CHAPTER IX

Rituals of the life cycle

Until recently, the Kayan kept no count of years, hence they did not know their age. In 1971, I was trying to place an event recounted by an old informant and asked him whether it had taken place long ago; 'Yes,' he said, 'about four years ago'. Somehow, this did not fit with the context, and I followed-up with another question: 'Did it take place before the Second World War?' – 'Oh yes, quite a bit before that!', he said. On another occasion, a young Kayan asked an old man about his age. 'I don't know,' he said. 'I think I'm past having an age'. In the absence of a chronology, a person's place in the life cycle is marked by events such as marriage, the birth of the first child, and assumption of grand-parental status. Like the *dayong*, naming, wedding, and funeral rituals include markers of social stratification. Like the rituals of the annual cycle, the *dayong*, and communal curing rituals, these three rites of passages are *lali* (see Chapter VI). This chapter also describes other rituals of the life cycle.

Childhood rituals

Pregnancy

In *adat Dipuy*, both husband and wife followed pregnancy taboos. The expectant father was not allowed to tie knots, hammer nails, close containers, or engage in any activity which involved securing something in place; breaking this taboo would render childbirth difficult. It would have been impossible to follow this prohibition to the letter; in practice, he was allowed to tie a knot, untie it, and then tie it again for good; in the same way, he would open a lid immediately after shutting it, then shut it for good.[1] It was taboo for both parents to eat animals which close themselves up (such as turtles), which stay in holes (such as honey bears), or any animal which was snagged in a tree, otherwise childbirth would again be difficult. It was forbidden to cut the *lunok* vine which twists itself around trees. The couple had to chew sugarcane from its base in order to go in the same direction as the growing plant, otherwise this

[1] He could also place a temporary binding, then the real binding or nail, after which he removed the temporary binding, announcing he was doing so. Similarly, if he was driving a post into a hole, he first placed in it another piece of wood which he removed after the post was in place.

would 'oppose the coming out of the infant' (*nyura' usang*). Similarly, they ate rice starting from the base of the leaf in which it was packed; after the meal, the leaf was rolled up and thrown out. When sleeping, expecting parents had to lie down parallel to the floor boards. All these prohibitions prevented the parents from going against or cutting across the flow of things, which would impede childbirth.

Neither parent could skin animals, cut hair, or scrape paint, otherwise the child would have blisters and would be generally unwell (*pali*). If a basket strap broke, they could not use its contents. They could not eat animals which twitched after being killed; they avoided rotten meat or any animal which had been found dead. The parents could not eat salt, otherwise the child would have no teeth. Some sour fruits were forbidden. Expecting parents were not allowed to look at snakes or watch a bitch give birth. When the thunder was rumbling or if it was misty, the mother was not allowed to sleep, otherwise the child would become unduly sleepy.[2] However, she could fake wakefulness by sleeping seated near the fire. I am told the husband could not have sex with his wife during her pregnancy, but it is not clear whether this prohibition applied for the whole period.

Birth and post-natal practices

During childbirth, a chain is brought to the room where the woman is giving birth. Through sympathetic magic, its weight helps pull down the child. Afterwards, the husband brings on a tray two pieces of cloth, four eggs, and a large hen with which to purify (*ngaping*) his wife.

In the past, when twins were born, one of them was exposed in the jungle. Members of other households were allowed to take the abandoned child as their own. However, it was forbidden to refer to the fact that the children were twins, otherwise this would attract the unwelcome attention of spirits. In *adat Bungan*, twins may be kept; in 1970, the presence of twins in another longhouse was considered a great novelty.

Some deliveries are considered to be 'bad', namely when the child appears face down, feet first, or if the mother urinates while giving birth. The child must be given away to another family, otherwise it will sicken and die. A neighbour of mine had to give away seven children for this reason. Some parents are

2 This is called *pali 'ep lok*, which might translate as 'the disability of the still mist'. 'When it rained, [the parents] could not sleep until the rainwater had reached the river' (Sombroek n.d.1:8.2). Aristocrats had to stay awake when there was thunder, but slaves had fewer taboos and only had to stay awake when it rained (Sombroek n.d.1:8.4). Parents had to make sure they did not let a hand hang out of a mosquito net, otherwise the baby's hand could come out first (Sombroek n.d.1:8.2). The man could not caulk a boat, as this could cause a slow delivery. He could not work at the forge, otherwise the child would be red and misshapen (Sombroek n.d.1: 8.3). During pregnancy, the man could not get a haircut from his wife, otherwise the child would be born with a wound on the brow (Sombroek n.d.1:8.4).

understandably reluctant to part with a child and they try to fool supernatural forces. In 1971, a woman whose child was born face down had him baptized, thus putting him out of reach of Kayan spirits. If the child has been adopted by another couple, , the parents may try to take their child back after a few years; if the child remains healthy, this is a sign the bad birth has been forgotten; otherwise, it is returned to its adoptive family. The biological mother is not allowed to feed the child. Nonetheless, the child may keep links with the biological parents. When she was a child, an Uma Bawang woman became ill every time she returned to her parents. She lived with her adoptive family, but she was considered to be part of her biological parents' household. When she married, she took up residence in her husband's apartment, against the universal Kayan rule of initial uxorilocality, because it was clear by then that she would be ill again if she returned to her parents.[3]

When a woman gives birth, charms must be taken out of all the apartments in the longhouse and brought to the gallery, otherwise their potency will be destroyed.[4] When a birth is imminent, households which are known to have charms are warned to bring them out. In headhunting days, except for the husband, men were not allowed to witness childbirth; he was purified (*ngaping*) in front of the house afterwards. Other men were not allowed to enter the room until the umbilical cord had been cut.

On the day of a birth, longhouse members may not go to the farm (otherwise pests would eat the *padi*), but one may leave the house to fish and hunt.[5] Messengers are sent to the farm areas to call people back to the longhouse. Until the message of a birth has been received, there is no problem if people continue to work on their fields. In other words, it does not constitute an inadvertent breach of taboo. Someone commented that spirits are not offended if people go on working as long as they are genuinely unaware that a child has been born.

Mother and child must stay away from farms for an unspecified amount of time, as their presence would be polluting. If a woman happens to give birth in

3 Because virilocal residence was arranged for her benefit, the usual requirement for bridewealth was waived: her parents had not lost a daughter who could have lived with them. Oddly enough, a breech presentation is not a 'bad birth'. On the other hand, it is an unusual birth, and girls born in this way are called Hura' and boys Hurang. In the Mahakam area, if a child was born with the umbilical cord wrapped around the stomach, this was a sign the child would cause the death of other people: the umbilical cord stood for the rope with which a coffin lid is tied down. Such infants were choked to death by pouring water in their mouths. If the baby shot out hands first and landed on the floor, it was considered to be an animal rather than a human being; it was killed in the same way (Sombroek n.d.1:8.24). Among the Kenyah, all births other than when the child's skull appears first were considered to be bad births; such children were killed, not only because they would bring danger to the community, but also because they would themselves have a miserable life if allowed to live (Elshout 1923:157-8).

4 The term which describes the negative power of childbirth is *sekilah*, which also applies to the consequences of incest.

5 Although some say this prohibition is obsolete in *adat Bungan*, I noted its observance. In *adat Dipuy*, they stayed away from their farms for the next two days as well.

a newly opened farm area, it must be purified. In *adat Dipuy*, the mother observed several taboos until the child could walk, otherwise the child would become ill. She could not eat fat meat, rotten meat, or sambhur deer. Some mothers still observe these taboos in *adat Bungan*.

After giving birth, the mother must protect herself against cold. She is 'unripe' (*mengun*) and must be kept warm so as to 'ripen'; this is still the case if the child is still-born. The mother covers her head with a turban and she does not remove her shirt, because she must protect herself from winds. She may not drink cold water, otherwise the child would have stomach cramps. In olden times, women warmed themselves even more thoroughly. They stayed by the fire without interruption three to five days (and nights) in order to 'dry the belly' (*na butit gang*). The mother slipped her wrists inside loops attached to a frame beside the fireplace so she would not fall down when she dozed. Old women said this 'drying' process produced blisters on the back. While 'drying', the mother made sure her turban did not fall in the fire, as this would mean bad luck for the child. To warm herself further, she could drink a decoction of ginger in hot water or eat the beans of the *petah* tree, which give a warm feeling. She could wrap a fire-heated stone in a cloth and hold it on the belly. Nowadays, some women still follow this procedure which, they say, counteracts post-partum aches and weight loss.[6]

Adoption and other elective parent-child relationships

Because of the prevalence of stem families, there are few orphans among the Kayan and the motivation for adoption is to be found in the childlessness of the adoptive parents (or their desire for more children). In the standard form of

6 Among the Mendalam Kayan and the Busang, the first faeces of a baby were kept. If they were lost, the child would lose his belongings when he travelled. Right after birth, the child received a bracelet (*leku lali*) made of Job's tears in order to keep spirits at bay. When the umbilical cord fell off, the bracelet of Job's tears was replaced by another one, and then a third one after the child received a name. The mother attached the discarded armbands to her necklace until the harvest festival (Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, I:71). In the first month after birth, neither mother nor child could wear fineries, in particular anything red (Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, I:73-4). The mother could do no work for the first ten days and the child could not be taken out of the house for a month. The father was not allowed to go far from the house. When it fell off, the umbilical cord was carefully kept in a bamboo container. When an outsider visited for the first time an apartment in which there was a young child, he offered a small gift (*usut*) for the protection of the child. It was kept in the *legen*, a basket which also contained the bamboo knife with which the umbilical cord had been cut, a necklace with which to frighten spirits away, a small dibble stick with which the child made his first hole in the ground, his first spinning top, the eggshell with which the child received his first name, his first clothes, cloth which formed part of the baby carrier (*avet*), a small bowl (*wit lali*), the tool with which the ears were pierced, the first faeces, the headband which the mother wore during the child's first year, and a bamboo container with the first water in which the child was washed (Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, I:126-7). The umbilical cord was cut with a bamboo knife because children were not to come in contact with iron until the harvest festival (Sombroek n.d.1:8.14). It should be noted that bamboo knives are very sharp and make a clean cut.

adoption, when the adoptive parents' motivation is a straightforward desire to have a child, and the adoption is arranged freely between biological and adoptive parents, the latter make no gifts to the biological parents in exchange for the child (*anak among*), who takes up residence with its adoptive parents, and takes on the patronymic of the adoptive father. (Kayan names are in two parts: the autonym – the person's own name – followed by the name of the father. 'Himang Jok' is Himang, son of Jok.) The statistically-small sample of Uma Bawang suggests that, before the introduction of low-level medical care in the early 1960s, slightly less than 20 per cent of children were adoptees. Since then, the proportion has fallen below 10 per cent.

The Kayan recognize other forms of elective parent-child relationships. We have seen that 'bad births' are a cause of adoption. These are not adoptions in the Kayan sense of the term (*among*), because the transfer is not arranged freely between biological and adoptive parents. In principle, such infants have to be 'abandoned' outside the house and then 'discovered' by the foster parents who pretend to be surprised to come across a baby. The child bears the patronymic of the father with whom he or she lives usually.

On rare occasions, bereft parents come across a child who reminds them of their own. They seek permission from the child's parents to establish a special relationship with him or her. This child is meant to fill the emotional void left by the deceased offspring and is called *anak kaluy* ('replacement child'). The *anak kaluy* remains with the biological parents, but occasionally visits the 'adoptive' parents and may help them in their farm work when he or she is old enough. In a ritual, the child is transferred to the adoptive parents who give the real parents a bead waist-band, a skirt, a bead wrist-band with old and valuable beads, a gong, and a sword. The last two items protect the biological parents against interference from the dead child.[7]

Dreams may also establish a parental relationship. A dream which enjoins parents to give away a child to a specific couple must be taken very seriously, whether the dreamer is a parent, the would-be adopter, or a third party. Such children are called *anak nyupe'* ('dream children'). Whether the 'dream child' lives with the biological or adoptive parents depends on circumstances. If the dream indicates that the transfer is a matter of life and death, the child lives with the adoptive parents. Otherwise, the 'dream child' is likely to remain a member of his or her natal family and visits the adoptive family from time to time. However, 'dream children' participate in the *dayong* of both biological and adoptive families. Given that the *dayong* is the quintessential ritual of the domestic unit, this emphasizes that 'dream children' belong to two households. The institutions of *anak kaluy* and *anak nyupe'* are suited to the longhouse

7 As I have not come across an instance of *anak kaluy*, I do not know what patronymic would be used. I assume the child would normally be known by the patronymic of the biological father.

environment in which children circulate freely between households, and to a society where all adults look after the well-being of all children.

We saw (Chapter III) that some aristocratic descent lines observed specific taboos. Adoptees were not bound by such taboos, which suggests that adoption is not a complete substitute for the biological relationship. Indeed, it is considered improper for the adoptive child of a chief to succeed to the position, unless he is himself of *maren* birth. Some men of low birth have in fact inherited the chiefly office from their adoptive fathers, but they are looked down upon by chiefs with appropriate pedigrees. This follows from the ideology that the exercise of power is an inherited characteristic.

Naming rituals

The Kayan receive several names through their life (Rousseau 1983). Parents wait several weeks before bestowing a name on their new-born. Infants have a tenuous hold on life and giving them a name would attract undue attention from potentially dangerous spirits. As long as they remain unnamed and for some time afterwards, all baby boys are called Bay and all girls Binye. The Kayan have different names for men and women. Some names are reserved for the *maren*, such as Dian (the name of a culture hero who brought the Kayan in the Baluy region) or Bato' ('stone'; since stones are imbued with power, it would be risky for a commoner to use a powerful name).

Babies receive a name at the occasion of a ritual which I will describe in a moment. They may also take on other names afterwards. A child may be given a 'bad name' (*aran ji'ek*) or an 'illness name' (*aran kelutun*). A child who is affected with a series of illnesses may go through several illness names. Such names deflect the attention of bothersome spirits and make the child unrecognizable. When a woman died in 1969, her three children took on 'bad names': Hado ('to forget', so she would not pine for her mother), Item ('black', so her memory would become clouded), and Tamat ('late to arrive', because the boy knew his mother only for a short time). Typical 'bad names' (or 'illness names') are Angah ('soot'), Uning ('ashes'), Lisang ('charcoal'), Lingen ('hidden'), Luho, Luhep, and Lireh ('rubbish'), which make the child invisible or unpalatable to spirits. One orphan was called Tubit ('pulled out') to indicate that he was taken away from the deceased. The bestowal of a 'bad name' is confirmed during a *dayong* ceremony.

When they are adults, the Kayan take on teknonyms, necronyms, and gerontonyms without any ritual. Parents assume the teknonym of their first child: thus, when Himang and Lurak had their first child Levo, they became known as Taman Levo ('Father of Levo') and Hinan Levo ('Mother of Levo'). Some parents are usually referred to by their teknonym, others by their own name. When other children are born, parents do not take on the teknonym of the newborn, unlike the Kenyah practice; however, the birth of additional children is often acknowledged by temporarily calling the parents Taman/Hinan Bay/Binye ('Father/Mother of unnamed boy/girl'). When Himang and Lurak had a second child, they were addressed as Taman Bay and Hinan Bay for a few months, then they reverted to their original teknonym. As soon as a couple loses any child, the teknonym is discarded for a necronym (death-name). After the death of the first child, parents return to their own name prefaced with the title Uyung. After the death of any child other than the first child, the father prefixes his name with the title Akem and the mother with He'et. When they reach grand-parental age, people become known by a gerontonym, the titles Lake' ('man') or Doh ('woman') before their own name. For instance, if Himang and Lurak lost a child, they would cease to be called Taman Levo and Hinan Levo. They would be called Uyung Himang and Uyung Lurak if their first-born child died, and Akem Himang and He'et Lurak if any other child died. Upon becoming grandparents, they would be known as Lake' Himang and Doh Lurak.[8]

The naming ritual is in three parts, each of which is identified by a particular sacrifice. In the first part, one bestows the 'name of the egg' (*aran teloh*); this is followed by the 'name of the chicken' (*aran hnyap*) and ends with the 'name of the pig' (*aran uting*). These are three distinct rituals and, in theory, they should take place on different days. In practice, the first two namings are often carried out together. The third naming is part of a *dayong*, and is often scheduled at the next harvest festival. The same name may be bestowed at the three rituals or three different names may be given. This three-part naming ritual establishes an individual's 'real name(s)' (*atek aran lan*).[9] The naming ritual fulfils several purposes. In the first place it transforms an infant into a real human being. A baby who dies before receiving a name is buried without ceremony. Babies could be exposed and allowed to die only as long as they remained unnamed. Secondly it places the child within the social system: there are different rituals for aristocrats and commoners. And finally it protects the child against supernatural dangers.

The structure of naming rituals has remained essentially unchanged with the

[8] Other necronyms refer to the death of other categories of relatives. People always assume a necronym after the death of a child or spouse, but there is more variation in the use of other death names (Rousseau 1983:255-61). Given that they distinguish only between first child and all other children, Kayan necronyms do not emphasize birth order to the same extent as the Kenyah, where there are different necronyms for each child. The existence of a separate necronym for the first-born child does not correspond to any precedence for the first-born in any aspect of Kayan social life. For instance, the succession to chiefship does not emphasize primogeniture; rather, if there are several sons, the most competent one is chosen. I know of one ritual circumstance where birth order is relevant: the last-born child (*anak telo'u telo'u*) is believed to have the power to make the river ebb when it is too high (by throwing a stone in the river).

[9] Specific phases of the moon (*butit halap* and *butit halap uli*) are particularly auspicious for a naming ritual. *Bulan musit* is the best time for *maren* marriages and namings; during my field-

Bungan reform. One can note the following differences between *adat Dipuy* and *adat Bungan:* a. in the old religion, this ritual, like all other rituals, was addressed to a multitude of spirits. In *adat Bungan,* naming rituals are directed to Bungan who takes the responsibility of dealing with other spirits; b. the taboos of the *adat Dipuy* naming have disappeared in *adat Bungan;* c. as with all other rituals, there is less anxiety about making ritual mistakes, because Bungan is a benevolent deity.

It is possible, although not necessary, to select the child's name with the help of divination, using the *nenong teloh* procedure in which an egg is balanced on a sword blade (see Chapter VII). Before placing the egg on the sword, the officiant holds it while praying to Bungan: 'This is the child's name because of you [Bungan]. This name will make him well, it will make him healthy, it will make it easy for him to obtain goods; X will be able to speak, X will hit the mark accurately, X will be brave, [...]'. If the egg stands on the sword, the name is appropriate; if not, one tries again with another name. (I do not know whether they come prepared with alternate names in case of refusal or think up new ones on the spot.) The *nenong teloh* is an *adat Bungan* divination procedure. In *adat Dipuy,* the officiant tossed bamboos for the naming of an aristocrat, and sections of banana leaves for commoners (see Chapter VII).

The first naming occurs one or two months after birth. In *adat Dipuy,* the baby's ears were 'pricked' open by inserting a string (*tale' keliat*) in the ear passages. This ensured that the child could hear normally and understand human speech.[10] Another string was stretched across the baby's belly in order to prevent the mother's milk from flowing too rapidly through the body. A bamboo container was touched to the child's anus in order to prevent the child from having diarrhoea or passing blood. The child was told to defecate only when the mother could take care of it; this was meant to prevent sorcerers from harming the child. The string with which the ears had been 'pricked' and the string which was stretched across the belly were stored in this bamboo container and placed in the *ingen lali,* the basket which contained the household's sacred objects.

In *adat Bungan,* these practices have been replaced by a simpler procedure: the child's ears, belly, and anus are rubbed with an egg to achieve the same purposes. This takes place near the hearth where the mother 'dried' herself after the birth. (My neighbour Avun Imang, otherwise a staunch supporter of *adat Bungan,* thought that the *adat Dipuy* rituals were more effective and that children have more intestinal problems since *adat Bungan.*) After the child has been rubbed with the egg, someone goes to the gallery to announce the child's name. The mother goes to the door of her apartment to call her child's souls and places

10 The Kayan associate mental ability with aural acuity: they often treat the deaf as if they were stupid and they speak loudly to feeble-minded individuals with normal hearing. People who are mentally deficient are called *amang,* which also means dumb, speechless.

them back into the child's head, 'because this is when children start to have souls'. In principle, the mother will repeat this practice every evening for a few years until the souls become less labile.

If the second naming takes place on the same day, household members pretend to sleep after the first ritual. After a while, someone imitates the cock's crow; they all 'wake up' and exit to the gallery to welcome the 'new' day. This subterfuge fools the spirits into thinking that people have properly waited for a night to elapse before holding the second ritual. They immediately return to the room and sacrifice a chicken. The mother again calls her child's souls at the door; this is followed by a protective ritual (*pelah*) for the whole family.[11]

These two naming rituals are private except for the fact that the child's name is announced on the gallery. The third naming is a public occasion. It is part of a full-scale *dayong* during which a pig is sacrificed. In *adat Dipuy,* when rituals were more expensive, people sometimes waited for a year or two if they could not afford a proper end-of-year *dayong.* The *dayong,* a familial ritual, publicly acknowledges the child's membership in the domestic unit. Because the child is officially presented to the community at that time, the 'name of the pig' is also called the 'name of coming out' (*aran usang*).

In *adat Dipuy,* the third naming called for a number of rituals and prohibitions. Well-to-do commoners imitated the *maren* by carrying the sacrificial pig in procession on the gallery. Commoners processed four times, the *maren* sixteen times. Men ate the meat of the sacrificial pig on the gallery, women in the apartment. Because a pig had been sacrificed, there was a ten-day taboo (see Chapter VII). On the day of the *dayong,* household members stayed home. The next day, they went out. At the end of the taboo, they went to their farm (*pusang luma'*) or, if this was inconvenient, they simply walked to the river, pretending they were going to their farm. At the base of the steps, they pretended to engage in poison-fishing. Someone beat the roots of the *avong* tree (*Nephelium* spp.) as if it were fish poison (*Derris elliptica*), then scooped some dried fish in a hand-net, saying a large fish (*nyaran*) had been caught. The mother ate the fish on her child's behalf. This made it safe for the child to eat fish caught with poison. During the ten-day taboo, mother and child could not leave the house; the mother was not allowed to smoke, otherwise the smoke of faraway places would be painful to the eyes of the child. Another informant suggested that, if

11 The second naming takes place in the part of the apartment called *usun awan* (this is also the place where the *dayong* starts). This is why the 'name of the chicken' is also called *aran usun awan;* the ritual can also be referred to as *pelah usun awan.* In *adat Dipuy,* household members had to stay home four days because they had sacrificed a chicken. They had to wait at least four days before proceeding with the third naming. Nieuwenhuis (1904-07, I:74-5) does not differentiate between first and second namings; he calls second naming what I describe as third naming. According to Nieuwenhuis, the last naming takes place at the harvest festival and the child is brought to the chief's gallery.

the mother smoked, the child would have breathing problems (*lama*).[12] She did not chew betel, otherwise the child would have red eyes. (Chewing betel produces a red spittle.) She did not drink broth, otherwise his feet would rot when he went to war. She could not eat Caladium, otherwise the child would have respiratory problems (Caladium makes the throat itch). Villagers could not carry *padi* or tobacco on the gallery past the child's room; household members could not bring any fresh produce to the room, otherwise the child would cough. During that period, the mother only ate rice cooked in bamboo (*lukuh usan*). When cooked, the bamboo was split open to extract a rice cylinder. The mother was not allowed to eat either end of the cylinder.

The aristocratic ritual of *adat Dipuy* was very elaborate. I pieced together partial descriptions by several informants and the following account is a reconstruction on my part rather than a paraphrase of a cogent description.

A knowledgeable old woman (who was not necessarily a priest or shaman) was put in charge of the ceremony and she observed the same taboos as the mother. The supernatural force of the *maren* is such that only someone with demonstrated resilience to the supernatural would accept the assignment; she received a big fee which served in part to protect her against supernatural dangers: a bolt of unbleached calico, a gong, a bracelet with a valuable old bead, and a chicken.

On the evening of the first day, the naming specialist donned her bracelet and addressed spirits while holding an egg. The child was placed naked on the floor and someone rapped the floor with a stick eight times on each side so the child would not be startled easily. (Souls may escape when one is startled.) Sixteen armbands were placed around the child. Both procedures helped to stabilize the child's souls; they have been retained in *adat Bungan*. She held the child in a standing position, then put it back on the floor. As for commoners, the baby's ears were 'opened' with a string, and another string was placed across the baby's belly in order to prevent the mother's milk from speeding through the body. After that, she rubbed the child eight times with an egg and named him or her.

A decoction of ginger was placed in a small wooden bowl. The mother washed herself and the child with water from a small gourd and placed a small shield on the child in order to shelter its soul (*tapong blua'*). A basin of water placed on the smoking rack was rapped eight times and the mother drank some of it (*telang pelah ata'*); they rapped the container eight times again. Sixteen little piles of rice were gathered and cooked in ginger water with tongue meat, so the

[12] According to Baling Avun (1961:16), mushrooms, the spice *meke* and *padi* also had to be avoided for ten days; outsiders were not allowed to enter the apartment for the same period. Until the end of the year, household members could not kill the barking deer, mousedeer, bear, scaly anteater, monitor lizard, three-striped musang, masked musang, various kinds of fish (*dungan, turing*), the soft-shell tortoise, nor could they cook Caladium (*lu'e*) or *meke*.

child would speak fluently. Eight (or sixteen) men and women whose parents (and ideally all four grandparents) were alive were invited to share this food with the child. Such people are called *kelunan pebungan urip* ('people with a plenitude of life'). This symbolized the baby's commensality with economically-active people. The ritual specialist sacrificed a chicken and placed its blood in a gourd. Only she could eat the chicken; the leftovers, including feathers, were burned. Having given the child a second name, she blessed him/her (*melah*) with the chicken's blood. Then they went to sleep.

Early in the morning of the following day, the *kelunan pebungan urip* dressed the mother in her fineries; she wore a necklace with old beads in order to frighten the spirits who might bother her. Followed by eight women, the mother went to the river to bathe, while people hit gongs and bamboo clappers in order to make sure ill omens could not be heard. The mother wore a necklace with a particular kind of corn (*jele latong*) which made her invisible to spirits. She submerged herself in the water, then returned to her room carrying a bamboo container which she had filled at the river. While people pretended to sleep, she washed her child with the water mixed with chicken blood. She rubbed all the child's joints to prevent illnesses.

After the mother had called the child's soul and suckled the child, the *kelunan pebungan urip* beat gongs and joined mother and child. They visited someone else's household where the child received a gift (*ku'an*) so that he or she would become a successful trader. Mother and child returned to their own apartment where the mother again called her child's souls. The *kelunan pebungan urip* accompanied mother and child to visit another apartment where a second *ku'an* was obtained. The mother fed the baby again, then they went to the gallery, where the *kelunan pebungan urip* struck gongs.

Mother and child touched a large pig which had been brought to the gallery, its legs tied up. The child's relatives addressed the pig:

> This, X, is the hidden name (*aran hok*), the name given when rubbing the egg (*aran usut teloh*), Y is the name given in the apartment [when the chicken was sacrificed] (*aran pelah usun awan*); now Z is the name of the public propitiation (*aran pelah usang*). You are called Z while a pig is sacrificed, you are known as Z, good people call you Z; Z will find it easy to get things, Z will be sated, Z will get a lot of money and a lot of rice; Z will be brave, Z will be well-to-do, without illnesses.

Striking gongs, the *kelunan pebungan urip* pretended to go on an overnight visit to the farm. The baby was carried by someone of the same gender as the child while someone else shielded the child with a gold-coloured cloth. They carried the pig back and forth on the gallery sixteen times. People told the pig of the child's name and asked it to pass on the information to deceased relatives from other communities. The pig was slaughtered; mother and child were blessed (*melah*) with its blood. Sixteen pieces of raw meat were placed on a piece of Nephelium wood in front of the house, presumably for dangerous spirits. The

pig was cooked. Sixteen small parcels of rice and meat were placed in a small hut built for the purpose at the bottom of the stairs (*pe'un takep*), where they repeated the protective ritual (*pelah*). They returned to the house, where the mother again called her child's souls. Everyone partook of the sacrificial animal which must be eaten all at once, otherwise people would suffer the effects of the Caladium (they would cough and suffer from respiratory ailments). This took place early in the morning (about 7.30 am); for the rest of the day, visitors from other longhouses came to celebrate.

The naming ritual was, and still is, the occasion to underline the child's pedigree: at one such occasion, Uma Bawang's chief narrated the story of Lake' Dian, the supernatural ancestor of the foremost chiefly families in the Baluy area. He asked spirits in general and ancestor spirits in particular (*to' sepun na'*) to look after the child and protect him in his travels and, should the occasion arise, on the warpath. While the ritual itself was performed privately in the apartment, the chief invited the whole village to his gallery afterwards and offered rice beer to all. His son's naming served to publicly underline his central position in the community.

After the ritual, a fence (*bilit*) was erected on the gallery and another one around the hearth as a place of seclusion for mother and child. In principle, mother and child slept alone in the room; in fact, household members were allowed in as long as they used another door and cooked elsewhere. For four days, mother and child slept near the fire, which must not be extinguished. The naming specialist could go in and out freely, but she stayed at hand to give assistance. On the seventh day, the mother pounded some small dried fish (*ilep*) which she cooked with ginger and placed on the baby's mouth. The naming specialist partook of this meal with mother and child; this signified that from now on people could enter the room to visit and eat. Meanwhile, the father killed a bird (of any species) with a blowpipe, using darts without poison. The bird was chopped up and cooked in leaves on the fire. 'I perform the bird-chopping ritual', said the father, 'so you will be wise, so you will be clever, so you can speak, so you know people's language, in the same way as this bird speaks'. (The meat was brought to the mouth of the child, then the mother ate it on the child's behalf.) As with commoners, they pretended to engage in poison-fishing, so that the child could eat safely fish caught in that way.

Two days later, a *dayong* took place and another pig was sacrificed. The fences were rolled up; the inclusion of the child in the propitiation (*pelah*) publicly marked his or her full membership in the household. Until that point, no *maren* in the longhouse had been allowed to pound rice, carry *padi* or rattan, or eat fresh food. In practice, the naming specialist observed at least some of the taboos on behalf of the *maren* so that they would not be unduly inconvenienced. After the pig had been sacrificed, visitors were allowed freely in the apartment; on their first visit, they brought a gift (*ku'an*) such as a knife, lighter, or spear.

Childhood rituals

Young children are carried on baby-carriers (*avet*) in which they spend much of the day. Various devices may be placed on the baby carrier. I noted the following on the chief's wife's baby carrier: a charred piece of aromatic *garo'* wood, whose pungent smell frightens spirits, a small carving of a seated human being, called *kayo' udu* ('the wood of sleep'); this is made from a piece of wood which is superficially rotten, but whose core is still hard. This charm puts the child to sleep. One may also hang snail shells on strings. To the spirits' ears, the noise of the shells as they hit each other sounds like threatening words. Unlike the Kenyah, the Kayan do not decorate baby carriers with tiger or crocodile teeth, as this would endanger the child (*parit*). A villager who bought a nicely-decorated baby carrier from a Kenyah Uma Baka replaced the teeth with shell disks, which are protective charms.

Children are particularly vulnerable to spirits and therefore must be made inconspicuous. It is most unwise to state that a child is fat and healthy, because this would bring the baby to the spirits' attention and they might take it away. On the other hand, it would be hard to forego the simple pleasure of describing a healthy child and one resorts to a secret language (*daho' ivun*) which spirits do not understand. Thus, a heavy (*bahat*), healthy (*tengo*) child is known as *mamih* and *tabung* in the secret language.

We have seen that mothers call back the souls of their children every evening. While calling, they hold their necklace in the right hand so the souls have a place on which to land; they list the various places where they have been with their children during the day. They call the souls of all their young children (until about six years of age), starting with the youngest. In *adat Dipuy*, mothers also held a hook of *avong* wood near their breast while calling the souls. When it was not in use, the hook was attached to the baby carrier or the mother's necklace. Traditionally, a snare was also placed on the baby carrier, again for the purpose of catching the labile soul of the child. With *adat Bungan*, mothers are less diligent in calling their children's souls at dusk, but the practice remains common.

In *adat Dipuy*, the mother followed taboos to protect her baby; until the child could talk, she avoided fat animals, such as the *tebela* and *halap* fish, otherwise the child would suffer from fevers. When the child was able to repeat the word *tebela*, the taboo was no longer in force. The mother could not eat porcupine, otherwise the child would be weak. On the whole, children were not expected to follow the taboos which affected the life of their elders (Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, I:76). However, the first time children travelled away from the community, they could not drink water from a bowl, only from the paddle. If they picked up anything, such as a leaf, they had to keep it and bring it back to the hut where they spent the night, otherwise enemies would run away when they attempted to kill them. When a young child went on a trip, it was usual to place

a string of *pehiding* bark (unidentified) on the child's ankles and to burn some *pehiding* around him in order to produce a strong smell which confused spirits. The current practice of young children wearing a cloth bracelet on the right wrist also aims at preventing their souls from escaping.

Markers of maturation

There are few ritual markers of maturation. No rites of passage draw a clear dividing line between the young, the adult, and the old; the identification of people as 'young' or 'old' depends on the context. People do not know their chronological age, but they keep a tally of sequences, hence one can easily know who is senior to whom. Before they are ten years old, children are left free to play; one of their few duties is to take care of younger siblings and to run errands in the longhouse. Around that age, girls start to help their mothers with domestic activities and they even undertake some light agricultural work; boys join in productive activities a few years later. A boy's participation in the head-hunting ritual indicates he no longer is a baby. In *adat Dipuy*, taboos marked some life stages: for instance, boys were allowed to eat the meat of the barking deer as long as they had not entered the hut in which auguries were sighted (*lepo' nyeho'*; there was no set age at which boys were expected to participate in this activity).

Transformations of the body take place at different ages. Boys' and girls' earlobes are pierced soon after birth. Heavy rings are inserted to elongate girls' earlobes, while men rarely wear earrings, and then only when adult. In their late adolescence or as young adults, men undergo several changes. Until recently, they all had a hole punched in the shell of the ears, in which to insert the canines of clouded leopards. These teeth (or a facsimile) are worn mostly in the context of headhunting and headhunting rituals, although a few elderly men sport them on a daily basis. Some men have a hole pierced in the glans penis in order to insert a penis-pin prior to intercourse; it is meant to increase their partner's enjoyment. The operation takes place without any ritual (Brown, Edwards, and Moore 1988). The Kayan deny that the practice is general among them and I was told that men cease using the penis-pin after marriage because it is thought to prevent conception. Tooth-filing has been reported in the Mahakam area (Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, I:141; Lumholtz 1920:46), but not in the Baluy region.

Until recently, all women were extensively tattooed on the arms, thighs, and feet. The process started in their early teens; it was rarely completed before they had given birth to a child or two. Women are tattooed according to specific motifs which mark the stratum of the bearer.[13] Most Kayan men are not

[13] Such patterns as the *tedek aso'* and *tedek bekwang usong tingang* are reserved for *maren* and *hipuy* women, while the *kalong bekwang, kalong nang, kalong pusong tuva*, and *kalong bila* are suitable for *panyin* women. In *adat Dipuy*, patterns differentiated the *maren* from the *hipuy*, but this distinction is now fading. Nieuwenhuis (1904-07, I:450-68) gives detailed attention to tattooing and provides tattoo patterns. See also Hose and Shelford (1901) and Thomas (1968).

tattooed; some are tattooed with designs which have no social significance (except, in the past, tattoos on the knuckles which marked a successful headhunter). Men usually acquire tattoos at the occasion of trading expeditions, especially in early adulthood. Since the Second World War, the printed word has had a definite attraction and some men have their name tattooed on the forearm. Some inscriptions are pointless: Avun's arm proclaimed 'TOOPEN THE', evidently copied from some container!

In 1970, all adult women and most older girls were tattooed, but only a few young girls, because the practice was becoming unfashionable. A former practitioner described the practice. The process started when the moon was auspicious; it was accompanied by several taboos which prevented tattooer and client from working in the fields or in tobacco gardens, or from handling *padi* or fresh tobacco. The tattooer must also avoid edible Caladium and the spice *meke*. Consequently, tattooing sessions were scheduled during periods when women were free from agricultural work, such as field clearing (which is mostly a male task) and the harvest festival, when the agricultural year is finished. (All tattooers were women.) Field clearing was not the ideal time for tattooing: it was thought that the client would suffer blisters because of the sympathetic magic of the felled vegetation drying in the sun. The client was expected to show her fortitude by not crying; instead, she sang a plaintive song which was a form of stylized crying.

The operation took place on the gallery at a time of day when there was enough light to work comfortably, but the patient was hidden from view with partitions. This seclusion appears to have had no ritual significance; it was an attempt to achieve a reasonably quiet work environment. The tattooer owned sets of wooden blocks with patterns. The blocks were blackened with soot and pressed on the skin and the pigment inserted by repeated prickings with a needle placed at right angles to a handle. The tattooer received specific items as payment: several beads, including an old valuable bead, 'with which to wipe her eyes'. When she had tattooed the knees, she received a sword, 'the bridge on which she returned'. The client's family was expected to feed the tattooer and to brew rice-beer for her if possible. Interestingly, the tattooer also had to offer a gift to her client, because the process causes bleeding. Anyone who causes someone to bleed must offer a gift to the victim in order to be freed from the malevolence of bleeding. (This is the reason why a man must make a gift to a girl he deflowers.) Both tattooer and patient had to be purified (*ngaping*) in order to cleanse them from the danger inherent in patterns (*parit kalong*). At the harvest festival, an element of the *dayong* repeated the cleansing process.

Sex, marriage, and divorce

Premarital sex is recognized to be a potential consequence of flirting (*pesangun*, lit. 'joking'); both are accepted behaviours among adolescents and pre-marital virginity is not a virtue. Adolescents usually have several liaisons before they marry. Given the lack of privacy in Kayan longhouses, their affairs are not secret and are the object of non-judgmental gossip. When young people visit other communities, flirting and sex are likely outcomes. This is hardly surprising, given the absence of disapproval of pre-marital sex on one hand and the attraction of novelty on the other: sudden passions are more likely to be ignited between strangers than with co-villagers whom one has known since childhood.

At first, boys and girls visit each other in groups, then individually as they overcome their shyness. Visits take place at night in apartments. Courtship is practised in semi-privacy; adults are present, but they attend to their own concerns. A boy may visit a girl stealthily at night to make love to her. As everyone sleeps in the same room, this does not pass unnoticed, but if the young woman has a mosquito net, the visitor's identity may remain secret. One may have casual intercourse on three occasions with the same partner, but afterwards it becomes a *de facto* engagement and a lover who refused matrimony at that stage would be liable to pay a fine for breach of promise. Premarital sex is permissible only between potential spouses; rules of exogamy and incest are coterminous. Intercourse between married and single people is extremely rare and constitutes adultery.

Prohibited relationships and incest

Marriage is prohibited between individuals who share a great-grandparent or closer relative. In 1971, not a single Uma Bawang couple transgressed this rule, although I heard of marriages between second and even first cousins in the past and currently in other villages. Unions are monogamous, although chiefly polygyny has been reported in the past (Furness 1902; Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, I). Among the Baluy Kayan, there is a strong tendency towards local endogamy (two-thirds of Uma Bawang couples) and stratum endogamy (seventy-one per cent in Uma Bawang).

The Kayan term which comes closest to 'incest' is *sekilah*. More accurately, the term refers to the supernatural danger caused by incest; the act is not distinguished from its consequences.[14] Relations between first and second cousins are

[14] '*Sekilah*' does not apply exclusively to incest, but also to the consequences of childbirth (see above). The term also applies to several prohibitions during the *kayo* ritual (Chapter VII). Some of these are related to sex and gender: people may not have intercourse during the *kayo*; men may not sacrifice female pigs or chickens which have reached maturity; on the other hand, it is also *sekilah* to dip the head trophy in the river in front of the house (maybe because this is where women bathe?). *Sekilah* is a kind of *tulah*, as is *sahapen* (see below). Sombroek (n.d.2:99) glosses

also incestuous, but their effect is neutralized when the culprits provide the chief with the means to perform a purification ritual (*pelah*). After the *pelah*, the couple can marry, but many people continue to think that such relationships remain improper. *Sekilah* also applies to illicit sexual relations between affines, especially siblings-in-law and ex-spouses, but also step-relatives: in order to avoid *sekilah*, a man broke up with a woman when his father married her mother. In cases of 'affinal incest', a special ritual averts the danger of the transgression and 'repairs' (*neme*) the situation (see below). A divorced couple which wishes to remarry must undergo the same ritual. The consequences of incest follow not only from intercourse, but from mere flirting.

Illegitimacy is subsumed under incest. If the genitor is known but declines to marry the woman, he pays for a cleansing ritual (*pelah*) during the pregnancy and a purification (*ngaping*) is performed at birth. In other words, illegitimacy creates the same supernatural dangers as incest even though the parents are not in an incestuous relationship. If the genitor is unknown, the matter is more serious, because incest is suspected. For her whole pregnancy, the mother stays away from the longhouse in a hut built for the purpose. She bears the expenses linked to the purification (*ngaping*), such as a sword, a gong, and a chicken. The chicken is placed in front of the house and every member of the community steps on it. In one case, everyone knew that the relationship between genitor and mother was not incestuous, but he refused to acknowledge paternity. There was no way to coerce him into acting properly because he was the chief. In the absence of a public declaration of paternity, one had to proceed as if there had been incest, given that spirits might interpret the situation in this way; the mother had to bear the expenses of the ritual. Illegitimacy is such a serious matter that one aristocratic woman who had two children out of wedlock was sent away from her village and married off to an Uma Bawang commoner.

Incest is thought to bring serious calamities, especially incest between primary relatives. It corrupts the whole river basin; economically-important species turn into similar-looking, but less useful species. For instance, rice might metamorphose into bamboo.[15] To counteract this, elaborate purification rituals are required. During my fieldwork, a child was born of an incestuous relationship in another village. Mother and child died in the next few weeks

sekilah as 'what is tainted, contaminated, by unfavourable influences'. *Busong* is another consequence of incest (including sexual relations between second cousins, or between siblings-in-law); the belly swells up and the patient spits blood. More generally, *busong* can be the consequence of relatives (including blood-brothers) quarrelling with each other. Among the Kenyah, *busung* also describes a disease in which the victim swells up; it follows from killing a relative, eating anything grown in a graveyard, breaking an oath, or a woman throwing things at a man (Conley 1973:107).

[15] Incest is related to nature in another way: if a particular kind of sugarcane (*tevo' latoh*) has fruits, this is a sign that incest has happened in the community (possibly incest with a cousin, not necessarily with a member of the nuclear family).

but, if the child had lived, the culprits would have had to pay a large fine to each longhouse in the area in order to pay for the cost of rituals. As it was, the surviving culprit was fined $100.

The fine (*hukum pran*) for incest between cousins is a pig, a good sword (*malat bukan*), a wristband of old beads, and a gong, all of which are used by the priest in the purification. A ritual (*abe*) counteracts some forms of *sekilah*. In the specific instances described to me, the culprits were affines: in one case, siblings-in-law, in the other, ex-spouses who wanted to be reunited. The couple swims along the shore, the man leading the way, and all village members – men, women, children – line up along the river to pelt them with spears made with the stem of a reed called *sakalah*. (Note the near-homonymy between *sakalah* and *sekilah*.) In other words, the couple are symbolically killed. The couple swims in the river 'like wild boars'. This refers to the fact that, when wild boars swim across a river, they are vulnerable and can easily be killed with spears. Villagers are cleansed (*ngaping*) at the river after which they return to the house, stepping through a stick split lengthwise (*sepkang*) and stuck in the ground. The stick is tied up after the last person has passed, thus preventing the return of *sekilah*. In the following months, unexplained misfortune may be explained as a result of *sekilah*, in which case the ritual must be repeated. (If it were necessary to repeat the *abe* for a divorced couple which remarried, they would have to divorce, repeat the *abe*, and remarry once more.) Hose and McDougall (1912, II:196) assert that the Kenyah put to death incestuous couples at the river bank or by throwing them in the river. This may refer to a ritual similar to the one described here. Sombroek (n.d.1:8.10) provides an explanation of the practice when he says the consequence of an illegitimate birth was the impossibility of catching pigs or fish. Symbolically killing the culprit(s) as if they were wild boars swimming in the water negates the curse.[16]

Choice of spouse

To a significant extent, marriages are the result of personal attraction between two individuals, but parents try, sometimes successfully, to guide their offspring's choices. This is particularly true for daughters, who are more likely than young men to follow their parents' advice. What is more important, uxorilocality is the norm and a woman's parents have a direct interest in the selection of a son-in-law who will join their household. Usually, parents can do little more than give advice to their son, but a woman's parents play a more decisive role and sometimes disregard her wishes. Some marriages are arranged without consulting the prospective bride, but in due course she may veto the arrangement. If the young man's father is a person of consequence, he may

[16] Nieuwenhuis (1904-07, II:103) translates *enah abei* [*na abe*] as 'to hold a propitiation' (*Beschwörung halten*), while Sombroek (n.d.2:2) defines *abei* as 'a ceremony to parry the calamity which the village sustains because of an illegitimate pregnancy'.

approach the woman's parents directly to suggest a union. Usually, the young man enlists the help of a male elder who acts as go-between. If the proposal is considered favourably, the suitor sends a small present, usually a sarong, through the go-between. Some time afterwards, the engagement is formalized by valuable gifts, such as an ornamental sword (*malat bukan*) or a piece of fine cloth whose value depends on the wealth and status of both parties. Unlike the first present, engagement gifts constitute a binding agreement; breaking it normally leads to litigation and a fine. Some Kayan say the custom of betrothal (*tunang*) with gifts (*barang tunang*) is borrowed from the Malays. These are indeed Malay words, but Hose and McDougall (1912, I:75) already describe the practice. Those who state that the *tunang* is an innovation say that the engagement used to be solemnized by escorting the prospective bridegroom to the woman's apartment when the moon was auspicious.

The husband is usually of the same age as his wife or slightly older; a man who married a woman young enough to be his daughter would be severely criticized. I heard of a single instance of such a union: the previous chief of Uma Bawang married a young woman, using his political influence to achieve this. The marriage soon ended in divorce but, many years later, people were still joking about it behind his back. There were two objections to this mismatch: it blurred the distinction between generations and it went against the expectation that a man should reduce his sexual activity as he becomes older. The desire not to confuse generations is also apparent in another circumstance: if a mother and a daughter have children of the same age, this is considered somewhat ridiculous and unseemly on the part of the mother.

When a union is planned between people of different villages who do not know each other, the man first visits the girl's community, usually helping her parents at the farm, so they can become acquainted. Some marriages are arranged when the girl is very young. In one case, a man in his mid-twenties married a pre-pubescent girl; the household desperately needed the help of a strong man because the father was suffering from a wasting disease; the marriage was not consummated for several years.

If a couple have been lovers before marriage, they of course continue to have sexual relations. Otherwise, the husband should exercise restraint and refrain from sex for about a month after the wedding in order to allow his wife to become used to him. In a longhouse, little remains private and people are well aware of impatient men who insist on having sex right after marriage. Such haste constitutes an important character flaw and, during my fieldwork, it was cited as grounds for a divorce. If the bride is pre-pubescent, sexual relations are utterly forbidden until the girl menstruates.

Elders are concerned that matches be suitable and they bring their influence to bear on such matters. Sometimes, it makes a difference, sometimes they are politely ignored. Uma Bawang elders were unable to prevent a marriage

between a *hipuy* and a slave; this still raised eyebrows one generation later, when the *hipuy* was now an old widower. More recently, they failed to prevent a few marriages between Christians and followers of *adat Bungan*. Such unions are considered unsuitable because parents can pray for their children only if they are of the same religion. Whether or not elders are successful in influencing marital choices, it remains that marriages are matters which concern the whole community. As we will see, the circumstances of the union and its potential pitfalls are publicly discussed during the nuptials. Elders also provide advice for secondary marriages when both spouses are mature. When a widow and widower in their forties decided to marry, this was the occasion for a meeting between elders of their respective villages. The discussion focused on post-marital residence, because the couple wished to alternate between the two communities and the elders wanted to evaluate the suitability of the proposal. After a lengthy deliberation, they agreed with the arrangement, as long as there was a predominance of uxorilocality.

Several people may become involved in influencing marital choices. When a young man has had sex with a young woman, her parents may try to persuade him to marry her. In one case, the father enlisted the help of Lake' Ajang, an influential commoner, who extolled the merits of the union. The young man was very reluctant because the father was a bad-tempered man, much given to swearing oaths against people who had angered him. Indeed, faced with a refusal, he threatened the young man with sorcery, but this failed to change his mind, because he had a fiancée in his own community.

Later on, the same young man developed a strong attraction for another Uma Bawang woman, but he was not sure his feelings were reciprocated. By that point, his feelings for the Uma Bawang woman were a matter of public knowledge and, back in his own village, the father of his fiancée was ready to charge him with breach of promise. The young man was unconcerned by this: as he had not discussed his intentions with the elders of his community, there was no official engagement with the young woman from his village and he thought he was free from legal action. He asked Lake' Ajang to approach the parents of his new love in order to ascertain the intentions of the young woman and her parents. He emphasized that he did not wish to pursue the matter further if the young woman was not keen on marrying him; on the other hand, he was ready to ignore his own parents' opinion. If the offer were accepted, he was ready to provide immediately an engagement gift 'in order to secure the woman's feelings' (*avan nageng kenep doh*), so she would not have affairs with other men in the meantime; he was willing to wait a few years before marrying her. He planned to give a good sword, a piece of batik, a shirt, and trousers.

Lake' Ajang waited a week to consult the woman's family because he wanted to give the young man the opportunity 'to cool his feelings' (*pehngem kenep na'*). After an initial visit, Lake' Ajang informed him the parents accepted his proposal; they wanted a wedding at the end of the agricultural year, after which the young woman would continue to go to school. The young man was asked to give her a piece of batik to confirm his intentions. He started to back-track; he was not yet ready to marry; he was not sure the girl had been adequately consulted. At long last, he expressed concern about his relatives' reaction: if he married against their will, they might refuse to help him in the future. Lake' Ajang visited the young man's relatives in their village and obtained their lukewarm acquiescence. Five months later, the project fell through. The young woman's parents had changed their mind. They expressed this indirectly: the young man's previous gifts were now interpreted only as an indication of interest in their daughter, not as engagement gifts, hence there was no contract yet. If the young man wanted to proceed, he should now give a first-quality sword (*malat bok kading*) and a ring. Such gifts are appropriate only for *maren* and the young man rightly recognized this as a refusal. The parents' change of heart was due to the fact that two other young men with better prospects had in the meantime expressed an interest in their daughter.

Among *maren*, political considerations are part and parcel of marital arrangements, as aristocratic marriages are essential to maintain an effective network between chiefs. An aristocratic woman was forced to break a previous engagement to a successful young man whom she loved because the heir-designate to the chiefship of a prominent longhouse wished to marry her. Aristocrats from several communities put enormous pressure on her and her parents to change their minds; they threatened not to consider them as relatives any more if she did not give in. She eventually succumbed to the emotional blackmail and reluctantly married her bad-tempered, boorish, suitor. There are also several instances of aristocratic men being forced to marry chiefs' daughters for political reasons. This kind of coercion, which is most unusual among commoners, is often counter-productive among *maren*, because many aristocratic marriages end in divorce.

In headhunting days, a state of hostilities between villages was brought to an end when the vanquished community offered in marriage one of its aristocrats as *pala bunu*, 'replacement for the slain'. Perhaps not surprisingly, these arrangements were sometimes cause for further conflicts. About two centuries ago, the aristocrat Bato' Bit from the village of Uma Daro' was a *pala bunu* in Uma Bawang, where he felt ill-treated. His relatives demanded that Uma Bawang migrate closer to Uma Daro', so they could effectively protect Bato'; Uma Bawang refused and this led to a war. Concerns about succession may also bring about aristocratic marriages. Lake' Bo' was Uma Bawang's chief at the turn of the century. When his wife died, he did not wish to remarry, but he was pressured to do so because people were afraid his daughter would remain childless; he married a commoner whose son succeeded to chiefship.

Wedding

A wedding is a public ceremony which brings together the whole village. The bride and groom are the focus of the ritual. Specific phases of the moon are auspicious times for nuptials. The harvest festival is a convenient period for weddings, but they may be held at any time of the year. It is possible to marry without the benefit of a ceremony; the man simply moves into the woman's apartment. It is said of such couples that they 'married as lovers only' (*ngehawa' bakeh tua*). At the end-of-year *dayong*, the union is formalized by a propitiation (*pelah*). Such unions are legally valid marriages and, in the case of a divorce, the usual fines apply. In olden times, slaves commonly married without a ritual, but this also happened among commoners. Nowadays, if one of the spouses is Christian, a marriage without ceremony avoids many disagreements.

The day before the wedding, women prepare boiled pastries (*pitoh, selukong*); deep-fried pastries (*dinu*) are cooked on the morning of the ritual, as they do not keep. These are to be served in the bride's apartment. If they can, the groom's family serves rice beer (and, nowadays, *arak*) before the ritual starts. Guests are entertained both on the gallery and in the apartment. At one wedding, the bride's household was criticized for serving only beer and *arak*, and no food; virtually everyone got drunk. Fortunately, while the mood turned to acrimony for a while, no clash erupted.

Towards the end of the morning, the officiant goes to the bridegroom's apartment to inform Bungan that the young man is about to marry and leave his parents' household.[17] The groom is escorted by his friends to the bride's apartment, where young women are waiting. In *adat Dipuy*, people visited the groom in the evening in his parents' apartment; he was escorted to the bride's apartment where he spent the night. (Before going to the bride's apartment, aristocratic men, accompanied by eight male attendants, visited every apartment in the longhouse.) In the morning, the bride and bridegroom ate together.

The wedding ceremony takes place in the apartment, not the gallery, probably to emphasize the integration of the man into the woman's household. Groom and bride sit beside each other, other young women sit behind them. On the sleeping platform is a mat on which offerings have been placed: a tray with eggs, another one with a single egg, and the third with rice beer. Holding the egg, the officiant informs Bungan of the groom's arrival:

> Now, X has entered the apartment. This is the place where he will be, this is where he will make his life. Please look after this household. I am raising an egg because these two are about to be married. I raise the egg to ask that they have children, that they have a good life, a healthy life. Give them fertile rice, give them healthy pigs and chickens, make it easy for them to get goods [...].

[17] If the groom is from another village, he is ritually incorporated to a household of his new community, so that there is a starting point for the nuptials. The ritual of incorporation is simple: the groom eats some rice cooked by a household member. No long-term right or duty is established by this ritual incorporation.

Addressing a chicken, the priest again asks Bungan to provide the couple with health and prosperity; he then protects them against supernatural danger (*pelah*). This marks the first time the couple receive blessings together. In *adat Dipuy*, a pig was sacrificed instead. The pig was carried on the gallery by men on one side, women on the other; this was done eight times for commoners and thirty-two times for aristocrats.

Another purification ritual (*pelah sahapen*) severs any relationship which the bride or groom might have had with other people. *Sahapen* (or *kesapen*) is a supernatural retribution for flirting with someone who is about to be married. Anyone who has had sexual relations with the bride or groom must participate in the *pelah sahapen*. In a wedding I attended, two young men stood by, looking slightly sheepish, but also rather pleased to acknowledge in this way their sexual maturity, while the priest protected them from the dangers of *sahapen*. At another wedding, all the young people present participated in the *pelah*, because the danger of *sahapen* exists even without sexual relations. If there ever was any suggestion that two people were sweethearts, then it is wise to sever the putative relationship. It is common for adults to suggest in jest that a boy and a girl are lovers when this is not the case. This can be a problem because spirits have a limited sense of humour and fail to understand the joke. In *adat Dipuy*, the participants stood under a hand-net during the *pelah sahapen*; the net hid them from the scrutiny of spirits and kept them anchored in this world.

The chicken is killed and a wood shaving dipped in its blood. The couple are blessed (*pelah*) again with the blood, while a sword and a gong are waived above their heads to provide further protection. The priest throws an egg, which children and young people try to catch. At one wedding, the priest threw the chicken's head instead; at another one, a bundle of cooked rice. One could also throw a shell ornament (*hulo'*). The couple's first child will be of the same gender as the person who gets hold of it. This is simply done for fun and people do not believe in the oracular value of this procedure any more than Westerners believe in the predictive value of catching a wedding bouquet.

The couple formally exit (*pusang*) onto the gallery and lead a procession of villagers in order to announce their new status. Commoners go from one end of the longhouse to the other four times, the *hipuy* eight times, and the *maren* sixteen times. This procession concludes the marriage ritual. If both spouses have previously been married, this step is omitted. After that, it is time to eat and be merry. This is the occasion to toast (*parap*) important guests. The lavishness of the feast depends on the wealth of the bride's household; the groom and his parents are not expected to contribute to the expense, but are free to do so. In the afternoon, one may hold a *dayong* in order to ask for further supernatural blessings, but this is not an essential step.

Sometime in the afternoon, everyone adjourns to the gallery where a meeting takes place to instruct (*nebara*) the spouses and their parents about their responsibilities. All the elders are expected to participate and the meeting lasts an hour or two. The groom is told how to behave towards his wife. He must not be jealous, he should not fight, he must work hard, he must behave respectfully towards his parents-in-law. The bride is given similar advice. The bride's parents are enjoined to be kind to their son-in-law. Specific circumstances and the participants' personalities are taken into consideration. At one wedding, Lake' Ajang noted that both the bride and her mother were short-tempered and he advised the groom to be patient and ignore their nagging. He should follow the lead of his new brother-in-law, the senior man in the household. As the groom came from another village, an elder from that community enjoined the bride's mother to be particularly welcoming and treat the groom as if he were her own son. Later, an old man advised that if a wife bickers, the only thing a man can do is to leave the room and sit on the gallery. These counselling sessions last an hour or two. Young people usually organize a dance in the evening.

In *adat Dipuy*, the couple and those who had participated in the *dayong* stayed home the next day in order to avoid bad omens, especially the barking deer, as this would make the marriage unlucky. The following day, they went out very briefly, but again returned home to avoid omens. On the seventh day, they stayed home to be cleansed of the supernatural danger of the altar (*ngaping dang bulu jok*, lit. 'to waive away the dust of the bamboos of the *jok*'. We have seen that in *adat Dipuy*, the *jok* was made with bamboo, which is a dangerous substance, as it is used to take oaths. This ritual had to be performed even if no *jok* had been erected on the gallery). On the tenth day at midday, they threw away the wristband of the *pelah* (*leku pelah*) and the ritual was completed. The following foods were tabooed for the couple until the end of the year: the sambhur deer, mushrooms, the spice *meke*, and animals with patterns (*tulan kalong*), otherwise their life would be miserable.[18]

Marriage prestations

In Uma Bawang, seventy-two per cent of couples practised uxorilocality in 1971. Initial uxorilocality for at least two or three years is mandatory for everybody and it remains a permanent arrangement in most cases. However, in the first years of marriage, couples occasionally stay over with the husband's parents; such visits are a welcome holiday for the new husband, who is adapting to life in a new household. The bride may not visit her parents-in-law or eat with

[18] Baling Avun (1961:12) provides the following list of prohibited foods: snakes, mousedeer, civet cats (*pelaring*, *bekulo'*, *hunun*, and *busan*), the clouded leopard, and scaly anteater. They could not eat Caladium (*lu'e*) or mushrooms, nor could they touch a dead person. 'From the time of the wedding until the new year feast, there were so many taboos that the Kayan preferred to marry shortly before the feast' (Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, I:87).

them until they have given a *ku'an* to her parents. The *ku'an* is a marriage prestation which, in 1970, was worth about M$50 for commoners and M$250 to M$300 for *maren*. The *ku'an* is composed of various items such as valuable beads, swords, and gongs. The gifts must be in good shape: one may not offer a rusty sword, a chipped blade, or a gong with a hole in it, otherwise the spouses would have a bad life. If the gift is not in perfect condition, it is returned and replaced. The *ku'an* is a form of propitiation (*melah*, *ngemhing*). Part of it is called *lasu ba*, 'hot mouth': if it were not received, the bride's mouth would burn when she ate in her in-laws' household. The *ku'an* is paid the first time the bride visits her in-laws' apartment and a *dayong* is held for her protection. That night, she sleeps in her in-laws' apartment; she returns to her parents the next day. With the *ku'an*, the bridegroom's parents acquire the rights to the visit of their son and his wife; it also establishes a link with their sons' children. Every time a child is born, the father's parents give the child a bead bracelet, otherwise the child would feel strange (*slap*) when visiting them.[19] Also, when the husband learns of his wife's pregnancy, he presents her with gifts such as two skirts (*ta'ah*) (so she can wear one while the other is being washed), a length of white calico, and a sarong. If he is well-to-do – and even more so if he is a *maren* – he will also give her a gong. These gifts from the husband to the wife are part of marital prestations.

In a few cases, initial uxorilocality is followed by virilocality, if the bride's parents agree and after payment of a bridewealth (*blian*). In 1970, its value amounted to about M$500 for commoners, M$1,000 for the *hipuy*, M$2,000 to M$3,000 for the *maren*, to be paid in cash and other items. When a Kayan *maren* woman from the middle Baluy region went to live in the longhouse of her Sekapan husband, she was escorted by representatives of all the middle Baluy longhouses. When she reached her destination, Sekapan women tried to drag her up to the house, while Kayan women held her back. This lasted for an hour, until the Sekapan provided a gong on which she could put her foot when disembarking from the boat, mats and gongs to form a path to the house, a valuable sword which served as a railing as she climbed the stairs, and so on. All these formed part of her *blian*. It is not clear whether there was actual negotiation or if the whole exchange had been staged, but this was the proper way to bring about aristocratic virilocality. In the past, the parents of a *maren* bride also requested a big gong (*tawak*) for each river tributary they passed on their way to their daughter's new abode.

[19] In virilocal marriages, the woman's parents make the prestations. For aristocratic marriages, the *ku'an* includes two strings of beads (*inu lo'*), each with a valuable old bead. These are a portent of healthy and numerous children. If no appropriate beads are available, other prestige property of similar value can be substituted. The *inu lo'* are brought by eight men and women whose fathers and mothers are still alive (*kelunan aleng pebungan*); gongs are struck as the gifts are being conveyed.

Divorce and remarriage

Divorce is easy and relatively frequent; it is a civil procedure which calls for no ritual. Of ninety-four Uma Bawang adults, twenty-one have been divorced once, five twice, and one four times. Thus, one-third of all marriages have ended in divorce. Its incidence is much greater when spouses come from different villages. Two-thirds of locally exogamous marriages end in divorce, while only one-fifth of endogamous unions do so (Rousseau 1974:270-4). Exogamous marriages are more fragile because the husband is away from his relatives who could support him in difficult times. Divorces also occur because of jealousy, incompatibility, persistent unfaithfulness, failure to conceive, or one spouse's wish to marry a lover.

Adultery is not unusual and is treated without undue excitement. It is an offence against the aggrieved spouse(s) and is punished by fines; adultery is not grounds for divorce unless it is habitual. There are a few religious aspects to adultery. It may be the cause of infirmities – such as blindness and lameness – not for the adulterous couple, but for their respective spouses and offspring. This supernatural effect is called *due*; given that it does not affect the culprits, it is not a punishment, but a consequence of breaching conjugal harmony. An old Uma Bawang man attributed his blindness to the fact his mother had committed adultery over half a century ago.

The spouse who initiates divorce procedures has to pay a fine (*sagen*), even if he/she has good grounds for the separation. In most cases, husbands instigate divorce procedures; because of uxorilocality, marriage is more stressful for men. Before *adat Bungan*, adverse dreams and auguries could bring about the dissolution of marriages, even in cases when the spouses were devoted to each other. I have already mentioned the story of Lirong and Livan (Chapter III). Someone dreamt they should not remain married, but Lirong ignored the dream because he loved his wife. The next day, he went to his farm and a *belahabong* snake crossed his path. This omen confirmed the dream without ambiguity. Livan and Lirong regretfully parted. As neither of them was to blame for the divorce, they did not have to pay the usual fines. As she could not bear to see Lirong every day without being able to be with him, Livan left Uma Bawang for a while and stayed in the village of Uma Kahe. Someone proposed to her there, but she returned to Uma Bawang and married again. Eventually, Lirong also found another spouse.

After a divorce or the spouse's death, remarriage is usual, even in old age, unless one has reached nearly complete economic inactivity. Some elderly people commented that they had been reluctant to remarry because they still missed their deceased spouse but they felt obliged to do so because, as widows or widowers, they would have lost much of their autonomy. People who remarry after a divorce undergo the usual wedding ritual. (Only one element is omitted, namely 'bringing out' (*pusang*) the spouses, because they are already adults.) When a widow or widower remarries, she or he must sever links with the deceased spouse: death, unlike divorce, does not terminate a union. Before marrying again, the survivor must become a 'new person' (*kelunan maring*) and 'discard the deceased spouse' (*mebet to' aleng hawan na' una'*). The ritual takes place in the household of the deceased; it calls for an iron bar, a pot, and a chicken, preferably a black one. The offering (*bahawen*) may be a small gift of money to the family of the deceased (M$5 to M$10 would have been sufficient for commoners in 1970). The iron is an offering to the deceased, so he/she will not create problems. I observed Avun Ngo officiate at one such ritual. Holding an egg and the iron bar, he prayed:

> It has been suggested an offering should be sent to the deceased spouse and we should spread blackness (*meso item*). We are here in the room of his wife who has gone on to live a blissful, effortless life. Bungan Malan, Penyelong Luan, talk to her because she might be angry. This man is only looking for a way to have a life. He is making an offering to his wife, which will form a wall, a boulder, a screen, so she cannot see him on this earth, so she will not turn her head towards him.

The widower touched the iron bar, after which Avun Ngo took the pot:

> Here is the piece of metal which will be a watershed, which will be a rock across the way. This pot will create darkness, it will form a shield. Please, Bungan Malan, say this to the woman: 'You, his spouse, might have hostile feelings towards him; [be aware that] he is about to send you the *bahawen*.'

Avun Ngo threw away the iron bar. We went on to the man's apartment and a black chicken was brought in. A tray, a sword, a piece of wood, and a short length of rattan were placed on a mat. Avun Ngo took the chicken and an egg; he was joined by his colleague Avun Imang, who took the tray and the sword and announced he was speaking on the widower's behalf. He asked for Bungan's help and took this opportunity to thank her because her *adat* is so much easier and pleasant than *adat Dipuy*. He was followed by Avun Ngo, who now held an egg and the piece of rattan and prayed for protection (*kaping*) against supernatural dangers. He asked for the help of the spirit Lirong Ubong Pusah and, having placed the piece of rattan on a board and the board on the widower's head, he notched the rattan seven times, threw it away, and everyone shouted. Cutting the rattan severs the link with the deceased spouse, who will not be able to see her husband any more; the rattan forms a watershed between them. Avun Ngo went to the gallery to purify (*ngaping*) the man while everyone else stayed in the apartment (the door was left open so I could observe the proceedings). As this was not a common ritual, it was explained to the widower ahead of time.

Table 23. Ngo's funeral

Day	
1	*Day of the death*
	Ngo dies; people return to the village
	The body is cleansed, dressed, and laid on a mat in the apartment
	Mothers smear soot on their babies' brows
	Offerings are placed besides the body
	Men make the coffin
	People visit the deceased
	Women utter lamentations
2	*Day of inactivity*
	Women start the day with lamentations
	Objects for the trip to the afterworld are placed beside the coffin
	Relatives don mourning dress
	The tomb is prepared
3	*Burial*
	Women start the day with lamentations
	Villagers share coconuts with Ngo
	The priest tells Ngo he is about to depart
	The coffin is brought out of the apartment and placed in a boat
	The deceased visits the village territory one last time
	On their way to the graveyard, people walk through the *sepkang*
	The coffin is placed in the tomb with grave goods
	Ngo is again told that he is leaving for the other world
	On their way back, people walk through the *sepkang*; the last man in the line ties it up to block the way
	Visitors to the graveyard are purified in Ngo's apartment
	Ngo's son-in-law purifies the whole longhouse
	Elders gather to counsel the survivors
4	*The household of the deceased protects itself*
	Ngo's household neutralizes breaches of mourning taboos
	They make themselves invisible to the deceased (*menyirem*) by making the apartment dark and smearing themselves with soot
	Boughs are used to brush away the influence of death
	A household member catches a fish and offers it to the deceased
5	*Uprooting the staff of life of the deceased*
	In the evening, food is offered to Ngo in his apartment
	Relatives eat with the deceased
	Ngo's staff of life is uprooted; survivors undergo protective rites
14	*Dayong to remove the influence of a curse*
After the harvest	*The whole community eats with the deceased*

Death rituals

In the morning of 11 January 1971, a middle-aged man, Avan Ngo ('Widower Ngo'), died on his way to Belaga bazaar where he was being brought for medical treatment. He had been sick for several years and his condition had deteriorated in recent months. The boat returned to Uma Bawang and the body was carried to his apartment. Messengers spread the news to the farms. My boat was used to fetch his children who boarded in the nearby community of Long Lino where they attended school. The body was cleansed and dressed in nice clothes. Some mothers smeared soot on their babies' brows in order to make their children unrecognizable to Ngo. The deceased was apprised of the proceedings and visitors talked to him with the expectation of being understood; for instance, he was informed of his children's arrival. Indeed, the animateness of the deceased is the reason for elaborate death rituals. The dead are in an anomalous situation: they are unresponsive but can still interact with their family and neighbours. It is essential to sever the link between the living and the dead, who would otherwise drag the living away with them.

The death of a villager affects the whole community; this is why people are called back from the farms. In principle, all community members should be present to pay their respects to the deceased and offer moral support to the bereaved. In fact, a few people stayed on at their farm, in particular the chief and his family. This disregard of solidarity was noted, but it hardly changed people's opinion, as the chief was already considered haughty and self-centred.

The body, covered with a sheet, was placed on a fine rattan mat on the middle of the sleeping platform, his head towards the wall. Plates of food were placed to his left and two radios were turned on for his pleasure. To his right were his spear, two swords, a tobacco box, and his other belongings. In the background were a medium-sized gong (*tawak*) and boxes of cloth. As the funeral went on, other objects were prepared for him.

Nothing much happened until the evening; while we waited for farmers to return to the longhouse, people discussed Ngo's lingering illness and the fact that he had ruined himself with curing rituals. At the end, priests had refused to treat him because he was unable to pay them, and priests can be punished by their spirit helpers if they carry out rituals without payment. In any case, the payment is essential for the *dayong* to be efficacious.

After sunset, five men built a coffin (*lungun*) in front of Ngo's room. (Some boards had been hewn by Ngo himself, the rest were obtained from other households.) They were Ngo's two brothers, his son-in-law, a neighbour, and a man in whose apartment Ngo had lived before marriage; others helped. The body was measured to make the coffin to size. Several men watched and gave advice to the carpenters. Visitors came in and out of the room which was filled with people, mostly women, squatting or sitting on the floor (not on the

sleeping platform where the body was lying). An aunt of Ngo brought him some food (*dinu* pastries, sticky rice, meat, rice etc.), which she described in the polite language used for important guests: she apologized for its poor quality and small amount; he must not be offended; they were doing their best. She sat to the left of the body and started a wailing song. Throughout the proceedings, the deceased was treated as a sentient being who needed to have everything explained. The body was placed in the coffin some time during the night or at dawn the next day.

On the second day around 6 am, Ngo's adult female relatives started wailing; his younger daughter, about thirteen years old, was too young for this formalized expression of sorrow. People placed in the coffin a sword, a paddle, a spear, a tobacco box filled with tobacco and rolls of cigarette-wrapping, a lighter, a flask, a shirt, trousers, leg-bands, armlets, a bracelet, a necklace, a basket, a sarong, a plaited head-band, a spoon, a cup, a plate, and palm-leaf mats. Ngo was told about all these gifts and instructed to use the souls of these implements on his way to the spirit country. When a Kayan is about to leave on a trip, villagers ask him to bring small gifts to their relatives in other communities. In the same way, Ngo was asked to deliver betel plugs, cigarettes, and pieces of cloth to those who had died earlier: 'If you meet them, tell them this has been sent by your aunt [uncle/brother/...]'.

Ngo also received beads which would transform themselves into every part of his new body in the afterworld. These 'replacements' (*kaluy*) included beads which would become his trunk, liver, eyes, nose, tongue, gall-bladder, feet, hands, veins, bones, hair, flesh, intestines, and so on. Different kinds of beads were used for the various parts of the body. (Although I did not observe this with Ngo, metal leg bands (*tekurang*) could be used as replacements for the teeth. For a woman, a cowrie serves as replacement for the vagina.) On his way to the afterworld, the new spirit takes a bath in Lake Haro where his body is made anew with these beads. When he emerges from the lake with his new body, he dons the clothes stored in the coffin.[20] Ngo was told about each set of beads and what they replaced; for instance, the replacement for the gall-bladder made it possible for him to have feelings (*kenep*) for those who predeceased him.[21]

The coffin makers nailed the lid shut and sealed all cracks and holes with gum; meanwhile, women continued wailing. The rest of the second day alternated between dirges and quiet conversations. In Kayan funerals, a wailing

20 For examples of such clothing, see Kooijman (1963: Plates vi and vii).

21 In *adat Dipuy*, eight white beads made into a ring were placed on the index finger of the left hand; on the way to the spirit country (*usun alan*), the ring became a hook or a 'pointing stick' (*tujo'*) with which to catch unripe rambutan (*avong*) which would ripen by being pointed at. This practice seems to have been discontinued. According to one informant, 'The Kayan do not wear a ring on the index finger because this is reserved for the dead'.

chorus is expected at specific moments; in addition, individual women intone laments from time to time. These are verbal outpourings drowned in tears and moans. They can also incorporate songs to which the audience sings refrains. Some people wail in a matter-of-fact way, others use this ritualized procedure to express genuine sorrow and anguish. Although the coffin was shut, people still interacted with Ngo: they offered food and played the radio for his enjoyment. His eldest daughter and an aunt decorated two sun-hats which were to be placed in the tomb. On the second or third day, the following people donned mourning dress: every member of his household, his father, his brothers, his aunt, and some cousins and nieces. For some, this meant a shirt or sarong of unbleached calico; others simply wore an unbleached calico headband; a girl covered her earrings with calico.

Still on the second day, while most villagers stayed in the longhouse, twenty-nine men (from every apartment in the longhouse but one) went to the cemetery to prepare a landing at the river bank and build a scaffolding around the tomb of Ngo's wife, because his children had decided his coffin was to be placed with hers. The Kayan do not inter their dead; they place them in an elevated structure on stilts in which the coffin is stored. In this case, the tomb was extended upwards to accommodate a second coffin (Plate 19). The men took this opportunity to clean their relatives' graves and cut the undergrowth in the graveyard. The roof of Ngo's wife's tomb (made out of a single piece of wood) was removed and the structure cleaned. The work was carried out in a relaxed atmosphere; men looked at Ngo's wife's offerings around the coffin, they handled them and made comments about them. One man went so far as to anoint his hair with oil left as an offering in the woman's tomb. Onlookers found this ridiculous, but not in bad taste or sacrilegious.[22] While up on the scaffolding, where I was taking pictures of the grave goods, I felt a tickle on my legs and discovered they were covered by thousands of tiny ants coming out of Ngo's wife's coffin. I was the only one to find this macabre. After the tomb was built up, we returned to the longhouse and ate in Ngo's apartment; a pig was slaughtered for the purpose.

At dawn on the third day, the lamentations resumed. Coconuts were harvested from trees belonging to Ngo's household. A coconut was opened neatly, its water poured in a cup, its meat in a bowl, and placed near the coffin. Everyone present drank the water of one or more coconuts in order to share food with Ngo. A pig was sacrificed and cooked, and everyone ate some meat; some

22 In *adat Dipuy*, it was considered very dangerous to take away grave goods. In *adat Bungan*, members of the deceased's household may do so after a year; by then, the spirit has had time to take their essence. This makes sense if we remember the absence of individual property among the Kayan. Everything belongs to the domestic unit and it simply activates its right to grave goods which still belong to it when there is no danger of offending the spirit. If someone else took them, this would be theft.

Plate 19. The tomb of Avan Ngo and his wife in a graveyard overlooking the river. When Avan Ngo died, the tomb's structure was extended upward and his coffin placed above his wife's. Offerings are hung under the tomb in a box.

partook of it immediately, others waited until the coffin had been brought to the graveyard; the remaining food was thrown away. (Most people followed the rule according to which men should eat this meal on the gallery and women in the apartment.) By their participation, they demonstrated their friendly feelings towards the new spirit; this mark of affection made it easier for Ngo to leave. Some people asked him to take their ailments with him. The body was entertained one last time with recordings I had made of an epic poem. Then they were ready to go and Avun informed Bungan that Ngo was about to leave; Bungan was to take charge of him and show him the way to the spirit country. Avun talked for about eight minutes. The following is an abridged translation.

> I am talking to you, Avan Ngo. You are about to be brought to the graveyard; this is it. Don't get lost and turn back. You became ill and this used up everything you owned.[23] Your relatives really cared for you; you were on your way downriver to be treated, but to no avail. This is what Doh Tenangan wanted, so you must go. You may be reluctant to do this because of your affection for your children or because you are still attached to your belongings, or whatever. But all your things are with you, all of them, all the valuables, all the pigs and chickens. Only their visible form remains here. Your relatives don't accompany you for the simple reason that they don't know the way. Now that they are orphaned, your family has a miserable life. Make their life good, make it easy for them to grow rice, to raise pigs and chickens.
>
> Another thing: some of us may be afflicted by illnesses, by bad dreams. Bring these dreams with you and tell the spirits who cause them not to do it again. We all mourn you; we have eaten with you in order to express our good feelings towards you. Show good feelings towards us in return. Let there be no illness, no unsuccessful endeavours, no *sekilah*. Please bring with you all the bad influences. When you go, let there be an easy, healthy life, in which it is easy to prosper.
>
> Another thing; the souls of our children might leave with you, maybe also the souls of your relatives; they might follow you. Don't allow this; send them back, every one of them; bring them back. Now you are going towards your mother, towards your siblings, who left before you. You are going towards Bungan Malan, towards Lake' Penyelong, who are our makers. This is it; there is no need to make a long speech.

The coffin was brought to the gallery; from there, it was carried on a stretcher made with two poles held together by ropes. A bearer missed his footing and some liquid poured out of the coffin onto the floor; we were surrounded by the stench of death. As the coffin was brought down the steps, Ngo's father, aunt, and eldest daughter wailed. Several people accompanied the coffin in a motor-boat. We went to the mouth of the Belepe and Murum rivers, then some way downriver along the Baluy, so that Ngo could have a last look at the land where he had spent his life. We turned back upriver towards the graveyard. At the bottom of the path to the cemetery, someone placed a *sepkang* in the middle of the path. A *sepkang* is a sapling split lengthwise for most of its length; it is stuck in the ground by its unsplit end. The coffin and all the participants passed

23 Avun alludes to the fact that Ngo ruined himself with curing rituals.

between the two sections of the *sepkang*. (We will see in a moment the purpose of this ritual.)

The coffin was placed in the grave, together with offerings: cloth, bottles, a cup, a plate, food, sun hats, a sword, a fine mat, and a mat of palm leaves. A relative of Ngo listed the items as they were placed in the grave. He and other men paraphrased Avun's earlier oration. The gist of the message was that Ngo was now on his way to the spirit country; he must not come back, his children and everyone else must go on living. This was said kindly, gently, without fear. Only men came to the graveyard, except for Ngo's closest female relatives (an aunt and two daughters). Ngo's eldest daughter wailed intermittently; as the lid was placed on the tomb, the aunt started a lamentation. As we came down the path, we walked through the *sepkang* again and the last man to pass through it tied it shut. The dead are often reluctant to be parted from their fellow villagers and they might try to follow their trail. When they reach the tied-up *sepkang*, they cannot go any further.[24]

Upon returning to the longhouse, most of us bathed in the river, not for ritual reasons, but because we had been splashed by liquid from the coffin as we climbed to the graveyard. We gathered in front of Ngo's apartment. His son-in-law, Luho, presented to Bungan a bamboo container filled with water and asked her to purify the community. He sprinkled us with water in order to cleanse us from the influence of death (*kepusan*). Everyone who had gone to the graveyard needed to be purified, even Christians. Luho walked from one end of the gallery to the other and sprinkled the longhouse in order to sweep away (*ngaping*) the influence of death. When this was completed, he threw out the bamboo container. Meanwhile, the floor of Ngo's apartment and his section of the gallery were washed thoroughly, more for cleanliness than ritual reasons.

Around 8 pm, a gathering took place on Ngo's gallery in order to give advice to the bereaved so they could cope with their loss and return to their normal routines. The meeting was attended mostly by middle-aged and elderly men. The bereaved were told to be kind to each other and to cooperate in all tasks. Spouses should not quarrel; adults must care for the orphans. A couple in Ngo's household who were not natives of Uma Bawang were warned against the temptation to leave the community. (This was gratuitous advice, as they had no intention of doing so.) As is true in meetings all over the world, most participants felt the need to express an opinion in order to demonstrate they were worth being listened to; there was much repetition and trite advice. The banality of the proceedings may have been soothing to the bereaved. During the meeting, cigarettes, coffee, and twelve bottles of *arak* were served. Except for the large quantity of *arak*, the cost of which was shared between several households, Ngo's household offered less food than one would normally expect on such occasions. A few people commented to me afterwards that this economy was understandable, as the harvest was only starting and there was little to offer. For the community at large, normal life resumed after the meeting, but Ngo's family had yet to undergo some rituals and observe some restrictions.

[24] The *sepkang* is also referred to as a 'watershed' (*ngalang hang*). According to Hose and McDougall (1912, II:37), mourners stepped on a chicken; this was not the case in Uma Bawang.

On the fourth day, Ngo's household held a ritual in the apartment. Outsiders were barred from the proceedings; my neighbour Avun Imang described it to me. During mourning, there is a taboo against playing musical instruments or eating roasted cassava (*isak uve kle*). In order to protect the family against unintended breaches of taboo, Luho, Ngo's son-in-law, used a nail to 'lance the deafness' (*nuin adang*) which is the consequence of hearing a musical instrument; he 'brushed away' (*mehu*) the cracks and cuts on the soles of the feet which would follow from eating roasted cassava. After that, they locked the front and back doors, covered all openings, and extinguished lamps to make the room as dark as possible. Next, they squatted under a cast-net. Luho informed Bungan of the proceedings and smeared everyone with ashes, then he waived purifying plants (*uro' kaping*). The net and the ashes hid them from the dead (*menyirem*) and the boughs brushed away the influence of death. The same day, a household member went fishing with a cast net and offered to the deceased the first catch which he placed on a leaf. Ngo was told this was his share; from now on, there were no more taboos and the mourners could once again eat fresh food.

On the evening of the fifth day, a *dayong* was held to 'uproot the staff of life' (*najok tuken*) of the deceased. This ritual skipped some usual features which usually are part of the *dayong*, such as divination and an altar on the gallery. Various rice pastries were brought to the back door of the apartment where they were offered to Ngo. The members of his household and his relatives gathered to eat. A purpose of this ritual was for them 'to stop holding the hand of the dead man'. From then on, the living and the dead were apart and Ngo was 'not allowed to look back at them any more'. Avun officiated, holding a sacrificial chicken:

> Bungan Malan, Penyelong Luan, these people tell you to remove the rottenness of his staff of life. Maybe his rotten staff fell on the staffs of the survivors. This should not be. These people command the chicken to dig it up, to throw it in the river, to throw away its rottenness, to throw away everything which is bad.

He cut the chicken's throat and threw it outside the house. He turned to another chicken and told it to clean up the household so they would have a good life, so they would be free from illness, so they would obtain the soul of rice, the soul of domesticated pigs, the soul of dogs, so their work would be easy, their farms fertile for the rest of their life, and every single one of their tools and utensils would serve them well. 'Maybe the soul of the rice and these people's souls are in danger because they have been hit by rain [death]. This is the reason for this

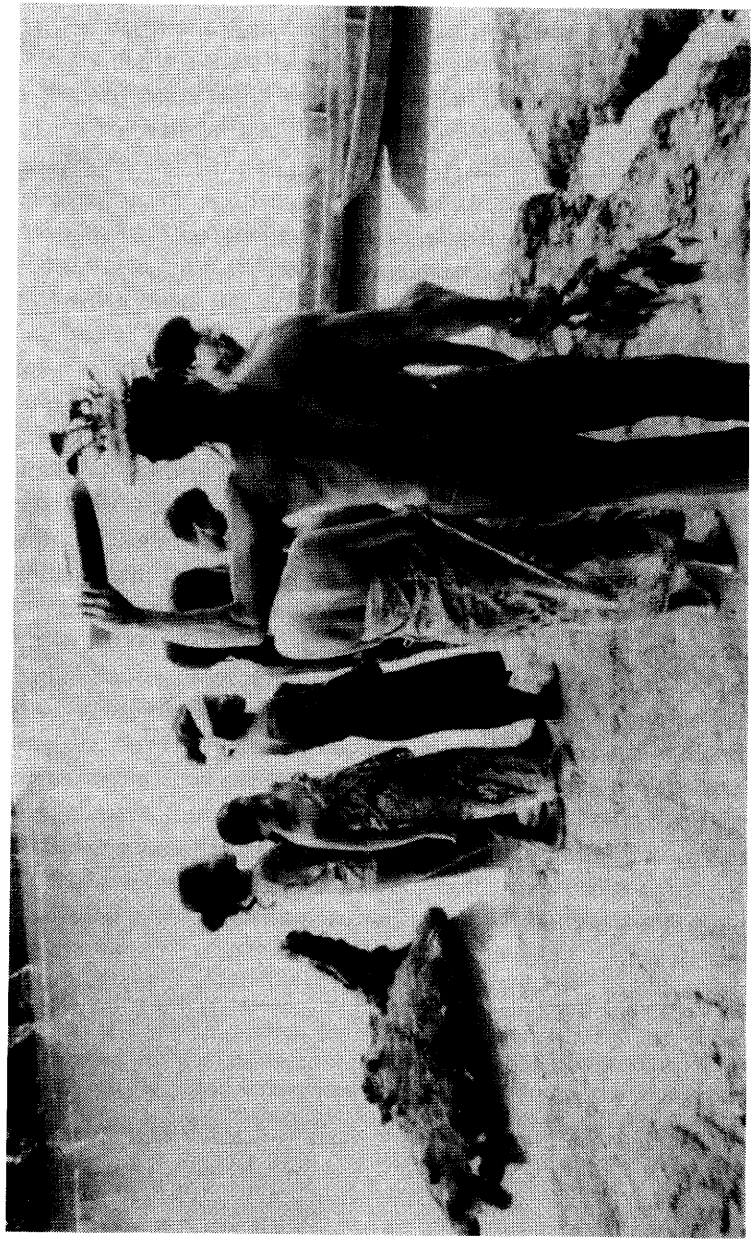

Plate 20. After the burial, mourners are purified at the river. This ritual is needed because the deceased had uttered a curse a few years before his death, and his family needs to be cleansed of any lingering evil influence. With a gong, Avun shields the mourners from danger. In his right hand, he holds purifying boughs (*uro' kaping*). When the purification is complete, the rivulet at right, which has been dammed for the occasion, is allowed to flow, and the influence of the curses goes away with the water.

ritual; ask Bungan Malan and Penyelong Luan to take care of everyone in this household.' The chicken was asked to lead all souls back to the village and make sure the staffs of life of the survivors were solidly planted in the ground. In the spirit country, the chicken visited the spirits in charge of life and the good things of life. This second chicken was not killed but released outside the longhouse. The priest carried out a protective ritual (*pelah*) for Ngo's family. The next day, Avun performed a communal curing ritual (*melo' bengen*, see Chapter VIII), in part because of Ngo's death, but also because a *melo' bengen* had been held a few days ago for several people were ill. Ngo's death suggested that the first *melo' bengen* had not been effective; it was feared that the harvest might be meagre unless the ritual was repeated.

On the afternoon of the fourteenth day, Ngo's household held a *dayong* for which they hired two priests: Avun was in charge, helped by Usun. For their services, each received M$10, plus a gong (*agong*) for Avun. The *dayong* was not a routine part of the funeral sequence. It was carried out in this case to 'repair the influence of wrong words' (*teme daho' sala'*): a few years ago, Ngo had cursed his wife after she committed adultery. Although they were both dead, inauspicious dreams had suggested that the influence of the curse remained and must be removed.

Except for the priests and I, only Ngo's household was present (although there was no prohibition against outsiders joining in). After prayers in the apartment, we went to the river bank where a rivulet was dammed with sand to form a little pool. Avun had brought with him a gong, a sword, a chick, and purifying plants (*uro' kaping*). He placed the gong above the heads of the bereaved in order to shield them from the curse; he brushed away evil influences with the *uro' kaping* which he dipped in the water (Plate 20). As this went on, some mourners said private prayers *sotto voce*. Avun destroyed the dam and let the water escape, so that the curse would go away with it. The mourners returned to the apartment while the two priests completed the purification ritual at the riverside. Avun again dipped the boughs in the water and brushed away evil influences, after which he threw the plants in the river. Then the *dayong* continued in the usual way and a pig was sacrificed. There were no further death rituals until the end of the harvest, but Ngo's relatives continued to wear mourning dress for a while.

After the harvest was completed, Ngo's household organized a last meal for him. As he was alive at the beginning of the agricultural cycle, he had a legitimate interest in its fruits; this was the occasion to give him his share and eat with him one last time. The room was packed solid with people. If any relatives had failed to attend, the deceased would have been disappointed or angry; many non-relatives were also present. After shielding the participants from danger with a tray and a sword, Avun told Ngo that this ritual would not be repeated the following year. 'You might as well know this right away and

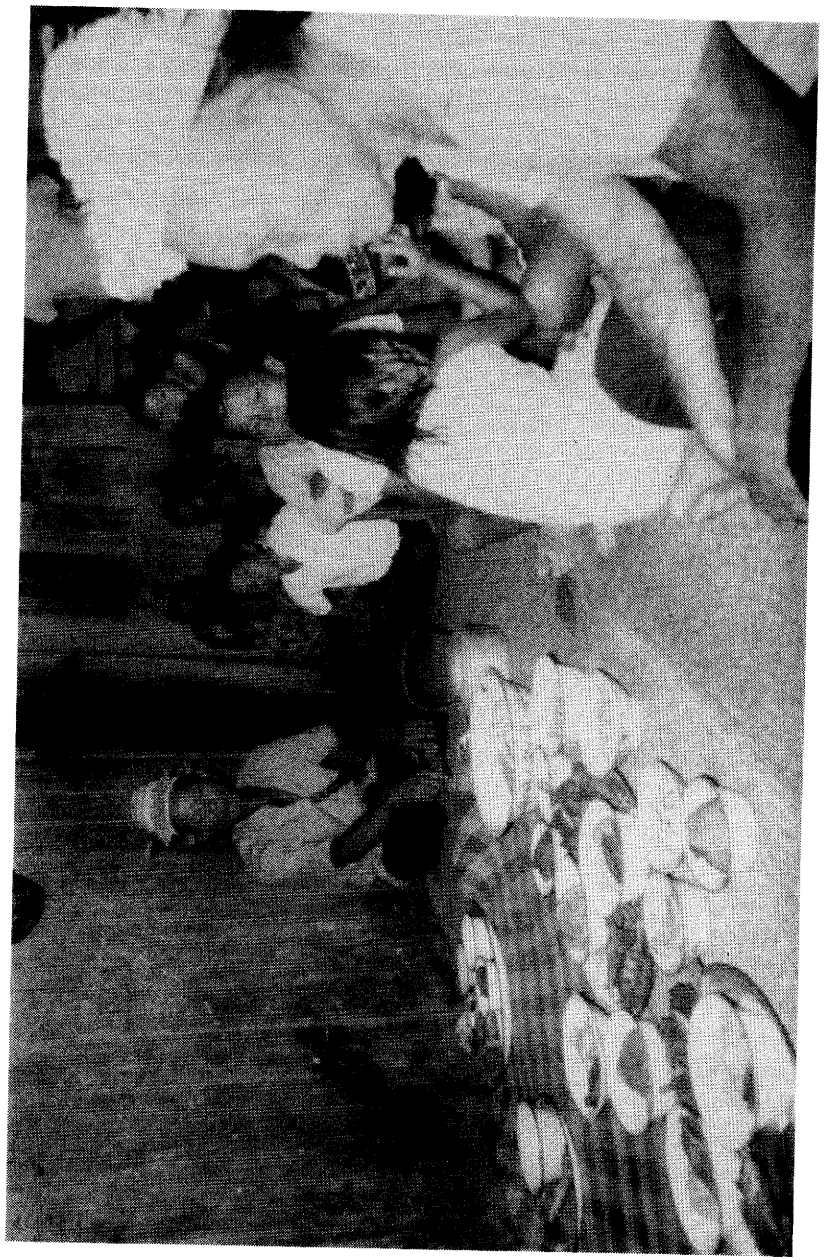

Plate 21. After the harvest, food offerings are given to the spirit of a man who died during the year. The deceased is invited to partake of the fruits of the harvest, after which he is expected to leave for the Other World. Avun sits beside the offerings. The room is packed with relatives and neighbours paying their last respects.

not have false expectations', he said. A variety of dishes was placed on a mat near the back of the apartment (Plate 21). Avun again spoke to Ngo: 'If you wish to get what belongs to you, do it now; we are about to share with you. After this, you may not come back'. He threw some food under the house; people consumed the rest. Avun asked Ngo to send back the souls of the survivors, the soul of rice, and the soul of all good things, in case they wandered away with him. As this ritual is potentially dangerous for the officiant, Avun received a sizeable fee, namely a fine sword and a bronze tray.

Kayan death rituals

As is the case in much of Southeast Asia, there is a variety of death rituals among the Kayan.[25] This is hardly surprising due to the high level of morbidity. Before pacification, the pervasive fear of headhunting attacks made death even more present; in 1970, headhunting was still part of Kayan consciousness, although it had not been practised for a generation. Beliefs about the afterlife are another reason for the importance of death rituals. The dead keep an interest in this world; in particular, they tend to retain a fondness for their surviving relatives and this interest can be deadly if uncontrolled.

Death does not end social relationships; we saw that a widow or widower who remarries must first sever the relationship with the deceased spouse. Necronyms make personal names into permanent reminders of a dead relative. Some necronyms refer to the death of a child, others to a dead spouse, a dead sibling, or a dead parent (Rousseau 1983:255-61). Necronyms belong to the category of 'sympathy names' (*aran kepuyo'*); they are a way for people to express affection for the survivors. Early in my fieldwork, the news reached me that my father had died. For a while, people called me Uyo, the name given to unmarried men who have lost a parent.

While it is important to keep the dead in their place, there is no wish to forget them. Indeed, a common reason given for having one's picture taken is to provide relatives with a tangible memento after one's death. At death, people enter an intermediate stage: they are still in this world and must be helped on their way. For the same reason, reference to the dead must be indirect; using people's names in the first years after death would hold them in this world or call them back. Euphemisms allow for indirect reference. A recently departed man is called *lake' brong aleng dayong*, 'the broken man who is a spirit' or, more briefly, *to'*, 'spirit'.

A person's death affects the whole community. All villagers cease work as soon as they hear the news and they gather in the longhouse. This is even more

25 Seen within the context of the Indonesian archipelago, this focus on death is not unusual; other groups have developed the theme of death much further, especially those who practise secondary burial. For an early account of Baram Kayan burials, see Haddon (1964). See also Hose and McDougall (1912, II:32-8).

Table 24. Death rituals

Commoner rituals	Aristocratic rituals
FIRST DAY	FIRST DAY
	Gongs are struck
	(a funeral specialist is hired)
The body is washed	The body is washed
Belongings and offerings are gathered	Belongings and offerings are gathered
	SECOND DAY
The coffin is prepared	The coffin is prepared
SECOND DAY	THIRD DAY
'Replacements' for the body are placed in the coffin	'Replacements' for the body are placed in the coffin with the 'pointing stick'
	The body, in the coffin, is placed on the gallery
	FOURTH DAY
	(the deceased is fed)
The grave is built	People start to build the mausoleum
	Offerings are brought to the graveyard
(Offerings are placed on a pole)	*(Offerings and a hornbill figurine are placed on a pole)*
	SEVENTH DAY
	(The deceased receives a bamboo tube with which to look at the living)
	Bodies of a kingfisher, a squirrel, and bones of a wild boar are placed in the coffin to act as scouts for the deceased
	A priest describes the way to the afterworld
THIRD OR FOURTH DAY	EIGHTH DAY
	A pig is killed to guide the dead
Communal meal	Communal meal
(The coffin is carried four times)	*(The coffin is carried sixteen times)*
(Each household provides a gift)	*(Each household provides a gift)*
(The coffin is lowered through the floor)	*(The coffin is carried down special steps)*
(A gong is hit four times)	*(A gong is hit sixteen times)*
The coffin goes back and forth four times in the boat	The coffin goes back and forth sixteen times in the boat
(The bereaved family eats gruel)	*(The bereaved family eats gruel)*
Burial	Burial
The burial party walks through the *sepkang*	The burial party walks through the *sepkang*
The burial party is purified	The burial party is purified

Rituals abandoned in *adat Bungan* are between brackets and in *italic* typeface.

important when aristocrats die, because they embody the community. Gongs are struck to announce the death of *maren*; the number of strokes is different for men and women. All village members gather in the deceased's apartment. Those who fail to do so can be fined for lack of respect. Anyone who shouts, sings, plays music, or beats a drum or gong is fined. In the past, a community in mourning for an aristocrat did not allow visitors. Indeed, the Mendalam river was closed off when an important aristocrat died (Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, I:91). A person's rank determines how long he or she remains in the longhouse: the corpse of a *maren* is ideally kept for eight or sixteen days; a *hipuy* remains for at most eight days and a *panyin* for four days.[26] In the equatorial climate of Borneo, this requires that the coffin be sealed tightly, which is hard to achieve. The smell of putrefaction has a moral connotation: it is said that the corpse of a good person does not emit bad odours.

In *adat Dipuy*, the whole community had to stay away from the farms for the next two days. Members of the deceased's household were not allowed to hunt the sambhur deer, mousedeer, monkeys, or animals with markings (*tulan kalong*, including bear, clouded leopard, and civet cat) until the end of the year. If someone died at the farm rather than the longhouse, his family could not enter the longhouse until the harvest festival; if they did not wish to stay at the farm, they built themselves a temporary shelter beside the longhouse (Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, I:91).

If someone died at an inconvenient time, accommodations were sometimes possible:

> [A Kayan] chief had died at a most unfortunate time, the people being engaged in sowing their crops and, by Kayan custom, it was necessary for them to go into mourning for the death of their chief. When in mourning Kayans are not allowed to work in the fields and, by putting off the sowing for another month, when the mourning would be over, the rice crops would be too late in the year to ripen properly and the ground would have become choked with weeds. In this dilemma the *Dayong* was called in and sitting down in front of the coffin he asked the chief what was to be done?
>
> 'Why,' said he, 'have you died at this most inconvenient time? What shall we do?' [...] [The chief replied:] 'I am not dead, children, grand-children and friends; I am only asleep, stunned by some unknown enemy. I shall live till after the harvest so do not stop your sowing on my account. You can mourn for me when you have gathered in your crops.' (Hose 1898:140.)

[26] Hose (1898:139) says 'the corpse of a Kayan chief is kept in the house for at least nine days after death'. Given that 9 is not a significant number for the Kayan, I assume that Hose's informants started the count on the day after the death.

Funeral

There are variants in Kayan death rituals. As with other life cycle rituals, funerals mark social rank (see also Hose and McDougall 1912, II:32; Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, II:117). The form of death determines one's abode in the afterworld (Chapter IV) but does not affect the funeral rituals (except in very specific cases). Infants who die before receiving a name are buried without any ritual.

I have already given an account of the *adat Bungan* death ritual for commoners. Except for the disappearance of some taboos, rituals have remained largely the same in both ritual systems, except that *adat Bungan* is more flexible (Table 24). For the first two days, *adat Dipuy* procedures for commoners were the same as in *adat Bungan*. On the third or fourth day, after the communal meal in which village members ate with the deceased, men carried the coffin four times back and forth along the gallery in order to give the dead person a last chance to have a look at the longhouse. Each household presented a string of inexpensive beads (*ku'an*) for him to deliver to those who had died earlier, so they would send back to the world of the living the soul of rice, the souls of goods, and the souls of domesticated animals. The day before the burial, the deceased was given instructions: when he visited spirits' villages in the other world, he must refuse to come up to the longhouse; instead, he must build a hut nearby; his refusal of hospitality would force spirits to relinquish these souls, after which he might enter the house.

The coffin was hewn from a single piece of wood (Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, II:299); nowadays it is made of planks.[27] Coffins could not be built ahead of time: to anticipate death is to cause it (Sombroek n.d.1:4.34). While a gong was hit four times, the coffin was lowered through a hole in the floor made by removing some boards. This stratagem made it more difficult for the spirit of the dead to find the way back to the longhouse. If they had not been brought to the graveyard ahead of time, grave goods were also lowered through this hole.[28] At the graveyard, a pole (*kayo' lujok*) was decorated with four flags and

[27] Sombroek (n.d.1:4.33) says plank coffins are reserved for aristocrats. Referring to the Berawan, Metcalf (1982:80) says 'the coffin is a boat, for the journey of the dead is a voyage, but this symbolic identification is not emphasized by Berawan as it is among other Bornean peoples'. During fieldwork, I heard no reference to the coffin as a boat, nor is this evident in Nieuwenhuis or Sombroek. It is easy to understand, however, how the coffin could be perceived as a boat. Haddon (1964:553) says 'a Kayan chief's coffin is often made to represent a boat; and a wooden figure about two or three inches in height is placed one at each [end] to paddle him down the river'. It is not clear whether Haddon was told of the coffin being a boat; I suspect it might be Haddon's interpretation based on comparative ethnology. During my fieldwork in Uma Bawang, a Christian woman was buried in a coffin made of a single piece of wood. The choice of one or the other kind of coffin is a matter of convenience and personal preference.

[28] One day when he was expounding on the harshness of *adat Dipuy*, Avun surmised this practice might have been a reason why life was so difficult then, because the dead were offended at being carried through the filth which collects under the house.

offerings were attached to it. The pole was placed where it could be seen from the river. A fire was lit near the grave for the corpse's comfort.[29] If the workers stayed at the graveyard long enough to need a meal, they had to go some distance from the graves to cook it.

During the burial, family members ate a gruel of pig's lungs while sitting under a roof opening in their apartment. If the spirit peeped through it, he would see the slimy gruel; this would frighten him, he would shrink back and go away. Upon their return from the graveyard, the pall-bearers sat on the gallery of the deceased in order to 'cool off' (*pehngem*).

The *adat Dipuy* funeral of aristocrats included all features of the commoner ritual and added a number of elements. Consequently it lasted much longer. The burial took place on the eighth day (rather than the third or fourth for commoners), and various rituals were added on the third, fourth, and seventh days (Table 24). The death of a *maren* was announced by hitting a gong (*nyulit*). Because of the complexity of *adat Dipuy* rituals, a specialist was hired to take charge of the proceedings. Funeral specialists inherited this function from an ancestor. The practitioner received a bead bracelet including one valuable bead, which was worn throughout the funeral. The fee included a gong, referred to as the 'sun-hat' which provided protection against the 'shadow' (*linge*) of the deceased and the danger of contact with social superiors (*tulah*); the first act of the specialist was to 'strengthen' him/herself (*ngemhing*). The metaphorical reference to 'shadow' underlines that the specialist has been touched by death in the same way as one might be in someone's shadow; the deceased has become a spirit, hence a superior being, and one must guard against the danger of being in contact with it. The specialist was provided with food as well as his own cooking and eating implements, and he ate by himself until the tenth day after the burial. His utensils and food were stored in a hand-net to make sure no one would touch them; they became his property. He ate the food which was offered to the corpse. During the funeral, the specialist was given chicken meat. (Chicken is not part of the daily diet, because chickens are used as sacrificial animals; killing chickens every day was a display of wealth.) The men who worked on the coffin and the grave were also fed by the afflicted family.

As in *adat Bungan*, the body was washed and anointed[30]; his personal belongings were gathered around him. Food was packed in a bundle: a thumb-size bag of rice (with ordinary and sticky rice) and some rock salt which served as cooking stand.[31] The specialist named each object for the benefit of the deceased

[29] This appears to have been optional. 'It is not until the corpse has been taken to the graveyard and placed inside a huge billian [ironwood] tomb that the fire is put out; then, it is supposed, that the soul first becomes aware that its body is dead' (Hose 1898:139). The *kayo' lujok* is similar to a *kayo' belawing* (see Chapter VIII).

[30] In Uma Suling (Mahakam area), the body of aristocrats was bathed in the river (Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, II:118).

[31] A cooking stand (*bato' angan*) is made of three stones on which the pot is placed.

as he placed it beside the body. By the second day, everyone was expected to have returned to the village; early in the morning, men started preparing the coffin. On the third day, just before dawn, beads were placed on the body as 'replacements' for all body parts. A lamp was stored in the coffin to shed light as the deceased entered the Lemo' cave on his way to the spirit country. The body was placed in the coffin and brought to the gallery where it was shielded with a partition (*bilit*). The contents of the apartment were placed on the gallery so that the deceased could take the souls of all his belongings.

Early in the morning of the fourth day and in the evening, the attendant struck a gong to invite the spirit of the deceased to eat. The pervading stench was proof of its presence. On that day, some grave goods were brought to the graveyard, as well as a chicken and a pig which were sacrificed and eaten. Workers started to repair the existing mausoleum (*salong*) or built a new one; they continued the task on the following days. Both aristocrats and commoners could participate in this work; craftsmen were often hired from other communities. The builders wore bead wrist-bands to protect themselves from the danger of death. A pole with offerings (*kayo' lujok*) was decorated with a rhinoceros hornbill figurine and thirty-two flags of various colours. (We have seen that commoners could place only four flags on their *kayo' lujok*; they were not allowed to have a figurine.)

While commoners lowered the coffin through a hole in the floor in order to prevent the return of the deceased, aristocrats achieved the same goal by installing special stairs (*kayo' adat*) on the seventh day, down which the coffin was carried the next day. The funeral specialist constructed a tube out of sixteen sections of bamboo cut at both ends and connected to each other; this was called the 'bamboos for peeping' (*bulu awang*) with which the deceased could see the living. The bamboo sections were presumably stored in the coffin, to be reassembled in the afterworld as a kind of telescope.

The funeral specialist wrapped in cloth a bone from a wild boar killed while crossing a river, a young kingfisher (*matih*), and a small squirrel (*telih bran*); the bundle was placed in the coffin. These animals acted as scouts on the way to the afterworld.[32] The specialist instructed the deceased:

> Follow the way of the spirits (*alan to'*) and these swimming boars will carry your load. The young kingfisher will fly ahead of you and announce your impending arrival to the people of Long Alan, so they come to meet you and carry your load. Likewise, the squirrel will follow you and help carry your belongings.

[32] The kingfisher and the squirrel were killed whenever convenient and smoked to be preserved until needed. The Uma Daro' section used the kingfisher, but substituted a tarsier (*hiko*) for the squirrel. Avun, a member of Uma Daro', gave a different interpretation for these animals: kingfisher and tarsier are the messengers to the ancestors of the deceased at Telang Julan; they inform them of the death. For more on the way to the afterworld, see Nieuwenhuis (1904-07, I:104).

In the evening, a priest described the way to the spirit country. In the course of the ritual, he sang rhyming songs (*long peleka'*) and extracts from epic poems for the benefit of the corpse and his animal companions. The singer described all the activities of daily life, such as hunting and travelling; he gave a detailed description of the landmarks which a traveller encounters from the source of the Baluy to its mouth. Caladium leaves (*long*) were hung to prevent the dead from coming back (spirits are afraid of *long* for an unknown reason). For his protection, the priest received a gong (plus the usual payments to a priest performing a *dayong*).

On the morning of the eighth day, the priest addressed a domesticated pig, which was an offering to those who had died in the past. The priest scratched the pig's anus so it would not forget the way to the spirit country: 'Maybe he [the deceased] will loiter, maybe he'll forget. Follow the road, pig, and scratch him[33], hurry him along the way.' The pig was instructed to chase away ill-intentioned spirits. If the special stairs had not been set up the day before, they were installed then. The pig was cooked and served with various rice pastries to every member of the community.

The screen shielding the coffin was removed. Men carried the coffin back and forth sixteen times along the gallery. The coffin was carried down the special stairs while the gong was struck sixteen times. (The top of the stairs was called 'the rapid where voices are raised' (*giham tanyang*) because this is where people wailed and cried.) The coffin was brought to the graveyard on a boat. As it departed, the boat went back and forth in front of the house sixteen times. At the end of each traverse, a rice pastry (*selukong*) was thrown in the river from the boat while someone else did the same from the river bank; this symbolized the cessation ('throwing away') of death taboos.

In *adat Bungan*, the funeral of aristocrats is the same as in *adat Dipuy*, except for the disappearance of a few elements. It is no longer necessary to hire a funeral specialist to take charge of the proceedings. On the fourth day, there is no need to feed the deceased. The deceased is no longer given a bamboo tube (*bulu awang*) with which to look at the living. It is not necessary to erect a pole on which to place offerings and a hornbill figurine, but mausoleums are decorated with flags. On the day of the burial, one may omit carrying the coffin back and forth along the veranda or collecting gifts of beads from each household. There is no need to install special steps down which to carry the coffin. Gongs may or may not be hit as the coffin is brought down, and the family of the deceased does not have to eat a gruel of pig's lungs to frighten him away.

[33] '*Nyubat*' ('scratch') refers to rooting up earth, a common activity of pigs.

Burial

Burial practices are the same in *adat Dipuy* and *adat Bungan*. I was told that, in theory, it was possible to inter a body any time except during sowing or harvest, otherwise the rice would rot. During these periods, one must place the body in an elevated structure.[34] While it is permitted to inter bodies at other periods, I heard of only a few examples of this.[35] I suspect interments are rare because it is considered more respectful to place the body in a *tapong*; in any case, if the lumber is available, it does not require more work than digging a hole for the coffin. A plain elevated tomb is called *tapong*; decorated mausoleums are called *salong* and are reserved for the *maren* and the *hipuy* (the latter may not be able to afford them, in which case they erect a *tapong*). The dead may only be buried in areas specifically identified as graveyards; there are usually several graveyards in a village territory. When a community moves to a new location, it selects suitable spots for graveyards.

The *salong* is a marker of status. Unlike a *tapong*, which houses one or at most two coffins, the *salong* has room for several coffins. It is made of the same materials as a longhouse: a structure of beams is placed on large posts, floor and walls are made of planks and the roof is shingled. The *salong* is decorated with carvings and paintings. It is expensive to produce; if members of several communities help in building it, this demonstrates the influence of the *maren* family for whom it is erected. Before he became chief of Uma Bawang, Lihan was interim chief of Uma Nyaving, where one of his children died. In addition to members of that village, people came from Uma Belun and Uma Bawang to help build a mausoleum. He also hired Kenyah artisans and the *salong* was completed in five days.

Kayan *salong* can be contrasted with the burial monuments of Kajang aristocrats. Unlike their Kayan neighbours, the Kajang practise secondary burial; the bones of aristocrats are placed in jars stored in funeral posts (*kliring*). The trunk of a large ironwood tree is split and a chamber carved inside it; alternatively, two ironwood trunks can be joined. The surface is carved with elaborate designs and the post is capped with a stone slab or a chamber made of planks (see Jayl Langub 1991:64-5). Some Baluy Kayan aristocrats have copied the

[34] Nieuwenhuis (1904-07, II:118) says that, during the harvest, the body was put in a temporary hut, otherwise the soul of the rice would bring about a bad harvest.

[35] Haddon (1964:554-5) notes the existence of ground burial among poor Kayan and when people have died from 'some infectious or loathsome disease, [...] accident, violence or [...] war'. It is also noted by Kükenthal (1896:283). Nowadays, Christian Kayan may not be placed in a tomb above ground. This can cause some anxiety and ill-feelings if a Christian dies during the sowing or harvest. I observed an interesting compromise: after digging a grave, the Christians built a *tapong* (without stilts) in it, in which the coffin was placed. Cement tombs are becoming fashionable, in part because cement is considered to be a kind of stone, a highly-valued material; furthermore, it is a stone that can be made to a desired shape. During fieldwork, a middle-aged man of Uma Bawang bought cement which was destined for his grave.

Kajang style of funeral posts, which they call 'stone posts' (*jihe' bato'*). The remains are deposited in a jar, but do not undergo secondary burial. While these posts are 'in the Kajang style', their use by Kayan chiefs is proper because they are related to Kajang aristocrats.[36]

Mourning

Death rituals do not end with burial. The bereaved must mourn (*lumuh*), otherwise they will incur the wrath of the dead. Some people think the old chief of Uma Bawang became deaf because he failed to mourn his mother's relatives properly; she was a commoner and he thought himself too grand to pay his respects to social inferiors. More generally, it is a social obligation to be present at funerals of all fellow villagers, even if they are not relatives. When an old demented woman died, someone told me: 'It is true she was mad, but the members of her household are not; one must visit the bereaved to make them feel better'. This is why people are expected to return from the farm when someone dies. When commoners die, the obligation to mourn extends to those who shared an apartment with the deceased as well as community members who recognize a kinship relation. In practice, these include lineal relatives, collaterals up to second cousins, and in-laws. At the death of an adult *maren*, the whole community goes in mourning; if a well-known chief dies, mourning is also expected from villages whose chiefs are his relatives.

People disagree about the proper duration of the mourning. Some say that, in *adat Dipuy*, it lasted a month, others until the end-of-year *dayong*. Nieuwenhuis (1904-07, I:91) states that it ended fourteen to fifteen days after the burial. In *adat Bungan*, some informants suggest eight days of mourning for aristocrats and seven days for commoners; others think the mourning period ends with the new moon. Everyone agrees that, under Bungan's dispensation, mourning dress need not be worn as long as in *adat Dipuy* because the spirits of the dead reach the afterworld more rapidly. In practice, the mourners' frame of mind is the main factor: some people wear mourning for a long time to express their grief. In a general discussion about widowhood and remarriage, informants suggested that, while the survivor might remarry one month after the spouse's death, it was more common to wait a year. Some people put off remarrying for years because of their love for their departed spouse. An elderly gentleman

[36] Other Kayan and Kayanic groups have adopted secondary burial: Nieuwenhuis (1904-07, II:119-20) says it was present in all the groups of the upper Mahakam. At the turn of the century, it was still common among the Mahakam-Kayan, while it had become rarer among other groups. The chief of the Mahakam-Kayan was against the practice. We must remember that the Mahakam-Kayan came into being by the amalgamation of Kayan conquerors with groups culturally related to the people of Central Kalimantan, where secondary burial is common. Metcalf (1975) describes the distribution of secondary burial in Borneo. Secondary burial is not, in any simple way, an ethnic marker: a form of secondary burial is also noted among Second Division Iban (Uchibori 1984:20).

Table 25. Mourning

Number of day after burial	*Adat Dipuy*	*Adat Bungan*
1	Mourners stay home *Menyirem* (the family makes itself invisible to the deceased)	Mourners stay home *Menyirem*
2	Mourners stay home	Mourners stay home
3	Mourners may leave the house	Mourners may leave the house
3 (or later) (optional)	*Nyalo' liu* (sharing goods with the deceased)	*Nyalo' liu*
After 3rd day		*Dayong* to uproot the staff of life
10	*Dayong* to uproot the staff of life	
7 days after *dayong* (optional)	*Pelah urip* (propitiation)	*Pelah urip*
Harvest festival	The deceased is asked to send back the souls of rice and valuables	The community eats with the deceased
Headhunting ritual	End of all mourning taboos Palms (*sang*) are brought to the grave	

waited four years to marry again, but he opined that young people would have been in a greater hurry. On the other hand, he could recall a case when a widow and widower married each other while they were still wearing mourning clothes.

Traditionally, mourners wore undecorated clothing made of bark cloth. Nowadays, mourning clothes are made of unbleached calico stained with earth dissolved in water. Bark clothes were discarded after the end-of-year *dayong*. Calico is very durable and, when it is time to discard mourning clothes, only a corner of the shirt is cut off and thrown away; the rest is kept for another occasion. Mourning clothes are simple and rustic; people wear a sleeveless shirt and wrap a rectangle of cloth around the loins. Mourners bathe normally but do not keep a neat appearance: they do not get haircuts or pluck unwanted hair. One man cut his splendid long hair after the death of his child. Mourners wear no jewellery; they may not be tattooed until the end of mourning. During the mourning, no one in the village may sing or play musical instruments, as the music could cause deafness for those who heard it.

The Kayan show a marked reluctance to utter the names of the recently dead and refer to them with circumlocutions (such as 'the spirit', 'the one who

departed'). One may call by name those who died a few years ago.[37] I was told that people with the same name as someone who died recently should temporarily be called by another name, but I have not observed this. In *adat Dipuy*, relatives of the deceased were not allowed to sleep during the day until the end of the mourning period, otherwise they would be affected with chronic somnolence. They avoided asking anything from other people, lest they get in the habit of begging. In the days following the burial (*do lahing*), the following foods had to be avoided: baked cassava, Caladium, and sugarcane. Breach of these taboos was deemed to produce specific illnesses: for baked cassava or Caladium, cracks in feet or hands (*pali bekang*); for sugarcane, the callused skin of the feet would peel off (*pali senura*).

For the first two days after the burial, mourners must stay home; they are allowed to work on the third day. On the first day after burial, *adat Dipuy* mourners were purified (*ngaping*) with a banana leaf and a knife. The banana leaf served to discard illnesses and spirits who cause accidents. The knife (or iron bar) served to 'prick' open the ear-holes which might otherwise be closed as the result of someone playing a musical instrument. On that day, mourners were not allowed to eat peppery or bitter foods. During the purification, the priest stated that the taboos ended on that day, although this was not the case. By saying so, the priest reduced the risk of breaches of taboos because his statements might confuse some spirits into thinking the taboo period was indeed over. On the evening of the first day or the next day, the household of the deceased underwent the *menyirem* ritual which made them invisible. This called for wild raspberry thorns (*sepirang abit*), charcoal or ashes, and a cast-net under which they huddled. The net hid them from the spirit, who was frightened away by the thorns, while the ashes made the survivors unrecognizable.

The *nyalo' liu* ritual can be performed from the third day on. When it takes place, fresh food (*ket tahu*) must be avoided, but one may eat smoked meat, rice, and other preserved foods. The *nyalo' liu* serves to give the deceased the souls of their belongings; at that occasion, one can also engage in poison fishing and offer the deceased some fish; after that, there is no prohibition on fresh food and travelling. The *nyalo' liu* is not a regular feature of Bungan mourning. It can be carried out if, through dreams, the deceased asks for some of his or her belongings; these are placed on a temporary platform erected in front of the house or on a raft which is sent adrift. Later on, the spirit sends a dream to express satisfaction.

In *adat Dipuy*, a *dayong* was performed on the tenth day after burial in order to uproot the staff of life (*tuken urip*) of the spirit. In *adat Bungan*, this takes place

37 The person's name is prefixed with *urip*, 'life'. I interpret this usage as meaning '[the person who was called] X when alive', for instance *urip* Lake' Lirong, 'the late Lake' Lirong'. By contrast, the Baram Kayan prefix the name of the deceased with *matei*, 'dead' (Clayre and Cubit 1974:90).

after a shorter interval. Rice pastries were prepared for the occasion and sent to the spirit country during the ritual. The priest's fee was high because of the supernatural danger attached to the occasion. As usual, the fee was also justified by the fact that it enhanced the priest's efficacy, that it made him 'sharp' (*nejek*). The departed was invited to eat with the participants and was told that, from now on, he should not look back or ask for any more. While the priest uprooted the staff of life of the deceased, he also took care to clean and repair the staffs of life of the survivors which might have been knocked down or sullied by the death of their relative.

Seven days after uprooting the tree of life, one can carry out a *pelah urip*, a 'propitiation of life'. This is necessary when some unfortunate event of the deceased's life is thought to still have an effect. The household where it takes place is marked off so people do not carry *padi* or fresh tobacco in front of it, as this would 'break' the ritual. Household members must stay home for two days after it. One *pelah urip* took place after a child died; his death was attributed to the fact that spirits had asked him for food, which he refused. A renowned priest, Lake' Huluy of Uma Belun, was asked to officiate.

Lake' Huluy first cleansed the participants with purifying boughs (*uro' kaping*, see Chapter VIII). He went to the river's edge where he made a little pond; he talked to the plants, which he dipped in the water, and to a chicken. He then notched lengths of rattan and split a length of bamboo in which he placed the sword. Participants touched the bamboo with their right knee; Lake' Huluy prayed that they be as strong as the sword. The bamboo was thrown in the river and drifted away. They returned to the house and the priest covered the participants under a cast net (*menyirem*) while each of them ate a grain of husked rice. After that, he created a spiritual fence around them with a sword. In the evening, they placed cooked rice in a dog manger, ate it together, then threw away the manger.

In *adat Dipuy* (and to a lesser extent in *adat Bungan*) life did not return to normal for the mourners until the harvest festival. Until then, the household of the deceased could not sell rice, pigs, or chickens. If the death occurred while new fields were being cleared, a small area was set aside as the farm of the dead person. If it happened after the sowing, a sheaf was harvested from the bottom of the farm if the deceased was a woman, from the top if a man. At the end-of-year *dayong*, the priest met the dead person along the way (*usun alan*) and guided him towards previously departed relatives at Telang Julan. There, the priest asked for the soul of rice, the souls of goods, and the souls of domesticated animals; he repeated the injunction that the deceased should not join his relatives until they returned these souls to the living.

In *adat Dipuy*, the headhunting ritual marked the end of all death taboos. After completing the headhunting ritual which marks the end of the ritual year, mourners brought palm markers (*sang*) to the grave. There, they stated that

they could once more kill animals with markings (*tulan kalong*) and sambhur deer; they were now allowed to eat Caladium, they could sell rice, pigs, and chickens. To use the Kayan expression, they could now 'throw away' (*bet*) rice, pigs, and chickens. During the taboo period, the recently departed spirit would have been offended not only if they sold the products of the household, but also if, through carelessness or accident, they lost anything of value, especially rice. The calendrical headhunting ritual marks the end of mourning in the same way as a headhunting expedition ended mourning for a chief: 'If, as is usually the case on the return of a war party, mourning for a chief is to be terminated, one of the heads is carried down-river to his tomb, followed by most of the men, while the women wail in the house' (Hose and McDougall 1912, II:176).

One restriction remains after the end of the mourning. If someone wishes to cultivate a piece of land whose last user has since died, he must first make a payment (*buling*) to the household of the deceased if the new growth has not exceeded the stage of small secondary jungle (*talun 'ok*), in other words if the land was cultivated less than ten or fifteen years ago. If it has become tall secondary jungle (*talun aya'*), the link between the land and its previous user is deemed to have faded away. The nature of the payment is unspecified, but might be something like a cast-net chain. It is required 'because the land is like the body of the dead person, like his tears' (*avin luma' anan itong le'ong pate, lunu na'*). '*Buling*' means 'mad', which suggests that madness is the consequence of failing to pay it.

Given that everything is owned by households rather than individuals, death theoretically does not create problems of inheritance. Issues of ownership arise only when a large household splits into two distinct units; the division of property takes place immediately under the supervision of the senior member of the household, even if they all continue to occupy the same apartment. However, if the seniormost household member (*puku amin*) dies just before a partition is to take place, his (or her) 'soul can be called up and spoken to by the *Dayong* should any difficulty arise in the family with regard to the division and disposal of the dead man's property' (Hose 1898:139).

Variations in funerals

As we have seen, there are ritual differences between aristocrats (the 'good people') and commoners ('bad people'). In addition, the duration and lavishness of funerals is influenced by financial considerations. Those who can afford it sponsor a full-scale ceremonial and keep the body in the longhouse for the maximum number of days. At the other extreme, if a household lacks the resources to build a proper *tapong*, they can place the body in an old boat instead. This would happen only if the deceased was disliked or despised, or during an epidemic, because fellow villagers normally lend a hand in building the coffin and the grave. The bodies of slaves were often disposed of in a very

casual way. The corpse of an unnamed baby might simply be placed in a tree. In areas of Borneo where limestone rockfaces are common, coffins may be placed in caves or rock ledges; people even carve out niches for coffins. While travelling up the Mahakam by boat, I saw coffins perched precariously in crags of rockfaces.

In the past, humans were sometimes sacrificed to serve as attendants to prominent aristocrats in the afterworld. It was not permissible to use a local slave for this purpose: some masters mistreated their slaves, but killing them was another matter, because the community, from *maren* to slave, is a unit. Killing one of its members, however lowly, would disrupt communal harmony. The victim had to be captured or bought. This rule was sometimes honoured in the breach: in 1882, Uyong Bato' of Uma Aging was fined for sacrificing one of his slaves (Low 1882:64). If the aristocrat had died through illness or old age, the slave could not be put to death through sudden violence, otherwise he or she would go to another area of the afterworld. The victim was left to die of thirst and hunger, tied to the *salong* or inside it. Fresh head trophies were also brought to aristocratic graves and some headhunting expeditions specifically took place for the purpose of procuring a fresh head after the death of a *maren*.

Burials were adapted to an individual's personal characteristics or to the circumstances of the death. For a renowned warrior (*kelunan lakin*), firebrands and wood shavings were placed in the tomb for the warrior to attack and burn Iban longhouses in the spirit country. (During the *dayong* which formed part of the funeral sequence, the priest also sent firebrands to the spirit country so the warrior could burn enemy longhouses in Telang Julan.) Small figurines of dogs, the size of a big toe, were placed around the neck of skilled hunters. When someone died suddenly, the body was immediately placed on a flat surface covered with a boat. Sudden deaths are inexplicable and the body must be dispatched with all speed before the danger spreads to the whole community. A woman who dies in childbirth should be buried immediately because she becomes a particularly fearsome spirit (see *to' ka'*, Chapter IV). People often fled after a sudden death, leaving old men and women to dispose of the corpse (Nieuwenhuis 1904-07, I:91; Hose and McDougall 1912, II:155). Similarly, suicides are buried with despatch. After the body has been safely disposed of, the new spirit is led to the appropriate region of the afterworld in a *dayong* ritual.

If someone died outside the longhouse, his body was placed in a temporary hut erected nearby. In *adat Dipuy*, it was strictly forbidden to bring into the house someone who had died violently, as this would endanger the whole community. Since *adat Bungan*, this prohibition has disappeared in Uma Bawang but is still in force in Uma Aging. If someone dies far away from the village, the body is left behind. When his companions return home to tell the bad news, they remain outside the longhouse. People place his belongings on a platform or hut near the house; the spirit is invited to take the souls of these objects. The travellers may then return to their apartments and mourn in the usual way.

Human beings are formed by the association of body and soul. This integration is often at risk, and life-cycle rituals are there to prevent the separation of these two principles. Conversely, death rituals assist body and souls in their separate journeys; without these, body and souls would remain in uneasy and unstable proximity. From our individualistic viewpoint, we perceive the obvious fact that life-cycle rituals constitute social persons, but it may be less immediately evident that they also manage social relations. Thus, death rituals do not only control an individual's death; they also rearrange the relationship between the deceased and the living. All life cycle rituals emphasize that individuals exist as members of a collectivity. They also buttress the stratification system by emphasizing that stratum ascription is an intrinsic part of personal identity.