longhouse was closed to outsiders; sticks forming an X were placed on the river bank as a signal for travellers to stay away. The process started when the moon was auspicious and continued until all auguries had been obtained. Men waited in a hut (*lepo' nyeho'*) built for the purpose. This was a frame without roofing through which the auguries had to be seen to be valid. If the villagers planned to cultivate several farm areas, auguries might be sought separately in each block, but the ritual could take place beside the longhouse on behalf of the whole community. The choice between these alternatives seems to have been based on pragmatic considerations. It was inconvenient to travel to the farm every day; at times, a small

[6] I have referred (Chapter III) to the secret language (*daho' ivun*) which spirits and wild animals do not understand. '*Mati payo*' is an *ivun* substitute for '*lemirik*' (clearing the underbrush). The meat of the sambhur deer was tabooed to most people and they were not allowed to touch the animal. If a deer jumped over a fence into a field, they could kill it, but they were not supposed to touch it; the corpse was pushed out of the field with poles, a rather tedious job.

[7] Breakfast is normally finished by 9 am and lunchtime is around 2 pm. Because of the taboo on eating at the farm, it is possible that they started the day earlier in order to allow for more working time.

group of men away from the village might have been vulnerable to head-hunting attacks. On the other hand, omen animals might be more numerous away from the village and this would speed up the process.

In principle, one man from each household participated in seeking auguries. They stayed together for the whole day, watching the sky. They could not work and were not allowed to eat fresh food; they relied on smoked meat and fish. During that period, other village members could not work at their farms but were allowed to eat fresh food. The prohibition on work made the observation of auguries extremely boring. Every day, the men brought to the omen hut a basket filled with the tools of field clearing: adzes, swords, and whetstones. A fire carried their prayers to the auguries. One man talked to the fire (*mara apuy*), praying for fields to be productive and asking auguries to look after them. In the evening each man brought back his tool basket and hung it on the gallery. Tools were made more efficient by their proximity to auguries, but this also made them dangerous; this is why they could not be brought into the apartments. Likewise, the men who looked for auguries slept on the gallery for the whole period.

Favourable omens had to be observed in a particular order (Table 12). On a given day, they looked for a single species and other omen animals were devoid of significance. When an augury manifested itself, they prayed to it: 'We make a fire for you. We are about to clear our fields. Let us have plenty of rice this year; make the fields burn well!' (Baling Avun 1961:9). If the expected omen did not appear, they continued looking for it the next day. People stayed

Table 12. Sequence of omens at the beginning of the agricultural year (*adat Dipuy*)

Day	Uma Bawang	Uma Daro'
1	*isit* (spiderhunter)	*isit*
2	people stay in longhouse	people stay in longhouse
3	workers clear fields	*mengiling* (Brahminy kite)
4	*mengiling*	people stay in longhouse
5	people stay in longhouse	*kihing* (maroon woodpecker)
6	workers clear fields	people stay in longhouse
7	*pajan* (greater yellow-eared spiderhunter)	*pajan*
8	people stay in longhouse	people stay in longhouse
9	workers clear fields	*tela'u* (barking deer)
10	*tela'u*	people stay in longhouse
11	people stay in longhouse	workers clear fields
12	workers clear fields	

home the day after a favourable omen had been obtained in order to acknowledge it. The sequence of omens varied somewhat from village to village. As we saw, Uma Bawang is composed of Uma Bawang proper and Uma Daro'. The Uma Bawang section followed a three-day sequence: observing the omen on the first day, staying home on the second, and working in the fields on the third. Uma Daro' observed a two-day sequence and did not start work until the eleventh day. (It is not clear whether these sequences applied to the whole longhouse or only to the men who sought auguries.) Uma Bawang and Uma Daro' shared the spiderhunter, Brahminy kite, greater yellow-eared spiderhunter, and muntjac; in addition, Uma Daro' looked for the maroon woodpecker. The observation of auguries required a minimum of eight or ten days of ritual inactivity. When all auguries had been obtained, the hut was pulled down; from then on, no animal augury had the power to make them abandon their fields. Afterwards each household could, if it so desired, offer eggs to omen animals at the farm.

Burning the fields

In swidden agriculture, the felled vegetation is burned in order to clear the ground; ashes provide essential nutrients to the poor soil. When the cut vegetation has dried, wood and brush are piled up every ten or twenty metres (large trees remain where they fell); it is time to set fire (*nyavet*) to the swiddens. This is the most critical phase of the agricultural cycle, because the success of the firing determines how well the rice will grow. There is much rain in central Borneo and the weather is always a cause for concern, because a dry spell is necessary for the felled growth to burn well. If the firing takes place before the wood is dry, it may be unsuccessful; if one waits too long, the rains start and the burning is unsuccessful. Astronomical observations help to establish the time of the burning. In Uma Bawang, a gnomon is used; other villages follow a lunar calendar. (Strictly speaking, the gnomon serves to identify the date of the first sowing, not the burning; it will be described in the next section. If conditions are unfavourable to a good burn, the ritual sowing may take place before the fields have been burned.) Men set fire to their own fields individually, but all at the same time so as to produce a thorough burn (all the fields are concentrated in a few blocks, and the fire spreads from one field to the other.)

The firing normally takes place when the moon is auspicious, but this does not appear to be an essential requirement. Nowadays, people use petroleum as an accelerant, which they carry in bamboo containers. While they set fire to piles of wood, they occasionally utter high-pitched shouts to call the wind. The next day, unburned wood is piled up and set afire. One may start sowing the following day.

Despite its critical importance, the firing takes place almost without ritual

except for individual prayers to Bungan for wind and a good fire (this part of the annual cycle is identical in *adat Dipuy* and *adat Bungan*). On the other hand, priests pray for a good burning at virtually every ritual throughout the year. The observation of the gnomon is also believed to foster a good fire. In *adat Dipuy*, when auguries were sought at the beginning of the agricultural year, offerings were made to them to obtain their assistance. Any domestic unit which held a *dayong* before the burning took this opportunity to ask for a good fire: tow was placed on one of the vertical bars of the altar (*jok*) so that fields would burn well even if it rained.

Given the absence of a really dry season, excessive rain can be catastrophic in the driest months (July and August). A drought-making ritual (*na taga'*) counteracts it. This is a dangerous ritual, because the Thunder is the master of rain; it can be performed only by people with strong supernatural force, either *maren* or men who have the Thunder as spirit helper (*putam Belare'*). The officiant must stay for at least four days in the storage area above his apartment (*ujong parong*), the hottest part of the longhouse. While there, he avoids contact with liquids: he does not drink water or broth, he does not wash his hands.

I observed an alternative drought-making ritual. Thirty-two eggs and one chicken were placed on sticks in front of the house.[8] Five men participated in this offering in order to make it clear to Bungan that this request was the wish of the whole village and not the act of a single priest trying to show off. The officiants were the senior priest (*dayong aya'*), another priest, two old men and one middle-aged man. There was no rain in the following days and a successful burn took place. One of the old laymen became very ill soon afterwards; it was assumed he should not have participated in the ritual because, despite his respectable age, he was a man of no account and he could not withstand contact with powerful spirits.

Sowing

The sowing ritual is the occasion to pray for fertile seeds. At the same time, it underlines the importance of the stratification system, as the ritual is carried out first by aristocrats (*kelunan jia*). At least one day must elapse between the burning and the first sowing, otherwise the soul of the rice would be offended by the heat. The first ritual sowing takes place in the chief's fields; the others follow suit the next day. The date of the chief's sowing is set by observation of the gnomon. The ritual sowing may take place before the fields are burned if this is delayed by bad weather; in this case, a tiny plot is set aside for the purpose (and it will need to be protected from the fire afterwards).

During the previous harvest, women have selected seeds for the next year and stored them separately in a barn. Seed selection does not call for any ritual, but only women may select and handle seeds. Exchanges of seeds take place informally between economic units, because there are several varieties of rice which are not cultivated by everyone every year. The tasks of sowing are divided on the basis of gender and age: men make holes in the ground with dibble sticks, followed by women and adolescents who throw about ten grains of rice in each hole. Men proceed in a line and nobody is allowed to get ahead or fall behind; this also applies to the line of women and adolescents who follow the men. In this way they sow fields in vertical strips up and down the slope until the job is completed. The ritual requirement of being in a straight line also guarantees that all participants work at the same rate.

Some people start living at their farm house during the sowing period. Some farmhouses accommodate a single domestic unit, others accommodate up to four or five households. These dwellings are not erected directly in the fields, but near a river, and they remain in use for more than a year if they are still conveniently close to the new fields. Besides the farmhouses are barns in which the rice will first be stored during the harvest before being brought to the barns which surround the longhouse.

Observing the gnomon

The first step in the sowing ritual is observing the gnomon, which is used in the same way in *adat Bungan* as in *adat Dipuy* (Plate 4). Among the Kayan, the time of the ritual sowing is determined by astronomical observations. Most Baluy Kayan longhouses follow a lunar calendar.[9] The villages of Uma Bawang, Uma Belun, and Uma Nyaving use a gnomon, like most Baluy Kenyah. Both methods are considered equally effective, but a longhouse must confine itself to its own practice. Uma Bawang once tried to use a lunar calendar and they had a bad harvest. This mishap was not attributed to bad luck or to an inadequate understanding of the lunar calendar; rather, the people of Uma Bawang concluded the poor harvest was a consequence of abandoning an established tradition. The use of the gnomon is more than an observational procedure: not

[8] The number of eggs indicates the importance of the ritual. In most ritual settings, commoners offer four eggs, and aristocrats eight or sixteen eggs. In *adat Dipuy*, offerings were directed to Lake' Batang Liveng Taga'. '*Batang*' is a man's name, as well as a classifier for long objects, such as rivers and longhouses. '*Liveng*' means 'to long for'; '*taga*'' means 'dry period'. Prayers are now directed to Bungan.

[9] The following villages use a lunar cycle and are said never to have used the gnomon: Uma Daro', Uma Juman, Uma Baluy Long Liko, Uma Baluy Ukap, Bukat, Uma Lesong, probably Uma Kahe, Uma Aging, Lirong Amoh, and all other villages below the Bakun. Reportedly, the La'anan (Kajang) also use a lunar calendar, but another Kajang village, the Sekapan, apparently look at the position of the sun in relation to a particular tree. The Kenyah villages of Uma Kelap, Uma Kulit, and Uma Baka also use the gnomon. The Mahakam-Kayan used two stones of unequal length to observe the position of the sun (Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, I, Table 54).

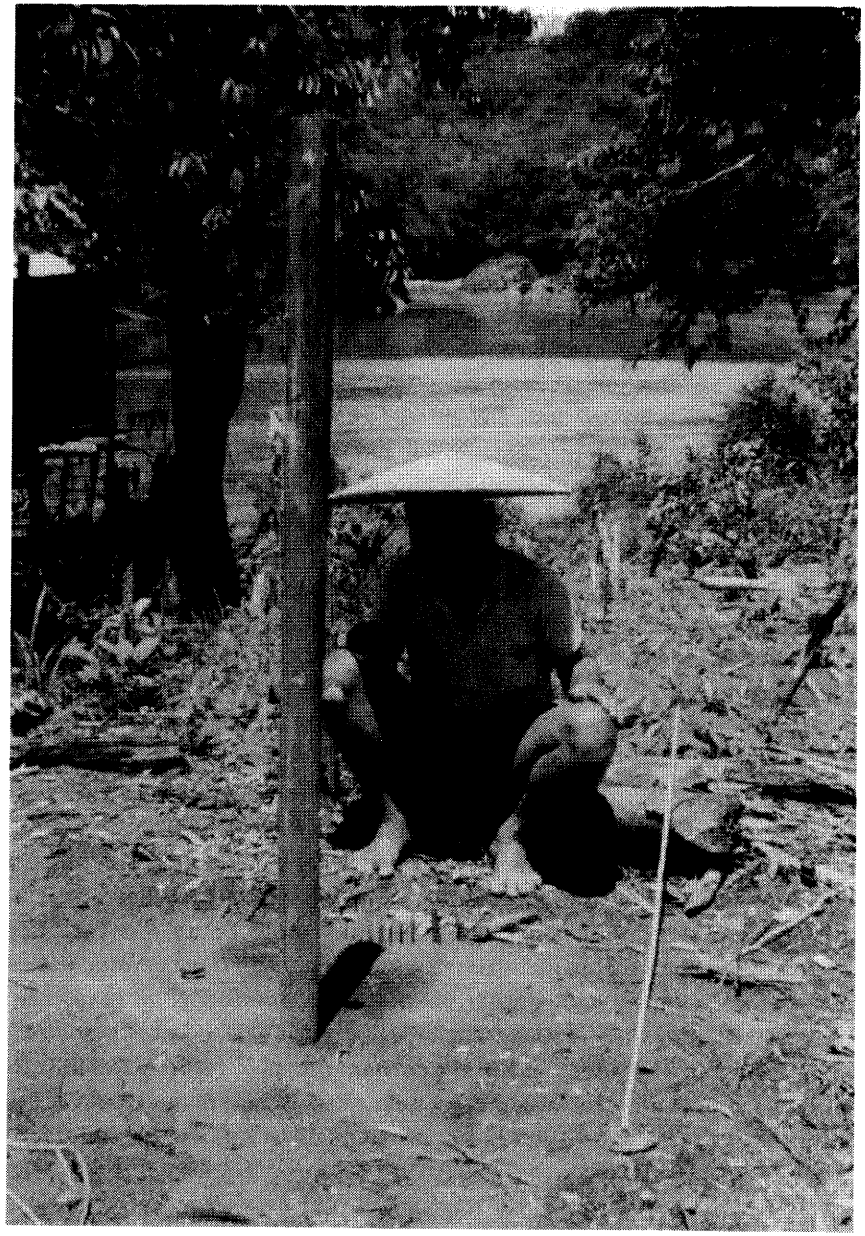

Plate 4. Lake' Ngo Jok observes the shadow of the gnomon. A plumbline is attached to the gnomon so that it is vertical. As the shadow moves, Lake' Ngo Jok sticks wood pegs into the ground. With the help of a stick (to his left), he will then measure the shortest distance between gnomon and pegs, thus establishing the length of the sun's shadow at noon.

only does it establish the date of the sowing ritual, but the correct use of the gnomon is efficacious in and of itself. While, strictly speaking, the gnomon determines the date of the ceremonial sowing, in practice it also indicates when fields are to be burnt, because the burning precedes the sowing.

The gnomon is a straight piece of wood stuck in a flat spot where the ground is cleaned and levelled out; two plumblines ensure its vertical position. The length of the shadow is measured at noon every day. The gnomon is owned and controlled by the chief who decides when the sowing is to take place. Uma Bawang's gnomon is seven centimetres thick and its tip is 154 centimetres from the ground. It can be placed in any convenient spot; in 1970, it was in front of the longhouse, in 1971, at the chief's farmhouse. Only two persons knew how to use it: Avun (the religious leader) and Lake' Ngo Jok, who had been a slave of the previous chief.

The gnomon was set up in July 1971 without any ritual. (The summer solstice is on 21 or 22 June; from then on, the length of the sun's shadow at noon gets shorter.) When it was nearing midday, Lake' Ngo squatted in front of the gnomon and stuck small wood markers in the ground to record the length of the gnomon's shadow until the distance between gnomon and markers started to increase. With a stick, he measured the smallest distance and placed it along his arm, holding one end of the stick in his half-closed hand. The proper date for sowing has been reached when the length of the shadow corresponds to either of two measures: *takin Punan* or *lavong tedek*. *Takin Punan* is the distance between the hand and seven or eight centimetres above the elbow, where nomadic men (*Punan*) wear an armband (*takin*). On Lake' Ngo's arm, this measure was 39.5 centimetres. *Lavong tedek* is the distance between the hand and a spot on the forearm near the elbow which is the limit of women's tattoos. With Lake' Ngo, this was 31.5 centimetres. The ritual sowing should take place at either date or a day or two later. In 1971, *lavong tedek* was reached on August 10th, but the *lali nugan* was delayed until the 15th. Some villagers felt this was an undue delay which would never have been allowed in *adat Dipuy*. Their concern was more agricultural rather than ritual, as they were eager to start sowing as soon as possible. The delay was due to the chief's reluctance to return to the longhouse at the appointed date; the ritual could not start without him. Even if it is not possible to burn fields in time for the *adat nugan*, the ritual should still be held at the correct time, 'in order to get hold of the gnomon' (*avan mapuh tuken do*). In other areas of central Borneo, where climatic conditions are different, other measures may be used: in the upper Baluy, the agricultural cycle starts earlier and a longer shadow marks the appropriate date of the ritual sowing.[10]

[10] This measure, *linge hape*, is the distance from the hand to the shoulder. *Linge hape* means the 'shadow of mourning garb', because the sleeveless jacket worn during mourning stops at the shoulder. All these measures are established empirically. When Apo Kayan Kenyah moved

Astronomical knowledge is limited: the length of the sun's shadow at noon is thought to become shorter only when the sun is visible, but not on overcast days. According to this belief, *lavong tedek* and *takin Punan* could fall on different dates every year; there is no clear understanding that the shadow's length decreases progressively every day; rather it is thought to increase and shorten randomly from day to day.[11] In 1971, the people of Uma Bawang were unaware of their limited understanding of astronomy, but they were very conscious of their imperfect knowledge in the use of the gnomon. There were heated discussions about its length. The concern was justified. For some unaccountable reason, the chief had asked the Bukat chief Gase Butek to make him a gnomon, although the Bukat – who until recently were hunter-gatherers – do not use this device. Gase made it six centimetres too long. The senior priest Avun noticed the error and corrected it. Until a proper gnomon was set up, some people advocated that the observation of the sun be replaced by a lunar calendar. By doing so, they were expressing a lack of confidence in the chief (who controls the gnomon), but he eventually prevailed. As it happened, people were glad they followed his lead because the harvest was plentiful. The use of the gnomon is a matter for anxiety every year, as Uma Bawang consistently burns its fields later than neighbouring villages which follow a lunar calendar. Furthermore, when other communities set fire to their fields, the smoke produces rain which can affect neighbouring areas.

While *adat Bungan* is generally recognized as a great improvement over *adat Dipuy*, it is not rare to hear that 'things were better in the good old days'. This is the case in relation to the gnomon. In olden times, I was told, Lake' Liling, a *maren*, gained rich knowledge from observing the gnomon: he could predict whether pests would attack the crops and if the harvest would be good. He may have produced self-fulfilling prophecies, as he enjoined people to work harder when he predicted a good harvest. Since the Bungan reform, people have become more ignorant about the old ways. The belief that some specialist knowledge has been lost is probably accurate; as only a few individuals (either aristocrats or slaves of aristocrats) knew about the use of the gnomon, it is not surprising that knowledge might fail to be transmitted; people have to muddle through until someone rediscovers what their predecessors knew.

to new areas, they had to establish new planting dates. They did so 'by recording the dates on which rice was planted over a period of several years and comparing the success of the harvest obtained' (Jessup 1992:26).

11 See Leach's comment (1966:133) 'Most primitive people can have no feeling that the stars in their courses provide a fixed chronometer by which to measure all the affairs of life. On the contrary it is the year's round itself, the annual sequence of economic activities, which provides the measure of time. In such a system, since biological time is erratic, the stars may appear distinctly temperamental.' The belief that the length of the sun's shadow changes only when the sun is visible corresponds to the agricultural reality that sufficient sun is necessary for the slashed vegetation to dry.

The *maren*'s control over the gnomon is justified by a taboo (*parit*): commoners may not manage the gnomon without the chief's permission. We saw (Chapter III) that when the priest Lake' Lirong died a few years after taking control of the gnomon, people attributed his early demise as a consequence of *parit*. The gnomon is related to the *maren* in another way. If the ritual sowing takes place at the earlier date (*takin Punan*), the harvest will be plentiful. However, sowing at that date several years in a row is 'hot' (*lasu* or *panah*) and can bring about the death of a *maren*. The chief understandably favours the later date (*lavong tedek*), as Lihan did both years of my fieldwork, causing much anxiety among villagers.[12]

Table 13. *Lali nugan*: the sowing ritual *(adat Bungan)*

Day	Ritual
1 (afternoon)	Communal ritual on chief's gallery; the seeds are mixed and shared among the participants
2 (morning)	*Nugan lavu aya'*: ritual in the chief's field, followed by a corvée*
3 (day)	*Nugan lavu panyin*: ritual in the commoners' fields
(evening)	The taboo on fresh food is lifted
Following days	Sowing
After the sowing	Each household performs a *dayong* to call the soul of the seeds

* If the *lali nugan* takes place before the fields have been burned, the ritual of *nugan lavu aya'* is repeated when the chief's field is sown; the corvée takes place then. Commoners start sowing their fields the following day.

The sowing ritual (adat Bungan)

In *adat Dipuy*, the sowing ritual (*lali nugan*) started at the chief's fields. In *adat Bungan*, a communal ritual in the longhouse precedes it (Table 13). When I observed it in 1970, members of all domestic units gathered on the chief's gallery at about 4 pm. As is the case with rituals which take place on the gallery, the floor was swept and washed beforehand, and a mat spread on the seating platform for everyone's comfort. Avun officiated. A member of each domestic unit brought a small quantity of rice seeds which were poured in a large tray. Everyone touched a plate with sixteen eggs to indicate participation

12 *Linge hape* (see note 10) is also dangerous for the *maren*, hence its name, which refers to mourning garb. The choice of such dates is recognized to be *panah* for the whole longhouse, but the *maren* are particularly at risk. The Kenyah Uma Kulit, who also use the gnomon, attribute two disastrous events a few generations ago to the undue use of *linge hape*. In one case, a hundred people died, in the other, two longhouses burned. While there is an agricultural preference for sowing early, in *adat Dipuy* it was sometimes impossible to hold the *lali nugan* at *takin Punan*, because various taboos had delayed tree felling.

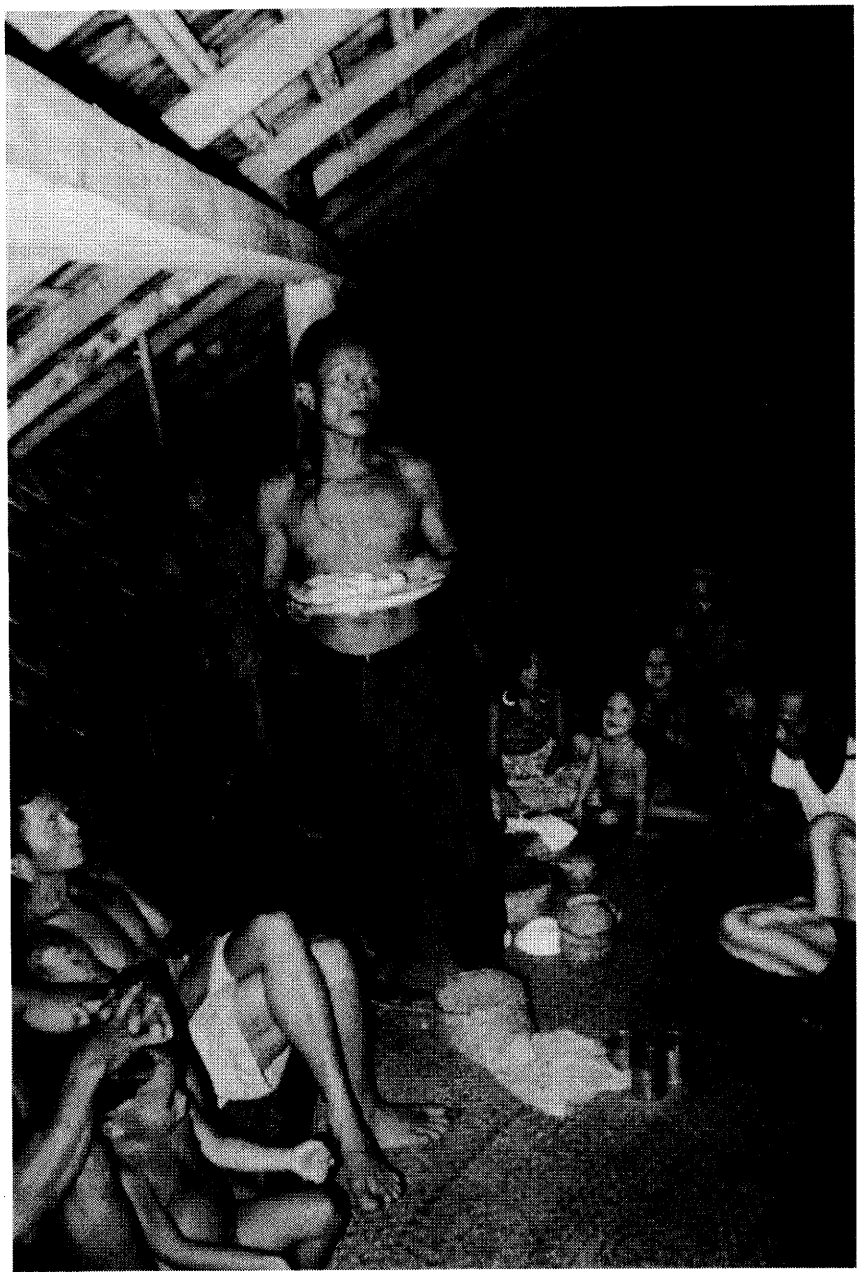

Plate 5. First day of the sowing ritual. Avun holds a tray with sixteen egg offerings. At his feet, a container holds rice seeds provided by every household. The chief, Lihan, sits to Avun's right.

in the ceremony.[13] Mothers placed their babies' right hands on the eggs to ensure their inclusion in the ritual.

Holding an egg, Avun stood up, looking towards the outside, and told Bungan that the people of Uma Bawang were only carrying out a ritual sowing because they had not been able to burn the fields yet (Plate 5). He asked Bungan for good rice seeds free from diseases and other problems, rice seeds which the animals would not eat; he reviewed all the mishaps which could possibly happen and requested that these be averted. Having finished his prayer, Avun raised the plate of eggs above his head to convey them to Bungan; he stored the eggs on a high beam, away from dogs. At this point, a layman broke in, asking Bungan for dry weather, so the fields would burn well. Seated at the edge of the gallery, looking outwards, Avun held a wooden hook which he pointed upwards, 'in order to secure this year's sowing' (*avan tageng nugan duman anih*). Ritual hooks (*kawit*) are made of Nephelium (*bua avong*), as specified by a myth of origin. (Hooks serve to catch souls or other supernatural forces; they point upward and thus bring things down to earth.) He placed the hook in the rice container in order to secure the soul of the seeds (*bluan beni*). Avun mixed the seeds and gave a portion to each household. This was all for the day and people stored the seeds in their apartments.

The next day corresponds to the first day of the *adat Dipuy* ritual; aristocrats carry out the ritual sowing (*nugan lavu aya'*), each at their own farm. I followed the chief, Lihan. We went to his farm around 10.30 am and placed two egg offerings on sticks with a decorated stick (*kayo' belawing dengah*) beside them. He wore a trilby bought during a visit to Kuching rather than the usual sun-hat. I probably was the only one to find this attire incongruous; later in the ritual, he switched hats with his wife and wore her sun-hat. Although the ritual took place in the fields, Lihan was well dressed in a good shirt and shorts, because, as chief, he did no farm work. 'This staff (*kayo' belawing*) is here to broadcast the news (*dengah*) that this will be a year of plenty', he said. He stood in front of the egg offerings beside which he had placed his share of seeds from yesterday's ritual (Plate 6). He prayed to Bungan, repeating in his own words Avun's prayer of the day before:

> We hold the *nugan lavu aya'* because it is now *lavong tedek*, the time set by the gnomon. However, we have not yet been able to burn the fields. We ask you for a good year, we ask for good weather so the fields burn well. If things do not go well, other villages will laugh at us; do not let this happen. Bring us dry weather. We ask for cool earth, fertile earth where the *padi* will flourish.

The chief then addressed a chicken, repeating the same prayers; after raising it

[13] This ritual is called *napo' lemali nugan*, 'to offer eggs to celebrate the sowing'. It does not matter which variety of rice is used. A pig may also form part of the offerings: if small, it is thrown away after being killed; if large, it is divided between the households. No pig was sacrificed when I observed this ritual.

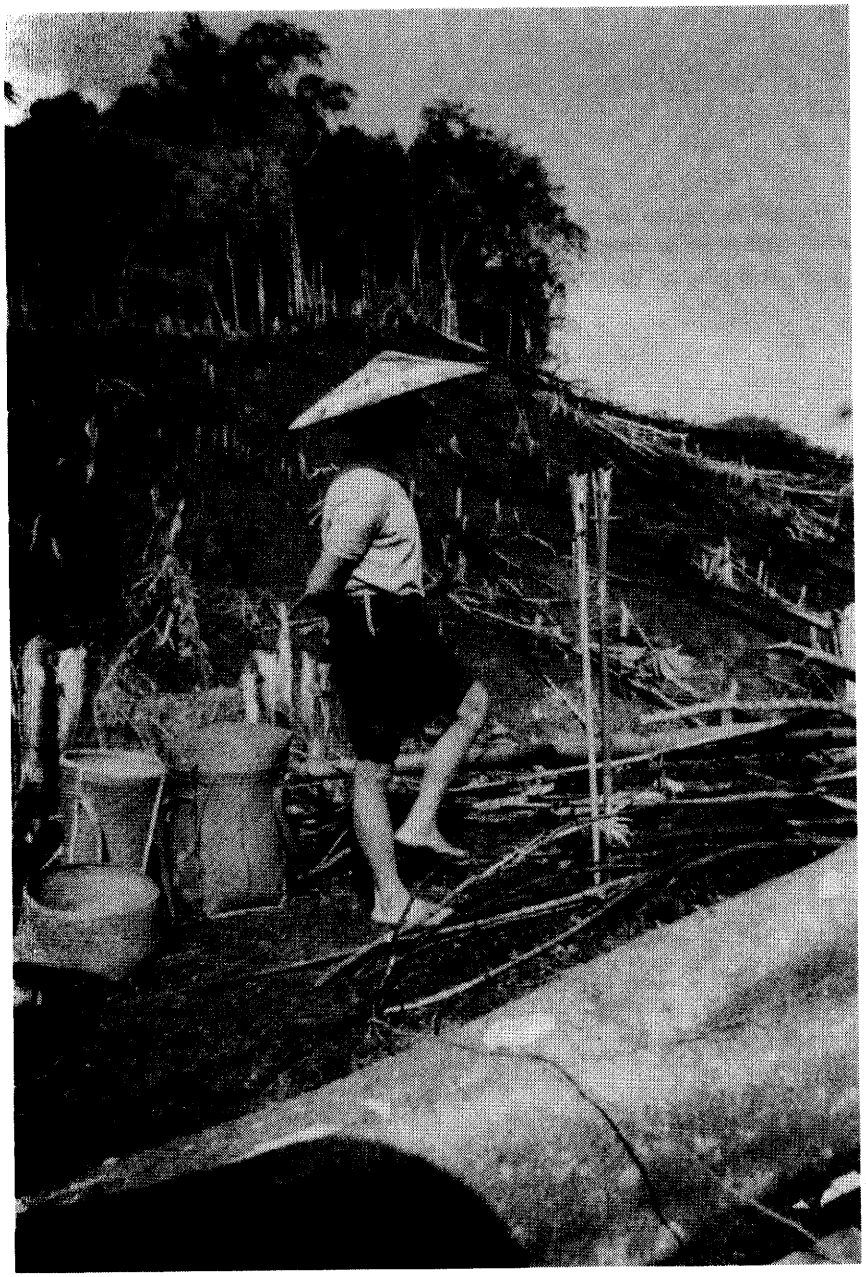

Plate 6. First ritual sowing in the chief's fields. Lihan prays in front of two egg offerings. Behind him is a basket containing seeds; two harvesting baskets have been brought along to be blessed by this ritual. In the background, the field is ready for sowing.

towards Bungan, he cut its throat and let some blood drip into the seeds; the rest of the blood was collected in an enamelled basin. He dipped a hook in the chicken's blood and held it up, saying it would retain the soul of the *padi* (the hook is an optional ritual device). Lihan performed a protective ritual (*melah*) for the members of his household, including his slaves, with a wood shaving dipped in blood, then again with a sword and a plate. This is not a requirement of the *lali nugan*; it took place because Lihan's infant was going through the annual cycle for the first time and needed protection against supernatural danger (*tulah*). A small area was set aside for the ritual sowing, but in contrast to *adat Dipuy*, it was not fenced off. Men dibbled a few holes in which women placed seeds. After this, women cooked a meal, including the sacrificial chicken, and we ate at the farm.

The next day, commoners carried out the same ritual (*nugan lavu panyin*) after which they returned to the longhouse. (This sequence underlines the requirement for commoners to work in the chief's fields for a day before they can attend to their own fields.) In the evening, Avun raised an egg to Bungan to tell her the ritual was completed; the taboos which had been in force since the first day did not apply any more. Up to this point, outsiders were not allowed to visit the longhouse and villagers could not come in contact with fresh things (*ket tahu*), in other words fresh meat and fish, rattan, or palm leaves newly brought from the jungle. To mark the end of the taboos, men went out (*pusang*) to hunt and fish.

If the fields have been burned before the ritual sowing, the first sowing in the chief's fields is the occasion for a corvée; if the ritual takes place before the burning, the corvée is scheduled at the earliest opportunity and the *nugan lavu aya'* is repeated. This was the case in 1970. We left at 8.30 am for the fields. Members of the chief's household touched the offerings, a large pig and two eggs. Standing at the base of the field, which was black with the charcoal of burnt vegetation, Lihan prayed in front of the eggs for a few minutes, then addressed the pig for about ten minutes. This ritual protects the chief's household during the year, but the whole community also benefits from it; this is why Lake' Ajang – the most influential commoner – followed Lihan in addressing the pig.[14] Before the pig was slaughtered, some of its hair was burned so its smell could rise towards the spirits. Two wood shavings were dipped in the pig's blood. Lihan prayed again in front of the egg offerings; with his sword, he dug into the ground, asking for fertile soil; he planted a *kayo' belawing dengah* (see above). This was a private ritual; most villagers were there to participate in the corvée, but they did not watch it, although they were not

14 While he was praying, someone brought him a glass of rice beer, which he drank up, and he then declined a refill. At the beginning of my fieldwork, I was surprised by such informality, but eventually learnt to take it for granted.

actively excluded. The pig was butchered and women started preparing the midday meal while the sowing started in earnest.

During the sowing, young people are supposed to splash each other with water at the end of each day in order to make the rice grow faster and to please Hunyang Lahe, the mother of the *padi* (*hinan pare*; see Chapter IV); this was done scrupulously in *adat Dipuy*, but I observed it only a few times.

After the sowing is finished, each domestic unit may hold a *dayong* in order to call back the soul of the rice seeds, which might have been frightened away by rain or might have drifted away in streams. This *dayong* is called *nawi bluan pare*, 'calling the soul of the rice', or *nawi bluan beni*, 'calling the soul of the seeds'. It is also the occasion to ask for the soul of the weeding knife (*wing*) and for an easy weeding. As for all *dayong*, it also serves to maintain and restore the general well-being of the household which sponsors it and is the occasion to counteract the influence of bad dreams and confirm good dreams which occurred since the previous *dayong*. Each domestic unit sets the date of its *dayong* without consulting neighbours. Several *dayong* can take place at the same time if enough priests are available; the chief does not have precedence. Households which do not feel the need for supernatural help may skip it entirely and simply raise an egg to Bungan in order to call the soul of the rice. During my fieldwork, almost everyone performed a *dayong*, some more lavishly than others. The weeding cannot start until all the *dayong* have taken place.

The sowing ritual (adat Dipuy)

In *adat Dipuy*, the *lali nugan* was an elaborate festival which lasted ten days (Table 15). Rituals took place only on some of those days, during which work was forbidden; food and water were stored ahead of time. On the other days, productive activities were carried out normally. (Some informants disagreed and stated it was taboo to work in the fields for the whole ten-day period, during which one could hunt and fish.) It was forbidden to eat chilli during the whole period, because its heat would 'burn' the seeds. Rituals took place on a small section of the field set apart for this purpose; the ritual fields of commoners were situated below the chief's plot (Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, I:157, 164).

It was not part of Uma Bawang's tradition to use masks (*hudo'*) for the *lali nugan*, but the practice was adopted after an Uma Bawang aristocrat, Lake' Bit, returned – sometime in the 1930s or 40s – from a lengthy visit to the Mahakam where he observed the practice. Lake' Bit became the senior priest; his successor Lake' Lirong also maintained the use of masks at the *lali nugan*. Nieuwenhuis (1900, II:Plate 54, 1904-07, I:164-8, 322-31) gives an eyewitness account of the rituals which Uma Bawang adopted; I start with his description. The ritual was divided into three nine-day periods (Table 14; in Kayan reckoning, the first day of the second period is also the tenth day of the first period). On the first day, rituals took place at the chief's ritual plot (*luma' lali*); on that day, people were

not allowed to bathe. The next day, commoners held the same ritual at their own *luma' lali*. During the first phase, people were not allowed to work outside the longhouse or leave the village; outsiders could not visit. Men kept busy by plaiting mats and baskets while women did bead work. Young people prepared the masks to be used in the second and third periods.

Table 14. The sowing ritual in the Mahakam (according to Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, I)

Day	Ritual	Taboos
	First period	
1	*Luma' lali* of the chief	No bathing
2	*Luma' lali* of other people	
3		
4		
5		No work outside longhouse
6		and no visitors to the village
7		
8		
9		
	Second period	
1	Masks (*hudo' kayo, hudo' ajat*)	No bathing
2	Sowing corvée in chief's fields	
3	Commoners make offerings	
4	at their fields	
5		
6	Playing with spinning tops	
7		
8	Sticky rice is eaten	
9	Edible leaves are cooked in bamboo	
	Third period	
1	Masks	No bathing
2	Masks; second corvée	
3		
4	Commoners sow	
5	their own fields	
6		
7		
8		
9		No bathing

On the first day of the second period, there was again a prohibition on bathing. Men wore wooden masks (*hudo' kayo'*), while married women wore masks made of baskets (*hudo' ajat*). Male masks represented humanoid and animal spirits while female masks had a human form. Male maskers dressed up in the

jungle, covering the whole body with banana leaves; they came to the village by boat.[15] Women's masks were followed by a masquerade in which unmarried women dressed as men (*hudo' lakeuy*). Without explaining further, Nieuwenhuis notes that the dance of women (*hudo' ajat*) preceded an obscene performance by men. Sombroek (n.d.1:12.22) adds that men disguised themselves as women; a man impersonated a pregnant woman to much hilarity. At night, a dance re-enacted a wild boar hunt.

On the second day of the second period, people sowed the chief's field and commoners made offerings at their own fields. During the second phase, men played regularly with spinning tops (*pasing*) in front of the house, hitting each others' tops as they sent them spinning.[16] There was a feast on the eight day in which sticky rice was served. On the ninth day, women gathered edible leaves which they cooked in bamboo. In the evening, they sprinkled on their ritual fields the water in which the leaves had been cooked. (While Nieuwenhuis does not explain its purpose, I suspect the leaves represent weeds magically weakened by boiling.) The third period started and ended with a one-day prohibition on bathing. On that day and the following, masks manifested themselves again. On the second day of the third period, commoners and slaves again worked in the chief's fields, after which they sowed their own fields (Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, I:164-8, 322-31).

In the Mahakam area, it was forbidden to smoke or drink in the fields during the sowing. One had to return to the huts to drink and everyone had to eat together there. It was forbidden to lie down in the huts. After meals, women left the huts first and, after dipping a finger in a bamboo container, they flicked some water towards the fields; this cancelled any breach of taboo. If a man dropped his dibble stick, the whole group had to return home. If workers found themselves in a section of the field which had not been sown, but was surrounded by sown fields, they had to stop. This problem was avoided by making sure that fields were sown in a regular manner. If anyone needed to urinate or defecate, all team members returned to the hut, after which they could resume work. During the sowing, rattan mats were rolled up in order to

15 They came from upriver, according to Sombroek (n.d.1:12.22-3). These *hudo'* brought with them rice seeds gathered by the religious leader which they distributed to each household to be sown in their respective fields. Before giving the seeds to the *hudo'*, the priest sacrificed a chick and poured its blood on the seeds. One of the masks spoke on behalf of them all to announce that the masks were spirits; he had to be either an aristocrat or a major priest (Sombroek n.d.1:12.22-3). It is intriguing that *men* handled the seeds, as this would have been impossible in the Baluy. However, this may be only an apparent exception, insofar as the masks were spirits, not men.

16 Among the Lepo' Ga' of the Baram, this 'represents smashing the heads of potential animal pests that would otherwise come to eat and destroy the growing and maturing *padi*. It is because of this that top playing is carried out only during and immediately after the planting season. Thus before the *padi* has really grown, the potential pests would have been already destroyed' (Chin 1984:51).

prevent the field from being as smooth – i.e. without rice – as a mat. In the evening, when workers returned home, they rattled a clapper made of a bamboo section and a small stick. The clappers and the spinning tops pleased the spirit of the rice (Sombroek n.d.1: 12.13, 12.16-8).

Table 15. *Lali nugan*: the sowing ritual (*adat Dipuy*)

Day	Ritual
1 (day)	*Nugan lavu aya'*: ritual in the chief's field, followed by a corvée
2 (day) (evening)	*Nugan lavu panyin*: ritual in the commoners' fields The taboo on fresh food is lifted
3	Sowing; visitors are allowed into the house
4	Sowing
5	Sowing
6	Sowing
7	*Daput to'*: a parcel of land is set aside for the dead
8	*Daput aya'*: the aristocrats feed their dead
9	Sowing
10	*Daput liva*: the fields are cleansed of pests
After the sowing	Each household performs a *dayong* to call for the soul of the seeds

Even after Uma Bawang adopted the use of masks from the Mahakam, they did not follow a twenty-seven day calendar; the *lali nugan* of Uma Bawang lasted ten days (Table 15). Otherwise, the account of Mahakam practices is consistent with my informants' descriptions and the same ritual prohibitions applied. Uma Bawang informants mentioned additional taboos. It was forbidden to add lime (*apoh*) to betel plugs, to handle rattan and palm leaves used for roofs (*hapo*), to use needles, to fry food in fat (*guring*), to render fat, to dig the soil, to use a delousing comb, to pluck eyebrows and eyelashes, or to comb the hair. The prohibitions on digging, touching rattan, and roofing palms made it impossible to erect huts in the fields at that time. The taboo against hot things (lime, frying, rendering fat) protected seeds against 'heat' which would kill them. This is also why it was forbidden to smoke while sowing. It was forbidden to comb the hair or pluck eyebrows and eyelashes because these gestures mimicked uprooting *padi*.

The above taboos were in force during the *lali nugan*. Other taboos were observed from the beginning of the *lali nugan* until the end of the sowing. One must not utter the words *nugan*, 'to sow' or *du'i*, 'to drink', otherwise this would draw the attention of spirits and the rice would rot. The secret language (*daho' ivun*) provided safe synonyms: *ngalong tana* ('to draw on the earth', which refers

to the pattern of dibble holes) referred to sowing, while *ne kelo' ngavok*, 'do-like-monitor-lizards' meant 'come and drink'. The dibble-stick (*tun*) could not be tipped with iron, as the soul of the *padi* would have perceived this as an attack. As the wooden sticks were rapidly blunted, they had to be sharpened frequently; this could take place only at the bottom or the top of the field, otherwise the rice would be offended by the iron knives used for sharpening. Someone who died during the sowing could not be buried in the ground but had to have an elevated burial (*tapong*). The body of a person who died after the beginning of *lali nugan* was kept in the house in a sealed coffin until *lemiva* (see below). If a body were buried during this period, the rice would rot in the fields and people would exhaust rapidly their stores of rice (*seho kuman*).

Aristocrats fed the rice (*makan pare*) on the first day; commoners did so the next day. During these two days, it was taboo to eat fresh food, and outsiders were not allowed in the longhouse. Aristocrats sacrificed a pig. A small plot was fenced in where the ritual sowing was to take place (*pe'un tebing*).[17] Food offerings to the rice were placed between a hook and a decorated pole (*belawing*) stuck in the ground. The offerings consisted of mashed eggs and dried fry (*ilep*) cooked in bamboo with rice, wrapped in the central leaves of banana palms. Aristocrats offered sixteen such bundles. The Kayan do not find it odd to offer rice to the rice plants, because rice is an essential element of food offerings. Indeed, I did not perceive the incongruity myself until much later.

For the commoners' ritual on the second day, there were minor differences between Uma Bawang proper and the Uma Daro' section. The latter performed the same ritual as aristocrats, except that they offered a chicken and four bundles of offerings. Uma Bawang commoners simply made egg offerings. On the third day, outsiders were allowed to enter the house; rice was sown until the *daput to'* ritual on the seventh day. A small parcel of land was set aside as a field for the dead; the rice which it produced belonged to them. During the *daput to'* ('the containment of the dead'), food cooked in bamboo was offered to the deceased. The purpose of the ritual was to prevent the dead from claiming the whole harvest for themselves.

For the seventh to the tenth days, accounts are confused, incomplete, and contradictory.[18] This is what I made out of it. An indeterminate number of

17 Apparently, only the Uma Daro' section fenced the *pe'un tebing*, not Uma Bawang proper. In the Mahakam region, the *puung tebing* was a special spot behind the chief's apartment with an ironwood post on which offerings were placed. Other offerings were placed in a tiny hut nearby with a fire which was not allowed to go out. While the sowing took place in the chief's fields, someone stayed at the *puung tebing* until workers returned to the longhouse (Sombroek n.d.1:12.13).

18 The confusion may come partly because the *lali nugan* often takes place before firing the fields; this reversal may have affected the sequence of rituals. Another factor is the introduction of a new ritual element, the dance of the masks borrowed from the Mahakam region. Some informants felt this ritual was not 'genuine' – as it was not part of Uma Bawang tradition – and they may have modified their description accordingly. Finally, there may have been differences between Uma Bawang and Uma Daro' which I failed to note clearly. According to Avun, they carried out the same kind of ritual on the seventh day as will be described for the tenth day, but this was not confirmed by others.

19 This ritual was identical for Uma Bawang and Uma Daro'. The celebrant received no payment. Up to the tenth day, there was a taboo against using delousing combs. In the Mahakam region, the water for this ritual was prepared in the chief's apartment by a woman who observed taboos for the whole longhouse; it was then distributed to women of every household. The *liva* put an end to the taboos of the sowing (Sombroek n.d.1:12.31-2).

young boys covered themselves with leaves and made masks with baskets. They went to the jungle to don their disguises, then returned to the longhouse where they danced on the veranda. After that, they returned to the jungle. The role of the dance was to chase away the animals which attack the rice. The eighth day was the *daput aya'* (also called *usang daput aya'*, 'coming out of the big [aristocratic] *daput*') during which they fed the dead and made a small field as the commoners had done the day before. On the following day, people worked normally. On the tenth day, the fields were cleansed (*lemiva* or *daput liva*). A priest placed ashes, shavings from a dibble-stick, a delousing comb, an ordinary comb, a needle, and water into a gong. After prayers, a member of the chief's household sprinkled the chief's farm with it. The two combs removed small pests from the fields. The role of the ashes was not explained, but in funerals, ashes prevent the dead from seeing the living; in this case, ashes probably served to confuse the pests.[19]

I have noted earlier the use of spinning tops in the Mahakam area. During the sowing period, Uma Bawang children played with spinning tops so that rice would grow profusely. They did not play after the sowing had ended, otherwise creepers would grow around the *padi* like the strings with are coiled around tops. Children also played with bamboo drums (*tong but*) during the sowing.

As is the case nowadays, each household could hold a *dayong* to call the soul of the *padi* seeds; a brief *dayong* (*dayong 'ok*) was usually sufficient, unless they had important dreams which required a full *dayong* (*dayong lan*). The priest offered a chicken to Silo Takang Lejo, the spirit in charge of the weeding knife.

Weeding

Pelah pare: 'curing the rice'

After a two-week gap, it is time to start weeding, an activity which will last for over two months. Weeding is an essential part of hill rice cultivation; without it, rice stalks would be choked with weeds. During this period, workers are in close contact with their crop and they follow its progress very closely. Weeding is a tiring job; the sun's heat creates added strain. People always wear sun-hats outside the house; while weeding, a protective mat worn on the back insulates

against the sun, and most workers wear long-sleeved shirts. By the time weeding starts, huts have been erected in the fields where workers can retreat for breaks and lunch. By that time, almost everyone lives at the farm and the longhouse is virtually abandoned. People stop weeding two or three weeks before the harvest; by then, rice stalks have caught up with weeds.

Before the start of the weeding, the *pelah pare* ritual protects the rice; it can be repeated later if the *padi* is not doing as well as expected or if it is attacked by diseases or pests. Strictly speaking, this is a critical rather than a calendrical ceremony; in fact, it has become part of the ritual cycle.

The *pelah pare* is a public ceremony and the house is closed to outsiders for the day. Fresh food may not be consumed nor fresh produce brought to the house. It is forbidden to touch needles, otherwise worms would pierce the rice. People gather on the chief's veranda, where a plate contains eight egg offerings. The priest asks Bungan to protect the *padi* against pests. He talks to a small chicken which is sacrificed; he collects its blood in a gong in which water has been poured. From the edge of the gallery, he sprinkles the water with his hand while asking spirits to cleanse the fields of worms. The body of the chicken is thrown away in front of the house.

In principle, people go out weeding (*pusang navo*) the next day; in 1970, this took place on the same day as the *pelah pare*. Ideally in the morning, one person from each household goes to his or her field – preferably where the ritual sowing took place – in order to gather weeds which are brought back home. They are left to dry on a stone or thrown into the fire. On the same day, most people offer eggs at the farms or raise an egg to Bungan in their room in order to ask for an easy weeding; they do not work at their farms on that day.

In *adat Dipuy*, the *pelah pare* also served to put an end to the taboos against rattan, palm leaves (*hapo*), frying, and lime.[20] The ritual took place at the farm of an aristocrat. The officiant received a bead bracelet as well as a high fee which acted as a 'strengthener' (*kemhing*) against the danger of *parit* and *tulah*. This danger was a consequence of the association between Thunder and *pelah pare*: a storm (*uven bahuy*, caused by the Thunder) on the day of the *pelah* was an auspicious omen, but a sunny day meant the ritual had not been effective. The priest asked the sacrificial animal – pig or chicken – to remove anything which could harm the rice. Special prayers were addressed to the spirits who control the *pelah pare*. As is the case now, the animal's blood was mixed with water. At this point, people rushed to obtain some of the water, then went right away to

20 This ritual is also called *lemiva*, not to be confused with the *lemiva* on the tenth day of the *lali nugan*. The rice was sprinkled with a decoction of edible leaves (Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, I:169).

their farms to collect weeds.[21] The water was sprinkled while uttering these words:

> You are the water from Doh Tenangan which will cure the rice; you can reach the field, you can reach the base of the rice stalks. Anything which can kill rice or make it sick – such as beetles and worms which perforate it, which eat its roots, its penis, and its heart – all of them run away and scatter; this chicken [or pig] is the *pelah* of the rice.

Back in the longhouse, each household gave rice and meat to the celebrant. People stayed home for the rest of the day; they were not allowed to lie down until the evening, otherwise the rice would be flattened. Nobody scolded children if they were boisterous at that point, as this kept them on their feet. As in *adat Bungan*, fresh food and fresh produce were tabooed on that day. Workers went out to weed their own fields the next day. They offered eggs to spirits if they felt like it; they could also place weeds in the sun or throw them in the fire to facilitate weeding. From then on, weeding continued on a cooperative basis with work teams making the rounds of their members' fields.

Some ritual elements have changed in *adat Bungan*: the initial part of the ritual now takes place on the chief's gallery; in *adat Dipuy*, it was held in the chief's fields. The priest now receives no payment, presumably because the danger of the Thunder has receded with Bungan's benevolence. Also, one may now go and weed on the same day as the *pelah pare*.

During the weeding, two rituals reinforce the *pelah pare*; both involve the use of figurines. In the first case, two figurines made from the pith of a reed are placed in the fields in order to get rid of worms. I did not observe this, because it must be done secretly. Avun described the ritual to me soon after carrying it out. At the base of a *padi* stalk, he placed the figurines with a worm which he had deposited on a leaf. He poured some sugarcane juice on the figurines to bring them to life. After looking away, he turned towards them again and feigned surprise at finding them there: 'Well, here are Hilu and Hirik, who will get the worms'.[22] Then, he 'discovered' the worm on the leaf: 'Oh, and this is a worm they have caught'. He then addressed them both:

> You, Hilu and Hirik, you come from Apo Token under orders from Bungan Malan; we are unhappy to see the worms kill our *padi*. This is why we have requested help from Bungan Malan and this is why you are here. You here, you are Hirik. You here, you are Hilu. Both of you are powerful and you are going to find the worms in all our fields.

21 The practice of all rushing together and competing to grab a portion of some ritual device is also found in other rituals (We will encounter it again later in the *lali ketam*, as well as the headhunting ritual). I have no explanation for it.

22 The use of sugarcane to bring a figurine to life is also found in other contexts (see Chapter VIII, *dayong hudo' kaluy*). Hilu is the man, Hirik the woman. Hirik means 'sharp of sight'.

Hilu and Hirik were asked to kill worms, but they should spare harmless grasshoppers and beetles. Avun turned his attention to the worm: 'This worm was caught by these figurines, by these priests'. He placed an egg on a raft made of reeds.

> You, Hilu and Hirik, bring this worm back to Hanyi Keta Tuen, who controls the jar of worms; bring it towards its father and mother, far away. You, worm, return home. This [egg], Hilu, Hirik, constitutes your provisions for your trip. If you come back here, worms, you will fall ill because of improper behaviour (*busong, gayong*), because we have fed you.

The raft was set adrift with the figurines, the egg, and the worm.

When the ears of *padi* appear, the rice is said to be pregnant (*pare mali*). At this point, it is liable to new dangers, especially birds, monkeys, deer, and boars. Some people place in their fields an anthropomorphic figure made of bundles of reeds, about one metre high. The man who makes it brings it alone to his farm without talking to anybody, otherwise the figure will lose its efficacy. It is installed in a small hut with wooden models of sword, spear, cooking utensils, cutting board, and whetstone. The reed figure wears clothes and carries a tobacco box. It receives four egg offerings, cigarettes, and betel plugs. The figure is asked to kill pests with sword and spear and to chop them up on the cutting board. If the ritual is carried out properly, animals will be afraid to enter the fields. If they dare come in, they will cut themselves on the *padi* leaves which the figure has sharpened with the whetstone. One may not shout in the vicinity of the ritual scarecrow, who would be offended by the noise and might invite monkeys and deer to ravage the fields.

The harvest rituals of adat Bungan

The harvest lasts between two and a half and three months. As with other phases of the agricultural cycle, people work in teams; they go up and down the field in a line so that no one is ahead of a team mate. The harvest is as much hard work as weeding, if not more so, because one must also haul the grain, but the task seems easier, because the workers are finally reaping the product of their labour. In *adat Dipuy*, there was a series of rituals during the period leading to the harvest, a few of which have been retained in *adat Bungan.*

Lali ketam: the pre-harvest ritual

The *lali ketam* is the only part of *adat Dipuy* pre-harvest rituals to have been retained in *adat Bungan*. After its completion, one may start the harvest without offending or weakening the soul of the *padi*. The *lali ketam* emphasizes the unity of the community; it also acknowledges that rice may be consumed by other people than its producers. It is a joyous ritual: people are about to start harvesting the crop which has been their main focus for seven months. It is the

Table 16. *Lali ketam*: the pre-harvest ritual (*adat Bungan*)

Day	Ritual
1 (evening)	Ritual on the chief's gallery
(night)	People may not leave the longhouse
2 (morning)	Women harvest rice (processing in a line)
(midday)	*Pelah*: a pig is sacrificed and shared
	Women bring the rice to the house (processing in a line)
	Women make *ubak*
	Each household eats *ubak*
(evening)	Dance
3 (morning)	Women harvest rice (leaving and returning in no particular order)
	Women throw the husk and call back its soul
	Women rub rice and implements with beads
(afternoon)	*Ubak* is shared on the chief's gallery
4 onwards	Harvest
During the harvest	Each household holds a *dayong*
After the harvest	Each household returns to reside in the longhouse; an egg is raised to Bungan to inform her of their return; the soul of the *padi* and human souls are called back.

occasion to taste the new rice for the first time. For more than three months, people have been in contact with a small circle of neighbours because they have been living at the farm. While they have enjoyed the intimacy and informality it entails, they are happy to rejoin co-villagers at the occasion of the *lali ketam*; the community spirit is enhanced by activities such as dances.

When the rice is ripe, the *lali ketam* is scheduled during an auspicious moon, ideally while the moon is waning, as this will prevent people from overeating the harvest. The ritual I observed started at sunset on the chief's gallery (Table 16), where eight egg offerings had been placed on a plate. People from all households touched the offerings to mark their participation. Holding an egg, Avun prayed:

> Bungan Malan, Lake' Penyelong, I inform you that we will perform the ritual harvest tomorrow; we are about to eat rice. We ask for your help so that our rice will not be bad, so that there be plenty. Protect people as they harvest: there are steep hills [which could make people stumble]; tree trunks could fall over them [...]. You are the one who looks after us; by ourselves, we are in the dark [...]. This ceremony follows your religion, the straightforward religion, the religion of Apo Token.

The priest raised the plate of eggs to convey it to Bungan and placed it on a beam to protect it from dogs.

From the beginning of the ritual, the longhouse is closed to outsiders; that

night, inhabitants may not leave. Latecomers may not return to the longhouse until the first rice has been brought in the next day. (When the chief failed to return in time, no exception was made for him.) Fresh food is tabooed during that period, but the rule is enforced strictly only during the ritual itself. On the morning of the second day, one woman from each household goes to her fields to harvest some rice. While the women are away, men go fishing as they normally do at the beginning of every day; however, because of the residual taboo on fresh food, they must return home before the women. Although the taboo is already much briefer than in *adat Dipuy*, people go out of their way to observe it in the most minimal fashion possible in order to underline the fact that *adat Bungan* is the perfect religion, the religion without any irksome taboos.

For the first ritual harvest, each apartment is represented by the oldest economically-active woman. Dressed in work-clothes and with harvesting baskets on their backs, women leave the house together in a line, in the same order as the sequence of apartments; they will return in the same way. The woman from the downrivermost apartment leads the way. If a domestic unit owns several fields, the ritual harvest takes place in the same field as the ritual sowing. In principle, it should happen on the very spot of the ritual sowing, but, as the area is not fenced in nowadays, it is difficult to be precise. Given Bungan's benevolence, it does not really matter. Each ear of *padi* is cut individually by hand with a special knife (*iu keluno*). This is a straight knife with a blade about nine centimetres long and a fifteen-centimetre handle made with the engraved leg-bone of a wild fowl. In the past, this knife was used for the actual harvest. It has been replaced with a more efficient tool, a semi-circular blade with a handle perpendicular to it at the middle of the diameter (*iu kopi*). Upon their return, women hang their baskets on barns or the outside of the longhouse, out of pigs' reach; they bring in cucumbers and wild foodstuff gathered during their outing.

When all women have returned, sometime after midday, the whole community gathers on the chief's gallery. The plate of eight eggs is placed back on the floor. The priest prays to Bungan; then he entrusts messages to a pig[23] which is dedicated to Bungan. It is sacrificed and divided into equal shares which each family cooks separately. The priest purifies (*melah*) the chief's family, then the rest of the community.

After the *pelah*, women process down the downriver steps; they pick up their rice baskets and return by the upriver steps, still in the same order, and enter their respective apartments without talking with anyone; nobody else may enter, and this applies to dogs as well. If they broke their silence, they would be liable to have a breech presentation the next time they gave birth. Some

[23] This pig weighed about 3 kilograms. The household which supplied it received M$0.20 or two cupfuls of rice from every domestic unit. This was not meant to be the market value of the pig, but, after some discussion, it was agreed to be adequate compensation.

children tag along during the procession; their presence has no ritual significance, neither is it seen as an impediment. In their kitchens, the women make some *ubak*. To make *ubak*, rice grains are heated in a frying pan, then pounded. The result is greenish, sticky, flaky, and sweet. The rice husks are stored in a separate container: at this stage, no part of the *padi* may be discarded, otherwise the soul of rice would leave and people would go hungry. Holding an egg, each woman informs Bungan that her family is 'about to eat the *ubak*. We have started to harvest the new rice. Strengthen our souls against harm. Protect us against *parit* and *tulah*.' The *ubak* is divided into two portions, one for household members, the other for Bungan. The woman goes to the door to call in her family, which has been waiting on the gallery. They eat one portion of *ubak* together. Until they have consumed it, it is strictly forbidden for members of other households to join them. Having eaten, they immediately exit to the gallery to indicate that their apartment is no longer off-limits, then they re-enter to eat Bungan's share of the *ubak*. At night, people dance and sing. A large mat is spread on the floor for the dancers; dogs enjoy the smooth surface and lie on the mat until people chase them away. Women put on their best sarongs and shirts; they wear bright colours and lively patterns. Some men and women wear Kenyah caps. Women and men follow each other, in no particular order, to perform solo dances. Women perform graceful dances while a man plays the *sape'*, skilfully moving hornbill feather decorations attached to their hands. Men's solos follow the same basic choreography, but they aim to convey a martial demeanour. Male dancers wear a war skull-cap decorated with hornbill tail-feathers and hold a fine sword in their right hand. The audience shouts comments during the performance and laughs good-humouredly at clumsy dancers. People are more complimentary towards women, in part because they are better dancers, but also because it is in dubious taste for men to make fun of adult women. By contrast, women show no hesitation in ridiculing bad male dancers. The solos are followed by women dancing in groups to a *sape'* accompaniment.

On the third day, women harvest more rice and make *ubak* again for their family. (They do not process in and out of the house but visit their fields independently of each other at their convenience.) Immediately afterwards, each woman throws the husk under the house and, with an egg, she calls back its soul. From now on, pigs, dogs, and chickens may eat any part of the rice without offending it. She offers beads to the *ubak* by rubbing them on it: 'I rub you, *ubak*, so one can take you out [of the apartment], so one can bring you anywhere'. She rubs the beads on rice-processing implements – winnowing tray, mortar, pestle, and basket – in order to catch the soul of the rice. At the same time, she calls her children's souls which might have wandered away.

In the early afternoon, a woman in every household raises an egg to Bungan to announce that she is about to share her *ubak* with the rest of the community.

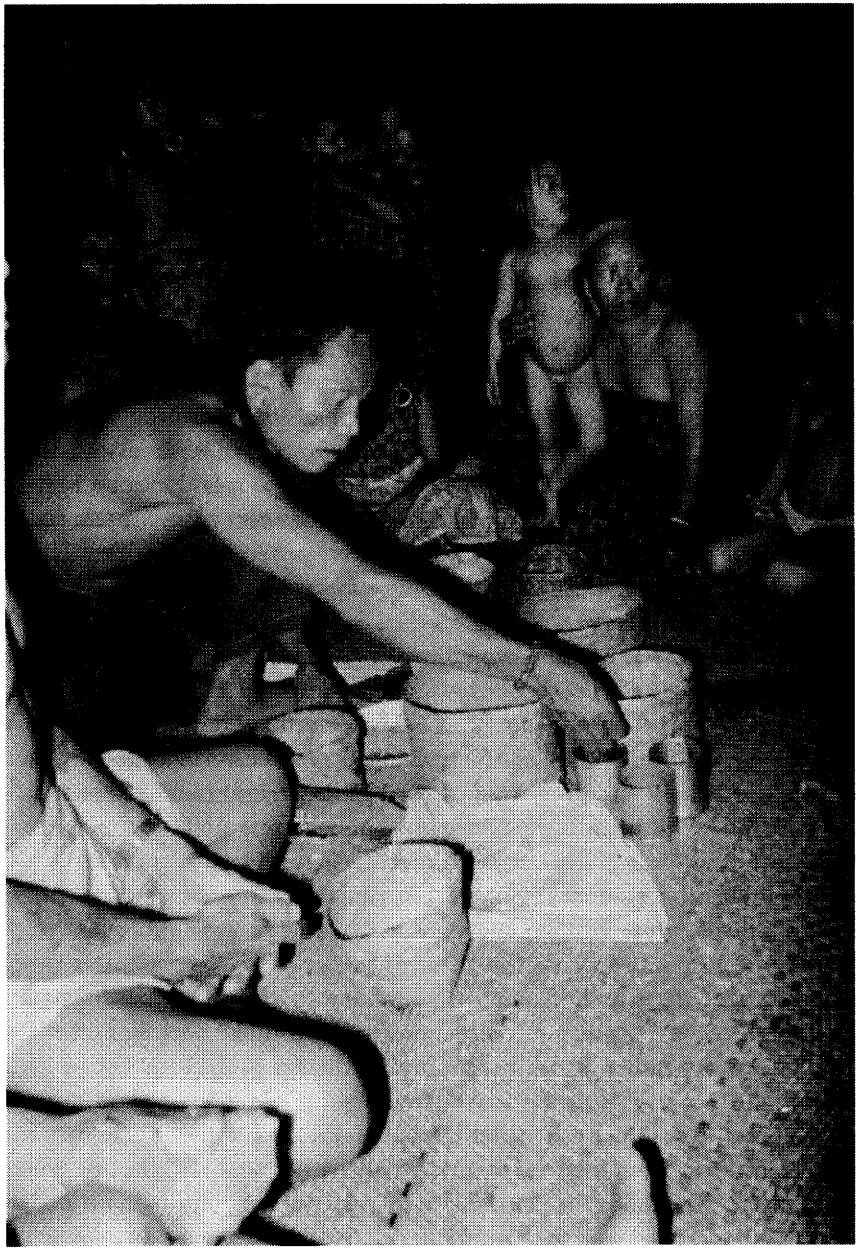

Plate 7. At the pre-harvest ritual (*lali ketam*), Avun distributes rice (*ubak*) and beads contributed by all the households. This symbolises the fact that rice may now be exchanged, bought, and sold. The ritual takes place on the chief's gallery and the whole community is present.

She brings a plate of *ubak* to the chief's veranda together with a string of small beads. When everyone has arrived, the priest places egg offerings on the floor; he mixes all the *ubak* in a large tray and places the strings of beads in a bowl. Seated near the edge of the gallery, with an egg in his hands, he prays to Bungan:

> People are about to eat the *ubak* together. Let there be no problem. From now on, people can eat the new rice without restriction, they can sell it, they can exchange it. It can be burned, it can fall into the water without any consequence.

He puts a portion of *ubak* and a string of beads into every bowl, leaving some *ubak* in the tray. Sharing the *ubak* signifies that people can buy and eat each other's rice (Plate 7). Each household eats its portion of *ubak* immediately. At a signal from the priest, children pounce on the remaining *ubak* and consume it. This symbolizes that people are eating together with Bungan (*pehelong dahin Bungan*). The priest raises an egg to announce the end of the ritual.

From the next day on, the harvest goes on normally. If the *lali ketam* has taken place before the rice is quite ripe in order to take advantage of an auspicious moon, the harvest may be delayed for a few days. In this case, people make daily visits to their fields to gather a little *padi* with which they make *ubak*. When they start harvesting, some people place an egg offering in their fields and a decorated staff (*belawing*); they ask Bungan for prosperity and inform her the harvest is starting. A hook is placed besides the *belawing* in order to catch 'the soul of satiety, the soul of wealth'. The *belawing* signifies that they will be sated and rich, with rice aplenty.[24] The first time *padi* is stored in a farmhouse barn, one may again offer an egg alongside a *belawing* and a hook. Later on, when rice is first brought to a longhouse barn, it is locked for ten days in order to prevent the soul of the *padi* from wandering away. During that period, some rice is stored in the room for immediate consumption.

Each household may hold a *dayong* (*nawi bluan ugo'* or *nawi bluan bulit*) while the harvest is in progress, but this is not an obligation. Those who do not feel the need for it simply raise an egg to Bungan in their apartment to call back the soul of the chaff. Someone commented that ' "*Nawi bluan ugo'*" ['calling the soul of the chaff'] is simply a name' (*aran na' tua nawi bluan ugo'*). In other words, its purpose is not limited to calling the soul of the chaff; it is a general-purpose propitiatory ritual. During my fieldwork, about half the households held a *dayong* at that time; these were usually modest affairs which took place entirely inside the apartment rather than on the gallery. Nonetheless, some households

[24] A new hook and a new *belawing* are made every year. This ritual also affords protection against the spirits of the rainbow. (I do not know why or how rainbow spirits are dangerous, but given that rainbows are related to rain and rain to the Thunder, this might be the explanation.) *Belawing* poles were used to indicate that head trophies had been obtained. In this case, the *belawing* marks a success which is yet to come.

Table 17. Pre-harvest rituals (*adat Dipuy*)

Day	Ritual
Lali pare hagit	
1	*Metok bilit*: partitions are set up around the mortar and the winnowing area
	Fresh food is tabooed until the *lali pakan* on the tenth day
	Women harvest some rice which is placed in the *lusan lali*; offerings are made to the rice
2	Women harvest more rice
3	The *bilit* are removed; people are allowed to visit each others' apartments; visitors are allowed to the longhouse
4 to 10	No work in rice fields; no limitation on other productive activities
10	*Lali pakan*: feeding *padi*, spirits, and souls
	End of taboo on fresh food
	First day of carnival: dance of masks
Following days	Dances, music, tugs-of-war
Lali ketam	
1	The women who observe the ritual abstain from sex, tobacco, and fresh food
	Aristocrats put up partitions (*bilit*) around the mortar and the winnowing area
	Aristocratic women harvest rice, make *ubak*, and make offerings to rice and implements
2	Aristocratic women harvest more rice and make *ubak*
3	Commoners put up the *bilit*
	Women harvest rice (leaving and returning in a line), make *ubak*, and make offerings to rice and implements
4	Women harvest more rice and make *ubak*
	Women of all domestic units share *ubak*
5	Everyone stays in the longhouse
6 to 9	Cooperative harvesting
10	*Tuman adat*: end of the taboos
	Women 'rub' the fire, the rice, and various implements
	The *bilit* are stored; rice husks and chaff are thrown away
	Women call back the soul of the rice and the souls of their children
	Women feed the stairs
	Women start looking for auguries (Table 18)

took the trouble to brew some rice-beer to have something nice to offer to guests.

When a domestic unit has completed its harvest, its members move back to the longhouse. In their apartment, they raise an egg to Bungan to announce their return; they call the soul of the *padi*, their own souls, especially those of their children, in case some souls have stayed behind at the farm. During the harvest, people rested in the shade of tree stumps and their souls might have been tempted to remain in these comfortable spots.

The harvest rituals of adat Dipuy

The pre-harvest rituals of *adat Dipuy* were very elaborate (Table 17). They started with the *lali pare hagit*, which ended in a carnival, and were followed by the *lali ketam* and a search for omens.

Lali pare hagit: the 'ritual of the quick-growing rice'

In *adat Bungan*, there is no equivalent to the *lali pare hagit*. This ritual was held after the end of the weeding; as its name indicates, its purpose was to make the rice grow fast.[25] During this period, it was forbidden to repair the longhouse or to chop firewood at the house (although one might do so at the farm). However, people were free to leave the longhouse. The interval between the end of weeding and the beginning of the harvest was the occasion to pay attention to other crops such as tobacco. This was also the time to make mats on which *padi* would be spread to dry. After the completion of the *lali pare hagit*, it was time to repair the house.

On the first day of the *lali*, every household set up partitions (*metok bilit*) around the mortar on the gallery. A section of each apartment where rice was winnowed was also fenced in with partitions; this area was called *lirong lali*, 'the ritual bay'. These fences prevented dogs from licking the rice husk. Normally, rice is winnowed outside so that the wind can separate the chaff from the grain;

[25] *Lali pare hagit* means 'the ritual of the fast-growing rice'. Of all the Kayan longhouses known to my informants, only Uma Kahe and Uma Bawang (in the Baluy area) and Uma Leken (in the Apo Kayan area) performed the *lali pare hagit*. Banks (1940) also notes its presence in the Baram area. I was never able to resolve a confusion in informants' accounts: the whole ritual lasted ten days, but I was also told it lasted eight days for aristocrats and four days for commoners. Presumably, some element of the ritual lasted eight or four days, but I am not sure what. Banks (1940:87-8) says that during the *lali pare hagit*, outsiders could not come to the house for four days in the Baram Kayan village of Uma Paku and ten days in Uma Pu. In Uma Bawang, the *lali pare hagit* was considered to be a ritual of Uma Bawang proper, but the Uma Daro' section joined in the carnival. The Uma Daro' section observed a brief ritual which occupied the same structural position as the *lali pare hagit*; it was called *muvuy usit pare*, 'inviting the rice to appear'. They fed the *padi* from a container (*belaka'*), after which the *belaka'* was placed on the roof. By counting the number of *belaka'*, it was possible to know how many years the longhouse had been in existence. The *lali pare hagit* may have been linked to a fast-growing variety of rice: Southwell (1990:289) glosses *parei hagit* as 'a quick growing and maturing breed of rice' and *parei tengen* as 'slow growing and maturing rice', while Banks (1940:85) says the Kayan grow two varieties of rice, one which grows quickly, the other more slowly. I do not know how to square this with the fact that the Kayan, like other central Borneo groups, cultivate a large number of varieties of *padi*, not only two. I do not understand fully the purpose of the *lali pare hagit*; it seems to be some kind of rehearsal for *lali ketam*. I am also unclear about the significance of the quick- and slow-growing varieties of rice. Did the quick-growing variety exist for agricultural or ritual reasons?

at this stage, it was processed in the apartment because of its temporary fragility. Until the end of the *lali*, it would have been dangerous to discard any part of the rice or let animals come near it. Partitions were made of sticks, about two centimetres wide, tied to each other with twine; they looked somewhat like North American snow fences. When not in use, they were rolled up and stored. (In the apartments, mats could be used as partitions instead of *bilit*.) The *bilit* were up for three days, during which people could not visit each other's apartments, and the longhouse was closed to outsiders. One woman from each household harvested a small amount of rice.[26] Five kernels of rice were husked by hand and stored in a bamboo container (*lusan lali*) about four centimetres long and one centimetre in diameter. The *lusan lali* was an heirloom; some households had owned the same *lusan lali* since the original migration from the Apo Kayan. In addition to these five kernels, some rice was harvested to make *ubak*. As in *adat Bungan*, the husk was kept in order to prevent its soul from wandering away.[27] Offerings (*usut*) were made to the rice so that it could be given to members of other domestic units. The next day, women returned to the fields to collect more rice for *ubak*. On the third day, they folded the *bilit*; from then on until the tenth day, people could engage in various productive activities anywhere except in the rice fields.

The tenth day was the occasion to feed spirits and souls (*lali pakan*). Early in the morning, a woman from each household placed food at the top of the longhouse stairs; children gathered and, at a sign, they rushed to eat it on behalf of the spirit of the stairs. After breakfast, people went to feed the *padi*. Each family cooked food offerings in four small bamboo containers.[28] This included dried fish fry (*ilep*) and ginger juice to which could be added bamboo shoots, ginger, boiled eggs, and rice. The bamboo containers were brought to the chief's gallery and placed in a winnowing tray. One woman from each household took a bamboo container and went to the spot where rice had been

[26] A special device made with the shell (*kahe*) of a mango seed was used to reap the rice. Nieuwenhuis (1904-07, I:117) provides a detailed description: 'The *kahe parei* is a piece from the shell of a fruit on which are attached two *kawit* [hooks] and a few *usut*, each of which consisting of two beads on a string. The *usut*, five in number, are called *usut parei* (rice), *usut baha* (husked rice), *usut kanen* (cooked rice), *usut ata* (water), and *usut apui* (fire); for all these *usut* one preferably uses old beads. By *usut*, one means in general a gift or an atonement [*Busse*] for the appeasement of an irritated soul.' *Usut* is the nominal form of *musut*, 'to rub'. The strings of beads were rubbed on the rice, water, and fire as a form of offering.

[27] Various factors could frighten away the soul of rice: 'Belare attributed the poor harvest of the last year to the fact that, when the Batang-Lupar [Iban] burned his house, the souls of rice were also lost' (Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, I:324-5).

[28] These were called *bulu tuvuh* ('planted bamboos'; the meaning of this name is unclear), or *bulu buring* ('striped bamboos': they were decorated with zigzags: someone rolled the bamboo on the floor while another slid a sword up and down the bamboo in order to mark it). After the ritual, these containers were used to store salt.

sown ritually (*pe'un tebing*). There, she shared the offerings with the spirits.[29] Three containers were offered to Hunyang Lahe, the mother of the *padi*, the other to the *peliut* bird (*Zosterops* sp.) which is said to copulate with the *padi* because it nests at the base of *padi* stalks. The woman prayed to the rice:

> Now, I eat with you [plural], *padi*, you are mine, you who are the children of the mother [lit. 'woman'] of rice. From downriver, from upriver, from below, from above, from across the hillside, come to eat here. I eat with you, children of the mother of rice. Come from above, come from below, come from across the hillside, we [inclusive] are eating together, we are gathering to eat together.

The woman poured some food on a leaf while saying 'This is your share' and she ate the rest.

Fresh food was tabooed from the beginning of the *lali pare hagit* up to the tenth day; provisions were stockpiled before the *lali*. Some people stayed at the farm to look after pigs, chickens, and secondary crops; they were not allowed to visit the longhouse for the whole *lali* and they were exempt from the taboos.

Carnival

On the tenth day of *lali pare hagit*, and for the next six (or eight?) days, there was a kind of carnival. People cooked various kinds of festive food. They wore their best clothes, they danced in line (*ngajen joh*), they played reed pipes (*keledi*) and the three-stringed guitar (*sape'*), and generally had a great time.

On the first day, some people wore masks and covered their whole bodies with palm leaves. Men put on wooden masks (*hudo' apa* or *hudo' kayo'*), while women used masks made out of women's baskets (*hudo' ajat*).[30] The wooden masks represented monkeys and boars, animals which attack the rice. While the maskers went in the woods to don their outfits, everybody else remained in the longhouse: there would be famine if they met the masks outside. The masks returned to the house, pacing from one end of the gallery to the other, striking the floor with sticks. The *hudo' apa* danced with people; they played practical jokes, they frightened children, they pretended to assault young girls, and they made lewd gestures. People were supposed not to be shocked by the behaviour of the *hudo' apa*; if they guessed the identity of the maskers, they must not show it, because the masks had become spirits who were expected to chase away the

[29] I did not think to ask, but I suspect women took any container in the tray (rather than take back the one they had contributed); this would parallel other elements of the annual cycle, when seeds are mixed and shared, and when *ubak* is mixed and shared. All members of the Uma Daro' section placed a hook and a *belawing* in the *pe'un tebing*; the food offerings were placed between the hook and the *belawing*. The chief of Uma Bawang (but not the other members of Uma Bawang proper) carried out the same ritual; Uma Bawang commoners placed an egg offering at their field.

[30] Men could wear basket mats if they wanted. Wooden masks are decorated, hence *parit* for women. The *hudo' ajat* were baskets in which eye holes had been cut, although they could be more elaborate (see Plate 12 of Nieuwenhuis 1900, I:opposite 185). The same masks were presumably used for the *lali nugan* and this carnival.

animals which attack the *padi*. The maskers ended their ambulation at the chief's gallery.

During the carnival, men and women competed at tugs-of-war (*pejat we*, 'pulling rattan') on the gallery. Sometimes the rattan was thirty metres long, and the whole community could join in. According to Sombroek (n.d.1:12.19-20), the tug-of-war pleased the spirit of the rice.[31] The carnival concluded with people splashing each other with water; this had the effect of sending away the spirits of the masks (*to' hudo'*).

Lali ketam: the pre-harvest ritual

The harvest ritual took place about two weeks after the end of the *lali pare hagit*.[32] The start of the ritual was scheduled for an auspicious moon. For the ten-day period, outsiders could not visit the house[33]; villagers did not tend tobacco plants or harvest cucumbers. If someone died during the harvest ritual, the body was kept in a sealed coffin in the longhouse until the end of the *lali*. The *lali ketam* was essentially the responsibility of one woman in each domestic unit. She observed several taboos: up to the eighth day, she could not smoke cigarettes, have sex, or eat fresh food. In order to reduce temptation, people threw away their cigarettes before entering apartments. She slept alone in the apartment; the rest of her family spent the night on the gallery. If the taboos were broken, the rice would disappear rapidly. While women observed the taboos, their families went on fishing and hunting; they cooked their meals on the gallery, while women made do with preserved food such as dried fish. At first, only women were allowed to eat the new rice, while the others consumed the rice of the previous harvest.

Accounts of the *lali ketam* were confused and contradictory, but the following reconstruction integrates several informants' accounts. On the first day, Uma

31 The sequence of activities for this carnival is not entirely clear. One informant described a different calendar; this might be due to a difference in rituals between Uma Bawang proper and Uma Daro'. People danced in line for three days; the dancers were fed (*pakan joh*) during that period; on the fourth day, maskers donned basket masks and, on the fifth day, wooden masks, ending the ritual (*pusang*) on the tenth day, when they threw water at each other. The Modang of East Kalimantan also use masks but the ritual is different; the dance of masks takes place after the harvest (Revel-Macdonald 1978:31); male maskers must reach the village by land (Revel-Macdonald 1978:39), unlike Kayan maskers who came by boat. Revel-Macdonald (1978:41-2) states that the Kayan used masks at four stages of the agrarian cycle. This is based on interviews with Christian Kayan from the Apo Kayan; if this is true, this would mean the agrarian cycle of the Kayan of the Apo Kayan was very different from all other Kayan's.

32 The *lali ketam* was also called *lali pare aya'*, 'the ritual of big rice' and *lali pare tengen* 'the ritual of the slow-growing rice'. For another description, see Nieuwenhuis (1904-07, I:117-20, 1904-07, II:122-3). Auspicious moons for the *lali ketam* were *butit halap, teloh manok*, and *beliling jia* (see note 1).

33 Banks (1940:87) confirms this. According to other informants, outsiders could not visit the longhouse until villagers had obtained auguries. Longhouse members who stayed at the farm at the beginning of the *lali ketam* could return on the fourth day; some of the new rice cooked during the ritual was set aside for them.

Bawang aristocrats set up partitions (*bilit*) around the mortar and in the apartment in the same way as for the *lali pare hagit*; commoners did so on the third day. (Aristocrats and commoners of the Uma Daro' section put up the *bilit* on the same day.)

On the morning of the day when the *bilit* were put up, women went to their farms to harvest some *padi*. They exited the longhouse together in a line, in the same order as the sequence of apartments in the longhouse, led by the woman from the apartment at the downriver end. Each woman went separately to her field. She hung her basket to a tree stump and reaped eight sheaves of *padi* if she was an aristocrat, four sheaves if a commoner. These were placed in the basket after drying in the sun. Upon their return to the village, they stored their baskets outside the house and prepared the 'ritual bay' (*lirong lali*), the section of the apartment where the ritual was to take place. The women processed out of the house in the same order as before to retrieve their baskets; they returned in the same way, going directly to their apartment, while everyone else stayed on the gallery. In the apartment, the women harvested the rice, in other words they separated the clusters of seeds from the stems with a harvesting knife, then they threshed these clusters to separate the rice seeds. Stalks and husk were set aside. In olden times, the spirit Lake' Uvang Wan visited the *lirong lali* at this point and ate the rice husk. He was dressed up in a war coat and tail feathers of the helmeted hornbill. Five grains of rice were husked by hand and placed in a bamboo container (*lusan lali*) which already contained grains from previous years. The container was never overfilled because the old rice disappeared. The *lusan lali* was stored in the *ingen lali*, the basket which contained the sacred objects of the household. Women rubbed the *ingen lali* with beads (*inu uran*; four beads for commoners, eight beads for aristocrats), while saying '[The straps of] this basket might break, this basket might burn, or something else might happen to it. This is why I rub you, so that this will be of no consequence.' (Without such propitiation, any mishap would offend the soul of the rice.) The women of Uma Daro' carried out this ritual in the rafters of their apartment (*ujong parong*). Besides the five grains which were placed in the *lusan lali*, new rice was stored in the *ingen lali*. The *padi* from the previous year which had been placed in the *ingen lali* was consumed before new rice was placed in the basket, because 'the old rice should not go across the new year'. The *ingen lali* was hung beside the fireplace, out of reach of children.

Each woman prepared some *ubak* after a brief prayer:

> I cook the *padi* now, so my *padi* will ripen[34] rapidly. I cook the heads of monkeys, deer, rice birds (*pit*), and [other] animals. Their heads will spin, they will be dizzy and will not see my rice. I blind them; they cannot see my *padi*.

The next day, women harvested more rice and made *ubak* again. Until the

34 '*Sak*' means both 'ripe' and 'cooked'.

fourth day, they could not talk when they harvested, nor could women of different households work cooperatively. On the fourth day, each family ate some of the new rice in its apartment, after which households exchanged *ubak*.[35] On the fifth day, everyone stayed at the longhouse. On the sixth day, the harvest started and, from then on, cooperation was allowed.

The tenth day was the *tuman adat*, 'the joint of the *adat*', the end of the taboos. With a string of beads, each woman 'rubbed' (*pusut*) the fire so it would not die off; she rubbed the rice so that it could be given away without offending its soul: 'I rub the husked rice; now, my rice can go downriver, my rice can go upriver, I can throw it away'.[36] She rubbed the husk (so that animals could eat it without offending the rice), the cooking pot (so that it would not crack), the fireplace, the cooking spatula, the cooking spoon, the cooked rice, the door (so that visitors might come in), the mortar (so that dogs could lick it)....

The *bilit* were rolled up and stored, which marked the end of the prohibition against visitors. The rice husk and chaff which had been set aside up to this point were thrown under the house, as were the leaves used to wrap cooked rice and the water in which it had been cooked. With a string, each woman lowered to the ground a stick carved in the shape of stairs (*san lali*) at the spot where the husk had been thrown.[37] To these stairs she attached some smoked fish as bait for the soul of the rice: 'Now, I lower the stairs, because the soul of *padi* might drift downriver, it might be thrown away'. Instead, it was coaxed to climb the stairs. Holding an egg, she then called (*nawi*) the soul of her children. Some dry fish was cooked in long bamboo containers (*luku basu*), at least sixty centimetres long, preferably two metres. Women carried these to the longhouse stairs and shared the food with the stairs – in other words they ate some food and threw away the rest – so that they could use the stairs without problem: 'I eat with you, stairs, so that we can come up; the ritual is now finished'. The *luku basu* were the 'joint of the ritual' (*tuman adat*), a sign the taboos were ended. (The rings on a section of bamboo are called *tuman*, 'joint, articulation'.) The propitiation of the stairs can be explained by the fact that they form the transition between the longhouse and the outside world.

35 This was called *pala do nyagah*, 'to cooperate in cooking'. *'Pala do'* means literally 'to exchange days' and normally refers only to the cooperative labour exchange of rice cultivation. Hence, this exchange of *ubak* symbolized the acceptability of cooperation. Given the special relationship between a household and the soul of its rice, cooperation, which brings to the fields members of other domestic units, requires proper management so that the soul of rice is not frightened away.

36 These prayers are not set formulas: a woman recited another version: 'I rub this rice. I do not have to follow taboos any more. I can send [rice] downriver, I can give it to people, I can throw it in the river. Now that I have rubbed it, anything is permitted.'

37 'The *san* (ladder) *lali* of the Uma Suling consists of a ladder, a bamboo container and a chicken feather, which serves to convey the soul in the container. The container is wrapped in white cotton; in it are two offerings [*kawit*]' (Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, I:119).

Table 18. Pre-harvest auguries (*adat Dipuy*)

Day	Ritual
1	*Hisit* (spiderhunter)
2	People stay in the longhouse
3	People may leave the house and go about their business
4	*Mengiling* (Brahminy kite)
5	People stay in the longhouse
6	People may leave the house
7	*Pajan* (greater yellow-eared spiderhunter)
8	People stay in the longhouse
9	People may leave the house
10	*Tela'u* (barking deer)
11	People stay in the longhouse
12	Harvest

Looking for auguries

While some harvesting had already taken place between the sixth and ninth days of the *lali ketam*, one still needed the auguries' permission before harvesting in earnest (Table 18). On the tenth day of the *lali ketam*, women started looking for auguries.[38] Outsiders could not visit the longhouse until all auguries had been obtained. Longhouse members could not work outside the house on days when omens were sought; they also stayed home the following day; on the third day, people could leave the house and go about their business. When they looked for auguries, the women walked out of the house in a line in the usual order, carrying on their backs empty rice baskets. They brought wood shavings prepared by men, with which to make fires to acknowledge omen sightings, while saying: 'We have you, auspicious [lit. 'rightwards'] spiderhunter; you give us satiety, you give us health'. They sought the spiderhunter, the Brahminy kite, the greater yellow-eared spiderhunter, and the barking deer. After each augury had been obtained, they returned in a line and entered their apartments where they left their baskets in the *lirong lali*. They placed ferns (*pako' bura*) on the door as a sign the ritual had been carried out; they cooked ferns to indicate it was now possible to eat fresh food. This process was repeated until all omens had been obtained.

Then the harvest started in earnest. Various taboos were in force. If a basket strap broke, all team members had to stop work on that day. They also stopped harvesting if a team member accidentally pushed a tree stump to the ground.

38 It is not clear how many women participated in the activity, but the description suggests that there was a representative of each apartment, given that women went out in a line which reproduced the sequence of apartments. In the same way as for the observation of omens before clearing the fields (Table 12), the Uma Daro' section probably followed a two-day cycle – observation of the omens on the first day, work the next day – while Uma Bawang proper followed a three-day cycle for each omen – observing the omen on the first day, staying home on the second day, and working on the third day.

After asking for its blessing, workers returned home if they met a snake. If a spiderhunter crossed their path[39], they ceased harvesting for the day. When people were in a hurry to harvest and only one person had seen an omen, he or she sometimes failed to mention it so that work could continue; after the fact, this might serve to explain why the harvest was not as plentiful as it should have been. If the barking deer was heard in the morning, workers could not go to the fields; if it was heard later in the day, the *padi* which had been harvested on that day was set aside and eaten in the following days; it had been contaminated by the omen and could not in turn be allowed to pollute the rice stores. Because of spontaneous auguries, the harvest took much longer in *adat Dipuy* than it does in *adat Bungan*. These omens affected only farm work, not hunting or fishing.

Someone who died during the harvest could not be buried in the ground, but was placed in an elevated burial (*tapong*), otherwise the *padi* would rot or disappear rapidly. It was forbidden to smoke or chew betel in the fields (presumably because their heat would damage the rice). It is the Kayan practice for cucumbers to be interplanted with rice; they could not be harvested at the same time as rice and separate trips were necessary. It was taboo to brew beer or make fried rice pastries (*dinu*) until the *tevuko'* (see below), but boiled pastries (*selukong, lukuh, pitoh*) were allowed. In the same way as the *dinu* are dry, so would life be dry; as fermentation of rice-beer is akin to rotting, so might life be rotten. Another reason for not brewing rice beer is that yeast cakes look like *dinu* pastries. Men and women could not sleep together in barns, otherwise rice supplies would dwindle. (This prohibition did not apply to children who were not sexually active.)

Nawi bluan bulit: a dayong ceremony

After the auguries had been obtained, each family held a *dayong* in order to retrieve the soul of the chaff (*ugo'*)while the harvest was in progress. They asked the help of the spirit Lake' Hivong Be' who is in charge of the chaff at Long Keliman in the spirit country. This *dayong* is called *nawi bluan ugo'* or *nawi bluan bulit* ('calling the soul of the rice-gruel'. The reference to gruel is unclear.) During the *dayong*, they fed the sacred basket (*ingen lali*) and the spirits of the *padi*. The latter were asked to retrieve the soul of the *padi* which might have wandered away, and inform it of the good treatment it had received. These *dayong* were modest, not an occasion for conspicuous consumption.

[39] According to some informants, the spiderhunter was an omen during the harvest whatever the direction of its flight; others said that only a spiderhunter flying to the left was an omen. The people of the Uma Daro' section had to return home when they came across some arthropods (*kudak ara'* or *katong ba'an*, unidentified), spiders, or the maroon woodpecker (*kihing*). If they saw the nest of the white-eye (*peliut*) among the stalks of *padi*, they harvested around it; if they disturbed it by mistake, they stopped harvesting for the day. The people of Uma Bawang proper showed respect to the spider in a more economical way, by leaving a sheaf of *padi* for it. Aristocrats were subject to a specific taboo: if they came across the common coucal (*but*) or its nest, they stayed home for four days. In the Mahakam area, if people came across a mouse with its young, they stopped work for the day and stayed home the following day; they made a food offering to the mouse (Sombroek n.d.1:12.38). Even if people feared head-hunters' attacks, they were not allowed to bring weapons to the fields; a few men stood guard at the edge of the fields (Sombroek n.d.1:12.39).

The harvest festival

After the *lali ketam*, the harvest lasts about three months. When it is completed, the harvest festival stretches out over two months during which new fields are selected for the next agricultural year. The post-harvest period is in two parts; the first was called *tevuko'* in *adat Dipuy*; it has been replaced by *Bungan pang* in *adat Bungan*. The second part is called *ledoh*, a term which also refers to the whole post-harvest period (Table 19). It is a thanksgiving for the year which is ending and an occasion to ask for a prosperous new year. The *ledoh* also

Table 19. The harvest festival

Day	*Adat Dipuy*	*Adat Bungan*
1	*Tevuko'*	*Bungan pang*
	Partitions (*bilit*) are set around mortars	Neighbouring communities are invited to the festivities
	Fresh food is tabooed	Taboo on working, fishing, hunting, using sharp objects
	Food offerings are cooked in bamboo	All priests gather in the chief's apartment to pray to Bungan
	Taboos on eating mushrooms, Caladium, and handling fresh tobacco	An altar is set up on the chief's gallery, where all households bring a pig or chicken to be sacrificed
	Pelah: protective ritual after the sacrifices	*Pelah*
		Ritual in households of villagers who died during the year
2	*Do kelalam*: period of ritual inactivity	End of restrictions and rituals
	Animal sacrifices are consumed	
	Fresh food may be eaten	
3 to 10	The *bilit* are stored	
	Tugs-of-war, bull-roarers, dances	
10	End of taboos on mushrooms, Caladium, and tobacco	
	First day of *ledoh*	First day of *ledoh*
	The chief's household sponsors a *dayong*	First *dayong* (any household)
11 onwards	Other *dayong*	Other *dayong*

Plate 8. The beginning of the harvest festival (*Bungan aya'*). Every household has brought a pig or chicken to the chief's gallery. Priests entrust messages to the sacrificial animals. Avun is squatting at left in front of a pig, while Uyong Wan, on the right behind the child, handles a chicken.

reaffirms local and regional solidarity. Each household sponsors a *dayong* to which the whole community is welcome; members of neighbouring villages are invited to participate in feasts. During the *ledoh*, everyone lives in the longhouse; social interaction is intense. The *ledoh* ritual is essentially the same in *adat Dipuy* and in *adat Bungan*. The bulk of the *ledoh* is devoted to *dayong*; it ends with the headhunting ritual, whose purpose is to strengthen the health of community members.

Bungan pang (adat Bungan)

In the *Bungan pang*, the 'ritual of gathering', every household brings a sacrificial pig or chicken to the chief's gallery (Plate 8).[40] The animals are entrusted with messages and slaughtered all at the same time. Unlike other rituals of the annual cycle, the *Bungan pang* is open to visitors from other villages. Formal invitations are sent to them several days ahead of time; neighbouring longhouses try to set the celebrations on different dates so that they can visit each other. (Unlike other rituals of the annual cycle, the date of the *Bungan pang* is set without reference to the phase of the moon.) Large quantities of *padi* are husked in preparation for the feast; on the day of the *Bungan pang*, women cook several kinds of pastries, especially *dinu*, which are everyone's favourite. *Dinu* are sticky rice disk-shaped patties with a depression in the middle, deep-fried in oil; they are chewy, sweet, and oily.

Upon arrival at the longhouse, visitors first go to the apartment of a relative, then to the chief's apartment. If they are well acquainted with other community members, they visit them freely, otherwise they stay with their relatives and only visit other people in the latter's company, because they are suspicious of strangers. Visitors are often afraid of being poisoned by their hosts and they carry protective charms about themselves (see Chapter III). People strive to hide their anxiety and the unsuspecting foreign visitor would only notice the jollity of the celebrations. Rules of politeness address the issue of poisoning: the host is expected to drink before his guests; this step is omitted between people

[40] Other names for *Bungan pang* are *Bungan aya'*, 'the big Bungan [ritual]' and *adat duman*, 'ritual [at the end of the] year'. According to Avun, 'the *Bungan pang* is similar to a *dayong*'; it uses the *jok*, the cross-shaped altar on which offerings are hung (see Chapter VII). The *Bungan pang* is also described as the *adat Bungan* version of the *dange*, an *adat Dipuy* post-harvest ritual sponsored by the chief on behalf of the whole village. In many Kayan communities, the *dange* was the high point of the *ledoh*, but it was not part of Uma Bawang tradition. In the Baluy area, it was present in the Kayan villages of Uma Apan, Uma Aging, and Uma Baluy Ukap. In the last decades of *adat Dipuy*, Uma Bawang adopted the *dange*, probably under the influence of Lake' Baling, the chief of Uma Aging, who had close links with Uma Bawang, but this was not retained in *adat Bungan*. The Baluy villages of Uma Juman and Uma Daro' are said to have also practised the *dange* (Antonio Guerreiro, pers. comm.). There were different kinds of *dange*: *dange lekkusan*, *dange kian*, and *dange usan*. The Mendalam Kayan held the *dange* every year because they consistently had good harvests, while the Mahakam-Kayan held it every two or three years (Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, I:163); for a description, see Nieuwenhuis (1904-07, I:170-83) and Anyaa' Ure and Tipung Nyipa' (1978).

who trust each other. In addition to charms and counter-poisons, the proximity of powerful people is a protection against poisoning; anxious visitors tag along with prominent community members whose supernatural strength is sufficient to protect their companions. Because I was considered to be impervious to sorcery, Uma Bawang people sought my company when we visited other villages; my travelling companions would suggest that I visit households where rice beer was flowing freely, so that they could come along in safety.

When I observed the *Bungan pang*, every Uma Bawang priest participated in it as well as a visiting priest from the neighbouring village of Long Mejawa and Lake' Ajang, an important layman. Women priests were wearing their best sarongs and fine Malay shirts decorated with gold thread. The men had limited their sartorial efforts to wearing clean clothes. Early in the afternoon, we gathered in the chief's room. On one side, the wall had been decorated with pieces of fine batik above which another batik was stretched horizontally with strings to form a canopy; this was 'Bungan's place' (*lasan Bungan*). Offerings were placed on a mat: several kinds of rice pastries, cooked rice for the priests, and eight eggs. The priests gathered at the *lasan Bungan* around the senior priest Avun whom they touched to indicate their participation. The chief and visitors sat on the floor watching the proceedings while helping themselves liberally to rice-beer. Holding an egg, Avun prayed to Bungan.

> We are travelling together towards you, Bungan Malan, Lake' Penyelong, in order to ask for your help. We ask you to come down, just for the day, to see how we are, to see our illnesses. We ask for a good life and a cool skin. We ask for a straight life, the soul of rice, the soul of good dogs, the soul of pigs, the soul of chickens. We ask for an iron fence; we ask for protection against epidemics and all difficulties. We ask you to look kindly upon us because we are about to start a new year. We ask for black earth, for fertile earth, where the *padi* will be thick and plentiful. We ask for a good life during this coming year, a satisfactory life. We also ask for easy work, fast work, work which will be finished soon. We put our faith in you, Bungan Malan, because you are our father and mother, you rule this earth, you who have made our bodies. Protect us against anything that could hurt us, such as swords, axes, or anything else.

The priests rejoined the festivities. Meanwhile, an altar (*jok*; Plate 14) was erected on the chief's gallery besides which were placed the egg offerings and a pig contributed by the chief's household. Each domestic unit placed a pig or chicken near the altar. All sacrificial animals were addressed at the same time; priests and a few lay people entrusted messages to several animals at a time.[41] The concurrent prayers created an indescribable cacophony; a priest repeated

[41] One requests priests (or lay persons) to talk to a sacrificial animal by placing on their right wrist a bead bracelet (as is done during a *dayong*, see Chapter VII). In Uma Bawang, about as many pigs as chickens were sacrificed. Except for the chief's pig, which was large, the pigs were of medium or small size. At the same ritual in Uma Belun, there were eleven pigs and three

his prayer later for my instruction:

> We ask for a good life, we ask for health, we ask for potent drugs. This is the end-of-year ritual. We are about to see another year, because you [pig] are the payment for black earth, for fertile earth. You are the payment for pure land, for cool land, where life will be healthy, where we will not be struck down, where we will not get hurt or become ill. There will be no epidemics, such as the roll of clouds.[42] If there are epidemics, bring them to other villages, to longhouses far away, to hostile longhouses. Do likewise with spirits who might want to bother us, such as the spirits of breadfruit, the spirits of the *lunok* creeper, the spirits of white anthills, the spirits of hollows, the spirits of landslides.
>
> As people say, we are ignorant; this is why we talk to you. We put our confidence in you so that you will tell Bungan Malan and Penyelong Luan to build a wall for us, to strengthen us, to build a fence, to erect a mountain against these dangers. You are the payment for potent drugs, for the curing liquid, for the liquid of easy life, for strong drugs. This is why we send you up to Bungan Malan and Penyelong Luan who are our father and mother, our grandparents, from whom we originate. This is what we put in trust with you.

The officiants then untied the legs of the animals who must be able to walk to the spirit country in order to deliver the messages with which they have been entrusted (or, as the Kayan say, the messages 'which have been put into them'). Every animal was sacrificed immediately after the end of the oration. There was much excitement and interest among onlookers, heightened by the simultaneous slaughter of animals. The victims were brought back to their owners' apartments to be cooked. Priests went on with a protective ritual (*pelah*) for the whole village, starting with the chief's family.[43] Afterwards, a priest placed the sword used in the *pelah* on a beam under the veranda roof. This procedure protects the priests against supernatural danger (*kemhing dayong*): earlier in the ceremony, they came in contact with Bungan and, despite her benevolence, her power is dangerous. (In principle, the sword should be left there until the next day, but in fact its owner stored it soon afterwards.)

This was all for the time being. People resumed eating, drinking, and visiting. Villagers who have died during the year can smell the new rice on people's hands; they want some of it and wish to participate in the celebrations with their relatives and friends. A ritual to which every community member is invited makes this possible. (This ritual is omitted for dead children, presumably because they played no part in agricultural work.) During that year, a widower, Avan Ngo, died in Uma Bawang. We gathered in his apartment, which was packed solid with people; there was at least one representative from

[42] '*Mejam lulun avun*'. The connotation is unclear. It is probably an indirect reference to the Thunder.

[43] For a description of the *pelah*, see Chapter VII. On one such occasion, there was a separate *pelah* for the ex-chief, because his supernatural power was so great as to make it unsafe for his family to associate with him in a ritual context. Unlike an ordinary *dayong*, this *pelah* is not

each household (Plate 21). If any relatives had failed to join the proceedings, 'the deceased would have been unhappy'. Several dishes were placed on a mat; small amounts of each kind of food were thrown under the house while the priest described the proceedings for Avan Ngo's benefit. He reported everyone's good feelings towards him but enjoined him to go to the land of the dead and stay there after this meal. The deceased was asked to relinquish the souls of any relative which he might have taken with him. Everyone but the priest was quiet and silent, in marked contrast with other public Kayan rituals, during which there is much noise and activity. After the priest had finished talking, everyone ate. As this ritual brought the priest in contact with the dead, he needed protection and the household of the deceased gave him a plate and a sword.

At night, two or more priests sing a *dayong* on the chief's veranda in order to ask spirits to convey offerings to Bungan.[44] The priests pray for a good life and for the well-being of the soul of the *padi*. The dreams of the chiefly family are narrated and the spirits who are credited with sending the dreams receive appropriate offerings. On the day of the *Bungan pang*, one may not work, hunt, fish, or use sharp objects. There are no taboos or restrictions on the following day.

Tevuko' (adat Dipuy)

In *adat Dipuy*, the *tevuko'* marked the end of the harvest and the taboos associated with it. It was also a 'reminder' (*tevuko'*) that the first *dayong* would take place ten days hence. On the first day of the *tevuko'*, each household set up partitions (*bilit*) around mortars and kitchen in order to protect the rice against chickens and dogs. Fresh food was tabooed for the day and one was not allowed to visit other people's apartments. A ritual (*pelah*) served to ask for prosperity in the year to come. Chickens and pigs were sacrificed, sometimes large ones, and food offerings were cooked in bamboo (*lukuh lali*). The first day of the *tevuko'* was the first time when it was permitted to cook deep-fried pastries (*dinu*) and brew rice beer. This is why the *tevuko'* was also referred to as *song puti*, 'white pestle', because husked rice was pounded to a powder in order to make flour for pastries and yeast cakes were pulverized to brew beer.

The second day was a period of ritual inactivity (*do kelalam*). People stayed home and finished eating the flesh of the animals they had sacrificed the day before. After that, they were free to leave the longhouse. Minor taboos were in force: one could not eat mushrooms or Caladium (*lu'e*); it was forbidden to tend tobacco gardens or chop tobacco. Everyone had to avoid the sambhur deer, even those for whom the animal was not normally tabooed (see Chapter III).

[44] Unlike the *dayong* held for a domestic unit (Chapter VII), priests do not travel to the spirit country to carry the offerings. It is sufficient to raise the altar (*jok*) at the end of the ceremony in order to send it to Apo Token, a region of the spirit country.

Sombroek (n.d.1:12.43) adds that, on the second day, people visited each other and shared food; there was no prohibition on outsiders visiting the house. The *tevuko'* marked an opening-up of the village.

On the third day, partitions were stored away. Boys and girls formed separate teams which competed in tugs-of-war on the veranda or in the front of the house. If the girls won, there would be plenty of rice, because 'women own the *padi*'; if the boys won, they were faced with a lean year, because men pound the sago which is eaten in periods of scarcity. The tug-of-war was repeated several times and, if the women's side was losing, people helped them. Like other forms of Kayan divination, the outcome of the tug-of-war was not primarily a communicative event but a representation of reality: in and of itself, victory by the girls' team brought about prosperity. People were not necessarily convinced that the tug-of-war predicted or caused prosperity, but it might, it certainly was amusing, and it expressed the association between rice and women. Children played with ironwood bull-roarers (*hong bak*) on the veranda or in front of the house. No one could explain the meaning of this game, but it was an integral part of the ritual. People went on dancing and playing tug-of-war until the tenth day, when the *ledoh* started.[45]

Ledoh: the end-of-year dayong (adat Dipuy and adat Bungan)

At the end of the year, each household holds an 'end-of-year *dayong*' (*dayong duman lebo*). The sum of these *dayong* constitutes the harvest festival (*ledoh*). In *adat Dipuy*, the chief scheduled the first *dayong* ten days after the start of *tevuko'*. On any given night, only one *dayong* could take place; in large longhouses, the *ledoh* could drag on for two months (Baling Avun 1961:67). In *adat Bungan*, two or more *dayong* can be held simultaneously and the chief need not initiate the process.[46] The following description is based on fieldwork observations, but it also applies to *adat Dipuy*. The *dayong* ritual is described in the next chapter; this section focuses on the social aspects of the end-of-year *dayong*.

In contrast to the *dayong* which took place after the sowing and during the

[45] Barth (1910:78) describes a related game (*hong*). According to some informants, the *tevuko'* lasted only two or four days. It is not clear whether this is related to ritual differences between commoners and aristocrats. The Laham section of Uma Bawang had a different set of rituals for the *tevuko'*: they killed a pig in the upper part of the room (*ujong parong*).

[46] In 1971, the first *dayong* was on 24 April, the last one on 9 May; the chief's *dayong* took place on 5 May. Eleven of the fourteen ceremonies were scheduled on seven consecutive days. On four nights, there were simultaneous *dayong* in two households; in three of these four nights, they were far apart and they did not interfere with each other. In the remaining case, it was rather jarring to hear two priests singing different parts of the ritual. The first *dayong* took place ten days after the *Bungan pang*. I do not know whether this was a coincidence or an attempt to follow the *adat Dipuy* calendar. In 1972, I was travelling upriver at the time of the *Bungan pang*; it took place on 2 or 3 April, while the first *dayong* (for the chief) took place on 11 April, ten days after 2 April. Nobody ever mentioned a ten-day gap between *Bungan pang* and the first *dayong* and, unfortunately, I noticed it only recently.

harvest, the end-of-year *dayong* is an occasion for lavishness; this is a social as well as a ritual affair. Everyone feels the need to keep up with neighbours, as an old man wryly pointed out. Large amounts of rice beer are prepared; people buy arrack, coffee, crackers, and other festive food. Good hunters are paid to provide wild boar which they hunt the night before the *dayong*.[47] The meal includes wild boar, fish, rice, rice beer, and rice pastries. In principle, the whole community should be invited to an end-of-year *dayong*; in practice, at least one person from each household partakes of the feast and, in Uma Bawang, with a population of 213, each household had between forty and eighty guests. On the four nights when two *dayong* were scheduled, people went to eat in one or the other room, but not both, unless they were prominent people, in which case they were invited to both. Members of all households had a drink in both rooms.

If two *dayong* take place at the same time, many people visit both households, but one unit is likely to attract more guests than the other, especially if it has more food and rice beer. The two households may engage in decorous rivalry to attract guests. Kinship relations and friendships also influence where guests choose to linger; the priest's reputation is another factor. In return for food and drink, male guests are expected to sing the responses to the priest's chant. A household which regularly attracts many guests gains prestige by it, especially if they are prominent people. Once, a neighbour of mine was bemoaning the fact that neither the chief nor any important man had attended her *dayong*. She was really disappointed, although this was simply the result of circumstances: all the notables happened to be sick or away from the village.

The fact of sharing food expresses solidarity. This is particularly significant among the Kayan for whom eating is usually a private activity. Unlike the Iban, who often eat on the gallery, the Kayan always eat their daily meals in their apartments. By contrast, at the end-of-year *dayong*, members of all households are expected to join in the feasts. However, participation depends on several factors. In Uma Bawang, the chief's family does not attend the *dayong* of commoners, but, in some communities, less stand-offish chiefs join their commoners' festivities. If there is an outstanding quarrel between two households, they do not visit each other. Immediate neighbours and relatives trickle in informally. Other guests are invited casually. The woman who co-ordinates the feast issues formal invitations to important people; she sends a child who reports this message: 'So-and-so wants you in her room'. Visitors from other villages would never dream of partaking of a meal without an invitation. The host usually fetches personally the most important guests, sitting with them

[47] Small fish are daily fare, but large fish (say, more than 5 kilograms) are suitable for a feast. Normally, the meat of wild boar and large fish is shared between community members on the basis of generalized reciprocity. In this case, hunters receive cash payments because they are providing a requested service for which the alternative would be to kill a valuable pig.

until they are ready to walk to the apartment. It is considered dignified for a guest to wait for a few minutes before responding to an invitation; important people are particularly slow to move. Invitations are issued mostly to men and only to a few women. Other women eat in the kitchen or take a portion of food which they take to their own apartment. (The children who usually come along are not guests, but simply appendages of their parents.) Men are much more likely than women to receive invitations because apartments are women's domain; women interact informally with each other, visiting each other's apartments without hindrance or formality. Men, on the other hand, need to be invited. Indeed, these formal invitations are an extension of the daily practice whereby a woman sends a child to fetch her husband or father-in-law when meals are ready.

While ordinary guests eat on the floor, important guests sit on the sleeping platform where generous portions of the best foods have been set aside for them. Important people include aristocrats and commoners with powerful spirit helpers. Commensality implies equality and ordinary people would not dare share food directly with their betters. Special guests are invited to eat slowly ('*Kuman peledah*!') and to satiety ('*Kuman besoh*!'), while ordinary guests eat lightly and rapidly in order to allow other visitors to take their places. Some food may be set aside for absentees so they may participate *in absentia*. The feast is often a midday meal (2.30 pm) before the ritual starts. Thus, the meal has a social rather than religious significance, because the pig has not yet been sacrificed.

The midday meal is not the only opportunity for sharing food. From late morning onwards, the hosts offer coffee, beer, rice pastries, cigarettes, and betel plugs to visitors (men and women). Virtually the whole adult population, accompanied by some children, pays them a visit and, in the absence of a good reason, failure to do so would be rude. Visiting is not always an unalloyed pleasure: brewing rice beer is an imperfect art and some batches are impossibly sour. As they come out of the apartment, visitors warn those who follow them that the beer is atrocious, but the latter still fulfil their social obligation. Families with a good harvest are expected to sacrifice a large pig; there is a correlation between size of sacrifice and size of harvest. When there is a large sacrificial animal, more guests may be entertained at an evening meal. The *ledoh* is a period for having a good time. Men and women dance as they did at the pre-harvest ritual. Young boys may be encouraged to wrestle with each other, but this is less common nowadays. In Kayan wrestling, opponents hold each other around the shoulders and try to make each other fall. This is not a violent activity and tempers remain equanimous.

The *dayong* ritual requires a single officiant. However, as the end-of-year *dayong* is an occasion for display, people normally hire two or more priests, one of whom should ideally be a renowned religious specialist. The senior priest is

Plate 9. During the end-of-year *dayong*, Lake' Ajang, a prominent commoner, offers sixteen eggs in front of his longhouse apartment

Table 20. The end-of-year *dayong* ritual (*dayong duman lebo*), 1971

Date	Officiating priests											Household of
	Locals						Outsiders			Total		
	M	M	M	F	F	F	M	M	M			
April												
24	X				x					2		
28	X			x						2		
30		X			x	x				3		
May												
1	X		x							2		
		x		x				X		3		two priests
2	X		x	x						3		
					x	x	X			3		priest
3		x			x		X			3		priest
4	X			x			X			3		
5	X			x		x				3		
					x		X			2		village chief
6	X									1		
9			x	x	x	x			X	5		senior priest

M = male priest; F = woman priest; X = main officiant; x = other priest.
Each line corresponds to a separate performance of a *dayong* and identifies its officiants. Columns indicate the occasions when priests officiated in Uma Bawang at the end-of-year *dayong* of 1971.

in charge, the others are assistants. In 1971, fourteen households hired a total of thirty seven priests. Six households hired three priests, and Avun, the senior priest of Uma Bawang, hired five priests (Table 20).[48] All households with priests had at least three officiants. (With one exception, priests participated in the *dayong* which they sponsored, but they are not counted in Table 20.) One household hired a single priest, but the circumstances were unusual. They had a very poor harvest. What is more important, perhaps, they had just decided to become Christians. Before they could do so, they had to hold a *dayong* in order to thank spirits for their help and to inform spirits and ancestors of their decision to convert. Avun officiated nine times. In one case (4 May), he shared top billing with a renowned priest from another village. Three priests from other communities celebrated five other *dayong*; all three were well-known

[48] In 1971, there were 21 apartments in Uma Bawang; some apartments housed two domestic units, but they celebrated a single *dayong*. (The chief's slave household participated in the chief's *dayong*, but offered their own small pig.) Two domestic units in the process of amalgamating had a single *dayong* although they occupied two (contiguous) apartments; they sacrificed two pigs. The two Christian households did not sponsor a *dayong* and neither did I. Three households which should have held a *dayong* did not. One of them was my immediate neighbour, the priest Avun Imang, who had lost most of his crop in a fire; everyone was sympathetic to his plight and he was not expected to organize a feast. The two remaining households were generally perceived as anti-social misfits and little was expected from them.

religious specialists and their presence was deemed to make the ritual more interesting. The fact that in every instance the main officiant is a man is circumstantial: being the senior priest of Uma Bawang, Avun was in charge *ipso facto* when he officiated. In a village where the *dayong aya'* is a woman, she will be in charge. Six other *dayong* were led by visiting priests. Their gender was of indirect relevance: it is more difficult to arrange for the visit of a woman priest, because women are reluctant to leave their community without a companion; by contrast, men show no reluctance to travel alone.

The end-of-year *dayong* is a thanksgiving and a request for blessings in the year to come. As with other *dayong*, it starts in the afternoon, when the priest entrusts messages to the sacrificial pig. The following is a précis of the priest's prayer:

> We ask for fertile land; we ask for a good life without accidents or illnesses. If there are illnesses, send them far away to enemy longhouses. Bungan, do not let spirits annoy people; protect us against them. The pig is the payment for powerful medicine. Tonight, we will send to the spirit world the altar, the cloth, the gong, and the pig. The pig will call the spirits, who will bring the offerings to Bungan Malan and Penyelong Luan. The spirits will tell Bungan and Penyelong that this is another year. We ask for a good life; Bungan and Penyelong are our mother and father, our grandparents, who protect us.

At night, priests sing the journey of the sacrificial pig to the spirit country, where it meets numerous spirits. The main officiant does most of the singing and expects a larger payment. Its value depends on the 'weight' of the dreams reported by members of the sponsoring household and on the presence or absence of special rituals. The *maren* pay a higher fee than commoners because they are associated with powerful spirits from whom the officiants need protection. There is no set pattern in the division of labour between priests; sometimes the principal officiant is almost alone in singing, sometimes the task is shared more equally. Avun usually let the secondary officiant entrust messages to the pig in the afternoon; he was not interested in that task and his assistant was usually pleased to carry out the less stressful part of the ritual, which attracts a very small audience.

Singing at night can be hard work; the longest performance by a single priest which I observed lasted from 9 pm to 7 am, with short interruptions for drinks and pastries. Normally, assistant priests also sing in order for the main officiant to take breaks. The *ledoh* is an exhausting period for popular priests. Between 28 April and 6 May, Avun had only two nights' sleep; he napped during the day. One visiting priest officiated three nights in a row. Adult men also become tired because they must stay awake to make responses (*nyabe*) to the priest's chant. The singing may attract forty to a hundred people depending on the reputation of the officiant, the social importance of the sponsors, and everyone's degree of exhaustion. It is the only time of the year when spectators do not bring any

work with them while attending a *dayong*. The audience tends to be larger if the priest is an outsider, because of the element of novelty. The hosts offer rice beer, coffee, arrack, cigarettes, betel plugs, and pastries. Women roll cigarettes and prepare betel plugs for men, but women guests are expected to make their own with ingredients provided by the hosts.

Various rituals can be grafted to the end-of-year *dayong*. Normally, priestly and shamanic activities are entirely distinct, but this is an occasion for shamans to renew their relationship with their spirit helpers by inducing a trance (Chapter VII). The end-of-year *dayong* is also the occasion to 'erect the priestly staff' (to invest a priest), or 'to repair the priestly staff' (to restore the priest's efficacy; see Chapter V). When the priestly staff stands upright in the spirit country, the priest can carry out rituals properly and effectively. Otherwise, it must be restored to its vertical position and cleaned of dead branches and vegetation which cover it. It is an important, 'weighty', ritual; this is why priests hire three officiants for their end-of-year *dayong*. This is also the reason why, in 1971, they all hired an officiant from another community, which is deemed to be more efficacious.

Because the end-of-year *dayong* is a public affair, it is an occasion to make social statements. One afternoon, while the priest entrusted messages to the sacrificial pig, Lake' Ajang, the most influential commoner of Uma Bawang, donned his best clothes, went in front of the house, and offered sixteen eggs to his spirit helper, while people beat a gong (Plate 9). He was imitating a similar performance by Lake' Kebing, the retired chief of Uma Bawang, in order to suggest that he was the equal of the most powerful aristocrat. Results were mixed: he thought he looked grand, but many people found the display pushy and immodest. On the other hand, they agreed that, despite his being a commoner, he had the appropriate supernatural strength to make such a splendid offering.

When every household has held its *dayong*, the headhunting ritual can take place.

The headhunting ritual

It may seem strange that a headhunting ritual (*kayo*) would be part of the annual cycle. The *kayo* was held whenever a head trophy was brought to the longhouse, either at the conclusion of a headhunting expedition or after a fresh trophy had been obtained from a friendly longhouse.[49] As a calendrical ritual, the *kayo* does not require a fresh head trophy. Head trophies are deemed to

[49] When they returned from a long trip, men sometimes performed elements of the *kayo* even if no headhunting had taken place, presumably to protect the village against outside influences (see Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, I:126). For an early description of the *kayo* (and other notes about Kayan religion), see Tromp 1890.

Table 21. *Kayo*: the headhunting ritual

Day	*adat Dipuy*	*adat Bungan*
1	Ritual cleansing Palm wrist-band 'Killing' head-trophy Sacrifice of chicken/pig Offerings to spirits Offerings to one's belongings *Pelah* (purification) Men sleep on gallery Numerous taboos	Ritual cleansing Palm wrist-band 'Killing' head-trophy Sacrifice of chicken/pig Offerings to spirits Offerings to one's belongings *Pelah* Men sleep on gallery Taboo on eating fresh food
2	The remains of the sacrificed animals are consumed Plaited palm decorations are hung on the outside of the gallery Picnic at the river-bank (*nasam*) End of taboo on fresh food Men may sleep in their apartment	*Tapo'* (decorated sticks) are placed at the edge of the river bank
3	*Tapo'* (decorated sticks) are placed at the edge of the river bank* Picnic at the river-bank (*nasam*) End of taboo on fresh food	
4	Those who sacrificed a chicken cook food in bamboo	
7	Those who sacrificed a pig cook food in bamboo	
10	Those who sacrificed a pig cook food in bamboo Men may sleep in their apartment End of taboos	

* It is not clear whether this took place on the second or the third day.

provide blessings for several years and can be used again and again in the *kayo*. '*Kayo*' literally means 'warfare';[50] in the course of the ritual, the trophy is 'killed' once more. Only men join in. According to some, only male participants benefit from the *kayo*; others consider that their families also profit from it. Its primary purpose is to cure illnesses, especially those which are the consequence of breaking taboos. It transfers to the head trophy the supernatural danger (*parit* and *tulah*) inherent in war paraphernalia.

50 '*Ngayo*', 'to wage war' (or perform the *kayo* ritual). '*Uvah*' is another term for the headhunting ritual; it is rarely heard; an Aoheng cognate, *üva*, also refers to a ritual on the return from headhunting (Bernard Sellato, pers. comm.). A young man told me that, when he participated in his first *kayo* as a young boy, he thought he was really going on the war-path.

The ritual is essentially the same in *adat Bungan* as in *adat Dipuy* (Table 21), except for the fact that it used to be more complex, stricter, longer, and burdened by many taboos. In *adat Bungan*, a few taboos have been retained. Work is prohibited; fresh food and other fresh produce are tabooed; thus, one may not bring tobacco or *padi* to the house. It is forbidden to pound rice: during this period, rice dust is dangerous. Nothing should be taken out of the house. These taboos are effective until the next day. Unlike most communal rituals, there is no taboo against outsiders visiting the house. This follows from the *raison d'être* of the ritual, which counteracts dangerous influences from outside; hence, the presence of friendly outsiders is hardly a problem.

Nowadays, some men refuse to participate in the *kayo* because they see it as an obsolete carryover from *adat Dipuy* which has lost its significance with the disappearance of the old taboos. Abstainers are in the minority. Most men are eager to benefit from the *kayo*. They are not convinced that the old taboos have entirely disappeared, because the spirits in charge of these taboos may not have accepted with good grace Bungan's return to power. Lake' Ajang, one of the most literal followers of *adat Bungan*, refused to join the *kayo* despite his wife's insistence; this was a point of disagreement between them.

In *adat Dipuy*, the *kayo* followed the end of the *ledoh* and marked the conclusion of the ritual cycle. It lasted ten days. In *adat Bungan*, it is a two-day ritual and its relation to the harvest festival is not so clear. It must take place after the *Bungan pang*, but may be held before the end-of-year *dayong* or while these are in process. Until 1970, Uma Bawang had kept the old practice of scheduling the *kayo* after completing the *ledoh*. In 1971, they decided to imitate neighbouring villages and held it two days after *Bungan pang* so that people could start work on their new farms. In other words, the completion of the *kayo* still marks the beginning of the new agricultural year, even if the post-harvest thanksgiving is still in progress. Exceptionally, two *kayo* were held in 1971: several men were offended because the chief had not given them proper notice of the ritual and they refused to join in at the last moment.

First day of the headhunting ritual (adat Dipuy and adat Bungan)

For the first day, the headhunting rituals are virtually the same in *adat Bungan* and *adat Dipuy*. Elements specific to *adat Dipuy* will be described later. In the afternoon, participants gather on the gallery and don their best clothes and war paraphernalia: hornbill-feather head-dresses, war jackets, breast shields, and seating mats; they buckle on their finest swords. If they lack a decorated head-dress, they wear a plaited skull-cap (which served in headhunting days as an effective protection against blows to the head). Young boys don adult-sized swords (Plate 10). Instead of swords, some men bring their shotguns. On one occasion, a man donned an old sword which had tasted human blood – something which is deemed to please spirits. Holding an egg, another man asked

Plate 10. Lake' Ngo, wearing a traditional black loin-cloth and leg-bands, places a palm band on his grandson's right leg to protect him against supernatural danger. They are at the river's edge, where they are about to 'kill' the head-trophy.

Bungan to protect the other participants – especially children – from the supernatural danger (*parit*) of this heirloom. In *adat Dipuy*, participants were only allowed to wear a loincloth, a sleeveless shirt, and a cap. Now, they may wear manufactured shorts and shirts; people are all dressed differently and the group of men looks very disparate: some old men are dressed traditionally with black loin-cloths and leg-bands (Plate 10) while others wear long trousers, plaited head-bands, sun-hats, or even cloth hats. Every participant ties a strip of palm (*sang*) around his wrist; some people tie another one below the knee. This protection against *parit* serves the same purpose as bead bracelets worn by priests (*leku dayong*).[51] At one of the *kayo* I attended, the old chief, Lake' Kebing, was dressed up in full regalia. He wore a skull-cap elaborately decorated with beadwork in front, with tufts of red, white, and black feathers stuck here and there at the top, and hornbill tail-feathers standing up in the back. Over a shirt, he wore a goatskin as a kind of tabard; he had donned a valuable old sword and carried a spear in his right hand. A seating mat was attached to his waist (seating mats may be made of animal skin – goat or clouded leopard, for instance – or plaited rattan. They protect the wearer when he sits on an uneven surface). He was an awesome sight.

After scraping his tongue with a piece of bamboo to remove any tabooed food (such as *meke* (a spice), Caladium (*lu'e*), or the *dungan* fish), each man prays:

> I throw away the *parit* which could ensue from killing a human being. I might have illnesses because my mother broke taboos: I throw away the red illness, the illness of mist, and swellings (*pali bela, pali ep, pali betong*); you [head trophy] will clean all this. I am about to kill a man. We of this longhouse are about to go to war. We will not be incapacitated, we will jump like clouded leopards, like tigers; our spears will be like lightning to the eyes of the Iban.

When boys are young, mothers observe taboos on their behalf; in this prayer, men ask to be spared in case their mothers transgressed the taboos. The prayer also refers to the incapacities which could affect members of a war party (see Chapter III).

The ritual takes place at the riverside. Some men raise an egg to Bungan to inform her of their plans:

> 'Bungan Malan, we are about to *ngayo*, we are about to kill a man. This might create *parit* which could bring illness in the same way as if we were killing someone [for real]. This [ritual] will wash away [the *parit*]'.

Men leave the longhouse by the downriver steps; they will return by the upriver steps. This procedure echoes the harvest ritual, in which women also leave the house by the downriver steps and return by the upriver steps. As with

[51] While priests always place their bracelet on their right wrist, *kayo* participants do so indifferently on the left or the right; I suspect this is due to absent-mindedness or ignorance.

the harvest ritual, the men are supposed to file out and back in the order of the longhouse's apartments, but in fact they do not follow this rule strictly, neither do they make an orderly, neat, and solemn line like the women.

Nowadays, Uma Bawang owns only a cranium, which is stored under the longhouse near the chief's apartment. A man collects it and attaches a plaited palm decoration to it. Men gather at the river's edge upriver of the house. If the ritual took place right in front of the house, this would create danger (*sekilah*) for those who bathed there afterwards.[52] In principle, before 'killing' the trophy, participants should take off their paraphernalia, place them on the ground, and ask the trophy to take the *parit* of these objects. They do not in fact do so; holding their swords, spears, and (unloaded) guns, they surround the head trophy, which one man addresses on their behalf:

> Now, I am about to cut you. Your life is not the same as ours, it is a blissful life, an easy life [...]. You are free from any inconvenience, you are not subject to epidemics; this is why I cut you, because I have many illnesses and problems [...]. You will assume the bad bones, the heavy bones, you will assume my illnesses (*pali, sukit, parit*) because you just stay there doing nothing [...]. I want to feel well, I want to be fit [...] as I was before, in the beginning, when I was free from diseases, epidemics, or pain in the bones, or any other illnesses.[53]

This prayer expounds the rationale for headhunting: the trophy is free from the problems which affect the living and is made to assume them. The transfer takes place by striking the trophy seven times, counting the strikes: *'Ji, dua', telo', pat, lima', nem, tusu, uuuuuh'*. They only pretend to strike the head, as they cannot afford to damage their only specimen. One can activate the trophy's curative properties by dipping it in the river and swinging it vigorously; this throws away illnesses and *parit*. (Non-participants, including women, may do the same in the evening.)

They return to the house and one man brings the trophy with him. Somewhere along the path, the first man in the line places an egg offering on a stick; one after the other, each man touches the egg with his right knee, saying: 'It is done. The illness of my veins, the illness of my bones have been thrown away.' As the men come up to the house, a young woman is supposed to pour sugarcane juice on their feet in order to wash away incapacities (*pali*) and supernatural dangers (*sekilah*), but I did not observe this. Another ritual can take

52 It would seem more logical to hold the headhunting ritual downriver of the longhouse so that the stream would carry away the dangerous effects of the ritual. This is indeed what Baling Avun (1961:50) stipulates.

53 I recorded another version of this prayer: 'Now, I am purifying myself (*mehu*); maybe some illnesses are due to my mother breaking taboos. I cleanse them, I throw them away. You [the head] will purify, clean, and wash them. I am about to strike a man, I am about to attack a longhouse. There will be no difficulty, no illness, no red illness, no cracks [in the skin], no swellings. Because you purify me, there is no problem any more.' In *adat Dipuy*, boys were not allowed to smoke until they had transferred the *parit* of tobacco to the head trophy. For women, there was no restriction.

place at this point: the mothers of boys who are first-time participants wrap beads in cloth bundles which they place in a basket. As each boy enters the house, his mother throws him the basket, saying: 'May you be blessed with an easy life. This is the booty of this house, this is booty which you have taken.' Alternatively, the 'booty' is scattered at the top of the stairs and boys make a rush for it.

Men go to their apartment door and, holding the handle, they spit out ginger root which they have been chewing, stating that they are now allowed again to enter the apartment, as well as eat and sleep there.[54] 'This is a way of speaking only', I am told, because they may not enter their rooms until they ritually go out (*nasam*) the next day. 'However, this rule is not followed [strictly] since we have embraced Bungan'. After spitting ginger at the door, each man goes to the edge of the gallery: 'I spit towards the outside, I spit in the eyes of the Iban who would attack us, who would fight with us, so that they cannot see us'.

Men hang their paraphernalia on the gallery and start a fire in front of their apartment on a hearth prepared for this purpose. All charms are brought to the gallery. In *adat Dipuy*, each man sacrificed a pig or chicken, which must be male or an immature female (the sacrifice of an adult female pig or chicken would create supernatural danger (*sekilah*)). Nowadays, a single sacrificial animal can serve for a man and his sons. All boys and young men, as well as some adults, ask senior men to address the animals on their behalf. This is what they say:

> You [chicken/pig] are the purification (*pelah*) for the *kayo*, you are the payment for everything, for the fine swords, for the head-dresses, you are the payment for a thick shield, for a breastplate, for sprightly bones, for light bones. We are able to throw sleep away, to throw the night away. There might be bad dreams [listed in detail]. This is why I purify myself with the *kayo*. I have thrown these dangers away; I will have good dreams, dreams which are effective, just right, as much as possible, whatever Bungan decides. Chicken, you are the payment for the head-dress, the payment for the words, for black land, for fertile land, you are the payment for the soul of all things, so that we can obtain them easily.

He goes on to ask for the usual blessings and prays to the spirits of jungle and river, as well as the spirits of deceased relatives from distant longhouses. There is considerable room for improvisation and some men pray much longer than others. Afterwards, the animal is killed and cooked. (In *adat Dipuy*, boys made fire by friction at their first *kayo*, igniting tinder by rubbing a piece of soft wood with a piece of rattan. Other participants could use a lighter, but they were not allowed to get a brand from the kitchen.) Men cook the meat in bamboo containers placed in the fire (*lemeho'*). This procedure is considered to be a form of broiling (although there is water in the container). Some meat is cooked separately for spirits: liver and flesh are mixed in a bamboo section with rice and water and cooked over the fire. When ready, the bamboo container is split

54 This practice is limited to Uma Bawang proper; it is absent in the Uma Daro' section.

open and its contents poured on a leaf. Meanwhile, women cook in their kitchens their share of the sacrificial animals. They also cook rice for themselves and the men. The *lemeho'* cooking method is now used only in ritual contexts; in the past, it was a convenient technique while travelling, as bamboo is readily available. Disposable containers have another advantage: the *kayo* is associated with death and it might be unwise to allow an ordinary metal pot to be tainted by it.

Men make small bundles of offerings by wrapping meat in the leaves of the *avong* tree in order to 'feed' their belongings. If the shape of the object allows it, the bundle is slipped inside it. If not, it is placed between shingles of the gallery's roof, where the soul of the object is told to come and get it. Men feed every part of their apartment (walls, shingles, door, beams), their furniture, their sword and its sheath, the box in which clothes are stored, money, beads, and anything of value such as gun, outboard motor, and boats. Tools are asked to perform their task correctly and not break down. Two informants explained the procedure in different ways: 'Feeding one's belongings will make life easier; our things will be in good shape and will work better'. 'We feed our possessions in order to be able to take them away with us when enemies attack the longhouse. If we do not feed them, we will run away and our belongings will be plundered by the enemy.' After the men have fed all their possessions, the remaining food is divided in two portions, one of which is thrown outside the house to the spirits:

> We ask the help of the spirits under the river. We ask the help of the spirits of places where people were killed. We ask the help of Galu, Gurang, and Timang [the spirits of the boulders downriver of Uma Bawang], we ask the help of the spirit in the boulder upriver of the house, the spirit of Ladong hill, the spirits at the source of the Belepe, the spirits at the source of the Murum, the spirits of the Bakun rapids, the spirits at the bottom of the sea. Maybe we will go there some day; the boat will float, we will not sink, we will not be buried. You are the ones who put things upright, who put things in order. [The man goes on in great detail to request the help and benevolence of spirits.] When we go in the jungle, there are wild boars, there is thunder, there are broken trees, swaying trees which could fall on us, but we go on walking. I ask the help of all the spirits of this world.

Several handfuls of food are thrown away; if the man is speaking on behalf of his son, he asks him to touch the food and throws it, saying: 'This is the offering of So-and-So' and praying briefly on his behalf. He concludes: 'Now we are eating with you, we will not suffer when we break taboos. There is no incapacity, we [spirits and us] are simply one body.' They eat rice and meat and wrap the leftovers in a leaf which they store until the next day in a safe place away from dogs. They are now ready to eat food boiled in the normal way. People eat on their own gallery, but members of other domestic units may be invited to share in the meal, particularly close relatives. Christians, who did not take part in the *kayo*, show no reluctance in sharing the food.

After the meal, male priests purify (*melah*) individually each participant. In *adat Dipuy*, each man donned all his paraphernalia for the *pelah* in order to neutralize their danger (*parit*); nowadays only boys need do so, because their souls are weak. The priest uses a wood shaving dipped in the blood of the sacrificial animal. He waves it around the boy, paying particular attention to his right arm, the arm which holds weapons: 'I *melah* So-and-So because he cut off a head, because he burned a house. Let there be no incapacity any more.' Boys take off their paraphernalia, place them on the floor, and jump over them, 'so that the soul of these things will be below and their own soul above'. The wood shaving is slipped between the shingles where it will remain. That night, all men sleep on the veranda. At this point, sexual intercourse would bring dire consequences (*sekilah*, which also refers to the repercussions of incest). Some women spend the night on the gallery with their husbands. There is much talk and merrymaking and people go to sleep late.

Second day of the headhunting ritual (adat Bungan)

On the first day of the *kayo* before the start of the ritual, men weave palm leaf strips into decorations (*sang*) (Plate 11). On the morning of the second day, participants trickle through to the edge of the river bank and stick into the ground long poles (*tapo'*) which have been frayed to decorate them. Each man hangs *sang* decorations on a pole while saying: 'We do this to make our enemies helpless, so that those who would quarrel with us will be without veins, without bones, without breath. Their eyes will be blind, they will not see us when we fight them.' Each participant notches the pole four times with a sword, counting the strikes: 'One, two, three, four, uuuh!'. (According to one explanation, notching the poles allows men to cut farm boundary markers, in other words to mark the limits of their new fields.) The *tapo'* is visible from the river for spirits to see that the longhouse has been on the warpath. In principle, there should be one *tapo'* per person; in 1971, there were only thirty-one because most boys used their father's *tapo'*. When men return to the house, each of them hangs a *sang* on the gallery railing in front of his apartment. In headhunting times, *sang* decorations announced the capture of trophies; members of neighbouring communities came to participate in the celebrations. The *sang* were messages not only for humans, but for auguries, who rejoiced when a headhunting expedition had taken place.

The ritual concludes with men and women leaving the longhouse for a picnic (*kuman bahe'*, lit. 'eating on the river-bank'; the meal itself is called *nasam*) during which they eat wild vegetables, meat, and fish which they have collected at the beginning of the outing. As soon as they catch fish, the men cook it, put it in their mouth, and spit it out, telling Bungan that they have eaten fresh food: 'I spit out this fresh food, so that I can eat again in the apartment, so that I can walk over the threshold, so that I can sleep with a woman again'.

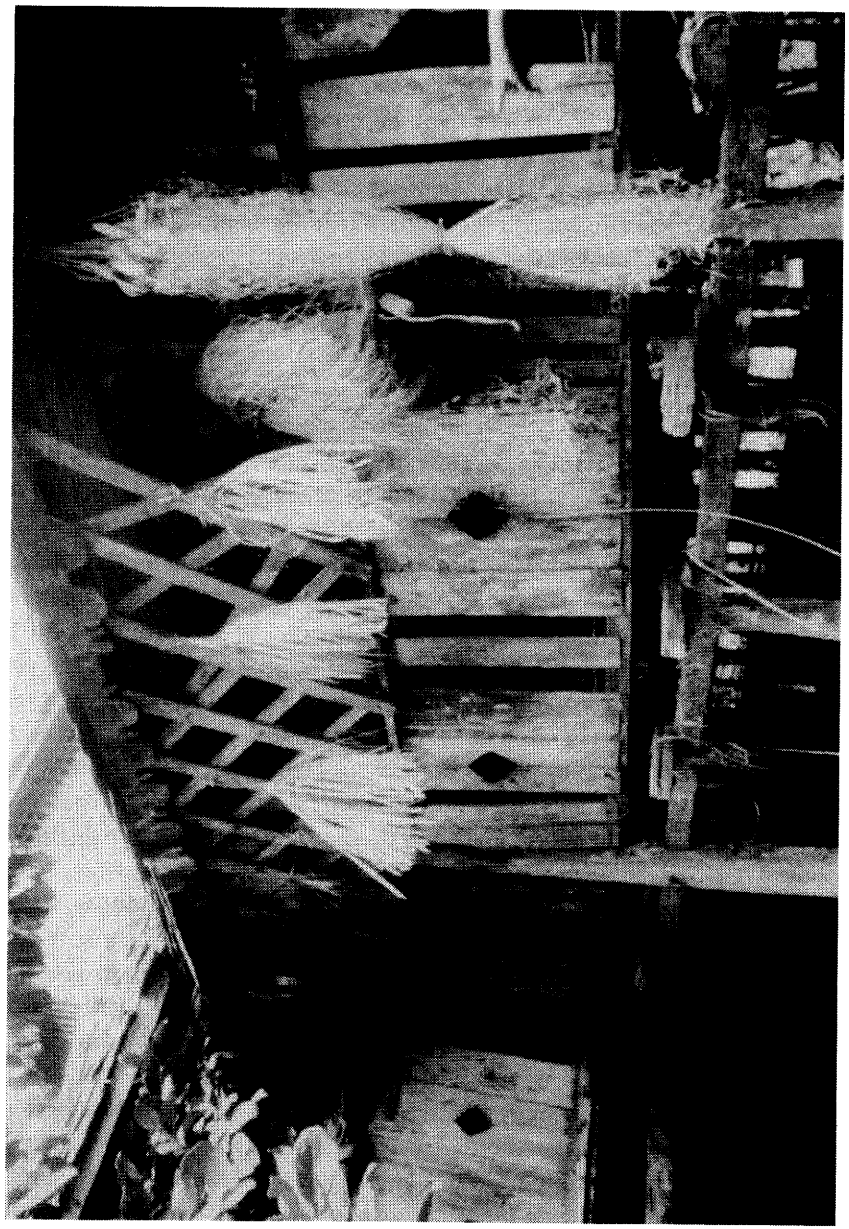

Plate 11. Plaited palm decorations (*sang*) hang outside the gallery

From now on, there is no prohibition against hunting and fishing. Back at the house after the picnic, men chew and spit some ginger root 'in order to burn the eyes of the enemies'. Until then, no fresh food, jungle produce, or cultivated plants could be brought to the house, nor could one take anything out of the house. One may now throw away the ashes of the previous day's fire, the remains of sacrificial animals (such as chicken feathers), leftovers from the ritual meal, and the bamboo sections in which the offerings were cooked. Men take off their palm wristbands and tie them to the palm decorations. No work is allowed until the following day, when they may start clearing the fields for the next agricultural year.

The headhunting ritual (adat Dipuy)

The first day of the *kayo* has remained essentially unchanged in *adat Bungan*. In *adat Dipuy*, the *kayo* lasted ten days, rather than two days as it does now (Table 21); it is not clear whether all productive activities were prohibited for the whole period. Many taboos were in force during the *kayo*; some of these applied particularly to boys, who were more liable to supernatural danger (*parit*). Unlike adults, boys were not allowed to decorate their head-dresses with tail-feathers of helmeted or rhinoceros hornbills. They could not smoke. They had to eat rice starting from the base of the leaf on which the rice was served, so that when their prey (animal or human) ran away, they would be able to follow it; if they started eating from the tip of the leaf, their enemies would be fierce. It was taboo for them to eat the heads of pigs, chickens, or fish, otherwise enemies would chop their heads off. They could not eat the feet of animals or fish tails for fear of hurting their own feet. Boys were not allowed to drink broth or water, lest water rot their feet. These prohibitions were in force for ten days. As young boys could not be expected to observe these taboos, their mothers did so on their behalf. The prohibition on drinking was not observed literally: boys (or mothers, as the case might be) drank underwater while bathing. During the *kayo*, women observed the same taboos as during pregnancy: they could not sleep while there was lightning, thunder, or rain, and they had to avoid Caladium (*lu'e*), mushrooms, and the spice *meke*. These taboos were also in force for real headhunting and warfare. For the ten days of the *lali kayo*, it was forbidden to pound rice in the house and to handle raw tobacco or rattan. Male participants in the *kayo* slept on the gallery and were not allowed to enter the apartment. An exception was made for young boys who could sleep with their mothers in the apartment, but the rule was strictly enforced for adults as it was essential to avoid sexual relations.[55]

[55] In *adat Bungan*, women may spend the night on the gallery with their husbands. Informants disagree as to whether this was allowed in *adat Dipuy*; some say they did because young boys who had participated in the ritual would have felt lonely without their mothers. In any case, sexual relations were – and still are in *adat Bungan* – strongly tabooed that night. In the

War paraphernalia were deemed to be very dangerous (*parit*); it took ten years of participation before one could wear a fully-decorated war-cap. The first time a boy joined a *kayo*, he sacrificed a cock and attached to his cap two rhinoceros hornbill tail-feathers which hung down from the cap. The next year, the boy sacrificed a pig and the feathers were allowed to stand up. The following year, a cock was sacrificed again and two new tail-feathers were hung on the cap, which were raised the following year as a pig was sacrificed. It took ten years to have the full complement of ten feathers. Those who sacrificed a chicken followed taboos for four days, while the taboo period was ten days for a pig.[56]

In *adat Dipuy*, before cooking pig meat in a bamboo container, they lightly roasted its spleen which was thrown under the house to Ba Sungo, a spirit who must be fed first. Bamboo containers contained liver and meat from the pig's neck. Food was wrapped in banana leaves, eight bundles for aristocrats, four for commoners. These were attached to the jaw of the sacrificial pig and placed on the rafters.[57] Offerings of breast meat were wrapped in *avong* leaves, as is still the case in *adat Bungan*. Men fed their belongings, head trophies, and the *bato' tuluy*, the sacred stones in front of the chief's apartment (Chapter III). Some offerings were reserved for animal auguries, to whom the men had prayed when they went down to the river to 'cut' the head (Baling Avun 1961:14).

On the second day (*do kelalam*), men finished eating the sacrificial animals before leaving the house. In the meantime, women ate chicken because it was forbidden to bring in fresh food. On the third day, a picnic at the river bank marked the opening of the longhouse. On the fourth day, men cooked food in bamboo on the veranda and ate it there. For those who had sacrificed a chicken,

village of Uma Aging, it was forbidden for everyone to eat sambhur deer, mousedeer, the spice *meke*, or Caladium (*lu'e*) (Baling Avun 1961:15). During this 10-day period among the Busang of the Mahakam, men could not even accept a drink from their wives or give them anything, such as meat from game. They were not allowed to cook anything in a metal pot. During the day, they went for picnics at the river (Sombroek n.d.1:1.3). Baling Avun (1961:15) describes a more lavish version of the *kayo* called *nyavi*, in which a large pig was sacrificed; women partook of it.

56 This procedure has some similarities to the Kenyah *suhen*, a component of the headhunting ritual (*mamat*), which 'primarily serves to accustom boys' souls progressively to the influence of body and clothing decorations which are to a large extent related to age, rank, and participation in headhunting matters' (Elshout 1926:215). Unlike the Kenyah *mamat*, the Kayan *kayo* lacks ritual ranking, which could weaken the stratification system by emphasizing individual valour through headhunting. By contrast with the Kenyah, Kayan chiefs tried to limit the incidence of headhunting in order to retain better control of the political process (Rousseau 1990:182-3). A form of ritual ranking persisted in a residual fashion in the Kayan *kayo* in relation to the number of hornbill feathers on the cap, but it had lost most of its social significance because all adult men were allowed to use ten feathers.

57 If the house had to be pulled down, these offerings, together with the piece of wood on which they were attached, were stored in a small hut built in front of the house. Similarly, when a village moved to a new location, old head trophies were left in a hut built for the purpose.

this was the end of the ritual. There were additional steps for those who had killed a pig but, from then on, everyone was allowed to eat fresh food from the jungle. On the seventh and tenth days, those who had sacrificed a pig cooked food in bamboo once more. On the fourth and seventh days, while they ate on the gallery, men stated that there were no taboos any more; in fact, taboos remained in force until the tenth day. After finishing the *kayo*, they could start seeking auguries for the new agricultural year.[58]

Conclusion

This chapter goes a long way to show why priests are essential to Kayan religion. The complexity of rituals, and the need to perform them correctly, is such that the responsibility needs to be delegated to skilled individuals.

Many ritual acts have a magical component insofar as they mimic desired outcomes; conversely, actions which are tabooed during rituals would be the parallels of undesired circumstances. Rituals include a major verbal component; prayers are uttered, either directly, or entrusted to the sacrificial animals which will deliver them to the intended recipients. Ritual acts are accompanied by commentaries which explain to spirits their efficacy. When necessary, rituals are justified by the narration of a myth of origin. It is not sufficient to carry out the rituals; it is important to explain them, to make sense of them. While they are directed towards spirits, these verbal elaborations have a didactic effect, insofar as the audience hears the explanations. Rituals aim to transform or enhance reality; with their verbal component, they draw participants in a web of shared meanings which give the comforting illusion of control over the world. The same comments can be made of the *dayong* ritual, which is the topic of the next chapter.

58 Ritual details differed between Uma Bawang proper and the Uma Daro' section. The day before the *kayo*, Uma Daro' placed in front of the house the trunk of a soft-wood tree, about 15 centimetres in diameter, on which one branch had been left (*kayo' gla'*). They drew a design on it (*kalong usong irang*). After striking the head trophy at the river's edge, the *maren* sacrificed a chick to the auguries. Its blood was used to purify (*melah*) all the men on the chief's veranda. The chick's uncooked meat was put on sixteen bamboo skewers. There were also sixteen thumb-sized sieves in which they poured sugarcane juice (*jakan*). The skewers were stuck into the tree trunk and the sieves were hung on the branch. The chief prayed on behalf of his whole longhouse. Then, each man sacrificed a pig or chicken in the usual way. Unlike Uma Bawang, first-time participants did not make fire by rubbing a string on a piece of wood. The people of Uma Daro' placed palm decorations, not only on the gallery, but also in their apartments, as an additional sign of having held the *kayo*. They used only *avong* leaves to wrap food offerings, unlike Uma Bawang, who also wrapped some food in banana leaves. Unlike his commoners, the chief of Uma Daro' did not place a marker decorated with woven palms at the river bank, because the *kayo' gla'* served the same purpose.