KING SILIMAN AND
OTHER BIDAYUH FOLK TALES

RAJA SILIMAN PAS TINGAH
TANUN BIDAYUH DA BUKUN

Compiled by
Robert Sulis Ridu • Ritikos Jitab • Jonas Noeb
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ROBERT SULIS RIDU • RITIKOS JITAB • JONAS NOEB

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK • DAYAK STUDIES
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2001
Since the founding of the Majlis Adat Istiadat Sarawak in 1978, members of its research and culture council have gathered a number of folk stories. Although there had been an earlier publication of these stories, the volume had been limited to only one volume and it was published in 1984 by the same council.

The present volume is the result of efforts that have been taken from the research of the Majlis Adat Istiadat Sarawak. I would like to acknowledge the assistance of the Institute of East Asian Studies, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. I would also like to express my thanks to Robert Sulistianta & Jonas Noeb for their support in engaging these stories into English.

Before the introduction of Christianity, these used to be used to be part of the moral implications of the community.

I have great interest in these stories.
Since the formation of the Majlis Adat Istiadat in 1974, staff members of its research section have collected amongst others, a large number of folk stories of the Dayak peoples. From this large collection only one volume of Iban folk stories, *Jerita Tuai Enggau Ensera*, was published in 1995 in Iban language by the Social Development Council.

The present volume contains ten Bidayuh dondan (folk stories), taken from the collection in the Bidayuh research section. The publication of this volume differs from the earlier publication in that the volume is published in Bidayuh the original version and English, the translated version.

The Majlis takes pride in the fact that this volume is published by Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), a seat of learning for Sarawak. I would like to express my thanks to the Institute of East Asian Studies and the Dayak Chair for making it possible to publish this volume as a UNIMAS publication.

This volume would not have become a reality had it not been for the contribution of the storytellers. To them I say, “Thank You” I would also like to express my appreciation to Robert Sulis Ridu, Ritikos Jitab & Jonas Noeb for transcribing these stories in Bidayuh, translating them into English and compiling them into the present volume.

Before the introduction of TV to the rural areas, folk stories such as these used to be a source of entertainment. Some folk stories also have moral implications for society. They are a product of a creative mind.

I have great pleasure in commending this collection of Bidayuh folk stories.

DATUK TRA ZEHNDER
Ketua Majlis
Majlis Adat Istiadat, Sarawak
SINDA PONGIDIO


Majlis sun ayuh hormat sebab buk itis mo morui jadi da Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), otak pingajar suo Sarawak. Oku suka ngin terima kasih do Institute of East Asian Studies duoh Dayak Chair sebab mo dopod kijadi buk itis do UNIMAS.


Dengan sonang otin oku ngibonar buk dondan Bidayuh itis.

Dayak Studies and the Oral Literature Series

The Dayak Studies publication series of the Institute of East Asian Studies, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) and the Cultural Foundation for Promoting Longhouse Communities of Sarawak (KESO) is an interdisciplinary research collaboration that seeks to promote the study of oral literature in the Dayak communities of Sarawak.

In this connection we aim to publish oral literature series, including research papers and monographs, focusing on Dayak oral literature.

About the Oral Literature Series

A major challenge facing modern Sarawak is the maintenance and perpetuation of local community culture. The oral literature genre serves a significant role in transmitting cultural narratives— all forms of cultural narratives embody many different identities. These oral narratives were formed and reshaped in various communities across the region.

The purpose of the oral literature series is to publish and promote research on oral literature. It is intended to be a platform for the exchange of ideas about oral traditions and to document changing social and cultural structures. Each volume in the series aims to contribute to the understanding of the rich oral traditions and to provide a basis for future research.
Foreword

Dayak Studies and the Dayak Studies Oral Literature Series

The Dayak Studies Program was inaugurated at the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak in January 2001. Constituted within the Institute of East Asian Studies, and sustained by an endowment from the Dayak Cultural Foundation, the program was established for the purpose of promoting long-term research on issues confronting the Dayak communities of Sarawak and of the island of Borneo more generally.

In this connection, the Dayak Studies Program has initiated two publication series: 1) a Contemporary Society Series (comprised of data papers and monographs relating to issues of current concern), and 2) an Oral Literature Series.

About the Oral Literature Series

A major challenge facing Dayak communities today is that of maintaining, or, in some cases, of rediscovering the vitality of community cultural institutions and identities. Traditionally, the verbal and expressive arts—storytelling, epics, sacred and historical narratives—all formed a central and cherished part of Dayak life and embodied many of the most important values on which cultural identities were founded. Today, in the face of rapid change, many of these narrative forms are in danger of being lost. Others are being radically reshaped or are assuming new cultural roles and meanings.

The purpose of this series is to make possible the recording and publication of some part of this rich and rapidly changing corpus of oral literature. It is intended not only to preserve a record of traditional examples of oral literature threatened with loss, but also to record and document changing forms of contemporary Dayak expressive culture. Each volume is introduced by its author(s)/compiler(s) with an account identifying the narrator or storyteller and describing the context in which recording was carried out. Texts are presented in both the original language in which they were narrated and in English.
translation. Where relevant, particular genres are described and their cultural significance within the community is explained as a background to the texts.

In addition to the publication of this series, a further objective of the Dayak Studies Program is to preserve original recordings of Dayak oral literature, including oral history, biography and life-history narratives, in a permanent sound archive, maintained in co-operation by the Majlis Adat Istiadat, the Tun Jugah Foundation, the Dayak Cultural Foundation, and the Institute of East Asian Studies. It is intended that most of the texts presented in this series (as well as others) will also be available in the form of sound recordings, so that it will be possible to listen to the actual words spoken or sung, as well as to read them on the printed page. In some cases, as indicated in individual volumes, this is already possible in our existing recording collections. In the future, we hope to make it universally so.

Professor Clifford Sather  
Chair, Dayak Studies  
Institute of East Asian Studies, UNIMAS
Pingilajar Pasal Kaum Dayak (Dayak Studies)


Bisangkut dangan ti, Program Pasal Dayak Studies ti mbūh tiguru ngichap duwūh macham siri tanūn 1) Siri hal-hal Semasa kaum (birisi dangan pikara-pikara da’ bisangkut dangan kaum), dangan 2) Siri tanūn-tanūn da’ udog pida’an namba tu’uh.

Siri Tanūn-Tanūn da’ udog pida’an namba tu’uh.


Tuju siri ti incheh supaya pingiraja tanūn-tanūn ti dapat udog ngirikod sireta tundah jaji buku. Kī chuma tuju nūh iring ngirikod tanūn-tanūn da’ mangka’ pinyusah iring udog rarap, pak iring ngirikod lagih simua macham sanda-sanda da’ bibungu, sanda pangkau ato sanda sinder


Professor Clifford Sather
Chair, Dayak Studies
Institute of East Asian Studies, UNIMAS
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td></td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrations</td>
<td></td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Storytellers</td>
<td></td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**English Section**

- King Siliman  
  *by Arthur Atos Langgi*  
  5
- The Peacock Pheasant and the Crow Pheasant  
  *by Naming ak Baren*  
  18
- Sibago, the Cockerel  
  *by Arthur Atos Langgi*  
  22
- The Mouse Deer and the Snail  
  *by Gabriel ak Nogek*  
  29
- The Frogs in the Pond  
  *by Arthur Atos Langgi*  
  34
- The Monitor Lizard and the Monkey  
  *by Gabriel ak Nogek*  
  38
- Ma' Tarui  
  *by Atoda ak Makot*  
  47
- The Tortoise and the Bear  
  *by Nori ak Ginyon*  
  52
- Job’s Tears  
  *by Arthur Atos Langgi*  
  61
- The Rats  
  *Arthur Atos Langgi*  
  65
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bagih Bidayuh</th>
<th>Dauń Surat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raja Siliman</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur Atos Langgi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruwai Ngga Knůkůp</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naming ak Baren</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibago Ûntu'o Piragah Binchau</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur Atos Langgi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pironuk Duoh Tikiung</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabriel ak Nogek</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tigarog Papu Tapau</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur Atos Langgi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bidaat Duoh Oyung</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabriel ak Nogek</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma’Tarui</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atoda ak Makoi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dia’ Ngga Buaang</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nori ak Ginyon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagal Umpus Tibok Adog</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur Atos Langgi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabap Tikus Nyarang Umuh Padi</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur Atos Langgi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Ki and the Tuwu were coming.

“O, Kir, I just a man with a beating heart was bus, and with feet over food.”

He was coming to the Ki.

The Cat was in anger and with a beating heart.

As the weather was coming in anger and with with feet over food.

“We did not to their prey, for the birt Sabap Tuwu.”

One day they wandered to the Ki.

“Are the Tuwu over food.”

Crow Pi.

Raung, Sinagur, Sinagur, Sinagur, Sinagur...
The King's compound, the fields beyond, and the treetops surrounding the palace were covered with people, animals and birds. .................. 6

"O, King of Kings, I saw the Cat behind me just a moment ago in the King's kitchen. He was busy helping himself to all the left over food on the table." .......................................................... 10

He was arrested by the Orang Utan and brought to the King to pay his respects. .......................................................... 10

The Cat was then tied to a post and given a beating. .............................................................................. 13

As the Cat left the palace, he gritted his teeth in anger and vowed to kill the Rat whenever and wherever the two crossed each other's path. .................. 14

"We didn't ask their permission because they broke their promise to give us rice as thanks for our stepping on the stomach of one of their wives, to hasten the birth of her child." .......................................................... 17

One day Ruwai, the Peacock Pheasant, wandered in the jungle. He met Kūkūp, the Crow Pheasant. .................................................. 19

"Are these beautiful enough?" asked the Crow Pheasant. ....................................................................... 20

Raung, the King of the Sun, competed with Sinagum to win Lady Buran's love. Both men came, one after the other, to woo her. ................................. 23
Sibago, King Raung's slave, kept watch on the verandah while King Raung slept with Lady Buran.

"You useless animal! Curse you! Come here and fight me!"

He flapped his wings and began to crow. Sibago became a cockerel and remained one, from then on.

"Goodness, gracious! You tikiung move so slowly. It must take you ages to get anywhere,"

exclaimed the Pironuk.

Many animals came to witness the race.

In the afternoon, the children gathered to play bamboo musical instruments called *pirunchong*.

As soon as they got out of the water, they were all changed into frogs.

One day, the Monitor Lizard went to bathe in the Monkey's bathing place, *pikalan*.

"Hey, Monkey, do you know that your head looks like a pineapple, your tail resembles a blowpipe and the palm of your hand looks like a spoon?"

said the Monitor Lizard.

"Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!" the Monkey laughed loudly.

The rest of the monkeys thought that the Trickster was fighting with the big monkeys, so they all jumped into the pool.

"Adoh, adoh, there's a boil on your head! This must be why you're crying," said Ma' Tarui to the baby.
Ma’ Tarui wrapped the dead baby in a mat and carried it to the cemetery. ................................................................. 50

Once upon a time, there lived a Tortoise who befriended a Bear .................................................................................. 53

"I want to plant the upper part of the plant, as it will bear fruit first," said the Bear. ............................................................... 54

The Tortoise planted the lower part of the plant, which included its roots. The Bear planted the upper part of the plant, which had many leaves. ................................................................. 55

"The skins are good for you to eat. Besides, the skins are tasty and delicious,” replied the Bear. ....................................................... 57

The Bear went to look for a rhinoceros to suck the water from the pool. .................................................................................. 58

"Why not? the plug was accidentally dislodged from my anus by the Mouse Deer,” replied the Rhinoceros. .......................... 60

“We have no power to provide sustenance to human beings. We are just additional food for them,” answered all the plants in a chorus. .................................................................................. 62

At dawn, the girl said that she had to go back. She invited Jugong to accompany her. ............................................................... 66

Jugong jumped together with her to her village. As they jumped, Jugong was transformed into a rat in the rodent world. .................................................................................. 68
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bagih Bidayuh</th>
<th>Gambar</th>
<th>Daun Surat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Padang, tarun dangan atuh atuh tùngän kayuh da’ ngiluling Milige Raja moh samah tűũs bada’ nũũh.</td>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sien udog tangkap lalu udog gūrūng Mayas taban ngadap jawi Raja.</td>
<td></td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sien lalu nanchak udog kabūt nalan tungkang, karang udog ukum sipat.</td>
<td></td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangin nũũh buhu, sien ngūntūm ra’ang nũũh bajį bisakap ira kinabūs Tikus bait daphi daphi, dangan wang manih manih nũũh napud.</td>
<td></td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Anih sabap amu kai nyungka masu adūp manusia? Sabap manusia mbūh ngakal ūngkuda ami. Sien bijangi ira nyugon padi tinan upah ami ngundot naih asau nũũh, bada anak nũũh mbūh kānan mayan.”</td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndi’ ondu, Ruwai panu di darum tarun; jadi ayũh dapūd Kūkūp.</td>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Ruwai, remus ka ayũh muti?” Ka Kūkūp siken di Ruwai.</td>
<td></td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raung, Raja Batūh Andu birabut dangan Sinagūm ira nunang Dayung Buran.</td>
<td></td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibago, da’ ulun Raja Raung pala’ nguaua mūndũ nyaga da’ baba’ jigan, lama adūp nũũh bitapū būũs dangan Dayung Buran.</td>
<td></td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Amu chilaka, dari minatang, banchat! Luah gati, adih bisapa’.” ................................................................. 91

Sien mbūh marui jaji anyau, ngabap arad nūh karang ūntu’ō. ................................................................. 92

“Adoh gai, ingan Tikiung tok-tok ponu bigoog. Bisowa-sowa ingan ponu doh goh ingan ndog toya’ do rie nuju ingan.” in pironuk. ................................................................. 95

Bogo binatang ndog jadin sakshi. ................................................................. 96

Wang narang andu, bala anak inya rang-티 bisindi biragung pirunchong. ................................................................. 100

Jaji wang bala nūh nak ira gatuh buhu masu umo, ujan batuh ūngkarui bala nūh bada jaji tigarog. ................................................................. 102

Ndī’ ondu Bidaat odi mamuh ko pikalan Oyung. ................................................................. 105

“Di’ mu puan nang bak mu mun bua nanas. Kuon mu mun sipuot. Rupa tongan mu kōdda’ sonuk.” in Bidaat balas Oyung. ................................................................. 106

“Ha! Ha! Ha!” in Oyung towoh. ................................................................. 108

Oyung do munu kisin-kisin oh bitabung ko piin. Bonda duoh kukam oh mo punuo da’ piin. ................................................................. 110

“Adoh, adoh, tibande’ pirakis meh di ubak mu dian! Anū meh beda’ ku’u naman ka sien, dian-i.” ................................................................. 113

Mā’ Tarui marun tedang anak-i di amok, ka teban meh tedang anak-i ka tinungan. ................................................................. 115

Ndī’ andu Dia’ panu di darūm tarun, ka ayūh bidapūd ngga Buaang. ................................................................. 118
“Kambui ata kutung, jaku tijuk-i, amai isa-i rikas buan.” Ka Buaang nang. ................................................................. 119

Tung Dia’, ayüh purun tura’ ka puun-i, ka tung Buaang ayüh purun tura’ ka tijuk-i. .......................................................... 120

“Kebang-kebang kena garang maan mu,” ka Buaang nam Dia’. ................................................................. 122

Buaang siroh Badak beda’ nyūūp terok anū isa’ piin terok anū bedūh. ................................................................. 123

“Munki aku dūh piruah doh, amai sisūng kenang ku tikadi beda’ piranuk,” ka ayüh nam Buaang. ................................................................. 125

“Ami kai sakap ira unggudip manusia, sabap ami ngaan nuh tinan inya pimaan saja,” kuan bala nuh. ................................................................. 128

Andu moh ira nyawa, dayung sien manang adūp nūh ira mari ndūg ramin adūp nūh. Sien ngaban Sijugong suwū ngajah adūp nūh mari. ................................................................. 132

Mūnū lagih, Sijugong papu ngajah lalu karang wang sien mah napud adūp nūh mbūn marui jaji tikus da’binua rikus. ................................................................. 135
The Storytellers

1. The late Arthur Atos Langgi hailed from Kampung Ta'ee, Serian. He was a teacher and was later attached to the former Upper Sadong District Council as an Administrative Assistant. From there he was transferred to work in the Education Department. Despite spending most of his adult life in town areas, he never lost touch with folk traditions, especially the art of telling folk stories. The Bidayuh Section of the Majlis Adat Istiadat has a large collection of his folk stories. He died at the age of seventy five on 3 July 1988.

2. The late Gabriel ak Nogek hailed from Kampung Sagah, Singai. He was a padi farmer and rubber gardener. He had no formal education, but learned how to read and write from a local catechist during his free time at night. For a number of years he was an unpaid village scribe for the people of his village. He was also one of his village's storytellers. Later, he was appointed as a school servant attached to St. John's School, Singai. He was seventy-six years old when he passed away in August 1999.

3. Naming ak Baren is a farmer. He was born in 1913 and is one of the oldest people in Kampung Anggo, Siratau, Kuching. In his young days, he was Tua Kampung. Such being the case, he is well versed in the adat of the community. A good storyteller, he also has a wide knowledge of Bidayuh legends and oral history.

4. Nori ak Ginyon was born in 1925 in Kampung Siga, Kuching. In his younger days, he was a tua gawai or bard of the ancient rites. As a bard, he has a wide knowledge of Bidayuh legends, oral history, and folk stories.

5. Atoda ak Makoi hails from Kampung Quop, Kuching. He learned how to read and write from the Quop village school. Being a village elder and storyteller, he is well respected by the village people. He was born in 1926.
Tukang Tanūn


Introduction

Like most Bornean people in the olden days, the Bidayuh were swidden cultivators. As such, their way of life was intricately interwoven with the forest environment. Their customs, practices, and much else were land and forest based. Indeed, to the Bidayuh, the jungle of Borneo was their “Garden of Eden.”

Folk stories used to be told at night on the gallery of the longhouse (botang romin), in the garden house (plaman), the farm hut (bori omuh), or in the ceremonial house (baruk). When a story was told on the gallery of the longhouse, the audience was larger and mixed, comprised of adults, young boys and girls. When a story was told in a plaman or bori omuh, it was usually told by an elderly woman to her children and grandchildren. When the story was told in the baruk, the audience was restricted to teenage boys. This was because the baruk was specially reserved for male activities.

Some ancient Bidayuh interactions with their environment are brought alive for us through oral tradition. Folklore is part of this tradition and the Bidayuh have a rich variety of folklore forms.

Thus, there are several categories of Bidayuh folklore. Among these are sasia (ethnohistory), susud toga (genealogy), and donelan (legends and fables).

The present volume comprises a collection of ten stories belonging to the category of donelan. The common feature in all these stories is that each contains an explanation of social relationships, the “dos” and “don’ts” of society, and other moral values.

The main function of folk stories is to entertain an audience. However, there are also other uses of folk stories. They can be a source of basic information on ways of life, norms and values and other mytho-historical matters.

All of the stories presented here were recorded in the village, in most cases in the storyteller’s home. The original recordings, and, in some cases, second recordings made after the teller had listened to transcriptions of the original recordings and had made minor changes or additions to the texts, are available in the Majlis Adat Istiadat’s tape-recording collections.
In the compilation of this volume various people have contributed their knowledge, ideas, and suggestions. First and foremost we would like to express our thanks to the storytellers without whom this volume would not have become a reality. We would like to acknowledge our gratitude to the late Arthur Atos Langgi, the late Gabriel ak Nogek, Naming ak Baren, Nori ak Ginyon and Atoda ak Makoi.

We would like to acknowledge the guidance of the late Tan Sri Datuk Gerunsin Lembat, the Head of the Majlis Adat Istiadat from 1987 to 1995, whose contribution to the collection was crucial. This volume is dedicated to his memory. We would like to record our appreciation to the present Head of the Majlis Adat Istiadat, Datuk Tra Zehnder for her encouragement and interest in our research activities. We would also like to express our thanks to the members of the Board of the Majlis for their advice and guidance.

A special note of appreciation is due to Datuk William Nais, Y.B. Fredrick Bayoi Manggie and Leo Mario Noeb, all pioneers of research on oral tradition for the Bidayuh section.

Our special thanks go to Jayl Langub and Ann Armstrong for their help in editing an earlier draft of the English version and Mary Dau William and Crispin Jusib for their invaluable contribution in putting the final draft in a proper form.

The final version of this volume benefited from the expert editing of Louise Klemperer. To her we would like to say, "Thank you."

Finally, we would like to acknowledge our deep appreciation to Professor Michael Leigh of the Institute of East Asian Studies, UNIMAS, and Professor Clifford Sather, Chair of Dayak Studies, UNIMAS, for their professional advice and for making the publication of this volume possible.

Robert Sulis Ridu
Ritikos Jitab
Jonas Noeb

Majlis Adat Istiadat
Chief Minister's Department
Kuching, Sarawak
February, 2001
Pinarang


Masa ami nulis tanun-tanun girūtų da' buk ti, ihong bala inya suwū nyugon pinaup, pingipuun dangan pincadan adüp nüh. Da' sibungas nüh, ami ira tayū nyugon ahi tirima kaseh ndüg bala tuwang tanun-girūtų, sabap kan nüh anyap bala sien kai buk ti dapat marui. Ami rasa birutang budi dangan turang jawa' Arthur Atos Langgi, turang jawa' Gabriel ak Nogek, Naming ak Beren, Nori ak Ginyon dangan Atoda ak Makoi.

Ami ira lagih nyugon ahi terima kasih da’ birega nduŋ Ybhg Datuk Tra Zehnder, President Majlis Adat Istiadat da’ iti nüh sabap mbūh nganchuh sireta pitangah ahi minat da’ kireja selidik ami ti. Ami pan ira nyugon ahi terima kasih nduŋ bala da’ Lembaga Majlis Adat Istiadat ngin mbūh mugon nasihat sireta dangan pinyukong nduŋ ami.

Ahi terima kasih da’ simunū meriyū lagih udog jugon nduŋ Ybhg Datuk William Nais, Y.B. Frederick Bayoi Manggie dengan Leo Mario Noeb, ngin bala da’ taruh ti da’ pala’ tayūg ngundah selidik pasal tradisi lisan Bidayuh.

Ahi terima kasih lagih da’ kai dapat nitong udog jugon nduŋ Jayl Langub dangan Ann Armstrong sebab aduŋ nulung ami ngichek deraf, Mary Dau William dangan Crispin Jusib sebab mbūh nulung ngarur dangan ngundah deraf, pimangan nüh bada’ marui jaji mung da’ iti nüh:


Tinan mangan nüh, ami dangan si-ubo ubo sidi awang nyugon ahi terima kasih da’ simunū birega nduŋ Professor Michael Leigh da’ Institute of East Asian Studies, UNIMAS dangan Professor Clifford Sather, Chair, Dayak Studies, UNIMAS sabab mbūh nyugon tunjuk-ajar bi-professional sireta pinulung da’ bada’ buk ti dapat marui jaji mung da’ tubūk kita ti.

Robert Sulis Ridu
Ritikos Jitab
Jonas Noeb

Majlis Adat Istiadat,
Jabatan Ketua Menteri
Kuching, Sarawak.
Februari, 2001

King Solomon called for animal orders.

According to Solomon, he invited the lions, the smallest all the birds, and all my surrounded in the guests’ party. He’s...
King Siliman

narrated by

Arthur Atos Langgi
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King Siliman was almost a demigod. While he reigned, no human or animal on the surface of the earth, or bird in the air, dared to disobey his orders.

According to legends, the King decided to hold a big festival one day. He invited all the human beings; the animals such as the elephants, the lions, the rhinoceros from the primary and secondary forests and even the smallest animals such as the mice from the bush and their burrows; and all the birds, such as the eagles, the hornbills, the honey birds and the sparrows. Only the sick and the women under confinement were excused from attending the festival. In those far off days, both animals and birds could speak like human beings.

The King asked the Crow to relay the message to all the invited guests. Crow flew everywhere: over the mountains, the valleys, the plains, the oceans and the rivers. The Crow called out,

"Ka’ak! Ka’ak! Ka’ak! Listen all of you human beings, all of you animals, and all my fellow birds! Open your ears; don’t pretend not to hear me. In seven days’ time our King Siliman will invite you to come without fail to a party. He’s going to organize a feast to celebrate the birth of his first child."

On the seventh day, all the human beings from far and near; all the animals, big and small, of different kinds and shapes; and all the birds, big and small, with all sorts of feathers and colours, came to attend the King’s party. The King’s compound, the fields beyond, and the treetops surrounding the palace were covered with people, animals, and birds. All the guests were excited to hear the message from the King.

The first to come out of the palace were the Elephant and his wife, two of the many servants of the King’s palace. The couple sounded their