

***Kenyah Recreational Songs and their Significance to  
Music Education***

by

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### *Prelude*

<i>Alem ini telu tiang pemong jaiee</i>	<b>Tonight my friends we gather together</b>
<i>Pemong jaiee tawai</i>	<b>We gather together,</b>
<i>Pemong jaiee tawai uyan</i>	<b>And recall the old days</b>
<i>Nelan-e, eh tuyang</i>	<b>Truly so, my friends</b>
<i>Nelan-e</i>	<b>Truly so</b>
<i>Ayen saiee telu tuyang masat use</i>	<b>Do not be shy, my friends when you walk,</b>
<i>Masat ngalang use</i>	<b>When you walk along the verandah</b>
<i>Use uma Telang Usan</i>	<b>The verandah of a Telang Usan longhouse</b>

As the lyrics of the song *Lan-e* illustrate, the Kenyah entertain themselves and their visitors by singing and dancing along their longhouse verandahs. Kenyah elders believe that when their ancestors first came to Sarawak, they dubbed the Baram river *Telang Usan* (pineapple juice), as its clear waters tasted so sweet.

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## ABSTRACT

The Kenyah, an indigenous group dwelling in the mountainous plateau region and the upper reaches of four major rivers of Borneo, constitute one of many minority communities in Sarawak, the largest state of Malaysia. This small, isolated community has nurtured refined forms of visual and performing arts, such as the music of the *sape*, a boat-shaped lute which has become a national cultural emblem. Kenyah historical and socio-cultural background is shown to have played a major role in shaping the development of a sophisticated choral singing tradition featuring homophonic harmony. Their substantial repertoire of attractive recreational songs and community-wide participation in *musicking* form the focus of this thesis, viewed from the perspective of music education.

The growing stature of world musics within the sphere of music education has led to increasing collaboration between ethnomusicologists and music educators to investigate and disseminate traditional genres. Kenyah songs, being distinctly Asian in flavour, yet largely conforming to classical Western musical syntax, would be especially valuable for world music programmes. However, in Malaysia, the shortage of available, relevant teaching materials, especially folksongs in a variety of tonalities, ill-equips the teachers to teach music genuinely reflecting local cultures, or to implement international approaches such as those of Kodály and Orff.

Analysis of over eighty songs documented during fieldwork in two different river-systems since 1996 demonstrated that they display a range of tonalities (predominantly pentatonic, hence especially amenable to Kodály programmes), emotional variety, rhythmic consistency and associated dance movements. The song-texts feature poetic references to a variety of interesting subjects. Responses from schoolchildren, workshop-participants and teacher-trainees demonstrated that the songs held wide appeal for both inherent and delineated meanings. Many succeeded in mastering the melody, lyrics, harmony and movements despite lack of familiarity with the language.

Choral performances of the songs, although attracting some points of criticism regarding modifications, drew approval from culture-bearers who expressed gratification that non-Kenyah could perform songs fast disappearing from their own community. Kenyah recreational songs would thus be a timely addition to music classes and to choral repertoire around the world.

**Keywords:** *belian*, Borneo, choral harmony, folksongs, Kenyah, Malaysia, music education, *musicking*, pentatonic, Sarawak.

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## Glossary

<u>Kenyah terms<sup>1</sup></u>	<u>Translation</u>	<u>Kenyah terms</u>	<u>Translation</u>
<b>Aban</b>	widower	<b>baling</b>	melody/tune
<b>adau</b>	species of tree	<b>Balu</b>	widow
<b>adet/adat</b>	traditional customs, songs, music, religion	<b>bampa</b>	longing for
<b>adet pu'un</b>	traditional Kenyah/Kayan religion	<b>bangen/nyangen</b>	joyful, joyfully
<b>adet Bungan</b>	reformation of <i>adet</i> <i>pu'un</i> , elevating position of Bungan	<b>basong</b>	blouse
<b>Along</b>	1. male name 2.category of songs sung primarily by women	<b>batu tuloi</b>	sacred stones
<b>amai/tama'/taman</b>	father	<b>baya'</b>	crocodile
<b>amin</b>	family apartments in a longhouse ( <i>uma' dado</i> )	<b>belawing</b>	decorative pole with a human figure at the top
<b>are</b>	present continuous tense <i>are ruti</i> vocables sung as prelude to dance	<b>belian</b>	songs
<b>ayau</b>	headhunting attacks	<b>belian abau/ajau</b>	weeding/harvesting songs
<b>babui</b>	wild boar	<b>belian anak dumit</b>	children's songs
<b>bada pimbun</b>	Kenyah figures of speech	<b>belian bali dayong</b>	spirit-medium songs
<b>badeng</b>	to be ‘unrefined’	<b>belian burak</b>	rice wine songs
<b>bali</b>	spirit	<b>belian dado'/badi/</b> <b>badek tiang</b>	long-dance songs
<b>bali baya<sup>2</sup></b>	crocodile spirits	<b>belian dekieng leto</b>	songs of young girls
<b>bali dayong</b>	singing/chanting spirit	<b>belian kale</b>	humorous songs
<b>bali lenjau</b>	tiger spirits	<b>belian katuk</b>	songs of advice
<b>bali tekena'</b>	story spirits	<b>belian kayau</b>	head-hunting songs

<sup>1</sup> except for words appearing only in the lyrics of songs, clarified directly in the accompanying translations.

<sup>2</sup> *baya'*: The inverted comma at the end of this and other words indicates a glottal stop

<b><i>belian lutong</i></b>	songs associated with <i>lutong</i> tunes	<b><i>isit</i></b>	spider hunter (an omen bird)
<b><i>belian menat</i></b> <b><i>kanjet/badi menat</i></b> <b><i>kanjet</i></b>	songs sung to cajole individuals into performing a solo dance	<b><i>isiu belian</i></b>	song-language based largely on Lepo' Tau
<b><i>belian pesalau anak</i></b>	songs to entertain children	<b><i>isiu ipet</i></b>	fundamental units of verse used in song
<b><i>belian tu'ut</i></b>	songs sung as a prelude to <i>kanjet laki</i>	<b><i>ja'at</i></b>	hostile
<b><i>besunong</i></b>	war cloak	<b><i>jatung</i></b>	long barrel drum
<b><i>burak</i></b>	rice-wine	<b><i>jatung utang</i></b>	pentatonic wooden xylophone
<b><i>chut tunyang</i></b>	to step in the mud	<b><i>kalong kelunan</i></b>	stylized human figure in squatting position design
<b><i>dahang</i></b>	low pitch/too flat	<b><i>kalong ulu</i></b>	stylized human face design
<b><i>dapin</i></b>	1. slow-paced. 2. viscous	<b><i>kanjet asal</i></b>	older form of dance
<b><i>datun julud</i></b>	choreographed group-dance for women	<b><i>kanjet kiut</i></b>	plate dance
<b><i>dau</i></b>	voice (human or instrumental)	<b><i>kanjet laki</i></b>	male solo 'warrior' dance
<b><i>det diet</i></b>	1. vocables imitating the sound of plucking the <i>sape</i> . 2. a category of <i>sape</i> tunes	<b><i>kanjet leto</i></b>	women's solo dance
<b><i>ia on bali dayong</i></b>	spirit-mediums, literally: "he who has the spirit"	<b><i>kanjet uyat</i></b>	masked dance
<b><i>ichuk</i></b>	harmonica	<b><i>kayu luten</i></b>	firewood
<b><i>ilun</i></b>	child whose mother has died	<b><i>kayu tau</i></b>	wooden post used to measure the position of the sun
<b><i>iman</i></b>	type of sugar palm <i>arenga pinnata</i>	<b><i>kedire'/kedireq/keledi</i></b>	mouth organ
<b><i>injin</i></b>	rice-processing machine	<b><i>kejaing</i></b>	category of Ngurek songs
<b><i>ipet</i></b>	verse	<b><i>kejala</i></b>	cast-nets

<i>kejat</i>	dance step, to stamp	<i>lenjau taman</i>	father tiger (refers to men in songs)
<i>kelunan</i>	human	<b>Lepo'/Lepu/Leppo</b>	1. village. 2. subgroup e.g. <b>Lepo' Tau</b> : Tau subgroup
<i>kelululun/kelun lulun</i>	warrior songs sung during <i>mamat bio</i>	<b>Long</b>	1. confluence of stream with main river. 2. name of village situated there
<i>kerahang</i>	1. thunder. 2. choral response. <i>ngerahang</i> to sing the chorus	<i>lutong buluq/bulu'</i>	bamboo zither
<i>keringut</i>	nose-flute	<i>lutong kayu</i>	wooden board zithers
<i>kerintuk</i>	category of songs sung by <i>paren</i> men	<b>ma'ap/adet mabe</b>	system of obligatory labour for the headman
<i>ketau</i>	dominant aristocracy (alternative for <i>paren</i> )	<b>mamat</b>	1. festival associated with headhunting. 2. harvest festival
<i>kirep</i>	circlet of hornbill feathers	<b>mamat bio</b>	religious festival celebrated at the end of the harvest
<i>kuai</i>	Great Argus pheasant, <i>Argusianus argus</i>	<b>mamat kediut</b>	religious festival celebrated on the first day of the harvest
<i>kuleh</i>	clouded leopard	<b>manok ilang</b>	magpie robin
<i>kulong punai</i>	pet pigeon; reference to women in songs	<b>mareng</b>	new
<i>lan-e/lan-i/londe</i>	1. truly so (from the word <i>lan</i> , 'true') 2. subcategory of <i>belian dado'</i>	<b>mechat ontat</b>	pounding of "rice-powder"
<i>lawen</i>	concept of tuning supporting <i>sape</i> strings to match frets on the melody string	<b>menjaeng</b>	category of songs of the Lepo Ma'ut
<i>lemalo</i>	warrior songs sung during <i>mamat</i> or to cheer on a dancer or singer	<b>meno'</b>	longing sadly, wistfully
<i>lenjau</i>	tiger	<b>meranti</b> (Malay)	species of tree

<b>merdang</b> (Malay)	species of tree	<b>payau</b>	deer
<b>metit</b>	to play (a percussion instrument)/rhythmic pattern/melodic phrase	<b>pelaki</b>	eagle (omen bird)
<b>nden/kiep</b>	frets (in <i>sape</i> or <i>lutong</i> )	<b>penghulu</b> (Malay)	head of a district/river-system
<b>ngalang</b> cf. <i>pusau</i>	child-naming ceremony	<b>pengulung</b>	Diard's Trogan (an omen bird)
<b>ngayang</b>	1. ritual occurring in the <i>mamat</i> festival. 2. older form of dance	<b>peruncong</b> (Bidayuh)	Bidayuh percussion instrument
<b>ngayang taket kempau</b>	'cross-leg dance' (an older genre of dance )	<b>peselai</b>	travelling with a particular purpose e.g. work or trade
<b>ngerahang</b>	to sing the chorus (see <i>kerahang</i> )	<b>pukat</b>	fishing nets stretched across the river-mouth
<b>njung ulai usang</b>	poisonous snake/snake with bad portents	<b>saga kedire'</b>	older genre of dance accompanied by <i>kedire'</i>
<b>Oyong</b>	see <i>Uyong</i>	<b>saga lupa</b>	processional dance associated with warrior traditions
<b>pabet jipen</b>	to brush teeth	<b>sala' tuyau</b>	out of tune/wrong pitch
<b>paku</b>	fern-leaves	<b>sambe</b> (see <i>sape</i> )	Lepo' Tau term for <i>sape</i>
<b>panyin lamin</b>	descendants of war captives/slaves	<b>sambe asal/asen</b>	older form of <i>sape</i>
<b>panyin/panyin tiga</b>	commoner	<b>sambe bali dayong</b>	older <i>sape</i> repertoire connected with spirits
<b>paren/ketau</b>	aristocrat; nobility	<b>sambe leto</b>	<i>sape</i> tune for <i>kanjet leto</i>
<b>paren bio</b>	paramount chief	<b>sang</b>	young leaves of a palm, <i>Licuala validia</i>
<b>paren iot/dumit</b>	lower aristocrats (only one parent is <i>paren</i> )	<b>saong</b>	broad sun-hats
<b>paren uma</b>	leader of a longhouse	<b>sape/sambe</b>	boat lute with 2 to 4 strings
<b>patung piping</b>	cork puppet	<b>sape bio/bas</b>	large <i>sape</i>

<b>sape labi</b>	'turtle' <i>sape</i> (home-made guitar)	<b>teluhan tubut/ tangbut</b>	idiophonic instrument
<b>sating</b>	high pitch/too sharp	<b>tiang/tuyang</b>	friend
<b>senguyun</b>	system of reciprocal labour	<b>timai</b>	to be refined
<b>sepak melu</b>	betel nut, betel leaves and lime paste concoction	<b>tu'ut dado'</b>	dance accompanying <i>belian dado'</i>
<b>sidau</b>	instrumental rendition of the death lament	<b>tuyau</b>	sound/pitch
<b>sieng</b>	less sustained, more rhythmically articulated	<b>ubek</b>	new rice (the first yields of the harvest)
<b>silat</b>	mature leaves of <i>Licuala valida</i>	<b>udep</b>	type of beeswax, used to glue <i>nden</i> to the surface of a <i>sape</i>
<b>silon tawan</b>	sweet and charming	<b>uding</b>	jew's harp
<b>suhan/suen</b>	grading system within warrior initiation rites during <i>mamat</i>	<b>ulu kayu</b>	carved wooden effigy representing the human head
<b>suket</b>	category of songs	<b>uma (Uma)</b>	1. house. 2. village or subgroup
<b>suling</b>	home-made transverse flute	<b>uma dado'</b>	longhouse (set of adjoining family apartments )
<b>tai ngasu</b>	to hunt; literally to 'go with the dog'	<b>upit</b>	munia
<b>taket kempau</b>	dance step, literally 'leg above'	<b>urang</b>	maracas
<b>tapong</b>	hat/headwear	<b>use</b>	common verandah in a longhouse ( <i>uma dado'</i> )
<b>tarit</b>	species of palm	<b>Utan</b>	female child/woman whose father has died
<b>tawit</b>	sustained note	<b>Uwe</b>	teknonym for mother
<b>tekena</b>	story/folk tale	<b>uyan</b>	to fashion
<b>tela'o</b>	barking deer	<b>uyan baling tuyau</b>	to tune an instrument

<i>uyan ngadan</i>	perform a melody
<i>Uyau</i>	male child/man whose father has died
<i>Uyong (Oyong)</i>	parents whose first born has died

## **Acronyms**

<b>ITE</b>	Institute of Teacher Education (In Malay, Institut Pendidikan Guru, formerly known as Maktab Perguruan or Teacher's Training College)
<b>KBSR</b>	Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah (Integrated Primary School Curriculum)
<b>KDPM</b>	Kursus Diploma Perguruan Malaysia (Diploma of Teaching)
<b>KPLI</b>	Kursus Perguruan Lepas Ijazah (Teaching Course for Graduates)
<b>PISMP</b>	Program Ijazah Sarjana Muda Perguruan Dengan Kepujian (Bachelor's Degree Program in Teaching)
<b>RC</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>SIB</b>	Sidang Injil Borneo (Borneo Evangelical Mission )
<b>SK</b>	Sekolah Kebangsaan (Primary School)

## **Some definitions**

Terms in music are often used in more than one sense, definitions varying according to context. The terms used in this thesis are interpreted as follows.

**Consonance:** Intervals or chords which sound relatively stable and free from tension.

**Harmony** (one or more of the following):

- (a) The combination of notes simultaneously to produce chords and successively to produce chord progressions. The term is used descriptively to denote notes and chords so combined and also prescriptively to denote a system of structural principles governing their combination (New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 2001)
- (b) a term used for any music in parts (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989)
- (c) that part of musical art or science which deals with the formation and relation of chords (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989)

**Homophonic music or homophony:** A texture in which two or more parts move together in harmony, the relationship between them creating chords. This is distinct from polyphony, in which parts move

with rhythmic independence, and monophony, in which all parts (if there are multiple parts) move in parallel rhythm and pitch. A homophonic texture is also homorhythmic (or uses a very similar rhythm) and has one clearly melodic line; other parts play subordinate roles. Even though these may have melodic interest, when they are sung or played with the melody, it is clear that they are not independent melodic parts.

**Polyphony:** (In Western classical music) polyphony is a texture consisting of two or more independent melodic voices, as opposed to music with just one voice (monophony) or music with one dominant melodic voice accompanied by chords (homophony).

There is a lack of consensus on the use of terms used to describe multipart singing in non-Western cultures (New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 2001; Nettl, 2005). The term polyphonic singing is sometimes used in a broad sense to cover all types of multipart singing. Some scholars use it in the narrower classical sense to refer only to singing in which the voices display relative independence of rhythm and movement. This is in antithesis to homophonic singing, where all the voices are rhythmically the same, and begin and end together.

**Tonality:** one of the following:

- (a) a particular scale or system of tones
- (b) as defined by Piston (1962:30), tonality is the organized relationship of tones in music, implying (for Western Classical music in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century ) a central tone with all other tones supporting it or tending toward it in one way or another. He elaborates further that tonality is not merely a matter of just using the tones of a particular scale, but a process of setting forth the organized relationship of these tones to one among them which is to be the tonal centre.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

---

### 1.1 THE SETTING

This thesis begins with the consideration of two disparate worlds: firstly, that of the Kenyah who live in the far interior of Sarawak and secondly, the contemporary Malaysian classroom. The link between the two is music, specifically vocal music. While the Kenyah possess a sophisticated and attractive but endangered vocal music tradition, Malaysian schools are desperately short of relevant teaching materials, particularly folksongs.

The East Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah are situated on the island of Borneo (Map 1). In comparison with the states of West Malaysia, which comprise three major racial groups (Malays, Chinese and Indians), Sabah and Sarawak have a much wider spectrum of ethnicities, with Bornean indigenous groups making up a significant proportion of their populations.



**Map 1: Malaysia (retrieved from Malaxi Malaysian map directory website)**

Sarawak, with a population of 2.47 million, is home to more than twenty-six different ethnic groups. The major groups, in order of numerical dominance are: the Iban, Chinese, Malay, Bidayuh, Melanau, Kayan, Kenyah, Lun Bawang, Penan, Kelabit, Bisaya and Kajang. Excluding the Chinese, Malay and Melanau, the nine remaining groups are commonly referred to as 'Dayak'<sup>1</sup> (although some scholars argue that the Melanau, many of whom converted to Islam, should also be included).

<sup>1</sup> In the dichotomy Dayak/Malay, well spread in the whole island of Borneo, the diverse and complicated cultural network is divided in a too simplistic way in two neat mutually exclusive cultural units. Popularly, the terms are used to distinguish between the Muslim and the non-Muslim indigenous peoples of the area (Soriente, 2002:58).

Recently, the term ‘bumiputera<sup>2</sup> Sarawak’ (Sarawak indigenous) has become an accepted replacement for ‘Dayak’ as the latter may carry connotations of ‘backward tribes’. According to the 2010 census<sup>3</sup>, the combined Sarawak indigenous population constituted 43.2 % of Sarawak’s population. Many of these ethnic groups are also found in large numbers in Kalimantan<sup>4</sup>. Each group has its own distinct language and culture. However, the last seven groups (Kayan, Kenyah, Lun Bawang, Penan, Kelabit, Bisaya and Kajang), together with several other smaller groups, are often classified as the ‘Orang Ulu’ (literally, the people of the interior). With the exception of the Bisaya, the Orang Ulu groups display many common cultural traits. They have, for example, similar styles of clothing and some common musical instruments. Among the Orang Ulu, the Kenyah are generally considered to be the most highly developed in the fields of both visual and performing arts.

The Kenyah (who numbered 24,906 according to the 2000 census<sup>5</sup>) trace their origins to the mountainous plateau region of Central Borneo, at the headwaters of the tributaries of the Kayan and Mahakam rivers of Kalimantan, and the Baram and Balui rivers of Sarawak. Their settlements, in the form of longhouses, are usually found at the confluence of a small stream with a large river. Their historical and cultural background will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

As this research concerns Kenyah songs and their introduction into schools, both the songs and the Malaysian music education scene are described briefly.

### 1.1.1 The Rich Vocal Repertoire of the Kenyah

The Kenyah have a rich musical heritage, and are well known for their *sape*<sup>6</sup> music and graceful dances. Indeed, *sape* music has become one of the chief symbols of Malaysia’s rich cultural heritage. However, there is another facet of Kenyah music culture which has received little publicity: their vast repertoire of enchanting songs.

The Kenyah have impressed writers and researchers such as Morrison (1957), MacDonald (1958), Galvin (1962) and Rubinstein (1973) with the sophistication of their vocal music. Scholars such as Seeler (1975), Gorlinski (1989, 1995) and Chong (1997) have written dissertations on Kenyah dance, instrumental music and song, attesting to the richness of their repertoire in the performing arts. All mention the unusually high quality of choral singing, often performed in two-part harmony. Morrison, who travelled extensively throughout Sarawak, paints this vivid picture (1957:266):

<sup>2</sup> The term ‘bumiputera’, literally ‘sons of the soil’, is a category which excludes the Chinese and Indians who are classified as ‘immigrant groups’. It has significant implications. According to current government policy, bumiputera are included in privileged quotas for business licences and scholarships and entitled to preferential enrolment in elite schools and institutions of higher learning. The category *bumiputera Sarawak* generally refers to all the non-Malay/Melanau indigenous groups of Sarawak.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Statistics Malaysia (2011).

<sup>4</sup> Indonesian Borneo.

<sup>5</sup> Department of Statistics Malaysia (2012). Apart from the Iban and Bidayuh, the 2010 census did not provide separate population counts for the different Sarawak indigenous groups. These are now all placed together in a category termed ‘other indigenous’. These 2000 figures for the different ethnic groups are still referred to (as the last official count) in the latest statistical bulletin.

<sup>6</sup> Boat-shaped lute with 2 to 4 strings.

*Their parties are famous ... their music, songs and dances are all far more highly developed than those of the other Bornean peoples .... No one who has ever heard Kayans<sup>7</sup> and Kenyahs singing will ever forget it ... the whole house, singing in harmony, comes in with a great full chested chorus ...*

These songs are different from ‘Western-influenced’ contemporary songs. While the latter are based mainly on diatonic major and minor scales, Kenyah songs are overwhelmingly pentatonic (Gorlinski, 1995; Chong, 1997). In addition, many of the dance-songs are sung in homophonic harmony and most display a metric regularity (Gorlinski, 1995; Chong, 1997). These songs are not only valuable from a cultural point of view, but could also play a vital role in music education programs in Malaysian schools (Chong, 1997). The irony is that many of these songs could disappear within the next generation if they are not documented and disseminated beyond the confines of Kenyah longhouses.

In the past, the upriver communities of Sarawak lived in relative isolation, cut off from modern urban influence by the sheer difficulties of travel, and the lack of access to mass media and mainstream educational facilities. They were, in effect, encapsulated societies, subject more to the influence of neighbouring ethnic communities in the interior of Sarawak and Kalimantan than that of urban Malaysian society. The changes wrought by rural development in Sarawak over the past fifty years have drastically affected the transmission of the cultural heritage among the rural ethnic communities. This is particularly evident in the ephemeral field of music and dance and will be explored in Chapter 3 under “The Changing Musical Landscape”.

Two prime factors hindering the original cultural transmission process have been the implementation of boarding schools and the rural-urban drift for economic gain. In school and in town, Kenyah children have little if any exposure to Kenyah music culture. Perhaps it would be more accurate to describe the present-day Kenyah situation in terms of a “residual culture” (Williams, 1977:121, in Beard and Gloag, 2005:48). The original music culture is being displaced by the influence of the mass media, the hegemony of Western popular music and the politically dominant Malay culture.

The focus now shifts to contemporary Malaysian schools.

### 1.1.2 The Music Education Scene

Music education in Malaysian schools began in the 1980s. Although started with the best intentions, implementation has always been problematic, as discussed in the literature review. Since 1993, however, there has been a renewed interest in music education, leading to nationwide reforms in the primary school curriculum and a move to introduce music as a subject in secondary schools.

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<sup>7</sup> As the Kayan and Kenyah live in close proximity and share some common cultural traits, they are often described as if they were one entity. My earlier research (Chong, 1997) has, however, shown a vast difference in their song culture.

Among the innovations introduced was the implementation of international music education approaches, specifically those of Zoltán Kodály, Emile Jaques-Dalcroze and Carl Orff, and a new emphasis on the use of traditional music as teaching material. The Kodály and Orff approaches both emphasize sequenced solfa-learning beginning with the falling minor third, progressing with the pentatonic scale before proceeding to the diatonic scales. Both utilize songs and folklore from their respective countries (Hungary and Germany), but emphasized that other countries adopting their methods should develop their own teaching materials.

One of the chief obstacles to the implementation of both methods is that teachers do not have access to suitable folk song material, especially those in non-diatonic<sup>8</sup> scales. There has also been very limited success in the policy of introducing ‘traditional music’, as there are hardly any books in Malaysian bookstores featuring folksongs, and limited materials on traditional music.

Besides the formal music education described above, an informal system runs parallel to this. A small proportion of the urban schools run activities such as marching-bands, choirs, wind or string ensembles, while a smaller number run traditional music ensembles. All of these are conducted as extra-curricular activities, often with the help of outside expertise. These groups are also hungry for local repertoire. When in need of traditional fare, they often resort to rearrangements of the same few Malay folksongs and well-known patriotic songs.

In an attempt to address the above problem, Chong (1997) and Chan (2001) have carried out research on Kenyah and Malay songs respectively. From an initial investigation into the dances and songs of Baram Kenyah and Kayan, Chong (1997) deduced that Kenyah songs, in particular the long-dance songs, *belian dado*,<sup>9</sup> can make a significant contribution to this need for educational materials. *Belian dado*, literally ‘long-dance songs’, is the Lepo’ Tau<sup>10</sup> term for community choral songs performed a capella, in an informal or semi-formal context, while executing elementary dance-steps in simple group formation along the verandah of a Kenyah longhouse.

As the two issues of the lack of teaching materials in Malaysian schools and the erosion of Kenyah musical culture are viewed alongside each other, a mutual remedy presents itself. The documentation and dissemination of Kenyah songs would help meet the urgent need for teaching materials, and simultaneously address the issue of a rapidly evolving musical culture within which these valuable songs face a diminishing role.

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<sup>8</sup> As defined in the Encyclopædia Britannica (2008), a diatonic scale is any stepwise arrangement of seven “natural” pitches (scale degrees) forming an octave, in particular the major and natural minor scales. Pentatonic and whole tone scales would be considered examples of non-diatonic scales because they do not include the seven degrees.

<sup>9</sup> The spelling *belian dadu*’ is used by Gorlinski (1993, 1995, 2005) and Chong (1997, 1998, 2006), but I now use *dado*’ in line with spelling used by Whittier (1978) and similar orthography in use in Sarawak, e.g. Lepo’ instead of Lepu or Leppu used in Kalimantan. The use of *dadu*’ was also found to be misleading to most participants in workshops as the pronunciation is closer to ‘o’ as in ‘no’.

<sup>10</sup> The Lepo’ Tau are considered by many as the cultural elite among the many Kenyah subgroups. This will be elaborated further in the literature review.

## 1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

My earlier research project (Chong, 1997) and subsequent efforts at introducing the documented songs have generated keen interest from the public, music educationists, as well as the culture-bearers. This has led to the emergence of several unresolved issues, which now form the basis of this thesis.

### 1.2.1 Research Problems

- (i) There is still an acute shortage of transcribed folksongs available to music educators in Malaysia. My field investigations over the past 15 years indicate that Kenyah music culture remains one of the richest sources for such material.
- (ii) Kenyah music culture has undergone much change over the last few decades, reflecting the influences of educational, social, economic and religious factors. In efforts to transmit ‘authentic’ music culture to the schools, it is necessary to understand these changes, as well as to document valuable repertoire which may soon be forgotten.
- (iii) A majority of the songs documented during my earlier project could be classified as long-dance songs or *belian dado*'. It seemed likely that these constituted only a small fraction of the large repertoire available, and many more might be discovered through field investigation. Apart from *belian dado*', several songs with simpler structures had been documented, which seemed ideal for the elementary stages of music education.
- (iv) An intriguing feature of the songs is the presence of multipart singing. This unusual feature warrants an investigation into its roots. It also leads to a consideration of how the Kenyah were able to develop their musical skills and repertoire. Such an analysis could potentially lead to useful applications in teaching strategies.
- (v) An issue that arose from the above research (Chong, 1997) stemmed from the language of the songs. It was found that the Kenyah consist of myriad subgroups, often differing distinctly in language. Yet, at least in the Baram, they seemed to share a common song repertoire. This has given rise to the speculation that many of the songs may have emanated from the same subgroup. It also leads to the question of how this repertoire has been spread and whether a similar repertoire existed in other main areas of Kenyah settlement, such as the Balui basin in Sarawak or in Kalimantan.
- (vi) Given that there is a musically valuable body of songs which could be documented, the next hurdle to overcome is the viability of their wider dissemination in the schools. As Malaysia is a multi-ethnic country, and the songs under research are from a minority community, there is the possibility that students of other ethnic groups, especially those in urban areas, would be unable to identify with the songs.

This is closely related to another issue, that of methods of transmission in the classroom context. Issues surrounding multicultural music education, which came in vogue towards the end of

the 20<sup>th</sup> century, are still being debated by music educationists around the world. One issue was the need to consult the culture-bearers on their views. Thus I needed to seek feedback from the Kenyah before proceeding with more projects on transmission.

The attractiveness of the songs has also made them especially amenable to public performance, such as in choral presentations and musical dramas. In the process of preparing for these performances, various other issues arose, giving rise to a number of further considerations such as the ethics of recontextualization.

The above issues are investigated in this thesis and are now framed into the following research questions:

### **1.2.2 Research Questions**

The main question on which this research is based is the following:

What are the musical structures, textual content and performance contexts of Kenyah recreational songs and how can these be applied to music education?

Sub-questions posed are:

- (i) Which genres would be suitable as teaching materials for classroom teaching and choral ensemble in schools?
- (ii) What are the dilemmas faced in transmitting the songs to children of a different cultural background and in different contexts?
- (iii) How is musicality nurtured in Kenyah culture and what are the implications for music education?
- (iv) What changes have taken place in Kenyah music culture over the last few decades?

### **1.3 OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

My involvement in ethnic music research has mainly been from the perspective of a music educator. In the selection of genres to document and study, my bias has always been for songs and dance movements which would be attractive to teachers and could be used in music classes in schools. In this respect, Kenyah songs have served as a rich reservoir of research data.

This research is based first and foremost on an appreciation of Kenyah songs as an aesthetic experience, and their use in teaching musical concepts.

#### **1.3.1 Study Objectives**

The objectives of this study are to:

- (i) discuss Kenyah recreational songs in their traditional socio-cultural performance contexts and the changes in music culture that have taken place in recent years
- (ii) transcribe and analyse examples of the different genres of Kenyah recreational songs
- (iii) appraise the suitability of Kenyah recreational songs for music education in Malaysia

- (iv) analyse the ways in which the Kenyah nurture musicality. Their attitudes toward music and their *musicking*<sup>11</sup> practices (as defined by Small) could inspire new methods of organising music activities in schools.

### 1.3.2 Scope

The study focuses primarily on research findings from fieldwork among seven Kenyah communities in the Upper Baram and Belaga<sup>12</sup>. The genres discussed in detail are ‘recreational songs’ such as *belian dado*’, songs associated with instrumental melodies and children’s songs. Only brief descriptions of other genres of songs and instrumental music are included in order to establish developmental links in harmony and melody.

Discussions on Kenyah performing arts and pathways of repertoire exchange are based on field observations and a review of literature while discussions on dissemination and applications to music education are based on personal experience and case studies. Feedback from students and teachers involved in classes, workshops and performances of the songs from 2006 until 2012 are analysed. The views of the culture-bearers are also taken into account.

Earlier field studies were supplemented by further visits, for the purposes of this thesis, to clarify meanings of songs and observe transmission processes. The selection of field locations was based on several criteria. In the Upper Baram, Long Moh<sup>13</sup> was singled out as the source of a large proportion of the songs. Long Semiyang was chosen for its unusual instruments and for its proximity both to the Sarawak-Kalimantan border and to Long Moh (thus facilitating exchange of repertoire with both Kalimantan Kenyah and the Lepo’ Tau of Long Moh), while Long Tungan was chosen for its proximity to Long Semiyang. As travel in upriver Baram is risky, expensive and time-consuming, proximity was a vital consideration.

Although the majority of the Kenyah live in the Baram, a second major area of settlement is the Balui/Belaga basin, or administratively, the Belaga district. If the songs are to be labelled as ‘Kenyah songs’ it seemed expedient to investigate whether the Belaga Kenyah exhibit the same or different repertoire. Thus three villages, Uma Sambop, Uma Badang and Uma Baka’, were chosen, based on recommendations by the *Majlis Adat Istiadat*<sup>14</sup>.

In each of these villages, musicians and singers were identified and performances arranged. Generally, all forms of recreational musical and dance activity were investigated, and individuals found

<sup>11</sup> Small (1998:9) defines *musicking* as: “to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practising, by providing material for performance or by dancing”.

<sup>12</sup> Belaga is one of three districts within Kapit, the largest and most sparsely populated of the eleven administrative divisions of Sarawak. It is located in the basin of the Balui and Belaga rivers, both tributaries of the Rajang river. Belaga and Upper Baram constitute the two districts in Sarawak which possess significant Kenyah populations.

<sup>13</sup> Its sister village Long Mekaba, situated on a tributary of the Baram, the Silat, is only accessible by river through a highly dangerous set of rapids, or by a separate, risky land route, and was investigated separately in 2002.

<sup>14</sup> A Sarawak government-funded body dedicated to the research and implementation of customary law and practices.

to be musically talented were approached for ‘coaching sessions’. Further discussions were later carried out with informants on interpretations of lyrics and the roots of their repertoire.

The second part of the investigation was based on feedback from classroom teaching and workshops conducted among schoolchildren, teachers and teacher-trainees (since 1999, teacher-trainees from Institute of Teacher Education Batu Lintang Campus have been involved in various projects involving presentations of the songs in musical drama and choir performances, dissemination programs and participant observation in Iban and Kenyah villages).

## **1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: DERIVING AN APPROACH FROM MUSIC EDUCATION, WORLD MUSICS AND ETHNOMUSICOLOGY**

The approach to this thesis is drawn from two separate disciplines, music education and ethnomusicology. Developments in music education and ethnomusicology have led to their convergence at certain points over the past forty years. Some ethnomusicologists have become concerned educators, while many music teachers have become part-time ethnomusicologists in their zeal to find authentic examples of ethnic musics for their students. This has resulted in the emergence of a new field, formed at the interface of the two disciplines, termed “world music pedagogy” by Campbell (2004).

At a meeting in June 1988 (Burton, 2002:162–163) the labels “multicultural”, “ethnic”, “world music”, “folk”, “traditional” and “non-Western” were each strongly endorsed by scholar-educators from different backgrounds. Every single one, however, also carried negative or politically loaded connotations for other members of the panel. The term “multicultural” was seen to have a political agenda, “ethnic” as implying an inherent inferiority, “world music” as envisaging commercial music created through artificial combinations of instrumental and vocal styles, “folk” and “traditional” as failing to recognize many classical Asian traditions, and “non-Western” as alienating the non-classical musics of Europe and the Americas. The members of the panel, however, found that they were all passionately championing the same basic cause, which was the need to incorporate the wide diversity of the musics of the world into music education. As expressed by one member of the panel, “We are on the cusp, as it were, the liaison between ethnomusicological research and the practicality of the classroom” (Volk, 2002:28).

### **1.4.1 Developments in Philosophy of Music Education and the Rise of Multiculturalism**

The late twentieth century witnessed the development of several schools of thought on the philosophy of music education. These include the ‘aesthetic concept’ exemplified by Schwadron (1967), Swanwick (1988) and Reimer (1989) and the ‘praxial’ perspective exemplified by Elliott (1995) and his followers.

The aesthetic concept evolved from the earlier views of formalists such as Hanslick (1957:21, cited in Reimer, 2003:41) who opined “the nature of the beautiful is specifically musical. By this we mean that the beautiful is not contingent upon nor in need of any subject introduced from without, but

that it consists wholly of sounds artistically combined”. Thus it was construed, the beauty of music lay in its form and was independent of any outside referent. The earlier formulations of the aesthetic concept in music education incorporated form as a major component of music education, alongside other important dimensions. For Reimer (1989: 93) music cognition is characterised by sensitivity to symbolic, expressive form embodied in a musical work. Thus, “good” musical works should be the central focus of the music education curriculum: “If a particular piece of music is genuinely expressive – if it presents in its musical qualities a sense of feeling – it is a good piece of music” (Reimer, 1989:51).

The weakness of the earlier formulations, which predated the appearance of multiculturalism on the landscape, lay in their silence about the great diversity of the world’s musics. Meanwhile, multiethnic societies such as the United States and Holland began to place emphasis on the importance of multicultural music education (Elliott, 1989; Anderson and Campbell, 1996; Schippers, 1996; Volk, 1998). There was and is a growing belief that music educators should break away from the hegemony of Western classical music and seek ways to include various genres of music far removed from that tradition, for example ethnic music from Africa and Asia, and Western genres outside the classical school.

As multiculturalism came into vogue, several music educationists began to question the validity of the aesthetic concept. Elliott championed the praxial perspective which emphasised music as “something that people do” or “practice” (Elliott, 1995:39–40) and opposed the aesthetic concept of music as having a Western classical music bias. He objected to the concept of music as a “product” to be appreciated (as if it were a static object like a painting), preferring to use “musicing” rather than “music” as the latter term downgrades the importance of the performer. He argues for the implementation of a music curriculum as “reflective music practicum” (Elliott, 1995:241) and fostering musicality through activities “deliberately organized to engage learners in musical actions, transactions and interactions that closely parallel real music culture”. For Elliott, performance and authentic music-making should be the primary means of education for all music students.

Reimer (2003:49–50) countered that the aesthetic concept had borrowed from, but had never been equated with formalism. He acknowledged that formalism was an extremist position, valuing the “product” at the expense of “practice”, but claimed that praxialism was equally extremist, focusing only on “practice” or “music as a matter of singing and playing instruments” instead of the finished “product”. He also critiques the excesses of postmodernist reactions. For postmodernists, “music has no ‘essence’ defining its assumed fundamental nature; there are only many different musics … no universal musical characteristics or values applicable to all the diverse musics in the world and in history” (Reimer, 2003:21). If all universal essentialisms were rejected, then there would be no way to compare the value of any one music with another.

Reimer has, however, modified his earlier stance to a more inclusive one. He points out that his stance on importance of form is not in any way elitist, that “many if not most people enjoy music not for what it says about social issues, or for any practical gain, but for the sheer delight musical

sounds afford" (Reimer, 2003:45). People spontaneously relish and are enchanted with sounds formed to give musical pleasure. He acknowledges it is not the only benefit, but one of music's most sought after benefits, because "it is one of its most immediately accessible qualities — the quality of organized sound as deeply satisfying in being in and of itself, organized sound" (Reimer, 2003:45). Qualifying the quotation from Hanslick cited earlier, Reimer emphasises that form, or inherent meaning, is only one dimension of music, and that (citing Green,<sup>15</sup> 1997) "delineated musical meanings" including social, cultural and historical contexts are equally important (Reimer, 2003:43). In his latest edition of the *Philosophy of Music Education*, he devotes a whole chapter (Reimer, 2003: Chapter 6) to "The Contextual Dimension of Music Experience". This includes a hypothetical debate between two extreme positions regarding the teaching of unfamiliar musics, pitting "Universalism", which views that music is to a large degree independent of its social context, and thus universally shareable, against "Contextualism", which views each music culture as intimately bound to that culture, and any attempts by an outsider to understand or assimilate it would be futile and harmful to that culture.

I will not delve further into the wider debate on aesthetics versus praxialism: it is sufficient to note their influence on the implementation of multiculturalism in music education.

#### 1.4.2 Dilemmas in Multicultural Music Education

With the rising popularity of multiculturalism, music educators realised that there was a need for theoretical work to provide a sound basis for practice. As Reimer observes, "as music multiculturalism took hold, supported by politically favourable attitudes, implementation did indeed take place rapidly ... But perhaps with insufficient grounding" (Reimer, 2002:4). A significant contribution toward this end was Palmer's (1975) dissertation which investigated the philosophical and practical problems of bringing music from other cultures into the classroom. Palmer admits, however (2002:31), that he had written his thesis from a purely intellectual point of view. Only later did he experiment<sup>16</sup> with making music in another culture.

As reflected in the presentations at the 1998 seminar on "Issues of Multiculturalism in Music Education" (Reimer, 2002), this new field is still striving for consensus and theoretical validity. Issues such as "why (introduce multiculturalism)?", "what (repertoires to choose)?", and authenticity "what exactly defines a culture's music?" were considered alongside practical considerations of issues such as "bimusicality" and "integration in a total music program" versus "distinct area of study" (Reimer, 2002:5).

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<sup>15</sup> Green (1997:60) *Music, Gender, Education* cited in Reimer (2003:42). 'Inherent meaning' refers to "the ways in which the materials that are inherent in music—sounds and silences—are patterned in relation to each other ... devoid of concepts or content in relation to the world 'outside' the music whereas 'delineated meaning' refers to the extra-musical concepts or connotations that music carries" (Green, 2006:102).

<sup>16</sup> With Japanese folk and classical music and introducing these to American schoolchildren.

Although most music educators subscribe to the ideal that schoolchildren should be introduced to the various music cultures of the world, this brings into question the practicality of the exercise, given the enormous diversity of music, limitations of time, resources and the need to balance it with the responsibility of building music literacy and basic music performance skills. There is also a need to choose a balanced approach towards how music is taught. Palmer (2002:34) notes, “Music can be taught as an isolated phenomenon, for its internal values” or as a “complex sound structure that has cultural meaning embedded”, warning that music without context is isolated while cultural context without sufficient musical content is not music.

Some educators feel that “traditional methods of transmission” should be adhered to, and each style of music appreciated and studied as a totally separate entity. They are adamant that if the original mode of transmission in the culture was oral transmission, this should then be adhered to in the classroom as well. Other educators believe that the focus should not be on the exoticism of the music, but rather, as Schippers (1996:20) proposed, “what is needed is a programme of world musics which is well integrated into the ‘regular music’ curriculum … the central focus should be formed not so much by the cultures the music comes from, but rather by the musical uses and principles underlying the music”.

Seeger (2002:110) suggests that as “no single culture exploits all the possible tones, timbres, rhythms and instruments”, teachers could draw from a selection of traditions, enough to enable students to develop “good ears and creative musical minds”. An example of a balanced combination, he further suggests, could be “music from Europe for harmonic structures, Africa for rhythmic structures and India for tonal relationships” (Seeger, 2002:111).

This last approach is not too distant, at least in principle, from what Kodály was advocating early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At that period in history, of course, Kodály did not have this degree of diversity (nor political correctness) to consider, and his aims were primarily to develop music literacy, giving prominence to music materials from his native land. Although he championed the use of each nation’s own musical culture<sup>17</sup> and resented the hegemony of Western European traditions, he also travelled to other countries to seek the best strategies to incorporate into his approach, adopting the solfa ‘hand-signs’ from the English, and rhythm syllables from the French. The songs used as teaching materials in the Kodály method are designed to develop music literacy in a specific sequence. Teachers use carefully selected materials, ideally folksongs. Kodály believed that the folksongs of a child’s own heritage should be the vehicle of all early instruction (Szonyi, 1989). He also fervently believed that only music of the highest artistic value, both folk and composed, should be used in teaching. The cultural context is also not neglected in the Kodály approach, as teachers are encouraged to plan for children to experience the non-musical elements of the song as well. At the same time there are detractors of the “method” who deem it unsuitable to cultural contexts outside Europe. Nevertheless, it is a proven, effective method, and Hungary’s superior musical literacy is testament to

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<sup>17</sup> With Béla Bartók he travelled round Hungary and neighbouring countries, transcribing thousands of folksongs which he later introduced into music education.

it. It is also entrenched in the music education curriculum of numerous countries including Malaysia. Kodály Music Education Institutes are active in countries around the globe, including the United States, Australia and Japan<sup>18</sup>. Japan is second only to Hungary in membership in the International Kodály Society (Choksy, 1988:8). Members of the world-wide body have endeavoured to introduce songs from their own cultures into their classrooms, and to share these with teachers from other countries.

### 1.4.3 Trends in Ethnomusicology

The nature of ethnomusicology has changed over the years, since its beginnings in the 1880s when it was known as ‘comparative musicology’. Its approaches have mirrored all the major theoretical developments in the closely related field of anthropology, including evolutionism, diffusionism, structuralism and functionalism. In the 1960s it was approached more as a branch of the ‘new anthropology’ and focused on describing and interpreting a specific culture through the study of its music. In line with postmodernist thinking, there was a conscious effort to avoid ‘western perceptions and judgments’, and to question the validity, or ethnographical truth of data which could have been influenced by the researcher’s presence and actions. Specific trends emerging recently include:

- (i) The integration of socio-linguistic approaches within the interpretive approach e.g. Gorlinski (1995) who delved into the *Social contours of Kenyah Lepo’ Tau versification*.
- (ii) Cross-disciplinary approaches e.g. Feld (1981) who explained the link between native ornithology, weeping and poetics in Kaluli song, and Roseman (1991) and Laderman (1991) who described the connection between (native forms of) medicine and music among, respectively, the Temiar and the Terengganu Malays.
- (iii) Applied ethnomusicology and applicative musicology which are discussed below.

Among ethnomusicologists and music educationists, there has been an increasing awareness of the pertinence of applied ethnomusicology (Baumann, 1991; Davis, 1992; Sheehy, 1992; Keil, 1998).

Keil (1998:309) proposes that ethnomusicologists give up the “respected specialty” as an exclusive or major goal and focus their energies on children, family, neighbourhoods and communities. He defines “applied sociomusicology” as “people making music/dance/drama and making sure all children become people capable of making music/dance/drama – within performance studies”.

Davis (1992:362–363) views applied ethnomusicology as an approach to preservation, which developed in the early twentieth century (citing Nettl, 1983:273–274). She relates that the earnest efforts of these ethnomusicologists initially met with criticism as “outsider attempts at political and cultural intervention”. Since then, many have modified their strategies. Their role now can be described as that of “culture brokers”, or “intermediaries between the power and goods of the power structure and the bearers of certain traditions”.

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<sup>18</sup> “There proved to be a number of unexpected similarities in rhythms and scales between Hungarian and Japanese folk music, particularly early childhood music” (Choksy, 1988:8).

Sheehy (1992) proposed that applied ethnomusicology be approached in terms of purpose, strategy, technique and evaluation. He reviewed the contributions of scholars such as John Lomax, Benjamin Botkin, Charles Seeger and Alan Lomax to the revival of folksongs that were once devalued through belonging to “small” cultures in an industrialised society.

Dedicated scholars such as Sharp (working on English and Appalachian songs), Kodály and Bartók (Hungarian and Szekely songs) have saved rich legacies of song, bringing them to the attention of modern societies previously familiar only with contemporary and classical music. Sharp (assisted by Maud Karpeles) later arranged and published folksongs for general usage. Kodály’s team systematically categorised his collection of songs for use at different stages of the music curriculum while Bartók incorporated them into his compositions, imbuing these classical styles with the true folk character of his nation.

Thus, there is definite recognition of the need for applied ethnomusicology, indicating a general shift of focus from the pursuit of ‘knowledge for its own sake’ to the application of that knowledge to worthwhile culture-related projects. More recently, scholars have been developing specific approaches for ‘applied ethnomusicology’ as an independent academic discipline. However, there is as yet no general consensus on its status as such.

Baumann (1991:22) proposed that ethnomusicological enquiry should encompass the past, present and future: “Insights about the past and the present should form … the bricks with which operational concepts for the future could be constructed”. This view is closely related to the concept of ‘applicative musicology’, a term coined by Yamaguti (2000 cited in Chan, 2001:240). It emphasises that in field music, the study of the past (historical) and present (comparative) should then be used to provide directions for the future (applicative). Applicative musicology was differentiated from ‘applied musicology’ and ‘applied ethnomusicology’ in that while the latter two were dependent on the methods and findings of another discipline, it stood as a discipline in its own right. “Its approach differs from the others in that there is a sense of purpose in solving a particular problem right from the start”. Yamaguti chose to use the term musicology instead of ethnomusicology so that there was no restriction on the field of music from which one could draw to solve a particular problem. He devised a framework which he termed the “The tripartite theory” comprising transcontextualization, transposition and transformation. He defined “transcontextualization” as a concept to study the change of context of a music and the effects of that change on the music text itself, while “transposition” repositions a given object (for instance, a music tradition) into a newly constructed relational network together with other objects (for instance, other music traditions). “Transformation” considers the various physical forms that a music could take and is taking in the present world such as notation, recording, performance and the effect of these transformations on the practice of music (Chan, 2001:242). Chan’s (2001) study of Malay folk song in Ulu Tembeling consciously adopts the applicative approach. In his dissertation the ethnography is designed so that emphasis is given to the music characteristics rather than their cultural significance.

#### 1.4.4 Conclusion

The above discussion has revolved around two main themes, from which the approach to the thesis is derived. The first theme was the recognition of the growing stature of world musics in music education, and the dilemmas surrounding its implementation. The second was the recognition of the need for more studies in ethnomusicology, which have, from the start, a focus on genres of particular relevance to modern society or that could be employed to solve particular problems.

In specifically focusing on genres and practices applicable to music education, rather than a comprehensive description of the music culture, my approach could be described as resembling that of Chan's approach in his thesis (Chan, 2001), which was based on Yamaguti's model of applicative musicology (Yamaguti, 2000:47–50). The focus is on an appreciation of Kenyah songs based on their musical structure and their use in teaching music concepts. As far as analysis of the songs is concerned, I am thus supportive of the aesthetic school of thought on music. I have specifically chosen to focus on 'recreational songs' as opposed to the more 'serious songs' such as epic and *belian burak* (literally wine-songs or praise-songs, sung by an expert singer while offering wine to an honoured guest). The recreational genres possess a variety of attractive melodies with a regular pulse which can fill the present void in educational materials. However, the analysis does not confine itself to a narrow formalist perspective. In the analysis of song-texts, the contextual aspects of the songs and their links to the history of the peoples are equally emphasised. Thus, both inherent and delineated meanings are taken into account.

In drawing upon the wealth of Kenyah songs to enrich music education, this dissertation could be viewed as an exercise in applied ethnomusicology. In seeking out songs with specific characteristics to fill voids in music education, and including discussions on recontextualization and transmission of the songs, it models Yamaguti's concept of applicative musicology.

### 1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW AND SURVEY OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

This section reviews literature reflecting increasing collaboration between ethnomusicology and music education around the world and then examines the situation in Malaysia, where, despite the increasing awareness of the importance of including traditional musics in the curriculum, little transcribed repertoire is available.

#### 1.5.1 Ethnomusicology and Music Education

Merriam (1975:193) describes five categories of personnel active in ethnomusicology, and names music educators as one of the largest and fastest growing groups. He cites the 1972 issue of *The Music Educators Journal* "Music in World Cultures" as a landmark in music education, and that it led to a high level of interest in the teaching of ethnic music in schools.

Scholarly societies such as MENC (Music Educators National Conference) and ISME (International Society for Music Education) have been actively promoting the teaching of a variety of

musics from different cultures around the world. In this respect, the Seventh International Conference of ISME in 1966 and the Tanglewood Symposium in 1967 greatly influenced music educators throughout the world (Volk, 1998).

In countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia, there has been a gradual increase in emphasis on the inclusion of ‘non-Western’ musics in the school curriculum, while in Eastern European, Asian, African and South American countries, there are concerted attempts to bring indigenous music into the education system. Numerous materials for instruction in world musics have been produced, many of which are the product of collaboration between ethnomusicologists and music educators. In contrast to music texts from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century which usually only featured folksongs, often with modified English lyrics, and no information except perhaps the name of the country of origin, many contemporary books contain a description of the culture of origin, lyrics of folksongs in the original language and details of instrumentation. One such book is *Multicultural Perspectives in Music Education* (Anderson and Campbell, 1989) which features musical examples from nine major regions of the world.

Chrysostomou (2004:41–45) argues that, as oral transmission of songs in Greece was dying out due to rural-urban migration, music education should play a bigger role in the revival of Greek traditional music. As Byzantine music uses “pneumatic notation”, which can reflect the mini intervals present in Byzantine modes, but is not yet widely mastered, she suggests that Western notation be used during the transitional period. This would also make the music accessible to a wider audience.

In Japan, music teachers, led by Chiharo Yoshio, succeeded in incorporating Japanese traditional music into the school curriculum. Prior to this, the curriculum concentrated almost exclusively on music in the Western classical tradition (Pecore, 2000). In Thailand Narutt Suttachit (2004), from the education department of Chulalongkorn University, is actively documenting *Tah Poh* folksongs (which, like Kenyah songs, are mainly pentatonic), analyzing them using Kodály method analysis and promoting their use in schools.

In response to the increasing emphasis on traditional music within the education system, Malaysian scholars such as Patricia Matusky and Tan Sooi Beng have written reference books (Matusky and Tan, 1989, 1997 and 2004) covering a wide range of musical genres in both East and West Malaysia. However, the emphasis was on descriptions of musical styles and instrumental music rather than songs.

Meanwhile, the methods of Kodály, Orff, Dalcroze and others continue to be used by many music educators. Studies reveal that most teachers use an eclectic mix of methods, which may be dictated more by practical considerations than by an adherence to a particular music education philosophy (Jorgensen, 2003).

Some of the strongest advocates of teaching world musics through non-Western methods acknowledge that they have problems with balancing “musical qualities with extra-musical qualities; Western notation with non-notated aural musical experience ...” (Klinger, 2002:216). Thus, there is no tried and tested formula as yet for the best way to implement multimusicality, without neglecting to

cultivate literacy in the Western art tradition that has served almost as a universal language for years. It may have its limitations, but it is still a precious tool for description and transmission of music. It may be unsuitable for some world musics but most Kenyah recreational songs are easily transcribed into Western notation and their tone-sets fit remarkably well into the Kodály method. They can also be presented in the classroom in a variety of interesting ways which focus on the original performance context.

### 1.5.2 Problems in Music Education in Malaysia

Despite the emphasis on the use of folksongs in contemporary music pedagogy, music teachers in Malaysian schools have little access to genuine folksongs from the nation.

The KBSR<sup>19</sup> songbooks (Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia 1982, 1984 and 1992) were written by groups of captive music teachers in sporadic, rushed sessions. Lacking guidance, resources and time, they produced songs with sterile, moralistic lyrics and formulaic tunes which did not reflect the melodic or rhythmic characteristics of local cultures (Johami, 1993; Chong, 1997; Chan, 2002). Three editions of KBSR songs were published for the national-type primary schools (1982, 1984 and 1992). Although the lyrics of the songs are in the national language (Malay), the tunes often reflect Western European tonalities and rhythms. As Johami (1993:178) observes, “The present KBSR songs seldom reflect local harmonies, rhythm patterns and melodic patterns”.

The songs were written during the 1980s, when Malaysian music educators were unaware of philosophies of music education based on the development of musical concepts in children. For example, Kodály and Orff both base their methods on the premise that children all over the world begin singing in the tone-set *s m*, followed by *l s m* (the first two stages in the Kodály melodic sequence). Instead of basing their choice of songs on a logical sequence of melodic patterns, the team of ‘composers’ produced numerous songs in major pentachords<sup>20</sup> and major scales. The emphasis was on “suitable lyrics”, “simple” melodies within a small vocal range, and “straightforward rhythms” (Chong, 1997: 9–14). As shown in Tables 1.1 and 1.2, the number of folksongs was almost negligible (7.9 %). There was a deluge of songs in the major scale (85.9 %), a small percentage in the minor scale (a common scale in Malay music) and an almost negligible number in pentatonic modes (3.7 %).

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<sup>19</sup> Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah (Integrated Primary School Curriculum).

<sup>20</sup> *d r m f s.*

**Table 1.1: Number of folk versus composed songs in Year 1–3 KBSR Books (Chong, 1997:7)**

	Year printed	Folksongs	Composed songs	Total
Year I	1982	4	14	18
	1984	0	26	26
	1992	1	8	9
Year II	1982	3	15	18
	1984	0	28	28
	1992	1	8	9
Year III	1982	4	14	18
	1984	0	28	28
	1992	0	10	10
Total		13	151	164
%		7.9	92.1	100

**Table 1.2: Number of lower primary KBSR songs according to mode (Chong, 1997:8)**

Level	Year printed	Major/major pentachords	Minor	Pentatonic & tetratonic	Other modes
Year I	1982	16	1	0	1
	1984	25	1	0	0
	1992	8	0	1	0
Year II	1982	17	1	0	0
	1984	24	2	1	1
	1992	7	1	1	0
Year III	1982	11	5	2	0
	1984	24	4	0	0
	1992	9	0	1	0
Total		141	15	6	2
%		85.9	9.1	3.7	1.2

The few folksongs present are mainly Malay folksongs, which, though appealing, are mainly based on diatonic scales (major, natural and harmonic minor). The exceptions are a handful of folksongs in pentatonic and other modes such as *Anak Itik Tok Wi* (Year I, 1982) and *Ulik Mayang* (Year II, 1992) from the Malay community, *Busak Pakui* (Year I, 1992) from the Kelabit community and *Jambatan Tamparuli* (Year III, 1992) from the Kadazandusun community. In comparison, educationists in countries such as the United States have developed materials based on their own folksongs to replace the original Hungarian and German songs that accompany Kodály and Orff materials.

It is true that a few composers took the trouble to incorporate local rhythms, but these comprised only a small minority. Analysing the rhythm patterns, Chan (2001:71) found that only five of the composed songs applied “local” rhythm patterns e.g. *Tarian Inang* (Year I, 1982) and *Sungai* (Year III, 1984), which featured, respectively, the *inang* and *zapin* (both Malay folk-dance rhythms in 4/4 time). Apart from these few exceptions, the vast majority of the composed songs, according to Chan (2001:71), “do not sound like Malay folk tunes although they apply the Malay language for their song texts; musically they sound more like Western children’s rhymes.”

There is also a lack of variety in the compositional techniques (Chan, 2001:71–75). He points out that an inordinately large number of songs are set in a musical mood similar to *Alla Marcia*, have lyrics and melodies set in a one-syllable-to-one-tone relation and possess no clear climax in their melodic structure. In addition, they display “recurring tonal and rhythmic patterns, and seem to follow a set harmonic progression, namely: *I V IV VI.*”

As a specific example, he calculated that one particular technique, “descending sequences”, is applied in almost 50% of the year 4 songs. He describes the melodies as

*... music with ‘neutral’ and ‘mild’ characteristics consisting of short phrases of melodies based on primary chords, chord I, IV and V, developed mainly through the technique of sequence ... These songs could only be categorised as a genre of their own that has no name, not because of the uniqueness of the music but rather due to their lack of musical character* (Chan, 2001:71).

Apart from the musical structure, there is also the fact that the texts of the composed songs bear an artificially ‘neat’ relation to the melodies. As pointed out by Chan, there is a syllabic relation between the lyrics and melodies of almost all the composed songs (whereas a typical folk song would contain some melisma). There are also no vocables, described by Chan (2001: 101) in the context of *Indung* songs as words that carry no specific lexical meaning but “play an essential role in the singing of Malay poems. The usage of vocables is not merely to fill up the gaps left by the song texts in a melody. Vocables themselves are an expression that carries musical meaning”.

Other related phenomena commonly found in the folk song of many cultures, such as the use of alliteration, metaphors, and allusion to folk literature, are conspicuously absent. These common ingredients of folk song, which contribute greatly to their musical and poetic appeal are sadly lacking in the composed songs.

To summarise the critique, the KBSR songbooks have a monotonously similar, bland quality. It is clear that they are woefully lacking in character and musical variety. In the context of contemporary music educational approaches they are unsuitable as teaching materials because the tone-sets are almost overwhelmingly in the major scale. In order to implement effective music teaching, there is an urgent need for teachers to draw on a large number of songs in a variety of scales, with differing tonal patterns, rhythm patterns and harmonic progressions. For instance, if a teacher were to implement the Kodály method, he or she would need access to a large number of songs in pentatonic and other non-diatonic scales. Unfortunately, this category only constitutes 3.7% of the KBSR collection (Table 1.2). Further, to be meaningful, the songs need to incorporate musical elements reflecting living cultures, foremost among these, local cultures, with which students can identify.

Although there have been several revisions in the music teaching curriculum, practically nothing has been done to alleviate the paucity of songbooks. The teachers are left to their own devices to search for suitable songs. Most just utilise the songs from the KBSR books. A handful of motivated teachers select examples from contemporary Malaysian patriotic songs or children’s songbooks (mainly western nursery songs) which are sometimes available in libraries or bookstores.

Lecturers in teacher-training colleges, when teaching Kodály, Orff and Dalcroze methods, rely heavily on American and British reference books for material. The songs featured are overwhelmingly American or European, with a small representation from African, Israeli and East Asian traditions. These books are expensive, not easily available to the ordinary teacher or teacher-trainee, and require adaptation for use in the Malaysian context.

The logical way to overcome the problem would be to produce books featuring genuine folksongs, with a sizeable representation from Malaysia. Folksongs in foreign languages could be translated, rather than relying on hastily composed songs of inferior quality. Ideally, these songs could then be arranged in a guided sequence, so that teachers could use them to develop musical concepts in a systematic manner. In order to achieve this, it is imperative to foster concerted efforts to unearth genuine folksongs from the country.

### 1.5.3 Research on Malaysian folksongs among Rural Communities

As Chan (2001) points out, the Malaysian public is unaware that what they normally consider as Malay traditional music is actually syncretic music. The application of the term syncretic to certain genres of music in Malaysia was proposed by Matusky and Tan (1997). It refers to genres developed in the multicultural urban environment involving the fusing of Western, Arab or Indian elements with Malay and other local music. Some examples would be *joget* (Portuguese influence), *zapin* (Arabic influence) and *ghazal* (Arabic and Indian influence).

There are very few books on ‘authentic’ Malaysian folk song available on the market. Among the few are Azah Aziz and Ariff Ahmad’s *Dendang dan Dondang Kanak-kanak* (1989). Although the book contains a token number of ‘genuine’ folksongs, it is bolstered by composed songs, syncretic songs (such as *Dondang sayang*) and well-known “pan-Malaysian/Indonesian” songs. Most are in the major mode. I know of only two previous publications of Sarawak ethnic folksongs. Nine songs from various ethnic communities (Iban, Bidayuh, Kenyah, Kayan, Melanau and Kelabit) are featured in *Malaysia Sings* (Smith, 1964). Two of these were later presented in harmonized form in *Rampaian Lagu-lagu Sarawak* (Chong, 1970). Most were cradle songs and other children’s songs with simple, short melodies.

The search for local folksongs needs to be cast much further from the urban areas to truly reflect the nature of folksong from traditional ethnic societies. Toward this end, a few scholars such as Chong (1997) and Chan (2001) have devoted their energies to collecting genuine songs of the rural communities, from, respectively, the Baram Kenyah in Sarawak and the Ulu Tembeling Malays in Pahang.

Following the transcription and publication of *Songs from the Kenyah Community* (Chong, 1998), I have been involved in efforts to disseminate this rich repertoire through public performances, seminars and classroom teaching. Given the richness of Kenyah music culture, I realised that I had

probably only documented a small portion of their vast repertoire. Thus, another two-year project<sup>21</sup> among the Kenyah in the Baram resulted in the publication of *Songs from the Baram* (Chong, 2006) which has been distributed to schools in Sarawak and institutions around Malaysia. A two year project funded through the ISME-Gibson award also produced a new publication, *An Introduction to Selected Instrumental Ensembles and Folksongs of East Malaysia* (Chong and Lajinga, 2011).

#### **1.5.4 Effectiveness and Applicability of the Songs in a Multicultural Setting**

In 1998-1999 (Chong and Wong, 1999: 93–105) a small-scale research project was conducted with the cooperation of several teachers who had attended the in-service courses on music pedagogy (Kodály and Orff methods) run by the Batu Lintang Teacher's College<sup>22</sup> music unit. The study gauged the effectiveness of Kenyah songs in promoting sight-singing skills using the Kodály method, and the attitudes of children of other ethnic groups to the songs. The target groups in the study were primary school students taught by serving teachers who had attended the college courses and by teacher-trainees during teaching practice.

Quantitative data, based on a quasi-experimental design using a non-randomized control group, supported the hypothesis that the three Kenyah songs used in the experiment were more effective teaching materials for the teaching of sight-singing than the three KBSR songs used for the control group. Qualitative data, obtained through classroom observation of music lessons and a survey on students' perceptions of the songs showed that the pupils in four schools demonstrated substantial interest in the songs, preferred them to the KBSR songs and agreed that more folksongs from Malaysia should be sung in school.

#### **1.5.5 Kenyah Language and Song-language**

As this thesis revolves around songs, language considerations are a major issue. The very classification of many groups as 'Kenyah' has been a controversial topic among academics, but this is too large an issue to elaborate on here. The complex situation of Kenyah languages, however, has been studied and examined rigorously by Soriente (2002 and 2004) and it is to her work that I have referred in the description of Kenyah isolects. According to Soriente (2002:1), "The ethnonym Kenyah refers to several groups, which ethnically and culturally, as well as according to their origins, are quite different; linguistically it includes variants of Kayan, Punan and other subgroups." Based on research among 35 speech communities in Kalimantan and Sarawak, Soriente (2004:59) has drawn up a tree of Kenyah languages, described further in Chapter 2.

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<sup>21</sup> From Upriver Longhouses to the Modern Classroom under the Sarawak Development Institute and funded by the US Ambassador's cultural restoration fund which focused on documenting songs, music and dances of the Kenyah, and introducing them to the schools.

<sup>22</sup> Following a restructuring exercise and change in status for all the teacher's colleges in the country, Batu Lintang Teacher's College was, in 2009, renamed Institute of Teacher Education, Batu Lintang campus.

With this wide diversity in language, it is not surprising that a proper Kenyah dictionary has yet to materialize. In my research on songs, the biggest obstacle I encountered was translation, given the lack of dictionaries. My only references were Galvin's (1967, unpublished) "Kenyah vocabulary list", his careful translations of several Kenyah songs, Catholic hymn-books (Roman Catholic Mission, 2004) which include modified *belian dado'* and the Lepo' Tau version (Protestant) of the New Testament (The Bible Society of Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei 1984).

Galvin's position as a Catholic clergyman did not hamper in any way his passionate research on all matters of Kenyah (in particular Lepo' Tau) cosmology and culture including language, oral literature and songs. His prolific output included numerous articles in *The Sarawak Museum Journal*, as well as a book (Galvin, 1972) on Lepo' Tau legends, based on translations of their songs, and the above mentioned vocabulary list.

The lyrics of the songs are built up from units of verse known as *ipet* which is defined by Gorlinski (1993:2–3) as "the fundamental unit of formulaic rhyme from which Kenyah songs and non-melodically versified narratives are constructed". Other features of *ipet* include the frequent use of strings of synonyms, lexical items considered totally meaningless and unique to the language of verse, and metaphoric expressions, many of which are obscure. Although the forty-odd subgroups of Kenyah speak a multitude of dialects, when they sing, they seem to do so in a common "song-language", termed *isiu belian* as argued by Gorlinski (1995:120). Her Kenyah informants agreed that others who used *isu belian* borrowed it from its true source, the Lepo' Tau. According one of her informants from Long Loyang, although Sebop was the language of his village, he stressed that "When we sing, we sing in Kenyah" Gorlinski (1995:121). This common song-language was also noted among the Badeng of Lio Matu, the Lepo La'ang of Long Palai and the Lepo Abong of Long Julian.

I have observed the same phenomenon in Long Selatong, Long San, Long Tungan and Long Semiyang. From my previous research in the Baram (Chong, 1997), the Lepo' Tau seemed to have the largest repertoire of song. The Ngurek of Long Semiyang admit that they "sing in Lepo' Tau" but substitute Ngurek words into some *belian dado'* such as *Are Ruti* (lyrics given in Chapter 4). However, the Ngurek dialect is still used exclusively in specific "Ngurek songs" such as the *kejaing*. It could be surmised then that the Kenyah readily adopt repertoire from neighbouring villages, retaining the original lyrics (largely in Lepo' Tau) intact much of the time, but occasionally substitute words from their own dialect. The validity of these conclusions will be revisited later in the light of my subsequent research in Belaga, which revealed the impressive repertoire of another subgroup, the Uma Sambop.

### 1.5.6 Historical Accounts and Ethnography of the Kenyah

In tracing the historical background of the culture-bearers, it would have been impossible to investigate the history of every Kenyah subgroup. The choice of subgroups was therefore narrowed down to two, the Lepo' Tau of the Baram and the Sambop of Belaga. Researchers such as Galvin,

Harrisson, Seeler and Armstrong perceived the Lepo' Tau as the epitome of refinement in language, material culture and dance. Harrisson (1966:287) describes them as “the repository of the purest form of their (Kenyah) culture and the center of their oldest and most important aristocracy”. According to Armstrong (1991:6), “their dialect and dance were considered the yardstick of refinement among the Kenyah”. As discussed in 1.5.5, the Lepo' Tau are considered by many to have the largest repertoire of song and that these songs are believed to be a prime source of the shared song repertoire in the Baram.

Thus in Chapter 2 (2.1.5) I have focused on the migrations, genealogies and political fortunes of the Lepo' Tau, for which my main references have been Galvin (1965:173–175), Whittier (1973), Sandin (1980:26), Liman Lawai (2003:184–196) and Gorlinski (1995: 65–79). Apart from these, other writers, covering various historical events, have shed light on the roles of the Kenyah in relation to the rest of the state, including the Brooke administration, and wartime activities. These include Maxwell (1987:26–49), MacDonald (1958) and Harrisson (2007). As a follow-up to the alternate theory of another subgroup also contributing a large part of the repertoire, I have traced the migrational history of the Sambop based on oral accounts, as there is scant literature on this subgroup.

### 1.5.7 The Material and Performing Arts of the Kenyah

Kenyah material culture, exemplified by splendid murals, intricate carvings and extensive beadwork, has attracted numerous researchers. Their writings have provided insights into Kenyah culture and examples of aristocratic symbols of power. In this matter, I have referred to Marshman (1989), Kjellgren (1999) and Munan (2005).

In the field of performing arts, it is widely perceived that Kenyah have developed the most sophisticated forms of music and dance among the indigenous groups of Sarawak.

#### 1.5.7.1 Previous research on Kenyah music

Many authors have noted the outstanding musicality of the Kenyah. As Hose (1993:127) describes: “Love charms are used by most of the peoples though the Kayans<sup>23</sup> and Kenyahs are exceptions, since they prefer to rely chiefly upon the power of music and personal attractiveness”.

Another early author, Krohn (2001), paints a sensitive and musically insightful picture of what I deduce<sup>24</sup> to be Kenyah or a related group which he observed while travelling in Dutch Borneo. On instrumental music (*kedire*<sup>25</sup>/*keledi*) he noted: “In the hands of a master, the *keledi* gives forth most seductive music, almost as if five individual clarinet players were, in unison, rendering exquisite reed music in perfect harmony” (Krohn, 2001:232).

The Kenyah are renowned exponents of the *sape*, which has come to symbolise Sarawak music. Many other groups, including the Kayan, Kelabit, Iban and Penan have adopted the instrument,

<sup>23</sup> Kayan and Kenyah are often grouped together as one entity. As they live in close proximity, and display certain similarities in customs and dress, many observers fail to distinguish between them.

<sup>24</sup> From similarities in musical instruments, song, costume and other customs.

<sup>25</sup> mouth organ.

but still acknowledge the Kenyah as the most accomplished players. This highly developed art is described in detail by Gorlinski (1989). The most outstanding praise, however, is reserved for their vocal music, as described vividly by many writers, such as Morrison (1957), MacDonald (1958) and Rubinstein (1985). Both MacDonald and Rubinstein compare it with the great Welsh choral tradition: “Kayans and Kenyahs are splendid singers … Their music is melodious, their voices lusty, and they have a natural talent for choral singing, reminiscent of the Welsh” (MacDonald, 1958:230). “The Kayan and Kenyah secular songs have a pleasing sound … probably because of the major-tonic harmonics and resolution. A chorus begins, intersperses with, and concludes the song, and is like a widely dispersed chord. The voices harmonise from high to low … like a Welsh chorus or an organ” (Rubinstein, 1985:50).

Lawing’s (2003) description of Lepo Ma’ut songs and instrumental music is invaluable as it points to common roots and exchanges of repertoire between the various Kenyah subgroups. Just as writers such as Galvin mention songs coming from Kalimantan, Lawing’s informants acknowledged that some of the songs “came from Sarawak”, attesting to the dynamic cross-border exchange of repertoire. Matusky (1997, 2004) describes some of the instrumental traditions, while Gorlinski (1988, 1989) wrote extensively on the *sape*.

Songs were widely appreciated by earlier writers, but hardly ever described in specific musical terms. Sets of lyrics were carefully translated but no transcriptions were included e.g. Galvin (1955:287–289, 1962:501–510) and Rubinstein (1973:1196–1250). The exceptions to the above are the writings of Gorlinski (1993 and 1995) and Chong (1997, 1998, 2006 and 2011), both of whom wrote extensively on the songs.

The songs which the Kenyah are best known for, the *belian dado’*, are described below as perceived by various researchers and writers.

### 1.5.7.2 *Belian Dado’* as perceived by various writers

‘Long-dance’ songs are known as *belian dado’* to the Lepo’ Tau, *badi* to the Sambop, Badeng and some other groups, *badek tiang* to Seeler’s (1975) informants, *tiang* to the residents of Uma Baka’, and *lan-i* to many others in Sarawak. A related Kalimantan Kenyah term is *londe* among the Lepo Ma’ut in Kalimantan as reported by Lawing (2003). In a Kenyah longhouse, *belian dado’* are sung by men, women and children when they perform the *tu’ut dado’*, a simple line-dance in which participants proceed counter-clockwise along the longhouse verandah.

There are different opinions on the origins of *belian dado’*. Galvin (1962:501) places the first appearance of the songs in Sarawak in the 1950s. He was of the opinion that they were brought over the border by Indonesian Kenyah, first to the Baram, and then to the Tinjar: “In recent years a very different new sort of song has come over into the Baram from Kalimantan … The words are simple and the tunes catchy. They often have a two-voice harmony”.

Seeler (1975) relates several possibilities. Citing descriptions of Kenyah song by Niewenhuis (1907<sup>26</sup> in Seeler, 1975) who spent two months in the Apo Kayan in 1900, Seeler claims that “there is evidence of Badek Tiang being performed for at least 70 years” (i.e. since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century). One of her informants from Long Atun estimates that they were first sung in his village in the 1950s, while another (from Long Sobeng) dates it in the 1930s. Another informant from Long Moh, however, claimed that *badek tiang* was passed down from their ancestors and is part of Kenyah *adat*. He recalled that during headhunting celebrations, the headman led *belian* (song) “suka hati” (if he wished). She also quotes two descriptions of line-dance and song by Hose and MacDougall (1912:127 and 1993:177) to support the possibility of the earlier existence of *badek tiang*.

Gorlinski (1995:45) describes *lan-i* songs (she classifies them as a subcategory of *belian dado*) as relatively recent songs for recreational group dancing, adopted from the Lepo' Tau of Indonesia in the 1940s. Given their great interest in music and dance, the Kenyah often performed their repertoire for visitors, who reciprocated with their own performances. This dynamic exchange occurred frequently with the practice of *peselai*<sup>27</sup>.

### 1.5.7.3 Dance

Dance occupies an exalted place in Kenyah culture. Besides serving as a form of aesthetic expression and (in the case of *kanjet laki*, the male solo ‘warrior’ dance) a display of athleticism and virility, it is indelibly associated with their warrior culture, in which tribal identity and pride are strongly rooted. The most widely admired genre is without doubt the *kanjet laki*, which has been described as a mesmerizing spectacle by many writers, perhaps most vividly and poetically by MacDonald (1958). In the following passage, he describes choreographic details as well as the emotions imbued into the performance. It is included here as the dance is intimately connected to the Kenyah warrior heritage as well as to specific instrumental melodies and songs analyzed in Chapters 3 and 4.

*After a few moments one of his feet began to tap the floor, repeating the beat three to four times to give him the sapit’s<sup>28</sup> rhythm ... The audience watched with fascination, as if held by a spell ... Making a swift, feline, sideways leap, he landed on noiseless toes, then crossed one leg in front of the other and began a downward, spiralling curtsey. By some miraculous trick his body made two complete revolutions as it descended and two more as it circled upwards again without any apparent change in the position of his feet. At the lowest point of his pirouette he squatted on the floor, with arms stretched sideways while slow, undulating ripples of motion passed through them. As he rose and attained once more his full height, one hand felt for his scabbard and the other clasped the hilt of his sword ... The expression on his face was sometimes serene, sometimes fierce, and sometimes lit by a kind of ecstasy. He was representing not so much an individual, personal sentiment as a deep, collective emotion of his race ... (MacDonald, 1958:249–250).*

The wider spectrum of Kenyah dance is described in detail, though more clinically than the above, in Seeler (1969 and 1975) and Chong (1997).

<sup>26</sup> Niewenhuis (1907), *De woning der Dajaks*.

<sup>27</sup> Travelling with a particular purpose (usually work or trade), perhaps for long periods of time.

<sup>28</sup> *sape*.

### 1.5.8 Multipart Singing in Relation to Other Austronesian Cultures

An intriguing aspect of Kenyah vocal repertoire is the presence of two to three-part consonant harmony. It may be significant if this characteristic is found among other Austronesian sub-groups. Blench (2004) in his article on “Musical aspects of Austronesian culture” raises an intriguing question about using common music and dance elements of various far-flung ethnic groups in Taiwan, Borneo, Philippines, insular South-East Asia, Madagascar and Polynesia to trace Austronesian migration routes.

Highly developed multipart singing has been reported among various ethnic groups in Taiwan<sup>29</sup> (Loh, 1982; Hsu and Lu, 2006). In Taiwan, (Loh, 1982; Blench, 2004; Hsu and Lu, 2006), the ten mountain groups<sup>30</sup>, all classed as Austronesian, have demonstrated various forms of multipart singing. This will be discussed in Chapter 5.

## 1.6 METHODOLOGY

As this study is situated at the intersection of music education and ethnomusicology, the research strategy used is a combination of ethnography (participant observation studies as described in Mouton, 2001:148) focusing on the music culture of several Kenyah communities, followed by textual and musicological analysis of their songs through a pedagogical lens and qualitative (naturalistic) evaluation research (Mouton, 2001:161), based on transmission of songs within an educational context. “While methodologies from ethnomusicology can be adapted to approach the study of world musics ... our generation is faced with the task of creating models and pedagogical approaches that are both appropriate for the musics and specifically suited for public school teaching” (Quesada, 2002:155).

In my approach to fieldwork, participant observation has always been the overriding focus. I actively seek out recognised ‘authorities’ of various genres and endeavour to form teacher-pupil relations with them. This approach is in line with the following description by Titon (1997:87): “Fieldwork is no longer viewed principally as observing and collecting ... but as experiencing and understanding music ... The new fieldwork leads us to ask what it is for a person (ourselves included) to make and to know music as a lived experience”.

As the ultimate goal of this thesis is the application of Kenyah songs in an educational context, the approach to the analysis will be a pedagogical one. This approach is loosely founded on the Kodály method of analyzing folksongs. Kodály curricula are structured by beginning with a repertoire of folksongs (Choksy, 1988). This repertoire is incorporated into lessons (planned for sequential development of musical skills) based on the frequency and occurrence of various musical elements such as rhythmic, melodic and harmonic patterns.

The songs are divided according to category and the basic melodic structures analysed. Selected examples were analysed according to each of the following aspects: text, harmony, rhythm

<sup>29</sup> Taiwan's indigenous people became known to the world through recordings of the multipart singing of the Bunun people by Kurosawa Takatomo.

<sup>30</sup> Ami, Atayal, Bunun, Paiwan, Puyuma, Thao, Saisat ,Tsou, Yami and Rukai.

and melodic aspects (tonality, ambitus, analysis of intervals, form). Apart from pedagogical analysis, I explore the connection between melodic structure and the portrayal of emotions. For this I adopt a formalist perspective, subscribing to Hanslick's view (1986:29, in Beard and Gloag, 2005:106) of music as "tonally moving forms". Musical elements, text and context of performance are related to aspects of Kenyah culture and history, exchange of repertoire between Kenyah subgroups and influences from other cultures. As expressed by Parker and Abate (1989, in Beard and Gloag, 2005:13), "analysis is the result of interaction between the music itself, music theory, aesthetics and history".

My analysis of the semantics of Kenyah music and postulation of the indigenous origins of Kenyah harmony develops ideas Gorlinski's (1989 and 1995) analysis of Kenyah melodies. It also draws on theories such as those of Cooke (1991), Cook (2002, 2009) and recent research in the fields of psychology, neurobiology and acoustics conducted on music and emotional perception, e.g. Curtis and Bharucha (2010), Bowling et al. (2010 & 2012), Hunter et al. (2010) and Brattico et al. (2011).

Kenyah ways of inculcating musicality and transmitting music skills were also studied. The findings are discussed in the light of current research on informal versus formal learning in music education (Lilliestam, 1996; Folkestad, 2006; Green, 2006; Seddon & Biasutti, 2009). As observed by Small (1998:207–208): "The big challenge to music educators ... is to provide that kind of social context for informal as well as formal musical interaction that leads to real development and to the musicalizing of society as a whole". He stresses that few opportunities exist in modern society for informal and continuous cultivation in *musicking*, in contrast to African traditional societies where children learn rhythm, songs and dances from an early age.

### 1.6.1 Fieldwork

Music and dance in Kenyah culture, with a focus on recreational songs, was studied through participant observation in seven Kenyah villages between 2002 and 2009 as shown in Table 1.3 and their locations shown in Maps 2 and 3. Further details are shown in Table A-1 in Appendix A.

**Table 1.3: Fieldwork<sup>31</sup> locations (see Map 2 and Map 3)**

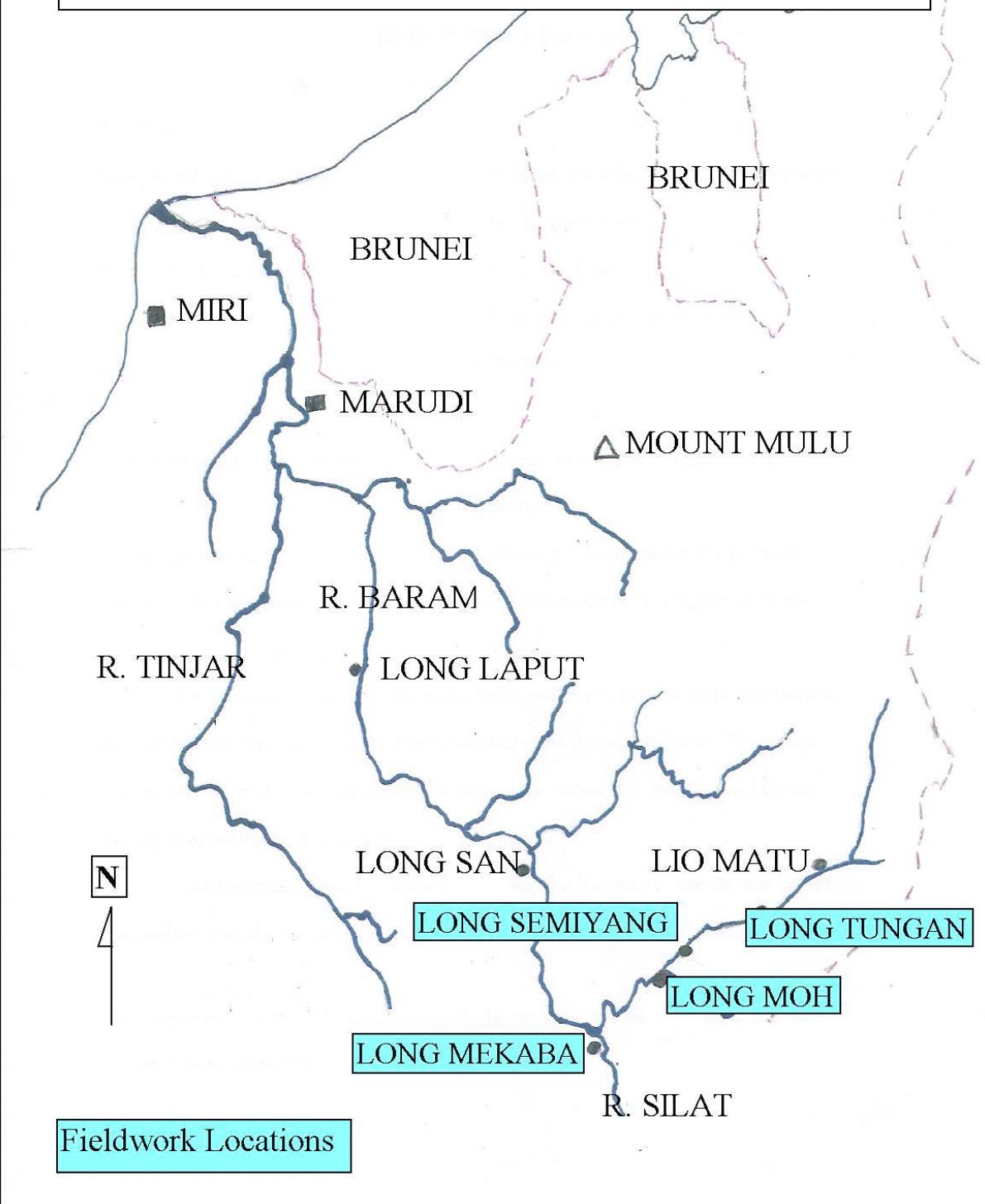
Date	Village	River system
18 <sup>th</sup> –21 <sup>st</sup> November 2002	Long Mekaba	Silat, a tributary of the Baram
10 <sup>th</sup> –17 <sup>th</sup> June 2004	Long Semiyang, Long Moh	Main Baram
12 <sup>th</sup> –16 <sup>th</sup> November 2004	Uma Sambop, Uma Badang Uma Baka'	Balui/Belaga
24 <sup>th</sup> –29 <sup>th</sup> March 2005	Long Semiyang, Long Moh Long Tungan	Main Baram
19 <sup>th</sup> –21 <sup>st</sup> January 2008	Uma Sambop, Uma Badang	Balui/Belaga
12 <sup>th</sup> –14 <sup>th</sup> December 2008	Uma Sambop	Balui/Belaga
28 <sup>th</sup> January–10 <sup>th</sup> February 2009	Long Moh	Main Baram

The selection of field locations was based on several criteria as elaborated in section 1.3. Of the three villages in Belaga, Uma Sambop is still situated at its original site in Belaga, while Uma Badang and Uma Baka' were recently resettled into Asap sub-district of Belaga, moving from the Upper Balui as their original villages were located in Long Gang and Long Belian, which will eventually be submerged as part of the Bakun hydroelectric dam.

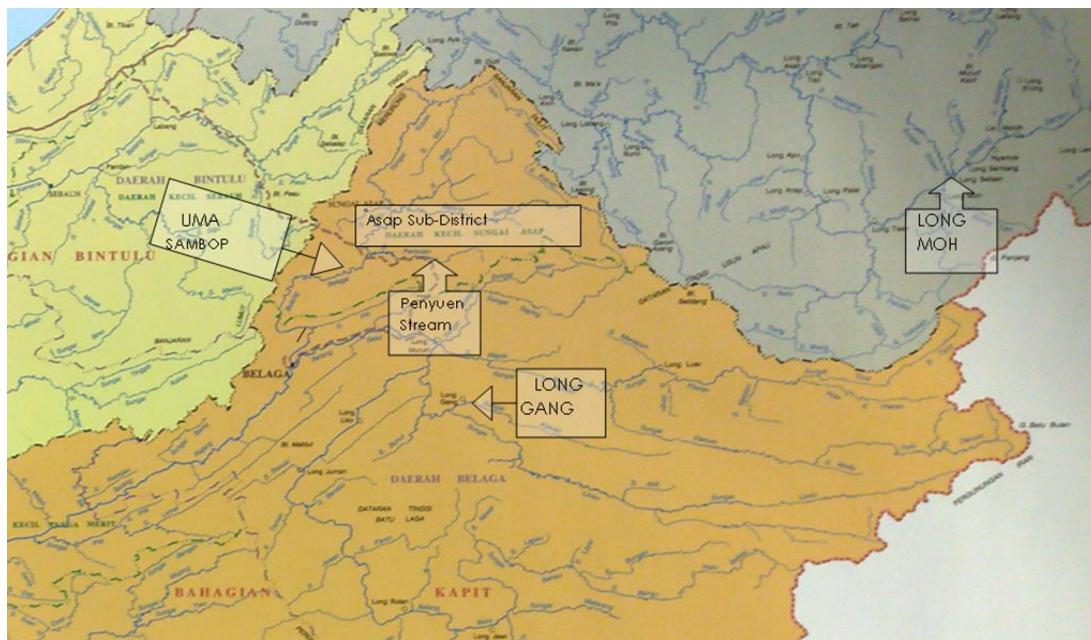
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<sup>31</sup> Research between 2004 and 2005 was funded by the United States Ambassador's Fund for cultural preservation under the project *From upriver longhouses to the modern classroom* while research between 2007 and 2008 was funded by the ISME-Gibson International award under the project *Introducing East Malaysian ensembles and folksongs to Malaysian schoolchildren*.

## Sketch of the Baram showing Locations of Fieldwork



Map 2: Fieldwork Locations in the Baram



**Map 3: Fieldwork locations in Belaga**

In each of these villages, musicians and singers were identified and performances were arranged. Discussions were carried out with informants on interpretations of lyrics and the roots of their repertoire. Based on the unusual depth of musical culture found in Long Moh and Uma Sambop, extended visits were later carried out to these two villages.

Documentation and translation of the lyrics was a challenging task. As most of the songs were dance-songs, the performers were constantly moving as they sang. Consequently many of the lyrics were inaudible. Also, as the verses were frequently improvised on the spot, the singers often forgot what they had sung. When time permitted, I would get the singers to dictate and partially translate the lyrics. As some performances occurred at group gatherings late at night, such sessions often had to take place later (even several months later), sometimes with different informants.

Translation involved the task of deciphering metaphors and figures of speech, made more difficult by the tendency to use ‘elevated speech’ and archaic expressions not understood by modern-day Kenyah. A large part of the text in the *belian dado*’ category is composed from a highly developed form of verse, *isiu ipet*. Perhaps the very nature of the verse itself negates the existence of lucid interpretation. As Gorlinski explains (2005:17–18), “it is simply not the point to explain away *ipet*, and is indeed antithetical to the guiding ideology of the register”. She argues that it is the very “semi-opacity” of the rhyme that endows it with authority, as for the Kenyah, honourable or “sebelang” speech is essentially indirect. Galvin (1966a:183) describes Kenyah figures of speech, *bada pimbun* (flowers of speech), as most commonly found in songs. “The language is very rich in metaphors and similes and often the meaning is hidden on purpose”. He further suggests that it may be a remnant of the olden days when a cryptic form of speech was necessary during war expeditions.



**Plate 1: Interpreting songs, Long Mekaba**

### **1.6.2 Application in Schools**

A large part of the research is concerned with the evaluation of the applicability of the songs within the present Malaysian context, and discussion of issues related to their recontextualization in both teaching-learning situations and stage presentations. Thus, the second part of the investigation is based on feedback from dissemination of the songs among schoolchildren, teachers and college students. Based on my own stint in an elementary school, the cooperation of music teachers now serving in various schools throughout Sarawak and trainee-teachers during practicum, samplings of the songs were introduced to schoolchildren. For a period of eight to ten weeks the children were taught several Kenyah songs using the Kodály approach of solfa movable-do with hand-signs, practice and reinforcement with songs, and simple sight-singing exercises. Apart from singing, other activities included playing the tunes on the recorder and movement activities based on the songs. Besides Kenyah songs, the teachers were free to teach whatever songs they thought suitable for their classes.

The effectiveness and applicability of these songs were then assessed through their responses to a set of questionnaires. The reactions of the schoolchildren were gauged both quantitatively through responses to several statements using a five-point Likert scale, and qualitatively based on their answers to several open-ended questions. Differences in the perceptions of schoolchildren of various linguistic and cultural backgrounds toward Kenyah songs were also explored. Reactions of the teachers and teacher-trainees involved in dissemination workshops, class-teaching, and various performances, have also been examined.

### **1.6.3 Feedback from the culture-bearers**

The third part of the investigation involved the reactions of the culture-bearers towards the different ways in which I have presented the songs to the public, i.e. through books, audio and video recordings, and stage performances. By 2007, it was possible for me to gauge the reactions of the

Kenyah to the books and audio-visual materials that had been produced under the first project. As part of the ISME-Gibson project, I was able to bring a group of students to Uma Sambop where they could experience Kenyah culture and learn the songs first-hand from the people. It was also an opportunity to note my hosts' reactions to the students' performances of Kenyah repertoire, and to the formal teaching of these songs in local schools. In 2011, after the publication of my third book, I obtained further feedback after presenting my informants with copies of the book, and showing them videos of our performances. This has also led to further enquiries into the background of the songs and comparisons between the repertoire of Baram and Balui Kenyah.

#### **1.6.4 Validity and reliability**

Golafshani (2003) argues that, particularly from a qualitative point of view, reliability, validity and triangulation have to be redefined “in order to reflect the multiple ways of establishing the truth”. In discussing validity, she quotes various researchers who have generated or adopted what they consider more appropriate terms such as quality, rigour and trustworthiness<sup>32</sup>. In discussing reliability, it is suggested that in qualitative paradigms, quality would more appropriately be ensured by examining dependability<sup>33</sup> and trustworthiness<sup>34</sup>. Other terms suggested are credibility, neutrality, applicability and transferability.

Validity and reliability in this study, as redefined above, are maximised by various triangulation methods. In fieldwork among the culture-bearers as well as in the application of songs in schools, I have engaged multiple methods such as observation, interviews and recordings. A quantitative component including input from assistant researchers is also incorporated.

Transferability was examined by conducting the research in schools in various parts of Sarawak, encompassing schools with different ethnic compositions and language backgrounds, as well as the fact that different teachers are involved in the teaching of the songs. The validity of this study is further strengthened by the fact that I have revisited the culture-bearers, some of whom I have been in contact with over a period of more than ten years.

### **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study aims to illustrate the intrinsic value of Kenyah songs as musical works of universal interest. The ensuing chapters will demonstrate that the Kenyah possess a wide repertoire of songs with attractive melodies and song-texts. Kenyah songs would fill a much needed void for culturally relevant materials in the Malaysian music education system. This is especially so in the light of the implementation of contemporary pedagogical methods. However, their value goes far beyond mere cultural interest and regional representation. Analysis of their melodic, rhythmic and harmonic structures (Chapter 4) demonstrates that they are useful for teaching music concepts found in a

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<sup>32</sup> Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Seale, 1999; Mishler, 2000; Stanbacka, 2001; Davies and Dodd, 2002.

<sup>33</sup> Lincoln and Guba, 1985.

<sup>34</sup> Seale, 1999.

standard ‘western music’ curriculum. As a large proportion of them are in pentatonic and other scales, they also serve to counterbalance the diatonic dominance of contemporary Western-influenced music.

The response to the songs, gauged from 15 years of experience in dissemination, and the written responses of schoolchildren from 11 different schools in Sarawak (Chapter 6), could be used as a reference point for the introduction of the folksongs from other ethnic groups in the country. One of the benefits of introducing the songs is the interest it arouses in the communities of origin. As the Kenyah only represent a very small fraction of the total population, many Malaysians are only vaguely aware of their existence. Bringing aesthetically appealing genres from a minority group to the Malaysian classroom would provide a concrete example for multicultural education, and foster intercultural appreciation, rather than mere inter-racial tolerance.

If there were concerted efforts to document and transcribe genuine folksongs from various communities around the country, this would contribute to multicultural education in other subject areas such as social studies. It would be a step forward in the promotion of inter-racial and inter-regional understanding. Malaysia is constantly faced with the challenge of integrating its diverse ethnic groups, and of bringing together the peoples of East and West Malaysia (as the two regions are not only divided geographically, but differ in historical background, racial and religious composition).

Apart from enriching song repertoire, a study of Kenyah music culture may provide clues to the development of their exceptional musicality (Chapter 5), thus contributing to current research on methods of teaching music. For instance, while simultaneously dancing in rhythm, the singers stay on pitch and maintain two-part harmony despite the lack of instrumental support.

Documentation and dissemination of the songs also contributes to the preservation of a vital cultural legacy. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the genres under study are in danger of extinction for various reasons. Publication and dissemination would rekindle interest and pride in this valuable heritage, and motivate the culture-bearers to revive their rich vocal music tradition. It may also attract the attention of cultural bodies, government agencies and international organisations, catalysing further research and documentation of the Kenyah language and performing arts, and subsequently those of other minority ethnic groups in Malaysia.

Their history and culture as mirrored in the lyrics of their songs may also draw attention to the difficulties of living in the interior of Sarawak, and the lack of amenities there, while highlighting the ingenuity of the Kenyah in creating their distinctive style of music. Showcasing their music may also serve to kindle interest in the development of facilities for home-stay tourism and cottage industries (for instance in the making of instruments for sale).

The significance of the songs extends beyond the field of education and preservation of cultural heritage. If Kenyah choral harmony is an indigenous development, as argued in Chapter 5, this may also have implications for anthropological studies of Austronesian groups. Blench’s (2004) paper raises intriguing questions regarding similarities in musical practices of the Taiwanese, Polynesians and South-east Asians. One ‘missing link’ is the seeming absence of multipart singing in South-east Asia, although it has been established to be an indigenous trait of the Taiwanese tribes.

Comparative research on the music of Taiwanese Austronesian groups and the music of the Kenyah (and other Bornean groups) may yield further evidence for ancestral ties and mass migrations in the distant past.

# CHAPTER 2

## AN ETHNOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE KENYAH

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### 2.1 HISTORY OF THE KENYAH

The Kenyah are swidden agriculturalists who live in multi-longhouse villages along the rivers of Central Borneo. In Sarawak, they dwell along the Baram river<sup>1</sup> and its tributaries (the Tinjar, Tutoh and Apoh) and along the Balui (the name given to the upper Rajang) and Belaga (tributary of the Rajang) rivers. In Kalimantan, they live mainly on the Apo Kayan (also known as Apau Kayan) plateau, along the Bahau and Pujungan<sup>2</sup> (tributaries of the Kayan river) and along the Mahakam river. Due to the location of their villages near the headwaters of the rivers, they are highly skilled boatmen as they have to manoeuvre the most difficult rapids in the whole of Borneo.

#### 2.1.1 Origins

Most Kenyah subgroups place their ancestral home either on the Usun Apau (the high plateau at the headwaters of the Baram and Rajang rivers in Sarawak), in the Apo Kayan plateau (in Kalimantan), or the headwaters of the Iwan<sup>3</sup>. The outline map of Borneo (Map 4) shows the Usun Apau and Apo Kayan in relation to the Baram, Balui, Kayan and Mahakam rivers. The Apo Kayan, Kayan and Mahakam rivers are found in Kalimantan, or the Indonesian (formerly Dutch Borneo) side of the border.

Hose and McDougall (1993) postulated that the Kenyah are descended from aborigines who inhabited Borneo when it was still a part of mainland Asia. One current anthropological theory (Diamond 1999:334–353) would place them in the wave of Austronesian expansion from Taiwan by sea around 2500 B.C. In line with this theory, Sellato (2002:127) postulates Austronesian-speaking populations “settled in Borneo some 4,000 years ago and developed one or another economic activity according to local environments”.

Some of the earliest written records appeared in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when explorers such as the Dutch physician Nieuwenhuis ventured into the interior of Dutch Borneo. Nieuwenhuis’s books<sup>4</sup> and film documentaries of his historic visit to the Apo Kayan yielded a glimpse into Kenyah culture. On the Sarawak side of the border, officials serving in the Brooke administration, such as Charles Hose, wrote extensively on various Central Borneo groups, though often describing Kayan and Kenyah culture together as one entity.

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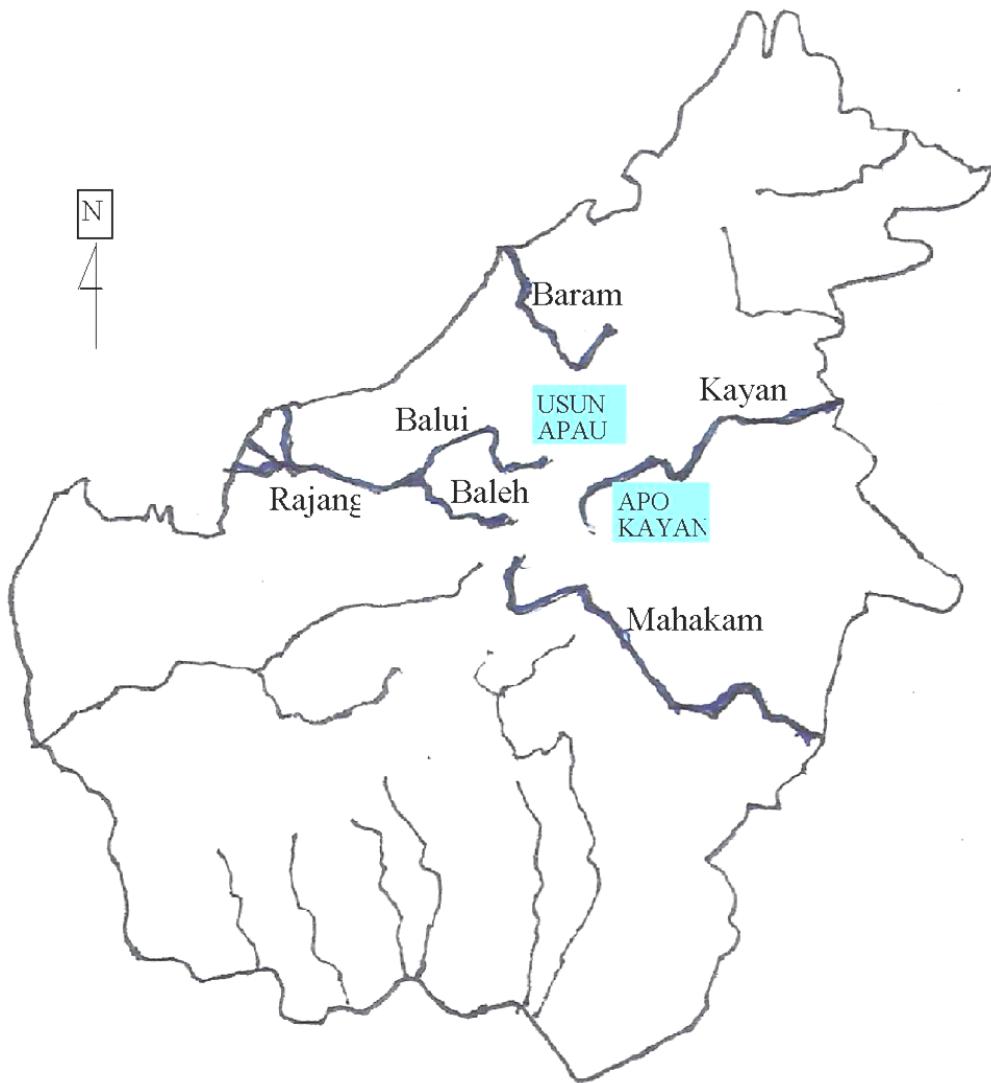
<sup>1</sup> The Kenyah usually build settlements at the confluence of a river and a stream, thus bearing the name “Long\_” meaning confluence of rivers,

<sup>2</sup> According to Soriente (2002) the majority of the villages on these two tributaries are Kenyah.

<sup>3</sup> A tributary of the Kayan river (see Map 5).

<sup>4</sup> *In Centraal Borneo, Quer Durch Borneo.*

## Outline Map showing the Usun Apau and Apo Kayan at the headwaters of four major rivers of Borneo.



**Map 4**

Kenyah subgroups have a long history of migration. Many followed complicated migration routes, moving back and forth between various river systems in Sarawak and Kalimantan. Some possible reasons for the frequent migrations are cited by Liman Lawai (1995:197). Prominent among these are:

- (i) Security: The Kenyah were compelled to escape from *ayau* (headhunting attacks) by stronger groups, often launched to satisfy the requirements of their traditional religion *adat pu'un* which required fresh heads for ritual purposes, as described in 1.5.6 in the context of the *mamat* feast.

- (ii) Beliefs: Under the influence of their *adet pu'un* the Kenyah often abandoned settlements because of bad omens. This is corroborated by an informant<sup>5</sup> in Uma Sambop who related that his grandfather (the headman at that time) once abandoned a newly built longhouse at Long Semembok because of the sighting of *njung ulai usang* (a snake with bad portents). They then followed the direction indicated by an omen bird or *pelaki*<sup>6</sup> to the next site at Long Jauh.
- (iii) Population pressure: Liman Lawai cites Whittier (1973) in postulating that improvements in agricultural techniques led to better diets and a sharp increase in population and overcrowding.
- (iv) Competition among leaders: The aristocratic class often had differences of opinion on matters of relocation and warfare, leading to a split, and the subsequent migration of one faction.

### 2.1.2 Subgroups, Population Distribution and Language

In the 1970s there were about 38,000 Kenyah in the whole of Borneo, comprising over 40 named subgroups (Whittier, 1978a:92) living in 110 communities, with the majority on the Kalimantan side of the border. Of these, Whittier estimates that around 4,000 were of the subgroup Lepo' Tau. Sarawak's Kenyah population then was estimated to be around 10,000<sup>7</sup>. By the year 1980<sup>8</sup> the Kenyah population in Sarawak had grown to 16,068; by 2000<sup>9</sup>, to 24,906. The Malaysian 2010 census did not provide separate population counts for the different Sarawak indigenous groups apart from the Iban and Bidayuh (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2011).

The Baram district is estimated to consist of 43 Kenyah communities originating from 30 subgroups, while The Balui/Belaga region consists of 7 communities from 5 subgroups. Each subgroup is generally known as *Lepo'*<sup>10</sup> "X" or *Uma*<sup>11</sup> "Y", depending on its history and the place of origin. Each has its own distinct dialect. However, there are several clusters of related dialects (Metcalf, 1974:31; Dungau Sagan, 1989:134).

Soriente's (2004:59) tree of Kenyah languages (Figure 1) based on 35 speech communities, presents the most comprehensive description of this linguistic maze.

<sup>5</sup> Saging Sufen.

<sup>6</sup> Omen birds: these include the black eagle, bat hawk and brahminy kite.

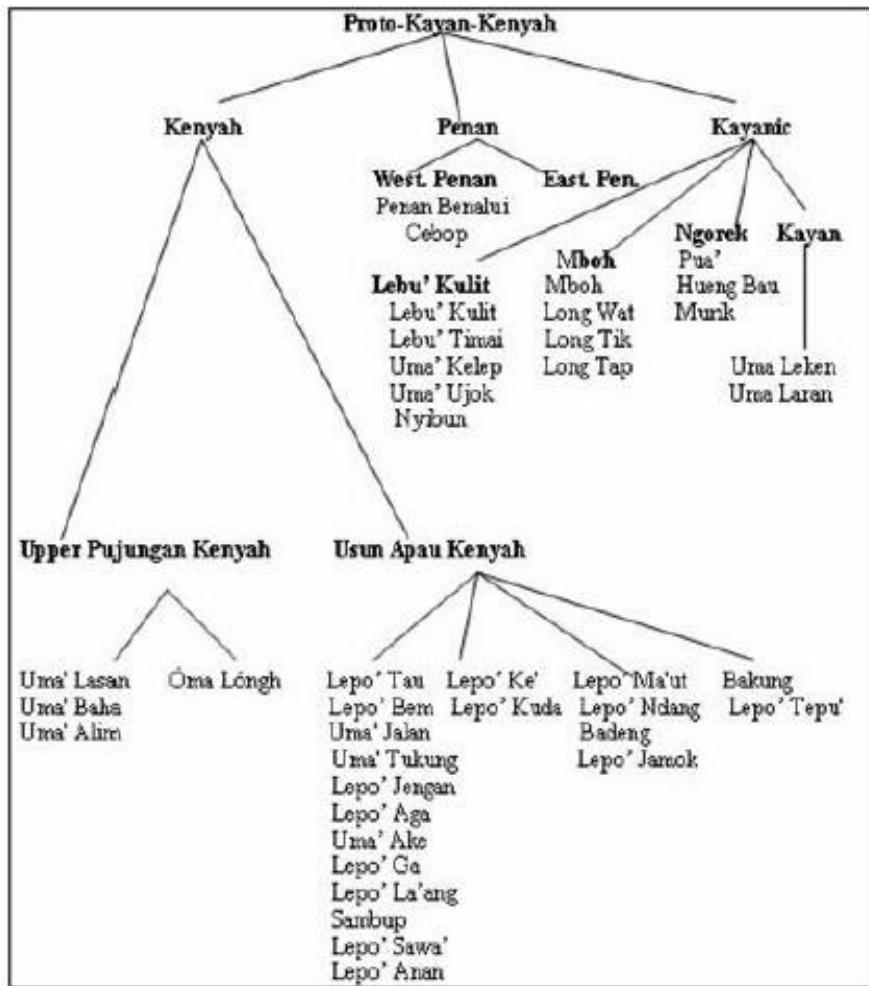
<sup>7</sup> Based on projections from the 8,000 during the 1960 census (Rubinstein, 1973:1184).

<sup>8</sup> 1980 census, quoted in Ding Seling & Jayl Langub (1989).

<sup>9</sup> Department of Statistics Malaysia (2001). In comparison there were 44,350 Kenyah in Kalimantan (Sensus Penduduk 2000, Central Bureau of Statistics Indonesia, 2000).

<sup>10</sup> *Lepo'*, literally 'village', is now more often taken to mean 'subgroup'. The name refers to the original settlement of that subgroup.

<sup>11</sup> *Uma*', literally 'house', sometimes refers to a village, but in this context, also to a subgroup.



**Figure 1: A Classification of the Kayan-Kenyah languages (Figure 3 in Soriente, 2004:59)**

The three main branches, Kenyah, Penan and Kayanic, subdivide into smaller branches and lower level branches. The branch with the majority of the known variants is the Usun Apau Kenyah branch with four lower level branches which include most of the groups whose music is discussed in this thesis.

Among these, the first sub-branch includes the Lepo' Tau of the Baram, the Sambop<sup>12</sup> of Belaga and the Uma' Jalan of Kalimantan whose music is described by Gorlinski (1989). The Lepo' Ke' are part of the second sub-branch, while the Lepo' Jamok and Badeng<sup>13</sup>, together with the Lepo' Ma'ut of Kalimantan, whose music is described by Lawing (2003) are in the third sub-branch, while the Bakung are in the fourth. It is significant that the Sambop, who are resident in Belaga, are found in the same sub-branch as the Lepo' Tau.

The Ngurek are placed in a Kayanic language branch. This supports the observations of other linguists who note their strong affiliation to the Kayan language. However, according to Soriente's

<sup>12</sup> Soriente spells it as Sambup.

<sup>13</sup> Often spelt as Badeng.

classification, many other core Kenyah groups such as the Lepo Mbo' of Long San<sup>14</sup>, the Lepo' Kulit, the Lepo' Timai and Uma Kelap are also classified as part of Kayanic branches.

Despite the above linguistic affiliations to the Kayan, all these groups clearly distinguish themselves culturally as Kenyah. As I observed during my visits to Long Semiyang, there was no doubt in my informants' minds that their culture was 'Kenyah', although other Kenyah such as the Lepo' Tau can hardly understand the Ngurek language. Most Ngurek, however, are conversant in Lepo' Tau and from what I have observed, Ngurek songs, music and dance definitely subscribe to 'Kenyah' forms. Ngau Jalang (1989:167), a Ngurek himself, argues that their *adat*, dress, handicrafts, farm implements, songs, music and dance are similar to those of other Kenyah groups, and attributes the similarity of their language to Kayan to the proximity of the two groups in the Apau Kayan. In the context of this thesis at least, I will assume that these cultural traits are the defining identity markers for the Kenyah rather than linguistic considerations.

It would be a monumental task to discuss the history, migration and linguistic profile of all the different groups involved in this study. Thus, subsequent discussion in this chapter will revolve around two selected Kenyah subgroups, the Lepo' Tau from the Baram and the Sambop of Belaga. A large part of my research material was obtained from these two groups. The Lepo' Tau are considered by many to be the cultural elite among the Baram Kenyah while the Sambop of Belaga were observed to be almost equally prolific in vocal music.

The population distribution of the various Kenyah subgroups referred to in this thesis is summarised in the next two tables. Also included are estimates of the population according to religious affiliation.

Table 2.1 combines information from various sources including my own research data for the Baram Kenyah at different periods of time. Table 2.2 contains the corresponding data for the Balui/Belaga Kenyah. However, as there has been little published research on the latter groups, the information is incomplete.

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<sup>14</sup> The administrative centre of the Upper Baram and the home of the former paramount chief of the Kenyah, Penghulu Oyong Lawai Jau.

**Table 2.1: Population distribution of selected Kenyah subgroups in the Baram**

Village & Subgroup	Year	No. of doors	Population		Religion
Long Moh  Subgroups: Lepo' Tau and Lepo' Jingan  Previously also Lepo Ke' (Dungau Sagan, 1989)	1974	73	698		mostly Bungan <sup>15</sup> some RC
	1976		716		10% RC 3% SIB, 87% Bungan
	1989	103 (including Lepo' Jingan?)	824		mostly Bungan, some RC
	1993	80 (20 empty)	753 (458 actually resident)		mostly RC 10 doors Bungan
	2000	82 (Lepo Tau) Hilir	738 (Hulu)	Total 873	(2009 data) Mostly RC 2 doors SIB 5 doors Bungan <sup>16</sup>
	2012	82 Lepo Tau Hilir	738	Total 873 <sup>17</sup>	
		17 Lepo Jingan	135		
Long Mekaba  Subgroup: Lepo' Tau	1974	23	186		RC/SIB <sup>18</sup>
	1989	27	217		RC/SIB
	1993	26	213		SIB
	2000	27	216		SIB
	2012	33	203		SIB
Long Semiyang  Subgroups: Ngurek and Lepo' Ke')	1974	12	119		RC/SIB
	1989	21	105		RC/SIB
	2000	27	176		RC/SIB
	2012	50	350		
Long Tungan  Subgroup: Lepo' Nyamok	1974	24	383		RC
	1989	46	421		RC
	2000	55	440		RC

### Key

<b>Abbreviations</b>	RC= Roman Catholic; SIB= Sidang Injil Borneo (Borneo Evangelist Mission)
<b>Year</b>	<b>Source of data</b>
1974	Metcalf (1974)
1976	King (1978)
1989	Dungau Sagan (1989)
1993	Gorlinski (1995)
2000	Marudi District Office (from 2000 census)
2009	Personal communication, Bilong Tingang, headman
2012	Marudi District Office (latest official figures, possibly outdated)

<sup>15</sup> A contemporary reformation of the Kenyah/Kayan indigenous religion (Rousseau, 1978) which spread to Sarawak in the 1940s, replacing the original religion, *adet pu'un*.

<sup>16</sup> Personal communication, Bilong Tingang (2009).

<sup>17</sup> This may not reflect the true picture. According to Bilong Tingang (headman, Long Moh, 2009), many families reside in urban areas for long stretches of time, and the effective number of people in the village most of the year (excluding schoolchildren at boarding schools) is only 100.

<sup>18</sup> Metcalf and Dungau Sagan's tables list Long Mekaba as RC, but according to Gorlinski (1995:403), the entire village became SIB in 1968. At the time of my visit in 2002 most residents belonged to the SIB church.

**Table 2.2: Population distribution of selected Kenyah subgroups in the Balui basin**

Village	Year	No. of doors	Population	Religion
Uma Sambop, Long Semutut Belaga  Subgroup: Sambop	1938	22	Not available	<i>adet pu'un</i> in the 1930s <i>adet Bungan</i> in the 1950s with many converting to Christianity by the late 1960s <sup>19</sup>
	1961	23	161	
	1971	25	250	
	2008	76	900	
Uma Badang, Sungai Asap, Belaga Subgroup: Badang One of 15 villages resettled in the 1990's from Long Gang, Upper Balui, in conjunction with the building of the Bakun Hydroelectric Dam	1941	47	281	<i>adet pu'un</i> in the 1940s followed by <i>adet Bungan</i> in the 1950s and many converting to Christianity by the late 1960s
	1961	52	334	
	1971	64	801	
	2008			RC/SIB The village is divided into two sections, according to religious affiliation

Key	
<b>Year of reference</b>	<b>Source</b>
1938, 1941, 1961, 1971	Rousseau (1974:463)
2008	Personal communication, Uma Sambop residents

### 2.1.3 Traditional Settlement Patterns

A typical Kenyah village consists of several longhouses, built close to and parallel to the riverbank. The longhouse community provided “all the spiritual, cultural and physical needs of its members” (Hong, 1977:222). The longhouse (*uma dado'*) consists of a set of adjoining private family apartments (*amin*) which open out into a common verandah (*use*). “Each longhouse in a village has its own name and leader (*paren uma*) but rarely acts as a unit” (Whittier, 1978a:102). The *paren uma*’s family generally occupies the central portion, with his or her closest relatives nearby. The hardwood structure is elevated to 4 feet to 6 feet above the ground due to the possibility of flooding (the wisdom of this detail became evident to me during the flood in February 2009<sup>20</sup>). Formerly the height was 8 feet to 10 feet for protection against head-hunters. The traditional ‘staircase’ was a notched log which could easily be pulled up when hostile parties appeared. The verandahs are usually very wide with a slightly raised platform constructed along the railing. A high roof covers both *amin* and *use* (Whittier, 1978a:92-110).

The verandah (*use*) of the longhouse provides a convenient playground for children, socializing centre for adults, meeting hall (for more formal functions), religious ceremonies and an informal stage for performances of dance, song and instrumental music. To call for a meeting or a gathering, messages are sent by word of mouth, or by striking a gong or long drum (*jatung*) hanging

<sup>19</sup> Deduced from interviews with Belaga residents and based on Rousseau’s (1998) descriptions of the overall situation in the district.

<sup>20</sup> Described in Appendix A

on the verandah of the main longhouses (this drum is still used in Long Moh, but rarely found elsewhere).

The space below the longhouse was traditionally used to store boats, nets and firewood. Chickens and pigs also ran freely, eating up any waste matter that dropped through the slats or was thrown down. Except for the pigs, which are now confined in pens, this is still the case in Long Moh and a few villages in the Upper Baram. However, the present trend, as seen in Long Tungan and elsewhere in the Baram, is to cement the lower floor, making it a two-storey structure.

#### **2.1.4 Cultural Exchange between Sarawak and Kalimantan**

Although this thesis deals with Kenyah music in Sarawak, many of my informants and other researchers have repeatedly mentioned Indonesian Kenyah influence. There is evidence of continuous exchange of music and dance repertoire across what is now the border. This is not surprising, given that groups of Kenyah have been migrating between the two regions over the last few centuries. Even though large-scale migration has now ceased, Indonesian Kenyah continue to travel to Sarawak for various reasons, often bringing their music and dance repertoire with them. Thus, in order to examine the origins of the genres under study, it would be necessary to trace the movements of the Kenyah on both sides of the present political division.

Whittier (1974:12) describes the Apo Kayan as relatively isolated from the outside world because of transportation difficulties. It was not worthwhile to transport goods by canoe and foot, journeying two to three weeks to the nearest markets. Instead, men from the Apo Kayan sold their labour by trekking to Sarawak and Tanjung Selor (coastal Kalimantan) in groups of 8–16. The shortest journey and the one most often used by the Long Nawang Kenyah is the trip across the border to the Belaga market in Sarawak. The custom of travelling with a particular purpose (usually work or trade), perhaps for long periods of time, is known as *peselai*.

From what I have observed during my field-trips, this trend continues until today. I have met a considerable number of Indonesian Kenyah who trekked to Sarawak from the Apo Kayan. These Indonesian migrants have introduced instruments, considerable vocal and instrumental repertoire, and choreographic innovations in dance. The following extracts from reports on my field trips illustrate this phenomenon:

### **Long Mekaba, November 2002:**

*As seen in various other upriver Kenyah villages, Long Mekaba is a popular rest and recreation haven for migrant Indonesian Kenyah workers, many of whom eventually marry and settle down there. The interesting cultural phenomenon is that many of these migrants, especially from the sister Lepo' Tau village of Long Nawang in Kalimantan, are talented musicians and dancers. Thus they have brought over their expertise in making and playing the jatung utang<sup>21</sup>, harmonica and flute into the village.*

*I did not personally witness the complete ensemble when I visited the village because many of the “orchestra members” were manning the barricade at the logging camp (there was a dispute between the villagers and the logging company). However, my host Jalong Tanyit, a talented sape player, teamed up with a skilled jatung utang player Kasa Jok, originally from Long Nawang<sup>22</sup>, to supply live music for the two nights of dance performances. Finding himself without his usual partner (jatung utang is usually played in duet) Kasa Jok ingeniously used a forked stick to play, thus simulating the chords produced with a duet (Plate 17, Chapter 3).*

*The younger generation has been inspired to learn some of the immigrants’ skills. Indeed, according to Lian Jalong, many of the dance skills including the kanjet leto’ were learned through cultural exchange between the two villages over the last fifty years. In the past, groups of people would often make the trek over the border, and put up performances of song and dance for each other.*

### **Long Semiyang, March 2005:**

*I met three travelling saleswomen, Ernawati, Ping and Suhan, of the Uma Bakong subgroup from Kalimantan, whose beads and handicrafts were in great demand among the local Kenyah. They obligingly sang several belian dado for me, including a different version of “Liling” (the most widely known belian dado’ in Sarawak). The two versions of “Liling” contained clear differences in melody<sup>23</sup> and lyrics ... Apart from song-exchange, the visitors also gave instruction in long-dance to a group of teenage girls.*



**Plate 2: Ernawati, Ping and Suhan, travelling saleswomen from Uma Bakong, Kalimantan, singing *belian dado'*, 2005**

<sup>21</sup> Wooden xylophone tuned to pentatonic scale.

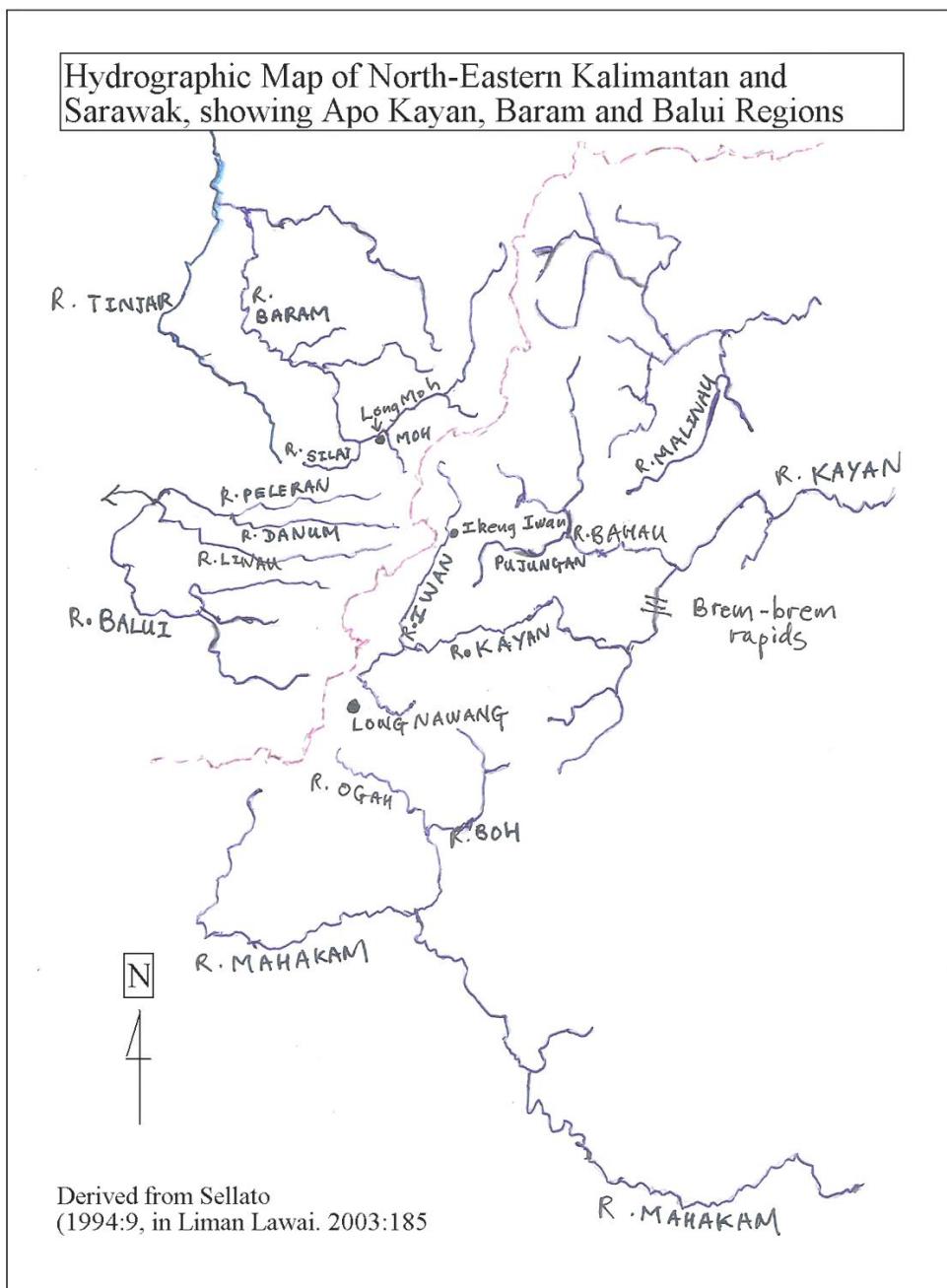
<sup>22</sup> His arduous journey involved trekking for one month and building two canoes.

<sup>23</sup> Both versions of the melodies (Transcriptions 57 and 58) are given in Appendix B.

## 2.1.5 The Lepo' Tau in the Apo Kayan and the Baram: The Path to Political and Cultural Prestige

The Apo Kayan/Apau Kayan (ref. Map 4 and Map 5) is a highland plateau region in Central Borneo on the Indonesian side of the border, where the majority of the inhabitants are Kenyah.

Whittier (1974:5) describes it as including all of the Kayan River and its tributaries above the “Brem-Brem rapids”, bordered to the north by the Iran Mountains which separate the Kayan River drainage system from the drainages of the Baram and Rajang Rivers in Malaysia. To the west and south the Muller Mountains separate the Kayan River drainage from the Mahakam River.



**Map 5**

According to statistics of the 1970s, the Apo Kayan contained the sub-districts of Kecamatan Kayan Hulu (17 villages) and Kecamatan Kayan Hilir (12 villages). Of these, 23 out of 29 villages were Kenyah. In Kayan Hulu, according to Whittier (1974:7), 6 out of 17 villages were Lepo'

Tau. The administrative centre of the region was, and still is, Long Nawang, a Lepo' Tau village. Table 2.3 summarises the Lepo' Tau population in the Apo Kayan in 1970 and 1993.

**Table 2.3: Population of Lepo' Tau in the Apo Kayan**

Village	Population of Lepo' Tau	
	1970 (Whittier 1974:7)	1993 (Liman Lawai 2003:176)
Long Nawang	949	809
Nawang Baru <sup>24</sup>	1,122	585
Long Temunyat	576	327
Long Uro'	280	303
Long Lidung Payau	365	351
Long Lisi	not included in census	not mentioned by Liman
Long Lebusan (labelled as an Uma Bakung village in Whittier)	216	648
Total Lepo' Tau population	3,292 (excluding Long Lebusan) 3,508 (including Long Lebusan)	3,023

### 2.1.5.1 Origins of the Lepo' Tau

*In ancient times the great Goddess Bungan Malan caused a very strong wind to blow upon the face of the earth. As the wind blew, two creepers known as Lorak Akar knocked against one another. And as they did their skins exuded a white juice. This juice strangely caused one of them to conceive and later bore a son who was called Apoi Akar and his genealogy runs as follows: ... (Sandin, 1980:26).*

This poetic description embodies the mythological origins of the Lepo' Tau leaders. In trying to draw up a historical account, however, various obstacles present themselves. A comparison of three sources of genealogies (Galvin, Sandin and Liman) produces some matches but also discrepancies. Galvin's (1965:173) informant begins with the mythical Akar Lurak<sup>25</sup> who was believed to live somewhere at the headwaters of the Baram and Bahau. In Liman's genealogy, Aka Gela is the 5<sup>th</sup> generation leader, followed by Lurek Aka in the 6<sup>th</sup> generation and Apoi Lurek in the 7<sup>th</sup>. With some allowance for spelling differences, the names given by Sandin and Liman Lawai match exactly starting from Lurek Aka (Lorak Akar) until Asa Bungan (Tassa Bungan) except for one missing ancestor in Sandin's account (Batu Batang) as shown in the following table:

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<sup>24</sup> In 1952, those who did not want Christianity moved to Nawang Baru.

<sup>25</sup> Gorlinski (1995:45) also mentions descriptions of the Lepo' Tau's mythological ancestor as a pair of creepers, and that according to Elshout (1926:184-185), all the great chiefs in the Apau Kayan have traced their genealogy to this mythical ancestor.

**Table 2.4: Comparison of three Lepo' Tau genealogies**

Genera-tion	Liman (2003:184)	Sandin (1980:26-27)	Galvin (1965:173-175)
5	Aka Gela		Akar Lurak (mythological)
6	Lurek Aka	Lorak Akar (mythological creeper)	Lurak Akar
7	Apui Lurek	Apoi Akar	
8	Lencau Apui	Lenjou Apoi	Nda Bila
9	Masing Lencau	Masing Lenjau	Balan Areng
10	Laing Masing	Laing Masing	
11	Batang Laing	Batang Laing	Njok Laeng
12	Batu Batang		
13	Suhu Batu (led move to the Iwan)	Shubu Batu	
14	Lencau Suhu	Lenjau Shubu	
15	Kajan Lencau	Ajan Lenjau	
16	Bungan Kajan	Bungan Ajan	
17	Asa Bungan (led move to Ikeng Iwan )	Tassa Bungan	Apoi Njok (also known as Apui Tuloi) is credited as the leader who led them to Sarawak and is also traced as Penghulu Oyong Lawai Jau's <sup>26</sup> ancestor through his Lepo' Tau grandmother
19	His grandson Tului Lawai led one branch of the Lepo' Tau to the Baram basin		
20	Surang Anye' (first paramount chief of Apo Kayan) led his people to Long Nawang	Surang Anye'	Pesurang is named as a cousin of Apoi Njok
21	Ingan Surang	Ingan Surang	Pingan Surang
22	Lencau Ingan	Lenjau Ingan	Lenjau Ingan
23	Li' Lenjau	Lek Lenjau	Leh Lenjau

A significant point of agreement is Suhu Batu (or Shubu Batu in Sandin) who according to Liman was the leader who brought the people to the Iwan river. He is also the quintessential *paren*, the ideal leader to whose standards all subsequent leaders are held. "Informants claim that these aristocratic leaders were expected to have various praiseworthy characteristics, as well as the *paren* (noble) traits of Suhu Batu"<sup>27</sup>" (Liman Lawai, 2003:179).

Galvin's (1965:173) account names Apoi Njok (also known as Apui Tuloi) as the leader of the Lepo' Tau while in the Iwan from whom both lines trace their descent. This corresponds to Tului, given by Liman as the leader who led the splinter group of seven longhouses to Sarawak. However,

<sup>26</sup> Vastly influential Paramount chief of the Orang Ulu, and headman of Long San in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. His father Mueng Lawai was from Long Moh.

<sup>27</sup>(among others): *courageous and strong (makang), to be effective in uniting and advising the people (mencam pebeka' ngan mencam pekatok dulu ngeleppo');* *to have a broad perspective and an open mind ('un kenep iya dado');* *to have a sense of shame ('un sae');* *to not be hasty in action (abe' uba' basuk kenep), to have great determination and a sense of responsibility in leadership (bawa').*

this would leave 9 generations unaccounted for in Galvin's version, as Tului would be in the 19<sup>th</sup> generation of Liman Lawai's (2003:184) version. Galvin also names a PeSurang (likely to be Surang Anye', the first paramount chief of the Kenyah in Apo Kayan) as a cousin of Apoi Njok.

For the Long Nawang branch, all three concur further down the line of descent, beginning with Pingan (Ingan) Surang. The last three named, Ingan Surang, Surang Anye and Lek Lenjau, were all former *paren bio* of the Apo Kayan.

As it is difficult to separate myth from fact, and there is no further substantiation as to which is the correct version, I have chosen to draw up one possible logical progression taking Liman Lawai's account to be the definitive version where there is disagreement. It is the most extensive version, and its authenticity acceptable, as the researcher is Kenyah and his named informant Baya Li' is a descendant of the Long Nawang *paren*.

The Lepo' Tau's ancestors might have originated from outside Borneo<sup>28</sup> (Liman Lawai, 2003:184), eventually settling in Telang Usan (Baram) of what is now Sarawak<sup>29</sup>. Although the date of their first arrival in Borneo cannot be determined, their first known leader was named Julian Awang, followed by Ubang Julian (who settled in the Baram). Lurak Aka (named in Galvin's and Sandin's accounts) appeared at least four generations later. Working backwards from known dates, this would be around 1540.

Seven generations later (around 1710), they moved to the upper Iwan river under the leadership of Suhu Batu, the quintessential Kenyah aristocrat. Here, in the Iwan, on a plateau named *Apau Kayu Tau*<sup>30</sup>, the Lepo' Tau acquired their name. It was also in the Iwan that the Kenyah may have learnt large-scale swidden agriculture, prospering and multiplying their population. Around 1780, they moved to Ikeng Iwan under the leadership of Asa Bungan. His son, and later his grandson, Taman Bawe' Tului (Tului Lawai), succeeded him. Here, they forged an alliance with the Lepo' Timai, who were then regarded as the most powerful and refined group.

Population pressures and war with other tribes resulted in a significant split of the subgroup, with the majority (7 longhouses) deciding to follow the leader Tului (also known as Apoi Njok) back to the Baram around 1820. Meanwhile, only three longhouses remained in Ikeng Iwan. One group, led by Ungau Kayang, moved to the Apo Kayan region. Ungau was succeeded by his adoptive sons, Surang<sup>31</sup> Anye' and Ngau Merang. Surang proved to be an outstanding leader, gaining prominence and respect among the Lepo' Tau and their allies. Under his leadership, the Lepo' Tau displaced the

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<sup>28</sup> According to Baya Li' of Long Nawang (Liman Lawai 2003:184), an aristocrat in the lineage of the paramount chiefs of Apo Kayan, their ancestors came from "across the sea" and first settled on the Baram river (Telang Usan) in Sarawak. Subsequently they moved to the Upper Iwan river (around 1700), the Apo Kayan (1820-1850), and finally to Long Nawang (around 1865).

<sup>29</sup> Guerriero (2006:5) believes that all the Kenyah and Kayanic groups had a common geographical origin in the Baram basin about 2,000 years ago, where they formed a single linguistic grouping.

<sup>30</sup> *Kayu tau* is a wooden post used to measure the position of the sun –“tau”.

<sup>31</sup> Surang and Ngau are referred to, in Kenyah fashion, as orphans. Surang is, however, also deduced to be a cousin of Tului and grandson of Asa Bungan.

Lepo' Timai to become the most powerful Kenyah subgroup in the Apo Kayan. This culminated in Surang's recognition by all the Kenyah communities and the Sultan of Kutei as the *Kepala Suku Besar se-Apo Kayan*, or the *Paren Bio* (paramount chief) of all the Kenyah.

Around 1863, Surang Anye' led his group to Long Nawang, where he died two years later. His son Ingan Surang and subsequently grandson Lenjau Ingan who succeeded him, in 1865 and 1893 respectively, as the *Paren Bio* of the Apo Kayan, both became known as great, influential leaders. Under Ingan Surang, peace was maintained in the Apo Kayan and the Kenyah could travel freely, often going to Sarawak to find work (*peselai*). Long Nawang was a very strategic point in the highlands, as it offered the easiest route to Sarawak. The Brooke government was at this time establishing its influence in the Baram, and invited Ingan for peace-making gatherings. They recognised him as the paramount chief in the Apo Kayan and sent him a royal vest as a gift. Ingan was succeeded by his son Lenjau Ingan in 1893, who was later also officially recognised by the Brooke government. During the peace-making ceremony of 1898 in Sarawak two tiger skins from the Rajah of Sarawak were presented to the Kenyah of the Apo Kayan (Smythies, 1955:506 in Whittier, 1973:162).

Around 1900, the Dutch first attempted to establish their control over the Apau Kayan area, setting up a garrison in Long Nawang. Initially, not understanding local Kenyah *adet*<sup>32</sup>, they held Lenjau Ingan responsible for two deaths and arrested him. As a result of appeals from many parties, they released him and subsequently deferred to him as the *kepala suku besar* of Apau Kayan. Lenjau Ingan was succeeded by his son Lek Lenjau in 1949.

### 2.1.5.2 The Lepo' Tau in Sarawak: Baram informants

The previous section described the movements of the Lepo' Tau in Kalimantan. To trace the corresponding movements of the Lepo' Tau in Sarawak, I refer now to Gorlinski's (1995) version and to that of another recent informant, Lusat Wan, who at over 100 years of age is one of the oldest residents of Long Moh. During my 2009 sojourn at Long Moh, the headman Bilong Tingang had recommended Lusat as the most authoritative source available. Bilong then proceeded to interpret Lusat's version of their history. Lusat's recollections, shown in Table 2.5 (with some clarifications from Gorlinski's and Galvin's versions) differ somewhat from Gorlinski's version. The latter is a combination of plural accounts from both Long Moh and Long Mekaba. Each version probably included the movement of splinter groups left out in the other. It is also acknowledged that some details may be missing as Lusat, being partially deaf, was slow to respond to questions.

According to Lusat's account, over a period of 180 years the Lepo' Tau underwent 13 migrations (possibly more according to Gorlinski) after they left the Iwan for the Baram basin. As in Gorlinski's version, they also stayed for some time in Long Penyu'en, Belaga.

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<sup>32</sup> Customary law, which for the Kenyah is intertwined with their belief system.

**Table 2.5: Migration history as told by Lusat Wan (Long Moh, 2009)**

	Site (Lusat Wan's version)	Region	Leader (Galvin, 1965:174)
1	Iwan	Kalimantan	
2	Usun Apau (left Ikeng Iwan, led by Tului around 1820 according to Liman's version)		(Apoi Jok/Tului)
3	Long Penyuen (approximately 1878 –1896 according to Gorlinski's version)	Belaga	
4	Selio' Moved from Belaga to the Selio' in the Baram; warfare with the Iban and government forces according to historical records 1896	Baram (The Selio' is a tributary of the Silat ) 5–9 are all on the Silat river 11–14 are all on the Moh river	Ingan Apui Lawai Ingan
5	Teba'au (Silat) Lusat was born here, (100 years ago, roughly 1909)		Usat Lawai Ingan Usat
6	Long Pusan		
7	Tong Kapung		
8	Na Besunong		
9	Lepo' Sawa		
10	Long Moh		
11	Lepu'an Sapi (Opposite bank of the river from Long Moh at the site of the present school)		
12	Long Pai		
13	Long Karing		
14	Long Moh		

Gorlinski's (1995:48) informants (the Lepo' Tau of Long Moh and Long Mekaba) place their earliest known homeland in the plateau above the Iwan and Bahau rivers. This differs from Liman's version in which their beginnings are traced to the Baram itself. According to them, the Lepo' Tau who migrated to Sarawak (these would then correspond to the 18<sup>th</sup> generation of leaders in Baya Li's list, around the 1800s) moved several times between the Baram, the Usun Apau (plateau between Upper Balui and the Baram which most Sarawak Kenyah look to as their legendary homeland) and Long Penyu'en in Belaga.

Splinter groups under different leaders (Gorlinski, 1995:52–54) settled in various locations during the early 1800s. A smallpox epidemic at Long Belian, however, persuaded the clan to reunite in 1878. They then formed one single community at Long Penyu'en, Belaga (Gorlinski 1995:57) where they remained for more than eighteen years. This is corroborated in the excerpts from Low's diaries of his work in the Balui-Belaga area from 1882–1884 (in Maxwell 1987:35–36), where he mentions Lepo' Tau involvement in local inter-tribal hostilities. These include a plea in 1882 from a rival group, the Kejamans, who urged Low to expel the Kenyah from Belaga, in particular the Lepo' Tau chief, Aban Jalang, who was "perpetually provoking him". A punitive expedition (Gorlinski, 1995:64–65) by the government in 1895, led by the Iban, convinced the Lepo' Tau that it was more

expedient to move back to the Baram basin via the Usun Apau. They thus left Belaga in 1896, travelled between the Selio', Silat and the Baram and eventually settled at Long Moh and an off-shoot village at Long Mekaba in the Silat (the Silat is a tributary of the Baram, while the Selio' is a tributary of the Silat).

The movements of the Lepo' Tau on both sides of the present political divide<sup>33</sup> is now summarised from the foregoing accounts in Table (2.6).

**Key: A > B: A is a tributary of B**

**Table 2.6: Migration history of Lepo' Tau (collage of various accounts<sup>34</sup>)**

Date	Leader	Region River	Site	Further details	Genealogy
Early 1500s	Uban Julian	Baram			Lurek Akar Apoi Lurek
Mid 1500s	Lurek Akar	Baram			Lenjau Apui Masing Lenjau
1600s	Unknown	Headwaters of Bahau and Baram			Laing Masing Batang Laing Batu Batang
Early 1700s	Suhu Batu	Iwan	Apau Kayu Tau and other sites	-acquire name of subgroup -adopt rice cultivation	Suhu Batu Lenjau Suhu Ajan Lenjau Bungan Ajan
1780s to 1810s	Asa Bungan Lawai Asa Tului Lawai	Iwan	Ikeng Iwan	forge alliance with Lepo' Timai	Asa Bungan Lawai Asa Tului Lawai
1820s to 1840s	Tului and followers leave the Iwan	Usun Apau Wing> Silat Selio'>Silat	Ikeng Bangan Long Sirem Long Belian	7 longhouses migrate to Usun Apau and Baram Basin led by Tului	-3 longhouses stay behind. - One group, led by Ungau Kayang leave for Apo Kayan
1850s	Ingan (Pingan Apoi)	Usun Apau	Long Pelutan	Split into two groups.  Ingan leads one faction out of the Baram to Belaga via Usun Apau where they stay briefly at Long Pelutan	

<sup>33</sup> Between the Malaysian site of Sarawak and the Indonesian province of Kalimantan.

<sup>34</sup> Galvin, 1966; Whittier, 1973; Liman Lawai, 1995; Gorlinski, 1995; Personal Communication, Lusat Wan, 2009.

Date	Leader	Movements of Long Moh branch of Lepo' Tau			Movements and Genealogy of Long Nawang branch
		Region/ River	Site	Further details	
1860s to 1878	Whole group reunites in 1878	Belaga Penyuen > Belaga	Long Penyuen	Ingan's faction resident in Long Penyuen. The rest of the clan move from Baram to Belaga in 1878 after a smallpox epidemic in Baram	1863: Surang Anye' leads Lepo' Tau to Long Nawang 1865: Ingan Surang appointed to succeed his father
1896	Ingan Apui Lawai Ingan	Usun Apau	Long Pelutan	Moved from Belaga back to the Selio' in the Baram via Usun Apau due to war with the Iban and government forces according to historical records 1896	Lenjau Ingan (who succeeded his father in 1893) receives recognition from the Brooke government in 1898
		Selio'> Silat	Long Belian		Dutch establish control; Recognise Lenjau Ingan as <i>kepala suku besar</i> of Apo Kayan
1907	Usat Lawai Ingan Usat	Silat	Teba'au Long Pusan Tong Kapung Na Besunong Lepo' Sawa	Lusat was born here	1913: Catholic and Protestant missionaries establish presence in Apo Kayan
1920 1923	Tama Guna Ingan Bungan Ingan	Moh	Long Moh	Moved from the Silat at instigation of Government	
	Mape Arang Bungan (Penghulu of Upper Baram)		Lepu'an Sapi	At the site of SK Long Moh (opposite bank of the river)	1947: <i>Adet Bungan</i> Started by Jok Apui — spreads to Sarawak
1944	Kuleh Arang		Long Pai	Upstream Moh	
1945	Mueng Bilong headman in 1966 (Galvin, 1966)		Long Karing	Upstream Moh (round one bend of the river)	In 1949 Lenjau Ingan dies and is succeeded by Lek Lenjau in 1949
1950s to 1960s			Long Moh	In 1955, one group leaves, for Long Mekaba (Silat)	

Thus, although the majority of the Lepo' Tau left the Iwan for the Baram basin, they became the smaller group after being decimated by three epidemics of smallpox. In contrast the minority group who stayed in the Iwan eventually rose to power in Long Nawang, staying in the same place for 140 years relatively free from disease. The combined population of Long Moh and Long Mekaba in 1993 was about 1,000 compared to over 3,000 in the Apo Kayan area. However, despite the long separation, the two groups have maintained close ties, and nurtured the same proud cultural identity. The foregoing historical account of the Lepo' Tau will now be examined and related to the high status of the Lepo' Tau among the Kenyah.

### 2.1.5.3 Rise in political and cultural status of the Lepo' Tau

Kenyah groups constantly competed for prestige (Liman Lawai, 2003:197). When the Lepo' Timai first moved to the Apo Kayan, they were the dominant group, and their leadership was recognised and accepted by the other groups. Eventually, however, the Lepo' Tau grew in strength, forced the Lepo' Timai out of the Apo Kayan, and supplanted them as the dominant group.

Whittier (1973:31) argues that the Lepo' Tau “rose to become the most powerful group in the interior” through a series of alliances with the Uma Djalan, Uma Tukung, and Uma Kulit. According to censuses in both 1928 and the 1970s, the Lepo' Tau constituted the largest group in the Apo Kayan. In the 1970s the Lepo' Tau in Kalimantan numbered some 4,000 in ten villages (including downstream villages).

The Lepo' Tau are acknowledged by many researchers as having developed the most refined versions of Kenyah music and dance (Harrison, 1966:287; Whittier, 1973; Armstrong, 1991). Writing of his World War II experiences, Harrison (2007:431) comments: “Long Nawang is perhaps the most impressive community in Borneo and among all the inland peoples famous far beyond experience”. Whittier (1973:26) concludes that the various Kenyah groups themselves place the Lepo' Tau in a supreme position, second only to the Lepo' Timai in the representation of the most refined aspects of Kenyah life. In his words, “Lepo' Tau song and dance and wisdom are regarded as the ultimate expressions by the Kenyah today”.

In her description of the Badeng's relations with the Lepo' Tau, Armstrong (1991:183) relates that the Badeng admired the Lepo' Tau: “In the cultural hierarchy of the Kenyah community of the Apau Kayan, the Lepo' Tau were the elite while the Badeng were considered coarse or unrefined”. The Badeng admitted the Lepo' Tau were skilled at dance and “making designs”, particularly symbols of rank, much of which they imitated during their sixty years of contact with the Lepo' Tau in the Apo Kayan. The Badeng were “well aware of social and cultural differences between themselves and other Kenyah, particularly the Lepo' Tau who they describe as ‘very paren’ and as having ‘high hearts’. At the same time the Lepo' Tau “treated them as cultural inferiors, disparaging their art, dancing and speech intonation” (Armstrong, 1991:9). To the Lepo' Tau, to be refined was *timai* in acknowledgement of what they learnt from the Lepo' Timai), while to be unrefined was “very badeng” (Armstrong, 1991:9). During my stay in Long Moh, I came across various references to the perceived inferiority of Badeng culture. The Badeng, according to Ulaup Lupa, did not have proper songs, only a few “simple” examples which she proceeded to sing for me (the transcriptions are given in Chapter 4).

This disdain for the lack of culture, including the musical culture of other Kenyah subgroups, is still evident in Long Moh today. The Lepo' Tau believe that they are the originators of most of the popular song repertoire in the Baram, and that the other Kenyah subgroups learnt the songs from them. As proof, they cite the fact that other Kenyah even sing these songs with the original Lepo' Tau lyrics. This was acknowledged to me by several members of other subgroups, and I have found that the lyrics (in the Baram) are generally in Lepo' Tau although some do feature replacements in their local dialects.

The predominance of the Lepo' Tau language is also reflected in the fact that the other subgroups use this as their 'lingua franca' in the Upper Baram, whereas the Lepo' Tau do not bother to learn the other dialects. It is also reflected in missionary publications. Despite the myriad Kenyah dialects, the Kenyah Catholic hymnal (Roman Catholic Mission, 2004) is recognisably Lepo' Tau and includes a large number of partially modified *belian dado*'. The SIB<sup>35</sup> missionaries produced a bible (The Bible Society, 1984) in Lepo' Tau, while Galvin's (1967) list of Kenyah vocabulary also has a bias for Lepo' Tau terms. I obtained copies of these books, together with an SIB Kenyah hymnal (Uchat Tusau, 2007) which is in the Badeng language (as the Badeng subgroup are the predominant followers of this denomination among the Baram Kenyah).

When she noticed my attempts to search for genuine 'Kenyah tunes' in the SIB hymn book (generously given to me together with an accompanying audio-cassette by the resident SIB pastor in Long Moh), Ulau Lupa sniffed contemptuously, "Mana mereka ada lagu? (Where do they [Badeng] have any songs?)". True enough, almost all the melodies were contemporary and the lyrics obviously composed for the hymn-book.

Lepo' Tau dance and song is still perceived as embodying the height of refinement by other Baram Kenyah. As stated by a resident of Long Jeeh (Lepo' Aga) in reference to Kenyah songs, "Mereka (Lepo Tau) yang pandai" (they are the skilful ones). Dudong Laing, a Badeng, also acknowledged that in his village of Lio Matu, they used Lepo' Tau when singing *belian dado*'. Matthew Ngau (a Ngurek) resented the fact that Long Moh seemed to attract the interest of researchers in much greater numbers than Long Semiyang, implying that this excessive attention was unfounded. Yet, when he sang examples of *belian dado*' to me, he admitted that "we sing mostly in their language". Matthew also recalled that during his secondary school days in Long San, the Penghulu<sup>36</sup>, ever mindful of the need to preserve Kenyah culture, arranged for a dancer from Long Moh to travel to Long San every Friday to give lessons in dance to the boys.

## 2.1.6 The Sambop

The preceding section emphasises the dominance of Lepo' Tau culture in the Baram. However, it cannot be denied that most of the literature on the Kenyah (other than Armstrong, who studied the Badeng) is the output of researchers who worked overwhelmingly in the Baram rather than the Balui. My search for references on the Balui Kenyah has met with such scant success that I have been compelled to turn to Rousseau's writings (1974; 1990) on the Balui Kayan instead (as he sometimes refers to the Kenyah living in the vicinity).

### 2.1.6.1 Is there high culture in the Balui Basin?

There is the possibility of other groups in the latter area also being prolific composers of songs. In Uma Sambop, I came across many *badi* (equivalent to *belian dado*) with different melodies

<sup>35</sup> Sidang Injil Borneo (the Borneo Evangelist mission).

<sup>36</sup> Temenggong Oyong Lawai Jau, also known as Tama Weng, who was influential in leading the Kenyah into Christianity. His own father was Lepo' Tau and his mother a Kayan aristocrat.

from those I had heard in the Baram, but composed in the same style. As described in Chapter 1(1.5.5), their language is closely related to the Lepo' Tau (Soriente, 2004), accounting for similarities in the verse. They also claim that the Badeng and other neighbouring groups have “copied their repertoire”, and deny that their songs came from Long Nawang.

The historical background of this subgroup will now be considered and related to that of the Lepo' Tau.

### 2.1.6.2 History of the Sambop

As a substantial portion of my musical data was derived from the people of Uma Sambop, their migration history, as related to me in 2008 by Saging Sufen, is now presented here in tabular form, as this brings the pattern of movement into clearer focus.

**Table 2.7: Migrations of the Uma Sambop people**

	Name of settlement	General region	Length of stay
1	Usun Apau	Highlands between Baram, Balui and Kayan rivers	Unknown
2	Apau Lingup		4 years
3	Apau Telek		3 years
4	Apau Lamojan		
5	Na Luing (paddy fields were first cultivated)	Baram River	5 years
6	Long Sambop (place where the subgroup derived its name)	The Sambop river is close to Long San	15 years
7	Long Liem		3 years
8	Long Ji'k		(200 years ago, about 1809)
9	Sungai Seping	Many of the moves were precipitated by the appearance of omen birds and animals	8–9 on the Balui
10	Sungai Dangang		10–11 are both tributaries of the Belaga river
11	Sungai Penyuen		12–20 all on the Belaga river
12	Kuala Lagi		
13	Long Iman		
14	Batu Lelai		
15	Long Sebumbong		
16	Long Semambung		
17	Long Nanyan		
18	Long Kelat		
19	Long Semambong	Abandoned a newly built longhouse because of the sighting of a snake with bad portents	
20	Long Semembok		
21	Long Jauh		Stayed for 60 years Two longhouses were built here
22	Belau Lumbung		
23	Long Semutut		1956 – first longhouse which was then rebuilt after a fire

As the table shows, over a period of more than 230 years, the people moved 22 times under the leadership of 12 headmen<sup>37</sup> or *maren uma* (a Kayan term used by the Balui Kenyah but not by Baram Kenyah). Apart from warfare, and avoidance of headhunting raids, a common reason for the frequent moves was the appearance of bad omens, such as the snake seen by Saging's grandfather (the headman) at Long Semembok just as they had put up the new longhouse there. They only experienced relative stability at two settlements, staying at Long Jauh for 60 years and at the present site for over 53 years.

Sambop residents estimate that they have been in the Belaga region for over 200 years, that is, before the Brooke rule began. This is corroborated in Rousseau (1974:20) who names them as among the earliest Kenyah arrivals in Sarawak. The presence of the Uma Kelap in the middle Balui who are of the subgroup Lepo' Timai (the “powerful and refined group” from which the Lepo' Tau acquired refinement) may also be significant.

Working backwards from known dates, this places the Sambop in Long Sambop around 1791, their first descent from the highland plateaus to the Baram (Na Luing) in 1786, and their first known settlement in the highland plateaus at Apau Lingep in the mid 1700s. Comparing this to Lepo' Tau movements, the Sambop came to the Baram first, while the Lepo' Tau were still in Ikeng Iwan. On the other hand, it could be argued that the Lepo' Tau (according to Liman's version) were already in the Baram for nearly two centuries before they moved to the Iwan around 1710 (when the Sambop were in the Usun Apau). As of now, there is no proof for this early settlement, nor can anyone recall where the Sambop were before they lived in the Usun Apau.

Despite the murkiness of the historical data, some interesting conclusions can be gathered. When the Lepo' Tau moved from Ikeng Iwan back to Usun Apau in 1820, the Sambop were already in Belaga, having moved there from the Baram around 1809. It could be significant that the Sambop also set up home in Sungai Penyuen, as the Lepo' Tau stayed at Long Penyuen for 22–40 years (one faction moved first) prior to the latter's move to the Baram (Gorlinski, 1995:56-61). Although the estimated dates for Penyuen do not coincide, the other settlements for the Sambop were all in the vicinity of the area (on the Belaga or on its tributaries). According to Rousseau (1974:51), the few Kenyah villages in the Belaga river (at the time of his doctoral research in the 1970s) were in close contact, although rather cut off from the rest of the Balui because of impassable rapids near the mouth of the river. This raises the possibility of the two subgroups being in social contact during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and may account for similarities in language and song. Recently, Helen Paya<sup>38</sup> related that residents of Long Moh have contacted the Sambop attempting to claim<sup>39</sup> compensation for land where their ancestors were buried in the Balui, in the vicinity of Sambop territory.

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<sup>37</sup> Although he could recall most of their names, Saging was reluctant to relate them to me as he was afraid of repercussions in an on-going dispute, involving a court-case over Uma Sambop land.

<sup>38</sup> in a discussion with me in Miri in December 2011.

<sup>39</sup> So far unsuccessful due to lack of written proof.

**Table 2.8: Comparing Lepo' Tau and Sambop migrations<sup>40</sup>**

Date	Sambop		Lepo' Tau	
	Settlement	Region/River	Region/River	Settlement
Early 1700s	Apau Lingep Apau Telek Apau Lamojan	Usun Apau	Iwan	Apau Kayu Tau and other sites
1780s	Na Luing	Baram	Iwan	Ikeng Iwan
1791	Long Sambop	23 years		
1806	Long Liem			
1809	Long Ji'	Balui		
1820	Seping Dangang Penyuen	Belaga tributaries	Usun Apau	Ikeng Bangan
	Kuala Lagi	Seping	Baram Wing> Silat	Long Sirem
	Long Iman	Dangang	Selio'>Silat	Long Belian
1850s	Batu Lelai	Penyuen		
1860s	Long Sebumpong	Belaga	Usun Apau	Long Pelutan
1870s	Long Semambung		Belaga	Long Penyuen
1880s	Long Nanyan			One group moves from Long Belian in 1850s
1890s	Long Kelat	200 years in	22–40 years in Belaga	All reunite in Long Penyuen by 1878
	Long Semambong			
	Long Semembok			
	Long Jauh			
	(60 years in Long Jauh)			
1896		Usun Apau		Leave Belaga in 1896 for the Baram via Usun Apau
1907		Baram		Long Pelutan
1920		Selio>Silat		Long Belian
1923		Silat		Teba'au
1944	Belau Lumbung			Long Pusan
1945	Long Semutut			Tong Kapung
1950s		Moh		Na Besunong
				Lepo' Sawa
				Long Moh
				Lepu'an Sapi
				Long Pai
				Long Karing
				Long Moh (24 families move to Long Mekaba in 1957)

<sup>40</sup> Summarized from various accounts.

**Table 2.9: Demographic Changes over the last 30–40 years** (derived from Tables 2.1 and 2.2)

Year	Uma Sambop		Long Moh		Notes
	No. of doors <sup>41</sup>	Population & Religion	No. of doors	Population & Religion	
1971	25	250 Mostly Bungan	73	698 Mostly Bungan	In 1974, Long Moh was the largest Kenyah village in the Baram (Metcalf, 1974)
2012 (Long Moh) 2008 (Uma Sambop)	76	900 Mostly RC	99	873 Mostly RC	

Uma Sambop, now accessible by road from the town of Bintulu in less than 2 hours, has experienced a dramatic increase in population since 1970, whereas Long Moh's population has not changed much. The number of Long Moh residents is probably much lower than the figures show, as many *amin* were effectively empty during my last visit, their owners residing in urban areas. The headman estimated that only 100 –150 people were actually present most of the time, not counting all the children (both primary and secondary) who stay in boarding school. The latest<sup>42</sup> statistics for Long Moh were exactly the same as the ones given for the 2000 census, hence believed to be unreliable. Comparing growth rates among all the districts of Sarawak, Marudi district (which encompasses the Baram) experienced the greatest relative drop in population over the past 20 years. Table 2.10 shows the statistics for the districts Marudi, Belaga and Miri (this includes the city of Miri, where many Baram Kenyah have relocated).

**Table 2.10 Population change in various districts of Sarawak over the last 20 years<sup>43</sup>**

Census Year	1991	2000	2010	Average annual growth rate	
District				1991–2000	2000–2010
Marudi	71,958	71,713	63,304	-0.04	-1.25
Belaga	22,284	22,896	37,102	0.03	4.83
Miri	161,337	221,055	294,716	3.5	2.88

<sup>41</sup> Each door (apartment or *amin*) houses normally houses one extended family.

<sup>42</sup> Given to me by the Marudi district office in November 2012.

<sup>43</sup> Department of Statistics Malaysia (2012:21).

## 2.2 TRADITIONAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC SYSTEM

For centuries, the main agricultural activity in traditional Kenyah communities has been swidden agriculture, with dry rice as the basic subsistence crop. Besides rice, they also cultivated subsidiary crops such as sugar cane, cassava, corn, betel nut and fruits. Cash crops such as rubber are cultivated, but at the time of my visit, rubber-tapping was not pursued due to the very low price of rubber on the market.<sup>44</sup>

### 2.2.1 Agriculture

The heavy work of rice cultivation fell to able-bodied men and women, while children and the elderly were responsible for the lighter domestic tasks around the vicinity of the longhouse (Whittier, 1973:89; Hong, 1977:102; Liman Lawai, 2003:177). In the past, only craftsmen and ritual specialists were freed from these agricultural responsibilities (Hong, 1977:102).

From what I observed at Long Moh, all of the above still holds, except that it is mainly women who cultivate vegetables and the only ones “exempt” from agricultural duties are those who have other sources of income in the town, or, in the case of Suok (the musician described in Chapter 3, who was busy making *sape*), musical business. Even the headman’s wife was working with a group of women. The headman himself was making harvesting baskets but did not venture to the fields during my stay.

In rice cultivation, men and women either work side-by-side, or perform complementary roles. Sowing the seeds and all activities related to it are the responsibility of the women. The men carry out the felling and burning, and protect the fields from marauding animals, while the tasks of weeding and clearing are chiefly performed by women. Both men and women participate in harvesting with women doing the reaping and winnowing while men carry the baskets and perform the threshing. The Kenyah also work in organised groups, in a system of reciprocal labour termed *senguyun*, and another system of obligatory labour for the headman of the village, termed *ma’ap*. These are discussed in 5.1.2.3.

In the past, subsequent to the above tasks, further steps in the preparation of rice were the responsibility of the women. Pounding was usually done by young women on the verandah, in synchronized movements (Hong, 1977:102–105). This has been described to me by several Kenyah acquaintances as “pleasing music with a regular beat”. Matusky (2004:218–219) describes the musical aspects of this practice which she terms *antan* and *lesung*. This process is now mostly carried out by a rice-processing machine referred to as *injin*. It is still done on a small scale as I witnessed during the *ubek* ceremony which marks the beginning of harvest. *Ubek* refers to specially prepared new rice (the first yields of the harvest). At the ceremony in 2009, it was prepared jointly by the women, in addition to a meal of chicken porridge and rice, and attended by the whole Catholic community. This took place on the same day as the *mamat kediut* (celebrated by the Bungan families) and a similar celebration by the SIB families. Pounding of rice on a large-scale using a long trough-shaped mortar

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<sup>44</sup> Personal communication, Baun Bilung, Long Moh, 2009.

is now only done in conjunction with the *mechat ontat* (pounding of ‘rice-powder’) during funeral wakes or when a family succeeds in harvesting 100 sacks of rice. I witnessed this during the mourning period for Maria Awieng, where eight men pounded rice in a rhythmic, synchronized manner. The fine rice-powder was then mixed with sugar and distributed on *tarit*<sup>45</sup> leaves to all those attending the wake.

During major periods of agricultural activity such as planting and harvesting, almost all able adults spend the whole day in the farm, and often sleep overnight as well. Even young children are brought along by their mothers (older children attend boarding school). On my way to Long Moh, the village of Long Semiyang, at the peak of harvesting, was practically deserted. Long Moh’s harvest was delayed as they had been busy with preparations for the grand Baram regatta held in Marudi the previous year.

## 2.2.2 Other Economic Activities

Other economic activities (as in the past) include hunting, fishing, rearing of pigs and poultry and collection of jungle produce. At the time of my last visit, the rice was just beginning to ripen. Most men, being relatively free from agricultural duties, spent their time repairing boats and hunting. Hunting is carried out at night with the aid of dogs. Packs of scrawny hunting dogs are still a very visible feature in upriver Kenyah longhouses such as Long Moh. They lie around the entrance to the *use* (longhouse verandah), and sit at the prow of canoes when accompanying their masters to the hunt. The importance of canine participation is reflected in the term for hunting: *tai ngasu* (literally ‘go with dog’). The most sought after prey is *babui* (wild boar). *Payau* (deer) is the next most popular target as a meat source. Honey bear and spotted leopard would, if encountered, be killed for their skin (Whittier, 1973: 103-104).

Many Long Moh residents grumbled that since the establishment of a logging camp nearby, *babui* and *payau* are scarce, as there are now few jungle fruits. In the past, they would wait for migratory herds of *babui* and shoot them as they swam across the river. The *babui berenang* (swimming boars) have not been spotted for 5 years. In my two weeks at Long Moh, only one wild boar and one civet cat was caught, although at every gathering, the men told tales of many hunting adventures. In the past the hunting party had an obligation to share the meat not only with immediate family members but, if sufficient, neighbouring *amin* as well. With the recent downturn in economy and the lack of game, this obligation has disappeared. The scarce meat is now sold at 5 ringgit per kilo. One night, Ulau stood quietly for some time by the window carefully watching what appeared to me as pitch darkness. She explained that someone was gutting a wild-boar by the river, and she was keen to find out which *amin* the man headed for later. She made a bee-line for the *amin* in question and came back triumphantly with 3 kilos of meat, much of which was smoked or fried dry for preservation (no one owns refrigerators in Long Moh).

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<sup>45</sup> A species of palm.

The Kenyah reserve their domestic chickens and pigs for festive occasions, so for my son Darren<sup>46</sup> and I, the only other source of protein during our stay (apart from an unfortunate monitor lizard run over by our four-wheel-drive vehicle on the way to Long Semiyang) came from fishing. Fishing is carried out with line, *kejala* (cast-nets) or *pukat* (nets stretched across the river-mouth) by men, often accompanied by young boys (or women, now that boys are in boarding school) venturing out in small canoes in the evenings. It is also carried out by women, though the latter cannot venture as far, given the difficulty of manoeuvring the rapids. Ulau and Baun brought us fishing around the nearby streams, setting up fishing-lines and immersing themselves in the water with hand-nets to catch prawns and small fish.

### 2.2.3 Visual Arts and Crafts

As noted before, Kenyah craftsmen in the past were a specialized class who were exempt from subsistence food production. Their services were paid for from the surplus in the community. They turned out superb swords, spears and shields and also performed services such as boat-making and painting of murals for rice-barns and rooms. Breath-taking murals, such as the “Tree of life” (the original design adorns the chief’s residence in Long Nawang) which was reproduced for the Sarawak Museum by Tusau Padan<sup>47</sup> are testament to the high degree of sophistication and aesthetic achievement of Kenyah artists. Since the aristocratic class either had a larger surplus, or perhaps controlled the surplus, they were the ones who usually commissioned works of art from the craftsmen (Hong, 1977:134).

Kenyah women are constantly busy with handicraft, making *saong* (broad sun-hats), baskets, baby-carriers and various items decorated with elaborate beadwork. This is a tradition well-maintained in all the Kenyah communities I have visited. The items contribute greatly to the aesthetic appearance of Kenyah homes and to trade—many villages have established markets in urban areas.

### 2.2.4 Trade in Other Essential Goods

For villages in the Apo Kayan (Liman Lawai, 1995) and the upper Baram (personal observation), commodities such as salt, flour, gasoline and sugar have to be brought by river, often past dangerous rapids, and are thus expensive and in short supply. In Long Moh, Ulau Lupa runs a small canteen with a limited stock (replenished several times a year) of sugar, tinned food and other goods.

The situation should have been alleviated recently as some villages, such as Long Semiyang and Lio Matu, are now accessible by rough logging trails. However, residents claim they are worse off than before, as large boats had the capacity to carry much more gasoline and gas tanks than four-wheel drive vehicles. Their supply of gasoline and gas is now limited, and has to travel by road from Miri, then by river via villages such as Long Semiyang (which then add charges). At the time I was

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<sup>46</sup> who accompanied me during the two week stay in Long Moh.

<sup>47</sup> A renowned Lepo’ Tau artist who migrated from Long Nawang to Sarawak.

there, the price of gasoline was 20 ringgit per gallon, and 100 ringgit per 14.5 kg tank of gas. It was no wonder that most of the time the generators were not utilized, and *kayu luten* (firewood) used for cooking.

## 2.3 SOCIAL ORGANISATION

The class stratification well known among the Central Borneo peoples reaches its fullest extent among the Kenyah (Leach, 1950:76, in Whittier, 1973:1).

### 2.3.1 Organisation of Power and Class Stratification

Traditional Kenyah society consisted of three different classes:

- (i) *kelunan ketau/deta'u*, the elite or dominant aristocracy, which was further subdivided into:
  - a) *paren bio*: ‘big leader’ - the chief and immediate family
  - b) *paren*: all those of pure aristocratic descent
  - c) *paren iot/dumit*: lower aristocrats (only one parent is *paren*)
- (ii) *panyin* (or *panyin tiga*): commoner
- (iii) *panyin lamin* : descendants of war captives/slaves.

In their complex class system, described by Whittier (1973:74), only the aristocrats (referred to by different scholars as *paren* or *ketau*) may inherit political power. *Paren* are ascribed a divine mythical origin and therefore distinct nature, which led to “stratum endogamy and low vertical social mobility, occurring through marriage only” (Eghenter and Sellato, 2003:31). Until today, Kenyah headmen<sup>48</sup> are all members of the *paren* class. They are the accepted leaders of the community in all fields of life. According to Liman Lawai (2003:178), the term *paren* first appeared in Lepo' Tau usage under the leadership of Suhu Batu, who embodied all the qualities of an ideal leader (as described in 2.1.5.1) and was believed to have been the first leader to establish Lepo' Tau dominance among other Kenyah groups.

As noted before, headmen in the past had special rights to labour known as *ma'ap* (Whittier, 1973:70; Armstrong, 1991:186) or *adet mabe* (Hong, 1977:121–122), and could demand seven days labour each year from a representative of every household. In return, they were expected to provide food and lodging to visitors. This is no longer enforced nowadays. Armstrong (1991:186) clarifies that *ma'ap* is viewed by the Badeng as a favour, rather than a right of the headman. I have noted similar views among other contemporary Kenyah societies. In Uma Sambop, the practice was discontinued two years ago, as it was felt the headman was compensated for in many other ways.

The headman usually chooses his successor from his immediate family, most often the most able son, nephew, or son-in-law. In order to be a leader, however, a man would have to prove himself

<sup>48</sup> Even though the term for village head in Kenyah is *paren lepo'*, I have never heard it being used. The Malay term *tua kampong* is much more commonly used as observed by Whittier (1978a:96). In Uma Sambop, *maren uma* is gaining popularity, but when I asked about this in Long Moh, they rejected it as Kayan influence and preferred the term “Kapong”.

worthy by his prosperity, speaking ability, strength of character and, in the past, prowess in warfare. *Paren* women also enjoy a high status and some (usually the widows of former headmen) have been appointed to important leadership positions.

### 2.3.1.1 The aristocracy and prestige symbols

Only *paren* are entitled to wear prestige symbols in the form of specific designs, motifs, feathers and teeth of animals. The belief that *paren* symbolically are the descendants of strong and powerful animals is still evident today in the names given to children such as Baya' (crocodile) for girls and Lenjau for boys (Yus Ngabut, 2003:251).

The tiger (*lenjau*) in all its manifestations is the ultimate symbol of the *paren* (Whittier, 1973:162–163). As Marshman (1989:219) observes, “the tiger recurs through the personal naming system ... and is associated with high rank, strength and bravery”. It occupies an important position in Kenyah and Kayan mythology, even though it is not part of Borneo’s fauna (Rousseau, 1990:62; Munan, 2005:66). It features strongly in Kenyah legends such as *Tekena Laking Kuyang Ngan Lenjau* (the Orang Utan and the Tiger) in Yus Ngabut (2003:254–255) and *The two brothers Lenjau and Kuleh* (clouded leopard) in Galvin (1971:45–50). Tiger and hornbill motifs and tattoos were the sole privilege of the *paren*, and ownership of objects such as tiger claws and skins and ancient beads indicate the social status of the *paren* families (Liman Lawai, 2003:178). Only *paren* were allowed to employ the tiger motif in adornments to costumes and the *ba'* or baby carrier, unique to central Borneo<sup>49</sup>.

The *Kalong Kelunan* (stylized full human figure in squatting position design) is another design exclusive to the *paren*, while the lower aristocrats are allowed to use the *kalong ulu* (human face). These two motifs are illustrated in Ulau Lupa’s hand-made *ba'* for her son shown below:



**Plate 3: Baby carrier for male *paren* child in Long Moh showing *lenjau* and *kalong kelunan* motifs**

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<sup>49</sup> Adorned by beaded images and believed to keep the soul of the child from wandering off (Kjellgren, 1999).

Nowadays, this restriction is not always adhered to, especially in urban areas<sup>50</sup>. Skins of goats, honey-bear and clouded leopard (*kuleh*) were formerly used as war-cloaks by the village headmen, but now function as dance costumes. These adornments are still celebrated in song, such as the *belian tu'ut* (sung by male dancers as a prelude to the *kanjet laki*).

In the past, hierarchy was also expressed in major rituals such as *mamat* (described in 2.5) and *ngalang*, the child-naming ceremony. Although, among contemporary Kenyah, the distinction between *paren* and *non-paren* is not apparent in daily life, it continues to be enacted in the *ngalang* (Armstrong, 1991:188; Gorlinski, 1995:83). Among the Badeng (Armstrong, 1991:188), who in other instances did not place as much emphasis on class as the Lepo Tau, *ngalang* was exclusively reserved for *paren*.

There was no mention of the word *paren* in any of the communities I visited. The only instance when it became important was at the death of a *paren* woman (the gong was sounded three times, and the body was placed on a raised dais – both practices, I was told later, reserved for *orang berpangkat tinggi* (those of high rank). It was only then that I learned of her rank.

### 2.3.1.2 The aristocracy and the performing arts

*Paren* are expected to have certain traits and talents, in keeping with their nobility. Some researchers have suggested that *paren* excelled in the arts because they had more leisure time for these activities (Rousseau, 1990). *Paren* as ‘keepers of the *adat* (culture)’ were expected to have a deep knowledge of the customs and to be genealogical specialists (Whittier, 1973:70). Young *paren* were trained to recite genealogies and to eat in a squatting position in order to be ready to run or to make war. Tillemma (1989) observed that dance was a necessary skill among the Kenyah aristocracy. This is not surprising as the warrior dance is believed to be a form of training for warfare. According to Belawing (1997:3), “A Kenyah, especially a noble by birth finds it a source of embarrassment if he or she cannot perform the *saga*<sup>51</sup>”.

*Paren* are often expected to be the best (or, at least, deferred to as the best) dancers in the village (Seeler, 1973:50) and are often the first to perform the solo dance. Sigau Langat of Long Moh would be a shining example of a model aristocrat. With his expressive and powerful baritone voice, and a seemingly endless repertoire of songs, he practically held centre-stage during my sojourns in Long Moh. Others of his age knew the songs, but few seemed to possess his wide tonal range, or to match his artistry. Sigau was also acknowledged as one of the best dancers. On both occasions when I witnessed a full night’s performance, he was one of the few dancers chosen to perform. In a follow-up visit to Long Moh in 2005, where I focused on transcribing and interpreting lyrics, he was also amazingly adept at improvising verse on the spot.

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<sup>50</sup> Personal communication, Loretta Empiang, who was in charge of the Orang Ulu association costumes for many years, Kuching.

<sup>51</sup> Kenyah term for dance, used in Long San and nearby villages.

When I visited Long Selatong in 1996, the headman's son Majus Lenjau was the first to dance, despite having been bitten by a snake that morning. During a day trip to Long Ikang (a Kenyah village in the lower Baram) in 2001, the headman and his wife, both in their seventies, readily agreed to dance for us. This was not just a gesture as gracious hosts, but because they believed their skills were worthy of representing the village.

In Long Mekaba, Beatrice Bulan<sup>52</sup>'s family are from the ruling *paren*. Her grandfather, Tanyit Paren, was a former headman, while her father, Jalang Tanyit, was a councillor and, five years after my 2002 visit, appointed as Penghulu<sup>53</sup> of the Upper Baram. They showed exemplary aristocratic traits through their skills in the performing arts. Beatrice's father, Jalang Tanyit, is a *sape* player of great repute, having performed overseas on several occasions, while his elder sister Awieng Tanyit is an exceptionally skilled dancer who had participated in many competitions.

In Long Moh, 2009, there was no discernible differentiation between *paren* and non-*paren*, but when the headman, Bilong Tingang, in his late 50s, was called upon to dance, he did so with a bearing befitting that of a great warrior, displaying a blend of skill and artistry rivalling that of Sigau Langat and John Lido (who were chosen to represent the best in the village in my previous visits).

Gorlinski (2005:10) observed that one genre of songs, the narrative *kerintuk*, is exclusively sung by *paren* men. These are the songs which narrate the deeds of legendary characters of *paren* lineage. The people of Long Moh strongly believe that the gift of *kerintuk* was bestowed on them by the *bali tekena'* (story-spirits) dwelling at Batu Luyok, a rock-formation located at the headwaters of the Moh river. Long Moh residents proudly related to me how they had led ethnomusicologist Virginia Gorlinski to this sacred place in 2001.

### **2.3.2 Gender Balance and Marriage Patterns**

Although there is a clear gender differentiation of duties in most household and farming activities, Kenyah women enjoy considerable freedom and power. According to Rousseau (1990:80) "by comparison with most societies, Central Borneo displays a limited degree of sexual inequality and no segregation of the sexes". He also notes that virginity is not valued and that there are no constraints to social interactions between men and women of all ages. He suggests that the predominance of uxorilocality and stratum differentiation further limits the gender inequality as aristocrats of both genders play an equal role in leadership.

#### **2.3.2.1 Aristocracy and gender balance**

Aristocratic women, in particular, have great influence and participate freely in public discussion. In the Baram there have been a number of powerful women chiefs among both Kenyah and Kayan, e.g. the late Temenggong Oyong Lawai Jau's mother-in-law, Lalang Batang of Long Laput, and his daughter-in-law, Bungan Arong (of Long Moh aristocratic descent) both rose to the

<sup>52</sup> An ex-student of ITE Batu Lintang. I had visited the longhouse in 2002.

<sup>53</sup> Paramount chief of a region, appointed by the government (there are four penghulu in the Baram).

rank of penghulu (MacDonald, 1958:260; Ritchie, 2006, January 7). My host in Long Moh, Ulau Lupa, widow of a brother of the former penghulu, obviously wielded some authority in the village. She runs her own canteen in Long Moh and is an acknowledged cultural leader (having organised and led dance troupes to inter-village competitions) and was deferred to even by the people of neighbouring villages such as Long Semiyang and Lio Matu.

### **2.3.2.2 Women as social equals**

In the many informal gatherings I have witnessed, men and women sat around the verandah or in private *amin*, and sang, danced, joked or discussed serious matters as equals. There was frequently easy banter and teasing between the sexes. This was also displayed in songs, such as *Jelip-jelip* (transcription given in Chapter 4), where men and women sang alternating verses making fun of the opposite sex.

During the 2005 Easter festival in Long Semiyang, it was clear that women were treated as seriously as men in the inter-village boat-races, with all-women teams competing fiercely for the honours. The runner-up in the previous night's competition, Balu Awieng, and other dancers showed vigour and aggression in sharp contrast to the grace and gentility they had exhibited the night before at the dance competition.

### **2.3.2.3 Gender and religion**

In the context of traditional religion (*adet pu'un* and *adet Bungan*), however, as Rousseau noted (1998:75), there is a much greater differentiation of the sexes, e.g. men's souls were considered stronger than women's, and only men could join in the chorus during the communal singing of *bali dayong* (spirit medium) songs (Rousseau, 1998:240). During traditional rituals, such as the blessing of a new longhouse, or the most sacred parts of the *mamat* rituals (discussed in the next section), women were banned from the gallery. During the 2009 *mamat kediut* ceremony that I witnessed in Long Moh, women (an exception was made for me) were not allowed in the ceremonial hut. With the onset of Christianity, there is no longer any differentiation. Men and women mixed freely on the *use* during the Catholic prayer sessions and *mechat ontat* (communal pounding and partaking of rice-powder) held in mourning for Maria Awieng, an aristocratic woman, who passed away on the second night of my stay in 2009.

### **2.3.2.4 Gender in music**

Among the Sarawak Kenyah, the *kedire'*, *sape* and *jatung utang* are exclusively played by men, while the *keringut*, *uding* and *lutong* are the preserve of women. This fact was confirmed when I followed my ex-student, Beatrice Bulan, back to her village in Long Mekaba. Beatrice is a musical girl who plays the guitar well, yet to her chagrin, her father, a skilled *sape* player, refuses to teach her the *sape*, deeming it unbecoming for a girl to play. He had, however, no qualms about passing on his skills to non-Kenyah women such as researcher Virginia Gorlinski, an accomplished *sape* player who completed a master's dissertation on the subject. This bias against female Kenyah was confirmed by several other *sape* players, but no-one could give me a satisfactory explanation (except for the belief

that if a woman plays the *sape* her breasts will grow long<sup>54</sup>). Hose (1912:121), however, mentions women playing *sape* “Juliet may respond with a few notes of her guitar (referring to Figure 20 in the book, which shows a *sape*) while Lawing (1995) reports that Lepo<sup>55</sup> Ma’ut men play *lutong* and *uding*, and that women also play the *jatung utang* (*geng galeng* in their dialect).

Musicians of both sexes, however, are accorded recognition and equal status as skilled performers. In the realm of vocal music, this may not have been true in the past. As noted by Gorlinski (2005:21-22), only aristocratic men were allowed to sing *kerintuk*. She relates that hierarchy in vocal performance was evident, as the women were clearly able to sing this genre, but did not do so in public. However, she also acknowledged a change over time with women recently “taking the lead” in *belian dado*.

### 2.3.2.5 Marriage patterns

Among *paren*, the ideal rule was class endogamy. The strength of this rule is expressed in several legends describing tragic romances between aristocrats and non-aristocrats. “The Princess and the Slave Boy” (Galvin, 1972:39-50) tells of a *paren* girl who falls in love with a slave-boy. As their community refused to sanction their relationship, the young couple elope, fall to their deaths while climbing a slippery rock, Batu Luyok, and are turned into two small rocks.

Marriage with cousins beyond the first cousin was permitted for all class levels, but only *paren* were allowed to marry first cousins. There is a tendency to village exogamy, with marriage between *paren* of different Kenyah subgroups, and to Kayan aristocrats (Whittier, 1973:85). At the Kayan village of Long Bemang in 1996, I met a Tinjar Kenyah aristocrat married to the sister of Henry Anyie Ajang<sup>56</sup>. The late Temenggong Oyong Lawai Jau’s mother, wife and eldest daughter-in-law were all Kayan aristocrats (MacDonald, 1968:264). Even in the 1970s, however, this rule (class endogamy) was losing force (Whittier, 1973) and the educational level of a commoner may make up for his/her lack of blue-blood. Traditionally, if *paren*-non-*paren* matches occur, their children would be downgraded in rank to *paren dumit* and the man had to pay a costly dowry, equivalent to several gongs (a well-known requirement not enforced anymore<sup>57</sup>).

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<sup>54</sup> As told by Matthew Ngau during a *sape* workshop in 2005; also described as a Kayan belief by Gorlinski (1988:82).

<sup>55</sup> Spelt as Lepo by Lawing.

<sup>56</sup> My *sape* instructor in Kuching, who belongs to the ruling aristocrat family in Long Bemang.

<sup>57</sup> Personal communication, Candy Biron, the Bidayuh wife of Matthew Ngau, a Ngurek aristocrat.

### 2.3.3 KENYAH NAMING SYSTEM

The Kenyah, like many other central Borneo peoples, possess a complicated naming system where members of the community are referred to first by their personal names, tekonyms when they have children, and death-names<sup>58</sup> if bereaved of a parent, spouse or child. Both Armstrong (1991:69) and Whittier (1973:81–82) give detailed accounts of the system.

At birth, each person is given a personal name followed by their father's personal name, for example Bulan Jalang is the daughter of Jalang Tanyit, the son of Tanyit Paren. Once they are married and have children, they are known by the tekonym *Amai* or *Tama* (father) or *Uwe* (mother) followed by the name of the most recently born child, e.g. Bulan's mother would be known as Uwe Bulan, until their next child was born. Once an individual has become a grandparent he/she may revert to his/her personal name, with the prefix *Pe-*, e.g., Pejalong.

In the event of the death of a close relative, death-names are used. A child whose mother has died is known as *Ilun*. If a father dies, the son is referred to as *Uyau*, while a girl is known as *Utan*. A widow is known as *Balu*, and a widower as *Aban*. If a child dies, the parents are also given death-names according to the order of birth of the child, e.g. if it be the first child, both parents are referred to as *Oyong* (*Oyong*). Death-names are often eventually replaced by a tekonym. This system is very logical to the Kenyah, but may give rise to much confusion to others tracing historical accounts as an individual may acquire several different names as he progresses through life, e.g. Temenggong Oyong Lawai Jau started life as ‘Lawai’ but MacDonald (1968) refers to him as Tama Weng, indicating that his most recent child’s name at the time was Weng. When his son Kalang died at the age of 30, he then took the name of ‘Oyong Lawai Jau’, and when his wife died, he became known as ‘Aban Lawai Jau’.

Names with legendary and heroic connotations are frequently bestowed on males, such as Lian, Ngau and Lenjau (tiger), while for women, names such as Baun, Bulan and Keling (which connote beauty, or also connected with legends) are popular. Some very unusual names are bestowed when women name their child after some significant event or phenomenon observed during the childbirth, e.g. Ulau’s sister Anap (centipede) was so named because a centipede crawled by during the birth, while Ingan Langat’s daughter was named Ujan (rain) because she was born during a great storm.

### 2.4 TRADITIONAL WORLDVIEW AND BELIEF SYSTEM

Until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Kenyah universally practised *adet pu'un*, their traditional religion. As the Kenyah and Kayan share a similar traditional belief system, albeit with different names for their deities, the most comprehensive coverage of this belief system may be Rousseau (1998). The book *Kayan religion: Ritual life and religious reform in Central Borneo* is a treatise on

<sup>58</sup> “Death-name” is used as in Whittier (1973), although “necronym” is used by a number of scholars such as Armstrong (1991:73), and Soriente (2004:57).

the Bungan cult, and its relation to the original religion, *adet Dipuy* for the Kayan (*adet pu'un* for the Kenyah).

#### 2.4.1 *Adet Pu'un*

In the Kenyah-Kayan cosmos, the world was divided into major regions: that of daily life and the spirit (*bali*) country. The latter consisted of two sections, one occupied by non-human, named spirits, and the other, the afterworld (Rousseau, 1998:91). There was no absolute contrast between humans and spirits, which both originated from a mythical tree. These spirits were responsible for the welfare and prosperity of humans (Rousseau, 1998:93–97). Lian Langgang confirmed Rousseau's statement (Rousseau, 1998:100) that spirits often manifested themselves to men who can sing poetic praise songs (*belian bali*) skilfully. Some were benevolent, others hostile (*ja'at*).

Ordinary animals could turn into spirits. Despite the conversion to Christianity, the Kenyah of Long Moh still harbour beliefs in spirits, as was apparent from the tale of the crocodile (*baya'*) and the tiger (*lenjau*) that Ulau Lupa related to me. They still believe that the crocodile (crocodiles inhabit the river between Long Moh and Long Semiyang), being their ancestor, would never attack the Lepo' Tau.

Some benevolent spirits, or spirit helpers, were believed to bestow specific skills such as the ability to play *sape*. Tiger spirits (*bali lenjau*) were purported to endow the qualities of good traders and warriors (Rousseau, 1998:107). In Long Moh, the existence of many *sambe bali dayong* melodies and ritual *jatung* rhythms with names such as *Lenjau Tugau* attest to the importance of these spirits. Spirit mediums (*ia on bali dayong*) are individuals within whom spirits deigned to reside because of their ritual purity (Whittier, 1978b:105). *Bali dayong* means literally “singing and chanting spirit” and *ia on bali dayong* literally “he who has the spirit”. They were called upon to cure the ills of individuals and the ills of society (Whittier, 1978b:105). Besides singing, the spirits loved to dance, so music was often played to entice the spirit to come. An associate of the medium would be invited to play the *sambe bali* (described in Chapter 3), gongs or *kedire'* (Rousseau, 1978:245).

A small number of very important spirits resided primarily in the spirit country, such as Bungan Malan, her consort, Peselong Luan, and her sister Dipuy. In *adet pu'un*, Dipuy gained prominence and was the major spirit to be appeased. When her daughter, the spirit of rice, died during the harvest ritual, out of anger she introduced the many onerous ceremonies and prohibitions which marked *adet pu'un* (Rousseau, 1998:102).

*Adet pu'un* occupied an important place in all social activities including the choice of location of settlements. Several types of animals and birds such as the *isit* (spider hunter) *pengulung* (*Diard's Trogon*) *tela'o* (barking deer), *pelaki* (eagles such as the brahminy kite) and the *ulai usang* (a red-headed poisonous snake) were believed to influence human life and sightings of these creatures were interpreted as auspicious or inauspicious signs. For example, if travellers saw an *isit* bird flying from left to right across their path, it was an unlucky sign. This meant that they had to return home as they were bound to fail in their venture. If the bird omens were unfavourable, they did not hesitate to abandon a settlement even if construction was almost completed (Sandin, 1980:35). The power of

these prohibitions became clear to me while listening to oral accounts of Uma Sambop's migrational movements.

The consequences of disobeying these periods of prohibition, often determined by omens, were believed to be dire. These result from the ensuing disturbance of cosmological harmony (Whittier 1978:107) rather than divine punishment. For instance, in the Balan Nyareng cycle (Galvin, 1972:79-100), one story relates how Balan Nyareng's wife, Bungan Lisu Lasuan, breaks the eight-day prohibition period by stitching hats on the last day. As a consequence, she pricks her finger and dies. This turn of events eventually leads to Balan Nyareng's heroic journey to Alo Malau, the river of the dead, to bring her back to the living world.

## 2.4.2 Christianity and *Adet Bungan*

In 1913, Christian missionaries began their work, gaining acceptance from some subgroups. Initially, they faced opposition by the *paren* of Long Nawang, who feared it would affect their authority in the community (Whittier, 1973:41). The rituals of the traditional religion are linked to the social stratification. The Christian missionaries soon faced a new competitor.

In 1947 the Bungan cult, started by a Lepo' Jalan Kenyah, Jok Apui, became popular throughout the Apo Kayan. *Adet Bungan*, a radical reform of *adet pu'un*, gave importance to one single female deity, Bungan Malan, instead of a multitude of spirits. Many were attracted to it because it dispensed with many of the taboos on food, prohibitions and expensive ceremonies demanded by the 'old religion' (Rousseau, 1998:34). Jok Apui was a *panyin* (commoner) and the initial form of Bungan was simple and egalitarian, but eventually, because of resistance from the ruling class, Bungan adherents reinstated the importance of the priests and the aristocracy. In fact, Galvin (1968) noted, in his comparisons between the *adet pu'un* and Bungan versions of the *mamat* feast, that there was an added emphasis on rank in the Bungan version, e.g. the procession of girls on the third day walked 28 times round in order of social rank and only those of *ketau* rank smeared blood on *ketau* boys.

Between 1949 and 1969, under Li' Lenchau's leadership, most of the Lepo' Tau of Long Nawang accepted Christianity. Whittier (1973:146) attributes this largely to threats from representatives of the Indonesian government, who insisted the Kenyah adhere to a "recognised religion" or be labelled as communists. The Indonesian army officers admitted that conversion was imposed "at gun-point". He also reports the destruction of many symbols of *adet pu'un*, including great works of art, by government authorities.

Meanwhile in Sarawak, *adet Bungan* was introduced to the Balui in 1948 and (from the Apo Kayan as well as the Balui) to the Baram in the 1950s where it came into direct competition with Christianity. The latter had entered the Baram earlier. The Bungan cult had considerable success at first, "replacing the old religion and even making inroads in Christian villages" (Rousseau, 1998:26). Eventually Christianity gained the upper hand in the 1960s, with the exception of a few bastions, in particular Long Moh.

One factor accelerating the acceptance of Christianity was the obvious economic advantage of not having to abstain from work because of omens. Adhering to these prohibitions caused the loss of a considerable number of working days every year. As some of the prohibitions affected only a specific family Hong (1977:120), the tradition of *senguyun* or labour reciprocity became a necessary part of the system, with other families helping out once the taboo had been lifted. Some periods of prohibition, however, also affected the whole community. Due to the many taboos (Hong, 1977:144), they frequently could not even protect their fields from pests.

Catholic missionaries eased the conversion from *adet Bungan* to Christianity by associating Bungan Malan with the Virgin Mary and her consort, the deity *Peselong Luan*, with God. Present day Kenyah Catholic hymnals, set to Kenyah *belian dado'* melodies, continue to use refrains dedicated to *Peselong Luan* (God)<sup>59</sup>. This is elaborated in the next chapter. In addition, the Kenyah of the Upper Baram were influenced by the conversion of prominent leaders such as Temenggong Oyong Lawai Jau.

Among the Lepo' Tau, *adet Bungan* initially predominated, but Christianity gradually won converts with the protestant Sidang Injil Borneo (SIB) church establishing itself at Long Mekaba, and the Roman Catholic Church at Long Moh. The rate of conversion at Long Moh was slower than most other villages, with a significant number of *amin* still retaining *adet Bungan* until very recently (see Table 2.1). In 1975, 87% were still *Bungan*. This proportion dropped to 10 *amin* in 1993 and only 5 *amin* today. The resistance to conversion may have contributed to the preservation of some of the customs, including music and dance, which have become a rarity in other villages. However, residents of Long Moh<sup>60</sup> think that the retention of customs has more to do with the considerable cultural pride of the Lepo' Tau than their religious leanings.

It could well be that Lepo' Tau ‘cultural pride’ delayed religious conversion. Rousseau (1998:260) suggests that some Apo Kayan Kenyah resisted Christianity because “The Kenyah also felt a loss of autonomy, as fundamentalist Christianity rejected much previously valued tradition”. This fear of Christianity hastening the demise of cherished traditions is not unfounded, as will be borne out in Chapter 3, especially among fundamentalist (SIB) villages.

### 2.4.3 The *Mamat* Feast

Of the rituals practised under the traditional belief systems, the most splendid was the *mamat* feast. Described by Harrisson (1966:287–291) as the greatest of the Lepo' Tau feasts, it occupied a central role in *adet pu'un* and later the Bungan cult. Initially associated with head-hunting, it served as an initiation rite into a “Brotherhood of Braves”, and included an elaborate grading system, the *suhani* (*suen* in Long Moh). With the inroads made by Christianity, festivals such as the *mamat*, formerly celebrated on a huge scale, have now shrunk to minor events, attended only by a few families.

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<sup>59</sup> Observed during Sunday worship at Long Semiyang, Uma Sambop and Long Moh and reference to Kenyah Catholic hymnals.

<sup>60</sup> Personal communication, Lawai Lian, Kampong Perpindahan, Marudi.

As I was in Long Moh at the beginning of the harvest in February 2009, I had the opportunity to witness the *mamat kediut*. Literally ‘small *mamat*’, this is the pre-harvest ceremony celebrated by the tiny Bungan community of Long Moh at Long Karing, the site of their former longhouse (10 minutes upstream by speedboat on the Moh River). The larger celebration, the *mamat bio*, marking the end of the harvest (and in times past, the time for headhunting and the *suen* (*suhan* in Long Nawang) or warrior ceremonies), would be held at the end of March.

The Bungan community maintain a simple shrine in a sacred shed housing two ancestral *jatung* (eight-foot long drums), one of which is estimated to be over 200 years old, a bundle of heads constantly ‘warmed’ above a small fire-place, four stones believed to bestow courage and invincibility for the warriors, and *sang*<sup>61</sup> leaves used in previous years’ offerings. In the surrounding yard are several *belawing poles*<sup>62</sup> and the *batu tuloi*<sup>63</sup> kept in a special section of a small garden.



**Plate 4: Belawing Poles at Long Karing**

The ceremony began with “*ngayang*”, where, to the accompaniment of the *jatung*, all the men burst across the verandah with war-cries. They then gathered for further prayers and rites at a specific tree, and later descended to the river-bank (re-enacting past head-hunting trips and triumphal return to the village). At the riverbank, instead of the ceremonial stabbing of the *ulu kayu*<sup>64</sup>, the celebrants aimed a rifle at the effigy. As the celebrants returned to the sacred shed, the *jatung* were played, and each man was anointed with chicken blood as he entered. In the past, this signified the upgrading in rank (*suen*) of each celebrant, as shown in the details of the costumes worn by each of them.

The only musical element that I observed during the *mamat kediut* was the playing of the drums (described in Chapter 3). All the chants and prayers were spoken, not sung. However, in pre-

<sup>61</sup> A species of palm, *licuala valida* (Plate 27, Chapter 4)

<sup>62</sup> Decorative pole with a human figure at the top. Sacrificial offerings were placed at the base of this pole. A new one was erected by each village at each celebration of *mamat*.

<sup>63</sup> Sacred stones – eight large spherical stones :“Only the *paren* are allowed to have these stones, and only 3 Long Nawang longhouses out of about 20 or 25 have them” (Belawing et al., 2006, January 1:3).

<sup>64</sup> The carved wooden effigy representing the human head taken in battle.

Christian times, during *mamat bio*, the warrior songs<sup>65</sup> *kelululun* and *lemalo* were known to be sung. As I witnessed the day's proceedings and listened to the patient explanations of this small band of men, I could sense the great reverence they had for the rituals and their pride in the connection to their warrior ancestors. Lian spoke with nostalgia of the old times when the whole village was still Bungan.

As Bilong Tingang had related to me the day before, his longhouse before the last fire used to house 27 *amin* instead of the present 12 door structure, and the majority were Bungan. In the past, when the village was overwhelmingly Bungan, each post-harvest *mamat bio* (a 4–8 day celebration<sup>66</sup>) was celebrated on a grand scale (all male residents including young boys took part). After the completion of the rituals, the ensuing festivities witnessed an impressively long line of celebrants, dancing *saga lupa*<sup>67</sup> to the music of the *kedire'* or the *sape*. *Belian dado'* were sung during these ceremonies. An older version of the *sape*, the *sambe asal*, playing the *sambe bali dayong* repertoire (described in Chapter 3) probably featured strongly during the *mending* healing rituals along with *belian bali dayong*.

## 2.5 THE KENYAH AND CHANGE

Kenyah society has undergone significant changes since the middle of the last century, especially with the influence of religion, modern education, and the logging industry.

### 2.5.1 Religion and Change

Christianity has brought major changes to the way the important agricultural events are celebrated, as these were, in the past, closely intertwined with *adet pu'un* and *adet Bungan*. The *mamat* ceremonies described above are only carried out by a minute number of celebrants. On the same day, the rest of the villagers celebrated their own pre-harvest ceremony, consisting of the communal preparation and consumption of *ubek*, with a feast of chicken porridge.

Recently in the town of Miri, where many Kenyah reside, there have been efforts to revive some of the *mamat* rituals and in a modern Christianised context. I observed this recontextualised version of *mamat*, held in a leading Miri hotel in December 2011. On the hotel stage, to the accompaniment of a long drum (*jatung*) played by Sigau Langat of Long Moh, a *belawing* pole was erected and the *batu tuloi* rolled around with much merriment. The significance of the stone-rolling, as explained by the master of ceremonies, was that the wisdom of the elders would be passed on to the younger generation. Young boys were later invited onto the stage to take part in a competition to grasp leaves from an elevated *sang* palm. This, I gathered, was the new symbolic rite to manhood, replacing the stabbing of the *ulu kayu*. The rest of the program consisted of Christian prayers and

<sup>65</sup> Associated with head-hunting.

<sup>66</sup> Galvin (1966b; 1968), excerpts of which are given in Appendix D under “Notes on the *Mamat*”.

<sup>67</sup> Community dance described in Chapter 3. In 2004 I witnessed the *lemalo* sung by a procession of men during a performance of the *saga lupa* in what could be considered the present day recontextualized form of the above tradition.

hymns, and the presentation of awards to honour academic achievement. The *lemalo* (sung lustily only by the older men who had travelled down from Long Moh and Long Mekaba) and *belian dado'* featured only as a welcoming item to arriving guests, while dance was performed as entertainment.

Nowadays, as most Kenyah are Christian, the *saga lupa* is only performed during the Christmas/New year period when the majority of townsfolk make their annual trip home. During this period, religious activity centres around the church , and the *saga lupa*'s purpose has become purely social, with the participants dancing their way to every household, and being rewarded with drinks.

### 2.5.2 Blurring of Class Distinctions

Together with the egalitarian empowerment that comes through equal education, Christianity has contributed to the gradual blurring of class distinctions. As mentioned before, although there are still many visible vestiges of class stratification, especially with regard to the appointment of leaders, prestige symbols and traditional ceremonies such as *ngalang* and *mamat*, most people are reluctant to bring up the subject. Jon Lido, a Catholic prayer leader, when asked if the positions of their apartments were according to aristocratic rank, denied this emphatically. He emphasised that now “everyone was equal”, but added disapprovingly that only “they” (the few remaining Bungan families) insisted on delineating the classes.

### 2.5.3 The Logging Industry

The logging industry has attracted labour from the fields to the logging camps, and the logging trails have opened up faster communication with the outside world. It has also changed the way the people lead their lives. In Long Semiyang (for the past ten years accessible by logging road), residents now travel to their farms by hitching rides on the back of pick-ups instead of paddling their own boats, and conversation often revolves around maintenance of four-wheel drive vehicles rather than boats.

Extensive logging in the Baram has wrought many negative changes in the environment. In Long Moh, apart from the lack of game and fish, I experienced first-hand many of the unpleasant effects of logging. During fishing expeditions I lamented the murky waters of the Baram, endured hordes of sand-flies and slithered helplessly on muddy riverbanks into which I often sank knee-deep. According to Ulau and Baun, before the nearby logging camp was built, the Baram river had been much cleaner and the Moh river (as I had witnessed in earlier visits) had been crystal clear.

Changes in Kenyah music will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 5.

## 2.6 SUMMARY

From the foregoing description, the Kenyah constitute an intriguing phenomenon. Compared to many other ethnic groups in Borneo, they live in relative isolation, mainly as subsistence farmers in a harsh environment. They have been compelled by various factors to migrate numerous times over the past two centuries, spanning several river systems and political boundaries. Yet they have nurtured

a proud and ancient aristocratic warrior culture, and developed sophisticated traditions in music and dance.

The history of the Lepo' Tau, traced at length at the beginning of this chapter, shows how they rose to political power at the strategic location of Long Nawang and subsequently cultivated refined versions of language, material culture and performing arts, held in esteem by neighbouring subgroups. These refined forms, including songs, were often adopted by other subgroups, even leading to the existence of a special song-language, *isiu belian*, based largely on Lepo' Tau. This is definitely true for the Baram Kenyah (the fact that Long Moh was also the largest Kenyah longhouse in the Baram during the 1970s also helped to cement their influence). However, it may not describe the complete picture.

From my research in Belaga, the existence of at least one other subgroup with a prolific output of songs, the Sambop, challenges the dominance of the Lepo' Tau in the realm of song. Unlike other Kenyah subgroups, they claim that most of their songs evolved within their own village. Their language is closely related to the Lepo' Tau, and a comparison of their migrational history reveals that both groups lived in close proximity in Belaga for a period<sup>68</sup> of 20–40 years in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which could have facilitated exchange of repertoire<sup>69</sup>. Thus, it is also possible that the Lepo' Tau could have learnt songs from the Sambop, and then spread them to their brethren in the Apo Kayan. Further research would be necessary to illuminate this possible missing link or alternative route in the evolution of the songs.

As evident in the last section, with the almost wholesale conversion to Christianity, rural-urban migration and educational priorities necessitating the absence of children from the village most of the year, many of these traditions are changing drastically, even disappearing altogether.

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<sup>68</sup> This corresponds with the ‘golden period’ of the Lepo’ Tau when Surang Anye, Ingan Surang and Lenjau Ingan had established themselves in the Apo Kayan.

<sup>69</sup> The role of the Lepo’ Timai, from whom the Lepo’ Tau admit they learnt refinement in the Apo Kayan, and who have a settlement (Uma Kelap) in the vicinity of the Sambop in Belaga, could also be significant.

# CHAPTER 3

## THE MUSIC OF THE KENYAH

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### 3.1 THE PERFORMANCE CONTEXTS OF KENYAH RECREATIONAL MUSIC

As the three facets of Kenyah performing arts – song, instrumental music and dance – are closely connected, it would be inappropriate to describe any one without mentioning its relationship to the other two. In a recreational context, these activities occur either simultaneously or in close succession. Thus this section will begin with the following narrative account of a community event and of smaller, intimate gatherings in two villages in the Baram and Belaga districts, Long Moh and Uma Sambop, illustrating the central part music plays in Kenyah social life. Significant additional features from other villages will also be mentioned.

As it is beyond the scope of this thesis, music in ritual and other contexts will not be covered exhaustively. Only those aspects will be described which have a bearing on the development of relevant instrumental and vocal genres.

#### 3.1.1 Music at Community Social Gatherings

##### *Alem Ini Telu Tiang Pemong Jaiee*

The first line of the *belian dado' Lane* above, which means “Tonight, my friends, we gather together”, sets the tone for this narration of events in Long Moh, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of June, 2004:

*Our party (Matthew Ngau, Candy, Aban Ingan, the boat driver Njok and I) arrived at Long Moh around 7.30 pm after a cold 45-minute boat journey down-river from Long Semiyang. It was almost pitch dark as the generators had not been switched on yet.*

*Carrying our provisions, we groped our way up the dark staircase and presented ourselves to the headman, Bilong Tingang, a fair, slender man in his fifties. After depositing our belongings in a corner of the sitting room, dimly lit by oil-lamps, we joined his family for dinner. As the generators were activated, the place slowly lighted up, revealing little outward change in the village that I had visited almost eight years before<sup>1</sup>. The massive long drums (jatung) hanging along the wide airy verandas of the two main longhouses contributed to the traditional atmosphere. They were a magnificent and reassuring sight, testament to the high level of preservation of culture in the village.*

*We spread the word about our intentions to record **belian dado'**, solo and group dance, *saga lupa* (a group dance), *kanjet uyat* (masked dance), and instrumental music. I was delighted to note that many of the villagers remembered me, and still kept copies of the photos I had sent them through the flying-doctor service. Sitting along the verandah were groups of men and women, including Sigau Langat, who had distinguished himself as the most prolific singer and an exemplary dancer during my last visit.*

*There was some difficulty getting ready for the dances since most of the costumes had been kept in storage barns away from the longhouse. This precautionary measure was initiated after an outbreak of fire the year before. Consequently, the 'performance' only started after midnight, and carried on until 3.00 a.m.*

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<sup>1</sup> In 1996, Long Moh residents had impressed me with their large repertoire of song, and their skill in dance. Convinced that I had just begun to scratch the surface of a sophisticated culture, I now hoped to tap deeper into their wealth of song, instrumental music and dance.



**Plate 5: Lian Langgang, Matthew Ngau and Sigau Langat singing on the verandah, Long Moh, 2004**

**The Songs:** As the gathering would entail refreshments for a large number of participants, we had purchased a fair amount of milo, cream-crackers and alcoholic drinks. Except in the Protestant<sup>2</sup> communities, alcohol is considered a necessary part of any Kenyah celebration, especially in the offering of a toast to an honoured guest, which would be preceded by **belian burak**<sup>3</sup>. After refreshments had been served, a group of women formed a line and sang, with accompanying movements, a series of **belian dado'**, beginning with “Nombor satu, nombor dua”.

Sigau Langat soon joined the dancers with “Abe Na'on Nekun”, a melancholic song with a hemitonic tune. Other men joined in and the pace picked up. They went on for nearly an hour, singing, often in two-part harmony, a total of 11 songs (listed in Appendix B). These ranged from slow, sentimental songs to fast, lively ones. Nine songs displayed anhemitonic pentatonic tonality, while two songs, “Abe Na'on Nekun” and “Taroi”, were hemitonic. They ended with a fast, robust version of “Burung Kechin”. There were several lead-singers, both male and female, with Sigau Langat, Ulau Lupa and Lian Langgang the most outstanding vocalists. Although the whole “performance” was impromptu, with people randomly joining the line, there was hardly any break in the songs, as if the whole event had been rehearsed. The soloists showed no hesitation in the improvised verses, and the chorus maintained perfect time, pitch and harmony.

In between, several **belian burak** were sung, followed, by popular request, with Aban Ingan's<sup>4</sup> delightful rendition of “Pesalau” (a humorous responsorial song poking fun at the thirteen Kenyah villages along the Baram). As I had witnessed before in Long Semiyang, everybody joined in the chorus without the slightest hesitation.

<sup>2</sup> SIB (Borneo Evangelist mission).

<sup>3</sup> Rice-wine songs.

<sup>4</sup> A widower from Long Semiyang, popular for his singing abilities and humour.



**Plate 6: Ensemble at Long Moh (*jatung utang*, *harmonica*, *sape*, water bottles)**

**Dance:** After an hour of *belian dado'*, the dancers and musicians were ready to perform. The instrumental ensemble (Plate 6) consisted of two *jatung utang*, *sape*, guitar, harmonicas, even a recorder (instead of the usual flute or *suling*) and partially filled bottles tuned to 'so' and 'do'. Unlike *Long Semiyang*, there were no *lutong kayu* (wooden board zithers) in the ensemble.

As usual, the first dance to be performed was the *datun julud*, a choreographed group-dance for women. A line of twelve women gave a polished performance after a twenty-minute rehearsal 'backstage' in a nearby amin. They were accompanied proficiently by the ensemble, playing '*det diet*'<sup>5</sup> repertoire. Each holding a pair of *kirep* (circlet of hornbill feathers), they performed a set sequence of steps, moving forwards and backwards, and occasionally turning to right and left.

This was followed by both men's and women's solo dances (*kanjet laki* and *kanjet leto*). I noted that they endeavoured to present music and dance in an appropriately 'traditionally correct' style. During my previous visit, they had simplified the performance by presenting male-female duets accompanied by the full *jatung utang* ensemble playing the same '*det diet*' music. For this occasion, male and female dancers performed separately accompanied by the appropriate *sape* melodies (hemitonic melodies for women, anhemitonic for men).

**Kanjet Laki:** Sigau Langat preceded his dance with a magnificent *belian tu'ut* (introductory song performed before a solo dance), then danced regally, though with less agility than in his performance eight years ago. His voice, however, was still expressive and resonant, and his rendition of the lyrics seemingly faultless. The second performer, Jon Lido, a young man in his late twenties, gave a mesmerizing performance, displaying grace, technical skill, agility and dramatic use of the shield (Plate 7). The manner with which he held it (close to his body, as if in actual combat, yet in an aesthetic manner) impressed even Matthew, himself a skilled dancer.

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<sup>5</sup> Category of tunes for accompanying *datun julud*.



**Plate 7: Jon Lido performing *Kanjet Laki*, Long Moh, 2004**

***Kanjet Leto:*** Two of the best women dancers, Ulau Lupa and Usun Lusat, performed after appropriate songs of invitation had been sung by the gathered community. The women's solo dance, *kanjet leto*, traditionally accompanied by a haunting hemitonic sape tune, consists of graceful, flowing movements, performed with *kirep* (Plate 8). The repertoire consists mainly of pivot turns performed with a variety of hand movements and different positions of the torso.



**Plate 8: Baun Bilung of Long Moh representing her village in a *kanjet leto* competition during the Upper Baram Easter festival, 2005**

**Kanjet Uyat:** In response to my request, An Lawai, a forty-year old woman, volunteered to perform the Kanjet Uyat (Lepo' Tau term for "masked dance") using make-up in lieu of a mask, as masks were no longer available in the village. According to Long Moh residents, this dance was traditionally performed during the sowing period (*musim nugan*) and also after the harvest during the *mamat* festival. I gathered that its original symbolism was to scare away pests or evil spirits. The dance appears to have become defunct with changes in religious beliefs. The dancer sportingly appeared with hastily applied and suitably hideous make-up. She performed confidently, in an unstructured, comical manner, using animal-like movements, eliciting much laughter from the gathering.

Festivities were discontinued at 3.00 am, but would resume early the next morning, as declared by the headman, thus giving everybody time to get their costumes. He announced that the villagers would forgo other work commitments in the morning to perform the *saga lupa* for us. The villagers agreed as they were immensely proud of their carefully preserved culture and eager to give a performance worthy of their reputation. They even chided us for not sending word earlier as this would have given them more time to prepare for a proper performance.

**Saga Lupa and Lemalo:** The next morning, at about 8.15 a.m., residents began to gather in full costume on the verandah. Some of the older men played earlier recordings of sape music on radio-cassettes and also performed an older style of kanjet laki.

Soon a group started to wind their way along the verandah in a slow dance, the *saga lupa* (basic step: step side, close, step-half turn, close, turn back) using recorded music. In half an hour at least thirty dancers were performing the *saga lupa* along the verandah (women in costume, the men in full warrior regalia with parang<sup>6</sup> and shields). It was a magnificent sight<sup>7</sup> (Plate 9).



**Plate 9: Saga Lupa, Long Moh**

<sup>6</sup> Malay word for local version of sword.

<sup>7</sup> Hose (1993:167) describes the Kayan equivalent of the dance: "... they turn half about at every third step ... turning to the right and left symbolizes the alert guarding of the heads which are supposed to be guarded by the victorious warriors ...".

*First, they paraded with sheathed parang, then after a thunderous rendition of **lemalo** (a “call to arms” sung by a chorus of powerful bass and vibrant tenor voices) they drew out their parangs from their sheaths and continued the stately dance around the verandah. This is probably the only song surviving from the **belian kayau** (head-hunting songs) genre. I have often heard it sung in an informal, recreational context, to cheer on or to applaud a solo dancer, usually as he or she is downing a glass of rice-wine. However, this was the first time I had seen it performed by a whole group of fully armed and costumed men, in a scene resembling the original context when a war party returned with a head (or more recently as part of the **mamat** ceremony).*

### **Excerpt 1: Excerpt from Lemalo**

*Free time*



*Oh-----*

The above narrative account gives an idea of the way songs, instrumental music and dance are blended into a public community gathering. Dance (as in *datun julud*, *kanjet leto* and *kanjet laki*) is usually combined with melodic instrumental music. Vocal music may be performed in chorus, *a capella*, either with less complex dance movements performed in a group (as in *belian dado*’), or by soloists who perform while seated on the veranda (as in *belian burak*<sup>8</sup>), over a glass of rice-wine. Vocal soloists also perform *belian tu’ut* while pacing along the veranda as a prelude to the *kanjet laki* (male solo dance). There are also humorous solo songs of various categories (as in Aban Ingan’s “*Pesalau*”). Such gatherings are by no means confined to the longhouse, and can take place at picnics by the river, as our team from ITE Batu Lintang experienced in January 2008 (as shown in Plate 10).



**Plate 10: ITE Batu Lintang students follow the *belian dado*’ line at a picnic by the riverside, Uma Sambop 2008**

<sup>8</sup> Rice-wine song.

### 3.1.2 Individual Musicians or Private Gatherings in the *Amin*

Besides featuring in large community gatherings, music also exists in a more private capacity. Some instruments, such as the *sape*, *lutong*, and *keringut*, are played in the privacy of the *amin*, purely for personal expression or for the entertainment of close friends and family members. In the quiet of the night or the early morning, the music of these instruments could be heard and appreciated by residents of the whole longhouse. At least this was so before the latter two instruments became scarce. The following description of the *lutong* repertoire in Long Moh serves to illustrate how a popular instrument has almost disappeared within one generation. The *lutong* is described in section 3.4.1.2.

The rich *lutong* repertoire, once in vogue among the women in Long Moh and Long Mekaba, has now almost completely vanished. Lian Jalang of Long Mekaba<sup>9</sup> recalled that in the past, there was at least one *lutong* in every *amin*, and the women would combine their efforts to accompany a grand *saga lupa* involving the whole longhouse.

Baun Bilung<sup>10</sup> of Long Moh remembers listening to her grandmother play the *lutong* while boiling water or cooking rice. The women of Long Moh played the *lutong* in the early morning or late at night, well aware that these melodies could be heard throughout the longhouse. They played not only to express their emotions but also with a clear purpose of influencing events. Besides entertainment, the *lutong* played a hidden role in the realm of love.

When I paid a courtesy call to him in January 2009, the headman Bilong Tingang looked through the book (Chong, 2006) that I presented to him. He noted with surprise the inclusion of *Ti Ruti Lun* which he immediately recognized as a song (of *lutong* melody origin) of a woman calling her lover ‘to bed’.

#### Transcription 1: *Ti Ruti Lun* (Chong, 2006:59)

$\text{♩} = 73$



Ti ru - ti lun be - ku bek du - ai lun!

Translation: *Come and sleep, Let us make love.*

Few outside their community knew of these songs. I had learnt them in June 2004 from Ulau Lupa while her step-sister, Unjung Lawai (one of a minute number of women who had learnt to play the instrument from their grandmothers), played a series of tunes on the instrument. This led to a discussion of how the jealous women involved in love triangles often resorted to ‘musical wars’ on their *lutong*. Their coded meanings were clearly understood by both male and female residents.

<sup>9</sup> Splinter village of Long Moh, which separated from the parent village in 1956.

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix A: Notes on Informants. As Baun’s mother died at childbirth, she was brought up by her grandmother.

During my visit in 2004, Unjong had played through a large repertoire of melodies, by lamp-light, while Ulau and Usun Lupa danced and sang to a number of these tunes. Some, such as *Tut-tut nang*, were simple dance sequences while others, such as *Ti Ruti Lun*, were directed at a sweetheart or husband.

### 3.1.3 Other Contexts

The Kenyah sing in various other non-formal settings, during leisure hours in the village, while at work or resting at the farms, or while traveling between destinations. Examples of these recreational songs are described in section 3.3. Music during *mamat* and the spirit-medium (*ia on bali dayong*) healing ceremonies are described briefly in the instrumental section.

## 3.2 THE ETHNOSEMANTICS OF KENYAH MUSIC

The keen perception of pitch exhibited by the Kenyah in their choral singing and the careful tuning of their instruments necessitates a vocabulary to facilitate pitch coordination. The following musical vocabulary was deduced after discussions and observation of musicians ‘tuning-up’ for an ensemble, and small groups of singers preparing for songs with choral response.

**Table 3.1: Kenyah musical terms**

Kenyah term/ descriptive phrase	Literal meaning	Approximate Western music equivalent
<b>I Terms based on concepts of pitch and melody</b>		
<i>tuyau</i> <i>e.g. tuyau upit</i> (song of the munia bird) <i>tuyau sape</i> (sound of <i>sape</i> )	sounds (with changes in pitch) bird-song or ‘voice’ of other animal (excluding humans) or object exhibiting pitch differentiation	(i) pitch or sound of melodic instrument (ii) snatches of melody as in bird-song (iii) tone colour
<i>Dau</i>	voice (human or instrumental)	voice
<i>baling</i> for example: <i>baling lutong</i> <i>baling Kasing</i>	melody/tune  melody (played by) <i>lutong</i> 'Kasing' melody – the title of a specific melody used for several different songs	melody/tune
<i>uyan baling tuyau</i>	make/adjust tune of ‘voice’	to tune (an instrument)
<i>uyan ngadan</i>	make a tune	perform a melody
<i>sala' tuyau</i>	wrong pitch/tune	out of tune/wrong pitch
<i>Sating</i>	high pitch	(i) higher pitched (ii) pitch is too high (iii) (choral context) descant or the same melody sung an octave higher

Kenyah term/ descriptive phrase	Literal meaning	Approximate Western music equivalent
<i>Dahang</i>	low pitch	(i) lower pitched (ii) pitch is too low (iii) (choral context) the lower voice or the same melody an octave lower
<i>kerahang</i>	'thunder' or the choral response to Kenyah songs	(i) choral response (monophonic on a drone) as in <i>belian tekena</i> (ii) choral, often multipart (harmonic) singing, as in <i>belian dado'</i>
<b>II Concepts of emotion/expression</b>		
<i>meno'</i>	longing for someone wistful reminiscence	(i) sadly, wistfully (ii) melody (referring to the melodic structure itself) expressing the above emotions
<i>bangen</i> (Lepo' Tau)	joyful	(i) joyfully
<i>nyangen</i> (Sambop)		(ii) melody depicting joy
<b>III Other miscellaneous terms</b>		
<i>metit, metit jatung,</i> <i>metit jatung utang,</i> <i>metit lutong</i>	to play an instrument	(i) to play (an instrument) (ii) rhythm pattern or melodic phrase of an instrument
<i>tawit</i> versus <i>sieng</i> <sup>11</sup>		sustained versus less sustained; more rhythmically articulated
<i>dapin</i> <sup>12</sup>	viscous	slow-paced, elastically intoned as in <i>kerintuk</i> (a genre of songs)

In my discussions with the Kenyah on songs, I noticed that they frequently used the English word 'tune' even when speaking in Kenyah. When I asked what term the Kenyah used for melody, Lucy Bulan Sufen<sup>13</sup> had to dig deep into her memory before answering "*baling*", the same term used by the Lepo' Tau. Other terms mentioned by the Sambop which were similar to the Lepo' Tau include the pitch-related *sating* and *dahang* and emotional indicators such as *meno'* ('wistful reminiscence') and *nyangen* (Lepo' Tau: *bangen*), meaning 'joyful'.

The usage of these terms may differ somewhat from that of their Western equivalents. Some examples in instrumental and choral contexts are described below:

Prior to a performance on the verandah of the main longhouse, as the *sape* players tuned their instruments to match with the *jatung utang*, Merang Iban told his team-members: *sating, sating* ('too

<sup>11</sup> Gorlinski (1995:205).

<sup>12</sup> Gorlinski (2005:20).

<sup>13</sup> Sister of Helen Paya Sufen, Uma Sambop.

high, too high') as he repeatedly struck the *do* on his *jatung utang* (as the *jatung utang*, a wood xylophone, is a non-sustaining instrument, players need to hit the keys in rapid succession).

One afternoon, while seated on the veranda of Ingan Langat's house<sup>14</sup> with Ulau Lupa and Ingan's brother-in-law Henry Suok, Ingan demonstrated the leading part of a song from the *Along* repertoire, which he had learnt from his mother, a reputed singer of the genre. As this required a *kerahang* (choral response), he first sang the tonal centre, and assigned Ulau and Henry to different registers "Iko' sating, iko' dahang (you sing the higher pitch/octave higher, you sing the lower pitch/octave lower)".

***Meno' (menoq<sup>15</sup>) and Bangen as Kenyah modes:*** Although many Kenyah musical concepts are not verbalized, these are nevertheless present. In describing *sape* melodies, Gorlinski (1988:107) suggested that tunes in hemitonic pentatonic scales have a specific emotional effect: "Tunes performed in this tonal system<sup>16</sup> are usually described as 'menoq', that is 'to reminisce' or 'to visit' and to evoke a mournful sentiment in the listener".

If this line of reasoning is extrapolated to vocal music, it would imply that since most of the songs in older genres, such as *belian burak*, *belian tekena* and *belian abau/ajau*, are in hemitonic scales, they are conceived as *meno'* and designed to evoke a mournful sentiment. Specific examples (data derived from Gorlinski, 1995) include *kerintuk* which utilize several hemitonic pentatonic scales: *d m f s ta* or C E F G Bflat; *d m f s t* or C E F G B while *suket* generally display the tone-set *d m f s ta*.

This view is shared by Krohn (2001:223): "The Dyak sings a great deal ... A plaintive beseeching tone pervades all his songs. Practically all are in a minor key". This description of songs with minor tonality could refer to songs in *la*-centred scales or hemitonic pentatonic scales.

In contrast, considering that most *belian dado'* are anhemitonic do-pentatonic (see analysis of tonality in Chapter 4), the above reasoning could be extrapolated further. If to the Kenyah the hemitonic tonality promotes a mournful sentiment, then anhemitonic tonality (*d r m s l*) appears to be associated with *bangen*, a cheerful atmosphere, relevant to the community gatherings at which *belian dado'* are usually performed. This would account for the great difference between the melodic structure of *belian dado'* and those of the older genres.

The association of specific tonalities to cheerful or mournful emotions could be related to recent investigations in the fields of psychology, neurobiology and acoustics. The hypothesis that the perception of emotion can be applied cross-culturally, e.g. that minor tonality and slow tempos suggest sadness is supported by various studies (Kastner & Crowder, 1990; Balkwill et al., 1999; Cook, 2002, 2006 & 2009; Curtis and Bharucha, 2010; Bowling et al., 2010 & 2012; Hunter et al., 2010 and Brattico et al., 2011). This will be discussed further in 4.1.4.1 and 5.2.1.

<sup>14</sup> Ingan is the brother of Sigau Langat. His family was one of the few with a 'single' or separate house.

<sup>15</sup> *Menoq* is the so-called Indonesian spelling; similarly *kedireq* is used in Indonesian rather than *kedire'*.

<sup>16</sup> She reasons further that this is the same tonal system as used in the death lament.

### 3.3 MAIN CATEGORIES OF KENYAH VOCAL MUSIC (*BELIAN*)

The Kenyah generally classify their songs in terms of function, rather than form and style. In this vein, instead of classifying the songs into different genres, Gorlinski (1995:249-260) has derived a system of classification whereby the songs can be divided into “functional groupings”, each containing various categories. This is summarized below.

#### 3.3.1 Classification of Vocal Music Based on Function

##### I Loose Groupings

- (i) *belian tu'ut* (dancing songs) – songs sung prior to dance e.g. *Kendi Ruti* (sung by a male dancer as a preface to his performance)
- (ii) *belian kale* (humorous songs), usually sung by men
- (iii) *belian katuk* (songs of advice)
- (iv) *belian dado'* (long-dance songs) of which the large majority are ‘*lan-i*’ songs
- (v) *belian burak* (rice-wine songs), which include non-narrative songs e.g. *suket, kerintuk*
- (vi) *belian tekena* (story songs) usually sung by men e.g. *kerintuk, Along*
- (vii) *belian abau/ajau* (weeding/harvesting songs) sung in the rice-fields usually by women e.g. *Along*.

##### II Fixed<sup>17</sup> groupings

- (i) *belian bali dayung* (spirit-medium songs)
- (ii) *belian pesalau anak* (songs to entertain children/lullabies)
- (iii) *belian kayau* (headhunting songs), sung to provide inspiration to warriors engaging in battle, e.g. *lemalo, kelun lulun*. The *lemalo* is the only song that could be sung outside of the headhunting context.
- (iv) *belian anak* (children’s songs).

**Certain subcategories** of songs appear in several different categories, for example *Along*. Sung primarily by women, these songs describe various features of the landscape in the context of longing for a man referred to as “Uyau *Along*”. *Kerintuk*, if narrative, are classed as *belian tekena*. Non-narrative *kerintuk* are classed as *belian burak*.

Comparing Gorlinski’s classification of Lepo’ Tau songs with Lawing’s (2003) study on Lepo’ Ma’ut songs in the Pujungan district, Kalimantan, similarities in melodic structure and context were noted in at least seven categories. These are (Lepo’ Ma’ut terms, if different, are given in brackets): *belian dado’ (londe)*, *lemalo (melalo)*, *Along*, *belian kerintuk (belian kenai dok)*, *suket*,

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<sup>17</sup> Gorlinski labels this grouping “Rigid”.

*belian burak* and *belian tekena* (*silun ketena*). It is also interesting to note that the Lepo' Ma'ut have another genre, *menjaeng*, in common with the Long Semiyang Ngurek *kejaing*.

As Lepo' Tau songs form a large proportion of this study, I have applied the system of classification as laid out by Gorlinski, with some modifications. These modifications facilitate the description of song categories observed among other subgroups such as the Sambop, whose language is closely related to the Lepo' Tau. For instance, *belian anak dumit*<sup>18</sup> (a term I learnt from Uma Sambop) is used in preference to *belian anak*.

In addition to the above categories, I have included several others. Some songs have characteristics in common with *belian dado'* but cannot strictly be classified as such because they are not sung while performing the characteristic *tu'ut dado'* formation. Rather they are sung by spectators cajoling individuals to perform the solo dance. They are placed under the subcategory *belian menat kanjet* (*badi menat kanjet*).

Based on field-work in six Kenyah villages, I have observed that there are other categories, such as *belian dekieng leto* (songs of young girls) from Uma Sambop and *belian lutong* (songs associated with *lutong* tunes) from Long Moh and various other songs which do not seem to fall in any specific category.

### 3.3.2 Dilemmas Faced with Classification of Songs by Function

From an analytical standpoint, classification by function may be misleading, because both the musical structure and text of the songs do not necessarily correspond with the context. Several dilemmas arise.

*Belian dado'*, the function of which is to accompany the *tu'ut dado'*, is a heterogeneous category. As the *lan-i* or *lan-e* type of songs happen to be in the majority, their characteristics have become the standard features of this category. As will be shown in the next chapter, however, there are also *belian dado'* with quite different characteristics.

In addition, with changes in society, the classification may no longer be realistic. The function of whole categories of songs may have changed. It could be argued that, based strictly on a classification by function, some *lan-e* songs can no longer be classed as *belian dado'*. A considerable number have been adopted into the Christian church with modifications of the lyrics, and some of these are no longer sung with their original lyrics at the traditional longhouse gatherings.

There are also many songs which share the same melodies with *sape*, *jatung utang* and *lutong* tunes, but are not performed in public gatherings. Several have associated dance-steps, but their lyrics are not built from the conventional *ipet* displayed by the majority of the *belian dado'* repertoire. My informants could not come to a consensus as to what category these songs would belong to. Songs associated with *lutong* can undoubtedly be labeled *belian lutong* as they clearly evolved from *lutong*

<sup>18</sup> *Dumit* means “little” in both the Lepo' Tau and Sambop languages.

tunes. I have also traced several *sape* tunes to their origin as *belian anak dumit* (although functionally not so any more as they are no longer sung by children). No specific category for other songs was proposed, as no-one can say for sure whether the instrumental or vocal version appeared first. For purposes of discussion, I have grouped all these under ‘Songs associated with instrumental tunes’. Various other songs, some with associated movements e.g. *Jelip-jelip*, others with no specific movements such as *Cap Apek*, are clearly ‘fun’ songs, but again do not seem to fall into any specific category.

### 3.3.3 Recreational Songs

Although the Kenyah have a vast repertory of songs, my research has focused only on specific categories, which I have grouped under the heading ‘recreational songs’. These fall into the categories *belian dado*’, *belian menat kanjet*, *belian pesalau anak*, *belian anak dumit*, *belian dekieng leto* and ‘songs associated with instrumental tunes’ such as *belian lutong*. I have also included miscellaneous songs which do not belong to specific categories.

This study does not cover categories such as *suket*, *kerintuk*, *belian tekena* (story-songs) and *belian burak* (rice-wine songs). The lyrics of these songs are complex, and carry great significance for the Kenyah. Melodically, however, they are less directly applicable to music education, being characterized by free metre, narrow pitch range and only one short, melodic phrase, repeated throughout the song.

### 3.3.4 Belian Dado’

*Belian dado’* refers to songs sung while performing a simple line-dance, the *tu’ut dado’*’ (literally ‘long-dance’). This dance is an informal one, and consists basically of a step and brush (or alternatively, stamp, brush, step, brush) punctuated with stamps at the end of certain phrases. There are, however, specific movements and variations which have evolved to accompany many of the songs e.g. the boat-rowing movements in *Nombor satu*, *nombor dua* (Transcription 3). Generally, the atmosphere is relaxed, and anyone present is welcome to join in at any time. Thus the participants may vary in age from toddlers and babies in their mother’s arms, to venerable 80-year-olds.

The singing of *belian dado’* is always the first item in a long evening of entertainment. The voices of the singers are clearly heard in the quiet of the night. As Seeler (1975:33) describes: *One of the haunting memories of a longhouse is the beautiful sound of singing of badek tiang songs arising on the veranda in the mid-evening calling the community ...*

Led by a few confident singers, several people form a line and synchronize the basic step and shuffle sequence. The formation, in single file, always moves counter-clockwise along the veranda of the longhouse or whenever the gathering is held (Plates 10, 11and 12). Generally, they will have agreed on a few well-known tunes and a suitable starting pitch to begin. With other choral songs, there is an impressively resounding ‘tuning’ where the whole community loudly sings the tonal centre before the soloist launches into the verse.



**Plate 11: *Belian dado'*, Long Tungan**



**Plate 12: *Belian dado'*, Long Semiyang**

For *belian dado'*, as the performers are moving around, this ‘tuning-up’ is achieved in a less obvious fashion. A soloist sings the first one or two phrases of a song, while everyone else joins in either at the beginning of the next melodic phrase or at the chorus. Once begun, the ‘performance’ continues smoothly, almost as if there had been a rehearsal. There might be a slight pause between songs while soloists mentally rehearse the beginning of subsequent songs. As time goes by, other people join the line and the singing grows in volume and merriment. Certain songs, such as *Mudung Ina* (which is accompanied by comical movements in imitation of animals), never fail to elicit laughter.

### 3.3.4.1 Structure of *belian dado'*

As *lan-e* songs form the majority of the *belian dado'* repertoire, the typical *lan-e* structure is described below as representative of the functional grouping:

*Belian dado'* are strophic in nature, consisting of several verses, alternating with set choruses.

For example in the song *Lan-e* (Baram version<sup>19</sup>) the chorus consists of two lines:

<i>Nelan-e, eh tuyang</i>	Truly so, my friends
<i>Nelan-e</i>	Truly so

In many songs, the verses are variable. They are usually taken from a pool of commonly known rhyme units, or *ipet*:

<i>Alem ini telu tiang pemong Jaiee</i>	Tonight my friends we gather together
<i>Pemong jaiee tawai</i>	We gather together,
<i>Pemong jaiee tawai uyan</i>	And recall the old days

Often, the chorus is performed in two or three-part harmony, as in *Lan-e* version 2, widely sung in the Baram (Transcription 2) with participants randomly joining in any of the parts. The words *lan-e*, or *nelan-e* (derived from the word ‘*lan*’ which means ‘true’), and *tiang* or *tuyang* (meaning ‘friends’) recur constantly in many of the songs (hence the common assignations ‘*lan-i*’, ‘*tiang*’, among the Kenyah for the name of this ‘genre’).

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<sup>19</sup> (Chong, 2006:20).

### Transcription 2: *Lan-e* version 2 (Chong, 2006:20)

$\text{♩} = 75$



A - lem i - ni te - lu tu-yang pe - mong jai - ee Pe -

mong jai-ee ta - wai pe-mong jai - ee ta-wai u - yan Ne -

mong jai-ee ta - wai pe-mong jai - ee ta-wai u - yan Ne

lan - e tu - yang ne - lan - e

#### 3.3.4.2 Differences from other categories of songs

The musical structure of *belian dado'* differs from older Kenyah repertoire such as *kerintuk* in a number of ways. Firstly, *belian dado'* are regular metrically, often 4/4 with some flexibility in the beat, more akin to a ‘swing’ beat than a march, whereas the older songs generally display free rhythm. Secondly, they are made up of a fixed number of phrases of irregular length and have a strophic structure. Thirdly, they are predominantly in the anhemitonic pentatonic scale, in contrast to the mostly hemitonic older repertoire. Fourthly, although both feature choral harmony, the *kerahang* (chorus) of *belian dado'* is melodic, generally following the contour of the melody at intervals of thirds, fifths, sixths or octaves (as in the above transcription) whereas in the older repertoire, the chorus is sung on a monotone.

In some songs, there are fixed lyrics for the first verse (or first few verses) which indicate the original significance of the song. *Nombor Satu*, *Nombor Dua* is an example of such a song which must have originated as a boat-song. It invariably begins with the same verse:

## Lyrics

*Mesai muiit, telu tiang lulau lan telit  
Lulau telit piping,  
Lulau telit piping langan  
Nelan-e*

### Chorus:

*Nombor satu, nombor dua  
Le mesai cha lidung sungai  
Neken cha lidung tu'on  
Lo' uban lan tawai*

## Translation

Paddle on my friends to the straight quiet stretch of the river  
To the straight quiet stretch, light as cork  
To the straight quiet stretch, light as the cork of an arrow  
Truly so

### Chorus:

Number one, number two,  
Paddle to the sheltered part of the river  
Pole through the rapids  
We recall the course of the journey

The actions accompanying the song clearly portray the rowing of a boat. While singing the verses, the participants perform the ordinary step-brush movement, moving anti-clockwise in a circle. During the chorus, the dancers remain stationary, and perform the following actions:

Counts	Legs	Arms
1	Step back right foot	Swing arms down together as if holding a paddle (in a right-back diagonal direction)
2 And	Step (front) left foot Click heels (right to left)	Bring arms forward and up

### Transcription 3: *Nombor Satu Nombor Dua* (Chong, 1998:26-28)

$\text{♩} = 88$

Me - sai mu - it Te - lu ti - ang lu - lau lan te - .

lit Lu - lau te - lit pi - ping lu-lau e - lit pi - ping la - ngan - .

- ne-lan - e Nom-bor sa - tu nom-bor du - a le me - sai cha li-dung su - .

ngai Ne ken cha li dung tu - on - lo - u ban lan ta - wai

### 3.3.4.3 Postulation of origins of *belian dado'*: Changing contexts

Besides the descriptions mentioned in 1.5.7, there are earlier depictions of Kenyah songs which fit the melodic and rhythmic characteristics of *belian dado'* but were performed in other contexts. It is my contention that these songs were the precursors of the genre. In the past, songs such

as the love-songs and boat-songs mentioned below could have arisen from informal activities (unlike formal occasions featuring songs like *belian burak*). They could then have been introduced at gatherings involving line-dances, giving rise to a new repertoire.

Krohn's (2001:225) descriptions of 'Dyak' love-songs and boat-songs match the characteristics of some popular *belian dado*' in my collection:

*These songs abound in figures of speech in which the love-lorn maiden is compared to a beautiful bird and the young man is likened to a mythical animal of marvelous strength ... the verses are sung alternately by a young woman and a young man ... with the entire audience joining in the chorus.*

In many *belian dado*', women are referred to as *kulong punai silon tawan* (beloved pet pigeon, sweet and charming), while men are referred to as *lenjau taman* (father tiger). The strophic nature and soloist-chorus alternation is also typical of *belian dado*'.

As the Kenyah travel long distances by boat, songs may have been sung to keep the paddlers in rhythm and to break the tedium. As Krohn (2001:226) observed:

*These boatsongs have more of a lilt to them, are more spontaneously sung, and have a more animated rhythm ... more rollicking and less doleful ... shorn of the plaintive appeal that clothes and characterises those Dyak classics chanted at ceremonial feasts.*

The above description suggests that the boat-songs he observed were rhythmic and catchy, and probably in anhemitonic do-pentatonic/major scales rather than the hemitonic pentatonic scale associated with the plaintive or *meno*' mood typical of the epic and drinking songs. *Nombor Satu Nombor Dua* fits this description and has now become established as part of the *belian dado*' repertoire. Songs like these, originating in different contexts, were probably introduced at large gatherings, and, subsequently, dance-steps added.

*Belian dado*' may also have developed when there was no musician available to accompany a group long-dance, prompting creative singers to improvise vocal 'accompaniment' instead. There is a growing trend for *belian dado*' to replace dying genres of instrumental music, filling in as 'accompaniment'. In Long Mekaba , previously the *saga lupa* was accompanied by *lutong* and *kedire*', but now because of the dearth of expertise in the making of these two instruments, performers often sing *belian dado*' as accompaniment. In Long Moh, the magnificent display of *saga lupa* by over forty dancers in full costume was accompanied by a taped recording of *sape* music. Towards the end of the 'performance proper' the dancers began singing *belian dado*', changing their steps accordingly.

In Chapter 5, the musical evolution of *belian dado*' will be discussed further, based on the features of several songs and instrumental pieces.

### 3.3.5 Belian Menat Kanjet (Songs of Invitation to Dance)

During a typical gathering, after an hour or so of *belian dado*', *datun julud* and perhaps a few *belian burak*, the solo dances begin. To encourage a dancer to perform, a song of invitation is often

sung in honour of a dancer whilst bringing the accoutrements of dance (*kirep*, headdress, or *besunong*<sup>20</sup>) to him or to her. These songs may be initiated by one person, but the whole gathered community soon joins in after the first few phrases. A popular song in this context, *Miling mubai*, sums up the sentiment. *Miling mubai* (literally ‘pivot turn’ refers to the central movement in a solo dance, a slow, controlled turn. Each successive verse refers to a different part of the costume, to be sung as each item is brought to the chosen dancer.

#### Transcription 4: *Miling Mubai* (as sung by Helen Paya Sufen, Uma Sambop)

♩ = 80



Ti Ne ke - ting      I - ko ti-ang ba - da      lan a - king      Ba -  
 A - la ta - pong      I - ko kohong me - kep      lan ko - hong      me -  
 A - la la - yung      I - ko ti-ang ti - ba      lan su - nong      Ti  
  
 8 da      a - king      u - sa      Ba - da      a - king      u - sa      i - nan  
 kep      ko-hong      li - mau      me-kep      ko - hong      li - mau      man.  
 ba      su-nong      ku - leh      Ti - ba      su - nong      ku - leh      ma - nan  
  
 ha      A - ha - - - lan - e      I - ko      te-kak      ta - wai

Lyrics	Translation
1. <i>Ne keting</i> <i>Iko tiang bada lan aking</i> <i>Bada aking usa,</i> <i>Bada aking usa inan</i> <b>Chorus:</b> <i>Aha, aha lane</i> <i>Iko tekak tawai</i>	Rise up Friend with the slim waist Slim waist and lithe body Slim waist and lithe body <b>Chorus:</b> Aha, aha truly so, You recall the old times
2. <i>Ala tapong</i> <i>Iko tiang mekep lan kohong</i> <i>Mekep kohong limau</i> <i>Mekep kohong limau man</i>	Put on the hat Friend, cover your head Cover your head Cover your head
3. <i>Ala layung</i> <i>Iko tiang tiba lan sunung</i> <i>Tiba sunung kuleh</i> <i>Tiba sunung kuleh manan</i>	Put on the cloak Friend, the cloak Cloak made of leopard skin Cloak made of leopard skin
4. <i>Ala tabit</i> <i>Iko tiang maping lan tumit</i> <i>Maping tumit temeran</i> <i>Maping tumit temeran</i>	Put on the ‘seat-mat’ <sup>21</sup> Friend, make it flap as you dance Flap against your ankles Flap against your ankles

<sup>20</sup> War cloak.

<sup>21</sup> Part of the warrior costume. Small decorative mat hung from the waist for the warrior to sit upon.

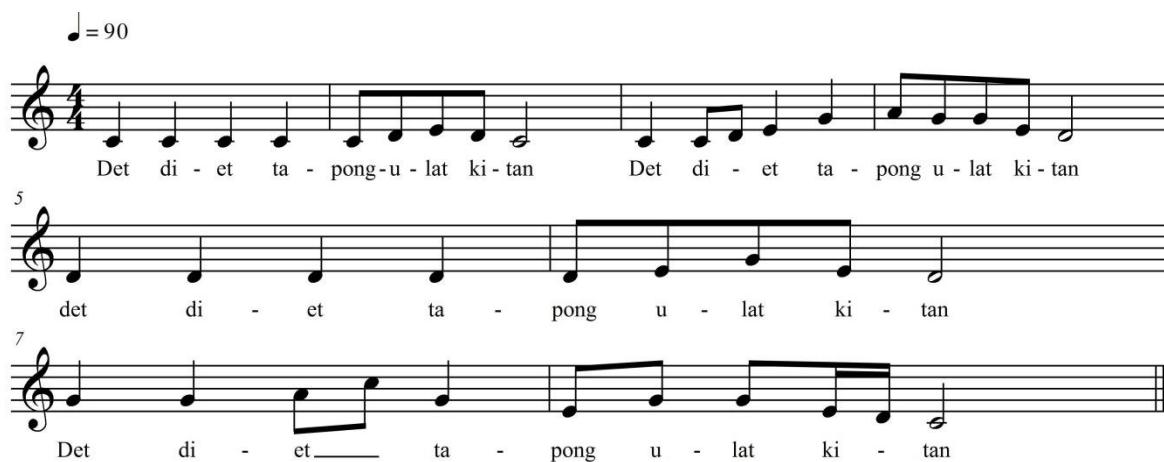
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 5. <i>Ala baeng</i><br><i>Iko tiang meka lan aking</i><br><i>Meka aking usa</i><br><i>Meka aking usa inan</i>               | Put on your sword<br>Friend, tie it around your waist<br>Around your body<br>Around your body   |
| 6. <i>Nyait ketai</i><br><i>Iko tuyang miling lan mubai</i><br><i>Miling mubai kusun</i><br><i>Miling mubai kusun lasan</i> | Go, get up<br>Friend start your pivot turn<br>Start turning<br>Start turning on the dance-floor |

### 3.3.6 Songs Associated with Instrumental Tunes and Children's Songs

The children in the villages that I visited exhibited scant knowledge of Kenyah children's songs. Apart from a few songs such as *Tai Uyau Along*, they inevitably ended up singing English, Malay or Church songs. Thus, in my search for children's repertoire, I turned to other avenues, such as instrumental tunes.

*Sape*, *jatung utang* and *lutong* tunes are often associated with songs. Some instrumental tunes owe their origins to children's songs while some songs were inspired by *sape* tunes<sup>22</sup>. As described by Gorlinski (1989:121), in the *sape* repertoire of the Uma Jalan, fixed cyclic melodies were typically associated with either children's songs or *kendau kancet* (the Uma Jalan term for *belian dado*'). One example of children's songs influencing *sape* tunes, *Det Diet Tapong Kitan*, is described below (the term *det diet*<sup>23</sup> refers to a whole repertoire of long-dance tunes played by *sape* and *jatung utang* ensemble). Matthew Ngau related that it is often sung to help *sape* players remember the tune (Transcription 5) commonly used as a beginner's piece.

**Transcription 5: *Det Diet Tapong Kitan*** (as sung by Matthew Ngau) (Chong, 2006:56)



♩ = 90

4

Det di - et ta - pong-u - lat ki - tan      Det di - et ta - pong u - lat ki - tan

5

det di - et ta - pong u - lat ki - tan

7

Det di - et ta - pong u - lat ki - tan

<sup>22</sup> Sampeq tunes may also inspire songs. There is a constant interaction between vocal and instrumental repertoire (Gorlinski, 1989:161).

<sup>23</sup> Vocables imitating the sound of the plucking of a *sape*.

## Lyrics

*Det diet tapong ulat kitan*  
*Det diet tapong kitan*

## Translation

*Det diet, hat woven from bear-cat fur*  
*Det diet, hat woven from bear-cat fur*

When I showed Helen Paya this song from my book (Chong, 2006) and enquired if she was familiar with it, she obliged with a rendition of the Uma Sambop version (Transcription 6).

### Transcription 6: *Det Diet Tapung Kitan* (Sambop version) (Chong, 2011:23)

♩ = 88



25

Det di - et ta pong u - lat ki - tan \_\_\_\_\_ Det di - et ta - pong ki - tan U -  
but ti - tik le - kai u - man \_\_\_\_\_ Det di - et ta - pong u - lat ki - tan U -  
but nya - dieng i - ya ba - la bu - an

## Lyrics

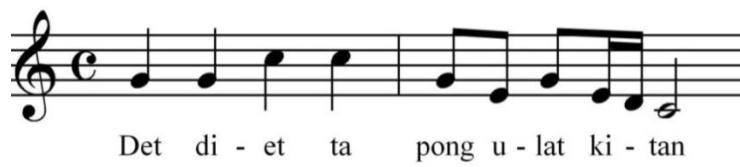
*Det diet tapong ulat kitan*  
*Det diet tapong kitan*  
*Ubut titiek lekai uman*  
*Det diet tapong ulat kitan*  
*Ubut nyadieng iya bala buan*

## Translation

*Det diet, hat woven from bear-cat fur*  
*Det diet, hat woven from bear-cat fur*  
*Shoots made into a tasty dish*  
*Det diet, hat woven from bear-cat fur*  
*Shoots from the red fruit*

In Long Moh, where *det diet* is a popular instrumental ensemble piece, the following excerpt was sung by Ingan Langat's wife to her grandchild:

### Excerpt 2: *Det Diet Tapung Kitan* (first phrase only as sung in Long Moh)



Det di - et ta pong u - lat ki - tan

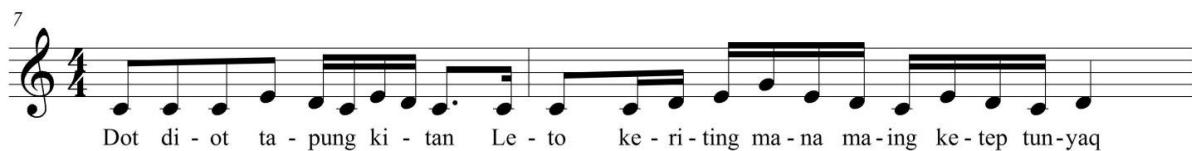
The above melodies are clearly a variation of the same melody *Dot Diot* referred to by Gorlinski (1989) in her description of fixed-cyclic *sape* melodies where the skeletal melodies correspond to children's songs. Her transcriptions of the Uma Jalan versions are given below:

### Excerpt 3: Skeletal melody, *Dot Diot* (Gorlinski, 1989:166)

(a) as dictated



(b) as commonly sung



#### Lyrics

*Dot Diot tapong kiton*  
*Leto keriting mana maing ketep tunyaq*

#### Translation

*Dot diot* hat made from bear-cat  
The curly haired woman cooks soggy rice

Other examples of songs associated with popular long-dance melodies are described in Chapter 4. Although these songs are based on the same skeletal melody played on *sape* or *jatung utang*, they have different lyrics in different villages. For instance *Pui Ngeleput Burui* (Uma Sambop version) is sung to the lyrics *Sai Ulai Alut Lai* in Long Moh. The melody as played by *sape* is given in 3.4.1.1 (ii) excerpt 6, while transcriptions and analysis of the songs are given in Chapter 4.

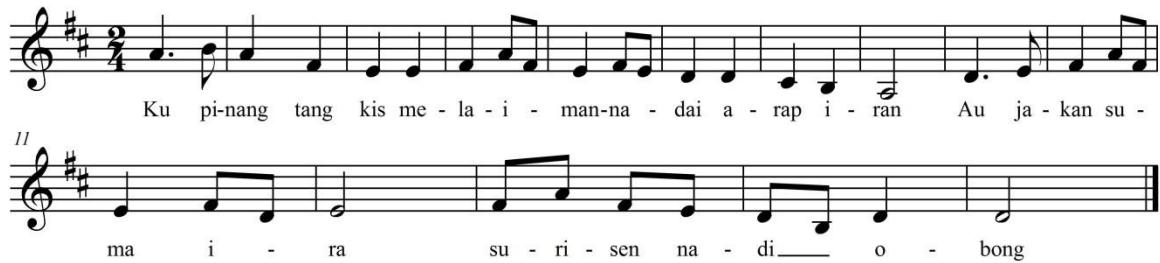
### 3.3.7 Belian Dekieng Leto (Songs of Young Girls)

In Uma Sambop, groups of young girls (between 5-12 years of age) gathered in the *amin* of older women such as Ramiah Sufen who instructed them on the finer points of dance and prepared them for public performances. I witnessed similar classes for teenagers held in Long Moh (in Ulau Lupa's *amin*, where Ulau taught the song *Ilun Kuai* with accompanying movements) and Long Semiyang (*datun julud* taught by visiting Indonesian saleswomen). This was a channel through which women bequeathed their music and dance culture to the next generation.

In January and December 2008, Helen and Ramiah Sufen and their friends (all in their fifties) performed a series of song and dance routines, which they termed *belian dekieng leto* (songs of young girls). They had practised these songs at classes such as the above. One example is given below. Transcriptions and analysis of other songs are found in Chapter 4.

### Transcription 7: *Ku Pinang* (Chong, 2011:55)

$\text{♩} = 84$



Ku pi-nang tang kis me - la - i - man-na - dai a - rap i - ran Au ja - kan su -  
 ma i - ra su - ri - sen na - di o - bong

### 3.3.8 *Belian Lutong* and Other Categories

*Belian lutong* have been described briefly in 3.1.2. Further examples of these and other categories of songs such as *belian anak dunit* and *belian pesalau anak* are described together with their transcriptions and analysis in Chapter 4.

## 3.4 INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Kenyah instruments, some of which are capable of producing music with considerable melodic and harmonic variety, are described below.

### 3.4.1 Chordophones

Kenyah chordophones include lutes such as the *sape*, and zithers such as the *lutong*.

#### 3.4.1.1 *Sape/Sambe*

The most widely known Kenyah instrument is a boat lute known as the *sape* or *sambe* in Lepo' Tau. *Sambe* meaning ‘to brush lightly with the fingers’ in Lepo’ Tau, is an apt description of the technique so often used by *sape*-players to produce the characteristic ornamentation (the effect is between that of an acciaccatura and an appoggiatura<sup>24</sup>). However, the term *sape*<sup>25</sup> is so widely accepted that it is probably more practical to retain the ‘unauthentic’ version.

The *sape* is a short-necked, plucked boat-lute carved from a single block of wood. Common choices are *adau*, *merdang* and *meranti* (Gorlinski, 1988:77-78). The body is hollow and the back is left open. Originally two-stringed, the norm is now 3–4 strings. In the past, strings were made from the fibres of the *iman*, a sugar palm (*arenga pinnata*), now replaced by bicycle brake wire, nylon

<sup>24</sup> “Although the grace notes are executed on the beat they are unlike appoggiatura figures in that the melody pitch is dominant and there is no sense of rhythmic displacement”(Gorlinski, 1988:89).

<sup>25</sup> According to Gorlinski (1988:79-80), it seems to share a common etymological origin to a number of instrument terms in South-East Asia such as (among others) the *chap-pey* of Kampuchea, *hasapi* in Sumatra, *kacapi* of Java and *kudyapi* in Mindanao, deriving their names from the Sanskrit term *kaccapi* (Sachs, 1923, Kaudern ,1927 and Kunst, 1973). However, she then points out that some of these instruments are of dissimilar construction (e.g. Sachs classifies the *chap-pey* as a stick zither), and that other instruments of more similar construction, such as *sundatang* of the Dusun and *blikan* of the Iban in Borneo, and the *kuglung* and *faglong* in Mindanao, bear names with no relation to the above.

fishing lines, steel wire and even guitar strings. At the head of the instrument, the strings are attached to tuning pegs. Positioned beneath the strings are a series of frets (Lepo' Tau term: *nden*) made of rattan, palmwood or bamboo, glued to the surface with *udep* (a type of beeswax). One group of fixed frets serve as bridges, while another set of movable frets under the lowest string serve as fine tuners (Gorlinski, 1988:77-78; Anyie Ajang, 2005:1-3; Lawing, 2003:269-270). The first or lowest string serves as the melody string, while the other strings are employed as rudimentary harmony, generally perfect fifths and fourths.

The contemporary *sape* evolved from the *sambe asal/sambe bali dayong*<sup>26</sup>. Anyie Ajang (2005:1-9) describes how this early instrument was used by the Kenyah and Kayan in the Apo Kayan to accompany the *bali dayong* dance, part of a healing ritual. The following myth of origin was related by two sources: Anyie Ajang (2005) and Jalang Tanyit (personal communication, 2002): A man, distraught over his wife's illness, first beheld the instrument in his dreams, played by a spirit (a female according to Jalang), who advised him to make and play a similar instrument in order to bring healing to his wife.

### (i) *Sambe asal/asen /sambe bali dayong*

The older form of the *sape*, as well as its repertoire, is known variously as *sambe asal/sambe asen/sambe bali dayong*. *Asal* and *asen* mean 'original' while *sambe bali dayong* strictly refers to the repertoire only, connected to the singing spirits featured in the Kenyah traditional belief system. As there is a considerable amount of purely secular repertoire, this last term cannot accurately be used to refer to the instrument itself. *Sambe asal* will therefore be used in reference to the instrument.

As demonstrated by Lian Langgang, one of two remaining exponents of this instrument in the village, the *sambe asal* differs in size, shape and tuning from the contemporary *sape* and has a very different repertoire. It is shorter (about 100 cm) and wider (22 cm) than the latter, as evident from the following illustrations (Plates 13, 15 and 16):

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<sup>26</sup> *bali dayong*: singing and chanting spirit.



**Plate 13:** Lian Langgang playing the *sambe asal* while manipulating *patung piping*



**Plate 14:** *Patung piping* (cork puppet, possibly used in curing rituals in the past)



**Plate 15:** Close-up view of the *sambe asal*



**Plate 16: Bilung Lupa holding a contemporary sape**

The *sambe asal* has only two strings, tuned a third apart (E, G#), and has only has three *nden* (frets), pitched at G#, A (+ 40 cents), B and C#, giving the resulting solfa: *d, m f s l* (*f*+40 cents ).

#### Tone-set of *sambe asal*



Lian played a series of melodies (some examples shown in Excerpts 4 and 5 in which the actual pitch of A is +40 cents) while artfully controlling, with a thin string attached to his fingers, a dancing puppet made of cork (*patung piping*). The *patung piping* and *sambe* demonstration included pieces from both sacred and secular repertoire. The significance of the *patung piping* is unclear, but it may resemble the *hudo' kepatung*<sup>27</sup> *bangu* (Kayan term) a ‘replacement human figurine’ mentioned in Rousseau (1998:255), formerly used in *bali dayong* curing rituals<sup>28</sup> to ‘fool’ the spirits who “want to snatch someone away from the living”. The *sambe bali dayong* repertoire included pieces entitled *Sambe Bali Chin Unyok Tapong* (Spirit from ‘Hat Rim<sup>29</sup>, mountain melody) and *Sambe Manok Ilang* (Magpie Robin melody). When asked about the meanings of the pieces, he sang examples of *belian bali dayong* associated with spirits such as *bali baya*’ and *bali Unyok Tapong*.

<sup>27</sup> Rousseau suggests that *kepatong* may be a cognate of *hampatong*, the wooden figurines of the Barito which ward off illnesses and disaster and perhaps also of *tepatung* defined as ‘image, representation’ such as wooden images on Ot Danum offering posts (Rousseau, 1998:255). In Miller (2004:48) there is a photo of a *belawing* in the Apo Kayan (taken in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century) bearing several wooden figurines of strikingly similar design to the *patung piping*. A main function of the *belawing* is to ward off evil from the village.

<sup>28</sup> featuring dancing accompanied by *sape dayong*, the Kayan equivalent of *sambe asal*.

<sup>29</sup>*Unyok Tapong*, literally ‘rim of hat’ is the name of a mountain near Long Moh.

### Excerpt 4: Excerpt from *Sambe Unyok Tapong* as played by Lian Langgang

$\text{♩} = 72$



(pitch of A raised + 40 cents)

Secular repertoire included *Chat Alieng* and a few other pieces for which Lian did not give a specific name. Later, inspired by the music of other pieces, Ulau started to dance in the *kanjet asal* style (older, more percussive form of women's dance). When Lian played the appropriate piece, she was joined by Bungan (Lian's wife) for the *ngayang taket kempau* (described in Chapter 4). It took some time for them to recall the movements, as they obviously had not performed this dance in years.

### Excerpt 5: Excerpt from a *sambe asal* tune as played by Lian Langgang

$\text{♩} = 95$

\*

\*



\* knocking with knuckles on every second beat

(pitch of A raised + 40 cents)

An interesting feature of the piece transcribed in Excerpt 5 is the employment of a percussive mode, 'knocking' the body of the *sape* with the knuckles on the second beat of every alternate measure, to which the *patung piping* correspondingly 'responded' with sudden jerky movements.

The transcriptions above show that the element of harmony was present in this older genre of music (perfect fifth sounded by strumming both strings). The tone-set, *d m f s l*, corresponds to that of the tone-set of the older genres of songs. There is also a clear link of the melody, rhythm and dance movements to song (discussed in the next chapter with reference to an older Badeng song).

## (ii) The Contemporary *Sape*

Contemporary *sape* music may be performed solo, in duet (with the accompanying player often playing an ostinato chordal figure) or in ensemble with other instruments, particularly *jatung utang* and harmonica. Its main public function is to accompany dance. This function is shared by other South-East Asian boat-lutes such as the *kuchapi* of the Minangkabau (Maceda, 1980). However, in both Kenyah and Kayan tradition, it is not used to accompany vocal music. In this matter, its usage differs from that of some other boat-lutes in South-East Asian culture such as the *hasapi* which is played at "Opera Batak" performances (Kartomi, 1984), and the *sundatang* which is used to accompany love-songs by the Dusun (Alman, 1984, in Gorlinski, 1988).

**Dimensions:** The length of the contemporary *sape* varies. The following paragraph gives the dimensions of the *sape* in the ITE Batu Lintang collection. As part of the project, *Introducing Selected*

*Instrumental Ensembles and Songs of East Malaysia* (a project undertaken with funds from the ISME-Gibson award), a number of ethnic Kenyah, Iban and Bidayuh instruments<sup>30</sup> were commissioned/ purchased and introduced to a selected group of Batu Lintang students. These students, in turn, acted as facilitators for workshops during which they assisted me in introducing Kenyah songs and instruments to schoolteachers and schoolchildren.

The length of the *sapes* (without decorative heads) in the collection<sup>31</sup> ranges from 117-132 cm. The decorative head could be anywhere between 0-23 cm in length, giving the longest *sape* a total length of 155 cm. The effective length of the fingerboard from lowest to highest fret is approximately 71 cm, and the width is estimated at 16.5-17.8 cm.

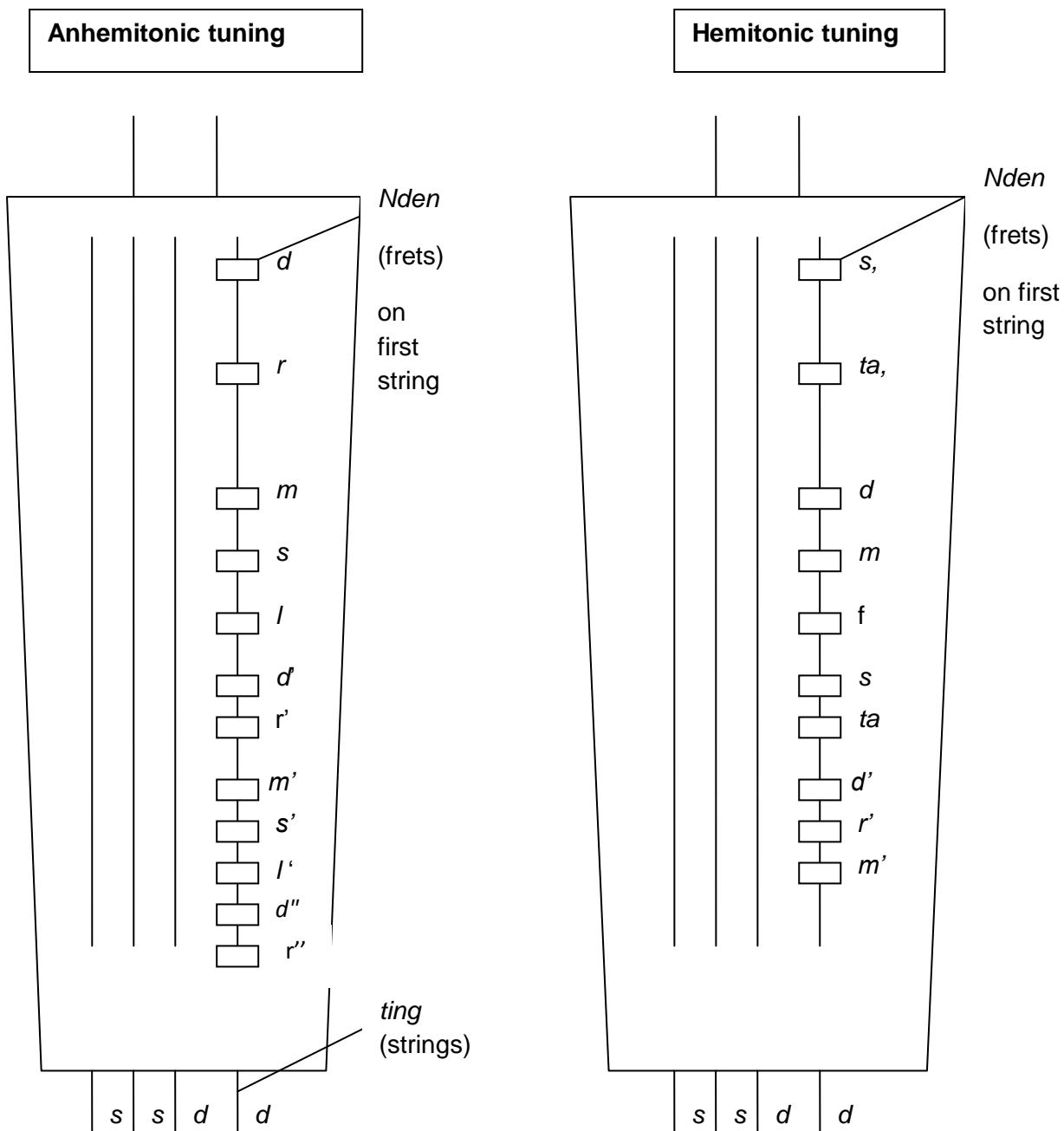
**Tuning:** The tuning of the strings and the frets (*nden*) varies according to the repertoire being performed. The number of *nden* also varies, normally 12-16 encompassing 2½ to 3 octaves. Figure 2 displays two common tunings. The first employs the anhemitonic pentatonic scale (*d r m s l*) normally used to accompany *datun julud* group dances, while the second, using a hemitonic scale, is used to accompany *kanjet leto* (women's dance). There is no standard pitch, although in ensemble *sape* are tuned to that of the fixed-pitch instruments such as *jatung utang* and harmonica.

**Vertical sonorities:** The importance of *vertical sonorities* as described by Gorlinski (1989:256) is displayed in the concept of *lawen*, where the supporting strings are tuned to match to specific *nden* on the melody string: "the *lawen* of any *nden* will be the string with which the pitch yielded by that *nden* produces (in order of precedence) a unison, an octave, major third, major tenth, perfect fifth or P12".

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<sup>30</sup> Kenyah instruments: *sape*, *jatung utang* and *lutong kayu*; Iban instruments: *engkerumong*, *ketepong*, *tawak* and *bebenda*; Bidayuh instruments: *peruncong* ensemble.

<sup>31</sup> Commissioned for ITE Batu Lintang from Anyie Ajang and Matthew Ngau.



**Figure 2: Tuning of Sape**

Dance music repertoire clearly distinguishes between the three main categories of dance: *datun julud* (long-dance), *kanjet laki* (men's solo dance) and *kanjet leto* (women's solo dance). *Datun julud* tunes are anhemitonic pentatonic and increasingly played by an ensemble rather than *sape* alone. When asked for the names of the melodies, I was often given the answer *go garo'* and *det diet*, which appear to be categories rather than individual tunes. The association of some tunes with specific songs will be discussed in Chapter 4. One example of a *det diet* melody is given below. *Det diet* is an example of onomatopoeia, referring to the plucking of the *sape* strings.

The melody below (Excerpt 6) is associated with the song *Pui Ngeleput* or *Sai Ulai* (song transcriptions given in Chapter 4).

**Excerpt 6: Excerpt from a sape tune for *datun julud***

$\text{♩} = 78$



**Melodic ostinato on the second sape**



*Sape* melodies for *kanjet laki*, such as *Suling Apoi*, *Gut Garut* and *Kabun*, are a mixture of anhemitonic pentatonic (*d r m s l*) and a combination of both anhemitonic and hemitonic scales appearing in different registers. They tend to have a more robust character than the women's dance tunes. Melodies for *kanjet leto* such as *Ilun Jebut* and *Jember Leto* are basically hemitonic pentatonic (*d r f s t*), with *d r m* confined to the highest register. Transcriptions of examples of the repertoire are given on the next page. The following *sambe leto* (a *sape* tune for *kanjet leto*) transcription is taken from the repertoire taught to me by Anyie Ajang (Excerpt 7).

**Excerpt 7: Excerpt from a sape tune for *kanjet leto* (*sambe leto*)**

$\text{♩} = 77$



*Gut garut* (Transcription 8 below), a classic piece for *kanjet laki*, is the preferred accompaniment for male solo dance performances in both Long Moh and Long Mekaba. Long Moh's premier dancer Jon Lido always uses an audio-tape recording featuring Jalang Tanyit's rendition of the piece. The following transcription is based on Edmund Ngau Bilung's rendition of the piece in February 2009.

### Transcription 8: *Gut Garut* as played in Long Moh

**Moderato** ( $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 108$ )



Sape I Melody

Sape II (ostinato)

Sape I

Sape II

Sape I

Sape II

Sape I

Sape II

Sape I

Sape II

The duet features a common arrangement in which one *sape* plays the main melody, while the other plays an ostinato based on *d* and *s*. The ostinato pattern in this piece is: *d d d, d d d, d d d d s,*

with a perfect 5<sup>th</sup> chord strummed on the last beat. The melodic component, which includes a considerable amount of improvisation, may differ from another player's rendition. The gentle winding melody combined with a slow, relentless ostinato seems to lull the audience into a trance-like mood<sup>32</sup> and serve as an effective setting for the *kanjet laki*, a dance depicting an agile warrior moving stealthily across the stage. The dancer's feline footwork, slow descending pivot turns, undulating arm movements and calm, focused facial expression mirror the serenity of the melody. Unlike a Western ballet, however, the dynamics and tempo of the *sape* music do not vary. Thus, when the dancer executes sudden leaps and vigorous movements, he changes the sonic effect by emitting hisses and war-cries or by striking his sword against the shield.

In Suok's rendition the tone-set for the lower register is C E F G A (*d m f s l*) while for the higher register it is C'D'E' G' (*d' r'm's'*). The last 4 bars produce an ending suggesting a IV I progression, resembling a plagal cadence.

Older recordings display simpler melodies employing drone accompaniment in a manner approximating the *kedire'*. *Sape* style has changed and developed over the years, flowering into virtuosic, highly ornamented displays in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Besides ostinato accompaniment, in *sape* duets, one *sape* often plays the melody while the second breaks into improvised counterpoint to the first.

An excerpt from a dance melody by two *sape* and *jatung utang* is shown below (Matusky and Tan, 2004). *Sape* 1 and *jatung utang* play the same melody, while *sape* 2 plays a chord in thirds (*do* and *mi*), after which *sape* 1 plays a counter-melody to the *jatung utang* while *sape* 2 plays a drone on *so*.

#### **Excerpt 8: Bars 16–17 of Excerpt (a) (Matusky and Tan, 2004:141)**

Jatung Utang



Sape 1

Sape 2

<sup>32</sup> as often reflected in the hushed, reverent atmosphere and transfixed gazes of the audience. This is reminiscent of the effect of the ostinato in Bizet's *Carmen* “Habanera aria” as described by Campbell (2004:139).



**Plate 17: Jalong Tanyit and Kasa Jok playing *sape* and *jatung utang* in combination with guitar (Long Mekaba, 2002)**

### (iii) *Sape bio*

The *sape bio* ('big *sape*' as it is known in Uma Baka') is shaped like a *sape*, but much larger, and placed horizontally on the ground. It is so large that it has to be played by two men, one pressing the frets and the other hitting the string with a stick. Despite its name and shape, the *sape bio* is tuned to the major scale<sup>33</sup> and functionally resembles a double bass more than a *sape*. Among the Uma Jalan in Kalimantan it is even known as a '*bas*' (Gorlinski, 1989:71). It was featured as part of the ensemble only in Uma Baka' although I have been told that it was quite common in other villages such as Long Moh in the past.



**Plate 18: *Sape bio* as played in Uma Baka' 2004**

<sup>33</sup> *d r m f s l t d.*

### 3.4.1.2 *Lutong*

There are currently two considerably different versions of this instrument: the *lutong buluq* (bamboo zither) and the *lutong kayu* (wooden zither).

#### (i) *Lutong Buluq* (Bamboo Zither)

The *lutong* demonstrated to me in Long Moh retains the original cylindrical bamboo body, with four strings. It is derived from a section of bamboo closed at both ends at natural nodes. This older form of the *lutong* where the strings are cut from the body of the instrument may be described as idiochordic as it reflects characteristics of both idiophone and chordophone families (Chong, 2000:107-109). The average dimensions of similar instruments are described in Matusky and Tan (2004:300) to be 50 cm long with a diameter of 9-11 cm. The strings are plucked with an alternating finger technique using both thumbs and index fingers. Each string is raised by a sliver of palm fibre (*nden*), which also acts as a fine tuner. The melodies are limited to the four notes at which the strings are pitched.

The *lutong* was still popular among the women of Long Moh less than 30 years ago. Unjung Lawai, one of the few remaining exponents, played more than a dozen tunes for me in June 2004, while Ulau Lupa and her sister Usun danced and sang songs associated with some of the tunes. One song, entitled *Ilun Butit*, refers to a rival in love in a derisive manner. The words were not translated for me, but were definitely rude in intention. Another example, *Matai Busong* (Transcription 9 below), is a curse-song also addressing a rival in love. Unlike other repertoire, the veiled meanings and purpose of these songs were known only to Long Moh residents<sup>34</sup>.



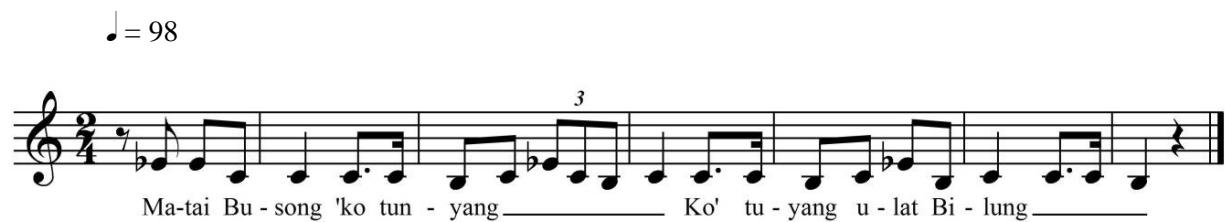
**Plate 19: Unjung Lawai playing *lutong buluq*, Long Moh, 2004**

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<sup>34</sup> When I sang *Ilun Butit* to my host in another village, Long Semiyang, she scoffed, denying its existence, even suggesting that Ulau was making these songs up.

In contrast to the contemporary *sape*, *jatung utang* and *lutong kayu*, the tuning of the *lutong* does not correspond to the Western tempered scale. However, when rendering the same songs *a capella*, Ulau invariably reverted to contemporary pitches in accordance with the tempered scale. The transcription below shows the instrumental version of *Matai Busong*. In bars 3, 5 and 6, B is pitched around **B-40 cents in the instrumental version**. In the sung version, the note sounded closer to B flat, giving a tritonic tone-set of *r m s*.

#### Transcription 9: *Matai Busong* as played on the *lutong* by Unjong Lawai



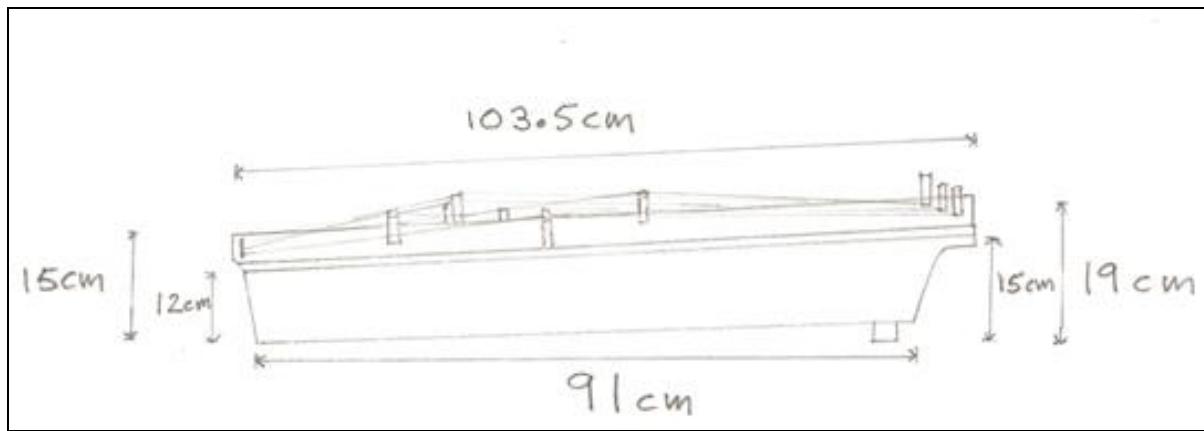
The tone-set exhibited above thus corresponds approximately to *r m s*. Unjung shifted the position of the *nden* from time to time, resulting in a variation of pitch and resultant tone set from tune to tune.

**(ii) The *Lutong Kayu***

This board-zither, a newer version of the *lutong*, is played in Long Semiyang by the Lepo' Ke' subgroup. It retains the same name, but I will refer to it here as the *lutong kayu* (as it is made of wood) to distinguish it from its predecessor. It is not clear when this instrument first appeared, though it has been documented by Lawing (1995:271-272) among the Leppo' Ma'ut in Kalimantan, and, according to Matthew Ngau, was brought to Long Semiyang by the Lepo' Ke' about 20 years ago.



**Plate 20: *Lutong kayu* players, Long Semiyang, 2004**

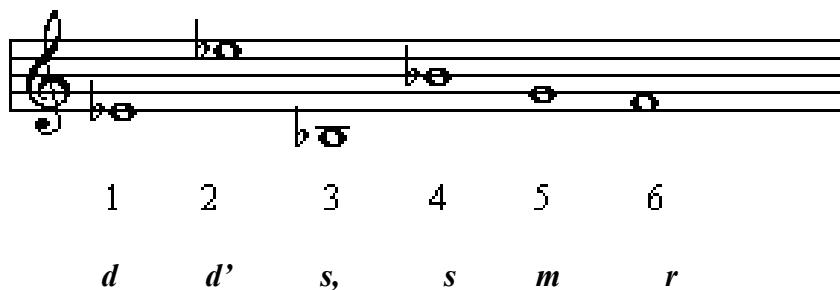


**Figure 3: Dimensions (side-view) of *lutong kayu* commissioned from Long Semiyang**

Made of wood instead of bamboo, it looks strikingly different as it has a five-cornered box-like body, with six strings, each attached to a separate tuning peg. Under each string is a large wooden movable fret or bridge (*nden*) which acts as a fine-tuner. The strings, generally tuned to *s, d r m s d'*, are played by plucking with thumb and forefinger by women, either in duet or in ensemble with *sape* and *jatung utang*.

The people of other villages such as Long Moh are curious about the instrument, describing it as a '*lutong kua sambe*' (resembling a *sape*). Although its construction employs some of the acoustic principles of the *sape*, the 'alternating finger' playing technique is identical to that used for the *lutong buluq*. The resulting melody produced is, however, very different from those of its bamboo precursor as this 'contemporary form' of the zither is tuned to very exact pitches. The manner in which the single movable fret under each string is slid along the body for fine tuning is similar to the tuning of the older instrument, but unlike the *lutong buluq*, the *lutong kayu* is tuned to the exact intervals (as described below) to play in ensemble with other instruments. It produces harmony with the sounding of two to three strings simultaneously (akin to the *sape*), e.g. (i) *d s* (ii) *d m s* and (iii) *r s*, corresponding to chords I and V. Thus, it is quite appropriate for the instrument to be named *sape-lutong* as suggested by Matthew Ngau. The tuning of the strings as recorded for one demonstration performance in Long Semiyang is shown below:

#### Relative pitches of strings for *lutong kayu*



In ensemble, however, it is normally tuned to the key of the fixed pitch instruments such as harmonica and *jatung utang*. During the ensemble performance, this was in C-do. Unlike the original bamboo version, it is capable of holding its own in ensemble, and can be tuned to play in harmony with the other instruments. It is, also, significantly the first ‘women’s instrument’ to appear in ensemble.

### 3.4.2 Idiophones

The only idiophone described here will be the *jatung utang*. Other idiophones such as gongs, which are seldom played now and do not have a bearing on this thesis, are not discussed. The *jatung utang* is a wooden xylophone with 9-13 keys, made of bars of light wood, strung together with rope and suspended on top of a rectangular shaped trough. The player uses a pair of wooden beaters to hit the keys which are tuned to the anhemitonic pentatonic scale (*d r m s l*). A common tone set for 9 keys is, for example, *s, l, d r m s l d' r'*.

The instrument probably originated in the rice-fields, where 3-4 slabs of waste-wood suspended near the farm-hut were struck to scare away animals from the ripening grain. From this utilitarian function, the *jatung utang* gradually evolved into an instrument of entertainment. This is corroborated by Gorlinski (1993) and Liman Lawai (1995).

Dimensions are variable. One example, with the innovation of raised support from Uma Sambop (Plate 21) enabling the player to stand, had a total length of 137 cm while the length of the barred section was 71 cm.



**Plate 21: Jatung utang, Uma Sambop**

The *jatung utang* is often played in ensemble with *sape*, a second *jatung utang*, harmonica, and an assortment of other instruments such as transverse flutes, guitars, water-filled bottles, *lutong*

*kayu*, etc. As the *jatung utang* cannot alter its tuning (except by careful shaving of the wood slabs) a practical concern would be to have it tuned to the specific harmonicas used in the village. In Long Moh, I was told that the key of C is normally preferred, probably because of the prevalence of C major harmonicas in their area. However, this is not a universal practice. Of the four instruments commissioned for ITE Batu Lintang there is one each in C (Long Mekaba), D flat, D (Long Semiyang) and E flat (Uma Badang). While in Uma Badang (2004) the key chosen was E flat, as they were carefully tuning it to the pitch of a removable xylophone bar obtained from the local school<sup>35</sup>.

A partial transcription of Kasa Jok's rendition of *Det Diet* on the *jatung utang* in ensemble in Long Mekaba is given below. The innovative musician, finding himself without a partner (*jatung utang* is often played in duet), used a forked 'double-stick' in his left hand to play ostinato chords, and his right hand to play the melody, rendered at the impressive speed of  $\text{♩}=160$ .

**Excerpt 9: Excerpt from *jatung utang* accompaniment to *datun julud* (as played by Kasa Jok)**



The musical score consists of three staves of music. The top staff features a single melody line with eighth-note patterns. The bottom two staves provide harmonic support with eighth-note chords. The music is in 4/4 time, indicated by the time signature at the beginning of each staff. A key signature of one flat (B-flat) is also present at the start of each staff.

### 3.4.3 Aerophones

Two Kenyah aerophones, both almost extinct, will be described, the *keringut* or nose-flute and the *kedire*' or mouth-organ.

<sup>35</sup> 20 years ago, there was a project to supply every school with these instruments, although few teachers knew how to utilise them.

### 3.4.3.1 Keringut (nose flute)

The nose flute or *keringut* is rarely played in Kenyah villages nowadays. Together with the *kedire'*, *lutong* and *uding* (jew's harp), these instrumental traditions seem to have survived longer in Kayan tradition (personal observation 1996-1998). The *keringut* is made from bamboo, with an average length of 50 cm (Matusky and Tan, 2004:289) and played by directing air from one nostril across the small hole at the end of the tube. The other nostril is closed by pressing it on the instrument, or by stuffing it with a piece of rag (observed in Long Semiyang and Long Bemang). The melodies in the repertoire consist of short phrases in free rhythm (Matusky and Tan, 2004:289). The traditional repertoire of the instrument consisted primarily of an instrumental rendition of the death lament known as the *sidau* (Gorlinski, 1989:47).



**Plate 22: Baun Lenjau playing *keringut*, Long Semiyang, June 2004**

Baun Lenjau of Long Semiyang had not played the *keringut* for years, but made one especially for the purpose of my recording. It is a very private instrument, played at leisure for the family or purely for self-expression, usually early in the morning or late at night.

The following melody (Excerpt 10) was played by Baun after she had related the tragic story behind the tune. The tale (mentioned in Chapter 2) is of two doomed lovers who elope due to parental disapproval and commit suicide at Batu Lingep, a rocky outcrop near Long Semiyang. She also sang the associated song, which narrates the story. Both vocal and instrumental renditions were sensitively performed, movingly portraying the tragic mood of the tale. The melody, in line with Kenyah musical practice, was in the melancholy hemitonic *meno'* mode.

### Excerpt 10: Two phrases of a *keringut* melody as played by Baun Lenjau



The *keringut*, which had four finger-holes, exhibited a range of two octaves upward from middle C. The tone set was hemitonic pentatonic: C E F G (A) C' E' F' G' C'' or *d m f s (l) d' m' f' s'* *d''*. The A is bracketed as it seems to function as a bridge between what is basically the same tetratonic tune in two registers.

#### (a) Tone set and range of melody



#### (b) Tone set of basic melody for associated song



Although Baun Lenjau pitched her singing at the much lower key of E flat, the song employed the same tone set as the instrumental tune. The skeletal melody, revolving around *s f m d*, was almost identical to that of the instrumental version. The main difference was that it did not feature the florid ornamented passages present in the instrumental melody.

#### 3.4.3.2 *Kedire'* (mouth-organ)

The *kedire'* (known as *keluri/keledi* among the Kayan) was widely described and photographed as part of the Kenyah-Kayan tradition in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Hose (1993:127) noted that both *kedire'* and *uding*, and possibly the *sape* (he uses the term guitar), were used by young lovers to express romantic feelings. It consists of 6–7 bamboo tubes bound together in a circle and enclosed in a gourd wind chest. In ancient times the mouth-organ was carried from East Asia to West Asia and Europe and the acoustic principle of a free beating reed manifested in ‘contemporary Western instruments’ such as the harmonica and reed organ (Matusky and Tan, 2004:278).

“It is generally thought that the mouth-organ originated from Southeast Asia and that it is possibly the earliest musical instrument to produce harmony” (Matusky and Tan, 2004:278). This statement gives a clear indication as to the roots of harmony in Kenyah music tradition, which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Although widely played in the past<sup>36</sup>, the instrument is now almost obsolete. Its role has been usurped by other instruments such as the contemporary *sape* (personal communication, Biro’ Ato<sup>37</sup> and Imang Ajang) and the harmonica. Imang Ajang, one of the few exponents left in Sarawak, lives in the Kayan village of Long Laput. He demonstrated how the *keluri* player used to lead the Kayan long-dance, the *hivan joh* (equivalent in function to the Kenyah *saga lupa*). A similar dance was demonstrated to me later in Long Bedian, with the procession led by a *sape* player instead.



**Plate 23: Imang Ajang playing *kedire’/keluri*, Long Laput, 1998**

Although the Kenyah of Long Moh and Long Mekaba clearly remember playing the instruments, they no longer have any in their possession. Lian Jalong of Long Mekaba recalled that two couples would perform an older genre of dance, termed *saga kedire*, to the accompaniment of these instruments. These older, more percussive versions of dance had been demonstrated to me before by both Kayan (in Long Bemang Long Lama) and Kenyah exponents (in Long Moh). This ancient instrument features a drone accompaniment to pentatonic melodies. This musical texture is mirrored in vocal genres such as *kerintuk* and *suket*, which feature a soloist in a hemitonic pentatonic scale, and a supporting drone chorus.

<sup>36</sup> Gorlinski (1989:54) notes its use in accompaniment of the masked dance *kanjet udo’*.

<sup>37</sup> A Kenyah immigrant from the Apo Kayan married to a Kayan woman in Long Lama.

Excerpt 11 shows an approximate transcription of a melody played by Imang Ajang (Plate 23). Here, notes approximating F# B C# D# F# produce the solfa pattern: *s, d r m s*. There is a drone on the lower F#, taken as the tonal centre.

### **Excerpt 11: Excerpt from a *kedire'* tune as played by Imang Ajang**

$\text{♩} = 76$



#### **3.4.4 Membranophones**

Membranophones do not play any significant part in contemporary Kenyah music, although they used to be prominent in accompaniment to *adet pu'un* and *Bungan* ceremonies such as the *mamat* and in accompaniment of dances associated with *bali dayong*.

I have only witnessed one drum, the *jatung*, being utilized. This long single-headed barrel drum is normally suspended along the sides of the *use*. It was used more widely in the past in accompaniment of dance and in ritual ceremonies such as the *mamat*. In Long Moh, a village with no telephones, it is still used to send out important messages to the people, such as to summon them for meetings, or to inform them about a death in the village. There are four *jatung* in Long Moh. One hangs along the verandah of the main longhouse, another on the verandah of the former Penghulu's longhouse. Another two *jatung* are kept by the small Bungan community (only five families in Long Moh remain Bungan) at Long Karing, upstream on the river Moh, which was the previous site for the village.

The two *jatung* in Long Karing are kept in the Bungan sanctuary (a simple shed housing all the sacred items), mainly for ritual purposes. One instrument is believed to be nearly 200 years old, having been carried all the way from the Silat<sup>38</sup> (some say it was originally brought from the Iwan Basin). It measures 2.2 m in length and 18 cm in diameter at the wider end (Plate 24).

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<sup>38</sup> The Silat is a tributary of the Baram, where the Lepo' Tau had several earlier settlements, as noted in tables 2.5 and 2.6.



**Plate 24: Ancient *jatung* in Long Karing, said to have been carried from the Iwan basin**

In Long Karing, I witnessed one drum being played during the *mamat kediut* ceremony. While we were there, Lian and Ukeng also demonstrated several other rhythms to me. Some were played by an individual drum, while others were meant to be played by two or more drums in combination. Most rhythms/rhythm combinations have specific names, e.g. *Lenjau Tugau*, *Lenjau Parit* and *Letutu Luta 'an*. The rhythmic patterns included even beats from 8-24 times in succession, followed by syncopated groupings, changes in tempo, crescendos and drum-rolls.

Transcription 10 shows two of the rhythm patterns used in *Letutu*, the accompaniment for *bali dayong* dances performed during *mamat bio*.

#### **Transcription 10: Examples of *Mamat jatung* rhythms**

Jatung (i)

Jatung (ii)

### **3.5 THE CHANGING MUSICAL LANDSCAPE**

Over the last few decades, Kenyah music has undergone significant changes, four of which are described in this section, as they have a bearing on how and why the songs could be taught in schools.

### 3.5.1 Changes in Roles of *Belian Dado'*

In a recent paper Gorlinski (2005:28) noted that societal changes have resulted in a change in status for *belian dado'*. These songs were previously regarded with some disdain among the seniors, but with the widespread conversion to Christianity and blurring of class boundaries, they have now become the defining songs, or *belian lan* for the Kenyah. Their less complex structure in comparison to older genres such as *kerintuk* makes them easily accessible to non-Kenyah.

*The recent compilation of arrangements of belian dadu' by Malaysian music educator, Chong Pek Lin (1997) is a case in point. Aside from their egalitarian character and technical accessibility, that belian dadu', unlike kerintuk, are not readily suggestive of any specific spiritual orientation also makes them "safe" for any setting ... In the 21st century, belian dadu' are perfect for public presentation and participation, and as such, are the ultimate "real songs," the canonic material of contemporary Kenyah society ... (Gorlinski, 2005:29).*

### 3.5.2 New Instruments and Rise in Prominence of Specific Instruments

The appearance of new instruments which combine characteristics of both traditional and contemporary Western instruments has been noted in several villages. The *sape bio* (mentioned in 3.4.1), along with other instruments, were observed in Uma Baka' as part of their large ensemble.

The *teluhan tubut* is an idiophonic instrument made of bamboo and rubber and inspired by the traditional bamboo *tangbut*.<sup>39</sup> Unlike its precursor, this contemporary innovation produces exact tempered intervals: *s, d r m*. As in other ensembles in the Baram, the ensemble included Western instruments such as the harmonica and maracas. Instead of buying commercial guitars, they made their own modified banjos, quaintly named *sape labi* (literally, 'turtle' *sape*).

Aside from two *det diet* tunes, their repertoire consisted mainly of hymn tunes, and Western and Malay folk-tunes. As in the Baram, tunes such as the pentatonic *Apa Guna Marah-marah*<sup>40</sup> have been acculturated into the Kenyah dance music repertoire. There were also several diatonic tunes in the repertoire (both Malay and Western) for which these instruments rendered a modified version of the melodies, e.g. *Lenggang Kangkong*<sup>41</sup>. The musicians at this SIB longhouse were somewhat reluctant to sing traditional Kenyah songs, saying they had forgotten or were no longer interested in them, expressing a preference to perform 'church music'. This was partly due to the connection of traditional song to alcohol consumption (abhorred by the evangelist SIB church).

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<sup>39</sup> Matusky and Tan (2004:207) describe the original form of the instrument.

<sup>40</sup> Malay lyrics used in Kenyah churches set to the tune of *Somebody's Knocking at Your Door*.

<sup>41</sup> Well-known Malay/Indonesian folksong in major scale.



**Plate 25: Uma Baka' ensemble, 2004: *Teluhan tubut*, harmonicas, *jatung utang* and home-made guitars (*sape labi*)**

**Table 3.2: Instruments in the Uma Baka' ensemble**

No.	Name of instrument (number of instruments in ensemble)	Category	Scale	Musicians
1	<i>sape</i> (2)	chordophone	<i>d r m s l</i> or <i>r f s l t</i>	Iong Laing Lirang Wan
2	<i>jatung utang</i> (2)	xylophones shaped and decorated to resemble boats	<i>d r m s l d'</i>	Ulut Libut Adan Lujang
3	<i>sape bio</i>	chordophone (one-string)	<i>d r m f s l t d'</i> (originally pentatonic )	Thomas Merang Rob Chok
4	<i>teluhan tubut</i>	idiophone	<i>s, d r m</i>	Amus Atok
5	<i>suling</i>	aerophone; home-made transverse flute	<i>d r m f s l t d'</i>	Tuloi Along
6	<i>sape labi</i> ('turtle' <i>sape</i> ) (2)	chordophone; modified home-made guitars, with unique shapes	as in guitar	Udip Wan Bang Ibon
7	<i>ichuk</i> (harmonica) (2)	aerophones (harmonica)	as in harmonica	Sudin Lian Eri Liau
8	<i>urang</i> (maracas)	idiophone		Ubin Ape

The rise in popularity of other instruments has led, however, to a decline in the prominence of the *sape*. The *sape* is a naturally soft, sensitive instrument, best appreciated unamplified. In combination with other, louder instruments such as the *jatung utang*, harmonica and guitar, its voice

is overwhelmed, unless, as is increasingly practised now, it is amplified with the employment of pick-ups.

With the increasing popularity of the *jatung utang*<sup>42</sup>, aside from the increased volume of sound, the repertoire of the dance music has also changed. As the *jatung utang* can only play in a fixed pitch *do-pentatonic* scale, the *sape*, if played in combination, is unable to change tone-sets, as was previously done, by adjusting the position of frets to either hemitonic or anhemitonic scales, according to the dance being performed. The player is also confined to the specific key to which the *jatung utang* is tuned.

### 3.5.3 Combining Vocal and Instrumental Elements

In Kenyah traditional music culture, vocal and instrumental music were mutually exclusive. Recently, however, there seem to be concerted efforts to combine song with instrumental accompaniment. Several instances are related below.

In Uma Badang, January 2008, the team from ITE Batu Lintang<sup>43</sup> were invited to join in the singing of *belian dado'* (or *badi* in their language), while the attendant ensemble with loudly amplified *sape* accompanied the medley of songs. The resulting combination was disastrous. There was almost no coordination between the singers (who danced merrily along the length of the veranda) and the musicians. The *sape* players did not know which songs were to be sung, could not coordinate a suitable key, and had trouble with the amplifiers. They had also pre-tuned their instruments to the fixed pitch of the *jatung utang*. Even if they tried to change their pitch to match the singers, this would have been out of tune with the *jatung utang*.

On my first night in Long Moh in January 2009, Ulau summoned her young nieces, who were back from boarding school for a one-week break, and other relatives to learn a choreographed version of dance to accompany *Ilun Kuai*<sup>44</sup>. Although this was newly choreographed, I noted similarities to Uma Sambop movements for the *belian dekieng* song *Kuai Maping* (The respective transcriptions and similarities between the songs are described in Chapter 4). She also had ambitious plans for a vocal-cum-instrumental and dance performance of *Ilun Kuai*. This had never been attempted before in Long Moh. She enlisted the cooperation of her nephew Edmund Ngau<sup>45</sup>, a talented *sape* and *jatung utang* player, and his uncle Arang, a regular member of ensembles in Long Moh. They encountered difficulties in combining, as the Kenyah are used to singing *a capella*, while the *sape* is difficult to

<sup>42</sup> Gorlinski (1989:309) notes that, with regard to the Uma' Jalan, the *sape* continues to decline in popularity while the *jatung utang* is the preferred instrument.

<sup>43</sup> During field research as part of the ISME-Gibson project.

<sup>44</sup> I have classified *Ilun Kuai* as a *belian dado'* as I have observed it rendered with others in a series of songs performed with *tu'ut dado'* in various Kenyah villages.

<sup>45</sup> Also known as Suok and recently returned from the city of Miri after unsuccessfully trying to establish a music business there.

‘retune’ to different keys to suit the vocalists’ range. After repeated attempts, the experiment was abandoned, especially as heavy rain on the zinc roof made it impossible to hear the *sape*.

Successful combinations, however, have been achieved, with considerable practice, and choosing one fixed key for the songs. In a commercial *sape* music album Matthew Ngau Jau included two *belian dado*’ in which he sang the melody and traditional harmony in separate tracks, and then superimposed them onto his instrumental *sape* track. While in the Catholic parish of Miri, Suok and his friends had included *jatung utang* and *sape* accompaniment to a choral version of *Amai Ilu Dalem Surga* (the Lord’s prayer in Kenyah set to a modified Chinese melody-transcription given in Chapter 4) in a recording produced by the music ministry of the church. Significantly, they only managed to use the traditional instruments for one song. All the other hymns (some of which were modified *belian dado*) were accompanied by Western instruments such as guitar and keyboard. The college choir at ITE Batu Lintang have successfully presented various performances accompanied by *sape* and *jatung utang* (described in Chapter 6), where the choice of songs was limited to one key.

### 3.5.4 Displacement of Traditional Repertoire and Disappearance of Harmony

Nowadays, with access to modern influences, competing repertoire from outside may displace traditional repertoire. In 2005, I witnessed a huge multi-village gathering during the Upper Baram Easter festival (hosted annually in turn by different villages) during which there were inter-village competitions in, among other things, dance and choral singing. Such occasions in the past would have resulted in much exchange of repertoire. That year, I was disappointed to note that almost all the ‘choir-songs’ were contemporary Western hymn tunes, none sung in harmony. The songs were accompanied by guitar and keyboard ensembles, while the dancers from the visiting villages used taped music. As the rest of the time was taken up with religious activities and other competitions, there was (except for one short session) little opportunity to hold the normal *belian dado*’ sessions, much to our chagrin as friends from overseas had come specifically to witness these songs<sup>46</sup>.

## 3.6 SUMMARY

The Kenyah have a rich and varied vocal and instrumental repertoire, with rhythms and melodies easily transcribed in classical western staff notation. As will be shown in Chapter 4, many of the songs have attractive melodies and lyrics which are suitable for use in school-based music education. The connection between instrumental melody and developments in vocal melody and harmony will be discussed in Chapter 5.

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<sup>46</sup> Thus, it would seem that Jordania’s (2006:210) observation that the “tradition of polyphonic singing is gradually disappearing on our planet” rings true for the Kenyah tradition.

# CHAPTER 4

## ANALYSIS OF THE SONGS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF MUSIC EDUCATION

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As the ultimate goal of this thesis is the application of Kenyah songs in an educational context, the approach to the analysis will be a pedagogical one. The analysis I have employed is based on the Kodály-method of analyzing folk-songs. Kodály curricula are structured by beginning with a repertoire of folk-songs (Choksy, 1988). This repertoire is incorporated into lessons (planned for sequential development of musical skills) based on the frequency and occurrence of various musical elements such as rhythmic, melodic and harmonic patterns. This approach is in line with the new Malaysian curriculum for Primary schools<sup>1</sup>

The songs will be analyzed according to category. The basic melodic structures of all the songs documented have been analyzed and summarized in Tables 4.1–4.9. A few selected examples will be used for detailed analysis according to each of the following aspects: text, harmony, rhythm and melodic aspects (tonality, ambitus, analysis of intervals, form). Apart from pedagogical analysis, the consideration of musical elements, text and context of performance will also be related to aspects of Kenyah culture and history, exchange of repertoire between Kenyah subgroups and influences from other cultures.

The majority of the songs, many of which evolved in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, are compatible with so-called Western tuning. The exceptions are marked with an asterisk in the tables.

### 4.1 ANALYSIS OF *BELIAN DADO'* AND *BELIAN MENAT KANJET*: TEXT, MUSICAL STRUCTURE AND APPLICATION TO MUSIC EDUCATION

*Belian dado'*, which make up the bulk of the songs documented, are sung by the whole community at social gatherings. To non-Kenyah, they are the easiest to appreciate as they are melodious, rhythmic and often sung in harmony. The overall summary of the musicological features of both *belian dado'* and *belian menat kanjet* is presented in Tables 4.1–4.7. For analysis purposes, it is less problematic to treat them as one category as there is some overlap, with similar melodies appearing in both categories.

For songs without ‘assigned titles’, I have used recurring phrases or themes in the text. Songs with different melodies, but sharing the same title, are differentiated by designation as numbered versions, or identified by the village where they were recorded.

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<sup>1</sup> Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah, introduced three years ago.

**Table 4.1 Belian dado' and belian menat kanjet: Tonal structure/rhythm**

	Title of Song	Tone set <sup>2</sup>	Mode	Ambitus	Metre
1	<i>Abe Na'on Nekun</i>	<b>s</b> <u>t</u> <b>d r m f</b> ( <b>d</b> m f s l t a)	So-hexatonic <sup>3</sup>	7	4/4
2	<i>Along</i> (Long Selatong)	M: <u>s</u> <b>l d r m s</b> H: s l d'	Do-pentatonic <sup>4</sup>	8	4/4
3	<i>Are Ruti</i>	M: <u>l</u> <b>d r m s l d'</b> H: d s l d'	Do-pentatonic	10	4/4
4	<i>Ateklan</i>	M: <u>s</u> <b>l d r m s</b> H: s l t d'	Do-pentatonic	8	4/4
5	<i>Badi Menat Kanjet</i>	<u>l</u> <b>d r m s l d'</b>	Do-pentatonic	10	2/4
6	<i>Bampa Lale</i>	<b>d r m s l d' r' m'</b>	Do-pentatonic	10	2/4
7	<i>Bangen-bangen</i>	M: <b>d r m s l d'</b> H: s l d' r' m'	Do-pentatonic	8	4/4 ; 2/4
8	<i>Belabau Alih Silon</i>	M: <u>l</u> <b>d r m s l</b> H: d' l s	Do-pentatonic	8	4/4;2/4
9	<i>Bujang Majan</i>	<b>d r m s l d' r' m'</b>	Do-pentatonic	10	4/4
10a <sup>5</sup>	<i>Burung Kechin</i> version 1a	M: <u>s</u> <b>l d r m s l d'</b> H: s l d'	Do-pentatonic	11	2/4
10b	<i>Burung Kechin</i> version 1b	M: <b>d r m s l d' r' m'</b> H: s l d'	Do-pentatonic	10	
11	<i>Burung Kechin</i> version 2	<b>d r m f s l d'</b>	Incomplete Major	8	4/4
12	<i>Chin M'bi</i>	M: <u>s</u> <b>l t d r m s</b> H: d m s l d'	Major	8	4/4
13	<i>Hip Balip</i> version 1	<b>m s d r m s</b>	Do-pentatonic	8	4/4
14	<i>Hip Balip</i> version 2	<b>d r m s l d'</b>	Do-pentatonic	8	3/4;2/4;4/4
15	<i>Iko Kenai</i>	<u>l</u> <b>d r m f s l t d'</b>	Major	10	4/4 ; 2/4
16	<i>Ilun Kuai</i>	M: <b>m s l d r m</b> H: <u>l</u> d r	So-pentatonic	8	4/4
17	<i>Ina Pikok Balu</i>	<b>r f s l t d r'</b>	Re-hexatonic	8	4/4
18	<i>Ju Habai</i>	M: <b>d r m f s l t d'</b> H: m f s l t d' r' m'	Major	8	4/4
19	<i>Kun Nelan-e</i>	<u>s</u> <b>l d r m s l</b>	Do-pentatonic	9	4/4
20	<i>Lan-e</i> version 1 (Baram)	M: <u>s</u> <b>l d r m s l</b> H: r m s l d' r'	Do-pentatonic	9	4/4 ; 2/4
21	<i>Lan-e</i> version 2 (Baram)	M: <b>d r m s l d'</b> H: s l d' r' m'	Do-pentatonic	8	4/4 ; 2/4
22	<i>Lan-e</i> (version 3) (Belaga)	M: <u>s</u> <b>d r m s l d'</b> H: s l d' r' m'	Do-pentatonic	11	4/4
23	<i>Lan-e Tuyang</i> version 1	M: <u>s</u> <b>l d r m s</b> H: <u>s</u> <b>d r m s l d'</b>	Re-pentatonic	8	4/4 ; 2/4
24	<i>Lan-e Tuyang</i> version 2	M: <u>s</u> <b>l t d r m s l</b> H: <u>s</u> <b>l d r m s</b>	Major	9	4/4

<sup>2</sup> M = melody; H = harmony; Ending tone: bold font; s denotes low so, l denotes low la, etc. I use this to avoid confusion with commas.

<sup>3</sup> Six-tone mode with so as tonal centre.

<sup>4</sup> Anhemitonic do-pentatonic: Five-tone gapped mode with no semitones; do as tonal centre.

<sup>5</sup> 10a and 10b are slight variants of the same song from two different villages. They could even be complementary, e.g. the second version sung as descant to the first. For purposes of analysis in this chapter, they are considered as one song.

	Title of Song	Tone set	Mode	Ambitus	Metre
25	<i>Liling</i> version 1 (Baram/Belaga)	M: <u>s</u> l d r m s l d' H: s l d'	<i>Do-pentatonic</i>	11	4/4
26	<i>Liling</i> version 2 (Uma Bakong )	<u>s</u> l d r m s l d'	<i>Do-pentatonic</i>	11	4/4
27	<i>Londe Kun Along</i> ( <i>Ini lan Di Kuo</i> )	M: s l d r m s H: d r m s	<i>So-pentatonic</i>	8	4/4
28	<i>Miling Mubai</i>	<u>s</u> d r m s l d'r'	<i>So-pentatonic</i>	12	4/4
29	<i>Mudung Ina</i>	<u>l</u> d r m s	<i>Do-pentatonic</i>	8	2/4
30	<i>Na'at Ne Telu</i>	<u>l</u> d r m s l d'r' m'	<i>Do-pentatonic</i>	12	4/4
31	<i>Nai Bilun Merika</i>	<u>s</u> d r m s d'	<i>Do-pentatonic</i>	11	2/4
32	<i>Nalo Ina Tuyang</i>	M: <u>m</u> s l d r m s H: m s l t d'	<i>Do-pentatonic</i>	10	4/4
33	<i>Na'on Name Inu</i>	d r m s l d'	<i>Do-pentatonic</i>	8	4/4 ; 2/4
34	<i>Nelan De Tiang</i>	<u>m</u> s l d r m s	<i>Do-pentatonic</i>	10	4/4 ; 2/4
35	<i>Nombor Satu,Nombor Dua</i>	<u>s</u> l d r m s l	<i>Do-pentatonic</i>	9	2/4
36	<i>Pa' Ali</i>	d r m s l d'r' m'	<i>So-pentatonic</i>	10	4/4
37	<i>Saping Sapau</i>	M: l d r m s H: s l d'	<i>Do-pentatonic</i>	7	4/4
38	<i>Sayang Dau Kenai Tawai</i>	<u>s</u> l d r m f s l t d'	Major	11	4/4
39	<i>Singget Lan Batung</i>	d r m s l d'r' m'	<i>Do-pentatonic</i>	10	4/4
40	<i>Silon Londe</i> (Long Tungan)	d r m s l d'	<i>Do-pentatonic</i>	8	4/4
41	<i>Taroi</i>	<u>s</u> t d r f s' l' (d m f s ta d r')	<i>So-hexatonic</i>	9	4/4
42	<i>Telu Tiang</i> version 1 (Long Moh)	<u>t</u> d r m f s' l'	Major	7	4/4
43	<i>Telu Tiang</i> version 2 (Uma Sambop)	M: <u>m</u> s l d r m s l H: s l d'	<i>Do-pentatonic</i>	11	2/4
44	<i>Tiang Ne Lan-e</i>	<u>d</u> r m s l d r m	<i>Do-pentatonic</i>	10	2/4
45	<i>Tuja</i>	r f s l t (s ta d r m )	Hemitonic <i>so-pentatonic</i>	6	4/4
46	<i>Ule Kun Along</i>	<u>l</u> d r m	<i>La-tetratonic</i>	5	4/4
47	<i>Ule Lan Lian</i>	d r m s l d'r' m'	<i>Do-pentatonic</i>	10	4/4

#### 4.1.1 Song Texts and Themes

An examination of the *belian dado'* documented reveals an assortment of themes (see Table 4.2) reflecting various aspects of Kenyah culture. The themes for the songs were derived by consideration of both the text of the recurring chorus and that of the verses.

**Table 4.2 Belian dado': Themes**

	Theme/original context	Some examples
1	Atmosphere of the gathering	<i>Lan-e</i> (version 1,2 and 3), <i>Burung Kechin Lan-e Tuyang</i> , <i>Ateklan</i> , <i>Nalo Ina Tuyang</i>
2	Welcoming guests/getting to know you	<i>Iko Kenai</i> , <i>Nelan De Tiang</i>
3	Group dance; calling on people to dance (including <i>belian menat kanjet</i> )	<i>Liling</i> (both versions), <i>Chin M'bi Miling Mubai</i>
4	Longing for absent friends/farewell/sadness/longing for absent love	<i>Bampa Lale</i> , <i>Kun Nelan-e,Telu Tiang Along</i> , <i>Ule Kun Along</i>

	<b>Theme/original context</b>	<b>Some examples</b>
5	Love-song (declaration of love)	<i>Sayang Dau Kenai Tawai, Na'at Ne Telu</i>
6	Featuring a woman (legendary beauty, others)	<i>Are Ruti, Tuja, Taroi</i>
7	Historical (e.g. escaping head-hunters; the end of World War II )	<i>Abe Na'on Nekun, Nai Bilun Merika</i>
8	Nature	<i>Belabau Alih Silon</i> (squirrel), <i>Ilun Kuai</i> (Argus pheasant), <i>Mudung Ina</i> (mountain)
9	Boat-song	<i>Nombor Satu, Nombor Dua</i>
10	Communal activity/Work-song	<i>Hip Balip, Singget Batung</i>

Some songs display a fixed ‘content’ (e.g. *Mudung Ina* and *Nai Bilun Merika*) but free improvisation of verses applies in most songs. This improvisation is so prevalent that often only the chorus is left intact with the original lyrics, for instance in the song *Sayang Dau Kenai Tawai*<sup>6</sup> (Chong, 1997: 96-97) the verse below refers to the participants dancing in formation as they sing, but the chorus reveals that it is a love-song, the poignancy of which is expressed in a soaring melody:

<b>Lyrics</b>	<b>Translation</b>
<i>Petuk julud</i>	We walk in a file
<i>Telu tiang sanam buket</i>	My friends, like a row of red ants
<i>Sanam buket, sanam buket ngalang daan</i>	Red ants, red ants, trailing on a branch
<b>Chorus:</b>	<b>Chorus:</b>
<i>Nelane, nelane</i>	Truly so, my beloved,
<i>Utan sayang, sayang dau kenai tawai</i>	My love is so deep, it cannot be spoken

A majority of the songs fall into themes 1–3. These emphasize the joy of being together, welcoming guests and the gaiety of the singing and dancing. A significant number feature sadness and longing as their main themes. It must be noted, however, that nostalgic sentiment and reminiscence of times gone by is an underlying theme in many of the songs with “happy” themes as well, e.g. in the first verse of *Lan-e* version 2 described in Chapter 3. Reciprocally, songs with sad themes also contain some verses describing the joy of being together. The resultant emotional duality, simultaneously portraying both joy and longing, is a common characteristic of Kenyah song<sup>7</sup>.

Six *belian dado*’ from various villages will be presented first to illustrate the variety of themes. This is followed by two *belian menat kanjet* (songs of invitation to solo dancers to perform). Songs with other themes will be discussed later under subsequent sections dealing with melodic, harmonic and other features. To avoid repetition, however, interesting melodic and harmonic features from these songs will also be discussed briefly. The terms and abbreviations used (given below) are adapted from song-analysis conventions used by educators employing the Kodály approach. A full analysis of form for all the songs in this category is given in 4.1.4 .4 (melodic aspects: analysis of form).

<sup>6</sup> Appendix B, Transcription 59.

<sup>7</sup> also noted by Gorlinski (1993).

### **Terms and abbreviations used in analysis of forms**

Bipodic: All phrases consist of 2 bars

Tripodic: All phrases consist of 3 bars

Tetrapodic: All phrases consist of 4 bars

Heteropodic: Phrases are of differing length

A, B, C and D denote different phrases

A A denotes an exact repetition

Av denotes a close variant of A (a difference in nuance)

Ax denotes an almost exact repetition of A with an extension – I have added this category as this feature appears so often in Kenyah songs

Ba (i.e. subscript a) denotes partial repetition from Phrase A, or imitation.

### **Terms and short forms used in the analysis of intervals**

Code	m2	M2	m3	M3	P4	P5	M6	P8
Interval	Minor 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Major 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Minor 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Major 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Perfect 4 <sup>th</sup>	Perfect 5 <sup>th</sup>	Major 6 <sup>th</sup>	Octave

(a) **Lan-e version 3** (as sung in Uma Sambop)

**Theme:** Atmosphere of gathering

### Lyrics

1. *Itung na'ikem tapi*  
*Ikem tiang ngan sada baiee*  
*Sada baiee sungai lan kanan*  
**Chorus:** *Han ne lane ,*  
*Lane-e –e*
2. *Itung na' ikem lundo*  
*Ini tiang kenda lan lao,*  
*Kenda lao kayu lan jian*
3. *Liling na' telu liwet*  
*Telu tiang kenda lan tuket*  
*Kenda tuket maput lan bulan*
4. *Bete' lan nemong*  
*Telu tiang singget lan batung,*  
*Singget batung usah lan inan*

### Translation

It is as if you stopped to rest  
By the banks of the river  
By the banks of the mighty river  
**Chorus:** Truly so,  
Truly so

It's just as if you sleep  
My friends, under a tree  
Under this humble roof

We circle back and forth  
My friends beneath the beams  
Beneath the smooth-ended beams

Come, everyone take part  
My friends all together now  
Together now as one

### Transcription 11: *Lan-e* version 3 (Chong, 2006:22)

$\text{♩} = 76$



Trad. Descant

Melody

I - tung na' i-kem ta - pi      i - kem ti - ang ngan sa - da\_\_\_\_ bai\_\_\_\_

Desc.

su - ngai lan ka - nan

Mel.

ee sa - da bai - ee su - ngai lan ka - nan Ah\_\_\_\_

7

Desc.

Han ne - lan - e Lan - e\_\_\_\_\_

Mel.

Han ne - lan - e Lan - e\_\_\_\_\_

## Musical features

Tone-set: M: s **d** r m s l d'

H: s l d' r'm'

Metre: quadruple

Tonal centre: *do*

Mode: *do*-pentatonic

Ambitus: 11

Intervals: M2, m3, P4

Form: A Av B C D

No. of phrases: 5      Podia: Bipodic (2.2.2.2.2)

This song was performed along with others in typical *belian dado*' style in Uma Sambop, Belaga (where such songs are known as *badi*) with the characteristic *stamp shuffle, step shuffle* movements.

## Textual and cultural features

The first two verses reflect on the Kenyah norms of courtesy toward guests. They humbly disparage the simple lodgings provided, indirectly honouring guests by assuring them they are being provided with the best, a form of courtesy known as *nyebalang* (Gorlinski, 1995:270). This is corroborated by Galvin (1966a:185) who explains that it is considered good etiquette to underestimate your capacities, e.g. *Na'on inu inu na' iko* (I have nothing to give you). Both the verses begin with the Malay word *Itung*<sup>8</sup> used here in the colloquial sense ‘take it as if’.

The third verse is a common *ipet* portraying the long-dance (*tu'ut dado*'), and the reference to architectural features of the longhouse is a common one, reflecting the value of craftsmanship in Kenyah culture. The last verse is an exhortation for all to join in the fun. This verse effectively summarizes the essential spirit of Kenyah choral singing; a sense of ‘oneness’ experienced by all participants.

## Pedagogical interest

Each of the verses could be the starting point for a discussion on various aspects of Kenyah culture; general themes such as hospitality to guests in the rural areas, types of dwellings, and participation in community events.

The song exhibits the musical features of a typical *lan-e* song, displaying pentatonic tonality and simple two-part harmony. For teaching purposes, it constitutes a fairly simple two-part exercise in harmony: for example, in bars 6-7 the descant comes in with the pattern *s d' d' d l s* while the melody continues with *m s s s m r*. Both patterns are tuneful and easy to teach with solfa and hand-signs.

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<sup>8</sup> *Hitung* in formal Malay.

**(b) Burung Kechin version 1a** (as sung in Long Mekaba) **Theme:** Nature/sweetheart

**Lyrics**

**Chorus:**

*Burung kechin chang  
Burung kechin  
Burung kechin chang tuyang  
Burung Kechin*

**Translation**

**Chorus:**

O little tiny bird,  
O little bird,  
O little bird, my friend  
This tiny little bird

1. *Neti tua lo' tepat tuyang*  
*Nesung sala*  
*Nesung sala, nesung sala*  
*Sapang janan*<sup>9</sup> My friends, we wish to express  
Apologies,  
Apologies for all that we  
Could not provide
2. *Pela nyalau lo' tepat panak*<sup>10</sup>  
*Kena lurau*  
*Kena lurau, kena lurau,*  
*Kiep matan* Let's entertain our guests,  
Before they sleep,  
Before they sleep, before they sleep  
And close their eyes
3. *Pela tuya lo' tepat panak*  
*Kusun aba*  
*Kusun aba, kusun aba*  
*Nyambung bu'an* We play to pass the time  
Out on the farm  
Out on the farm, trees with sweet  
Fruit and betel nuts

**Transcription 12: Burung Kechin version 1a** (Chong, 2006:11)

$\text{♩} = 90$

Chorus



Bu - rung ke - chin - - chang tu - yang bu - rung ke - chin

5



Bu - rung ke - chin - - chang tu - yang bu - rung ke - chin

9 Verse

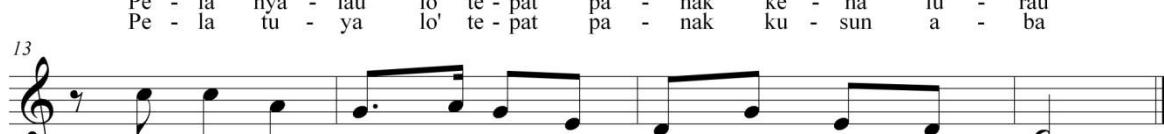


Ne - ti tu - a lo' te - pat tu - yang ne - sung sa - la

Pe - la nya - lau lo' te - pat pa - nak ne - na sun sa - la

Pe - la tu - ya lo' te - pat pa - nak ku - sun a - rau ba

13



Ne - sung sa - la ne-song sa - la sa - pang ja - tan

Ke - na lu - rau ke - na lu - rau sa - pang ja - tan

Ku - sun a - ba ku - sun a - ba nyam - bung ma - tan

<sup>9</sup> Literally, ‘junction of a road’, either for assonance, or to emphasise the humble dwellings.

<sup>10</sup> to entertain at a family gathering.

## Musical features

Tone-set: <i>g l d r m s l d'</i>	Metre: duple	Ambitus: 11
Tonal centre: <i>do</i>	Mode: <i>do</i> -pentatonic	Intervals: M2, m3, P4
No. of phrases: 4	Form: A Av B Av	Podia: tetrapodic (4.4.4.4)

## Textual and cultural features

This version of the song was recorded at Long Mekaba, but I have heard it sung with melodic and textual variations at Uma Badang, Long Moh, Long San and Long Selatong. Initially I thought the song might have been dedicated to a bird, but learnt from informants<sup>11</sup> that birds are also common metaphors for sweethearts, thus indicating its origin as a love-song. The first two verses of *Burung Kechin* reflect Kenyah attitudes toward hospitality and courtesy. In the first verse, there are apologies for their humble lodgings (again demonstrating *nyebalang* – the Kenyah way of honouring guests), while the importance of entertainment is emphasised in verse 2. Visitors to a longhouse should feel greatly honoured if they are kept awake the whole night with songs and dance. The last verse shows that the songs are also sung during leisure hours at the farms, and hint at the sense of playfulness that the Kenyah bring to many aspects of their life.

## Pedagogical interest

As with most *belian dado*' the tone set is *do*-pentatonic and this particular melody has balanced phrases and simple rhythmic patterns which appeal to young children. Unlike most songs in this category, which are sung at a moderate tempo, *Burung Kechin* is always sung at a lively pace, with robust stamping and shuffling movements.

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<sup>11</sup> Ulau Lupa and Baun Bilung.

(c) *Nai Bilun Merika* (as sung in Long Mekaba)      Theme: Historical

Lyrics	Translation
1.	<p><i>Nai bilun Merika</i>  <i>Pet surat ka Long Tuah</i>  <i>Pala' Tama Asong Angang</i></p>
	<p><b>Chorus:</b>  <i>Damai!</i></p>
	<p><i>Dan masat sikam barang<sup>13</sup></i>  <i>Sama tunangan sayang</i></p>
	<p><b>Chorus:</b>  <i>Peace!</i></p>
	<p><i>Strolling and collecting parcels</i>  <i>With my beloved fiancée</i></p>
2.	<p><i>Nai Bilun Merika Syarikat</i>  <i>Pet surat Ka' Long Lat</i>  <i>Lat piping langan</i></p>
	<p>Here comes the plane from United States  Dropping letters at Long Lat</p>
	<p>Swift as the dart of a blowpipe</p>
3.	<p><i>Leping Bila' kun Talip</i>  <i>Kelap kaba'</i>  <i>Takut tuan nyelapang</i></p>
	<p>“Pale as a ghost was I” said Talip<sup>14</sup>,  “I ran into hiding because</p>
	<p>I was afraid you would shoot me sir”</p>

**Transcription 13: *Nai Bilun Merika*** (Chong, 2006:31)

$\text{♩} = 63$

Nai bi lun Merika Sya ri kat Pet su rat ka - Long Tu ah pa la Ta ma A  
 Nai bi lun - Merika Sya ri kat - Pet su rat ka - Long - Lat pa lat pi -  
 Le ping bi la' kun Ta lip ke - lap - ka - ba ta kut tu an -

5

song ping nye A la - ngan pang Da Da Da Dan Dan Dan ma -

9

sat sat sat Si Si Si - kam - kam - rang rang rang sa sa sa - ma ma ma tu tu tu na na na - ngan ngan ngan sa sa sa - yang yang yang

## Musical features

Tone-set: *s, d r m s l d'*      Metre: duple

Tonal centre: *do*

Mode: *do*-pentatonic

Ambitus: 11

Intervals: M2, m3, P4

Form: A Av B C

No. of phrases: 4

#### **Podia: Heteropodic (2.2.4.4)**

<sup>12</sup> Tama' Asong was a high ranking chief. Long Tuah and Long Lat are villages in East Kalimantan.

<sup>13</sup> *Si kam barang* may be a corruption of vernacular Malay *tikam barang* – collecting parcels of supplies dropped by the planes.

<sup>14</sup> describes the fright of a villager at seeing an army officer (Tom Harrisson) parachute into a tree.

## Textual and historical features

This unusual song commemorates the end of World War II. After the Japanese had officially surrendered at the end of the war, allied planes air-dropped personnel and supplies at selected villages in the highlands on both sides of the present Malaysian-Indonesian border. After years of hardship under Japanese occupation, sheer joy and relief must have inspired the composition of this song. It corroborates the events described in Harrisson (2007: 429-434). In this memoir, Harrisson describes his adventures leading a section of “Semut I”, one of several groups of local ‘liberators’ led by allied personnel. It was the occasion of his parachute getting caught in a tree near a steep ravine and being rescued by Kenyah on the Indonesian<sup>15</sup> side of the border that is immortalized in this song.

*... I could no longer feel my body below the waist, where the harness and the pressure of suspension held me as in a vice of pure misery ... the extraordinary sight of a small yellow man, wearing only a loin-cloth and a cap with a hornbill feather, perched in my tree-top on the theory – as I subsequently learned – that if he unhooked the ‘chute it would open again before it hit the ground. He was trying to free me and it ... (Harrisson, 2007:429).*

This song is an example of one of many *belian dado*’ originating in Kalimantan, then traversing the border to Sarawak. I have a video-recording<sup>16</sup> of the Long Nawang villager mentioned in the above passage relating his first-hand encounter with Harrisson during this episode. The song thus has rich possibilities for integration with history, and could be dramatized effectively in the classroom.

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<sup>15</sup> Although he landed in the Bahau, he was guided to Long Nawang where he stayed for some time.

<sup>16</sup> Given to me by Dave Lumenta, an Indonesian researcher who had accompanied me to Long Mekaba.

**(d) Ilun Kuai** (as sung in Long Moh and Long Semiyang)   **Theme:** Nature

<b>Lyrics</b>	<b>Translation</b>
1. <i>Kuai maping</i> <i>Mudung suling apau payan</i> <i>Ilun kuai</i>	Pheasant fanning From the everlasting mountains and plateaus Orphaned pheasant
2. <i>Kuai mekat</i> <i>Lide silat sang<sup>17</sup> usan</i> <i>Ilun kuai</i>	Pheasant scratching The decaying leaves of the fan-palm Orphaned pheasant
3. <i>Kuai meku</i> <i>Nalan bio ne te tengang</i> <i>Ilun kuai</i>	Hoarse-voiced pheasant Caught in a big trap Orphaned pheasant
4. <i>Kuai puteh</i> <i>Mayep murik alut takeng</i> <i>Ilun kuai</i>	White pheasant Beckons to push out the boats Orphaned pheasant
5. <i>Kuai kalong</i> <i>Mayep mudung apau payan</i> <i>Ilun kuai</i>	Patterned pheasant Beckons from the mountains and plateaus Orphaned pheasant
6. <i>Kuai bala</i> <i>Mayep meka entem hujan</i> <i>Ilun kuai</i>	Red pheasant Truss up the gathering rain clouds Orphaned pheasant

**Transcription 14: Ilun Kuai** (Chong, 2011:28)

$\text{♩} = 66\text{--}69$



The musical transcription consists of three staves of music in G clef, common time, and a key signature of one flat. The first staff starts with a dotted half note followed by eighth notes. The lyrics are: Ku - ai ma - ping mu-dung su - ling A - pau pa - yan san ang. The second staff continues with eighth notes and lyrics: ai me - kat Li - de si - lat sa - ng U - san ang. The third staff begins with a dotted half note and lyrics: ai pu - teh ma-yep mu - rik a - lut ta - keng. The music concludes with a final set of eighth notes and lyrics: I - - - lun - - - ku - ai.

<sup>17</sup> Sang are the young leaves of *licuala valida* (a species of fan-palm, identified in Asung Uluk et al., 2001); silat are the mature leaves of the same plant; lide are decaying leaves.

## Musical features

Tone-set: M: m, s, l, d r m

H: l, d r

Metre: quadruple

Tonal centre: do

Mode: so-pentatonic

Ambitus: 8

Intervals: M2, m3

Form: A B C

No. of phrases: 3

Podia: Bipodic (2.2.2)

## Textual and cultural features

This is the song described in Chapter 3 (3.5.3) which was choreographed especially to bring out the meaning of the verses and presented on the final night of my last field-trip to Long Moh. The imagery is particularly beautiful, but the full meaning behind the metaphors in each verse for the *kuai* (*Argus* pheasant, shown in Plate 37 in 6.3.1.1) is not easily explained. Are the *kuai* really birds, or do they represent women, or spirits with the powers to control nature?

It was interesting to note that the same bird (*kuai*) is the topic for a song in *Uma Sambop* (*Kuai maping* – see section 4.2) which is classed as *belian dekieng leto* but has characteristics more similar to *belian dado*'. In both songs, the movements for *kuai mekat* ("pheasant scratching ground") were exactly the same (both hands raised outwards, above shoulder height, palms down; balanced on left leg; right leg shuffles as if scratching the ground).



**Plate 26: Movement for ‘*kuai mekat*’ in *Ilun Kuai***

Perhaps the verse or *isiu ipet* has different layers of meaning and was never meant to be crystal clear to everyone. If *belian dado*' is the contemporary form of *belian lan*, it should then embody all the richness of verse which characterised the older songs. This text consists of *sebelang* speech (speech designed to show honour and respect), thick with allusion and indirect suggestions (Gorlinski, 2005:16). As Galvin (1966a:185) describes: “the Kenyah prefer to use circumlocutions in their speech and a good speaker is one who can make full use of analogies and metaphors. Often, the true meaning is disguised”. Attentive listeners are awed by the “oblique symbolism and imagery inherent in *isiu ipet*, as well as any narrative it is used to convey” and that “it is the semi-opacity of this register of rhyme that endows it with authority” (Gorlinksy, 2005:18).

## Pedagogical interest

The song contains poetic imagery (capable of appreciation at different levels), associated movements both graceful and meaningful, and could be used in different ways by teachers to initiate discussions on issues such as endangered animals. I used this approach, employing group dramatization successfully with a fifth grade class (described in Chapter 6). Musically, it consists of a short and deceptively simple but expressive melody, with one phrase in two-part harmony, as shown in Transcription 14. It is thus a practical song to teach within a short time, yet rich with content.

Only the last phrase is sung in harmony. The melody is shown in the transcription as the lower voice (*l s m s s s*) while the supporting harmony is the higher voice (*r d l, d d d*). In actual performance the supporting harmony is sometimes sung an octave lower. Sometimes the singers add a melismatic ornamentation as shown in the first bar of the melodic variant. The basic melody is simple enough to hand-sign with solfa, while the optional ornamentation would give the singer the opportunity to add grace and expression to his/her performance. The one-phrase harmony could be mastered even by elementary classes, and would be an ideal introduction to two-part harmonic singing.

(e) *Abe Na'on Nekun* (as sung in Long Moh)      **Theme:** Historical

**Lyrics**

1. *Abe na'un nekun*  
*Nilu anak uban ko'ong*  
*Lan kujun, o'ong kujun kera'en*  
*Bila lidai Batu Tusan*

**Chorus:**

*Mo'o tego kini*  
*Lane teka tawai*

2. *Ne' bang ne' ake ngawak*  
*Lini anak uban necin*  
*Le anak, necin anak lan tading*  
*Lan lian*
3. *Na'on nena tiga*  
*Na' ake anak uban dau*  
*Lan leka, dau leka ake tira*  
*Lan uran*

**Translation**

We cannot go on (poling through the rapids)  
Because we face this waterfall  
Steep cliff of Batu Tusan<sup>18</sup>

**Chorus:**

This is the end  
We can go no further

I remember  
A time when we were young  
When we were lithe and strong

It is no good  
Now I am old and graying  
My voice is weak  
And feeble

**Transcription 15: Abe Na'on Nekun** (Chong, 2006:3)

$\text{♩} = 60$



A - be      na'-on ne - kun      Ni - lu      a - nak u-ban ko' - ong      Lan

ku - jun      O - ong      ku - jun \_ ke - ra - en      Bi - la      li-dai Ba - tu      Tu -

san      Mo - o      te - go      ki - ni      lan - e      te - ka      ta - wai

**Musical features**

Tone-set: s t d r m f

(d m f s l t a)

Metre: quadruple

Tonal centre: so

Mode: so-hexatonic

Ambitus: 7

Intervals: m2, M2, m3, M3

Form: A B Av Bx C

No. of phrases: 6

Podia: Heteropodic (2.2.2.4.2)

**A note on the singer:** This song was led by Sigau Langat of Long Moh, whose expressive, powerful voice gave life to many of the songs documented here. Listening to his sensitive rendition of this song was a moving experience.

<sup>18</sup> A legendary stone, perhaps a limestone cap, which recurs in songs and stories. According to Galvin (1972) it is the place where souls go after death.

## Textual and historical interest

*Abe na'on nekun* or “We can go no further” portrays the desperation of a community which narrowly escapes annihilation. It is believed to commemorate an incident in which the Lepo’ Tau were almost decimated by an enemy clan<sup>19</sup>. While attempting to flee upriver past dangerous rapids, their escape route was blocked by a waterfall. The incident, according to an informant (Dau Dudong of Long Moh) occurred at the Iwan river.

## Pedagogical interest

This song is exceptional in that it reflects the history of the Kenyah, and captures the desperation of the clan in verse and melody much more effectively than a dry paragraph in a history book. The tone set of the melody resembles a *so*-hexatonic mode, *s t d r m f* (or in C-*do*, *d m f s l ta*) which bestows it with a feeling of darkness and despair. Alternatively, the melody could be considered hemitonic *so*-pentatonic, as it generally revolves around the tones *s t d r f* (or in C-*do*, *d m f s ta*) with the exception of bars 4 and 8, which each feature *mi* (or *la*, in C-*do*) once. This latter scale is the same as that used for the women’s solo dance and for many of the older genres of songs, such as *kerintuk* and *suket*. As mentioned in Chapter 3, this scale is generally acknowledged to describe *menoq* (reminiscence) and to evoke a mournful sentiment. It is also a scale which seems to resonate with many students from Sarawak, perhaps because it is employed in songs from other communities, and is immediately distinguishable from contemporary songs.

Other examples of *belian dado’* exhibiting similar modes include:

- (i) *Tuja* (Transcription 56, Chapter 5): *r f s l t* (or *s ta d r m*), and
- (ii) *Taroi* (Transcription 25, Chapter 4): *s t d r f s ’l’* where *l’* functions as an auxiliary note)  
or *d m f s ta d r’* where *r’* functions as an auxiliary note).

*Abe Na’on* could be thus be used for the development of expressive singing, and for introducing students to the *so*-pentatonic mode. Other useful teaching points include:

- (i) Introduction of *ta* (using the solfa sequence: *d m s; s ta s*)
- (ii) Breath control: holding the long notes at the end of each phrase.

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<sup>19</sup> According to Awe Ngerong (a former student of mine from Long Moh), Marudi, 1996.

**(f) *Are Ruti* (as sung in Long Semiyang)**

## Lyrics

1. *Awe lan jam edang bulan musit*  
*Awe lan jam edang*  
*Ne jam layan seketang litig*  
*Anun lan Baun*

**Chorus:** *Are ruti  
Oi yois lan Usang,  
Usang Jutang lan talau*

2. *Awe lan jam ulong penganen*  
*Awe lan jam ji ulong*  
*Ne jam tudiek betiek lengen*  
*Anun lan Baun*
  3. *Awe ne jam ji ulong lan kiking*  
*Awe ne jam ji ulong*  
*Ne jam layan basong mareng*  
*Anun lan Baun*

**Theme:** Legendary beauty

## Translation

Like the light of the emerging moon  
Like the light  
Shines the belt of coins  
Worn by Ba'un Lanyau

**Chorus:** *Are ruti*  
Alas, here comes Usang,  
Usang Jutang

- As beautiful as a python  
As beautiful  
Are the tattoos on her arm  
On Baun Lanyau's arm

As beautiful as a parrot  
As beautiful  
The pattern on the new blouse  
Worn by Ba'un Lanyau

### **Transcription 16: Are Ruti** (Chong, 2006:5)

**Soloist**

**Chorus**

**S**

**Chor.**

**S**

**Chor.**

**S**

**Chor.**

A - we lan jam e - dang bu - lan mu - sit A - we lan jam e - dang  
A - we lan jam u - long peng - a - nen A - we lan jam u - long

mu - sit Peng - a - nen bu - lan mu - peng - a -

ne jam la - yan se-ke-tang li - git A - nun lan Ba - un A - re - ru -  
ne jam tu - ðiek be - tiek le - ngen

sit nen li - git lan Ba - un Lan - yau

ti lan U - sang U - sang ju - ga lan ta - lau

Oi Yois lan U - sang U - sang ju - ga lan ta - lau

## Musical features

Tone-set: M:  $\underline{l} \ d \ r \ m \ s \ l \ d'$   
                   H:  $d \ s \ l \ d'$

Mode: *do*-pentatonic

Form: A A B C

### Metre: quadruple

Tonal centre: *do*

Ambitus: 10

Intervals: M2, m3, M3, P4

No. of phrases: 4

#### Podia: Heteropodic (4.4.2.3)

## Textual and cultural features

This song describes a legendary beauty, Ba'un Lanyau, who married a high-ranking nobleman. Each verse features a different aspect of Ba'un's beauty, or details of her costume. This version of the lyrics was recorded in Long Semiyang, and thus features the Ngurek dialect e.g. *basong* (blouse) and *mareng* (new). It is a cultural gem as it gives insights into costumes and ideals of beauty in the past. For instance, the lyrics indicate that Kenyah women once wore 'coin belts' (heavy belts made from strings of coins), a custom nowadays only associated with Iban women. Also, Kenyah women no longer tattoo their arms but, as clearly reflected in the song, tattoos were once a mark of beauty, and also signified rank, as this practice was confined to aristocratic women.

The meaning of the chorus is rather obscure. *Usang Jutang* may be the name of a male character in the legend, perhaps a suitor for Baun Lanyau. Ngurek informants could not explain the meaning of *are ruti* to me. Matthew Ngau remarked that although he has been singing this song for years, he never thought to enquire about the meaning of the recurring phrase.

Subsequently I have found that in both Lepo' Tau and Sambop dialects, *are* is a word depicting the present continuous tense. The word *ruti* also appears in the recurring choral refrain *eh ruti kendusang* of *Ruti Kendusang*<sup>20</sup>, a song in the *belian tu'ut* category (verses are sung solo by male dancers as they pace around the verandah as a prelude to dancing the *kanjet laki*, while the gathered community join in the refrain). The words *ruti kendusang* are considered as vocables by Jalong Tanyit<sup>21</sup>. Thus, the words *are ruti* could be taken as vocables, but also bear relevance to the context as *ruti* seems to denote "songs performed by dancers prior to performance". It could be that, in the past, this song preceded performances of *belian tu'ut* and subsequently either *kanjet laki* or *kanjet leto*.

## Pedagogical interest

This song is interesting musically as it displays features of both older and newer forms of Kenyah song. The harmonic structure of the song is particularly significant. An analysis of the two-part vocal transcription shows that it contains both the drone characteristics of the older genres of song, as well as the more common harmonic patterns in other *belian dado'*. This is discussed further in Chapter 5 with regard to change in form and style. In the classroom, it would be an ideal example for introduction to both forms of harmony.

Apart from the interesting cultural context and harmonic features described above, melodically, the song is conveniently pentatonic, and displays a 'call and response' structure, e.g. the lyrics *are ruti* take up the whole first phrase of the chorus, serving as a 'call' by the soloist to which the other singers respond with *oi yois*, an expression meaning, in this context, 'alas' or 'oh dear'. It serves to fill out the melodic line with an emphatic melisma on the "A-re" and to act as a prelude to

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<sup>20</sup> Score in Appendix B, Transcription 60.

<sup>21</sup> *Tak ada maksud ... cuma sebagai bunga bahasa untuk mencantikkan lagi bunyi melodi ... nyanyian itu untuk memanggil semua orang rumah panjang datang berkumpul* (no meaning, just as poetic language to enhance the melody ... this is sung to call on all the people of the longhouse to gather together).

the rest of the tune. This feature would be useful in music classes to develop coordination between two groups of singers, or to nurture the confidence of a selected soloist.

### Examples of other themes

An example of a boatsong is *Nombor Satu*, *Nombor Dua* (Transcription 3, Chapter 3), while the transcriptions of two songs with themes on love and absent sweethearts, *Along*<sup>22</sup> and *Sayang Dau Kenai Tawai* (Chong, 1997:96–97) are given, respectively, in Section 4.2 and Appendix B<sup>23</sup>.

### *Belian Menat Kanjet* (Songs of invitation to dance)

As described in Chapter 3, *belian menat kanjet* have a specific function: to cajole soloists into performing. Some of their melodies are shared with *belian dado'*. The following songs, however, have melodies distinctly shorter than the average *belian dado'*. They contain very specific text directed toward a potential dancer.

#### (g) *Badi Menat Kanjet* (As sung in Uma Sambop)

Lyrics	Translation
<i>Menat sapai bala</i>	Pull (up) the one wearing a red shirt
<i>Menat menat ia</i>	Pull, pull him up
<i>Menjam, menjam ta'ia</i>	Skilled, skilled he is
<i>Kanjet kanjet lasan</i>	In dance, solo dance

#### Transcription 17: *Badi Menat Kanjet* (Chong, 2011:49)

$\text{♩} = 96$



### Musical features

Tone-set: <i>l d r m s l d'</i>	Metre: duple	Tonal centre: <i>do</i>
Mode: <i>do</i> -pentatonic	Ambitus: 10	Intervals: M2, m3, P4
Form: A B C D	No. of phrases: 4	Podia: Heteropodic (2.2.3.2)

### Textual and cultural features

The lyrics reveal a common tactic used to single out a potential dancer discreetly by mentioning the colour of his/her shirt, while someone advances towards the unsuspecting victim with the accoutrements in hand.

<sup>22</sup> Transcription 20.

<sup>23</sup> They are not presented in this section as they were fully analysed in my previous study (Chong:1997).

## Pedagogical interest

The above song, being brief and having a manageable tone-set, is easily learnt. Its content makes it an ideal activity-based song.

### h) *Chin M'bi*

Lyrics	Translation
1. <i>Ini kenai cha laki amai</i> <i>Lenjau taman</i> <i>Nelane</i> <b>Chorus:</b> <i>Chin m'bi tading</i> <i>Uyau Along eh lesau saiee</i>	Here comes the honoured man Father tiger Truly so <b>Chorus:</b> From where does he begin <i>Uyau Along</i> , do not be shy
2. <i>Ini kenai cha kulong punai</i> <i>Silon tawan</i> <i>Nelane</i> <b>Chorus:</b> <i>Chin m'bi tading</i> <i>Utan<sup>24</sup> Seton eh lesau saiee</i>	Here comes a pet pigeon Lovely and charming Truly so <b>Chorus:</b> From where does she begin Utan Seton, do not be shy

### Transcription 18: *Chin M'bi* (Chong, 1998:59)

$\text{♩} = 62$   
Melody



3

7

<sup>24</sup> *Utan* refers to a woman whose father has died, while *Uyau* is used for a man whose father has died. Both are commonly used as prefixes in Kenyah names.

## Musical features

Tone-set: M: s l t d r m s

H: d m s l d'	Metre: quadruple	Tonal centre: <i>do</i>
Mode: major	Ambitus: 8	Intervals: m2, M2, m3, M3, P4
Form: A B C	No. of phrases: 3	Podia: Heteropodic

## Textual and cultural features

As in the previous song, this is sung as an invitation to a potential solo dancer. If the intended soloist is a man, he is addressed in the song as *lenjau taman* (father tiger) while a woman is referred to as *kulong punai* (pet pigeon).

## Pedagogical features

This song is unusual for its major tonality and for the large number of different voices involved in the *kerahang* harmony, which involves the recurrent basic tonic chord (*d m s*) in bars 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9 and a ‘descant’ at intervals of fifths and sixths above the melody (bar 7).

### 4.1.2 Analysis of Kenyah Conventions in Vocal Harmony

Harmony was observed in 19 out of 47 songs. Two-part harmony is the most common, occasionally branching into three-part (e.g. *Lan-e* version 2, Transcription 2) and even four-part towards the end of the chorus (e.g. *Chin M'bi*, Transcription 18). The contour of the accompanying part generally follows the melodic contour of the main part, sometimes resulting in a succession of parallel fourths or fifths. However, the parallelism is never overwhelming, and the result is a pleasing consonance.

On examination of ten *belian dado*<sup>25</sup> and one example from another category (*Ruti Kendusang*), it can be deduced that there are consistent conventions present in the way the Kenyah harmonize, or for want of a better terminology, conceive of as consonant chords. Consistent pairings/groupings include the following: *d s, m s, d m s; r s ; r l ; l d, l m*. All these pairings/groupings are sounded simultaneously with either tone at a higher level. The analysis below shows that these conventions are related to or at least compatible with Western harmonic conventions

I have taken the liberty of extrapolating from Western concepts of tonic, dominant, supertonic and submediant chords. However, for the great majority of this category of songs, and for much of the instrumental repertoire of the last 40 years, the scale is confined to the anhemitonic pentatonic scale, i.e. the subdominant (*f*) and leading note (*t*) are missing. These are thus assumed as not ‘available’ for use in the accompanying voice within their traditional concept of ‘harmony’.

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<sup>25</sup> Along, Are Ruti, Belabau Alih Silon, Chin M'bi, Ilun Kuai, Lane version 1, Lane version2 , Lane version3, Lane Tuyang, Liling.

#### 4.1.2.1 Kenyah harmonic conventions compared to Western Classical harmony

The bracketed notes are missing in the Kenyah harmonic vocabulary except in the more recent songs mentioned below.

<b>I</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>VI</b>
<i>dm s</i>	<i>r l</i>	<i>s r</i>	<i>ldm</i>

##### Western chord equivalents for D major

<b>I</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>VI</b>
D F# A	E (G) B	A (C#) E	B D F#

##### Western chord equivalents for G major

<b>I</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>VI</b>
G B D	A (C) E	D(F#)A	EGB

Where there is a choice between possible tones for harmonization, however, the Kenyah aesthetic differs from that of the Western classical in that intervals of the Perfect 4<sup>th</sup>, Perfect 5<sup>th</sup> and Major and Minor 6<sup>th</sup> are preferred, with the first two often occurring in succession (although a series of parallel 4<sup>ths</sup> or 5<sup>ths</sup> is soon alternated with 6<sup>ths</sup>, less frequently, 3<sup>rds</sup> and occasional octaves and unisons). Generally, the accompanying voice is subservient to the melody, entering towards the end of a verse or only in the chorus, generally adhering to the rhythm of and imitating the melodic contour. Normally the harmony is in two parts, with doubling at octaves above and below, though sometimes with the tonic chord, it extends into three parts, displaying the full tonic triad.

It is due to these over-riding characteristics that I believe it is more appropriate to label Kenyah vocal practice as homophonic rather than polyphonic in texture. However, it is also very evident that the Kenyah aesthetic seeks to maintain melodic interest in the accompanying voice. Except for rare instances, however, the accompanying voice does not exhibit independence in rhythm, and there is no overlapping of the melodic strands (except, for example, in sections of *Ateklan* and *Ju Habai*). Melodic interest in the accompanying part is attained while still adhering to the ‘conventions’ listed above, maintaining the Kenyah ideal of consonance. For this reason, I would hesitate to label their vocal music as polyphonic (using this term in its purely classical sense).

As an illustration, the implied chords for the songs *Lane version I*, *Along* and *Belabau Alih Silon* are given below. *Lane version I* is sung in harmony in almost all Kenyah villages, although each village displays its own slight variation (not to be confused with *Lane* versions 2 and 3, which are distinctly different melodies). Exceptions include the songs *Ateklan*, *Ju Habai* and *Nalo Ina Tuyang*, where the leading note appears briefly in the accompanying voice (displaying the full dominant triad). As will be discussed in Chapter 5, I consider these songs to be more recent developments, showing the appearance of diatonic elements in their predominantly anhemitonic pentatonic repertoire.

**(i) Lane version 1 (as sung in Long Moh)**

**Lyrics**

*Alem ini telu tiang pemong Jaiee  
Pemong jaiee tawai  
Pemong jaiee tawai uyan*

*Nelan-e, eh tuyang  
Nelan-e*

**Translation**

Tonight my friends we gather together  
We gather together,  
And recall the old days

Truly so, my friends  
Truly so

**Transcription 19<sup>26</sup>: Lane version 1 (Chong, 2011:34)**

$\text{♩} = 68-74$

Chorus      Soloist      Chor.      Sol.      Chor.      Sol.

Chorus: A - lem i - ni      Te - lu      tu-yang pe - mong      Lan - jai \_\_\_\_\_

Soloist: I      I      II      I      VI      V      I      V

Chor.: Ta - wai      ta - wai      u - yan \_\_\_\_\_

Sol.: ee      Pe - mong jai-ee ta - wai      Ta - wai      u - yan      e \_\_\_\_\_

Chor.: II      II      I      I      V      II      I      I      VI      I

Sol.: Ne      lan -      lan -      e      eh -      ne -      lan      Ne      lan -

Chor.: e -      ne -      lan -      e

Sol.: eh -      ne -      lan -      e

<sup>26</sup> As sung in Long Moh. Variations of the first two phrases often occur in other villages.

**(j) Along (as sung in Long Selatong)**

**Lyrics**

**Chorus:**

*Cha, Cha bulan majo majan  
Along taun kenai ule*

**Translation**

**Chorus:**

One month, one month and still  
Along has not returned

**1. Verse**

*Palan ilu kenyih  
Ini tiang kua  
Lan suiee  
Sua suiee manok maan tiang  
Kumbin lo' ia taiee tiang*

**Verse**

My friends we make merry  
Like the pheasant  
and the hornbill  
and all the birds of the jungle  
But how is he faring, my friends?

**2. \*Chorus:**

*Dua, dua bulan majo majan  
Along taun kenai ule*

**Chorus:**

Two, two months and still  
Along does not return

\*For each subsequent verse, the lyrics for the chorus change to *telu, pat and lima bulan* (3, 4, and 5 months), and the women singing the song display with their fingers the number of months “Along” (perhaps an absent lover) has been away, while turning on the spot with the basic brush-step.

**Transcription 20: Along (Chong, 2011:39)**

$\text{♩} = 72-75$



Trad. Descant

Melody

D

M

D

M

Chá cha—— bu - lan ma-jo ma-jan A-long ta - un—— ke-nai u - le

Chá cha—— bu - lan ma-jo ma-jan A-long ta - un—— ke-nai u - le Pa -

Su - a su - ies ma-nok ma-

lan—— i-lu ken - yih I - ni ti-ang ku - a—— lan su - iee Su - a su - iee ma-nok ma-

an ti - ang kum - bin lo' ia tai - ee ti - ang

an ti - ang kum - bin lo' ia tai - ee ti - ang

**(k) Belabau Alih Silung (as sung in Long Moh)**

Lyrics	Translation
<i>Belabau alih siloung</i>	The rat with the striped face
<i>Merit manit ubut nyibung</i>	Scratches the skin of the palm-tree shoot
<i>Ubung nyibung dua inan</i>	The palm-tree shoot with two branches
<b>Chorus:</b>	<b>Chorus:</b>
<i>Eh eh, Oi Yois</i>	<i>Eh eh, Oi Yois</i>
<i>Oi Yois Utan</i>	<i>Oi Yois Utan</i> (referring to a girl)
<i>Bampa Iko salam tekak me</i>	I long for you

**Transcription 21: Belabau Alih Silung**

$\text{♩} = 96$



**Table 4.3 Analysis of harmonic conventions and implied chord progressions of 11 songs (compared to conventions in Western classical harmony)**

No.	Title of Song	Tone set <sup>27</sup>	Chords present	Chord progressions
2	<i>Along</i> (Long Selatong)	M: <i>s l d r m s</i> H: <i>s l d'</i>	I, II	II I II I
3	<i>Are Ruti</i>	M: <i>l d r m s l d'</i> H: <i>d s l d'</i>	I, II, V, VI	I VII I ; V VII I; VI V I ; II V I
8	<i>Belabau Alih Silon</i>	M: <i>l d r m s l</i> H: <i>d' l s</i>	I, V, VI	I VI I VI V;
12	<i>Chin M'bi</i>	M: <i>s l t d r m s</i> H: <i>d m s l d'</i>	I, II	I II I
16	<i>Ilun Kuai</i>	M: <i>m s l d r m</i> H: <i>l d r</i>	I, II, VI	II I; II I VI I

<sup>27</sup> M = melody; H = harmony; Ending tone: bold font; *s* denotes low *so*, *l* denotes low *la*, etc.

No.	Title of Song	Tone set	Chords present	Chord progressions
20	<i>Lan-e</i> version 1 (Baram)	M: <u>s</u> l d r m s l H: r m s l d' r'	I, II, V, VI	I II I VI V; I II I VII I; I VII I II I; VI VI
21	<i>Lan-e</i> version 2 (Baram)	M: d r m s l d' H: s l d' r' m'	I, II, V ,VI	V I II I V I ; II I II I; I VII
22	<i>Lan-e</i> version 3 (Belaga)	M: <u>s</u> d r m s l d' H: s l d' r' m'	I, II ,V ,VI	I VI V; II V I; I VI V I
23	<i>Lan-e Tuyang</i> version 1	M: <u>s</u> l d r m s H: <u>s</u> d r m s l d'	I, II ,V, VI	I V II; I V VI V; I V I; I V VI; I VI V
25	<i>Liling</i> version 1 (Baram/Belaga)	M: <u>s</u> l d r m s l d' H: s l d'	I, II	I III I ; II I II I
	<b><i>Belian tu'ut</i></b>			
	<i>Ruti Kendusang</i>	M : s l d r H: d	I, VI	I VII

Cadences in the classical sense do not seem to play a prominent role, but are present at the ends of phrases of several songs, e.g.: *Lan-e* version 1, *Lan-e* version 3 and *Lan-e Tuyang* where perfect (V I), imperfect (VI V) and interrupted cadences (V VI) occur. However, it could be argued that in the Kenyah context II I and VI I could be considered cadences.

#### 4.1.2.2 Pedagogical Applications of Kenyah Harmony

The following discussion considers the merits of using the songs as class or choir exercises in simple part-singing (or as choir performance pieces).

##### (I) *Lan-e Tuyang* version 1

###### Lyrics

1. *Lan-e tuyang nelan ne sa-lan lamat*  
*Lan-e tuyang telu neman lan palat*  
*Neman palat ujuh*

###### Chorus:

- Lan de talan, lan de tuyang*  
*Menjam puyan kumbin*  
*Lan de tuyang*

2. *Lan-e tuyang telu kidang lan paduk*  
*Lan-e tuyang telu kidang lan paduk*  
*Kidang paduk Batu Tusun*

###### Translation

- My friends, let us celebrate  
 My friends, let us shake hands  
 Let's shake hands  
**Chorus:**  
 Truly, my friends  
 How do you do?  
 How are things going, my friends?

Friends, we walk beneath the beam of the longhouse  
 Friends, we walk beneath the beam of the longhouse  
 The beam which is as strong as Batu Tusun

##### Transcription 22: *Lan-e Tuyang* version 1 (Chong, 2006:26)

$\text{♩} = 56 - 62$



###### Musical features

Tone-set: M: s l d **r** m s

H: s d r m s l d'

Metre: 4/4 and 2/4

Tonal centre: *re*

Mode: *re*-pentatonic

Ambitus (melody): 8

Intervals: M2, m3, P4

Form: A A B Ca

No. of phrases: 4

Podia: Heteropodic (4.4.2.6)

## Pedagogical interest

The descant for *Lan-e Tuyang* which begins in bar 6 makes an easy and effective exercise in two-part singing, as it begins in unison, with the descant then rising to *m* while the melody falls to *d* (melody: *s s m r d*; descant: *s s m r m*). It then continues with its own tuneful melody at intervals of a third, fourth and fifth above. Students assigned to sing the melody are less likely to be led astray (as is apt to happen for the lower voice) as they merely repeat the ending of the opening phrase: *d r m s m r*.

In the last five bars, the two-part singing is made easier by two repetitions of the same pattern (melody: *d s d*; descant: *m r m*). The melody ends with the same motif as the first two phrases: *d r m s m r*. The singers' familiarity with this should keep them from being led astray by the descants, which now soar to a different ending: *m s l d' s m l s*. Both descant and melody are suitable for excercises in solfa and hand-signs.

## Unusual Feature of Kenyah harmony

In most of the multipart songs described, such as *Lan-e* version 3 (Transcription 11), *Ilun Kuai* (Transcription 14), *Lane* version 1 (Transcription 19), *Along* (Transcription 20) and *Lan-e Tuyang* (Transcription 22), the descant or alto constitutes a distinct and attractive melody in itself. This characteristic, however, makes the songs especially suitable as teaching materials, as the subsidiary voice is easily taught and remembered by rote. Although multipart songs are also featured in the repertoire of other countries, the nature of the harmony differs considerably (this is discussed in 5.3.1). The melodious nature of the subsidiary parts in Kenyah songs may constitute an unusual feature on the world music scene. I have found this characteristic to be extremely valuable in coaching singers with no previous experience in part-singing, and who are unfamiliar with sight-reading.

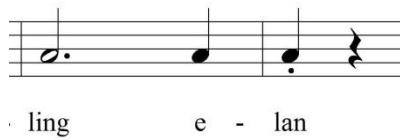
**Mastery of vocal harmony at a young age:** As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, in Kenyah society everybody is expected to be musical and their musically saturated environment ensures that they become so. Singing in harmony is a skill the Kenyah acquire early in life, merely by listening and direct participation. Apparently, it does not (as many educators believe) require years of training and music literacy to achieve.

In approaches such as those of Kodály and Orff, homophonic harmony is placed late in the sequence of teaching of musical concepts. Both educationists recommend that children first be exposed to simple harmonies such as found with ostinatos, round-songs and borduns. Children are only introduced to homophonic and chordal harmony later, beginning with singing tonic, dominant and subdominant chords. Perhaps it is time to consider the possibilities of introducing multi-part singing such as in the Kenyah, Polynesian or South African traditions, where harmony is picked up naturally as an oral-aural tradition, at a much earlier stage.

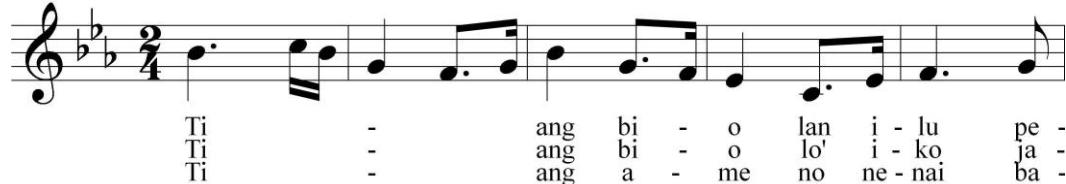
### 4.1.3 Rhythm and Movement

#### Metre

*Belian dado'* generally conform to a regular metre, generally 4/4 or 2/4, although there is some flexibility at the end of phrases, giving rise to a mixed 2/4 and 4/4 metre in some instances. The steady pulse is essential as the songs are accompanied by the basic two or four step sequence (discussed in the next section) performed by a large number of choristers and have to be synchronized with their movements. This readily recognizable pulse contributes to the broad appeal of the songs and makes them ideal materials for the Orff and Dalcroze methods, both of which emphasise the importance of learning rhythmic concepts through movement. A common rhythmic pattern recurs at the end of phrases as shown below:



The singers normally perform an emphatic stamp on the last crotchet. Most songs are sung at a moderately slow tempo. Exceptions include *Burung Kechin* (version 1a and 1b) which are sung at rollicking tempos with a matching increase in the pace of dance. Crotchets and quavers predominate, but dotted rhythms and semiquavers are also common. Melisma occurs frequently, for example in the first phrase of *Kun Nelan-e*, the first word “Tiang” extends to 2½ bars:



#### Dance Movements

The dance-steps accompanying the songs consist of fairly simple, enjoyable movements suitable for inculcating rhythm in the classroom. The basic sequence: *step, brush, step, brush* produces a duple metre, while the common variant: *stamp, brush, step, brush* results in quadruple metre. The only drawback of stamping in the classroom is the absence of the resounding thud of the wooden floor of the longhouse.

A variant movement, simulating ‘boat-rowing’, is performed for the song *Nombor Satu Nombor Dua* as described in Chapter 3 (3.3.4.2). A third movement variant, which is used to accompany the song *Nelan De Tiang*, consists of three steps executed while turning in various directions followed by a shuffle, performed to a four-beat pattern.

m) *Nelan De Tiang* (as sung in Marudi)

**Lyrics**

*Ne lan de tiang*  
*Nemo ne sa lan lamat*  
*Ne lan de tiang*  
*Telu neman lan palat*  
*Neman palat ujuh*  
**Chorus:**  
*Ne - la-----ne---e*  
*Lan-e tiang*

**Translation**

Truly my friends  
 Let us celebrate  
 Truly my friends  
 Let us shake hands  
 Shake hands with each other  
**Chorus:**  
 Nelane  
 Truly so, my friends

**Transcription 23: *Nelan De Tiang*** (Chong, 2006:33)

$\text{♩} = 72$



Ne - lan de ti - - ang      Ne - mo ne sa lan la - - mat

5      Ne - lan de ti - - ang      Te-lu ne-man lan pa - lat      Ne - man pa-lat u -

11      juh      Ne - lan - - e lan ti - - ang

**Movements**

This is a song with a rather challenging set of movements. Advancing counter-clockwise in a circle, the singers perform the following steps:

Counts	Leg movements
	Facing forward while progressing anticlockwise in circle formation
1	Step right foot forward
2 and	Step left foot forward while turning 90 degrees to the right (face outwards) Tap right foot beside left
3	Step right
4	Heel left
5	Step left foot, turning to face forward
6 and	Step right foot while turning 90 degrees to the left (face inwards) Tap left foot beside right
7	Step left
8	Heel right

#### 4.1.4 Melodic Aspects

One of the main attractions of *belian dado*' is melodic variety. An examination of melodic components (tonality, tonal range and form) illustrates why the songs are likely to have a broad appeal.

#### 4.1.4.1 Melodic aspect: Tonality

The number of songs exhibiting different tonalities is shown in Table 4.4 (derived from the analysis of the tone-sets of the 47 songs as listed in Table 4.1).

**Table 4.4 Tonality of *belian dado'* and *belian menat kanjet*** (derived from Table 4.1)

Tonality	No. of songs	% of the category
Anhemitonic <i>do</i> -pentatonic ( <i>d r m s l</i> )	30	74.5%
Anhemitonic <i>re</i> -pentatonic or <i>so</i> -pentatonic	5	
Major	7	14.9%
<i>La</i> -tetratonic	1	
Hemitonic <i>so</i> -pentatonic/ <i>so</i> -hexatonic	3	10.6%
<i>Re</i> -hexatonic	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	

Table 4.4 shows that the majority (74.5 %) of the transcribed repertoire) of *belian dado'* and *belian menat kanjet* melodies are built on the anhemitonic pentatonic scale. However, this statement belies the wide range of tonality represented in the repertoire. There are also a number in the major scale (14.9 %) while others display *la*-tetratonic, hemitonic pentatonic, *so*-hexatonic and *re*-hexatonic scales (combined 10.6 %). Thus, the tunes are based on a variety of tonalities (unlike the sanitized KBSR songs which are overwhelmingly major or major pentachord). This tonal variety provides a refreshing change from the diatonic dominance in contemporary repertoire and imbues the songs with an Asian flavour. To illustrate this, three songs with various tonalities are analysed below:

- (n) *Kun Nelan-e* (Transcription 24)      *do*-pentatonic
- (o) *Taroi* (Transcription 25)                *so*-hexatonic
- (p) *Ule Kun Along* (Transcription 26)    *la*-tetratonic.

For variety, I have selected examples with a range of moods and musical difficulty.

Technically, the first two would be more suitable for older students, as they demand a greater degree of skill in singing, especially in breath control and expressiveness. The third song, with short phrases and simple rhythms, should be easy for younger students to master,

Unlike many of the songs presented in 4.1.1-4.1.3, such as *Lan-e*, *Burung Kechin*, *Nai Bilun Merika* and *Nelan De Tiang*, which could be described as predominantly *bangen* or joyful in character, these songs are more introspective, reflected in slower, more expressive performances and melodies conveying *bampa* (longing), a contrasting emotion often reflected in Kenyah songs.

**(n) *Kun Nelan-e*** (as sung by Sigau Langat, Long Moh)

**Lyrics**

1. *Ti-----ang bio lan ilu pesong  
Ti-----ang layan lan batung  
Layan batung usah lan inan*

**Chorus:**

*Kun nelan-e tiang  
Bampa lali lale l'ame ke iko  
Lan oi yois*

2. *Ti-----ang bio lo'iko jaka  
Ti-----ang bulan lan uma'  
Bulan uma madeng melan*

3. *Ti-----ang ame no nai bada  
Ti-----ang tawai lan semba'  
Tawai samba' salam lan layan*

**Translation**

My friends, we meet for the first time  
My friends we come together for the first time  
We gather in close fellowship

**Chorus:**

Truly, we say, my friends,  
We long for you/will miss you  
Oh (expression like a sigh)

Friends, for the first time you come up  
To our longhouse  
Our new longhouse

Friends, come, tell everyone  
Say that we are glad  
We wish you all the best

**Transcription 24: *Kun Nelan-e*** (Chong, 2006:18)

Slowly, pensively

$\text{♩} = 60$



The musical transcription shows the vocal line with corresponding lyrics. The lyrics are as follows:

1. *Ti - ang bi - o lan i - lu pe - song.  
Ti - ang bi - o lo' i - ko ja - ka.  
Ti - ang a - me no ne - nai ba - da.*

8. *Ti - ang bi - o lan ba - tung La -  
Ti - ang bu - lan lan u - ma Bu -  
Ti - ang ta - wai lan sem ba' Ta -*

15. *yan ba - tung u - sa lan i - nan  
lan u - ma ma - deng lan me - lan  
wai sem - ba' sa - lam lan la - yan* Chorus: *Kun ne lan -*

22. *e ti - ang Bam - pa la - li la - le la - me ke i - ko lan Oi - yois*

**Musical features**

Tone-set: *s l d r m s l*

Metre: duple

Tonal centre: *do*

Mode: *do-pentatonic*

Ambitus (melody): 9

Intervals: M2, m3, P4

Form: A A B C D

No. of phrases: 5

Podia: Heteropodic (7.7.5.4.5)

**Textual and melodic features**

This song is always sung slowly and expressively and displays contrasting emotions. In the verse, the singer joyfully extends a warm welcome to the guests who are visiting the longhouse for the first time. In contrast, in the chorus, he expresses how much he will long (*bampa*) for his guests after

they leave. Although *do*-pentatonic, this melody, with its long, winding phrases, expresses sentimentality. This clearly contrasts with the more jovial character of other *do*-pentatonic songs such as *Burung Kechin* and *Lan-e Tuyang*.

### Pedagogical interest

This song could be used for developing expressiveness and breath control in singing by older children, e.g. in the first three bars: *Ti-----ang, bi----o* and the ending of the first phrase: *pe-song----*.

#### (o) *Taroi* (as sung by Sigau Langat, Long Moh)

##### Lyrics

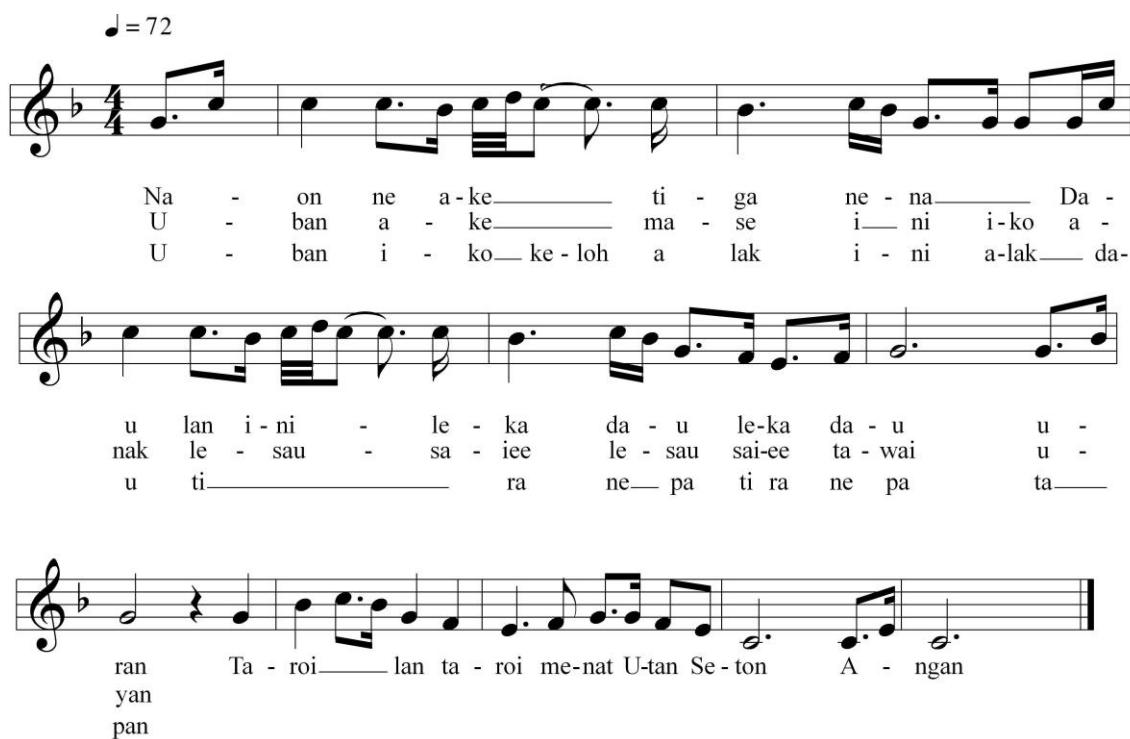
1. *Naon ne ake tiga nena*  
*Dau lan ini leka*  
*Dau leka dau uran*
- Chorus:**  
*Taroi lan taroi*  
*Menat Utan Seton Angan*

##### Translation

- My voice is not good  
This voice  
This weak voice
- Chorus:**  
Let's pull Utan Seton (name of a woman)  
Up to dance
- Because you are here  
I pity you,  
So I try to sing

#### Transcription 25: *Taroi* (Chong, 2006:41)

$\text{♩} = 72$



### Musical features

Tone-set: *s t d r f s' l'*  
(*d m f s t a d r*)

Metre: quadruple

Tonal centre: *so*

Mode: *so*-hexatonic

Ambitus (melody): 9

Intervals: m2, M2, m3, P4

Form: A Ax B

No. of phrases: 3

Podia: Heteropodic (7.7.5.4.5)

The lyrics of the song were improvised on the spot by Sigau Langat (he preferred to sing with a new set of lyrics rather than clarifying the lyrics in the prior recording). Once again, the lyrics

emphasise the way the Kenyah honour a visitor, by disparaging their own shortcomings. There was definitely nothing inferior about Sigau's performance. Even though it was 9 a.m. in the morning and there were chickens crowing in the background, he managed to sing with power and expression.

### Textual and melodic features

From the words of the chorus, it is clear that the original version of the song must have been composed for the occasion of a community gathering with dance and song as the central activity. An inspection of the melodic structure, however, reveals that this song, like *Abe Naon*, is very different from most *belian dado*', or rather it does not belong to the largest sub-category, the *lan-e* sub-category. Whereas most *lan-e* songs are anhemitonic, it is *so-hexatonic*, and displays extensive melisma. Its composition probably predated the main existing body of *lan-e* songs. Its relative antiquity was confirmed by Bilong Tingang, who also claimed that it is an original Long Moh composition.

*La'* can, however, be considered an auxiliary note, leaving the song essentially a hemitonic pentatonic melody, resembling the scale used in *kanjet leto* and the older categories of song such as *suket* and *kerintuk* (*s t d r f* or *d m f s ta*). Unlike in *Abe Naon*, however, the lyrics of the song are basically merry, in contrast with the *menoq* mood of the scale. Perhaps there was a sad aspect to the original lyrics. The first version I recorded the year before contained the verse *kembi ketai da manai, uma ini*, meaning "Where have all the young men gone?"

**(p) Ule Kun Uyau Along** (As sung in Uma Sambop)

**Lyrics**

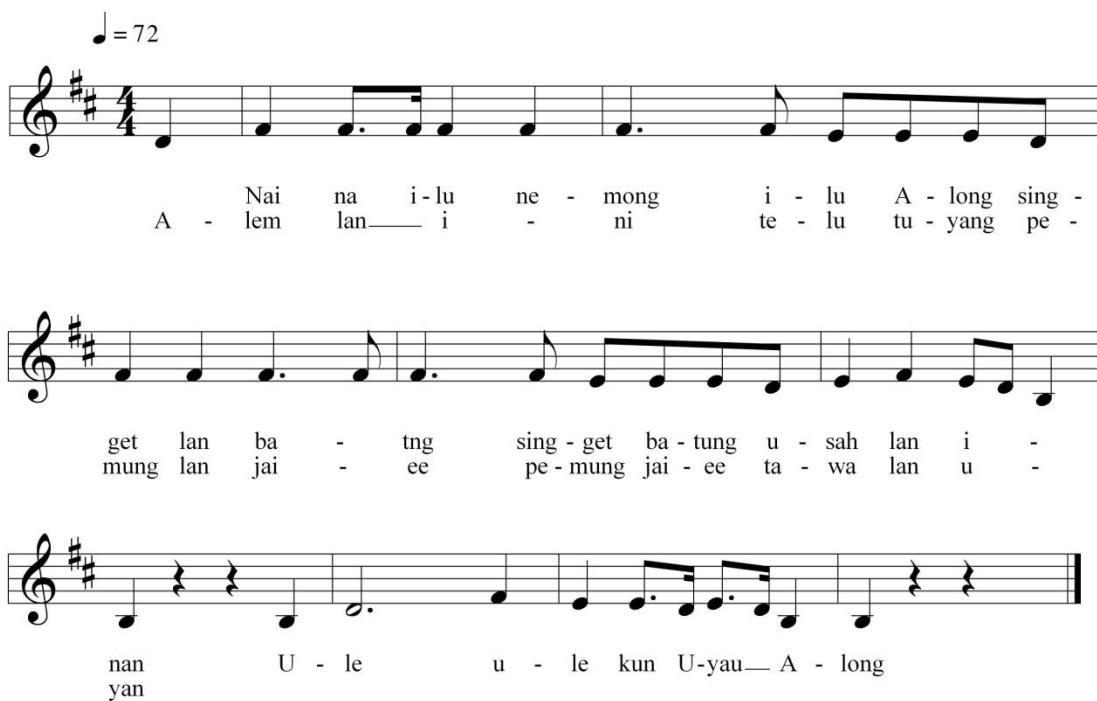
1. *Nai na ilu nemong  
Ilu Along singget lan batung  
Singget batung usah lan inan*  
**Chorus:**  
*Ule, ule kun Uyau Along*
2. *Alem lan ini  
Telu tuyang pemung lan jaiee  
Pemung jaiee tawai lan uyan*  
**Chorus:**  
*Ule, ule kun Uyau Along*

**Translation**

- Come, let us all join in  
Everyone must take part  
Everyone in close comradeship  
**Chorus:**  
Come back, come back Uyau Along
- Tonight  
Our friends, we gather together  
We gather together and remember the old days  
**Chorus:**  
Come back, come back Uyau Along

**Transcription 26: Ule Kun Uyau Along** (Chong, 2006:44)

$\text{♩} = 72$



A - lem      Nai      na      i - lu      ne - mong      i - lu      A - long      sing -  
 lan      lan      i      ni      te - lu      tu - yang      pe -  
  
 get - lan      ba -      tng      sing - get      ba - tung      u - sah      lan      i -  
 mung      lan      jai -      ee      pe - mung      jai - ee      ta - wa      lan      u -  
  
 nan - yan      U - le      u - le      kun      U-yau — A - long

**Musical features**

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Tone-set: <i>l d r m</i> | Metre: quadruple                                |
| Tonal centre: <i>la</i>  | Mode: <i>la</i> -tetratonic                     |
| Ambitus (melody): 5      | Intervals: M2, m3                               |
| Form: A A B Cb           | No. of phrases: 4      Podia: bipodic (2.2.2.3) |

**Textual and melodic features**

Unlike most *belian dado*', this song has a *la*-centred or minor tonality, and is built on a tetratonic scale: *l d r m*. The verses consist of common *ipet* calling on the community to gather together, while the chorus seems to plead for the return of an absent sweetheart (Uyau Along). The *la*-

tetratonic mode gives the song an air of antiquity and sombreness. The poignancy<sup>28</sup> of the melody (minor tonality, slow tempo) reflects its frequent employment as a farewell song (this usage was related by Helen Paya, Uma Sambop); the chorus is directed at the person leaving, imploring him or her to return one day. Several non-Kenyah have mentioned to me that they have been particularly moved by Kenyah ‘farewell songs’, sung to them as their boats pull out from the village. For anyone familiar with the hazards and uncertainties of journeys up the river, past numerous rapids to remote Kenyah villages (or nowadays, traversing the precarious logging roads), such farewells are understandably filled with emotion, as the visitors and the hosts may not meet again for years, if ever. The chorus addresses a member of the community (Along), urging him to return. The lyrics, *U-le* (come back) are strategically placed with a long note on the second syllable, enhancing the ‘pleading effect’.

### Pedagogical interest

The la-tetratonic mode also appears frequently in Kenyah lullabies, e.g. *Pengalang* (*l d r m*), *Datang Chok* (*fi l t d*). Such songs are suitable for the teaching of *la*-tonality, and the introduction of *ti* to younger students. With only four different tones and simple rhythms and short phrases, it is also fairly easy to sing in solfa and to accompany with hand-signs.

#### 4.1.4.2 Melodic aspects: Ambitus

An analysis of the ambitus (tonal range) of the songs in each category reveals that *belian dado'* melodies display a much wider range than those of other categories of songs. From Table 4.4, it can be deduced that 52% of *belian dado'* have an ambitus greater than an octave, and 98% greater than a perfect fifth. For other categories of songs, the ambitus seldom exceeds an octave. This wider range contributes to the melodic variety of this genre.

**Table 4.5 Ambitus of songs** (derived from Tables 4.1, 4.9 and 4.10)

Ambitus	3 to 5	6 to 8	9 to 12	Total
<i>Belian dado'</i>	1	21	25	47
Songs related to instrumental tunes	7 ( <i>lutong</i> )	1 ( <i>lutong</i> )	—	12
		5 ( <i>sape/jatung utang</i> )		
<i>Belian dekieng leto</i>	—	5	2	7
<i>Belian anak dumit/Pesalau anak</i>	7	2	2	11
Miscellaneous	—	3	—	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>81</b>

<sup>28</sup> Over the last two decades, a considerable body of research in the fields of psychology, neurobiology and acoustics has been conducted on music and emotional perception. Among the findings, evidence has emerged to support the theory that the perception of emotion in music can be attributed to psychophysical factors, rather than purely cultural factors. The hypothesis that the perception of emotion can be applied cross-culturally, e.g. that minor tonality and slow tempos suggest sadness is supported by various studies (Kastner & Crowder, 1990; Balkwill et al., 1999; Cook, 2002, 2006 & 2009; Curtis and Bharucha, 2010; Bowling et al., 2010 & 2012; Hunter et al., 2010 and Brattico et al., 2011). This is discussed further in Chapter 5.

#### 4.1.4.3 Analysis of intervals

Table 4.6 shows the types of intervals appearing in the melody of each song.

**Table 4.6 Analysis of *belian dado'* and *belian menat kanjet*: Intervals**

	Title of Song	Intervals
1	<i>Abe Na'on Nekun</i>	m2, M2, m3, M3
2	<i>Along</i>	M2, m3, M3, P4, P5
3	<i>Are Ruti</i>	M2, m3, M3, P4
4	<i>Ateklan</i>	M2, m3, M3, P4
5	<i>Badi Menat Kanjet</i>	M2, m3, P4
6	<i>Bampa Lale</i>	M2, m3, M3, P4
7	<i>Bangen-bangen</i>	m2, M2, m3, P4, P5
8	<i>Belabau Alih Silon</i>	M2, m3, P4
9	<i>Bujang Majan</i>	M2, m3, M3, P4, P5
10a	<i>Burung Kechin</i> version 1a	M2, m3, P4
10b	<i>Burung Kechin</i> version 1b	M2, m3, P4
11	<i>Burung Kechin</i> version 2	M2, m3, M3, P4, P5
12	<i>Chin M'bi</i>	m2, M2, m3, M3, P4
13	<i>Hip Balip</i> version 1	M2, m3, M3, P4
14	<i>Hip Balip</i> version 2	m3, M3, P4, P5
15	<i>Iko Kenai</i>	M2, m3, M3, P4, P5
16	<i>Ilun Kuai</i>	M2, m3
17	<i>Ina Pikok Balu</i>	M2, m3, P4, P5
18	<i>Ju Habai</i>	m2, M2, m3, M3, P4
19	<i>Kun Ne Lan-e</i>	M2, m3, P4
20	<i>Lan-e</i> version1( <i>Baram</i> )	M2, m3, M3, P5
21	<i>Lan-e</i> version 2 ( <i>Baram</i> )	M2, m3, M3, P4
22	<i>Lan-e</i> version 3 ( <i>Belaga</i> )	M2, m3, P4
23	<i>Lan-e Tuyang</i> version 1	M2, m3, P4
24	<i>Lan-e Tuyang</i> version 2	m2, M2, m3, M3, P4
25	<i>Liling</i> version 1	M2, m3, M3, P4, P5, M6
26	<i>Liling</i> version 2	M2, m3, M3, P4, P5
27	<i>Londe Kun Along</i>	M2, m3, M3, P4
28	<i>Miling Mubai</i>	M2, m3, M3, P4, P8
29	<i>Mudung Ina</i>	M2, m3, M3, P4
30	<i>Na'at Ne Telu</i>	M2, m3, M3, P4
31	<i>Nai Bilun Merika</i>	M2, m3, P4
32	<i>Nalo Ina Tuyang</i>	M2, m3, M3, P4, M6

	<b>Title of Song</b>	<b>Intervals</b>
33	<i>Na'on Name Inu</i>	M2, m3, P4
34	<i>Nelan De Tiang</i>	M2, m3, M3, P4, P5
35	<i>Nombor Satu, Nombor Dua</i>	M2, m3, M3, P4
36	<i>Pa' Ali</i>	M2, m3, P4, M6
37	<i>Saping Sapau</i>	M2, m3, P4
38	<i>Sayang Dau Kenai Tawai</i>	M2, m3, M3, P4, M6
39	<i>Singget Lan Batung</i>	M2, m3, M3, P4, M6
40	<i>Silon Londe</i>	M2, m3, P4
41	<i>Taroi</i>	m2, M2, m3,
42	<i>Telu Tiang ver. 1 (Long Moh)</i>	m2, M2, m3, P4
43	<i>Telu Tiang ver. 2 (Sambop)</i>	M2, m3, P4, P5
44	<i>Tiang Ne Lan-e</i>	M2, m3, P4, P5
45	<i>Tuja</i>	m2, M2, m3, P4
46	<i>Ule Kun Along</i>	M2, m3
47	<i>Ule Lan Lian</i>	M2, m3, M3, P4

An analysis of Table 4.6 yields the frequencies of some common combinations of intervals, which are summarized in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7 Frequency of appearance of combinations of intervals**

<b>Intervals appearing</b>	<b>Number of songs</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Combinations of intervals</b>		
M2, m3, P4	41	87 %
M2, m3, M3, P4	24	51 %
<b>Individual intervals</b>		
P5	13	28%
m2	8	17 %
M6	5	11 %

The characteristic intervals of pentatonic tunes, M2, m3 and P4, occur in combination in the overwhelming majority (85%) of the songs while the combination M2, m3, M3, P4 occurs in 51% of the total. P5 appears in 28%, while m2 is confined to the hemitonic and diatonic songs and M6 appears only in 5 songs.

#### **4.1.4.4 Melodic aspects: Form (podia, motifs, ideas for composition)**

A consideration of the form of the songs provides some additional clues to their melodic appeal. Closer inspection of the relations between the different phrases of the songs reveals that there are some clever compositional devices at work which may provide useful pointers for music students.

Table 4.8 shows a summary of my analysis<sup>29</sup> of the forms. The conventions are a modified version of song-analysis techniques used by educators employing the Kodály approach. The abbreviations used were given in 4.1.1.

**Table 4.8 Analysis of *belian dado'*: Form**

	<b>Title of Song</b>	<b>Podia</b>	<b>Form</b>	<b>Length of phrases</b>
1	<i>Abe Na'on Nekun</i>	Heteropodic	A B Av Bx C	2.2.2.4.2
2	<i>Along</i>	Tetrapodic	A B Ca	4.4.4
3	<i>Are Ruti</i>	Heteropodic	A A B C	4.4.2.3
4	<i>Ateklan</i>	Heteropodic	A B C Dc Bv	2.3.2.2.3
5	<i>Badi Menat Kanjet</i>	Heteropodic	A B C D	2.2.3.2
6	<i>Bampa Lale</i>	Heteropodic	A B C D	6.6.4.4
7	<i>Bangen-bangen</i>	Heteropodic	A B C D	4.4.2.3
8	<i>Belabau Alih Silon</i>	Heteropodic	A Av B C D	2.2.5.3.3
9	<i>Bujang Majan</i>	Heteropodic	A B C Cv D	4.3.5.5.4
10a	<i>Burung Kechin</i> version 1a	Tetrapodic	A Av B Av	4.4.4.4
10b	<i>Burung Kechin</i> version 1b	Tetrapodic	A B A B	4.4.4.4
11	<i>Burung Kechin</i> version 2	Heteropodic	A B C	2.3.2
12	<i>Chin M'bi</i>	Heteropodic	A B C	2.3.4
13	<i>Hip Balip</i> version 1	Heteropodic	A B C D	2.1.1.2
14	<i>Hip Balip</i> version 2	Heteropodic	A A B C D	2.2.2.2.4
15	<i>Iko Kenai</i>	Heteropodic	A A B Cb	4.4.5.6
16	<i>Ilun Kuai</i>	Bipodic	A B C	2.2.2
17	<i>Ina Pikok Balu</i>	Heteropodic	A B C Dc A	3.2.4.4.3
18	<i>Ju Habai</i>	Heteropodic	A B C D	2.2.1.3
19	<i>Kun Ne Lane</i>	Heteropodic	A A B C D	7.7.5.4.5
20	<i>Lan-e</i> version1(Baram)	Heteropodic	A B C D	5.5.3.3
21	<i>Lan-e</i> version 2(Baram)	Heteropodic	A B C Cv	4.5.2.2
22	<i>Lan-e</i> version 3 (Belaga)	Bipodic	A Av B C D	2.2.2.2.2
23	<i>Lan-e Tuyang</i> version 1	Heteropodic	A A B Ca	4.4.2.6
24	<i>Lan-e Tuyang</i> version 2 ( <i>Long Tungan</i> )	Heteropodic	A A B C A D	4.4.3.3.4.5
25	<i>Liling</i> version 1	Tripodic	A B C B	3.3.3.3
26	<i>Liling</i> version 2	Tripodic	A B C B	3.3.3.3
29	<i>Mudung Ina</i>	Heteropodic	A B A B Ca Bx	3.3.3.3.3.5
30	<i>Na'at Ne telu</i>	Heteropodic	A A B C	2.2.2.3
31	<i>Nai Bilun Merika</i>	Heteropodic	A Av B C	2.2.4.4
32	<i>Nalo Ina Tuyang</i>	Heteropodic	A B C Db B	3.3.2.2.3
33	<i>Na'on Name Inu</i>	Heteropodic	A B C D E	2.3.4.4.4
34	<i>Nelan De Tiang</i>	Heteropodic	A B A Bx C	3.3.3.5.5
35	<i>Nombor Satu, Nombor Dua</i>	Heteropodic	A B C D	7.7.4.4.
36	<i>Pa'Ali</i>	Heteropodic	A A B C D	4.4.2.2.4
37	<i>Saping Sapau</i>	Heteropodic	A B C Cv Bv	2.3.2.2.3
38	<i>Sayang Dau Kenai Tawai</i>	Tetrapodic	A Ba Ca D	4.4.4.4
39	<i>Singget Lan Batung</i>	Heteropodic	A B C	2.3.6
40	<i>Silon Londe</i>	Heteropodic	A B C D	2.4.6.3.3
41	<i>Taroi</i>	Heteropodic	A Ax B	2.4.2

<sup>29</sup> Limitations: There are many grey areas, e.g. how closely must two phrases resemble each other for one to be considered a variant of the other (Av), when to combine two phrases into a larger one, etc. However, though some individual analyses are debatable, the overall analysis reveals interesting patterns.

	<b>Title of Song</b>	<b>Podia</b>	<b>Form</b>	<b>Length of phrases</b>
42	<i>Telu Tiang ver.1</i> (Long Moh)	Bipodic	A A B Bv	2.2.2.2
43	<i>Telu Tiang ver.2 (Sambop)</i>	Heteropodic	A B C D	5.7.6
44	<i>Tiang Ne Lan-e</i>	Heteropodic	A A B Ax	6.6.4.9
45	<i>Tuja</i>	Heteropodic	A Av B Av	2.4.3.4
46	<i>Ule Kun Along</i>	Heteropodic	A A B Cb	2.2.2.3
47	<i>Ule Lan Lian</i>	Heteropodic	A A B C D	4.4.6.3.3

**(i) Podia (phrase length):** Generally, each song consists of several short phrases. In some songs, the phrases are of equal length, as in *Burung Kechin* (tetrapodic) and *Ilun Kuai* (bipodic), but this is the exception rather than the rule. It is clear from Table 4.7 that the overwhelming majority of the songs are heteropodic, i.e. consist of phrases of differing lengths. Only 17% (8 out of 47) are isopodic. This is in vast contrast to the formulaic KBSR songs where the majority are neatly composed with phrases of equal length.

Only a small minority of songs exhibit symmetry e.g. *Burung Kechin* version 1b (A B A B) and *Telu Tiang* version 1 (A A B Bv). Most of the songs are asymmetrical since they have an odd number of phrases, or phrases of different lengths. Some songs exhibit symmetry within sections, for example, with longer phrases in the verse, followed by shorter phrases in the chorus as in *Nombor satu, nombor dua* (7.7.4.4). Variation in phrase length often can be traced to the fact that many phrases are extended by the addition of one or two bars, often with lyrics such as *nelan* or *tiang* or with repeated motifs as explained in the following paragraphs. In many songs, the tonic is repeated at the end of phrases with rhythms such as in the following excerpts:

(a)



(b)



These mechanisms seem to function as musical ‘semicolons’ or exclamation marks, often extending the phrase by one bar, as in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> phrases of *Chin M’bi*.

## **(ii) Repeated motifs, delayed endings and climax**

Some phrases are extended by repetition and imitation. The fourth phrase of the song *Lan-e Tuyang* version 1 (4.4.2.6) is extended by two repetitions of the motif *d s d*. In *Nelan De Tiang*, the last phrase is extended by imitation of a short motif, resulting in a long, winding melody, necessitating considerable breath control. In both cases, the delayed ending again contributes to a build-up of tension, leading to a climax towards the end of the song.

#### 4.1.4.5 Analysis of *Mudung Ina* (melodic structure and emotional effect)

A detailed description of the song *Mudung Ina* will be given to illustrate the foregoing sections. Consideration of the text and analysis of the melody provide further insights into the relationship between melodic structure and emotional expression.

##### (q) *Mudung Ina* (as sung in Long Semiyang)

###### **Lyrics**

1. *Tiang mo' mudung ina*  
*Tiang mo' mudung ina*  
*Tiang nga linget mata*  
*Tiang mo' ta'at lesan*

###### **Chorus:**

*Oi mo nelan londe*  
*Tiang mo' mo-on tawai*  
*Uyan me*

2. *Tiang mo' pabat piboi*  
*Tiang mo' pabat piboi*  
*Tiang mo' adang toi*  
*Tiang mo' payun peman*

3. *Tiang mo' piboi pabat*  
*Tiang mo' piboi pabat*  
*Tiang mo' kulong kuyat*  
*Tiang mo' mecun da'an*

4. *Tiang mo' madong juong*  
*Tiang mo' madong juong*  
*Tiang mo' kusun lesong*  
*Tiang mo' mecat siai*

5. *Tiang mo' adong pejoh*  
*Tiang mo' adong pejoh*  
*Tiang mo' kusun batoh*  
*Tiang mo' uma' luan*

6. *Tiang mo' nyain betek*  
*Tiang mo' nyain betek*  
*Tiang mo' ala sa'e*  
*Tiang mo' alem inan*

###### **Translation**

Friends behold that mountain  
Friends behold that mountain  
Though clouds block our view  
We can see through clearly<sup>30</sup>

###### **Chorus:**

Truly dear friends,  
We long for times gone by

Friends let's chase and run  
Friends let's chase and run  
Like hornbills we flock together  
With our arms around each other

Friends let's run and chase  
Friends let's run and chase  
We are like pet monkeys<sup>31</sup>  
Treading<sup>32</sup> on and rattling the branches

Friends we squat down together  
Friends we squat down together  
With mortar and pestle  
We pound rice and smoke meat

Friends we sit down together  
Friends we sit down together  
On the planks of the veranda  
In a friend's longhouse

Friends we rise up together  
Friends we rise up together  
Do not be shy  
We go back satisfied

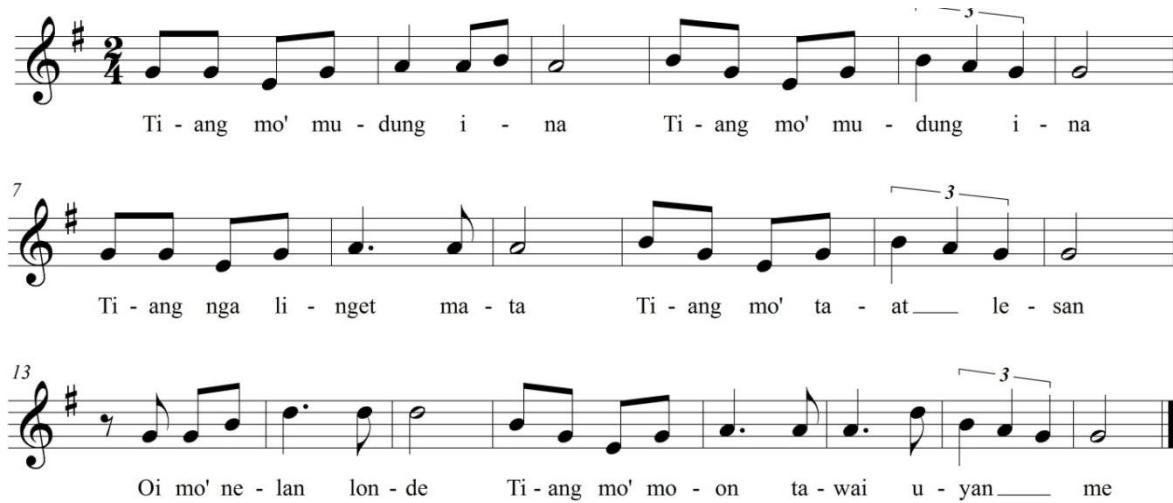
<sup>30</sup> Possibly implying that one can also ‘see into’ the heart of a friend.

<sup>31</sup> Before the wild-life ordinance was passed, it was common to keep pet monkeys.

<sup>32</sup> In an attempt to startle predators, monkeys stamp on tree-branches, causing them to vibrate.

### Transcription 27: *Mudung Ina* (Chong, 2006:28)

$\text{♩} = 72$



Ti - ang mo' mu - dung i - na      Ti - ang mo' mu - dung i - na

Ti - ang nga li - nget ma - ta      Ti - ang mo' ta - at le - san

13  
Oi mo' ne - lan lon - de      Ti - ang mo' mo - on ta - wai u - yan me

#### Musical Features

Tone-set: <i>l d r m s</i>	Metre: duple	Tonal centre: <i>do</i>
Mode: <i>do</i> -pentatonic	Ambitus (melody): 8	Intervals: M2, m3, M3, P4
Form: A B A B C Bx	No. of phrases: 6	Podia: (3.3.3.3.3.5)

#### Actions

Verse 1	Point to a distant mountain (mountains are visible from the verandas of most Kenyah longhouses)
Chorus	Stretch hands and flick wrist up as if dancing Then cross wrists and place hands over heart
Verse 2	Run in single file in a circle; flap arms like a bird Turn to face inwards; place arms around each other's shoulders
Verse 3	Run in single file in a circle Stamp on the floor, while lifting shoulders in 'ape-like' manner <sup>33</sup> (imitating monkeys treading on branches)
Verse 4	Squat down and 'pound padi' with mortar and pestle
Verse 5	Sit down on the floor
Verse 6	All rise together

#### Pedagogical interest

This song portrays life in a rural setting, featuring different scenes or activities in each verse, and is enacted by the singers in unison with simple movements. The lyrics and accompanying actions make this an attractive song for class-teaching. Older students can be guided to appreciate the underlying wistfulness, aptly portrayed in its sentimental melody. The melody is especially amenable to the teaching of solfa, as the limited number of tones (*l d r m s*), slow tempo and even rhythm make it easy to hand-sign.

<sup>33</sup> The strange antics of the dancers depicting this ape activity puzzled me until I was enlightened by Matthew Ngau.

**(i) Tonality (Tonal duality as a mirror of emotional duality):** Although the melody of *Mudung Ina* is categorized as *do*-pentatonic, the opening phrase *d d l d*, features a ‘*la*-pentatonic’ or ‘minor’ chord, then gradually shifts to *do*-pentatonic or major tonality in which it ends. This shifting between major and minor tonality effectively mirrors the essence of the emotional duality of *belian dado*: a mixture of joy (in the merriment of the gathering) and sadness or longing (*bampa*).

The text of the song also portrays the duality. Although this song is almost always accompanied by comic dramatization of the lyrics and never fails to elicit laughter, a consideration of the text of the first verse and the chorus reveals the nostalgic sentiments behind the song. On contemplation of the mountains in the distance, the singers recall a time in the past, and a way of life (perhaps a carefree one, as described in subsequent verses) that they cannot be a part of any longer (whether through aging, leaving home, or the change of Kenyah culture itself), and they dearly wish that they could relive those times.

**(ii) Answering phrase:** Phrase B (bar 3–4) is an example of an imaginative and effective answering phrase for A (bar 1–2). Bar 3 echoes bar 1, but raises the pitch of the first note by a minor third, thus raising the emotional tension. In bar 4, the melodic contour then descends, closing the phrase on the tonic chord (after beginning in the minor key). The change from minor to major tonality mirrors the sudden clarity of vision described in the metaphor of the third and fourth lines in verse one.

**(iii) Implied chordal background:** The above discussion is based on an implied<sup>34</sup> chordal background for the first 6 bars such as the following:

Phrase: A	_____	B	_____
Chords:	VI	II	V
	Em	Am	D

*Tiang mo' mudung ina      Tiang mo' mudung ina*

Inclusion of this song would provide some relief from the monotony of the implied I V IV V I chordal sequence found in many KBSR songs, besides providing a realistic context of life in rural areas, and insights into animal behaviour of which urban children would be largely ignorant.

**(iv) Form:** An analysis of the form reveals that it is composed of three pairs of phrases, A B, A B, and C Bx. Its phrase lengths can be summarized as 3.3.3.3.3.5.

The song would have been tripodic if not for the last phrase. This phrase, denoted by Bx, consists of an exact repetition of B plus an insertion of two bars (bars 17 and 18), delaying the ending and effecting a climax as described in section d (ii).

#### 4.1.5 Summary of Applications for *Belian Dado*’

The foregoing analysis clearly displays that *belian dado*’ constitute an attractive genre of songs which would serve as excellent teaching materials in schools. They contain all the essential elements such as varied tonality, melodic appeal, rhythmic consistency, and culturally meaningful

<sup>34</sup> based on the Kenyah conventions of harmony described in 4.1.2.

texts. The predominantly anhemitonic tonality makes them ideal for the earlier stages in the sequence of teaching melodic concepts according to the Kodály method. They also offer a body of songs with ready-made traditional harmonies suitable for teaching of harmonic concepts. Most significantly, the songs possess a real cultural context, with embedded socio-cultural and historical elements, thus imbuing them with a value far beyond the narrow objectives of musical concepts.

## 4.2 BELIAN DEKIENG LETO (SONGS FOR YOUNG GIRLS)

This category of songs was demonstrated to me by a group of middle-aged women in Uma Sambop, who had learnt these songs as young girls. Apart from the first song *Kuai Maping* they differed strikingly in musical structure and content from the standard *belian dado*'. The melodies were shorter, with simple rhythms and the structure non-strophic. The dance movements and fixed formations showed a departure from the standard circle progression. The song-and-dance routines were performed with much merriment. With the help of video-recordings, these routines were quickly imitated with great enjoyment by my students and also schoolchildren during various workshops. Unfortunately, for the majority of the songs, the lyrics cannot be translated (as explained later in this section).

At least one, however, *Kuai Maping*, employs language in everyday usage. This song is similar in context as well as in movements to *Mudung Ina* (Transcription 25), a *belian dado*' well-beloved in the Baram. Both consist of numerous verses, each depicting either animal behaviour or human activities. Although classed by Helen Paya<sup>35</sup> and her family as *belian dekieng leto*, I observed that Saging (Helen's elder brother) was familiar with both the words and the movements. Thus it can be considered another instance of a song moving from dying categories of songs to the *belian dado*' category.

**Table 4.9 Analysis of *belian dekieng leto***

	<i>Belian Dekieng Leto</i>				
	<b>Title of Song</b>	<b>Tone set</b>	<b>Scale/mode</b>	<b>Ambitus</b>	<b>Podia</b>
48	<i>Kuai Maping</i>	<i>s l t d r m s l</i>	<i>so</i> -hexatonic	9	2.3.2.3
49	<i>Ku Beli</i>	<i>s l t d r m s l d'</i>	Major	11	2.2.2.2.2.2
50	<i>Ku Pinang</i>	<i>s l t d r m s l</i>	Major	8	4.4.4.3
51	<i>Sia Maha</i>	<i>s l d r m s</i>	<i>do</i> -pentatonic	8	4.4.2.3 4.4
52	<i>Sun Suma</i>	<i>s l d r m</i>	<i>do</i> -pentatonic	7	3.3
53	<i>Shim Shim Shim</i>	<i>l d r m s</i>	<i>do</i> -pentatonic	7	2.2.2.2.2
54	<i>Tai Ne Tang Tu</i>	<i>s l d r m s</i>	<i>do</i> -pentatonic	7	2.2.2.2.2.3

<sup>35</sup> Helen Paya Sufen was my chief informant at Uma Sambop. A widow of *paren* descent in her fifties, she and her siblings are seen as cultural leaders in the village.

**(a) Kuai Maping** (as sung in Uma Sambop)

**Lyrics**

1. *Tiang lamo' kuai maping*  
*Tiang lamo' kuai maping*  
*Ne cha lide luing,*  
*Lide luing*  
*Are lan mesem uman*

**Translation**

Friends behold the pheasant fanning  
Friends behold the pheasant fanning  
(Eating) a fallen *luing* leaf  
Fallen *luing* leaf  
How sour to eat

2. *Tiang lamo' kuai mekat*  
*Tiang lamo' kuai mekat*  
*Ne cha umbong silat*  
*Umbong silat*  
*Are lan sang usan*

Friends behold the pheasant scraping  
Friends behold the pheasant scraping  
A *silat* frond  
< i>silat frond  
*Sang* leaves

3. *Tiang lamo' madong juong*  
*Tiang lamo' madong juong*  
*Ne ka tilong nesong*  
*Tilong nesong*  
*Are lan muet pinggan*

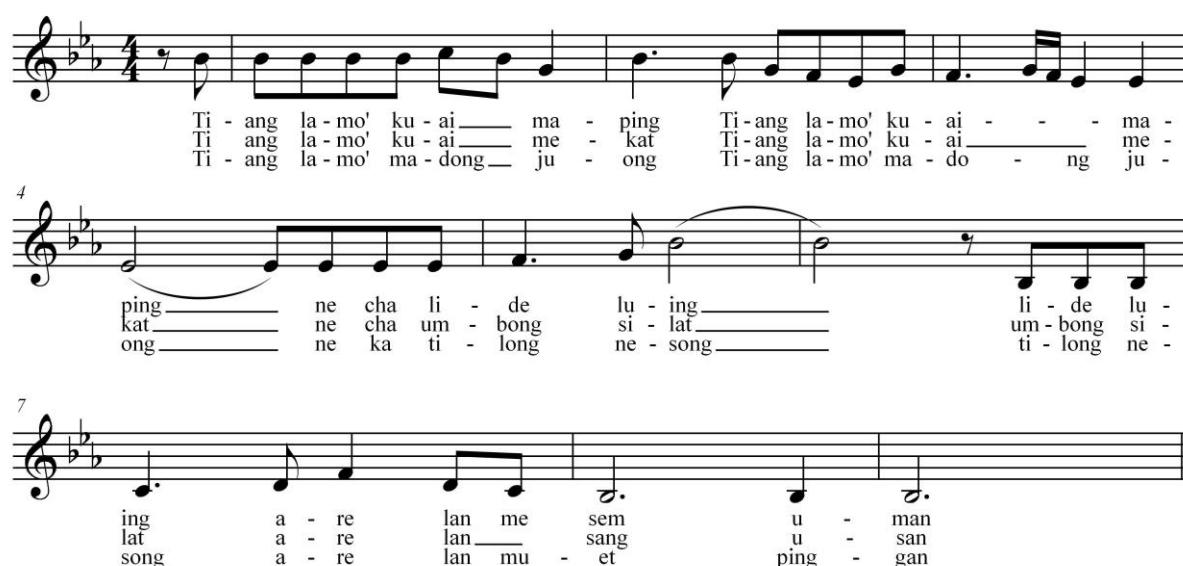
Friends let's squat down together  
Friends let's squat down together  
Near the washing/bathing area  
Washing/bathing area  
Washing plates together

4. *Tiang lamo' madong pejuh*  
*Tiang lamo' madong pejuh*  
*Ne ka pu'un tajoh*  
*Pu'un tajoh*  
*Are lan kada'bulan*

Friends let's sit down and stretch our legs  
Friends let's sit down and stretch our legs  
In the corridor  
In the corridor  
Gazing up at the moon

**Transcription 28: Kuai Maping** (Chong, 2011:31)

$\text{♩} = 76$



Ti - ang la - mo' ku - ai \_\_\_\_\_ ma - ping Ti - ang la - mo' ku - ai \_\_\_\_\_ ma -  
 Ti - ang la - mo' ku - ai \_\_\_\_\_ me - kat Ti - ang la - mo' ku - ai \_\_\_\_\_ me -  
 Ti - ang la - mo' ma - dong ju - ong Ti - ang la - mo' ma - do - ng ju -

ping \_\_\_\_\_ ne cha li - de lu - ing \_\_\_\_\_ li - de lu -  
 kat \_\_\_\_\_ ne cha um - bong si - lat \_\_\_\_\_ um - bong si -  
 ong \_\_\_\_\_ ne ka ti - long ne - song \_\_\_\_\_ ti - long ne -

7  
 ing a - re lan me sem u - man  
 lat a - re lan mu - et sang u - san  
 song a - re lan mu - et sang u - gan

**Musical features**

Tone-set: s l t d r m s l

Metre: quadruple

Tonal centre: *so*

Mode: *so*-hexatonic (anhemitonic)

Ambitus: 9

Intervals: M2, m3, M3, P4

Form: A B C D

No. of phrases: 4

Podia: Heteropodic (2.3.2.3)

## Textual and cultural features

The textual focus of the first two verses of the song, reminiscent of *Ilun Kuai* in Long Moh concerns an Argus pheasant (*kuai*) fanning its feathers and scratching the ground (see Chapter 6, Plate 37 and the accompanying footnote on the male bird clearing the ground for its mating dance). The movements for the first two verses, as described in 4.1.1, are also strikingly similar to those in *Ilun Kuai*. However, in general verse structure, and in the content and movements of verses three and four, the song is more similar to *Mudung Ina* (widely sung in the Baram). It is significant that in Long Moh, Ulau chose the two songs *Ilun Kuai* and *Mudung Ina* as a medley in her choreographed performance for an all-women team. Although both songs are regularly featured in the *belian dado'* repertoire of the Baram, this usage and resemblance indicate the origin of the two songs as *belian dekieng leto* (the Sambop term is used here as I was not informed of a similar named category existing in Long Moh. However, as mentioned before, the custom of conducting classes for young girls was definitely present in the Baram, as I witnessed in January 2009 when the schoolgirls returned for holidays).



**Plate 27: *Licuala valida* (sang), a Bornean fan-palm**

## Pedagogical interest

The song is sung slowly and gracefully as befits the poetic imagery of the first two verses. The accompanying movements express this beautifully. These two verses would also be interesting material for an appreciation of endangered birds and the uses of local vegetation (*sang* are young *licuala valida* palm leaves used to make hats while *silat* are the mature palm fronds widely used by the Kenyah for food-wrappings. They also carried religious significance in *adet pu'un/Bungan* ceremonies such as the *mamat* (see 2.4.3). The last two verses consist of straightforward actions illustrating the text (washing plates, sitting down, gazing at the moon), and reflect the activities of women in a traditional longhouse.

This graceful melody displays an unusual scale. Although it is *so*-hexatonic, there are no semitones. Basically most of the song is *so*-pentatonic, with *ti* only appearing twice in bar 8. This unexpected transition in tonality, together with its ending on *so*, gives the song added colour.

## Other songs

Unfortunately, many of the songs, such as *Sun Suma*, *Ku Pinang* and *Sia Maha* (transcriptions given below), employed vocabulary no longer in general use. Hence, although the performers could sing and dance in perfect unison they could not translate a large part of the text. Helen Paya recalled that they began singing these songs in 1965, as a result of influence from the “Gurkha”. Gurkha soldiers played an important role in the confrontation with Indonesia in the 1960s and there were battalions stationed in Belaga<sup>36</sup>. She and her friends in primary school, perhaps with adult guidance, composed and choreographed the songs and dances, mixing in both Kenyah and Gurkha elements<sup>37</sup>.

### (b) *Sun Suma* (as sung in Uma Sambop)

**Transcription 29:** *Sun Suma* (Chong, 2011:54)



Sun su - ma      sun su - ma - ha - ha      Ha - ha ha - ha le - su - ma

### Musical features

Tone-set: <i>s l d r m</i>	Metre: duple	Tonal centre: <i>do</i>
Mode: <i>do</i> -pentatonic	Ambitus: 7	Intervals: M2, m3, P4
Form: A B	No. of phrases: 2	Podia: Tripodic (3.3)

### Pedagogical interest

The tone-set of this song (*s l d r m*) and simple rhythm is ideal for the beginning stages of teaching melodic intervals. The lyrics are simple, consisting of only two phrases. The quaint movements are easily learnt, would be attractive to children and come ready choreographed into an interesting two-line formation.

<sup>36</sup> “... a memorial stone erected forty years ago in honour of two Gurkhas and two border scouts who died defending the village. Forty years ago, Captain John Burlison of the British army, was stationed at Belaga in-charge of the Gurkha Rifles First and Second Battalion ...” (Borneo Post 2005, on website of Resident’s office, Kapit division).

<sup>37</sup> “Lagu dan tarian itu dicampur Bahasa Gurkha dengan bahasa kami ... Masa itu kami tengok Gurkha main, kami ikut” (Helen Paya).

**(c) Ku Pinang**

**Transcription 7 (in Chapter 3): Ku Pinang**

$\text{♩} = 84$       \* \* \*



Ku pi-nang tang kis me - la - i - man-na - dai a - rap i - ran Au ja - kan su -  
 ma i - ra su - ri - sen na - di o - bong

**Musical features**

Tone-set: <u>s l t d r m s l</u>	Metre: duple	Tonal centre: <i>do</i>
Mode: major	Ambitus: 9	Intervals: m2, M2, m3, P4
Form: A B C D	No. of phrases: 4	Podia: Heteropodic (4.4.4.3)

**Pedagogical interest**

During the group performances the tone-set of this song was in a major key, but when Helen Paya sang it alone to me, she substituted the C sharp and B in bar 7 (\*) with two C naturals. If this was the original melody, it would be an unusual tone-set. Apart from these two passing notes in bar 7 (\*), the song is basically *do*-pentatonic and is built on a simple rhythmic pattern; as such, it is again ideal for the beginning stages of teaching melodic intervals. The lyrics are more complicated than those of *Sun Suma*, but surprisingly, quickly learnt by the 13 year-old schoolchildren at our workshops in July 2008. They also greatly enjoyed performing the varied movements.

**Movements:** The dancers wave their hands at eye-level from side to side in circle formation. In the original version the dancers hold any handy objects such as shoes, books or plates. This alternates with a soloist singing one verse as she dances solo while the rest squat down.

**(d) Sia Maha**

**Transcription 30: Sia Maha (as sung in Uma Sambop)**

$\text{♩} = 76$



Si - a ma - ha - ha ha si - a ma - ha Si - a ma -  
 ha - ha - ha si - a - ma - ha sun ja - na - ku i - ya  
 su - ka su - ri man - dul sa - mi - ru - u - dah la pa  
 su - ri man - dul sa - mi - ru u - dah la pa - ri

## Musical features

Tone-set: <i>s l d r m s</i>	Metre: mixed duple/triple	Tonal centre: <i>do</i>
Mode: <i>do</i> -pentatonic	Ambitus: 8	Intervals: M2, m3, M3, P4
Form: A A B C D E	No. of phrases: 5	Podia: Heteropodic (4.4.2.3 4.4)

## Pedagogical interest

With a *do*-pentatonic tone set, fairly simple rhythm patterns and attractive movements, its pedagogical applications would resemble the preceding two songs, though perhaps the duple/triple metre combination makes it more challenging.

There are at least six other songs in this genre/category. However, as I have not yet been able to obtain the full sets of lyrics, they will not be presented here, but their musical features have been analysed. As with the other songs, they were accompanied with very attractive movements and would definitely appeal to children of all ages.

## 4.3 SONGS<sup>38</sup> ASSOCIATED WITH INSTRUMENTAL MELODIES

The songs in this section came from various sources. Some were sung to me by the musicians who played the tunes, others by informants listening to the tunes. The songs are generally short, with melodies corresponding to the main themes of instrumental pieces. Musicians probably have an aural memory of this theme in association with such a song, and for instrumental performances, would elaborate and improvise on the main theme.

Although seldom performed currently, these songs were once widely sung during intimate family gatherings<sup>39</sup>, but are now largely forgotten. The *lutong* songs as performed by Ulau Lupa and family in Long Moh (Chapter 3) revealed what one musical aristocratic family has nurtured and retained in the face of an onslaught of contemporary music.

Whatever their original place in Kenyah society, these songs are valuable in the context of music education. Aside from their direct correspondence to instrumental tunes, their simple structure and tonal range make them ideal for learning of tonic-solfa in the beginning stages. The themes may seem simple, but they reflect a rich culture, one far removed from the modern urban way of life. Some songs have playful teasing themes, while others tell of folk tales, sexual love, betel nut-chewing and dancing.

### 4.3.1 Songs associated with *sape* and *jatung utang*

#### (a) *Det Diet Tapung Kitan*

An example of a song associated with a popular ensemble tune is *Det Diet Tapung Kitan*, described in Chapter 3 (3.3.4) as an example of a children's song evolving into instrumental repertoire.

Two other examples, *Pui Ngeleput* (Uma Sambop) and *Sai Ulai* (Long Moh), are given below. These are songs which may have evolved from the instrumental tunes (or vice versa). These were

<sup>38</sup> Songs associated with spiritual matters and curse-songs are not included.

<sup>39</sup> Personal communication, Ulau Lupa.

initially documented, with different lyrics (Chong, 2006:54-55), as a song associated with a *sape* tune. The tune was the first one I learnt on the *sape* from my Kayan *sape* teacher, Henry Anyie Ajang, who sang the Kayan version as *Bui Luk But Burui*. I noted that it was similar to the verse *Pui Ngeleput Burui*, referred to by Gorlinski (1989)<sup>40</sup>. The same tune was named *Telang Buin* by *sape* player Asang Tengit of Uma Badang. They had also played it in ensemble with *jatung utang* in accompaniment for a woman performing *kanjet kiut* – the plate dance. The connection between the different song “titles” became clear when Helen Paya sang to me the version which she used to croon to her younger siblings.

**(b) *Pui Ngeleput* (Uma Sambop)**

**Lyrics**

*Pui ngeleput adding burui aka*  
*E ia keloh uman telang buin*

**Translation**

Grandfather shot a bird with his blowpipe  
Who wants to eat pork soup?

**Transcription 31: *Pui Ngeleput* (Chong, 2011:23)**

$\text{♩} = 78$



5

In Long Moh, I hummed the above melody to Merang Iban and his friends and relatives, asking if they knew the song associated with it. They immediately recognized the tune, naming it “*Sai ulai alut lai*”. After some persuasion, they sang it to me. The lyrics were completely different but the melody differs only in slight details. Two days later, Suok, Bilung and Arang played the melody with variations in an ensemble of two *sape* and *jatung utang*. With some prompting, Bilung and Arang also recalled their version of the above song, complete with a set of actions as described below.

<sup>40</sup> The verse *Pui Ngeleput Burui* –“grandfather goes hunting with his blowpipe” – is part of a well-known *tekena* (sung folk-tale) in which Burui, the main character, goes out with his blow-pipe and shoots a magic bird (Gorlinski, 1989).

**(c) *Sai Ulai* (as sung in Long Moh)**

Lyrics	Translation
Version 1 (Merang Iban and friends)	<i>Sai ulai alut laiee</i> <i>Uyau Along nai ule kuli</i> <i>Tai leto nyat sugi</i> <i>Nyat pabek gosok gigi</i>
	Paddling the boat home Uyau Along returns from his coolie job The woman asks for tobacco She also wants a toothbrush
Lyrics	Translation
Version 2 (Bilong Lupa)	<i>Sai alut ulai laiee</i> <i>Uneng Sigau ule kuli</i> <i>'We lalo metep beli</i> <i>Tai leto nyat sugi</i>
	Paddling the boat home Uneng Sigau back from his coolie job Declares his purchases The woman asks for tobacco

**Transcription 32: *Sai Ulai* (Chong, 2011:25)**

$\text{♩} = 78$

5  
 Saj sa - u - lai - a - lut - lai - ee U - yau A - long - nai u - le - ku - li  
 Tai le - to - ny - at su - gi Nyat pa - bet - go - sok gi - su - gi

**Actions**

- Clap and step forward right foot
- Sweep arms (paddling motion) to left (tap left foot)
- Clap and step forward left foot
- Sweep arms (paddling motion) to right (tap right foot)
- Clap hands front (right foot forward)
- Raise both hands above head (tap left foot)
- Lower hands to touch shoulder (left foot forward)
- Clap hands at the back (tap right foot).

As it could be accompanied by a set of actions, it could technically be classed as a *belian dadox* but I have not seen it performed in public gatherings. In fact, to the younger (under 40 years) members of this group, Suok, John and Baun, the song and dance session was a learning experience as prior to this they had only been aware of the name of the tune, and knew neither the lyrics nor the movements.

The melody is almost identical except that in the first phrase, the Long Moh singers substitute the low *so* for high *so*, and *mi* instead of *do* in the second bar of the third phrase. Bar 5 shows two variants as sung by the same singers in successive repetitions.

**Musical features (both songs)**

Tone-set: <i>s d r m s</i>	Metre: quadruple	Tonal centre: <i>do</i>
Mode: <i>do</i> -pentatonic	Ambitus: 8	Intervals: M2, m3, M3, P4, P5, M6
Form: A B Av B	No. of phrases: 4	Podia: Bipodic (2.2.2.2)

## Pedagogical interest

The small tone-set and straightforward rhythm, accompanied by simple rhythmic actions, reminiscent of boat-rowing, make this attractive material for the early stages of a Kodály program. The two compact verses paint an interesting portrait of traditional Kenyah economic activities (*peselai*) and customs. “Along” and “Sigau” are all too typical of men-folk who travel afar to sell their labour, returning in boats laden with goods for their wives and families. Tobacco seems unfortunately high on the list of priorities. In the first version, it is interesting to note the inclusion of two Malay words *gosok gigi* instead of the Lepo’ Tau equivalent *pabet jipen* as the latter would not fit the rhyme scheme. This willingness to substitute words from other languages into the lyrics is reflected in several other songs as well.

### (d) *Chut Tunyang* ('Step in the mud', as sung in Long Moh)

Lyrics	Translation
<i>Be'un Utan keloh kena sepak melu</i>	The young lady doesn't want the betel nut (symbol of courtship)
<i>Selem-selem taiee na' me dulu</i>	Secretly I slip away
<i>Saiee ame dia kua silung asu?</i>	So ashamed, does my face resemble a dog's?
<i>Chut tunyang, chut tunyang na'mau</i>	Stepping in the mud, stepping in the mud at night

### Transcription 33: *Chut Tunyang* (Chong, 2011:21)

$\text{♩} = 91$



The musical transcription consists of three staves of music. The top staff starts with a G clef, common time, and a key signature of one flat. It contains lyrics: Be' un U - tan ke - loh ke - na se - pak me - lu      Se - lem se - Chut tun - . The middle staff continues with lyrics: lem yang tai'ee na' me du lu      Sai'ee a - me di - a ku - a si - lung a - . The bottom staff concludes with lyrics: su Chut tun - yang Chut tun - yang na' ma - u Chut tun . Measure numbers 4 and 7 are indicated above the staves.

## Musical features

Tone-set: <i>s l d r m s</i>	Metre: quadruple	Tonal centre: <i>do</i>
Mode: <i>do</i> -pentatonic	Ambitus: 8	Intervals: M2, m3, M3, P4
Form: A B A B	No. of phrases: 4	Podia: Bipodic (2.2.2.2 )

## Textual and cultural features

This is a song associated with a *jatung utang* ensemble melody, first sung to me in 2004 by Ulau Lupa, and featured in Chong (2006:58). In 2009, I obtained a more comprehensive set of lyrics and learnt how the song came to Long Moh. Baun Bilung told me with certainty that it was introduced to the villagers in the 1970s by Long Nawang visitors while they sat around the verandah. The lively

tune has now been immortalized in the instrumental repertoire (although it is arguable whether the vocal version preceded the instrumental version or vice versa).

The song tells of a folorn suitor slinking off in the dark (in the interior, this entails stepping on muddy ground, hence the refrain *chut tunyang* – to step in the mud) after being rejected by the girl his heart desires. The polite way to express interest in a young lady is to visit her family, and ask for *sepak melu* (known in Malay as *sirih*<sup>41</sup>). Receiving the answer that “no-one is free” to prepare the *sepak melu* for him, he knows he has been rejected. The lyrics reflect Kenyah courting rituals and social interactions. As I found throughout my days in any Kenyah and Kayan village, any gathering lasting more than 15 minutes is inevitably graced with the partaking of *sepak melu*.

However, if Krohn’s description of courting rituals in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (an excerpt is shown below) holds true for the Lepo’ Tau, there appears to be an alternative interpretation. The lyrics may actually indicate that the girl does not want to accept the *sirih* offered by the prospective suitor who has come to visit her at night beside her sleeping mat:

*... In the still tropical darkness ... the Dyak youth steals silently to the side of the sleeping mat on which reposes the object of his affections. He awakens her, and without any preliminary words, offers her a sirih leaf in which are rolled up the ingredients for betel-nut chewing. If the girl, on awakening, accepts the betel-nut, lime, gambier and sireh, and starts to chew it, the prowling lover can regard this as a sure sign that his visit is acceptable ...*  
(Krohn, 2001:259).

### Pedagogical interest

The simple tone-set, symmetrical phrasing and rhythmic structure make it amenable to solfa exercises in the earlier stages of teaching singing according to the Kodály method. The culturally rich text (betel nut chewing, courting rituals, muddy roads) could spark interesting discussions on life in the rural areas of Southeast Asia.

The tune could be sung and played on an instrument, and traditional dance movements performed with it. Subsequently it could then be used for tonic-solfa practice. Playing the melody on the *jatung utang* could serve as an effective and simple introduction to harmony. The melody is easily picked up and reproduced even by a novice, using the right hand. Once he/she can render the tune accurately he/she can then add in harmonic support, playing (this comes almost intuitively) the left hand, which traditionally follows, at an interval below, the contour of the melody. Beginning with a fixed interval (usually either a 3<sup>rd</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> below) the player finds that, by moving his/her hands in parallel motion, an acceptable harmony can be produced, but with minor adjustments, to avoid clashes. Later on, he/she can be led to analyse why certain notes seem to clash while other combinations sound pleasing.

#### 4.3.2 Belian Lutong

My introduction to *lutong* songs by Ulau Lupa’s family in Long Moh was described in 3.1.2 (pg. 80-81). Ulau and her sisters demonstrated not only the instrumental repertoire, but also songs and simple dance movements in accompaniment. Their musical features are summarized in Table 4.9

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<sup>41</sup> *Sirih* refers to the Asian custom of chewing a concoction of betel nut, betel leaves and lime paste.

together with the other songs associated with instrumental tunes and children's songs. As the *lutong* has only four pitches, the associated songs have a smaller range than songs associated with *jatung utang* and *sape*, and are limited to tetratonic modes (except for *Ilun Pesak Pakui* – discussed last). This makes them especially useful for elementary music classes.

In the transcriptions, I have attempted to notate the pitches of the songs as they were sung, rather than as played by the *lutong*. Some of the intervals in the songs differ from the instrumental versions, as vocal and instrumental versions were often performed separately. This seeming discrepancy is not confined to the *lutong*. The *jatung utang* repertoire, as noted earlier, includes the instrumental versions of diatonic Malay songs such as *Lenggang Kangkong* and *Pura Pura*, which the Kenyah sing<sup>42</sup> in diatonic scales but play with modified intervals on their pentatonic instruments.

#### (a) *Tut-tut Nang* (as sung in Long Moh)

Lyrics: *Tut-tut nang, Tut-tut teh*

This song is accompanied by simple dance-steps, as described below the score.

#### **Transcription 34: *Tut-tut Nang* (as sung in Long Moh)**

$\text{♩} = 86$



Tut - tut nang      Tut - tut teh      Tut - tut nang nang      Tut - tut Teh

The actual pitch of the Eflat is +30cents and the B is -40cents

#### Musical features

Tone-set: <i>si l d</i>	Metre: duple	Tonal centre: <i>si</i>
Mode: tritonic	Ambitus: 4	Intervals: m2, m3, P4

#### Textual and cultural interest

*Tut-tut Nang* seems to be an innocuous song with clear dance-steps, ostensibly for pure enjoyment of music and dance. As the word for dance is *tu'ut* the vocable *tut* along with *dot*, *dut*, *ti* and *det* seem to be used widely for vocalising melodies, with some eventually establishing themselves as well-known repertoire as in the case of the Badang song *dot ti dut* (described in 4.5.2).

#### (b) *Ti Ruti Lun*

##### Lyrics

*Ti ruti lun*  
*Bekubek duai lun*  
(could be substituted with  
*Luntuk duai lun*)

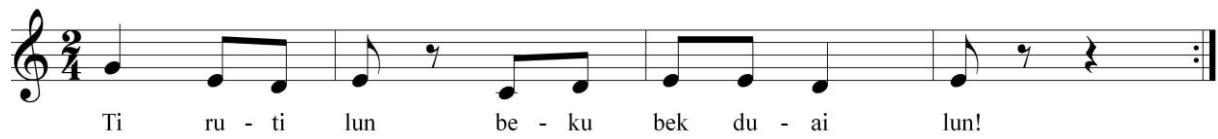
##### Translation

Come and sleep,  
We two make love  
(could be substituted with  
“we two sleep together”)

<sup>42</sup> As sung by Merang Iban and friends in Long Moh.

### Transcription 1 from Chapter 3: *Ti Ruti Lun* (Chong, 2006:59)

$\text{♩} = 88$



Ti ru - ti lun be - ku bek du - ai lun!

**Actions:** Step point clap beckon with both hands lay head on folded hands

The melody has been transposed up from the actual pitch, but retains the intervals as sung by Ulau. These differed slightly from the intervals actually played on the instrument.

#### Musical features

Tone-set: <i>d r m s</i>	Metre: duple
Tonal centre: <i>m</i>	Mode: tetratonic
Ambitus: 5	Intervals: M2, m3

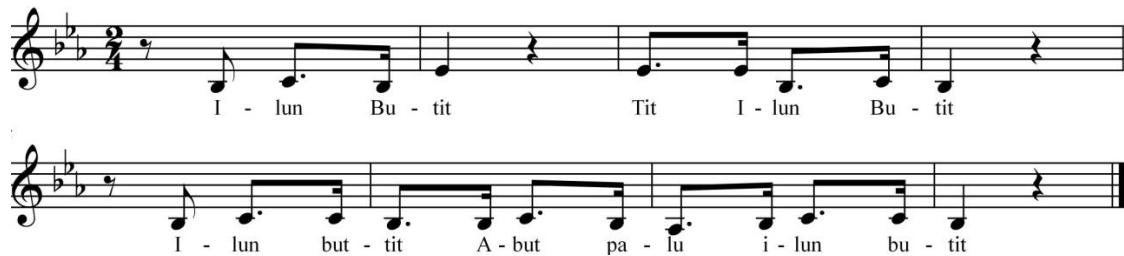
#### Pedagogical interest

The cultural context of this song was discussed in Chapter 3 (pg. 80-81). Although the original context may be deemed unsuitable for children, the lyrics could be altered as suggested above, resulting in an innocuous and catchy song and dance routine suitable for young children.

(c) *Ilun Butit* (as sung in Long Moh)

### Transcription 35: *Ilun Butit*

$\text{♩} = 96$



I - lun Bu - tit Tit I - lun Bu - tit

I - lun but - tit A - but pa - lu i - lun bu - tit

The transcription above (*Ilun Butit*) shows the sung version (pitch of Bb in instrumental version is approximately higher by +40 cents). Hence the sung melody could be classified as tetratonic: *f s l d* (or, in  $A_{\flat}$ , *do, d r m s*).

#### Musical features

Tone-set: <i>f s l d</i> ( <i>d r m s</i> )	Metre: duple	Tonal centre: <i>so</i> ( <i>re</i> )
Mode: tetratonic	Ambitus: 5	Intervals: M2, P4

## **Textual, cultural and pedagogical interest**

*Ilun Butit*, as mentioned in Chapter 3, may originally have been aimed at a rival in love. It is sung in a jesting or teasing manner. Such songs are fun to perform, and their slightly irreverent lyrics probably add to their appeal to children. A cursory study of English nursery rhymes should convince the most staid educators of this.

(d) *Ilun Pesak Pakui*

Lyrics	Translation
<i>Ilun Pesak pakui</i>	The orphan girl cooks ferns

### **Transcription 36: *Ilun Pesak Pakui* (Chong, 1998:16)**

A musical score for two voices. The top voice is in 2/4 time with a tempo of 63 BPM, and the bottom voice is in 3/4 time. Both voices sing the same lyrics: "I - lun pe - sak pa - kui". The top voice uses a treble clef and a dotted half note as the beat unit. The bottom voice also uses a treble clef. The lyrics are written below the notes.

## Musical features

Tone-set: <u>s</u> l d r m s	Metre: duple
Tonal centre: <i>do</i>	Mode: <i>do</i> -pentatonic
Ambitus: 8	Intervals: M2, m3, M3

Bars 5-6 probably constitute a later development of the original version of the song as played<sup>43</sup> on the *lutong*, which is restricted to 4 pitches, probably corresponding to *d r m s* in the transcription above (see above note on differences between vocal and instrumental versions).

## **Textual and cultural features**

*Ilun Pesak Pakui*<sup>44</sup>, another song corresponding to a *lutong* tune, reflects the loneliness of a young girl who has lost her mother, and can only cook *paku* (fern-leaves) for herself. Baun sang the song to me while the melody was being played by Suok on the *sape*. It was a revelation to me that there was an instrumental origin to this song, a well-known item, which resembles the Lun Bawang song *Busak Pakui*.

<sup>43</sup> Baun remembers her grandmother playing the tune; however, no *lutong* player was present during my last visit.

<sup>44</sup> This was first sung to me by Matthew Ngau in 1997, and included in my book (Chong, 1998:16) as a children's song. The Lun Bawang/Kelabit song *Busak Pakui* may well be an adapted version of *Ilun Pesak Pakui*.

## Pedagogical interest

Besides the small tone-set and simple rhythm which makes it amenable to solfa exercises, the above song could also be sung as a round<sup>45</sup>, with the second voice entering after the first or second phrase.

## General applications for songs associated with instrumental repertoire

As an activity in class, the same tune could be sung and played on an instrument, and dance movements performed to it. For songs related to *sape* and *jatung utang* repertoire, a direct application of traditional context is for one group to sing the melody and the other to sing (or play on pentatonic xylophones) the ostinato or bordun accompaniment<sup>46</sup>. Subsequently the melody could be used for solfa practice and the text used as a starting point for a cultural discussion. These songs are more suitable than *belian dado*’ for solfa ‘hand-signing’ exercises, as the tone-sets and rhythm patterns are simpler. The lyrics of each song could spark discussions on a host of topics, such as hunting, folktales, costumes, etc. – invaluable material for teachers in areas as varied as social sciences and environmental studies.

**Table 4.10 Songs associated with instrumental tunes and other songs: Tone set, ambitus and theme**

	Title of Song	Tone set	Scale/mode	Ambitus	Theme
<i>Songs associated with sape tunes (origins as belian anak dumit)</i>					
55	<i>Det Diet</i> (as sung by Matthew Ngau)	<b>d r m s l d'</b>	do-pentatonic	8	Plucking of <i>sape</i> /dance-costume
56	<i>Det Diet</i> (Sambop version)	<b>d r m s d'</b>	do-pentatonic	8	Plucking of <i>sape</i> /costume/food
57	<i>Pui Ngeleput</i>	<u>s</u> <b>l d r m s</b>	so-pentatonic	8	Hunting a magic bird with a blowpipe
58	<i>Sai Ulai</i> (same tune as No. 57)	<u>s</u> <b>l d r m s</b>	so-pentatonic	8	Returning from <i>peselai</i>
<i>Songs associated with jatung utang</i>					
59	<i>Chut Tunyang</i>	<u>s</u> <b>l d r m s</b>	do-pentatonic	8	Rejected suitor
<i>Belian lutong</i>					
60	<i>Chat Chat Luchat</i>	<b>s i l d</b>	tritonic	3½	Names of persons: making fun of people
61	<i>Ilun Butit</i>	<b>d r m s</b>	tetratonic	5	
62	<i>Ilun pesak pakui</i>	<u>s</u> <b>l d r m s</b>	do-pentatonic	8	Cooking jungle ferns
63	<i>Lalut Utan Usun*</i>	<b>s i l d</b>	tritonic	3½	Making fun of people
64	<i>Matai Busong*</i>	<b>r m s</b>	tritonic	4	Curse-song
65	<i>Ti Ruti Lun</i>	<b>d r m s</b>	tetratonic	5	Calling a lover to bed
66	<i>Tut-tut Nang*</i>	<b>s i l d</b>	tritonic	3½	Vocables

<sup>45</sup>According to Matthew Ngau this was actually done in Kenyah tradition.

<sup>46</sup>Imitating the ostinato played by the second *sape* or the bordun played by *jatung utang* in an ensemble.

<b><i>Belian anak dumit and belian pesalau anak</i></b>						
67	<i>Chok Chok Awe</i>	<b><i>m s l</i></b>	tritonic	4	2/4	Comic rhyme
68	<i>Datang Chok</i>	<b><i>f i l t d</i></b>	<i>la</i> -tetratonic (hemitonics)	4½	2/4	Endless tale: animals
69	<i>Eh Eh Luwe</i>	<b><i>m s l d r m s</i></b>	<i>do</i> -pentatonic	10	4/4	Lullaby
70	<i>Go Garo</i>	<b><i>m s l</i></b>	tritonic	4	2/4	Action song
71	<i>Luntok Saidin Encik</i>	<b><i>d r m s l</i></b> <i>d'r'm'</i>	<i>so</i> -pentatonic	10	2/4;3/4	Sleep little brother
72	<i>Pengalang</i>	<b><i>l d r m</i></b>	<i>la</i> -tetratonic	5	2/4	Walking down the road
73	<i>Pemba Pemalok*</i>	<b><i>l d r m</i></b>	tetratonic	5	2/4	Pair of tigers
74	<i>Pesalau Anak Luntok</i>	<b><i>s l d r m</i></b>	<i>do</i> -pentatonic	6	4/4	Lullaby
75	<i>Sua Ulem</i>	<b><i>d r m s</i></b>	<i>do</i> -pentatonic	5	4/4	Play-party song
76	<i>Tai Uyau Along</i> ver.1(Long Moh )	<b><i>d r m f s l t d'</i></b>	major	8	2/4	Misadventures of Uyau Along
77	<i>Tai Uyau Along</i> ver. 2 (Belaga )	<b><i>l d r m f s l t d'</i></b>	major	11	2/4	Misadventures of Uyau Along
78	<i>Teroh Putong Roh</i>	<b><i>d r m</i></b>	trichordal	3	6/8	Lullaby
<b>Miscellaneous songs</b>						
79	<i>Cap Apek</i>	<b><i>d r m f s l t d'</i></b>	major	8	4/4	Requesting liquor
80	<i>Jelip-jelip</i>	<b><i>s l t d r m s</i></b>	<i>so</i> -hexatonic/ <i>do</i> -hexatonic	8	4/4	Teasing song
81	<i>Dot ti dut*</i> (Badang song)	<b><i>d r m a m s l t d</i></b> (ambiguous)	<i>do</i> -hexatonic (ambiguous)	8	2/4	Rejection of suitor

\* Ambiguous designation of tone-set not corresponding to Western-tempered scales. For some of the songs associated with instruments, this could be attributed to the intervals on the *lutong* and *sambe asal*.

#### **4.4 BELIAN ANAK DUMIT (SONGS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN) AND BELIAN PESALAU ANAK (ULLABIES )**

The children's songs discussed here are a mixture of lullabies, game-songs and a comic folk tale (*Tai Uyau Along*). Apart from *Tai Uyau Along* and *Luntok Saidin* these songs have a limited tonal range, small tone set (tritonic, trichordal, tetratonic and pentatonic), repetitive rhythm and regular metre, making them eminently suitable for solfa learning in the early stages. They fit into the earliest stages of the Kodály sequence for teaching melodic groupings. For example, *Chok Chok Awe* and *Go Garo* with a tone-set of *l s m* correspond to stage (ii) in the sequence, *Ilun Pesak Pakui* and *Pesalau Anak Luntok*, being *do*-pentatonic, are suitable for stage (v), while the *la*-tetratonic *Pengalang*, and *Pemba Pemalok* which has an ambiguous tonality, can be used for stage (vi) to introduce minor or *la*-centred tonality.

#### 4.4.1 Belian Anak Dumit

##### (a) Sua Ulem

Lyrics	Translation	Actions (all join hands in circle formation)
<i>Sua ulem,</i>	Brinjal <sup>47</sup> thorns	Right heel, Right step
<i>Sua pedang</i>	Pedang (a fruit) thorns	Left heel, Left step
<i>Meno teka</i>	Feel like cooking them	(moving to left), right (cross in front), left, right (cross in front)
<i>Kun petunangan</i>	On the iron stove	Left heel, Left step Repeat in the reverse direction

**Transcription 37: Sua Ulem** (as sung in Uma Sambop)

$\text{♩} = 100$



Su - a      U-lem      su - a      pe-dang      me - no      te - ka      kun      pe - tu - na-ngan

##### Musical features

- Tone-set: *d r m s*      Metre: duple      Tonal centre: *do*  
 Mode: *do*-pentatonic      Ambitus: 5      Intervals: M2, m3

##### Cultural and pedagogical interest

This is a simple dance-song in circle formation, learnt from Helen Paya and Ramiah Sufen in Uma Sambop, suitable for children as a fun activity for inculcation of rhythm. Helen Paya and her sisters also gave other examples of *belian anak dumit*, formerly sung by older children, to their younger siblings as they carried them on their backs or rocked them to sleep.

##### (b) Chok Chok Awe

Lyrics	Translation
<i>Chok Chok Awe Awe</i>	<i>Chok Chok</i> (vocables) Awe (name of a girl)
<i>Empan Bilong</i>	Bilong's (name of a boy) knife
<i>Pelabo pueh-Pengkupeng</i>	Has fallen down – crash!

**Transcription 38: Chok Chok Awe** (as sung in Long Moh)

$\text{♩} = 82$



Chok      Chok      A - we      A - we      Em - pan      Bi - long      pe - la -  
 bo      pu - eh      Peng      -      ku      -      peng!

##### Musical features

- Tone-set: *m s l*      Metre: duple      Tonal centre: *mi*  
 Mode: tritonic      Ambitus: 4      Intervals: M2, m3

<sup>47</sup> *terung pipit kecil* in Malay.

\*The last two bars (*Peng-ku-peng!*) are unpitched, i.e spoken, not sung. This is an action song I learnt from the children of Long Moh.

### (c) *Pemba Pemalok*

#### **Lyrics**

*Pemba Pemalok ipa*  
*Nga cha lenjau mabang ina*

#### **Translation**

Vocables (?)  
One of a pair of tigers emerges

### **Transcription 39: *Pemba Pemalok* (as sung in Long Moh)**

$\text{♩} = 84$



Pem - ba Pem - a - lok i - pa Nga cha len - jau ma - bang i - na

#### **Musical features**

Tone-set: <i>l d r m</i>	Metre: duple
Tonal centre: ambiguous <i>do/la</i>	Mode: tetratonic
Ambitus: 5	Intervals: M2, m3, P5

#### **Textual, cultural and pedagogical interest**

This song was sung to me by an elderly lady in Long Moh in response to my request for children's songs. It is a cumulative song with improvised endings. Children could sing this melody in solfa, then in imitation of the cultural context, guided to improvise different lyrics to the melody, possibly making up the continuation of the original story.

#### ***Tai Uyau Along* – Variants to a children's song in two different river systems and its entry into *belian dado'* repertoire**

In Long Moh, the song *Tai Uyau Along* had first been sung to me in 1996 by the children as a *belian anak*, then later by adults seated on the verandah. It was not clear if it was treated as part of the *belian dado'* repertoire.

In January 2008, as Helen Paya was looking through my book (Chong, 2006), she took note of common repertoire and requested that I sing the Long Moh version of *Tai Uyau Along*, after which she reciprocated with the Belaga version. Subsequently, I have observed the same song performed as *belian dado'* in both Uma Sambop and Uma Badang.

It is interesting to note the similarities. The context is similar, featuring the antics of a lovable but foolish folk character. Both employ the full major scale and the first two phrases have similar rhythmic structure. It is likely that both developed as variants of the same song, perhaps originally composed to entertain children. Eventually, at least in Belaga, this song found its way into the *belian dado'* repertoire.

**(d) *Tai Uyau Along* version 2 (Belaga)**

**Lyrics**

- 1 *Tai Uyau Along mesih  
Asin asin ia petai-ee  
Abe pe'lan atuk kayoh uma*

**Translation**

Uyau Along went fishing  
Alas all he caught was dung  
The fish refused to bite

**Chorus:**

*Pekina lale  
Salam kake  
Uyau Along pekina lale la penyae*

**Chorus:**

That's the way he does things  
Poor thing  
Uyau Along's way, oh, how pitiful

- 2 *Tai Uyau Along ti alut  
Dutut dutut Uyau Along alut  
Abe pe'lan nya njam lan*

Uyau Along tried to make a boat  
Hunched over he toiled with the boat  
But he did not succeed

**Transcription 40: *Tai Uyau Along* version 2 (Chong, 2011:4)**

$\text{♩} = 104 - 109$



Tai U-yau A-long me-sih  
Du-tut du-tut U-yau A-long a-lut  
A-be pe'  
lan-a-tuk ka-yoh u-ma lan  
Pe-ki-na la-le sa-lam ka-  
ke U-yau A-long pe-ki-na la-le la-pen-ya-e

**Musical features**

Tone-set: *l d r m f s l t d'*

Metre: duple

Tonal centre: *do*

Mode: major

Ambitus: 11

Intervals: m2, M2, m3, M3, P4, P5

The Baram version is given below for comparison (Chong, 2006:61).

**(e) *Tai Uyau Along* version 1 (as sung in Long Moh)**

**Lyrics**

1. *Tai Uyau Along lemesih  
Asin alak ca'kelempung tailee  
Kelempung tailee iya tiga  
Iya tiga ukok mula  
Ubi ngan jelai baa, ha-ha-ha*
2. *Tai Uyau Along nyuun kapak  
Tai pita cha bai tumpak  
Bai tumpak, iya tiga  
Ia tiga ukok mula  
Ubi ngan jelai baa, ha-ha-ha*

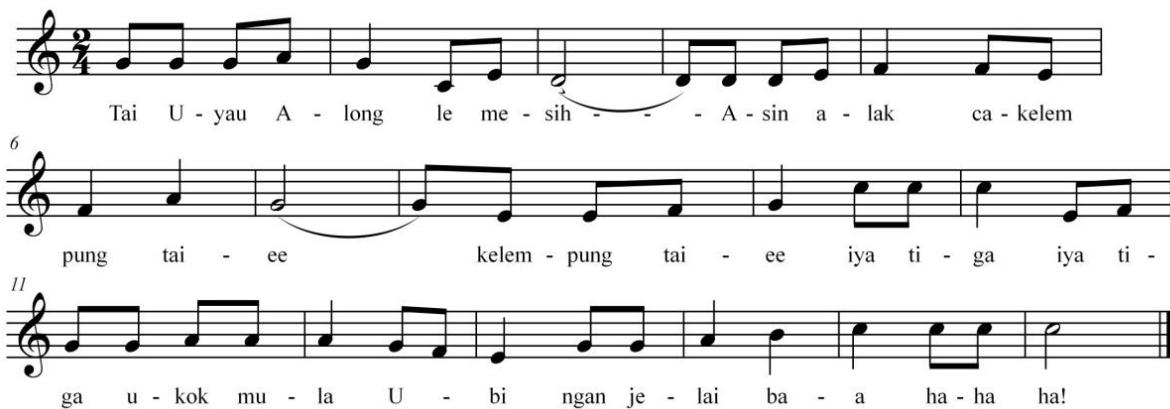
**Translation**

Uyau Along went fishing  
Alas all he caught was a lump of dung!  
A lump of dung is good  
Good for planting  
Potato, maize and rice

Uyau Along set off with his axe  
Seeking a fresh patch of land  
A fresh patch of land is good  
Good for planting  
Potato, maize and rice

### Transcription 41: *Tai Uyau Along* version 1 (Chong, 2006:61)

$\text{♩} = 112$



Tai U - yau A - long le me - sih - - A - sin a - lak ca - kelem  
 6 pung tai - ee kelem - pung tai - ee iya ti - ga iya ti -  
 11 ga u - kok mu - la U - bi ngan je - lai ba - a ha - ha ha!

#### Musical features

Tone-set: *d r m f s l t d'* Metre: duple

Tonal centre: *do* Mode: major

Ambitus: 8 Intervals: m2, M2, m3, M3, P4, m6

#### Pedagogical interest

A consideration of the texts of these two songs gives a rich insight into the culture of the Kenyah. *Tai Uyau Along*, with its major tonality, could pass for a Western melody, but its theme, revolving around the antics of the comic Uyau Along, is indisputably Kenyah. The cheeky reference to dung would never have materialized in a composed song, or would be censored out by aghast education officials. It is nevertheless beloved of children (and adults, who also sang the song with considerable hilarity<sup>48</sup>) and all too practical a consideration in a rural agrarian life.

#### 4.4.2 *Belian Pesalau Anak* (Lullabies)

##### *Eh Eh Luwe* (as sung in Long Moh)

Baun and Ulau both sang the following lullaby, *Eh Eh Luwe*, for me. The melody is in a *do*-pentatonic mode (original key G major, which I have transposed up to C, a more amenable key for use in schools, in the transcription below). It is a typical cumulative lullaby, designed to be continued indefinitely until the child falls asleep. The following is an excerpt from the beginning of the song. The lyrics were sung to a set of melodic phrases repeated in a cycle, with slight variations in the order, depending on the whim of the singer.

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<sup>48</sup> but at a much slower tempo, approximately  $\text{♩} = 78$ , and at a lower pitch (F major compared to children's B<sub>b</sub>).

Solfá	Lyrics	Translation
<i>d d l d</i>	<i>Eh Eh luwe</i>	Eh eh sleep
<i>s d d l d</i>	<i>Lun Luwe Ichun</i>	Sleep, while I rock you
<i>s d l m s</i>	<i>Ichun uban ukun</i>	Rock you till you grow
<i>s d d l d</i>	<i>Uban ukun tulang</i>	Grow quickly bones
<i>r s m r d</i>	<i>Tulang 'ait akang</i>	Bones large and brave
<i>d l m s</i>	<i>A'it Akang Njok</i>	Brave will you be Njok <sup>49</sup>
<i>s d d l d</i>	<i>N'jok pelanok</i>	Njok mouse-deer
<i>r m d d d</i>	<i>Pelanok lide</i>	Mouse-deer fallen leaf
<i>s d d l d</i>	<i>Lide uping bete'</i>	Fallen leaf shrinks the calf
<i>s s l m s</i>	<i>Bete' tang tike</i>	Calf of the tree-partridge
<i>s d d l d</i>	<i>Tang tike madang</i>	The tree-partridge flies
<i>m r m d l d</i>	<i>Madang lempau siang</i>	Flies into the stakes
<i>d d l d</i>	<i>Eh Eh luwe</i>	Eh eh sleep

### Transcription 42: *Eh Eh Luwe* (Chong, 2011:47)

$\text{♩} = 82$

3

Eh eh lu-we Lun lu-we i-chun I-chun u-bang u-kun U-bang u-kun tu-lang Tu-

5 lang nya-it a-kang A-kang chok chok pe lan-nok pe - la-nok be - te' Be -

9 te' tang ti-ke Tang ti - ke ma-dang ma - dang lem-pau si - ang eh eh \_ lu-we

3

### Musical features

Tone-set: *s l d r m s*

Metre: quadruple

Tonal centre: *do*

Mode: *do*-pentatonic

Ambitus: 8

### Intervals: M2, m3, P4

## Pedagogical interest

With its repeated pentatonic tonal patterns revolving around *s l d r m*, *Eh Eh Luwe* is an ideal solfa exercise for introduction of low *so* and low *la*. It could also be sung as a round, serving as an introduction to two-part singing. As this is a cumulative song, children could then improvise their own lyrics after they have learnt the original version.

## 4.5 MISCELLANEOUS SONGS

A varied selection of songs appears in this section. The first two are ‘fun’ songs which do not fit into any specific category, but would be enjoyable material (perhaps with some censorship of the more bawdy elements) for an educational context.

<sup>49</sup> Name of a boy.

### 4.5.1 ‘Fun’ Songs

#### (a) *Cap Apek*<sup>50</sup> (as sung in Long Semiyang)

##### Lyrics

*Kuda piko lesau ame  
Ne na cha botol Cap Apek*

*Kuda pa ikem lesau eda  
Ne na cha put Cola*

*Kuda piko kediut  
Ne na cha tin Setout*

*Kuda pa ikem lesau eda  
Ne na cha put teh bunga*

##### Translation

Have pity on us  
Give us a bottle of *Cap Apek*

Have pity on us  
Give us a jug of Cola

Give us a little drop  
From the tin of Stout

Have pity on us  
Give us a jug of chrysanthemum tea

#### Transcription 43: *Cap Apek* (Chong, 2006:64)

$\text{♩} = 88$



Ku - da pi - ko le-sau a - me Ne - na cha bo - tol Cap A - pek Ku -  
 5  
 da pa i-kem le - sau e - da Ne - na cha put\_ Co - la.

#### Musical features

Tone-set: *d r m f s l t d'*

Metre: quadruple

Tonal centre: *do*

Mode: major

Ambitus: 8

Intervals: m2, M2, m3, M3, P4, P5

#### Textual and cultural features

*Cap Apek* is a ‘fun’ song, if a rather irreverent one, which illustrates the festival atmosphere in Kenyah villages during Christmas. It was sung to me by residents of Long Semiyang, in response to my request for songs related to Christmas.

#### Pedagogical interest

This song is readily amenable to improvised lyrics, and can be utilised for other celebrations.

*Cap Apek* is the brand-name for a popular local alcoholic drink, but it can easily be substituted with other more suitable beverages for children (as my creative hosts immediately did in the second verse in response to my predicament).

The tonal patterns in the song, (i) *s d'* (ii) *s d* (iii) *s t l s f m r d* constitute suitable solfa exercises.

<sup>50</sup> This is a brand name, hence the spelling. *Cap* (pronounced “chap”) means brand’ in Malay. *Apek* means ‘old man’ in Chinese.

### (b) *Jelip-jelip*

The following somewhat ribald song was first taught to me by my host Ulau Lupa (who demonstrated the movements with great hilarity). Later, she enlisted the help of an accomplished singer, Ingan Lahat (brother of Sigau Langat) and his brother-in-law Henry Suok. At Ingan's residence, they sang it together (quite solemnly, with no embarrassment) for the purpose of recording.

Lyrics	Translation
1 <i>Jelip-jelip kisek mata Uyau Along</i> <i>Jelip-jelip kisek mata Uyau Along</i> <i>Ta'un Uyau Along ke nyingo</i> <i>Daun kuko lepa kanan</i>	Bat your eyelids Uyau Along Bat your eyelids Uyau Along Uyau Along doesn't care anymore Withered leaves discarded after use
2 <i>Dilo-dilo kisek 'ko Utan Along</i> <i>Dilo-dilo kisek 'ko Utan Along</i> <i>Ta'un Utan Along ke nyingo</i> <i>Daun kuko lepa kanan</i>	Sway your hips Utan Along Sway your hips Utan Along Utan Along doesn't care anymore Withered leaves discarded after use
3 <i>Juit-juit kisek pen Uyau Along</i>	Walk like this (observing women's behinds )Uyau Along
4 <i>Jilap-jilap kisek mata Utan Along</i>	Bat your eyelids Utan Along
5 <i>Jebet-jebet kisek pen Uyau Along</i>	Walk like this (pushing pelvis forward) Uyau Along

### Transcription 44: *Jelip-jelip* (as sung in Long Moh)

$\text{♩} = 80$

### Musical features

Tone-set: s l t d r m s

Metre: quadruple

Tonal centre: *so/do*

Mode: *so-hexatonic*

Ambitus: 8

Intervals: m2, M2, m3, M3, P4

I have classified the song as having two possible tonal centres, because Ulau ended all her renditions on s while Ingan ended the last verse on s l d. As the song is supposed to go on indefinitely,

perhaps there should not be an ‘official’ ending. The second ending (*s l d*) was only sung by one of the men at the end of the recording.

### Textual and cultural features

*Jelip-jelip* is a teasing song performed with actions – alternating verses sung by opposing groups of men and women. This recording was rather muddled because the men kept reverting to the prefix “Utan” (referring to women) while Ulau used “Uyau” (referring to men), reflecting the actual context in which the song was sung. Verses 1, 3 and 5 are sung by women, verses 2 and 4 by men. The chorus “daun kuko” is repeated after each improvised verse, which is accompanied by suggestive movements.

### Pedagogical interest

Even though the song is strictly hexatonic, the *ti* only appears once. The dominant tonality is pentatonic. Unusual tonal patterns in the song which can be explored include *s s s t r l* and *r l s s*.

### 4.5.2 Older Songs Linked to Older Instrumental Genres

These songs and the songs in 4.5.3 and 4.5.4 are included because of their significance to developments in vocal music with relation to instrumental genres, adoption of repertoire from other subgroups and ethnic groups and the movement of ‘*belian dado*’ into Church music. They will not be analysed in detail for musical and pedagogical features.

#### (a) *Dot ti dut, dot ti de* (Badang song from Teba’au, as sung by Ulau Lupa)

Ulau told me that the Badang had learnt much of their song repertoire from the Lepo’ Tau, implying they had few songs of worth themselves. She did, however, recall two songs which she learnt from the Badang. She sang them to me with great amusement, finding it difficult to suppress her laughter.

The two songs were built on almost identical melodies. For purposes of discussion, I will refer only to the first song, *Dot Ti Dut*. It differs from the standard ‘*belian dado*’ repertoire in structure, lyrics and tuning, and displays a clear connection to the older genre of *sambe asal tunes* described in 3.4.1.1. The scale intervals do not, as with most ‘*belian dado*’, concur with the Western scale. The E flat in bar 1 & 3 sounds 40 cents higher, B (bar 5) is 20 cents lower, while the E (bar 8) is 30 cents lower. In Ulau’s rendition, the second half of the melody displayed a distinct major mode, with the pitch corresponding clearly to E rather than E flat.

#### Lyrics

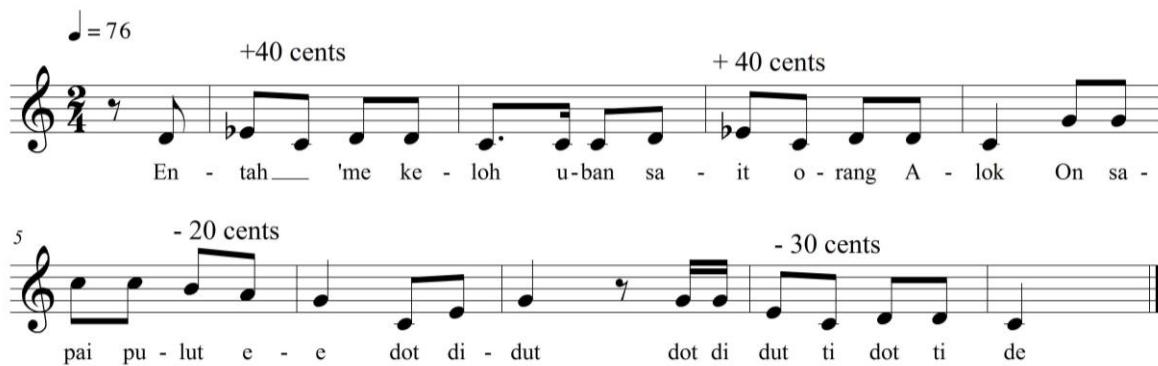
*Entah ‘me keloh*  
*Uban sait orang alok*  
*On sapai pulut e-e*  
*Dot ti dut*  
*Dot ti dut ti dot ti de*

#### Translation

I don’t want  
To marry the foreigner  
Wearing the singlet  
*Dot ti dut*  
*Dot ti dut ti dot ti de*

### Transcription 45: *Dot Ti Dut* (as sung by Ulau Lupa)

$\text{♩} = 76$



En - tah\_\_ 'me ke - loh u-ban sa - it o - rang A - lok On sa -  
 pai pu - lut e - e dot di - dut dot di dut ti dot ti de

The song is also of cultural interest as it reflects the social presence of Chinese traders (*Orang Alok* is the Kenyah term for foreigner – applicable to all non-Kenyah) to whom the Kenyah are grudgingly grateful for introducing all manner of material comforts. However, they may be more than a little disdainful of Chinese lack of refinement (as displayed by the reference to the singlet *sapai pulut* typically worn by Chinese shopkeepers). Their terms for a number of household items are derived from the Chinese version of the Malay terms, e.g., *luteh* (bread) stems from the Chinese pronunciation *loti* of the Malay word *roti*. There have been instances of marriage between the two communities, although many suitors were also turned down because of parental objections.

The refrain *dot ti dut*, *dot ti deh*, I was told, refers to the simple Badang dance-step which Ulau demonstrated to me. Later, I found a significant connection to an older genre of instrumental music, while witnessing Lian Langgang's performance on the *sambe asal*. He had played a mixture of both ritual *sambe bali dayung* and recreational repertoire. As he played through some of the recreational repertoire, Ulau and Bungan Anye (Lian's wife) spontaneously started dancing in the 'old style'. They took some time to recall the movements, as they obviously had not performed this version in years.

#### (b) *Ngayang taket kempau*

This is an older form of dance performed with *sambe asal* for purely recreational purposes. The melody was also verbalized with a set of vocables. There are clear similarities to the vocables and accompanying movements of the humorous Badang song above. The similarity also extends to the tuning (the non-correspondence of the *sambe asal* tuning to that of the Western scale).

### Transcription 46: *Sambe Taket Kempau* (as performed in Long Moh)

$\text{♩} = 80$



ti dut\_\_ ti\_\_ dut dut\_\_ ti dut\_\_ ti\_\_ dut te\_\_

**Tone-set:** *d m f s* (approximate pitch, *f* + 40 cents)

The style of the dance is somewhat percussive, unlike the more legato, flowing contemporary version<sup>51</sup>. The dancers proceed in a zig-zag line, utilizing a basic step and tap sequence, followed by a stationary sequence as described below (stamps and other actions are performed on the accented second beat (corresponding to the lyrics *dut* and *te* in bars 2 and 4). The two basic steps are: *taket kempau* which means ‘leg above’ and *kejat* (to stamp).

#### **Basic step when stationary:**

Right foot stamp front  
 Right foot stamp behind  
 Left foot stamp front  
 Left foot stamp behind  
 Hook right foot over left knee  
 Place right foot down  
 Hook left foot over right knee  
 Place left foot down.

### **4.5.3 Kenyah Melodies Incorporated into Christian Worship**

In my search for original Kenyah songs, I have found an unexpected ally in the Catholic Church. Musical missionaries cleverly incorporated many *belian dado'* into praise and worship sessions, sometimes by merely replacing a few words in each verse. Many of these songs are almost forgotten, but their melodies are immortalised in the hymns. Unfortunately, only a few people, such as Ba'un and Suok, whose family was among the first to convert to Christianity in the 1970s, are musical enough to distinguish between the many hymns with similar sounding lyrics. Some, such as *Lan-e Tuyang* (KY49<sup>52</sup>) and *Tiga Kua*, originally *Iko Kenai* (KY104), were immediately recognizable, as I had previously transcribed the original versions. In some cases, such as *Ini Lan De Kuo*, originally *Londe-Londe Silon* (KY40, shown below), most people were so used to singing the church version, they had forgotten the original versions altogether.

#### ***Ini Lan De Kuo*, (or *Ini Ia De Kuo*)**

	<b>Lyrics (hymn version)</b>	<b>Translation</b>
1.	<i>Ini ia de kuo</i> <i>Ame amai nyemba lan iko'</i> <i>Nyemba iko ' salam layan</i> <b>Chorus:</b> <i>Londe kun Along</i> <i>Meno,meno Amai Peselong luan</i>	This is the truth We praise you our Father We praise you and welcome you <b>Chorus:</b> Charming is Along We long for you Almighty Father
2.	<i>Nyae 'lan de netai</i> <i>Iko ' Amai ulang ulai</i> <i>Ulang ulai ule 'lian</i> <b>Chorus:</b> <i>Londe kun Along</i> <i>Meno, meno Amai Peselong Luan</i>	You depart Father you must return Return once more <b>Chorus:</b> Charming is Along We long for you Almighty Father

<sup>51</sup> as in *datun julud*.

<sup>52</sup> hymn numbers as found in *Belian Pejung Tuhan* (Roman Catholic Mission, 2004). Only the lyrics are given – no scores are provided.

An inspection of the lyrics clearly indicates that this was originally a *belian dado'*, altered to suit the context of Christianity. In both Uma Sambop and Long Moh, numerous residents were able to sing the hymn version faultlessly, but were at a loss as to what the original wording of the chorus could be. Only Ramiah Sufen of Uma Sambop seemed to recall some of the lyrics (the original version of the first line is still uncertain), revealing it to be a touching farewell song directed, in the verses below, to an honoured man, who is compared, as is often done, to a tiger. The song was also originally sung in harmony (the accompanying voice was partially sung by Helen Paya as notated in Transcription 47).

<b>Lyrics</b>	<b>Translation</b>
1. ....(uncertain)	.....
<i>Ame amai meno lan iko'</i>	We long for you father
<i>Meno iko' salam layan</i>	We long for and welcome you
<b>Chorus:</b>	<b>Chorus:</b>
<i>Londe kun Along</i>	Charming is Along
<i>Meno,meno amai lenjau taman</i>	We long for you father, the tiger
2. <i>Nyae'lan de netai</i>	You depart
<i>Iko' Amai ulang ulai</i>	Father you must return
<i>Ulang ulai ule' lian</i>	Return once more
<b>Chorus:</b>	<b>Chorus:</b>
<i>Londe kun Along</i>	Charming is Along
<i>Meno, meno amai lenjau taman</i>	We long for you father, the tiger

#### Transcription 47: *Ini Lan Di Kuo (Londe-Londe Silon)*

♩ = 78

I - ni lan di ku \_\_\_\_\_ o a - me a - mai nyem - ba lan i -  
 I - ni lan di ku \_\_\_\_\_ o a - me a - mai men - no lan i -  
  
 ko nyem - ba i ko sa - lam la yan Lon - de kun A -  
 ko me - no - i - ko sa - lam la yan Lon - de kun A -  
  
 long me - no me - no a - mai pe - se - lung lu - aîn  
 long me - no me - no a - mai len - jau ta - man

In Long Moh, I enlisted the help of Suok, John and Ulau to seek out hymns with original Kenyah tunes from the hymnal. Suok and John, with some difficulty, managed to sing five of the hymns, prompting Ulau to come forward with the original versions. Later when Baun returned from a three-day sojourn to the nearby timber-camp, she effortlessly sang another five songs with Kenyah melodies. Her superior recall may be traced to four factors: her immediate family was among the first small batch of converts in Long Moh (these pioneers originally met in one *amin*, using mainly adapted

Kenyah songs as hymns), her active participation in the church choir while working in Miri, and her own innate musicality and superior grasp of the nuances of the language.

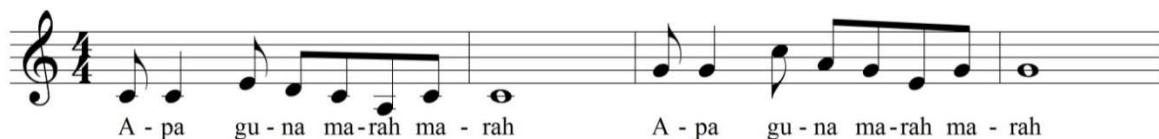
#### **4.6 ENCULTURATION PROCESSES: ADOPTION OF MELODIES FROM WESTERN, MALAY AND CHINESE CULTURE**

The following songs, along with the earlier examples from *belian dekieng letō*, reveal how the Kenyah are receptive to song repertoire from other communities and adapt it for use in their own music culture.

##### **(a) *Apa guna marah-marah* (derived from an American folk-song)**

The *det-diet* category of the *jatung utang* repertoire also includes the tune of the American folk song *Somebody's knocking at the door*, sung in Long Mekaba to the lyrics “Apa guna marah-marah<sup>53</sup>” (a pentatonic melody, thus playable on the *jatung utang*).

##### **Excerpt 12: Excerpt from *jatung jtang* ‘Det Diet’ repertoire *Apa Guna Marah-marah***



A - pa      gu - na      ma - rah      ma - rah

I observed the same melody played repeatedly in accompaniment of dance in Uma Baka’, and also in a video-recording of dance performance in a church in Long Nawang<sup>54</sup>.

##### **(b) *Pura-pura* (Malay song, as sung by Merang Iban and friends)**

As mentioned in 3.5.2, the *jatung utang* repertoire includes pentatonic modifications of diatonic Malay songs. The transcription of the melody of *Pura-pura* (sung with Malay lyrics) is given below:

##### **Transcription 48: *Pura-pura***



<sup>53</sup> Malay lyrics “What’s the use of being angry” used in Christian worship.

<sup>54</sup> Provided by Indonesian researcher Dave Lumenta.

As the *jatung utang* is pentatonic, in the instrumental version of this major tonality song, the *ti* and *fa* are replaced by *la* and *mi*. The other song mentioned, *Lenggang Kangkong*, is a common Malay/Indonesian folk-song which is included in the KBSR books (1982, Year 2, song no. 11) in the major scale. I have heard it performed (the *ti* is replaced by *la* on the *jatung utang* and *sape*) in five of the six villages in this study.

(c) *Amai ilu dalem surga* (The Lord's prayer, as sung in the church at Long Moh)

**Lyrics**

*Amai ilu dalem surga*  
*Bue' ne ngadan Ko'*  
*Nai ne pengelaja' Ko'*  
*Uyan me pengelo' 'Ko kusun tana'*  
*Uko' ba'an ka'dalem surga*  
*Na'me ame tau ini*  
*Alai penguman 'me'*  
*Mesau penyala' me'*  
*Uko' ba'an ame mesau dulu*  
*Dia un sala'neng ame'*  
*Ayen nggin ame' neng pengeten*  
*Tape' nakau ne ame' cin ja'at*  
*Ne-lan*

**Translation**

Our father who art in heaven  
 Hallowed be your name  
 Your kingdom come  
 Your will be done on earth  
 As it is in heaven  
 Give us this day  
 Our daily sustenance  
 Forgive us our sins  
 As we forgive  
 Those who sin against us  
 Do not bring us to the test  
 But deliver us from evil  
 Truly so

**Transcription 49: Amai Ilu Dalem Surga** (as sung in the church at Long Moh)

$\text{♩} = 72$

One Sunday, I heard the congregation lustily singing the above song, *Ame ilu dalem surga* (Our father in heaven), in a telling adaptation of a melody from that of another ethnic group. The

lyrics were set to a Kenyahised version of a Chinese melody<sup>55</sup>. The melody has clearly been modified with repetitions and suspensions to fit the lyrics. The ending, too, has been modified (both lyrics and melody) to the signature closing cadence of many *belian dado*': “ne-lan”. The hymn was also featured using the innovation of *jatung utang* and *sape* accompaniment in an audio-cassette recording of a set of hymns sung in Kenyah<sup>56</sup>. The difficulty of doing so was reflected in the fact that all the other hymns were accompanied with guitar and keyboard.

## 4.7 SUMMARY

This chapter clearly displays that Kenyah recreational repertoire constitute an attractive body of songs which would serve as excellent teaching materials in schools. Analysis of their musical structure reveals many of the elements required in a Kodály program including varied tonality, melodic appeal and rhythmic consistency. An examination of the lyrics reveals culturally meaningful texts and well-composed verse. The predominant anhemitonic tonality makes them ideal for the earlier stages in the Kodály-sequence of teaching melodic concepts.

*Belian dado*' constitute a sophisticated category. With their melodic and rhythmic complexity and refined verse employing poetic imagery, they would be ideal for secondary school or college level students. Their melodies and rhythms, however, can be appreciated (though with less depth of understanding) by much younger children, as will be elaborated in Chapter 6. One great strength is their ready-made traditional harmonies, suitable for teaching of harmonic concepts.

Compared to *belian dado*', other categories such as *belian anak dumit*, *belian pesalau anak* and the songs associated with instrumental repertoire are more suitable for the elementary stages of a Kodály program, especially for solfa hand-signing exercises, as the tone-sets and rhythm patterns are simpler. For example, *Chok Chok Awe* with a tone-set of *l s m* corresponds to stage (ii) in the Kodály sequence of melodic progression. Many of the songs are easily adaptable to elementary experiences in harmony, for example (following traditional practices) the singing of *Sai Ulai Alut Lai* accompanied with a vocal ostinato imitating that of an accompanying *sape* or *Ilun Pesak Pakui* as a round. The instrumental tunes can easily be played on the *jatung utang*, contemporary xylophones or Orff instruments.

The traditional movements which accompany the songs are easily adopted into a Malaysian classroom context, and would be more acceptable to students from Muslim communities (e.g. many of my Muslim students refuse to hold hands) than Western folk-dances which are described along with the many songs available in international publications.

Here, the *belian dekieng leto* are especially useful. Unlike the normal circular formation in *belian dado*' the dance movements and formations feature an interesting choreographic variety. Their only drawback is the text, which cannot be translated, but the popularity of the songs and dance routines among students of various ethnic descents (described in Chapter 6) is testament to the sonic

<sup>55</sup> Baun even named the priest (Michael Chia) who introduced the original Chinese song to them.

<sup>56</sup> by a Catholic church in Miri, as mentioned in 3.5.3.

and kinesthetic appeal of the melodies and movements in themselves, without any “outside referent”. This could be cited in support of the aesthetic concept: that music can be appreciated purely for its sonic qualities and beauty of form without the need for an insider’s cultural understanding. In the case of bawdy songs such as *Jelip Jelip*, the teacher could substitute less offensive words in the verses. One well-known song from the other side of the world, *La Cucaracha*, is no less beloved because of a connection to marijuana – this version of the lyrics just never appears in the classroom.

For the majority of the songs, however, it is very significant that they possess a real cultural context, with embedded socio-cultural and historical elements, thus imbuing them with a value far beyond the narrow objectives of ‘musical concepts’. The lyrics of each song could spark discussions on a host of topics, such as folk tales, endangered animals, war, love and courting rituals. The songs would be invaluable material for teachers in areas such as social sciences and environmental studies. They also provide insights into aspects of Kenyah culture and life in a rural area which echo those of a great many other indigenous groups in the country.

The analysis of themes in section 4.1.1 shows that the majority of *belian dado*’ are concerned with the atmosphere of the gathering and welcoming guests, while the rest cover various themes such as love, historical events, nature and legend. This is in contrast to various genres of songs from other communities which have connections with animistic religious beliefs. The *Tarian Saba* songs from the Malay community of Ulu Tembeling (Chan, 2001), for example, display melodic variety but have a shamanistic context, and may be considered unacceptable to certain communities.

The songs should then be a welcome addition to the paltry collection of folk-songs available to music teachers in Malaysian schools. It is a far cry, still, from the ideal proportion according to Kodály scholars such Choksy et al (1986:137) who advocate forty-five folk-songs per year, or the “40% folkloric<sup>57</sup> material” already written into Bulgarian school music texts (Ognenska-Stoyanova, 2000).

It is clear that the Kenyah have a highly developed music tradition, as mirrored in their large and varied repertoire of songs. As shown in the analysis above, the songs would be a substantial and welcome addition to teaching materials in any music classroom in the world. This is especially so as songs from the South-East Asian countries seem especially scarce in ‘world music’ publications. For these songs to be used widely in schools, however, other issues need to be explored. An immediate consideration is whether songs from a minority community would be applicable in a multi-ethnic society such as Malaysia. Another debatable issue is the question of modifications for presentation on the stage and usage in classrooms. These will be discussed in Chapter 6.

The musical processes described in this chapter also show various instances in which the Kenyah have blended musical elements from their own and other cultures. These have revealed much about the roots of their music culture, which will be examined further in the next chapter.

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<sup>57</sup> The Eastern European countries favour the use of the term ‘folklore’ over folk-song.

# CHAPTER 5

## KENYAH MUSICALITY AND VOCAL HARMONY THROUGH THE LENS OF MUSIC EDUCATION

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As proposed by Small (1998:210), the lack of musicality of so many people in Western industrial society could often be “because they have been actively taught to be unmusical”. He further suggests that “schools themselves, alas, and the music tuition they provide, can contribute to this process of demusicalization”. As Folkestad (2006:136) emphasised, the great majority of musical learning takes place outside schools, and there should be a shift of focus of research from “how to teach (teaching methods) … to what to learn … and how to learn … how musical phenomena are perceived, experienced and expressed in musical activities by the learner.”

It is clear that the Kenyah have a highly developed music tradition, as mirrored in their large and varied repertoire of songs. Song, dance and instrumental music with rudimentary harmony permeate the daily lives of the Kenyah. Such pervasive music making contrasts sharply with the environment in most schools. The previous chapter analyzed, from an educationist’s perspective, a sampling of the Kenyah communities’ varied repertoire of songs. Apart from the songs and dance movements per se, there is much that educationists can learn from the Kenyah. They have cultivated an impressive multipart singing tradition in which the whole community participates. This tradition and a melodically rich instrumental repertoire indicate the existence of a high level of musicality in the community. In this chapter I will examine factors which may have fostered the development of skills in the performing arts, especially choral singing skills, and then postulate a theory of how their unique version of vocal harmony developed over the years. A discussion of the implications for school music education follows.

### 5.1 INVESTIGATING KENYAH MUSICALITY

“Musicality” as pointed out by Jaffurs (2004:3) is “a loosely used term with many meanings”. To some, it is manifested in technical achievement while others believe that “technique is secondary and musicality is the level of expression brought by a musician to a work”. Focusing on another dimension, Reimer (1989:169) wrote that “heightened aesthetic experience, which occurs through listening, comes to those who are truly musical”. Rather than ‘musicality’, both Gardner (1983) and Reimer (2003) prefer the term ‘musical intelligence’, elevating music as a school subject equivalent to language or mathematics. However, their perspectives differ. Whereas Gardner views musical intelligence as a single, general factor, Reimer believes that an individual can have different levels of musical intelligences for different musical roles, such as in composing, performing, improvising and listening. He conceives of musical intelligence

(2003:213) as “the level of one’s ability to experience music as meaningful, informed by sensitive discernments and broad understandings in each particular musical role engagement in which one becomes involved”. Gordon (1997) uses the term “musical aptitude” to refer to the inherent capacity of every human being to develop musicality, and believes that exposing children to quality early childhood experiences is the best way to help them reach their full potential.

From the perspective of a music educator, musicality could be viewed as the ability to perceive the basic aspects of musical sound such as pitch, duration, intensity and timbre, in addition to possessing an overall understanding of music as a unified and expressive whole, and the ability to innovate new permutations of these elements. The term musicality, however, may not be acceptable to all educators. Radocy and Boyle (1988:295) claim that terms such as musicality and talent are imprecise. They suggest that ‘musical capacity’ ought to refer to genetic potential plus maturation, while ‘musical aptitude’ should refer to capacity plus informal environmental factors, and ‘musical ability’ as the broadest of the terms, consisting of the sum total of capacity, environmental factors and formal instruction. Thus, in this chapter I employ the term ‘musical aptitude’ in the Kenyah village context, and the term ‘musical ability’ for formal educational contexts.

A closer look at Kenyah attitudes, customs and societal norms, as well as specific music and dance activities may throw some light on how musical aptitude is nurtured in this culture. Although some of the following practices are not unique to the Kenyah, the way in which these factors have combined to shape their music culture may inspire new approaches to music education.

### **5.1.1 The Development of General Performing Arts Skills**

This section examines how a conducive village environment and societal attitudes contribute to the development of skills in the performing arts.

#### **5.1.1.1 The longhouse as a theatre and socializing centre**

The Kenyah longhouse is an ideal setting both for social interaction and for music and dance performances with community participation. It consists of a set of adjoining private family apartments (*amin*) which open out into a common verandah (*use*). The verandah of the longhouse provides a convenient playground for children, socializing centre for adults, meeting hall (for more formal functions) and an informal stage for performances of dance, song, and instrumental music. Whenever people are lonely, they need only open their front door and stroll down the verandah until they find companionship. Groups of people can sit down anywhere along the verandah, either on the raised platform, or on mats brought out from the *amin*. Residents are summoned for meetings or gatherings featuring song and dance by striking a gong (or alternatively *jatung*, a long drum hanging on the verandah of the main longhouse, as is still done in Long Moh).

The wide verandah provides an excellent stage for music and dance activities. Such gatherings are normally held near the headman's *amin*, usually found at the centre of the longhouse. The wooden floor, wooden partitions and the proximity of the apartments ensure that the performance is audible to all the residents of the longhouse. Kenyah dance, including *tu'ut dado'* (the dance accompanying *belian dado'*) often involves a lot of stamping, which resounds on the wooden floor. The voices of the singers, rendered in close harmony, waft clearly through the longhouse in the evenings and those who have retired early are often tempted to join the 'party' outside, which frequently continues throughout the night.

The nearby *amin* provide a convenient backstage area, serving as changing rooms and rehearsal areas for the dancers. The longhouse is also 'audience friendly'. Babies and the elderly can watch and participate, as the 'theatre' is within walking distance of their own apartments. If they tire, spectators can fall asleep on the verandah without fear of offending the performers, many of whom are often impromptu volunteers from the 'audience'. People who may start off as passive onlookers are easily persuaded to join in the musicking, as there is no clear demarcation between the stage and the seating area for the audience. The term musicking as defined by Small (1978) is used here in preference to 'performance', as a Kenyah song and dance session is geared towards the participation of the whole gathered community. In Long Mekaba and Uma Sambop, I have seen very young boys, dressed in pajamas, 'intruding' on the dance floor while a performance was underway. The youngsters concerned proceeded to put on their own performance of *kanjet laki*, to the amusement of the gathered crowd. Nobody objected. The intrusion did not affect the other performers due to the extensively long 'stage' appended by unobtrusive entrances and exits as shown in the photo below.



**Plate 28: A little boy in Uma Sambop, January 2008, making an impromptu debut (the door behind leads to a private dwelling, or *amin*)**

There are, of course, a considerable number of skilled musicians, singers and dancers, well-known to the community, who can be depended upon to lead the musicking. The stress on community participation is reflected in the following *ipet* which appears in many *belian dado'*:

*Bete' lan nemong*

*Telu tiang singget lan batung*

*Singget batung usah lan inan*

Come, everyone take part

My friends all together now

Together now as one

### 5.1.1.2 No age or gender discrimination: Life-long involvement in music and dance

Among the Kenyah, music and dance are considered honourable, highly valued activities, and open to participation by all members of the community with no age or gender discrimination. Life-long involvement in music and dance was the norm in Kenyah societies, at least until the intrusion of modern education and boarding schools. In *belian dado'* sessions, women often join in the singing and dancing with babies in their arms, or in baskets on their backs (Plate 29) while even children under five years join the line of their own accord.



**Plate 29: *Belian dado'* participants include babies and grandparents**

As described in 5.1.1.1, even very young children are encouraged to dance. For girls participating in the *datun julud*, this could start at the age of five years old (as witnessed at Uma Sambop, see Plate 30) where the members of a troupe of *dekieng leto* are trained to participate in dance competitions or performances. As noted, in the past, such classes also included songs (*belian dekieng leto*).



**Plate 30: Dekieng leto at Uma Sambop practise *datun julud***

Kenyah women singers and dancers are held in high regard, and readily participate in public displays of their talent. There is no prejudice against married women and older women performing in public. During my visit to Long Mekaba, the resident *datun julud* troupe (Plate 31) consisted of a group of women aged between 40–60 years, led by the mother of my former student, Beatrice Bulan Jalong. The team-members were skilful and confident performers, perhaps the best I have witnessed. The age of the performers attests to the Kenyah's high regard for dance as a treasured cultural activity rather than a chance to exhibit youth and beauty as it is in other communities in contemporary urban communities.

During my first visit to Long Moh in 1996, Balu Awieeng, a regally poised woman then in her fifties, was called upon to perform, clearly regarded as representing the epitome of female solo dance. In 2005, at the Upper-Baram Easter festival, at the inter-village women's solo dance-competition, Balu Awieeng was named first-runner up in a field of sixteen dancers, all of whom were younger than her with the sole exception of the champion of the contest, a woman of about her age.



**Plate 31: *Datun Julud*, Long Mekaba resident dance troupe 2002**

In contemporary urban Malaysian society, men often suffer reverse discrimination in the performing arts, especially in dance which is often labelled as a feminine activity. In Kenyah society, there is no such bias against men. Dance among the Kenyah is a suitably virile activity, especially as it is associated with warrior traditions. It is also not monopolized by young men. The most highly regarded dancers in some villages are over 50 years of age. When I visited Long Ikang, a down-river Kenyah village in 2001, the headman, well into his seventies, proudly and skilfully danced for us (even though we only stayed for the afternoon). There is no ‘cut-off age’, although for the men, who often execute intricate spirals to the ground, there is a limit when their knee-joints are no longer supple.

### 5.1.1.3 Adaptation of musical elements from other cultures

An outstanding characteristic of the Kenyah is their ingenuity in adapting musical elements from other cultures, blending them with traditional elements to produce new, unique forms. Examples include the evolution of the contemporary *sape*, the *lutong kayu* with tunings corresponding to the western scale, and the *sape bio* modeled on the double bass. Another instance, as described in the last chapter, is the incorporation of Malay melodies into the *jatung utang* repertoire, but with modifications to the intervals to fit into the pentatonic scale. Thus, musical development thrives on selective adaptation of musical elements from other cultures, instead of wholesale adoption of instruments and music repertoires. At least this was true in the past, before massive changes hit Kenyah society, as described in 3.5.4 (displacement of traditional repertoire and disappearance of harmony).

### 5.1.2 The Development of Choral Singing Skills

The aptitude of the Kenyah for choral singing (specifically multipart singing, an unusual phenomenon in South-East Asia) has been referred to in previous chapters. Factors that have contributed towards the development of general choral skills will be explored here, drawing comparisons to other Asian communities known to exhibit choral singing. The development of vocal harmony will be examined in greater detail in Section 5.2.

Contrary to the perception that East Asian vocal music is mainly monophonic, research since the 1950s among remote village communities has revealed multipart singing in twenty-four of China’s fifty-six ethnic groups (Fan, 1992)<sup>1</sup>. Fan (using the term polyphonic in its broader sense to include all multipart singing) notes that the groups that still retain the polyphonic song tradition share similarities in social structure, cultural background and historical development. Among these shared traits, there are striking

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<sup>1</sup> Examples from other researchers include: the Hani of Honghe County, Yunnan (Zhang, 1997 and 2001, cited in Blench 2004; Chien, 2002; Rees & Trebinjac, 2006) practise a complex form of eight-part vocal polyphony which is without parallel in the world. Kam ‘big song’, the main multipart vocal genre of the Kam people of Guangxi and Guizhou province, has been a prominent example of how Western views of China lacking polyphonic music were incorrect (Ingram, 2006).

parallels to Kenyah society. Firstly, they display an agricultural clan-based culture, where the relative stability of farming helped promote communal singing during work, entertainment, ritual and courtship. Secondly, the lack of adequate transportation and absence of outside influences led to self-contained societies, prompting the development of original repertoire. Thirdly, song festivals provide social occasions for the community where they exchange and consolidate existing repertoire.

As illustrations of and in addition to the above, specific Kenyah traditional practices could have played pivotal roles in shaping choral singing skills. These are examined below.

### **5.1.2.1 Periods of prohibition**

Under *adet pu'un*, the Kenyah/Kayan traditional belief system (and later, to a lesser extent, the *adet Bungan*), there were many enforced holidays during which all villagers were forbidden to do any work, or even to leave the longhouse. As mentioned in 2.4.1, to disobey these periods of prohibition (often determined by omens), would, it was believed, result in dire consequences. A legend<sup>2</sup> retold by Galvin (1972:79–100) relates how Bungan Lisu Lasuan dies when she stitches *saong*<sup>3</sup> during the eight-day prohibition period.

These enforced holidays presented an exceptionally conducive atmosphere for the recitation of epics, and for the whole community to become so familiar with these tales that they could also participate in a responsorial manner. Gorlinski (1995) mentions that narrative *kerintuk* in the past was sung during these periods of prohibition, and Lah Jau Uyo (1989:83) in his description of Kayan oral traditions mentions:

*The very rich oral tradition is due to the many holidays the people were forced to observe ... With nothing to do during these enforced holidays, the people occupy themselves by playing musical instruments ... It is not uncommon during these holidays to find the whole longhouse engaged with one or two poets narrating epic stories of Kayan heroes the whole night through. As a result, people became very familiar with these stories ...*

I have observed both Kenyah and Kayan communities participating in this communal story-telling. The soloist sings the stanzas, while the whole gathered community sings the chorus (*ngerahang*, Kenyah, *nyabei*, Kayan), often the closing line of each stanza. From the perspective of a music teacher who often struggles to keep students on pitch and rhythmical, it seemed amazing that chorus singers entered at exactly the right time, on the right pitch (usually the tonal centre of the song) with the right lyrics, as if performing from two-part choral scores after months of practice.

Thus periods of prohibition provided the Kenyah and Kayan the leisure and opportunity to develop and hone these community singing skills.

<sup>2</sup> Described in 2.4.1.

<sup>3</sup> Women's sun-hats.

### 5.1.2.2 Attitudes towards leisure and recreation

One decisive factor contributing to the prolific recreational choral repertoire could be the relaxed Kenyah attitude towards leisure and play. In their free time, both men and women gather informally to talk, drink, sing and dance. Older men and women do not hesitate to sing impromptu songs, and demonstrate dance steps in public. I have seen women in their fifties and sixties unhesitatingly perform comical dance movements including rather off-colour Penan<sup>4</sup> dance steps. During the 2005 Upper Baram Easter festival, every family paraded up the long verandah in turn to claim their share of Easter cake and present a cash donation. Residents in their sixties practically danced up the aisle, employing movements parodying dances from other cultures.

The third verse of the *belian dado'*, *Burung Kechin* version 1a (Chapter 4, 4.1.1, Transcription 12), displays the Kenyah propensity towards musically creative play, even in work situations:

<i>Pela tuya lo'tepat panak</i>	We play to pass the time
<i>Kusun aba</i>	Out on the farm
<i>Kusun aba, kusun aba</i>	Out on the farm, trees with sweet fruit
<i>Nyambung bu'an</i>	And betel nuts

The song *Jelip-jelip* (Chapter 4, 4.5.1, Transcription 44) displays how men and women use song and dance to spar in a ‘battle of the sexes’. The women showed no signs of embarrassment singing and acting out parodies of male sexuality. *Cap Apek* (Chapter 4, 4.5.1, Transcription 43) is another example of a playful, irreverent song, sung during festive seasons. When I lamented that mention of an undesirable beverage might disqualify the song from respectable classrooms, my Long Semiyang informants immediately substituted it with Coca Cola.

The choreography and performance of *belian dekieng leto* by a group of middle-aged women are testament to the willingness of the Kenyah to take part in group singing and dancing with no other aim but to enjoy themselves. Even though many of the steps were childlike (they had been choreographed for young girls), and the lyrics held no meaning for the audience, the women happily performed them in public, singing the lyrics in perfect unison although the words were essentially meaningless to them<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> A nomadic ethnic community who often dwell in the vicinity of Kenyah villages.

<sup>5</sup> They had composed the lyrics and dance-steps by combining Kenyah elements with observed “Gurkha song and dance” elements (as described in Chapter 4).



**Plate 32: Helen Paya and friends perform *belian dekieng leto, Uma Sambop***

### 5.1.2.3 Reciprocal labour and obligatory labour systems

The Kenyah often work in groups in a system of reciprocal labour known as *senguyun* for rice agriculture and various other kinds of work (Sandin, 1980:18; Armstrong, 1991:131; Eghenter & Sellato, 2003:32) such as building longhouses, making longboats and clearing vegetable gardens. This practice helped to alleviate the loss of working days brought about by the periods of prohibition (specific families were sometimes obliged to observe additional obligatory ‘holidays’). During *senguyun*, the host *amin* (household) is obliged to provide meals for the duration of work. This was also an opportunity for unmarried young men and women to mix socially and for courtship (Galvin, 1975:84). Apart from reciprocal labour, all families were, in the past, obliged to send representatives to help (in a custom termed *ma’ap*) on the headman’s farm seven days a year (Whittier, 1973) during the four seasons of clearing and felling, planting, weeding and harvesting (Sandin, 1980).

It is likely that this tradition of working in groups contributed to the development of communal music making<sup>6</sup>. The song *Hip Balip*<sup>7</sup> (an exhortation to ‘do it together’) must have developed during group labour parties, for example when erecting poles for a longhouse (verbal communication, Jalong Tanyit, 2002).

At least one category of song, *belian abau/belian ajau* (weeding and harvesting songs), has developed directly from agricultural work. Lawing (1995:267) relates that both men and women sing *Uyau Along* songs “in an answering manner” during *senguyun* for harvesting and planting. Both *Along*

<sup>6</sup> This practice also extends to the Kayan who, in the past often played the jew’s harp (*ruding*, Kenyah; *tong*, Kayan) in accompaniment to dancing in the rice-field.

<sup>7</sup> *belian dado*’, Transcription 61, Appendix B.

and *belian tekena* are still sung in Uma Sambop during harvesting (personal communication, Ramaiah Sufen, 2008).

#### 5.1.2.4 Lengthy journeys by boat

As the Kenyah live near the headwaters of rivers, they often (at least in the past before the advent of logging roads) had to travel for days in their longboats. It is likely that they created songs to break the monotony of the journey, besides keeping the rowers in rhythm. The song *Nombor Satu, Nombor Dua* (as postulated in Chapter 3, 3.3.4.2, Transcription 3) must have developed as a boat-song. *Pesalau*, a light-hearted song of a different category (sung by the jovial Aban Ingan from Long Semiyang) describes features of each of the thirteen Kenyah villages traversed in a typical boat journey down the Upper Baram. The song is likely to have originated during such a journey. The chorus and three verses (verses 1, 3 and 5, relating features of Lio Matu, Long Semiyang and Long Moh) are shown below for illustration (score in Transcription 50, Section 5.2.2).

Lyrics	Translation
<b>Chorus:</b> <i>Pesalau(nepa) pesalau, Na'at tina tau, Dah dua bulan</i>	<b>Chorus:</b> Forget your worries, Look out for the sun Two months gone
<i>Pesalau pesalau, oh na'at tina tau Dah dua bulan</i>	Forget your worries, look out for the sun Two months gone
<b>Verse</b>	
1. <i>Ne Badang Long Lio, Ne Badang Long Lio Ne dulu dai ngeno mudip kusun apau</i>	The Badang of Long Lio [Lio Mato] The Badang of Long Lio, Long ago we passed by from Usun Apau
3. <i>Ne Long Semiyang, Ne Long Semiyang Pinai kadok pinai busang tenang bulan lulau</i>	Oh Long Semiyang, Oh Long Semiyang, Many islets and a quiet stretch of river
5. <i>Ne Long Moh, Pina Long Moh Pida kadok pida guru pida nyat pesau</i>	Oh Long Moh, Oh Long Moh, Many teachers here beg to be transferred out

The words in bold lettering indicate where the *kerahang* (chorus) enters in response to the soloist, on a drone on the tonal centre *la*, while the soloist sings the melody in a *la*-pentatonic scale.

#### 5.1.2.5 Ritual and festive occasions

Uding Jau (now in her sixties) of Long Semiyang recalls that when she was a young girl, the villagers held regular gatherings every weekend during which they would sing and dance. This was the avenue through which her generation learnt *belian dado'* and other songs.

Apart from weekend gatherings, there are numerous ceremonies in which the whole community participates. These include weddings, harvesting, the end of mourning, visiting parties, major Christian holidays (Christmas and Easter), *ngalang* (child-naming ceremony) and in the past, the *mamat* ceremony (to welcome the return of head-hunting parties). During these seasonal occasions there would be large-scale dancing and consumption of rice-wine (Gorlinski, 1995).

At these occasions, there would be both solo and communal singing and dancing, with festivities lasting for days. In the past, for weddings between *paren*, the groom's party first visited the bride's longhouse for wedding rituals, followed by festivities which included two days and three nights of "dancing until dawn" (Sandin, 1980:7–10). Later, when the bride was brought to the groom's house, ceremonies were ended with feasting "amidst much merriment and shouting and drinking" (Sandin, 1980:9) and again, dancing till dawn.

Although Sandin does not specifically mention music, it is highly unlikely that any celebration among the Kenyah could have taken place without songs and instrumental accompaniment. Sandin (1980:28–32) does, however, describe that Kenyah warriors sang the *lemalo* in chorus during the first and third days of the *mamat* ceremony. The first two nights featured ritual dance, but on the third night there was merriment and it can be surmised, more music and dance.

### 5.1.2.6 Cultural exchange between villages

In connection with the festive occasions mentioned above, invitations are often extended to neighbouring villages (and nowadays to kin and friends residing in urban areas). Frequently, large contingents from other villages may be present, and this leads to performances from each group and much exchange of repertoire. Many songs are also spread by travelers on extended journeys looking for work. Most Kenyah are thus well-acquainted with the repertoire of neighbouring and sometimes far-flung villages. Visitors listen to and participate in the host communities' singing and vice versa, leading to the development of a repertoire known to the whole river-system. Thus, whenever someone starts singing a verse from a song, he or she will soon be joined by a gradually increasing chorus of singers in a slow crescendo, as each participant takes his own time to recognize the specific melody.

This eagerness to learn new songs is emphasized by Gorlinski (1995:261) when she relates how disappointed a resident of Lio Matu was after listening to her recordings of songs from Long Moh and Long Mekaba, saying in disgust "We know all these songs. Don't you have any unfamiliar ones?" Thus, songs spread easily from village to village, and there continues to be much mutual cross-border exchange as well. The song *Chut Tunyang* (4.3.1, Transcription 33) was brought to Long Moh in the 1970s by Long Nawang visitors. *Tuja* (Transcription 56) a favourite *belian dado'* from an earlier period, was introduced to Uma Sambop before the 1930s by visitors from the Tinjar (personal communication, Mening Jangin). *Burung Kechin*, a song both Long Moh and Uma Sambop residents acknowledge as coming from Long Nawang, was observed (with slight variations) in seven villages in Baram and Belaga.

### 5.1.3 The Development of Individual Singing Ability

Besides fostering choral singing, the Kenyah village environment nurtures musical aptitude and provides opportunities for development of individual singing skills.

#### 5.1.3.1 Musical environment

As described in 5.1.1., the Kenyah are (or at least were in the past) exposed to instrumental music, song and dance from a young age. Besides the regular and seasonal community gatherings featuring *belian dado'* and other items, individual families also organise private sessions in their own *amin* (as I witnessed with Ulau Lupa's family in Long Moh and Helen Paya Sufen's family in Uma Sambop).

Kenyah musical instruments such as the *lutong*, *kedire'*, *sape* and *jatung utang* are all pitched instruments tuned to pentatonic scales. Players of the *sape* and *jatung utang* are capable of producing tunes with melodic sophistication, variety and consistency. Exposure to such melodies from a young age would definitely influence the musical aptitude of the people. As described in Chapter 3, in the past women played *lutong* and *keringut* for entertainment and to express emotions and intentions. The melodies wafting through the longhouse on quiet evenings or early mornings often contained coded messages or stories. Deciphering their meanings entailed keen listening on the part of curious residents, sharpening their musical perception in the process.

Although the *sape* is played by the Kayan, certain other Orang Ulu groups, and more recently, the Iban, musicians from these communities acknowledge that the Kenyah were the originators and still are the best exponents of the instrument. After my *sape* instructor, Henry Anyie Ajang (a Kayan who had served as a teacher in various Kenyah villages), had taught me the three basic tunes<sup>8</sup>, he advised me to “learn from the Kenyah” as he was of the opinion they knew more tunes and were better at improvisation.

#### 5.1.3.2 High status of song and the aristocracy as keepers of the tradition

Various categories of song, especially those concerned with the legendary origins of the group, are held in high regard by the Kenyah. One category, the narrative *kerintuk*, is believed (Gorlinski, 1995) to exhibit the essence of Kenyah customs and conduct. The singers, all aristocrats, are greatly respected for their skill. The songs are believed to have originated from *bali tekena* (spirits) dwelling in the vicinity of Batu Luyuk, a limestone cap in the upper reaches of the Moh river. A parallel phenomenon among the Lepo Maut in Kalimantan, *Silun Ketena*, which narrates stories of spirits in the Berini district is described by Lawing (2003:264).

Good singers are accorded due recognition and respect, and members of the community are motivated to learn the songs. I have observed small groups of people from various Kenyah villages listening with great interest to recordings of singing by bards from other villages. Aside from appreciating

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<sup>8</sup> one each for *datun julud*, *kanjet leto* and *kanjet laki*.

the lyrics and the narrative embodied by the songs, they listened critically to the melody as well as the quality of the singing.

As described in Chapter 2 (2.3.1.2), members of the aristocracy had the opportunity (and were expected) to excel in the arts, and were looked upon as patrons of the arts. Even if the life-styles of present-day aristocrats do not differ much from the rest of the community, many (such as the families of Ulau Lupa and Sigau Langat of Long Moh, Jalang Tanyit of Long Mekaba, and Helen Paya of Uma Sambop) maintain their leadership in the arts.

### 5.1.3.3 Improvisation

The Kenyah memorize melodies and harmonies extraordinarily well, but they do not always slavishly reproduce lyrics. There is great flexibility when it comes to choosing an appropriate verse for a song. As displayed in the examples in Chapter 4, often only the chorus is retained. Improvisation of lyrics (within the confines of the rules of verse) is encouraged, and the lead singers, having to fit the words in spontaneously, would need to be adept at both verse and melody. Good singers are highly regarded. During a follow-up visit to Long Moh in 2005, where I focused on transcribing and interpreting lyrics, Sigau Langat showed his mastery of this form of improvisation. Instead of using the lyrics that he sang the year before, he created, after a few minutes of quiet deliberation, three new verses for the song *Burung Kechin* (version 1b, Transcription 50) to honour my project:

Lyrics	Translation
1. <i>Uban kenai lo' ini</i> <i>Ngitang nyelai</i> <i>Ngitang nyelai, ngitang nyelai</i> <i>Menyelawan</i>	Because you come, we meet We meet again, We meet again, we meet again And we are glad
2. <i>Nenai ala' ne iko</i> <i>Dau tira</i> <i>Dau tira, dau tira</i> <i>Le tipa tapa</i>	Because you come to hear To hear us sing To hear us sing, to hear us sing, Our voices ring
3. <i>Ne man merekod na' ini</i> <i>Nyalo nya</i> <i>Nyalo nya, nyalo nya</i> <i>Tira' uran</i>	You come to record our songs And what we say, And what we say, and what we say For all to know

### Transcription 50: *Burung Kechin* version 1b (Chong, 2006:13)

$\text{♪} = 112$  (tempo is given in quaver beats according to the dance-steps)

Chorus



Bu - rung ke - chin - chang bu - rung ke - chin



Bu - rung ke - chin - chang tu - yang bu - rung ke - chin

Verse



U - ban ke - nai lo' i - ni ngi - tang nye - lai  
Ne - nai a - la ne i - ko Da - u ti - ra  
Ne - man mere - kod na' i - ni Nya - lo ny - a



Ng - tang nye - lai ngi - tang ne - lai men - ye - la - wan  
Da - u ti - ra da - u ti - pa ta - pan  
Nya - lo ny - a nya - lo ny - a ti - ra' u - ran

Improvisation is also a necessary skill in the playing of Kenyah ensembles (involving the pentatonically tuned *sape*, *jatung utang* and *lutong kayu*, a practice made easier by the usage of pentatonic scales (discussed in 5.2.2).

#### 5.1.3.4 Expectation of reciprocity

Song and dance feature regularly at various festive gatherings. These include solo ‘wine-songs’ (*belian burak*) such as *kerintuk* and *suket*, which are sung in honour of guests. Often, there is an expectation of reciprocal performance. The guest is expected to imbibe the proffered *burak* (rice-wine) and is then cajoled into rendering a song in return (if the hosts consider him or her capable of doing so).

Before we left Long Moh in June 2004, we were each feted with wine and song and then urged to reciprocate. Matthew Ngau obliged with a creditable rendition of an appropriate *belian burak*. Unfamiliar with songs in that category, I sang a verse from *Telu Tiang* (Transcription 51), a poignant song from the *belian dado*’ repertoire as the lyrics seemed meaningful in the context:

*Telu tiang menjat ne telu jita*  
*Telu tiang batung lan usa*

Dear friends too seldom do we meet  
Dear friends we gather now, body and spirit

Even though a song from this category, strictly speaking, was out of context, my hosts responded immediately, their voices joining mine in a gradual crescendo over the last two lines:

*Batung usa eyong inan  
Nelan-e, nelan-e*

In body and spirit  
Truly this is so

I was thus given the privilege of being the leading soloist in a full Kenyah choir, a profoundly moving experience.

**Transcription 51: Telu Tiang** (Chong, 1998:34)

$\text{♩} = 53$

Te-lu ti - ang, ti - pa lan te-pat ka - u, Te-lu ti -  
Te-lu ti - ang, men - jat ne te-lu ji - tu, Te-u ti -  
ang, nen - tuk lan ka - yu, nen - tuk ka - yu lu - nang lan lia -  
ang ba - tung lan u - sah Ba - tung u - sah e - yong i -  
an ne lan - e ne - lan - e  
an nan ne lan - e ne - lan - e

Reciprocity is also expected in dance, as any visitor to a Kenyah longhouse will have experienced, and is extremely difficult to refuse as the whole gathering joins in to sing an enchanting song of invitation. This expectation of reciprocity practically shames any would-be visitor into brushing up his/her skills in song and dance. It is helpful that there is a general culture of acceptance, and any attempt at performance is treated with respect.

This does not mean, however, that the Kenyah are not critical of their own performances. In fact, they generally expect a very high standard from acknowledged ‘expert singers’, who are very wary of producing substandard performances for any recording. As noted in Chapter 3, the people of Long Moh chided us for giving them scant notice of our arrival and intention to record their repertoire, as they did not have sufficient time to rehearse.

## 5.2 MULTIPART SINGING IN NON-WESTERN CULTURES

There seems to be a lack of consensus among ethnomusicologists about ways of describing harmony. As expressed by Nettl (2005:100):

*Harmony is the hallmark of Western music to both Westerners and others, but ethnomusicologists have often been cavalier in their treatment of this musical element, sometimes going no further than using the term “polyphony” to indicate any music in which one hears more than one pitch at a time ...*

Nettl states further that ethnomusicology does not even have a term for this musical element, or an accepted set of concepts, analogous to those in the realm of scale about which “we can at least argue”.

It is generally believed that the beginnings of contemporary Western concepts of harmony can be traced to the practice of organum or ‘parallel singing’ in the middle ages in Europe. There is also a general assumption that ‘harmony’ is an exclusive Western development which later spread to the rest of the world, aided by Christian missionaries and Western Classical music. The similarity of Kenyah multipart harmonies to Western harmonic concepts has given rise to speculation that this practice developed through Christian missionary influence. However, my contention is that the Kenyah concept of harmony has indigenous roots. It should be noted that no other ethnic group in Sarawak has been observed to exhibit harmony<sup>9</sup> in traditional choral singing despite the same exposure to missionaries. Similar arguments have been raised in other parts of the world.

The following survey indicates the fallacy of the assumption that the development of harmony stemmed from Western music alone.

**Europe:** “Polyphonic vocal folk music” (Nettl, 2006) is common in Eastern and Southern Europe. Homophonic parallel singing is perhaps the most common type of folk polyphony: parallel thirds – that is, singing the same tune at an interval of a third – are found in Spain, Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and farther east, parallel fourths and fifths are sung in the Slavic countries. Ethnic groups in Georgia (Chkhikvadze & Jordania, 2006), Southern Russia, (Marquise & Schurov, 1994), Finland (Salminen, 2006) and Bulgaria (Ognenska-Stoyanova, 2000; Campbell, 2004) have been reported to practise multipart singing of various types, including homophonic styles. The Welsh are well-known for homophonic choral singing. In fact the similarity of Kenyah choral singing to that of the Welsh has been noted by two writers, Macdonald (1956:30) and Rubinstein (1985:50).

**Africa:** Multipart singing in folk music has been noted in various folk cultures in Africa. Kubik & Robotham (2006) relate that: “Homophonic multipart singing styles are common throughout sub-Saharan Africa, and they are usually associated with a leader/chorus structure in call-and-response form. After a leader's solo call, a chorus responds in tight harmony”. Contrary to earlier opinions, harmony in African folk song is now seen to be “not a result of acculturation but rather indigenous to the continent” (Kubik & Robotham, 2006). Polyphonic singing styles were almost certainly used by prehistoric hunters in central and southern Africa. Multipart singing in African music embraces two entirely different approaches, homophonic and polyphonic, with the definition of these words adapted to African cultures. According to

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<sup>9</sup> except the Kayan who sing a simple drone chorus in accompaniment to a soloist.

Scholes (1955:447), early European explorers reported that ‘non-Europeanised’ South African tribes had been observed to sing in parallel fifths and sixths, West Africans in parallel thirds, and central Africans in fourths and fifths. Williams and Maselva (1947:foreword) observe that: “In Southern Africa, the home of the Bantu peoples, choral music has long been a favourite. The first European explorers heard village choruses singing rich harmonies with counterpoints and antiphony entirely African in character”.

**China:** The vocal music of China, as in most of East Asia, is generally known to be monophonic. This is true of the music of the Han Chinese, who constitute more than 90% of the population, contributing to the long- held belief that there was no polyphonic music in China. As described in 5.1.2, recent research (since the 1950s) among remote village communities, however, has revealed China’s rich heritage of polyphonic songs in at least twenty-four of its fifty-six ethnic groups.

**Austronesian cultures:** Austronesians (or Austronesian-speaking peoples) are various populations, mainly found in South-East Asia, the Pacific islands and Taiwan, that speak languages of the Austronesian family. According to Blust (1999), Austronesians are divided in several primary branches, nine of which, the Formosan languages, are found exclusively in Taiwan. All Austronesian languages spoken outside Taiwan (including its offshore Yami language) belong to the Malayo-Polynesian branch. These include South-East Asian languages such as Javanese, Tagalog (Filipino), Malay, Iban, Bidayuh Kenyah, and Kadazan (the last four spoken by Bornean indigenous groups). Blench (2004) in his article on “Musical aspects of Austronesian culture” raises an intriguing question about using common music and dance elements of various far-flung tribes in Taiwan, Borneo, Philippines, insular South-East Asia, Madagascar and Polynesia to trace Austronesian migration routes. As the Kenyah are members of the Austronesian family, it would be expected that there are other linguistically related Austronesian groups which practise multipart singing. Most of South-East Asia seems devoid of this practice<sup>10</sup>. Further afield, however, at least two regions have a thriving choral culture:

**(i) Taiwan:** Highly developed multipart singing has been reported among various ethnic groups in Taiwan<sup>11</sup> (Loh, 1982; Hsu & Lu, 2006; Jordania, 2006). Taiwanese groups have linguistic and cultural ties with South-East Asian groups, and multipart texture is one of the traits for which anthropologists are now trying to establish cultural links (Blench, 2004). In Taiwan (Loh, 1982; Blench, 2004; Hsu & Lu, 2006; Jordania, 2006), the non-Han indigenous groups<sup>12</sup>, who are classed as Austronesian, have demonstrated various forms of multipart singing. Hsu (2006:4) notes that “most aboriginal music in Taiwan is vocal” and that their formats range from simple to complex styles, including “polyphony

<sup>10</sup> although, as mentioned by Jordania (2006), there are indications it exists in isolated regions, such as in rural Vietnam.

<sup>11</sup> Taiwan's indigenous people became known to the world through recordings of the multipart singing of the Bunun people by Kurosawa Takatomo.

<sup>12</sup> Ami, Atayal, Bunun, Paiwan, Puyuma, Rukai, Saisat, Thao, Tsou and Yami.

(organum, canon, drone bass, free counterpoint), harmony (with both natural chords using major triads and consonant harmony using both major and minor triads) and heterophony”.

**(ii) Polynesia:** Jordania (2006) demonstrates the fallacy of the Western assumption that non-Westerners had (unlike them) no notion of harmony, and had not yet “developed polyphony”. “Perhaps one of the most important historical lessons that Oceania (and particularly Polynesia) taught European musicology (in the 18th century) was the shock of the discovery that well-organized part-singing can exist far from European civilization” (Jordania, 2006:172). He mentions early voyagers providing descriptions of choral singing featuring four different homorhythmic parts of which one voice provided a drone on a low note.

According to Moyle et al. (2006), multipart choral styles are prevalent in Western and Central Polynesia. However, the original forms may not be practised anymore. Many existing forms are acculturated styles, e.g. *himeni* of the Cook islands, a polyphonic combination of solo and group voice parts. In Samoa, “relatively few non-acculturated homophonic or polyphonic songs have been recorded; these songs appear to be characterized by movement in parallel 4ths and 5ths”.

**(iii) North America:** American Indian song is mostly monophonic (Fields, 2001) but multipart singing has been observed among tribes of the North-West coast, particularly homophonic singing in parallel thirds, fourths and fifths among the Nootka and Quileute (Densmore, 1939, quoted in Fields, 2001).

The brief survey above shows that multipart singing, formerly believed by many to be a purely Western classical development, has been discovered in specific indigenous cultures in various parts of the world. In fact, Jordania (2006:210), citing examples around the world, argues that the generally accepted notion that monophonic singing naturally evolves into polyphonic singing is a fiction. On the contrary, his hypothesis is that the tradition of polyphonic singing, originally widespread, is “gradually disappearing on our planet” and has only survived in geographically isolated regions.

### 5.2.1 Tonality, Harmony and Emotional Response to Music

For centuries, Western composers have employed devices such as changes in mode, harmonic progression, tempo, rhythm and melodic contour, to evoke a range of emotions in their audience, e.g. as elaborated by Zbikowski (2002 and 2009). Some may have done so intuitively; others carefully applying formulas involving minor adjustment of tones and rhythmic patterns, which they knew were effective.

The reasons for these effects are now being investigated by combining perspectives from various fields such as psychology, neurobiology and acoustics. Although concepts of consonance and tonality are generally believed to be culturally determined, evidence is now emerging for the existence of universal elements. The hypothesis that the perception of emotion in music can be applied cross-culturally, which runs against much current ethnomusicological thinking, is also gaining support.

Balkwill and Thompson (1999) and Balkwill et al. (2004) showed that listeners from three different cultures were sensitive to intended emotions in music from all three cultures and that this was associated with perception of acoustic cues transcending cultural boundaries (e.g. high ratings of joy were associated with music judged to be in fast tempo and melodically simple; sadness with music judged to be in slow tempo and melodically complex). Cook (2006, 2009) argues that although it is fashionable to dismiss the common perception of major and minor harmonies as being merely a “cultural artifact” there is a deep bias for children as young as 3 years-old (citing Kastner & Crowder, 1990) and for adults of various cultures to hear ‘sadness’ in minor chords and ‘happiness’ in major chords. He demonstrated how, by introducing a three-tone ‘tension’ factor, the sonority of triads (major>minor>diminished> augmented) can be explained and that by invoking the frequency code of linguistics and comparative ethology (the sound symbolism of rising/falling pitch in speech intonations), the characteristic positive/negative valence of the major/minor chords is shown to have an acoustic basis. Various studies have shown that emotion in music is closely related to speech patterns e.g. Curtis and Bharucha (2010) demonstrated that the minor third communicates sadness in speech, mirroring its use in music. Studies on spectral characteristics of voiced speech sounds in English and Tamil by Bowling et al.(2010, 2012), showed results consistent with the hypothesis that the association between musical tonality and emotion is based on universal vocal characteristics of different affective states. Furthermore, recent empirical studies such as Hunter et al., 2010 and Brattico et al., 2011 (the latter using magnetic resonance imaging) have focused on measuring emotional responses and perceptions of these responses, related to mode and tempo. Their findings also point to the role of acoustic cues for the experience of emotion in music.

The above and other related findings are elaborated further in Appendix E. Based on these findings, it is plausible that the similarity of Kenyah harmony and concepts of consonance to those of Western music could be explained as acoustical phenomena.

### **5.2.2 Postulation of Indigenous Origins of Kenyah Vocal Harmony and Comparisons with Austronesian Groups in Taiwan**

As mentioned in 5.1.2 and above, polyphonic singing has been discovered to exist among many of the non-Han ethnic minorities in China and Taiwan. The Taiwanese, besides being of Austronesian stock, resemble the Kenyah in many ways. These include the dubious privilege of living in remote inaccessible areas and historical practices such as headhunting and tattooing. In addition, Taiwanese ethnic vocal music, according to Loh (1982:408), “include[s] many of the multipart practices known among the music cultures of the world<sup>13</sup>”. Choral singing is likely to have been preserved by the remote mountainous location of their villages and their continuation of a communal agricultural way of life.

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<sup>13</sup> Parallel 3rds, 4ths and 5ths, ostinato, melody with drone, sectional canon, homorhythmic multipart movement based on double thirds, solo with drone, etc.

In the context of Taiwanese ethnic music, Loh (1982: xvi) concludes that “no evidence has been found to substantiate any assertion of early European influences on … multipart singing techniques.” He cites evidence such as a surprising degree of variation in multipart styles, and that “the only contact the missionaries had was with the sinicized<sup>14</sup> ‘P’ing-p’u<sup>15</sup> community rather than the ‘mountain’ groups (Loh, 1982:412). Further, he emphasises, unlike the repertoire of the mountain groups, P’ing-p’u songs are all monophonic and the P’ing p’u have no recollection of multipart singing.

In comparison, among the Kenyah, multipart singing was exhibited in at least 40% of the *belian dado*’ category. The harmony can be described as homophonic where the parts move at the same speed and density. In visits to different villages, I often hear snatches of harmony added to songs previously sung monophonically in other villages. The resulting harmony, although superficially similar to church choral singing, follows different conventions. There is, as described, no restriction on parallel movement. Yet it is also different from the organum of early European music, as the parallelism is not continuous and there is also contrary motion. What is most striking is that the ‘accompanying part’ in itself constitutes an attractive counter-melody. Traditional Kenyah harmony thus differs considerably from the four-part harmony used in Western hymnals. Also, if the influence of the missionaries had been so significant, surely the melodies of Kenyah songs would have become more diatonic. Yet they remain predominantly pentatonic.

The above characteristics indicate that the Kenyah are more likely to have developed their understanding of harmony independently from missionary influence. The only connection with Christianity may be that many *belian dado*’ were incorporated (probably by musical missionaries attempting to integrate local elements) into the Catholic Church hymn repertoire. I acknowledge that there has been Western influence in the music<sup>16</sup>, for instance in songs exhibiting major tonalities, but this influence is peripheral rather than central to the *belian dado*’ genre.

In 1953, Takatomo Kurosawa caused a sensation among ethnomusicologists when he demonstrated the complex homophonic choral singing of the Bunun in Taiwan, described in this extract from Hsu and Lu (2006):

*The celebrated Pasi-but-but (millet harvest prayer song) ... consists of male singing in one to seven parts. Parallel 4ths, parallel 5ths and triads are often sung ... If the last chord is harmonious (a natural chord or a perfect 5th), this is thought to predict an abundant millet harvest for the year.*

From the last sentence quoted, the Bunun associate ‘consonance’ expressed as a natural (major) chord or a perfect 5<sup>th</sup> with a happy state of affairs. Audio-recordings of Bunun choruses (Wu, 1992), where the

<sup>14</sup> Sinicization is a process whereby non-Han Chinese societies come under the influence of dominant Han Chinese state and society.

<sup>15</sup> plains communities as opposed to mountain groups.

<sup>16</sup> in particular the influence of the harmonica and guitar.

chorus joins in slowly, marked with tiny time lags, and swelling out gradually in harmony, eerily resemble the sonority of a Baram longhouse. The Kenyah also base their music on the consonance of thirds, fifths and octaves, corresponding to the natural harmonic series. However, although the Bunun harmonies are rich, their melodies are simple. In comparison, Kenyah harmony seems sparse, but melodies are more complex.

It may be significant that another Taiwanese group, the Ami (Loh, 1982:372-390; Hsu, 2006) is well known for group-singing and dancing with strong rhythm and distinctive melody, and for singing in free counterpoint. These characteristics, together with the prevalence of the anhemitonic pentatonic scale, resemble the basic characteristics of the *belian dado*'.

Besides the similarities in song, there are notable similarities in instrumentation. Blench (2004:3), in a paper focusing on musical evidence for Austronesian cultural history, mentions the leg- xylophone, stick-dances, jew's harp and polyphonic choral singing as being characteristics of Taiwanese Austronesian groups and describes similar practices across South-East Asia for all except polyphonic choral singing. Thus, the phenomenon of multipart singing among the Kenyah may well provide what appears to be a missing link in this theory.

Further studies in this area may be significant to theories of Austronesian migration. Taiwanese ethnic musical instruments include the jew's harp, board-zither, pentatonically tuned xylophones, stamping poles, musical bow and nose-flute. The jew's harp was a popular Kenyah instrument in the past, while the xylophone (*jatung utang*), board-zither (*lutong kayu*) and nose flute are still played by the Kenyah. Intriguingly, the *torotoro* (board zither with 5 strings tuned to *s d r m s*) described by Loh (1982:180) bears striking similarities to the six-stringed wooden *lutong* (relative pitch of strings: *s d r m s d'*) of the Kenyah found in Long Semiyang. It is possible that these similarities in culture, lifestyle and instruments could be associated with the development of similar vocal practices, including the phenomenon of multipart singing.

In his thesis on Taiwanese ethnic music, Loh (1982:154–158) describes two opposing theories by Kurosawa (1973:357-372) and Tsukuda (1980:42-43) concerning the development of the pentatonic scale as well as multipart singing in Bunun song. According to Kurosawa, “Bunun chordal singing was derived from the harmonics of the musical bow (8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> partials) and the additional overtones derived from stopping the strings led to the discovery of the anhemitonic scale”. Tsukuda, however, challenged this theory, proposing instead that it was the jew's harp which had influenced both the pentatonic scale as well as the chordal (triadic) singing style. If the latter theory is true, it could also be extended to the Kenyah.

The existence of these theories, regardless of which, if either, is correct, shows general acceptance that these traditional communities display forms of vocal harmony of their own development. Thus it seems logical to postulate that the Kenyah concept of harmony also has indigenous roots. The next two sections will consider this development, firstly by examining specific examples of instrumental music

influencing concepts of harmony and melodic patterns in songs, and secondly by tracing the changes in harmonic style in *belian dado'* through comparisons of different songs.

### **5.2.3 Influence of Kenyah Instrumental Music on Vocal Melody and Harmony**

As Nettl (1990) observed, in many cultures, the sounds of instruments have characteristics similar to those of the singing style. Traditionally Kenyah vocal music and instrumental music have been mutually exclusive. However, there appears to be a “constant interaction between vocal and instrumental repertoire” as suggested by Gorlinski (1989:298).

Recreational songs and instrumental repertoire show similar tonalities, e.g. from Table 4.3 (in Chapter 4, 4.1.4.1), 74.5% of *belian dado'* are built on the same anhemitonic pentatonic scale as the tunes for *datun julud*<sup>17</sup> and *kanjet laki*<sup>18</sup>, while 7% are built on similar (hemitonic so-pentatonic or so-hexatonic) scales as the *kanjet leto*<sup>19</sup>. With the exception of *lutong* songs (which were mainly tritonic and tetratonic), 50% of the rest of the songs exhibit anhemitonic pentatonic tonality. As noted in Chapter 4, for each of 12 songs, there was direct correspondence in melody with an instrumental counterpart.

Two of the oldest instruments in Kenyah culture, the *sambe asal* and the *kedire'*, predating Western influence, both exhibited rudimentary harmony. The *kedire'* generally plays a drone accompaniment to a pentatonic melody. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Matusky and Tan describe the *kedire'* as “possibly the earliest musical instrument to produce harmony” (Matusky & Tan, 2004:278). It is feasible then that the *kedire'* also helped to shape harmonic concepts and influenced the development of multipart singing among the Kenyah. Excerpts from the repertoire of the *sambe asal* and the *kedire'* (Excerpts 5 and 11 from Chapter 3) are reproduced below:

#### **Excerpt 5: Excerpt from a *sambe asal* tune as played by Lian Langgang**

$\text{♩} = 95$



\* knocking with knuckles on every second beat

<sup>17</sup> choreographed group dance for women.

<sup>18</sup> men's solo dance.

<sup>19</sup> women's solo dance.

### Excerpt 11: Excerpt from a *kedire'* tune as played by Imang Ajang

$\text{♩} = 76$



The two strings of the *sambe asal* are tuned to an interval approximating a third, but the strings are only sounded together at the interval of the fifth. Similarly, the recurrent chord in the *kedire'* is the perfect fifth. Thus, the perfect fifth intervals are clearly heard and must have established themselves in Kenyah aural memory from an early period. The Kenyah have a very strong sense of the tonic and dominant, evidenced by the ‘sounding’ of the tonic before any choral singing, and the careful tuning of all their instruments, even quaint beer-bottles filled with water, to produce *d* and *s*.

The *kedire'* excerpt exhibits the tone-set: *s d r m s*. There is a drone on the lower F#, taken as the tonal centre. The *sambe asal* melody tone-set revolves around another hemitonic scale, *d m f s l*. This musical texture is mirrored in older vocal genres such as *kerintuk* and *suket*, and other songs such as *Pesalau* (Transcription 52, lyrics described in 5.1.2.4), which feature a soloist in a la-pentatonic scale, and a supporting drone chorus. The resultant harmony features the intervals: octave, fifth (*l m*) and fourth (*l r*).

### **Transcription 52: *Pesalau* (as sung by Aban Ingan and communal chorus)**

$\text{♩} = 70$

Soloist Chorus

Chorus

Soloist

Chorus

Du-

Verse

S

Ch.

Ch.

II

S

Ch.

Evolving from these older instruments, the repertoire of the contemporary *sape* (which now sports three or four strings) inherited this interval, and with extra strings, it became a triad. In duets, a common arrangement is for one *sape* to play the main melody, while the other plays the ostinato *d d/s*, often sounding the middle string to produce the *d s d'* dyad (corresponding to chord I in Western harmony) as shown below:

### Melodic ostinato on the second sape

It is possible that the gradual disappearance of the *lutong* and *kedire'*, which were once ubiquitous as dance accompaniment, may have catalysed the development of the contemporary *sape*, *jatung utang* and *lutong kayu* as well as the development of *belian dado'*. The next stage of development in Kenyah harmony is likely to have been the emergence and growing popularity of the anhemitonic pentatonic mode, reflected in the fixed tuning of the *jatung utang* and the optional tuning for *datun julud* and *kanjet laki* in the contemporary *sape*.

The association of the *do*-pentatonic mode with *bangen* (joyful) atmosphere has been noted. In the instrumental repertoire it is associated with the group dance, *datun julud*. The *sape* developed a greater number of frets in both anhemitonic and hemitonic scales, while the *jatung utang* was tuned to *d r m s l d* and *lutong kayu* to *s d r m s d'*. Other chords began to emerge.



**Plate 33: Lepo Ke' women carefully tuning the *lutong kayu* strings by sliding the frets**

Another prominent chord sounded on the contemporary *sape* is *so re* (reminiscent of chord V in Western harmony). Both chords *s d* and *s r* are recurrent in *jatung utang* and *lutong kayu* repertoire. In *sape* duets, one *sape* plays the melody while the other either plays an ostinato revolving around *s* and *d*, or breaks into improvised counterpoint to the first. The excerpt mentioned in Chapter 3 (Matusky & Tan, 2004) is revisited here, featuring the melody by *sape* I and *jatung utang* while *sape* II plays a chord in thirds, followed by *sape* I playing a counter-melody to the *jatung utang* while *sape* II plays a drone on *s*.

#### **Excerpt 8: Bars 16-17 of Excerpt (a) Matusky and Tan (2004:141)**

The players continuously employ thirds and fifths in the harmony while, at the same time, playing clearly distinguishable counter-melodies or melodic ostinatos, which are stored in their aural memory. They also freely improvise within these “rules of harmony” which are simple if they remain in the

pentatonic scale. Thirds and fifths are also played continuously by *jatung utang* players, with resultant chords I and V as shown in the extract from Kasa Jok's rendition in Long Mekaba.

### Extract 1 from Excerpt 9 (*Jatung utang* accompaniment to *datun julud*)



A comparison with a typical two-part anhemitonic song in the *belian dado'* repertoire shows striking similarities: the maintenance of a main melody, with an accompanying or counter-melody, sometimes with a third voice on some chords. Consider the excerpt below from *Lan-e* version 3, from the ending of Transcription 11 in chapter 4 (4.1.1), where the descant for the phrase *Han ne-lan-e* runs in contrary rather than parallel motion, thus asserting momentary independence and an interesting melodic line of its own, yet still maintaining consonance. (Extract 2 is taken from Transcription 11 while extract 3 is from Transcription 2. In each of these transcriptions the pick-up measure consists of 1 beat.)

### Extract 2 from *Lan-e* version 3 (Transcription 11 in 4.1.1)



The ending of *Lan-e* version 2 below is an example of a three-part chordal end to a predominantly two-part song, where the descant generally follows the melodic contour, except in the 3<sup>rd</sup> bar where it also establishes melodic independence by moving in contrary motion. There is also liberal use of thirds instead of the more common fourths and fifths.

### Extract 3 from *Lan-e* version 2 (Transcription 2 in 3.3.4.1)



mong jai-ee ta - wai pe-mong jai - ee ta - wai u - yan      Ne

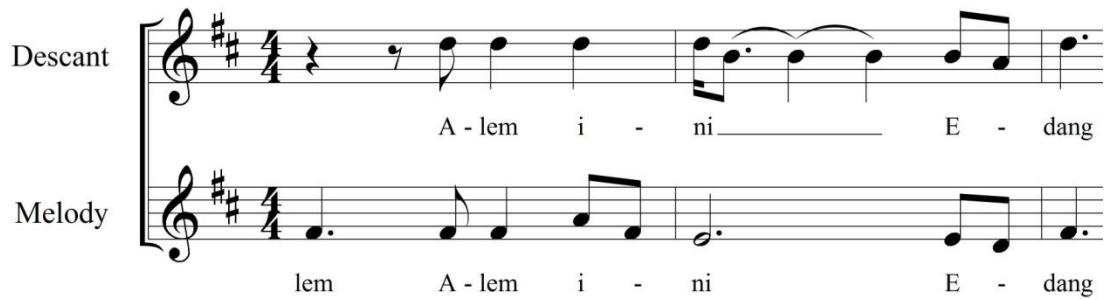
mong jai-ee ta - wai pe-mong jai - ee ta - wai u - yan      Ne

lan - e tu - yang ne - lan - e

lan - e eh tu - yang ne - lan - e

Apart from harmony, there are other nuances of style which obviously link *belian dado'* and *sape* music. An example is Extract 4 below, from *Ateklan* (Transcription 53). A specific instance where the descant melody apparently imitates *sape* ornamentation is in the second bar of the descant in the extract (*i-ni*) as in typical *sape* style: this ornamental grace-note is half-way between an acciaccatura and an appoggiatura, and can be considered a suspension from the previous note:

### Extract 4 from *Ateklan* (Transcription 53)



Descant      A - lem i - ni E - dang

Melody      lem A - lem i - ni E - dang

The above examples demonstrate how harmonic textures and melodies in *belian dado'* could have evolved as a result of influences from Kenyah instrumental repertoire. The following section postulates how Kenyah vocal harmony has changed over the years.

#### **5.2.4 Changes in Kenyah Harmonic Conventions**

With reference to the discussion on harmony in Chapter 4 (4.1.2 ), changes in Kenyah harmonic conventions are evident in songs such as *Ateklan*, *Ju Habai* and *Nalo Ina Tuyang*, where the leading note appears briefly in the accompanying voice (displaying chords resembling the mediant and full dominant triad). I consider these songs to be more recent developments, showing the appearance of diatonic elements in their predominantly anhemitonic pentatonic repertoire.

(a) *Ateklan*

Lyrics	Translation
<i>Pemong jaikee telu tuyang</i>	We gather together my friends
<i>Alem ini , alem ni edang bulan</i>	Tonight, tonight, the moon shines bright
<i>Alem, alem ini</i>	Tonight, tonight
<i>Edang, edang bulan</i>	The moon shines bright
<i>Ateklan nelan nalo ina tuyang</i>	Truly this is so my friends

Although the melody is pentatonic, *t* appears in the harmony (Transcription 53, bar 3) and thus can be configured as displaying the mediant chord.

### **Transcription 53: Ateklan (Chong, 2006:7)**

**Music Score:**

Key signature: G major (two sharps). Time signature: Common time (indicated by '4'). Measure number: 1.

**Descant:** The melody starts with a rest followed by a dotted half note. It continues with eighth-note patterns and concludes with a sixteenth-note pattern. The lyrics are: I - ni a - lem i - ni e -

**Melody:** Starts with a quarter note followed by eighth-note patterns. The lyrics are: Pe-mong jai - ee te - lu\_\_ tu - yang A - lem i - ni a - lem i - ni e -

**D (Duet):** Starts with a dotted half note. The lyrics are: I dang bu - lan I A - lem i - ni E -

**M (Melody):** Starts with a dotted half note. The lyrics are: dang bu - lan A - lem a - lem i - ni E -

**D (Duet):** Starts with a dotted half note. The lyrics are: II I dang e - dang bu - lan II I III II I ne - lan na-lo i - na tu - yang

**M (Melody):** Starts with a dotted half note. The lyrics are: dang e - dang bu - lan A-tek - lan ne - lan na-lo i - na tu - yang

### (b) *Nalo Ina Tuyang*

#### Lyrics

*Alem ini la telu tuyang  
Pemong jaiee tawai uyan  
Pemong jaiee tawai tawai uyan  
Ateklan ne-lan nalo ina tuyang*

#### Translation

Tonight, tonight my friends  
We gather together and recall the  
old days  
Truly I say this to you my friends

The melody of *Nalo Ina Tuyang* (Transcription 54) also displays the leading note (bar 7) and can be configured as displaying the full dominant triad.

#### Transcription 54: *Nalo Ina Tuyang* (Chong & Lajinga, 2011:46)

$\text{♩} = 84$



The musical score consists of two staves of music in common time, with a key signature of two sharps. The top staff uses a treble clef and the bottom staff uses a bass clef. The tempo is indicated as  $\text{♩} = 84$ . The lyrics are written below the notes, corresponding to the melody. The lyrics are:

A-lem i - ni la te-lu\_\_ tu - yang pe-mong jai - ee\_\_\_\_ ta - wai u -  
jai - ee ee ee - ta - wai u -  
yan pe - mong jai - ee ta - wai ta - wai u -  
yan pe - mong jai - ee ta wai - ta - wai - u -  
yan A - tek ne - lan na - lo\_\_ i - na tu - yang  
yan a - tek e - lan na - lo - i - na tu - yang

Musical notation includes various note heads (circles, squares, triangles) and rests, with some notes having vertical stems and others horizontal stems. Some notes have small letters above them, such as 'm', 'r', 'd', 's', 'l', 't', 'd'', etc., which likely represent specific performance techniques or fingerings.

(c) *Ju Habai*

**Lyrics**

*Selamat kenai  
Ame tuyang kulong pumai  
Kulong punai  
Kulong punai silon tawan*

**Translation**

Welcome (to our village)  
My friends, my pet pigeon (referring to a woman)  
Pet pigeon  
Pet pigeon sweet and charming

The diatonic song *Ju Habai* (Transcription 55) can be interpreted as displaying chords resembling the subdominant and dominant seventh (both in bar 7) in addition to the full dominant triad in bars 4 and 6. Thus, with the emergence of the major mode in melodies and adoption of diatonic elements in accompanying voices, the resemblance of Kenyah harmony to Western harmony has increased.

**Transcription 55: *Ju Habai* (Chong, 1998:37)**

Music score for Transcription 55: *Ju Habai*. The score includes four staves:

- Descant:** G major, 4/4 time. Lyrics: Se-la - mat ke - nai, ku-long pu -
- Melody:** G major, 4/4 time. Lyrics: Se-la - mat ke - nai, A - me tu-yang ku long pu - nai
- D:** G major, 4/4 time. Lyrics: nai, Ku-long pu - nai, Ku - long, pu - nai, Si-lon ta - wan
- M:** G major, 4/4 time. Lyrics: —, Ku - long, pu - nai, Ku - long, pu - nai, si - lon ta - wan

Harmonic analysis (Roman numerals):  
 Bar 1: I  
 Bar 2: I  
 Bar 3: V  
 Bar 4: I  
 Bar 5: II/V  
 Bar 6: V  
 Bar 7: VI  
 Bar 8: V  
 Bar 9: IV  
 Bar 10: I  
 Bar 11: II/V7  
 Bar 12: I

Based on the foregoing discussion, an analysis of Kenyah harmonic conventions and implied chord progressions is summarised in Table 5.1:

**Table 5.1: Analysis of harmonic conventions and implied chord progressions**

Title of song	Tone-set	Chords present	Chord progressions
<i>Ateklan</i>	M: <u>s</u> <u>l</u> <u>d</u> <u>r</u> <u>m</u> <u>s</u> H: <u>s</u> <u>l</u> <u>t</u> <u>d'</u>	I, II, III	I II I III ; II I III I
<i>Ju Habai</i>	M: <u>d</u> <u>r</u> <u>m</u> <u>f</u> <u>s</u> <u>l</u> <u>t</u> <u>d'</u> H: <u>m</u> <u>f</u> <u>s</u> <u>l</u> <u>t</u> <u>d'</u> <u>r</u> <u>'m'</u>	I, II, IV, V, VI	I V I ; I II V VI V; IV I V7/II I
<i>Nalo Ina Tuyang</i>	M: <u>m</u> <u>s</u> <u>l</u> <u>d</u> <u>r</u> <u>m</u> <u>s</u> H: <u>m</u> <u>s</u> <u>l</u> <u>t</u> <u>d'</u>	I, II, V, VI	I II I VI I; I V I VI I; VI V I

## 5.2.5 A Profile of Change: Analysis of three *Belian Dado'*

Older categories of song, such as *kerintuk* and *suket*, featured soloists with answering choruses singing drones on the tonal centre. This simple form of harmony later evolved into the more sophisticated homophonic part-singing of *belian dado'*. By comparing transcriptions of three *belian dado'*, presented now in a probable chronological order, this process of evolution (from simple drone accompaniment to homophonic multipart singing) becomes clear.

### (i) *Tuja*

This song is a favourite in Uma Sambop. Mening Jangin, one of the oldest residents there, recalled that the song was already well-known at the settlement then in Long Jauh, around the 1920s-1930s (Table 2.7, 2.1.5.2). It was, she remembers, also sung as *belian burak* in the past. I have classified it as *belian dado'* because it was performed in that context by groups of women, as one of the ‘items’ in a series of *belian dado'*, during three different occasions at the same village (August 2004, January 2008 and December 2008). The lyrics display the typical *belian dado'* context of describing the *tu'ut dado'* (circling under the beams).

Unlike the typical *belian dado'* it has an uncharacteristic hemitonic so-pentatonic melody, tone-set *r f s l t* (alternatively, *s t d r m*) and an unusual chorus, wholly executed on a drone (Transcription 56). Structurally, it fits into the mould of older categories such as *suket* or *kerintuk*. Apart from the tonality and drone accompaniment, several other features distinguish it from typical *belian dado'*: the melody is repetitive, consisting of a short repeated motif with slight changes in subsequent verses, the rhythm is somewhat irregular and there is no discernible pattern in the phrasing.

#### Lyrics

*Liwet telu Tuja*  
*Kenda tuket selekang*  
*Kun Ilun Tuja*  
*Ilun Tuja*

#### Translation

Circle round Tuja  
Under the beams, the wooden beams  
Ilun (orphan) Tuja  
Ilun Tuja

### Transcription 56: *Tuja* (As sung in Uma Sambop)

$\text{♩} = 72$

#### (ii) *Are Ruti*

A consideration of the text of this song, performed by singers in Long Semiyang (discussed in 4.1.1), reveals its ancient roots. It tells of a time in the distant past, and revolves around the tale of a legendary beauty, Ba'un Lanyau. Melodically, being anhemitonic *do-pentatonic*, with a wide range, regular rhythm and compact phrasing, this song is typical of *belian dado'*. The harmony, however, is significant as it presents an intermediate stage in the development of the genre. As the soloist sings the verse, the chorus enters in responsorial fashion, on a drone on the tonic. In the chorus, however, homophonic harmony prevails, with parallel fourths and fifths predominating, and the accompanying descant imitates the contour of the melody.

### Transcription 16: Are Ruti (Chong, 2006:5)

Soloist

Chorus

S

Chor.

S

Chor.

### (iii) Ateklan

This song has all the features of a typical *belian dado'*. The melody is anhemitonic *do*-pentatonic, has compact phrasing and a regular rhythm. The harmony is basically homophonic, with the accompanying part entering either one phrase or half a phrase behind the soloist. The contour of the accompanying voice mostly follows that of the melody but there is also some contrary motion. There is a predominance of parallel fifths and sixths with occasional thirds and octaves. The descant also constitutes a clear and easily remembered counter-melody. The text clearly depicts the atmosphere of a night where the community is gathered for fellowship, that is, a perfect setting for *belian dado'*.

## **Transcription 53: Ateklan**

**Music Score:**

Key signature: G major (one sharp). Time signature: Common time (indicated by '4'). Measure number: 1.

**Descant:** The first measure consists of a single note followed by a rest. The lyrics are: I - ni a - lem i - ni e -.

**Melody:** The melody begins with a dotted half note followed by eighth notes. The lyrics are: Pe-mong jai - ee te - lu\_\_ tu - yang A - lem i - ni a - lem i - ni e -.

**D (Duet):** The first measure consists of a dotted half note followed by eighth notes. The lyrics are: I dang bu - lan I A - lem i - ni E -.

**M (Mezzo-soprano):** The first measure consists of a dotted half note followed by eighth notes. The lyrics are: dang bu - lan A - lem a - lem i - ni E -.

**D (Duet):** The first measure consists of a dotted half note followed by eighth notes. The lyrics are: II I II I III II I dang e - dang bu - lan ne - lan na-lo i - na tu - yang.

**M (Mezzo-soprano):** The first measure consists of a dotted half note followed by eighth notes. The lyrics are: dang e - dang bu - lan A-tek - lan ne - lan na-lo i - na tu - yang.

## **5.3 SPECIFIC STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL MUSIC EDUCATION DERIVED FROM KENYAH PRACTICES**

Music in a typical Malaysian school (besides the normal KBSR songs emanating from music classes) is confined to ‘patriotic songs’ regularly churned out by government promotional agencies and rather poor renditions of the school, state and national anthems. Combined with a home environment devoid of participation in music making and a mass media totally devoted to popular music featuring little vocal harmony, this makes for a poor ‘musical diet’ for urban Malaysian schoolchildren. Few are capable of spontaneous improvisation in melody and most find it very challenging to sing in harmony.

The average Malaysian schoolchild would freeze with embarrassment if requested to sing in public, whereas, as Campbell (2004:8) describes<sup>20</sup>, “students from ‘singing cultures’<sup>21</sup> are likely to sing as they talk, easily, with volume, and without embarrassment”. In the preceding sections, various factors

<sup>20</sup> The context of the discussion was the effects of a rich music environment on musical abilities, and the music and music-educational influence of family, friends and teachers.

<sup>21</sup> According to Russell (2001:1), a singing culture may be described as one in which large numbers of the population sing frequently and regularly. “In such a culture, singing embodies and expresses the values of the group, it nurtures and expresses group identity and affirms social relations”.

were identified as influencing the development of Kenyah musical aptitude. Of particular significance are the development of choral singing skills and homophonic textures in both vocal and instrumental music. Perhaps certain aspects of Kenyah culture could be adapted to enrich the learning environment in schools. To quote Russell (2001:197-218), who studied Fiji's singing culture and its implications for music education in Canada, "Singing ability is more than a gift: it is a human behavior that develops under favorable socio-cultural conditions." Although such an environment would be impossible to simulate closely, some of the factors mentioned could be translated in the school context to specific strategies to enhance musical learning.

### **5.3.1 Multipart Singing in Early Childhood in 'Singing Cultures' around the World**

A clue to the early enculturation of Kenyah children into rhythm and harmony is the common practice of mothers carrying infants as they join in the *belian dado* 'chorus line. Small (1998:207) mentions a parallel phenomenon: "... in traditional African societies a child's musical experience and development may well begin with hearing and sensing multiple bodily rhythms as it rides on its mother's back while she dances ..."

Campbell (2004:22) specifies South African and Polynesian songs as good choices for secondary school choral ensembles, probably because of the complex choral harmonies exhibited by these cultures. It is intriguing that the ability to sing in harmony comes so effortlessly in singing cultures such as the Kenyah, Bantu and Samoan peoples, e.g. the Samoan song *Ata, Ata Mai Pe'a Fiafa* (Excerpt 13) in three-part close harmony is sung by children even in pre-school settings.

**Excerpt 13: Excerpt from *Ata, Ata Mai Pe'a Fiafa*** (from Campbell, 2004:166)

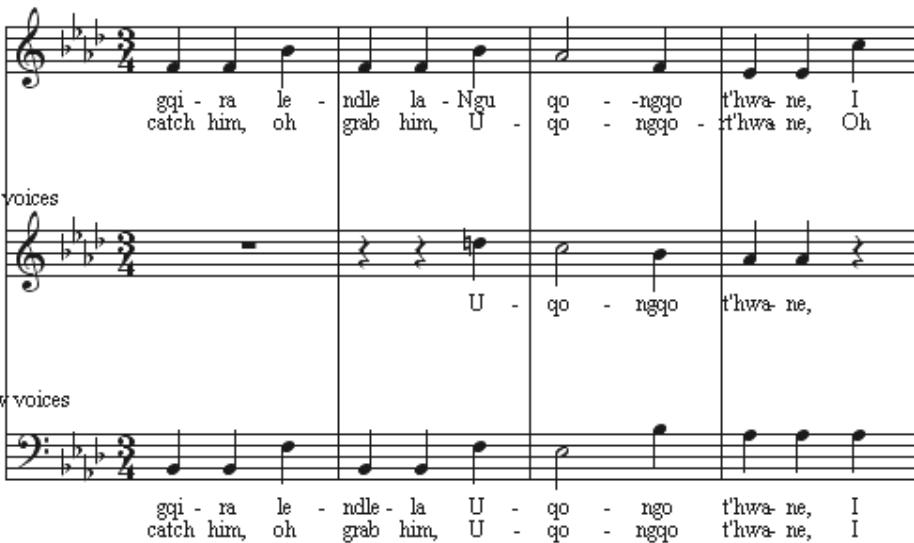


A - ta at - a mai \_\_\_\_ pe - 'a e fi - a fi - a \_\_\_\_

In South Africa, the children's song *Uqongqot'hwane* (Excerpt 14) exhibits the parallel harmonisation popular in many parts of the country.

### Excerpt 14: Excerpt from *Uqongqot'hwane* (Williams & Maselva, 1947:56–57)

Lead voices



gqi - ra le - ndle la - Ngu - qo - - nggo t'hwa- ne, I  
catch him, oh grab him, U - qo - - nggo t'hwa- ne, Oh

High voices

Low voices

gqi - ra le - ndle la - U - qo - - ngo t'hwa- ne, I  
catch him, oh grab him, U - qo - - ngo t'hwa- ne, I

These examples show that young children in specific cultures are capable of singing in complex harmonies. This feature of multipart singing cultures has significant implications for music education. From my perusal of transcriptions of African and Polynesian examples, although all could be classed as homophonic multipart songs, they differ considerably from Kenyah songs in compositional style. The various subsidiary harmonies seldom constitute distinct, easily remembered melodies in themselves. Some feature close chordal harmonies, while others are based on interlocking ostinato patterns. Kenyah songs are mostly in two-part harmony and the parts are easily distinguishable. In each song, the descant or alto appears at intervals of a third, fourth, fifth, sixth or octave, and constitutes a distinct and attractive melody in itself. This characteristic, as mentioned in Chapter 4, makes them uniquely suitable as teaching materials, as the subsidiary voice is easily taught and remembered by rote. They are ideal for introducing harmony to music classes and teaching multipart singing to choral groups who have no previous experience singing in harmony.

Multipart singing is a skill most Malaysian students have not cultivated. Very few can harmonise spontaneously by ear or sing a second part from a printed score. (Most ITE Batu Lintang students, for example, enter tertiary education with no formal background in music, and are thus not adept at reading from a musical score. Even in college choral ensembles, most singers, armed only with good memories and a basic musical sense, learn the songs by rote, a situation commonly faced by many Malaysian music teachers and choral leaders). Thus for most Malaysian students and choristers, and possibly for many others throughout the world, *belian dado'* would be useful as choral training exercises. They could serve as an intermediate stage in the teaching of part-singing, after the elementary stages of singing drones, ostinati and rounds.

### 5.3.2 Simulating the Musical Environment of the Longhouse

The longhouse verandah, which provides sufficient space for performance, yet no barrier between performers and audience, could serve as a model for a music class. Christopher Small's (1998) critique of the modern symphony orchestra, with its artificial distancing of performers and audience, rings true when comparing the warm informality of a longhouse performance with the cold formality of a concert hall. The music classroom and school hall, for bigger gatherings, could be designed to be 'performance friendly' and music activities structured so that creativity is encouraged in a relaxed, accepting atmosphere.

The importance of fun as a key element in learning music cannot be overemphasized. The Kenyah sense of creative play is a recurring theme in their culture, and may be the key to their musical inventiveness. Teachers could shift the focus of lessons towards exploration and improvisation, rather than slavish reproduction of set pieces. Based on their respective studies on informal learning in the classroom, Green (2006:109) and Seddon and Biasutti (2009:200) reported strong student responses with regard to motivation, enjoyment and relevance. They argue that much of the enjoyment and motivation stemmed from feelings of autonomy, and recommend higher levels of student autonomy and less teacher direction.

Kenyah instruments, or simulations of them, tuned to pentatonic scales, could be used in classroom or small ensemble settings. General musicality could be developed through practical experience with tuning makeshift instruments, such as bottles filled with water. Using pentatonic instruments such as the *jatung utang* (reminiscent of Orff strategies) frees the students to experiment with harmony and counter-melodies, as they are much less likely to encounter discord (in comparison to using diatonic instruments). The same principle would apply to vocal improvisation in pentatonic scales. With this basic experience in harmony associated with melodies in the pentatonic scale, students could then be introduced to singing in harmony, beginning with the harmony found in typical *belian dado*'.

The Kenyah practice of *a capella* group choral singing reinforces a strong sense of melody and harmony among members of the community. Students could be encouraged to sing *a capella* more often and to determine their own starting pitch without the teacher's help. In a part-simulation of the longhouse community, pair-teaching or occasional help from groups of singers well-versed in specific two-part songs may aid the process of learning to sing in harmony.

### 5.3.3 Transmission Processes with and without Notation

As in many other folk traditions, Kenyah music has been transmitted through an oral/aural process. "Oral transmission gives the learner first-hand insights into the emotional power and purpose of the music, and these are key attributes of successful performance in any genre" (Sheridan & Byrne, 2008:155). This could be combined flexibly with score-reading, depending on the pupils' inclinations. I

have found transcriptions are a great help to those who have reached a certain level of competency in sight-reading, but may even be a hindrance to the others. An ex-student's description of his experiences with the teaching of Kenyah songs using the song-book and audio-visual aids (Chong, 2006) prompted me to reconsider the need for flexible approaches:

*Before I had your CD, I really had a very hard time in reading the scores. (You know that I'm not good at sight-reading.) I had to add the solfa in every song-sheet before I could sing each song. Playing the song with keyboard sometimes made things worse. With the help of the CD and VCD, I listened to each song before entering the class, memorized the melody and played it on keyboard (I can memorize melody without looking at the scores). That really helps me.*  
[Melrance Chris Anak Louis].

Melrance was the top student in his group and had no difficulty with elementary sight-singing exercises, acing most practical singing tests. However, as he had entered college without having had formal music lessons, his early conditioning may have bred a preference for memorisation rather than score reading. In contrast, another gifted student (Chain Wee Tat) with previous formal instruction in Chinese instruments could not grasp the melody for a *kanjet leto* sape tune aurally, but quickly mastered it after I gave him the transcription, which he then reinterpreted to solfa. His previous early conditioning would have been Chinese numerical music notation (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 etc. corresponding to *d r m f s*). Hence although both, after solfa drills in college, were equally good at sight-singing, their preferred mental musical pathways were different.

According to Lilliestam (1996:201), remembering music can rely on different kinds of memory: auditive, visual, tactile, motoric and verbal<sup>22</sup>. Kenyah instrumentalists and singers learn their skills and repertoire traditionally through an oral route, utilising auditive, visual and tactile-motoric memory, whereas in schools, applying Western classical methods of transmission, although all the different types of memory come into play, verbal memory is greatly emphasised. As Lilliestam (1996:97) observed, "playing by ear or from notation are just different musical behavior and practices, each with its own advantages and disadvantages" and that "the opposition between orality and literacy should not be seen as an opposition between two conditions, as a dichotomy, but rather as a continuum, where cultures have different degrees (as well as types) of literacy." He suggests that it would be more relevant to speak of 'oral or literate strategies' to be used for different purposes.

Although my *sape* teacher, Henry Anyie Ajang, taught me using 'oral strategy', my own learning utilised both oral and literate strategies. I employed all the different forms of memory: auditive (I sang the melodies and made audio recordings), visual and tactile-motoric (recalled how and what it felt like in

<sup>22</sup> Auditive memory refers to perceiving music by hearing, and later recreating it with voice or instrument from memory; Visual refers to remembering what it looks like on the instrument, e.g. in terms of finger position; Tactile-motoric refers to "muscular memories", remembering how it feels to play; Verbal relies on the naming of phenomena , e.g. chords.

terms of finger placement on the instrument), but most of all verbal memory (I transcribed the melodies to solfa and wrote them down for long-term reference). Henry Anyie requested a copy of my notations, and later made use of them when he was assigned to teach a *sape* class at the Dayak Cultural Foundation. He found the solfa notation very helpful at the initial stage, aiding his students' understanding, and speeding up the learning process. Once they had mastered the skeleton melody, though, the subsequent variations were taught totally thorough an oral route.

Even master musicians in Asian classical traditions are open to the use of Western notation for those whose musical mental pathways have been conditioned through this route. "For the Thai ensemble that he conducted at Kent State University, Panya Roongruang transcribed the music to western notation, followed by score memorization for performance" (Quesada, 2002:153).

Moving out of the formal classroom, efforts should be made to promote the notion that music and dance activities are for the whole community, regardless of age or gender, and not just for a few talented individuals. Teachers themselves could begin by setting the example of performing, singing and dancing together with the children in class, on stage, or during informal occasions. Nurturing the skills of the school band and choir is vital, but should not be at the expense of the 'less talented'. Music, song and dance should be presented as a unified whole, involving the students in performances combining all three fields. Attempts could be made to immerse children in a musical environment outside the classroom, such as lunch-time performances by teachers, students and organized group-singing during outings.

## 5.4 SUMMARY

This chapter has examined aspects of Kenyah culture which have shaped their extraordinary musical aptitude, in particular their choral singing skills. Implications of some of these aspects to music education were then examined. In addition, links between instrumental and vocal harmony were explored and, based on the structure of three songs, a possible path for the evolution of the unusual choral harmony found in *belian dado*'. An examination of the occurrence of multipart vocal music in various parts of the world supported the argument that Kenyah vocal harmony was an indigenous development. By comparing Kenyah music with that of Austronesian groups in Taiwan, many similarities, in particular in terms of instrumentation and choral singing emerged, indicating that further studies may provide musical evidence for Austronesian migration theories.

# CHAPTER 6

## BRINGING THE SONGS TO SCHOOL

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A pertinent issue to examine next is the practicality of bringing Kenyah songs to the modern classroom, and to consider the ensuing recontextualization of the music. The teaching and learning of the songs in actual classroom situations will be examined, and the perceptions of schoolchildren, teachers and facilitators for ethnic music workshops will be gauged. Although the research was carried out only in East Malaysian schools, many of the findings should be relevant to schools anywhere in the world. The views of the culture bearers themselves regarding new interpretations and stage performances of their songs and dances will also be considered.

### 6.1 DISSEMINATION STRATEGIES AND ISSUES ARISING

Since 1996, I have endeavoured to bring these songs to the attention of the Malaysian populace through a series of initiatives:

- a) Incorporating them into public performances for the UNIMAS choir in 1996–1997, and subsequently the Institute of Teacher Education Batu Lintang Campus choir from 1998–2012 (Plates 34, 45 and 46).
- b) Incorporating them into music pedagogy classes during lectures at ITE Batu Lintang and in-service courses with schoolteachers, as well as ethnic music courses for schoolchildren, teachers and music lecturers (Plates 35, 36, 48 and 49).
- c) Guiding and obtaining feedback from teacher trainees and serving music teachers in their efforts to incorporate these songs into music lessons in schools (Plates 41, 42, 43 and 44).
- d) Teaching the songs to a class of year 5 students (Plates 39 and 40).
- e) Writing books (Chong, 1998 and 2006; Chong & Lajinga, 2011) and journal articles on the songs, and the invaluable contribution they could make to the music education curriculum.

#### Issues arising during dissemination of the songs

*Philosophical acceptance of world music and sufficient familiarity... [may seem adequate] ... , but those of us endeavoring to teach world musics know that the total equation is far more complicated ... issues related to the music styles themselves engender some of the most controversial , complex questions that music educators face ... (Quesada, 2002:149).*

Various issues arose during dissemination. The most significant of these were:

- (i) Receptivity towards the songs (Malaysian context)
- (ii) Language issues
- (iii) Teaching strategies (teaching of harmony and other specific aspects)
- (iv) Adaptations: Accompaniment
- (v) Other modifications for stage presentations.

Issues (i) and (ii) will be discussed first as they have a direct bearing on the investigation of teaching and learning of the songs in schools as described in 6.3.



Plate 34: ITE Batu Lintang choir performing Kenyah songs at the 2004 Borneo International Ethnic Music Conference, Kuching



Plate 35: ITE Batu Lintang student, Bernerd Anak Girak<sup>1</sup>, accompanying songs on the sape at a workshop on Kenyah songs, 2006

<sup>1</sup> “Anak” meaning “child of” is used in Iban and Bidayuh names.

## 6.2 RECEPTIVITY AND CULTURAL IDENTIFICATION

As the previous chapters have shown, Kenyah songs have the potential to be immensely valuable educational materials. However, as the songs are the product of a minority group in a multi-ethnic country, there may be doubts regarding their applicability in a nationwide context.

Various parties have posed this question to me: “Why should the average Malaysian be interested in singing Kenyah songs?” In reply, I would say that I have introduced the songs to many different groups of people, of varying ethnicities and educational backgrounds. The vast majority exhibited enthusiasm for the songs. Many responded to aesthetic appeal of the melodies, and recognised that they were unlike those of contemporary songs (including Malay and Iban popular songs) featured in the mass media or in school song books. Some felt that the songs reminded them of the gentle *sape* music in Orang Ulu longhouses, others of lullabies that their own grandmothers sang.

However, unless care is taken to build in a sensitive introduction, cultural bias may at times become an obstacle to the appreciation of the songs. This is especially the case, given the differences between East and West Malaysia in ethnic composition. As Bresler (1995:10) expressed,

*We cannot love music we do not know. In folk society, love of the society's traditional music grows out of the learner's interrelated experiences not only with the sounds of the music, but with the people and contexts in which those sounds emanate. Therefore, the teacher in non-traditional teaching and learning contexts must find ways to provide these interrelated experiences to assure the necessary aesthetic gratification.*

### 6.2.1 Regional Differences and Receptivity toward the Songs at College Level

The songs have been received with enthusiasm by the students of ITE Batu Lintang, who comprise a wide range of ethnic groups from Sarawak (such as Iban, Bidayuh, Malay, Melanau and Chinese) and a sizeable number from Sabah and West Malaysia. Students of Sarawak indigenous descent, especially those from a rural background, were particularly enthusiastic about the songs, possibly because they could identify closely with the lyrics reflecting life in an upriver longhouse setting. Trainees of Chinese and Malay descent from Sarawak were also delighted to be able to sing songs from Sarawak, as most Sarawakians generally take pride in the complex multicultural profile of the state. Although the Chinese language majors, who hail from Chinese medium schools, initially found the lyrics strange, they were soon able to render the songs from memory without hesitation.

Students of Kadazandusun and Bajau descent from the neighbouring state of Sabah served with distinction as facilitators for the ‘outreach to schools workshops’ which were conducted in Kuching and Miri in 2006 and were as enthusiastic as the Sarawakians. Some of the comments about their favourite songs (taken from their responses to a questionnaire) are quoted below<sup>2</sup>:

*Ateklan* and *Liling* were described as having “attractive melodies with ‘easy- to- learn’ harmony”; *Hip Balip* and *Nombor Satu Nombor Dua* had “lively rhythms”, while three of the more sentimental *belian dado*’, *Mudung Ina*, *Taroi* and *Kun Nelan-e* were described with a different set of

<sup>2</sup> *Ateklan*, Transcription 53, Chapter 5; *Liling* ver. 1, Transcription 57 and *Hip Balip*, Transcription 61, Appendix B; *Nombor Satu Nombor Dua*, Transcription 3, Chapter 3. The other songs were presented in Chapter 4.

comments: “enchanting melody”, “melody arouses sadness”, “melody touches the heart”, “wistful ... calms our thoughts”; “The lyrics realistically portray experience of actual events”.

Admittedly, one small group of West Malaysians in my KDPM<sup>3</sup> (2003–2005) music major class (75% of whom were male) showed limited interest. This, I believe, stemmed from resentment at being sent to Sarawak to study and the fact that they made up 50% of the class. For a year, there was even a palpable rift between the Sarawakians and the West Malaysians in their class. Their attitudes changed dramatically, however, after I brought them for a two-day course in instrumental music and dance at the Sarawak Cultural village. Class unity and general receptivity to all things Sarawakian improved tremendously. Subsequently, some of them proved outstanding facilitators during the 2005 national-level workshops on East Malaysian music for music lecturers. This episode brought home to me the importance of being sensitive to cultural prejudice and the need to formulate different strategies for students with different backgrounds. This group of students had been blinded to the aesthetic appeal of the songs for as long as they represented an ‘alien’ and unfriendly culture associated with their erstwhile rivals – their classmates from Sarawak.

As Green (2006:103) reasons, “In all musical experience, both the inherent and the delineated aspects of musical meaning must occur, even though listeners may not be aware of them” and that “negative responses to delineations occur when we feel that the music is not ours”. She argues further that, although a listener may experience contradictory responses to the inherent and delineated meanings of a particular piece of music, sometimes one aspect of meaning can overpower, influence and even change the other (Green’s definition of these terms are found in the footnote to 1.4.1 on page 10).

The UNIMAS<sup>4</sup> choir, under my direction from 1996–1997, comprising students from various faculties and different ethnicities from all over Malaysia, happily memorized ten Kenyah songs, and were the first to perform them publicly, at faculty concerts and at the 1997 convocation. A few years ago, I met with a leading member of that choir, Veronica Shanmugam, a West Malaysian of mixed Indian-Chinese descent. She still treasured the experience of performing the songs, and had even chosen to sing a Kenyah song for a job interview. Unfortunately, a panel member (assuming the song to be Chinese because of the pentatonic melody and unfamiliar lyrics) rebuked her for choosing a ‘Chinese song’ rather than a ‘Malaysian’ song. Racial stereotyping is not an uncommon occurrence in West Malaysia. This incident indicated that there could be potential barriers to the general acceptance of the songs, particularly from West Malaysia with its different racial profile.

As a member of a national panel in 1995, drawing up the new secondary school music curriculum, I had met with opposition to my proposal to include East Malaysian indigenous instruments in the curriculum. In 2004, together with other music lecturers from Sarawak and Sabah, I again voiced dissatisfaction with the paltry and inaccurate representation of East Malaysian music in

<sup>3</sup> Kursus Diploma Pendidikan Malaysia, a 2½ year Teacher’s Diploma program (now replaced by the PISMP, a 5½ year Degree program).

<sup>4</sup> Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, where I served as a tutor while pursuing my Master’s degree.

the new syllabus for teachers' colleges. With some persistence this led, eventually, to our college hosting a week-long course on Sabah and Sarawak music for lecturers from all 27 teachers' colleges in March 2005. The lecturers, most of whom hailed from West Malaysia, were full of enthusiasm. Most returned home with song books and video-recordings, and several with newly purchased *sapes*. Any apprehension that the West Malaysians would be disdainful of East Malaysian culture was completely dispelled. The course had been an eye-opener for many them, especially for the majority who had never previously visited Sarawak. It had, no doubt, helped greatly that they been introduced to the music 'first-hand', in a very conducive environment, rather than through books and recordings. We had endeavoured to present the music to them with an 'insider's view' approach, bringing in local Kenyah *sape* instructors, as well as Sabahan lecturers and ITE Batu Lintang student facilitators for other instruments. In addition, the course incorporated a day-trip to the Sarawak Cultural Village, where the participants were taught by experienced in-house music and dance instructors.

Perhaps the last word in this discussion on regional receptivity should go to Grace Tan Huimin, the only West Malaysian student among the facilitators for the ISME-Gibson project (2007–2009), writing about her experiences:

*It was wonderful and very special as I felt like I am part of a hidden treasure of Malaysia. Back in Selangor, we never knew anything about the Kenyah except what we learnt in Geography. We knew the kind of dances or music by name, but never experienced the magic of it ...*

*[On her trip to the longhouse] ... It brought to life the lyrics of the songs, and I was able to imagine what might be going on by meeting with people who sang the songs...*

*[On the songs]... I wish that every other Malaysian would be able to hear and learn these songs as it's very relevant to what we claim Malaysia to be – multicultural, rich in tradition, multilingual ... Lan-e Tuyang – I like the upbeat melody and the harmony. The way it begins is as though someone is telling a very interesting story, and the ending is also catchy ... Nombor Satu, Nombor Dua – it tells a story of how the Kenyahs live their life – something very foreign to urban students. I also love the harmony very much!*

### 6.2.2 Past Research on Receptivity to the Songs in Schools

The above discussion revolves around adults attending lectures and various dissemination projects. Aside from data collected during short-term workshops in 2006–2009, there has been little direct feedback from schoolchildren, except for the small-scale study by Chong and Wong (1999) mentioned in Chapter 1. The results of that project showed that for the sample under study, the three Kenyah songs (all pentatonic) used were more effective than the diatonic KBSR songs in the teaching of sight-singing. The qualitative and semi-quantitative results also indicated that pupils in four schools with different racial profiles demonstrated substantial interest in the songs, and agreed that more folk-songs from Malaysia should be sung in school. A large number of the students also agreed that the original language be used in school.

It was time then to bring the songs back to school. In order to establish that the songs are viable in a nationwide school context, it would be pertinent to explore the perceptions of elementary schoolchildren of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds toward Kenyah songs. This was carried out over a period of two years, from 2011–2012. As the language of the songs is one of the major

aspects under consideration, this will be discussed first in 6.2.3 before the presentation of the results of the 2011–2012 exercise in section 6.3.

### 6.2.3 Language Issues and Translation

As the Kenyah language is unfamiliar to the majority of Malaysians, would this present a major obstacle to the learning of the songs? From what I have observed during my own dissemination efforts, Kenyah lyrics were mastered easily, as, like Malay<sup>5</sup>, it is an Austronesian language, and phonetically bears many similarities to the latter.

My students in ITE Batu Lintang had no difficulty with the lyrics, although initially, some laughed and balked at having to memorize an unfamiliar tongue for performances. As mentioned in 6.2.1, even the Chinese language majors (the only students of non-Austronesian language background) were soon singing effortlessly.

Some trainees were initially skeptical about teaching the songs in school during practicum. Although they were confident that the melodies would be well-received, they were doubtful if their pupils could cope with lyrics in an unfamiliar language. However, many of these trainees later reported that their pupils enjoyed the novelty of singing in another language, and learnt the lyrics relatively fast. I have video-recordings of some of these successful classes including sessions at five Chinese medium primary schools where most students are ethnic Chinese. This will be discussed further in section 6.3.

In July 2007, I brought twelve young trainee-teachers to the Iban majority district of Lubok Antu, where we held workshops with primary schools in the daytime (Plate 36), and interacted with Iban musicians in longhouses at night. At the workshops, we introduced a series of Kenyah songs to the children (90% of whom are Iban) who sang the Kenyah lyrics fluently after several repetitions. It was definitely helpful to have several facilitators interspersed among them (an auditory situation not unlike that of a Kenyah longhouse), especially when it came to teaching two-part songs.

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<sup>5</sup> The official language of Malaysia.



**Plate 36: ITE Batu Lintang student facilitators teaching Kenyah songs to schoolchildren at SK<sup>6</sup> Lubok Antu, 2007**

One way to overcome the barrier of language would be through preparing good translations. My three books feature songs with Kenyah lyrics alongside Malay and English translations. Although purists may oppose this, I have, with the encouragement even of some of the culture-bearers, included some singable translations, which provide the option of performing the song in Malay.

In public performances of the songs, wherever possible, the original Kenyah lyrics were retained. In less formal settings, I arranged for a verbal introduction to the songs, and translated versions were given in the program notes. In such cases, audience reaction was exceedingly warm and positive. This was not possible during formal occasions, where I often arranged for the choir to sing a translated version in Malay, alternating with verses in the original Kenyah. For choir competitions which stipulated that all songs had to be in either Malay or English, only translated versions were used, but movement and props were added to emphasize the culture of origin.

However, it would be wise to remember that “subtle shades of meaning are inevitably lost when one creates a contrived translation for singing purposes” (Burton, 2002:178). Burton recommends, “The original language should be used … along with a pronunciation guide, literal translation, extended translation and extended interpretation” and that any attempt at “singable translations” be overseen by a culture-bearer. This is a tall order given the remoteness of the villages where the Kenyah reside, the numerous differences in language and repertoire and the lack of dictionaries.

Translation, seeking ‘authentic’ versions of the lyrics and understanding the cultural context of the songs have presented the most challenging aspects of my research. It must be acknowledged that the quality of translations could be improved with more extensive consultation with the specific subgroups involved. I have since rectified this partially with extended visits to Uma Sambop and Long Moh. As described in Chapter 4, I succeeded in obtaining a more complete version of the lyrics

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<sup>6</sup> SK (Sekolah Kebangsaan or National School) is the prefix for the names of all government primary schools.

(in comparison to the version in my second book [Chong, 2006]) and the endearing story behind the song *Chut Tunyang* (Step in the mud). A major discovery was the existence of not one, but two full sets of lyrics associated with a popular *sape* tune known by several names, such as *Pui Ngeleput Burui* or *Sai Ulai*. However, this discovery surfaced only after extended visits to two villages in different river systems. It took me a full year to find out the identity of the bird portrayed in the songs *Ilun Kuai* and *Kuai Maping*, when Baun finally sent me a photo of herself holding the feathers (Plate 47). The letter was sent by hand through a relative as there is no regular postal service in Long Moh. Even in Long Moh, there was much disagreement on the proper lyrics and meaning of certain verses in songs. Also, the ‘semi-opacity’ of *isiu ipet* (described in 1.6.1 and 4.1.1) has to be borne in mind.

Perhaps very few people are aware of the complete cultural context for the songs they sing. For instance, how many teachers know that the well-known children’s song *Ring-a-round the Rosie* as pointed out by Seeger (2002:109) “is widely held to refer to plague epidemics that devastated London’s population”?

Language and receptivity issues will be investigated further in the next section, along with children’s opinions on melodic, harmonic and textual aspects of the songs.

### 6.3 INVESTIGATING THE RESPONSES OF SCHOOLCHILDREN TO KENYAH SONGS

From 2011–2012, my research focused on the teaching and learning process of the songs in regular music classes in the schools. The relevant research questions (from the sub-questions listed in 1.2.2) for my investigation in schools in 2011–2012 were as follows:

- (i) Which genres would be suitable as teaching materials for classroom teaching and choral ensemble in schools?
- (ii) What are the dilemmas faced in transmitting the songs to children of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds?

For a period of eight weeks, selected classes of elementary school pupils were taught (along with any other songs the teachers deemed suitable) several Kenyah songs applying the Kodály approach of movable-*do*. As the success of conveying the aesthetic appeal of a song is dependent on the teacher’s familiarity with it, the teachers were free to choose any songs from the two books supplied (Chong, 2006<sup>7</sup>; Chong & Lajinga, 2011).

Apart from singing, other activities included the teaching of traditional dance-movements associated with the songs, playing the tunes on the recorder, free dramatization, and where possible, accompaniment with traditional instruments such as *sape* and *jatung utang*. Written feedback was obtained through two questionnaires. The reactions of the schoolchildren to the songs were gauged both quantitatively through responses to several statements using a five-point Likert scale, and qualitatively based on their answers to several open-ended questions. Feedback from the teachers was

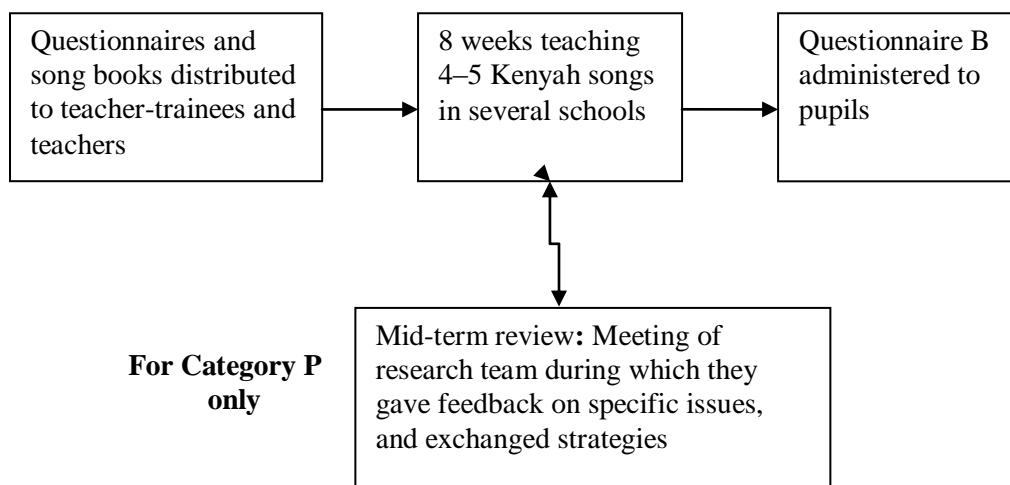
<sup>7</sup> accompanied by a set of Audio-CD and Video-CD.

collected during post-lesson discussions and through a separate questionnaire for teachers. I also observed and video-recorded five classes at four different schools.

Two categories of Year 2–6 students were included:

- (i) Category P from several Chinese medium schools where the children were mostly of Chinese descent. This group, taught by teacher-trainees<sup>8</sup> during practicum, was closely monitored.
- (ii) Category R from ethnically mixed schools (Malay medium). This included the class I taught personally and classes in other schools taught by ex-students<sup>9</sup>, now serving as teachers in various schools throughout Sarawak.

The research design is summarized diagrammatically in the figure below:



<sup>8</sup> Ten teacher-trainees, all of whom were Chinese language majors with music minor, volunteered to participate in the 2011 project. Of these, six submitted complete sets of data.

<sup>9</sup> At the time of writing, of the twelve serving teachers involved, four have sent in complete sets of data.

**Table 6.1 Location of schools and profile of teachers and students**

	Name of School, Level, No. of respondents	Location	Profile of respondents	Profile of teachers
<b>Category P : Chinese medium schools</b>				
P1	SK Chung Hua Stapok, Year 4 (n=38)	Outskirts of Kuching	Chinese: 68% (25 Chinese, 3 Malays, 7 Ibans, 3 Bidayuh)	PISMP <sup>10</sup> Chinese language majors with music minor (carried out during their 12- week practicum in 2011)  All members of the choir and 5 were facilitators for the ISME-Gibson project
P2	SK Chung Hua No. 2, Year 4 (n=30)	Kuching	Chinese: 93 % (28 Chinese, 1 Iban, 1 mixed Chinese-Kayan)	
P3	SK Chung Hua No. 3, Year 4 (n=41)	Kuching	Chinese: 100%	
P4	SK Chung Hua No.5, Year 2 (n=40)	Kuching	Chinese: 98% (39 Chinese, 1 Bidayuh)	
P5b	SK Chung Hua No.1, Year 4 (n=36)	Kuching	Chinese: 90% (32 Chinese, 4 mixed Bidayuh/Iban)	
P6	SK Chung Hua No.2, Year 3 (n=39)	Kuching	Chinese: 85% (33 Chinese, 2 Malays, 2 Ibans, 1 Bidayuh,1 Kayan)	
<b>Category R: Malay medium schools</b>				
R1	SK Ong Tiang Swee, Year 5 (n=35)	Kuching	Malay/Muslim: 43 %; Sarawak Indigenous: 40%; Chinese:17% (14 Malays, 8 Ibans, 6 Chinese, 5 Bidayuh, 1 Kelabit, 1 Javanese)	Chong Pek Lin
R2	SK Suba Buan, Year 5 (n=17)	Bau	Bidayuh: 88% (15 Bidayuh, 1 Malay, 1 Chinese)	Music teachers with 7 years of experience Former KDPM <sup>11</sup> music major students from Batu Lintang, both members of the choir and played <i>sape</i> and <i>jatung utang</i>
R3	SK Bakerkong, Year 1, 2, 3, 4&5 (n=15).	Daro	Iban: 93% (14 Iban, 1 Malay) Small school with only 20 students	
R4	SK Nanga Sama, Year 4 & Year 6 (n=20)	Kapit	Iban: 100%	Music teacher with 5 years of experience Former Batu Lintang KDPM music major student
R5	SK Petra Jaya , Year 2 (n=22)	Kuching	Malay/Muslim: 77% (17 Malays, 2 Ibans, 2 Melanaus, 1 Bidayuh)	English/music teacher with 7 years of experience. Former Batu Lintang KPLI <sup>12</sup> student (English major/music minor). Choir member

<sup>10</sup> Program Ijazah Sarjana Muda Perguruan dengan Kepujian, a 5½ year degree program for school-leavers.

<sup>11</sup> Kursus Diploma Perguruan Malaysia, a 2½ year diploma level program for school-leavers.

<sup>12</sup> Kursus Perguruan Lepas Ijazah, a 1 year Diploma in Education program for graduates.

R1 (Primary 5 Bijak of SK Ong Tiang Swee, in the centre of Kuching) comprised the most ethnically diverse group. The Chinese medium schools all featured the typical overwhelmingly ethnic Chinese enrolments in urban Chinese medium schools with the sole exception of P1, situated on the outskirts of Kuching, which comprised a sizeable proportion of indigenous races. R2, R3 and R4 are situated in the small rural towns of Bau, Daro and Kapit where the majority are of either Bidayuh or Iban descent. R5 is situated in a Malay-majority area of Kuching. Thus, the 11 schools involved should provide a fair representation of the different<sup>13</sup> cultural milieus resident in Sarawak. With the sole exception of R4, all the classes (besides my own) were taught by former members of the college choir, well acquainted with the songs.

My experiences with R1 will be narrated first, followed by a discussion of the experiences of the teacher-trainees in Chinese medium schools, and then an analysis of the responses to the questionnaires by the children from all 11 schools.

### 6.3.1 Introducing the Songs to SK Ong Tiang Swee<sup>14</sup>

For the first three months of 2012, I took over the weekly hour-long music lessons for Primary 5 Bijak, SK Ong Tiang Swee. Introducing Kenyah songs, instruments and culture to this class of 35 eager eleven-year-olds was a rewarding experience. Although the official medium of instruction was Malay, the children, mainly from upper middle-class families, preferred to communicate with me in English. At the request of the headmaster, I also assisted their music teacher in training the school-choir in preparation for an upcoming competition. Besides the compulsory patriotic song, I arranged a medley of Kenyah songs, with lyrics translated into Malay to comply with competition rules. A summary of the topics covered and strategies used is given in Appendix C, Section 2.3 , while table 6.2 shows the songs and musical concepts covered.

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<sup>13</sup> The only major cultural group not included is the Orang Ulu, to which the Kenyah belong, and who are expected to display the most positive response. Feedback from teachers and students in Orang Ulu majority areas obtained in a different manner will be mentioned later.

<sup>14</sup> SK Ong Tiang Swee is the ‘teaching-school’ for ITE Batu Lintang, i.e., an officially designated partner institution for training and research purposes.

**Table 6.2 Songs and musical concepts covered**

	Song title	Scale	Tone-set	Accompaniment/strategy
1	<i>Sai Ulai</i> (Transcription 32)	Pentatonic	<u>s</u> l d r m s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>sape and jatung utang</i></li> <li>• traditional movements</li> <li>• cultural context: long boat journeys</li> <li>• ostinato &amp; solfa</li> </ul>
2	<i>Ilun Pesak Pakui</i> (Transcription 36)	Pentatonic	<u>m</u> s l d r m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>jatung utang</i></li> <li>• ostinato &amp; solfa</li> </ul>
3	<i>Ateklan</i> (Transcription 53)	Pentatonic	<u>s</u> l d r m s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• harmony (two-part )</li> <li>• accompaniment: <i>sape</i></li> <li>• dance : <i>tu'ut dado'</i></li> </ul>
4	<i>Ilun Kuai</i> (Transcription 14)	Pentatonic	<u>m</u> <u>s</u> l d r m s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• association with endangered species and traditional costumes</li> <li>• sentimental mood</li> </ul>
5	<i>Telu Tiang</i> (Transcription 51) Choir only, using added non-traditional vocal harmony	Major	<i>t d r m f s l</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sentimental song associated with remoteness of village and rare meetings with friends</li> <li>• solfa and composed harmony</li> </ul>

### 6.3.1.1 Strategies used, cultural impact and overall interest in the songs

Although it was a complicated undertaking bringing my various teaching aids: *sape, jatung utang*, keyboard, laptop and assorted Kenyah costumes and arranging for projection and amplification of my presentations, the effort paid off immensely. The children were intrigued by the traditional instruments and costumes, some (the musically confident) were very eager to try their hand at playing the *sape* and *jatung utang*, and many competed to don the Kenyah hats, head-dresses and warrior cloaks. Most had never seen them (except perhaps in photos) before, and many asked me where to purchase them. The video-clips of song and dance in Kenyah villages fascinated them. Perhaps many (40% of the class were of Sarawak indigenous descent, although only one was of Orang Ulu extraction) could identify with a heritage of life in a longhouse environment in rural Sarawak. They were eager to learn the songs, and to sing them in the original language, despite having to put some effort into learning the lyrics. They bombarded me with questions about cultural matters. The following experience during the teaching of one song illustrates this:

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of February, the lesson featured just one song *Ilun Kuai*<sup>15</sup> (*Kuai* is the Kenyah term for the Argus pheasant<sup>16</sup>). I had had immense problems with the school LCD projector the previous week, so I decided to forgo the power point presentation and video-clips that I had prepared. Much time had been wasted trying to set it up resulting in the children becoming bored and restless. I also did not bring traditional instruments because although these had sparked a lot of interest and many children were eager to play, only a few could do so at a time. It was also time-consuming to set up the amplifier for the soft-toned *sape* in a school with a high level of background noise.

<sup>15</sup> Transcription 14, analysis and translation given in Chapter 4.

<sup>16</sup> *Argusianus Argus*, also known as *burung ruai* in Iban.

To capture their interest, I brought one long feather<sup>17</sup> (spectacularly covered with large ‘eye-spots’) and an Iban hat (traditionally decorated with *Argus* feathers). In discussing the context of the song, we were able to connect it with environmental issues, as the *Argus* is a protected species. The lyrics, featuring mystical orphaned *kuai*, and the sad, gentle tune, seemed to strike a chord with the children.



**Plate 37<sup>18</sup>: Argus pheasant males clear dancing rings on the forest floor<sup>19</sup>**



**Plate 38: Baun Bilong with *kuai* feather**

Among the questions they asked me were: “Is the feather real?”, “Is it plastic?”, “Is the bird extinct?”, “How does it clear the dancing ground? (The second verse, ‘*Kuai mekat*’, refers to the male pheasant scraping the ground in preparation for a mating dance), “What does it taste like?” One interesting response was that Joshua, the sole Kelabit<sup>20</sup> child in the class, had eaten the meat of the *Kuai* before and could tell us that it tasted “like wild boar-meat”.

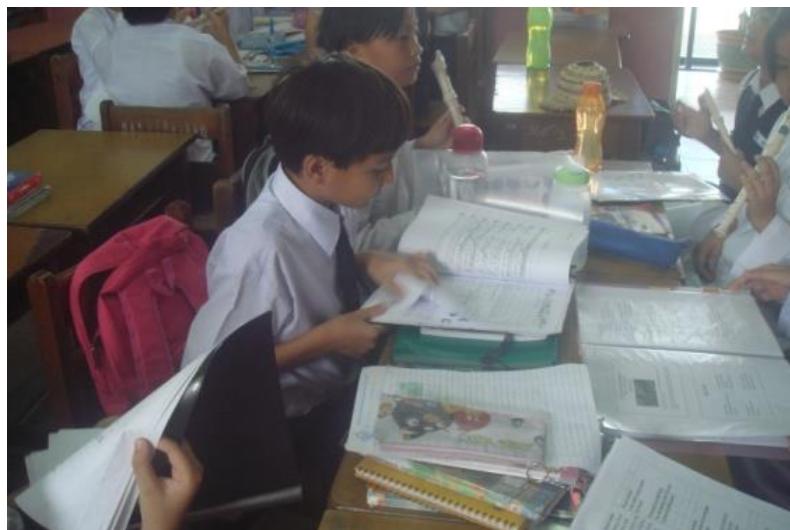
The children learnt to sing the song, first in unison and later in harmony - this was manageable as only the last short phrase was in two parts. Playing the melody with the descant on the recorder helped them to distinguish between the two parts. Later, in groups of seven, they practised two verses each and presented the song with dramatization (and recorder accompaniment) using props I had supplied.

<sup>17</sup> As the Argus pheasant is a rare, protected species, it is very difficult to obtain these feathers.

<sup>18</sup> Photo from Smythies (1968:185, Plate VI).

<sup>19</sup> Argus pheasant males clear dancing rings on the forest floor, removing all leaves, seedlings, and stones. They call from these dancing grounds in the morning, and give a visual display to visiting females by raising and fanning the tail and wings, somewhat like the display of a peacock (Sarawak Forestry Department).

<sup>20</sup> The Kenyah, Kayan, Kelabit and various smaller communities are classed under the category “Orang Ulu”.



**Plate 39: Pupils of SK Ong Tiang Swee practise Kenyah songs in groups**



**Plate 40: Group performance of *Ilun Kuai* and *Sai Ulai***

The winners of the inter-group<sup>21</sup> competition performed a musical, comic dramatization of the following two verses of *Ilun Kuai* followed by *Sai Ulai*:

<b>Lyrics</b>	<b>Translation</b>
1. <i>Kuai maping</i> <i>Mudung suling apau payan</i> <i>Ilun Kuai</i>	Fan-tailed pheasant From the everlasting mountains and plateaus Orphaned pheasant
2. <i>Kuai mekat</i> <i>Lide silat sang usan</i> <i>Ilun kuai</i>	Pheasant scratching The decaying sang leaves Orphaned pheasant

**Movements and harmony:** The class succeeded in learning two songs with movements: *Ateklan* and *Sai Ulai*. They were able to sing simple ostinato for *Sai Ulai* and the short two-part

<sup>21</sup> Group-members: Abang Ain, Mohd. Adib, Wan Mohd Afiq, Annabel Rantie, Christine Nuda, Lyciana Nagi, Rindiani.

harmony phrase in *Ilun Kuai*, but had difficulty with the two-part harmony in *Ateklan*. What I badly needed was the presence of a second demonstrator to lead the other voice (this was achieved by some of the teacher-trainees working in pairs in their schools, as will be related in 6.3.2). Some children reinforced the descant by playing it on the recorder, while the ostinato was supported by *jatung utang* and *sape*.

I was more successful with the school-choir in teaching two-part songs such as *Ateklan* and *Telu Tiang*. The choir was a combination of the more musically-inclined members of 5 Bijak and another class, 4 Bijak. By singing along with video-clips and audio-recordings of ITE Batu Lintang choir, the children were able to master the harmony and better appreciate the tempo and mood of ‘belian dado’.

### **6.3.1.2 Written feedback from R1 (SK Ong Tiang Swee)**

The data was gathered from a questionnaire in two sections (Appendix C, Form B).

The first section (Section A) contained six statements (listed below) to which the students were asked to rate their responses (ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’) using a Likert scale :

- A.1. Kenyah songs have attractive melodies
- A.2. Kenyah song rhythms are suitable for music class activities in school
- A.3. The lyrics of the Kenyah songs are better able to portray local culture than KBSR<sup>22</sup> songs
- A.4. More songs from the different ethnic groups of Malaysia should be included in KBSR books
- A.5. The traditional Kenyah lyrics can be mastered easily by schoolchildren
- A.6. East Malaysian (Sabah and Sarawak) songs should be introduced throughout Malaysia

The second section (Section B) consisted of five open-ended questions:

1. Do you feel that Kenyah songs are suitable for teaching in class/or for performance at school events? Compare them with the composed songs in the existing KBSR (primary-school) and pre-school books.
2. Choose two songs that you particularly like and explain why you like them.
3. What is your opinion on Kenyah traditional multipart-singing, for example, is it easy to learn/are the songs effective as teaching material for harmony<sup>23</sup> in schools?
4. What are your suggestions for instrumental accompaniment?
5. Have you ever been involved in a stage performance of Kenyah songs? Please give details.

#### **Results:**

From the written feedback it was clear that the songs made an impact on the children. From the responses to section A, on a Likert scale of 1–5, there was overwhelming agreement that Kenyah

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<sup>22</sup> KBSR: Integrated Primary School Curriculum.

<sup>23</sup> An unusual feature of Kenyah songs is the presence of two-part harmony, rare in Asian folk music. In Malaysia it is generally considered difficult to teach children to sing in harmony. Yet the Kenyah achieve this effortlessly. It would be interesting to see if the average teacher can teach this two-part harmony in class.

songs had attractive melodies (mean value: 4.58), that more songs from Sabah and Sarawak should be introduced nationwide (mean value: 4.52) and that there should be more songs from the different ethnic groups in school song books (mean value 4.38). Although responses to the other statements were more divided, the majority (mean value 4.19) still agreed that Kenyah lyrics could be mastered easily and that the rhythms (mean value 4.08) were suitable for class music activities.

The only statement which drew a luke-warm response (3.83) was that Kenyah songs compared to KBSR songs could better portray local culture. I credit this to their music teacher, Mdm. Kueh, an unusually resourceful teacher, who has been teaching them a wide variety of songs not in the KBSR books (including both Malay and Chinese songs) which portray the culture of several communities, whereas I only had time to teach songs from one community.

The responses to Section B<sup>24</sup> were more revealing. For children so young (10-11 years), I thought that some of their responses were immensely insightful and telling. They showed a real appreciation of specific characteristics of Kenyah songs.

**Question 1** evoked responses such as:

- (i) *Songs are special compared to others; Something new/Something different*
- (ii) *Through songs we can learn a different language/We can learn Kenyah language*
- (iii) *Yes, we can learn and gain more knowledge*
- (iv) *Yes, the songs are peaceful/Yes, more soothing to the spirit than other KBSR songs.*

The answers revealed an unusual maturity, a realisation on their part that the musical content of the songs was different from the composed KBSR songs, and that the textual content was more substantial.

**Question 2** entailed choosing their two favourite songs. Their choices are tallied in table 6.5:

**Table 6.3 Songs in order of popularity**

Title of song	Number of votes
Ateklan	29
Ilun Kuai	20
Sai Ulai	11
Telu Tiang (only taught to the choir)	9

The reasons given for liking the song chosen, partially coded into several categories, include:

- (i) *Attractive melody/like the tune /entertaining/enjoyable:* 10 responses
- (ii) *Relaxes me/Calms me/song is peaceful/very soothing:* 12 responses
- (iii) *Soft tone/gentle tone/sweet voice/sounds acoustic:* 4 responses
- (iv) *Lyrics beautiful and sweet:* 4 responses
- (v) *Like rhythm:* 3 responses
- (vi) *Inspires me:* 1 response
- (vii) *Has dance movement:* 1 response
- (viii) *Has descant (suara tinggi):* 1 response
- (ix) *Ateklan reminds me of my family:* 1 response

<sup>24</sup> The questionnaire was prepared in Malay, but most preferred to answer in English. Responses in Malay have been translated into English.

Category (i) speaks favourably for the melodic appeal of the songs, while responses in categories (ii) and (iii) showed a genuine appreciation of distinctive characteristics of Kenyah music, and together with (iv) aptly describe the nostalgic *belian dado' Ateklan, Ilun Kuai* and *Telu Tiang*. The recognition of the same characteristics is echoed in response (iv) to Question 1 (previous page) in the comparison of Kenyah songs to KBSR songs. Response (ix) came from Joshua, of Kelabit/Kerayan<sup>25</sup> descent, the only Orang Ulu child in the class, showing a deeper appreciation in association with his own culture.

The fact that *Ateklan* and *Ilun Kuai* were preferred over *Sai Ulai* demonstrates that these more challenging, sentimental songs were better appreciated than the latter, straightforward, jolly song. This would have been food for thought for my students, as during practicum, *Sai Ulai*, its twin song *Pui Ngeleput* and *Det Diet* (which has similar characteristics) were the most frequently taught songs (see 6.3.2).

**The response to question 3** (concerning their opinion on the difficulties and benefits of learning to sing traditional Kenyah harmony) surprised me. I had expected most of them to answer that it was difficult, as I had found it a real struggle teaching *Ateklan* in two parts to them. Instead, the majority replied that learning to sing in harmony was easy. Perhaps this was because most were able to sing *Ilun Kuai* (where only the last phrase was in harmony) in two parts, or that many were choir-members, who, with their more intensive training, succeeded in mastering *Ateklan* and *Telu Tiang*.

Most of the answers fell into category (i) below:

- (i) *Yes, easy to learn/Quite easy to learn /Yes, definitely should be taught in school:* 24 responses

However, the most insightful answers came from 7 students, who appreciated that while harmony may be challenging initially, it was achievable and worthwhile learning (category ii).

- (ii) *Yes, with training or effort/Yes, if we keep practising/Difficult at first but easy after practising/Easy if we are interested:* 7 responses.

**Question 4** (*suggestions for instrumental accompaniment*): This question was asked because of the dilemma of choosing suitable instrumental accompaniment for the songs. Kenyah songs are traditionally performed *a capella*, but in the classroom and in stage-performance, instrumental accompaniment is often vital. It will be discussed further in 6.5.1 together with the responses from the other 10 schools.

**Summary and discussion:** The children demonstrated their adaptability in mastering songs in an unfamiliar language within a short period. This achievement supports the premise that Kenyah, being an Austronesian language, is fairly easily learnt by Malaysian children. There was no sign of racial bias. Although the class constituted a balanced mixture of six different races, everyone seemed keen to sing the songs and learn about Kenyah culture. Musical concepts such as solfa were inculcated easily through the pentatonic songs *Sai Ulai, Ilun Kuai* and *Ilun Pesak Pakui*. The answers to the

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<sup>25</sup> His awareness of and pride in his mixed descent was shared by several other classmates, who revealed themselves as Iban/Kayan, Chinese/Bidayuh, Malay/Chinese/Indian.

questions in Section B showed real appreciation of the characteristics of Kenyah songs. A significant response was the realisation that they were able to master multipart-singing after a period of perseverance.

The above interpretations are now viewed in the light of recent investigations into aesthetic emotion and aesthetic judgements, particularly among children.

#### **Aesthetic emotion, aesthetic judgment and ‘beauty’ in music (in the context of the above questionnaire):**

Since the first investigations into aesthetic judgments by Fechner (1876), studies in experimental aesthetics have focused mainly on responses to visual art. Only very recently has attention turned to aesthetic experiences in music. In a review of recent studies in this area, Nieminen et al. (2011:1138-1146) discuss psychological and neural mechanisms that are believed to contribute to the development of aesthetic experiences of music. In the investigation of the connection between aesthetic pleasure and types of stimuli, variables such as complexity, familiarity and predictability of stimuli have been investigated in the field of visual arts. Some influential theories and possible implications for music are discussed below.

Berlyne (1971) suggested that positive aesthetic emotions (pleasure, enjoyment) are most elicited by stimuli with “medium arousal potential”. Reber et al. (2004) suggested that aesthetic pleasure emerges from fluent stimulus processing (governed by the person’s familiarity and implicit knowledge of stimulus-governing rules). Extrapolating this to the field of school music, songs of medium complexity and which are somewhat similar in structure to music they are familiar with, would be expected to appeal to schoolchildren. The complexity of a song (borrowing an example from Balkwill and Thompson [1999:51], who wrote a research paper investigating cross-cultural perception of emotion in music) could be viewed, for instance, on a scale of 1-9, with *Mary had a little lamb* given a rating of ‘1’, and an Italian operatic aria a ‘9’. I would place many of the songs in the *belian dado*’ repertoire in the “medium complexity” range of 3-6, and some of the other songs (songs related to instrumental music, and children’s songs) in a range of 2-5. As the aforementioned songs have a recurring, metric rhythm, and the tone-sets are mainly subsets of major and minor scales with which the children are familiar, they could be expected to elicit “fluent stimulus processing” in line with the model by Reber et al. (2004).

Hargreaves (1984) suggested an inverted U-curve model (later supported by data in Hargreaves and Castell, 1987) for the relationship between familiarity and liking a piece of music. This implies that people initially dislike completely novel objects, but develop a liking for them as they become more familiar, until reaching a peak at some optimum familiarity level, after which there is a decline in liking with increased familiarity. In the context of the songs taught in Malaysian schools, much of the existing repertoire comprises composed songs with tonal and rhythmic patterns similar to (as described by Chan, 2001) those of Western nursery songs, and having predictable chordal patterns such as I V IV V I. This large number of songs with almost identical musical elements would be expected to contribute to a ‘decline in liking’.

The thrust of my investigation in my research in schools concerned the response of schoolchildren to the songs, in particular their aesthetic perceptions of the songs. The data collected was valuable, in particular in the descriptions of their two songs which they ‘particularly liked’. Although a person’s ‘favourite song’ may arguably vary from day to day, this question was designed to elicit from the respondents the characteristics of songs which rendered them attractive. The overall analysis served to indicate which types of songs and which specific characteristics appealed to the majority of the respondents. The sincerity of their responses could be judged from the adjectives that they used, such as “attractive” or “pretty” tunes, “*hao ting*” (Chinese, literally ‘pleasing to hear’) “enjoyable”, “soothing” and “peaceful”.

According to Nieminen et al. (2011:1143), the concept of beauty, central in aesthetics and a fundamental criterion for aesthetic judgments in music (Istók et al., 2009) is difficult to define, often considered to be in the eye of the beholder, and has not been extensively investigated in empirical aesthetics or neuroaesthetics. They consider beauty judgment to be “discernible from aesthetic emotion (such as enjoyment or awe) because it is more objective in nature and includes voluntary decision making processes based on predefined culture-specific or even universal criteria”. Based on research involving children aged 6-9 years, they found that the adjective ‘beautiful’ is used often in judging music and propose that the concept of beauty in music seems to emerge around the age of 6 years in association with the formation of culture-specific knowledge of tonality. This finding is consistent with my observations during the 2011 research in schools, where children between 8-10 years often used the adjectives ‘pretty’ and ‘beautiful’ in describing melodies.

Significant findings in the development of music cognition in children include the following: By the age of 5-6 years, children can detect mode changes in music (Costa-Gomi, 1996; Nieminen et al., submitted for publication), and judge tonal music as ‘prettier’ than atonal (Zenatti, 1991). The neural bases for this development are beginning to be studied by neuro-imaging methods, e.g. specific parts of the right cerebral hemispheres in 10-year-olds were activated by violations of harmony and tonality (Koelsch et al., 2006).

## 6.3.2 Introducing the Songs to Other Schools

The songs were also taught to children at six different Chinese schools by ten teacher-trainees during their 12-week practicum from February until April 2011. Data collected from these schools, and responses to the written questionnaire from four Malay medium schools taught by serving teachers, is discussed in the following sections.

### 6.3.2.1 Mid-term review

At the end of the sixth week of the practicum, I met with the trainees for a mid-term review. They shared their experiences in an informal group discussion and in written responses (see questionnaire in Appendix C). Besides showing trends common to many schools, this review helped us to formulate new teaching strategies, and gave me a glimpse of what was happening in the schools to which I was not officially assigned as a practicum supervisor<sup>26</sup>.

One observation was rather disturbing. In all the 10 classes involved (comprising children ranging in age from 8 to 10 years), over 90% of the pupils said they had never heard of the Kenyah, and were unable to name the different indigenous groups of Sarawak, with the exception of the Iban<sup>27</sup>. The teacher for P2, Teo Lei Teng, wrote<sup>28</sup>:

*The songs are an important part of local culture which should be bequeathed to the future generations. Incidentally, only three out of thirty children in the class I teach were aware of the existence of the Kenyah community, and two of the three were of mixed descent (Chinese-Kayan and Iban-Chinese).*

Most of them reported that they introduced the Kenyah community to their pupils by showing pictures and video-clips. When relating the children's reactions to the first Kenyah song each of them taught, a spectrum of responses emerged:

P1 (Yik Kang): "A few students of Chinese descent showed interest while those of mixed descent showed great interest". This led to a change of strategy: "I tried to talk about importance of other cultures".

P2 (Lei Teng), *Pui Ngeleput*: "... interested and were happy to sing again and again ... enjoyed the song ... took half-an hour to learn to sing the song in simple harmony with ostinato ... could sing Kenyah lyrics but had difficulty memorizing."

P3 (Phyllis), *Pui Ngeleput*: "... interested and curious about culture ... found the melody appealing; amused at lyrics ... learnt the song in 1 hour ... enjoyed singing very much".

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<sup>26</sup> Of the 6 schools, I was assigned as official supervisor for P1 and P5, to which I paid frequent visits. I visited and video-recorded sessions at two other schools later, after the official evaluations by other lecturers had been completed.

<sup>27</sup> The Iban are the largest single ethnic group in Sarawak, slightly more numerous than the Chinese.

<sup>28</sup> This, along with other responses from several other teacher-trainees, was written in Malay, while responses from schoolchildren were often in Chinese. Only the translated versions are given here; the original versions are still in my possession. Responses in English are reproduced verbatim.

SK Chung Hua Batu<sup>29</sup> 4 ½, Year 4 (Tiffany) *Sai Ulai*: “Listened with full attention ... they were keen to find out the meaning of the lyrics ... took 1 hour to learn ... enjoyed singing in solfa but had to struggle with Kenyah lyrics.”

P5a (Chak Leong), *Hip Balip*: “Some boys were bored as they thought the melody too sentimental; Some girls expressed a liking for the tunes. Most did not feel inclined to learn the Kenyah lyrics. One child remarked ... *Eee, Malay song!*”

This last reaction<sup>30</sup> spurred Chak Leong to change his strategy: he translated some of the songs into Chinese. The above responses from P5a came from pupils in the first class (many of whom displayed little musical aptitude) assigned to Chak Leong. One of my most musically gifted students, he was becoming increasingly frustrated at their lack of appreciation of his efforts. Subsequently, at my request, he was reassigned<sup>31</sup> to another class, P5b. This class had a higher level of musical ability and proved very receptive to the songs and to almost any other repertoire that he introduced to them.

One cogent point which emerged was that strategies such as showing video-clips and pictures alone may not be enough to motivate children to learn songs with unfamiliar lyrics. One successful approach was related by Phyllis (P3): “I taught them to make manila-card versions of Kenyah headwear, which they later wore whenever they sang the songs”.

After the review, several trainees made the effort to borrow *sape* and *jatung utang* (from our collection in the college music room) and to the delight of their students utilised them in class while teaching the songs. As a result, interest in the songs undoubtedly increased; besides, the instruments were useful in conveying musical concepts such as solfa (discussed in 6.4).



**Plate 41: Chain Wee Tat teaching *Sai Ulai* with solfa using the *sape* in accompaniment at SK Chung Hua Batu 4½, April 2011**

<sup>29</sup> This school was not listed in Table 6.1 because the trainees involved did not submit complete data.

<sup>30</sup> An unfortunate but not uncommon attitude among the Chinese toward the Malay language being imposed on them. Kenyah, being an Austronesian language, was initially mistaken as Malay.

<sup>31</sup> This constituted a mutual exchange with another, less musical trainee, who was clearly relieved to forgo the latter class, as their musical ability clearly surpassed her own.



**Plate 42: Year 4 pupils at SK Chung Hua Stapok playing *jatung utang*, March 2011**

### **6.3.2.2 Quantitative analysis of written responses**

#### **Analysis of Section A**

The mean values of responses to Section A from 11 schools are shown in Table 6.4. For four samples (P1, P2, P3, P4), the trainees involved also administered the questionnaires before they taught the songs. These ‘pre-learning’ values (designated as ‘Pre’) compared to ‘post-learning’ values (designated as ‘Post’) provide an indication of how opinions changed after learning the songs.

**Table 6.4: Responses to questionnaires from 11 schools (2011–2012)**

	Teacher		Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6
	<b>Chinese medium schools</b>							
P1	Lee Yik Kang	Pre	2.97	2.95	3.39	3.45	3.24	4.08
		Post	4.4	4.08	4.17	3.89	3.94	4.29
P2	Teo Lei Teng	Pre	4.26	4.04	3.46	4.65	3.04	4.56
		Post	4.64	3.81	3.96	4.08	3.58	4.75
P3	Phyllis Thiang	Pre	3.00	3.00	3.00	4.20	3.25	4.25
		Post	4.22	4.25	3.94	4.64	4.52	4.75
P4	Yong Shiau Gin	Pre	1.03	1.05	1.00	3.44	1.61	2.78
		Post	4.32	3.62	4.08	4.41	4.08	4.23
P5b	Kong Chak Leong	Post	4.56	4.35	4.74	4.67	4.46	4.65
P6	Elhanne Chua	Post	4.22	4.05	4.53	4.37	4.26	4.18
<b>Mean (post)value for Chinese medium</b>			<b>4.39</b>	<b>4.03</b>	<b>4.24</b>	<b>4.35</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>4.48</b>
	<b>Malay medium schools</b>							
R1	Chong Pek Lin	Post	4.58	4.08	3.83	4.38	4.19	4.74
R2	Desmond Anak Ikal	Post	4.18	4.06	4.76	4.88	4.12	5.00
R3	Stanley Neddy Anak Nangoi	Post	4.93	3.8	3.8	4.73	4.10	4.43
R4	Herwandy Nordin	Post	4.65	3.65	3.55	3.9	2.5	4.0
R5	Haslina Padiel	Post	4.55	4.55	4.32	4.77	4.36	4.76
<b>Mean value for Malay medium</b>			<b>4.57</b>	<b>4.03</b>	<b>4.05</b>	<b>4.53</b>	<b>3.85</b>	<b>4.59</b>
<b>Mean value for all 11 schools</b>			<b>4.47</b>	<b>4.03</b>	<b>4.15</b>	<b>4.43</b>	<b>4.01</b>	<b>4.53</b>

The mean values of scores for each item were then compared and ranked for each of the categories of schools.

**Table 6.5 Ranking responses to Section A**

	Statement	Mean values (Ranking of statements in brackets)					
		Pre-learning & Post-learning		Post-learning values only			
		4 Chinese schools		Ratio b/a <sup>32</sup>	All 11 schools	6 Chinese medium schools	5 Malay medium schools
		a) Pre	b) Post				
1	Kenyah songs have attractive melodies	2.81(4)	4.40 (2)	1.57(1)	4.47 (2)	4.39 (2)	4.57 (2)
2	Kenyah song rhythms are suitable for music class activities in school	2.76 (5)	3.94(6)	1.43 (3)	4.03 (5) <b>4.03(6)*</b>	4.03 (6)	4.03 (5) <b>4.03(6)*</b>
3	The lyrics of the Kenyah songs are better able to portray local culture than KBSR songs	2.71(6)	4.03(4)	1.49 (2)	4.15 (4) <b>4.15(5)*</b>	4.24 (4)	4.05 (4) <b>4.05(5)*</b>
4	More songs from the different ethnic groups of Malaysia should be included in KBSR books	3.93 (1)	4.27 (3)	1.09(6)	4.43 (3)	4.35(3)	4.53 (3)
5	The traditional Kenyah lyrics can be mastered easily by schoolchildren	2.82 (3)	4.03(5)	1.43 (3)	4.01(6) <b>4.16(4)*</b>	4.14(5)	3.85 (6) <b>4.19(4)*</b>
6	Sabah and Sarawak songs should be introduced throughout Malaysia	3.92 (2)	4.51(1)	1.15 (5)	4.53 (1)	4.48(1)	4.59 (1)

\*disregarding the unusually low value of 2.5 from R4 for statement 5

#### Overall conclusions based on mean values of responses

The level of agreement with all 6 statements after being taught the songs was high (Mean values for all 11 schools ranged from 4.01 to 4.53). Comparing responses to the 6 statements, the score was highest for statement 6 (4.53), that Sabah and Sarawak songs should be introduced throughout the country. The score for statement 1 (Kenyah songs have attractive melodies) was the second highest among both students in the Malay medium schools (4.57) as well as in the Chinese medium schools (4.39). Overall, the mean value for this statement was 4.47, only marginally less than the value for statement 6. Ranking the statements in order of decreasing score yields the sequence: 6, 1, 4, 3, 2, 5.

However even before exposure to the songs, most students in schools P1–P4 were already in agreement with statement 6 (in these 4 schools, a pre-treatment survey was carried out, administering the questionnaire before the songs were taught). Comparing values in these schools before and after

<sup>32</sup> b/a = ‘Post-learning’ value divided by ‘Pre-learning’ value.

the learning period, there was a very significant increase in level of agreements with four of the statements (1, 2, 3 and 5). The most dramatic change in opinions after learning the songs was in response to statement 1 (from 2.81 to 4.40, ratio b/a: 1.57). Although the level of agreement to statement 6 was higher, this did not change much from the pre-learning value (ratio b/a: 1.15). Thus (assuming that students in the other schools would also be inclined to support statement 6 beforehand), the most striking finding was that, after learning the songs, students in all schools found Kenyah melodies appealing.

Familiarity with the songs also yielded a considerably higher post-learning value (4.03) versus the pre-learning value (2.71), for statement 3, that Kenyah song lyrics portrayed local culture better than KBSR songs (ratio b/a :1.49).

The mean value for statement 5, that Kenyah lyrics could be mastered easily, was the lowest overall (4.01), but the post-learning value for P1–P4 (4.03) showed a significant increase in level of agreement (ratio b/a :1.43) compared to the pre-learning value of 2.82. Surprisingly, the mean value for the response to this statement from the six Chinese medium schools was considerably higher (4.14) than that for the five Malay medium schools (3.85). Yet the latter, comprising children from mainly Austronesian language background would have been expected to find it easier to master Kenyah lyrics. The low value for the Malay medium schools could be traced to R4 (Nanga Sama), a school with an all-Iban population, which contributed an unusually low value of 2.5. Incidentally, this was the only class taught by a teacher who was not a former member of the college choir. Even though the teacher in question may be capable, a lack of familiarity with the songs on his part may have influenced the effectiveness of the transmission process. Disregarding the value from this school, scores from the other four Malay medium schools yield a mean value of 4.19, marginally higher than that of the Chinese medium schools. The adjusted values are given in bold (marked by an asterisk\*).

Using the adjusted value mentioned in the preceding paragraph for statement 5, a rough comparison of values for all statements shows slight differences between the mean values for the Chinese medium schools versus the Malay medium schools. A significant observation is that the order of ranking of the statements is strikingly similar. For Chinese medium schools, the ranking in order of decreasing scores is: 6, 1, 4, 3, 5, 2 compared to: 6, 1, 4, 5, 3, 2 for Malay medium schools. Adjusting for R4, the overall ranking for all 11 schools modifies to: 6, 1, 4, 5, 3, 2 (the same as for the Malay medium schools).

Based on these results, it could be surmised that children from a variety of schools generally agree with all six statements, but demonstrate that they are strongly in favour of statements 1, 4 and 6. Thus, the children in these 11 schools strongly agree that Kenyah songs have attractive melodies and strongly support the introduction of songs from different ethnic groups, especially songs from Sabah and Sarawak in schools throughout Malaysia.

Admittedly, these conclusions are gleaned from written responses given by very young children. However, the conclusions are also triangulated with other data. As was the case with R1, the children's answers to Section B revealed their appreciation for the songs at a deeper level (discussed

in 6.3.2.3). In addition, the observation of class-teaching and feedback from trainee-teachers provided further insights into the children's perceptions of the songs and the effectiveness of specific teaching strategies. In 6.8.1, comparisons will be made with responses to the same questionnaire by adult participants and facilitators involved in dissemination projects.

### 6.3.2.3 Analysis of responses to Section B, Questions 1 and 2

The responses to section B from all 11 schools were analysed by coding them into various categories. The categories have been changed slightly (from those in 6.3.1.2) in order to fit the different nature of the responses. To reduce the number of categories, "attractive rhythm" has been merged with category 1 "attractive melody" and "soft/gentle tone" absorbed into category 3 "soothing/peaceful". By tallying the number of responses according to these categories<sup>33</sup>, some interesting trends emerge.

**Table 6.6 Coding of responses in Section B, Questions 1 and 2**

		Wording of responses
1	Attractive melody	<i>like the tune; interesting melody; very sweet melody; very pleasing to the ears; very attractive rhythm; very attractive melody; very good tune; nice tune/ pretty tune ("hao ting" in Chinese, literally "good listening")</i>
2	Enjoyable	<i>enjoyable; entertaining; very enjoyable; makes me happy; gladdens my heart; alleviates my boredom</i>
3	Soothing/peaceful	<i>soothes my heart; soothes me; calms my thoughts; peaceful; gentle melody</i>
4	Movements	<i>like the movements</i>
5	Harmony	<i>has a descant; chance to learn two-part song</i>
6	Lyrics	<i>lyrics very interesting; new language; very meaningful</i>
7	Easy	<i>easy to sing; easy to memorize; short melodies</i>

### Some significant responses to Questions 1 and 2

P5b: *Very special and we can learn about another culture*  
*More interesting than Chinese songs*

P6: *I can sing, dance and pronounce the words*

Q2: *The music calms my thoughts*  
*The music alleviates my boredom*

Q3: *Rich with culture*

Q5: *I like the song because the lyrics have moral values (referring to Burung Kechin)*  
*Lyrics difficult to master ... not suitable for Iban culture.*

Responses from P5b and Q3 show genuine appreciation of the songs and lack of bias toward another culture. However, the second statement from Q5, an all-Iban school (given in answer to the

<sup>33</sup> There is, admittedly, some ambiguity in deciding whether certain responses would fit into categories 1, 2 or 3, as they are all concerned with the perceived qualities of melodies. However, I consider category 1 as a cognitive response, whereas categories 2 and 3 are affective responses.

question whether Kenyah songs were suitable for performance in school events), may indicate the existence of cultural chauvinism. P6 displays the satisfaction gained from being able to perform despite initial difficulties. The two statements from Q2 display the recognition of the emotional effect of the melodies and the first statement from Q5 shows appreciation of the lyrics.

The coded responses to questions 1 and 2, the names of the songs according to popularity and the songs which I actually observed being taught are summarised in Table 6.7.

**Table 6.7 Responses to Section B Questions 1 and 2 according to coded responses**

School	Favourite songs in order of popularity	Teaching Strategies	Reasons for liking the songs					
			Attractive melody	Enjoyable	Soothing peaceful	Associated Movements	Harmony	Interesting lyrics/new language
P1	<i>Kun Nelan-e</i> (31) <i>Sun Suma</i> (25) <i>Det Diet</i> (8) <i>Telu Tiang</i> (4)	solfa, traditional movements <i>jatung utang</i> accompaniment	6	6	2			1
P2	<i>Det Diet</i> (20) <i>Pui Ngeleput</i> (20) <i>Hip Balip</i> (18)	two-part harmony, solfa, inner-hearing ; translation to Chinese	10	8				
P4	<i>Det Diet</i> (21) <i>Pui Ngeleput</i> (16) <i>Sai Ulai</i> (15) <i>Nombor Satu</i> (13) <i>Hip Balip</i> (11)	solfa, dance, ostinato						
P5b	<i>Telu Tiang</i> (32) <i>Pui Ngeleput</i> (23) <i>Ateklan</i> (16)	two-part harmony, ostinato	13				16	1
P6	<i>Pui Ngeleput</i> (35) <i>Sai Ulai</i> (29) <i>Det Diet</i> (18)	Ostinato	27			13		
<b>Total for Chinese medium schools</b>			<b>56</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>
R1	<i>Ateklan</i> (29) <i>Ilun Kuai</i> (20) <i>Sai Ulai</i> (11) <i>Telu Tiang</i> (9)	two-part harmony, traditional movements, <i>jatung utang</i> , <i>sape</i> and recorder accompaniment	13	4	16	1	1	4
R2	<i>Det Diet</i> (17) <i>Liling</i> (17)	Ostinato	1	16	1			13
R3	<i>Det Diet</i> (15) <i>Burung Kechin</i> (12) <i>Hip Balip</i> (2)	<i>sape</i> accompaniment	5			1		2
R4	<i>Burung Kechin</i> (15) <i>Hip Balip</i> (13) <i>Liling</i> (2)	singing in unison	6					5
R5	<i>Tai Uyau Along</i> (18) <i>Cap Apek</i> (17) <i>Det Diet</i> (8)	singing in unison	3	10	1			4
<b>Total for Malay medium schools</b>			<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Total for 10<sup>34</sup> schools</b>			<b>84</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>
								<b>23</b>

The most frequent reason (84 responses) given for liking a song is undoubtedly “attractive melody”, substantiating the findings from Section A (question 1), and confirming the intrinsic

<sup>34</sup> P3 and P4 not included here as children from P3 did not answer this question; those from P4 did not give reasons.

aesthetic appeal of Kenyah melodies. In addition, many (44) agreed that the songs were enjoyable. A considerable number thought the songs easy to sing/remember (23) and that the songs were calming and peaceful (20). In contrast to the responses<sup>35</sup> from R1 alone, more children thought the songs “enjoyable” than “soothing and peaceful”. This may be attributed to the repertoire chosen by the teachers. The majority voted for the light-hearted, shorter songs taught at most of the schools: *Sai Ulai*, *Pui Ngeleput*<sup>36</sup>, *Det Diet*<sup>37</sup>, *Hip Balip*, *Burung Kechin*<sup>38</sup>, *Tai Uyau Along*<sup>39</sup> and *Cap Apek*<sup>40</sup>. The slower, sentimental songs such as *Kun Nelan-e*<sup>41</sup>, *Ilun Kuai*, *Ateklan*, *Lane Tuyang*<sup>42</sup> and *Telu Tiang* were only taught at a few schools (P1, P2, P5, and R1). It is significant that for P1, P5 and R1, the most popular songs were these sentimental *belian dado*'. Despite being fond of these songs themselves, the other trainees were hesitant to teach them, perceiving them as being too challenging for their young charges.

However, from my experience in R1, and my observations of P1 and P5, the children not only learnt the melodies and memorised the lyrics, they sang these nostalgic songs with nuance and sensitivity. I was particularly impressed with the excellent rendition of *Kun Nelan-e* by P1, as this slow, melancholic song consists of long phrases that I did not envision young children would appreciate, or strive to memorize in an unfamiliar language. The teacher-trainee concerned, Lee Yik Kang, related that it took him 2 hours to teach them the song.

Describing their reactions to the first song he taught (*Telu Tiang*), Yik Kang recalled that almost half of the class had struggled to pronounce the lyrics, but they persevered because they were “so interested in the song” after he had sung it to them .Yik Kang has a resonant bass voice, and had performed the song as a soloist in our college musical drama, thus his talent and deep acquaintance with the songs were probably major factors in motivating the children.

In reply to the question on the suitability of the songs in school, trainee Teo Lei Teng responded:

*The song books used by the school contain ... a sprinkling of common Malay folksongs like Rasa Sayang and Lenggang Kangkong. These songs are generally rather long with complicated lyrics, whereas many Kenyah songs are shorter and useful for teaching solfa quickly.*

*However, the children still have difficulty with memorisation of the lyrics, even though I explain the meaning to them, some children will forget by the following week. Thus appreciation of the songs could not be achieved 100%.*

When asked to describe two of their own favourite songs, both Lei Teng and Yik Kang chose songs with contrasting moods:

<sup>35</sup> Discussed in 6.3.1.2.

<sup>36</sup> Transcription 31, Chapter 4.

<sup>37</sup> Transcription 5, Chapter 3.

<sup>38</sup> Transcription 12, Chapter4.

<sup>39</sup> Transcription 41, Chapter 4.

<sup>40</sup> Transcription 43, Chapter 4.

<sup>41</sup> Transcription 24, Chapter 4.

<sup>42</sup> Transcription 22, Chapter 4.

*Taroi*: “I like the melody as it conjures up images of the Kenyah community living in the interior surrounded by mountains and *Det Diet*: a lively melody, with a rhythm which makes me move and nod my head with the beat” (Teo Lei Teng).

*Sun Suma*: “A light song with movements well-suited to the rhythm ... and *Kun Nelan-e*: a song which can express my feelings when I am sad ” (Lee Yik Kang).

#### 6.3.2.4 Analysis of responses to Section B, Questions 3 and 4

Questions 3 and 4 revolve around the children’s opinions on traditional Kenyah harmony and what they consider to be a suitable instrument to accompany the songs. The responses from all 11 schools are summarised in Table 6.8. and Table 6.9. Before discussing these, however, the rationale for the inclusion of these two issues is presented in sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.2.

**Table 6.8 Analysis of Section B Question 3 according to coded responses**

Class	Teacher	Harmony in Kenyah songs				
		Easy to learn	Difficult/quite challenging	Easy with training	Harmony is beautiful	Effective
P1	Lee Yik Kang	15	10	-	-	-
P2	Teo Lei Teng	12	1	-	-	-
P5	Kong Chak Leong	21	-	-	7	-
P6	Elhanne Chua	15	8	-	-	-
R1	Chong Pek Lin	24	-	7	1	-
R3	Stanley Anak Neddy Nangoi	9	9	-	-	-
R4	Herwandy Bin Nordin	1	7	-	4	-
R5	Haslina Bt. Padiel	-	-	-	-	22
<b>Total</b>		<b>97</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>22</b>

#### 6.4 USING *BELIAN DADO’* TO TEACH HARMONY

The characteristics of harmony in Kenyah music have been discussed in Chapter 4 and 5. This traditional harmony constitutes a unique feature on the world music scene and its potential to enhance music education has yet to be fully harnessed. In many *belian dado’*, the descant or ‘second voice’ in each multipart song constitutes a distinct and attractive melody in itself. The songs thus constitute attractive introductory material for singing in harmony.

Although *belian dado’* harmonies have been introduced to my students since 1998 during music class and choir ensemble projects, few have utilized them during teaching practice. The approaches they used in the classroom were in accordance with the present curriculum where homophonic choral singing is only introduced at a late stage. As trainees were posted for only short stints (8–12 weeks) in primary schools where pupils were previously not taught to sing in solfa (most resident music teachers in schools are not trained for this aspect), they were hesitant to teach songs with intricate tonal patterns. They also had to demonstrate to lecturers evaluating them that they were able to teach basic musical concepts, and to be able to achieve their goals within the given time-frame

of  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 hour. Not surprisingly, most concentrated on what they perceived as easily achievable objectives, using children's songs and songs associated with instrumental tunes, such as *Sai Ulai* and *Det Diet*, in which harmony was taught using *bordun* and *ostinato*.

Yet, at dissemination workshops with schoolchildren<sup>43</sup>, teams of student demonstrators have successfully taught songs such as *Lan-e Tuyang* in two-part harmony within twenty minutes. The presence of multiple demonstrators is a good simulation of the longhouse setting, where an individual naturally picks up part-singing when surrounded by groups of people already singing in harmony. Applying this premise, a useful strategy would be to arrange for multiple instructors to be present for several sessions in the classroom to catalyse the process. These instructors could be recruited from a group of more talented students who are taught the songs out of school-hours. Another way would be to seek the cooperation of at least one more teacher. Pair-teaching is a productive strategy encouraged during teaching practicum but seldom implemented in the schools.

During the 2011 practicum, pairs of trainees, working together at P1, P2, P5 and SK Chung Hua Batu 4½ succeeded in teaching *Ateklan*, *Lane Tuyang*, and *Telu Tiang* in two-part harmony. Lee Yik Kang (P1) related his experiences as follows:

*Kenyah harmonies are easy to learn and are effective as teaching materials for the concept of harmony. One example is the song Ateklan, which the children picked up fast, mastering the harmonies within three practices ... I sought the assistance of a fellow trainee-teacher. Firstly, we sang in two parts. Then we taught them the lyrics, concentrating on the pronunciation. After that we divided the class into two groups, and taught each group one of the parts, with the help of keyboard accompaniment. I taught (one group the descant) phrase by phrase. 70% of the children were able to sing (one of the two voices) in two-part harmony.*

Outside the classroom, some have succeeded in teaching their school choirs to perform the songs in two-part harmony for choir competitions. Former student and choir-member Melrance Chris Anak Louis, teaching in the Baram since 2006, was the first to report back, proving his success by giving me a recording of a recent performance by his students (where they sang *belian dado'* in two parts, with dance-movements).

Referring to Table 6.9, 56% of those who responded to question 4 agreed that it was easy to learn the harmony in Kenyah songs, only 20% thought it difficult/rather difficult, while six students suggested that it was "easy with training". Further (although not asked specifically) a significant number also volunteered the descriptor "beautiful" (*cantik*) to describe the harmony, showing their appreciation of its aesthetic value. Thus, even though most have never sung in harmony before, a majority consider Kenyah multipart singing to be achievable, if rather challenging, and a considerable number recognise its inherent beauty.

The likelihood of early conditioning playing a crucial role in the development of musical skills such as singing in harmony was acknowledged by two Batu Lintang students who served as facilitators for dissemination projects in 2008–2009, then studied abroad in New Zealand<sup>44</sup> in 2010 –

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<sup>43</sup> Held in Miri and Kuching (2006) and in Lubok Antu, Miri, Bintulu, Kuching and Belaga (2007–2009). See Plate 36.

<sup>44</sup> In a twinning program between Batu Lintang and Otago University (B. Ed TESL degree).

2011. In the following excerpts from their reflections, they refer to the similarity between the Pacific islanders<sup>45</sup> and Kenyah in their ability to harmonise:

*I believe harmony is a beautiful and natural way of enriching the songs ... would be nice if teachers are able to teach it! Here, I realise the Pacific Islanders harmonize effortlessly as well. I would have liked to have been exposed to it more at a younger age ... [Grace Tan Huimin].*

*The Pacific islanders here in New Zealand like Maori, Samoa, etc., they are really good in harmony. I am guessing that they are exposed to it since their childhood. So I am not surprised that many of them can sing very well and do the harmony voice ... [Nicholas Nyelang Anak Jalin].*

## 6.5 OTHER SPECIFIC APPLICATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS FOR CLASSROOM TEACHING

In Chapter 4, many songs were analysed and specific pedagogical applications suggested for different categories of song. The songs were found to be very amenable to a Kodály approach, because of their tonality, melodic and rhythmic appeal, as well as meaningful text and rich cultural significance. The following discussions will review specific strategies which were attempted in classroom contexts for selected musical elements.

### 6.5.1 Applying Kodály and Orff Strategies in the Classroom

**Kodály and Orff methods:** Many pentatonic songs fit well into the elementary stages of a Kodály program, specifically singing in solfa and the use of pentatonic ostinato. In fact, in the context of the dire shortage of songs in non-diatonic scales in the KBSR song books (Table 1.2), my students had very few suitable songs to use when applying the Kodály method. Thus Kenyah songs were used often, more out of necessity than whim of choice.

The Orff method was also reflected in the use of traditional themes and movements. Many of my students incorporated bordun, drone and ostinato accompaniments (employing voice, recorder, *sape* and *jatung utang*). Songs such as *Pui Ngeleput*, *Det Diet Tapung Kitan* and *Sai Ulai* were successfully used (see Table 6.8 for the tally of the most popular songs). These songs were especially suitable as in the traditional context, the accompanying second *sape* actually plays an ostinato, such as *d d s.*

Some of the successful sessions which I observed are described below. Chain Wee Tat, in SK Chung Hua Batu 4½ (Plate 41), employed solfa and rhythm names, Kodály style, to teach the melody for the song *Sai Ulai*, then played the *sape* with ostinato accompaniment while the children sang the melody, and vice versa. At P2, Teo Lei Teng introduced the song *Tai Uyau Along*, employing the Kodály approach to develop ‘inner-hearing’ with the melody in solfa. She then taught the song in translated form (she had translated it into Chinese), retaining the cultural context and choreographing

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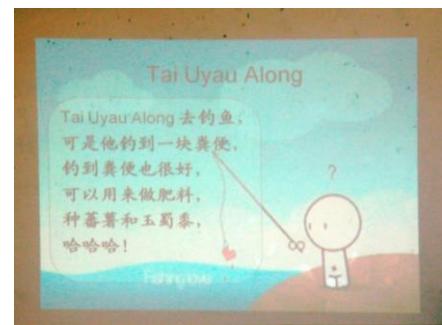
<sup>45</sup> There may indeed be a link between the Taiwanese aborigines, the Pacific islanders and the Kenyah in their practice of multipart singing, all being of Austronesian stock.

actions to suit the cheeky lyrics about the luckless Uyau Along, which the children performed with great hilarity (Plate 44a).

As the songs are rhythmic, with stable metres, many used them to inculcate rhythm, employing simple traditional dance movements as well as improvised movements (rhythmic movement is emphasized in both approaches). The children greatly enjoyed the traditional movements (Table 6.8 shows that this is a frequent reason given for liking a particular song). I observed and video-recorded some of these sessions, including *Sun Suma* (Lee Yik Kang, P1) and *Sai Ulai* (Tiffany Tieng, SK Chung Hua Batu 4½).



**Plate 43: Tiffany Tieng leads her Year 4 class in singing  
*Sai Ulai*, SK Chung Hua Batu 4½**



**Plate 44a: *Tai Uyau Along* with actions, SK Chung Hua No. 3**

**Plate 44b: Slide used for the same lesson showing a Chinese translation of the song**

## 6.5.2 Instruments as Educational Tools

Apart from the songs, the instruments themselves offer unique advantages as educational tools. The *jatung utang* was found to be an apt instrument to illustrate acoustic principles; the relation of length of the slabs to the pitch is easily demonstrated. Also, as the *jatung utang* is played with two hands, instinctively producing harmony from the pentatonic scale (*do* with *mi*, *re* with *so*, *la* with *do*), it is an ideal instrument for teaching harmony by ‘discovery’ and natural reinforcement rather than by prescription. Similarly, when playing the *sape*, a child would soon realize which strings to strum together with specific melody notes on the first string (*do* with *mi* or *so*, *so* with *re*, and *do* with *la*),

leading to an appreciation of the consonance of these intervals which the teacher could later extrapolate to introducing chords I, V and VI.

### 6.5.3 Strategies from Workshops on Kenyah Songs 2008–2009

During workshops held in 2008–2009, apart from the usual repertoire of *belian dado'*, we taught the *belian dekieng leto*, *Sun Suma* and *Ku Pinang*, that we had learnt from Uma Sambop in early 2008. The two song-and-dance routines, featuring lively melodies and group-dance sequences, were immensely popular. Before learning the dance-steps, the lyrics had to be memorized. As the lyrics consisted of simple short phrases, this was easily achieved, although they were essentially meaningless, even to the Kenyah (as discussed in Chapter 4). This brings to mind Blacking's observation (in Merriam, 1997:149) on the Venda, "Failure to understand the meaning of the text is not a hindrance to learning a song: it is in fact rare to come across children, and even adults who can explain the meaning of what they sing."

However, for *belian dado'* with more complex lyrics and melodies with longer phrases, this was not always achievable within the short span of time available for workshops. In these cases we used the singable Malay translations for one verse. Once they were familiar with the tune, we taught them the Kenyah lyrics. This may not please the purists, but the end result was that they learnt the melody faster (and subsequently also the Kenyah lyrics), without becoming frustrated and losing interest.

## 6.6 RECONTEXTUALIZATION: ADAPTATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM AND ON STAGE

In the process of bringing the songs from a longhouse environment to the modern classroom and urban stage, adaptations have been made. Their implications to the songs and the culture-bearers are now considered.

### 6.6.1 Accompaniment

Kenyah songs are traditionally sung *a capella*. In order to keep their pupils in correct pitch and rhythm, however, most of my students used accompaniment such as keyboard, guitar and *sape* during their teaching practicum. I have purchased several Kenyah instruments for the college, such as *sape*, *jatung utang* and *lutong kayu*, and nurtured several 'specialists' in the instruments, who have played for various public performances. These trainees later made good use of their skills in the classroom.

Some scholars have taken exception to the utilization of piano accompaniment for Kenyah songs. They argued that a Western diatonic instrument was unsuitable for Kenyah pentatonic songs. There are two objections being raised here; firstly, the use of a 'Western' instrument and secondly, that it is diatonic. The second objection should more accurately be directed at the arrangement, perhaps the application of diatonic harmonies rather than at the instrument itself.

In response to the first, I concur that these songs may sound more ‘authentic’ if accompanied by ‘traditional Kenyah instruments’. Authenticity is highly debatable here, as in a real Kenyah longhouse, no accompaniment is used. The only accompaniment is their very audible, rhythmic stamping (often with variations in rhythm patterns) on the wooden longhouse floor. This is very effective, but extremely difficult to simulate in an urban or classroom setting. As noted in Chapter 3, the Kenyah themselves are now looking to add keys to the *jatung utang* so as to be able to play diatonic songs. There is also the practical aspect to consider. Kenyah instruments, unfortunately, can only play in one fixed key. A *sape* would need to be retuned, or the *nden* (frets or *kiep*<sup>46</sup>) reset to play in another key or tonality. If *sape* or *jatung utang* are employed in accompaniment, a choir would only be able to sing in a single key at a particular session. It takes considerable time for a *sape* player to readjust the pitch of the strings and this is impossible to execute in the middle of a performance. For the *jatung utang*, retuning is next to impossible (the only way to tune it to a higher pitch is by painstakingly shaving the wooden bars).

The alternative is to sing *a capella*, or use guitar or harmonica. Incidentally both are Western instruments which have already become fixed items in Kenyah traditional ensembles along with the traditional *sape*, *jatung utang*, *lutong* and *suling*. I have employed several alternative modes of accompaniment during performances: *a capella*, *sape*, *jatung utang*, piano, cello and violin. Although the first three lent a more traditional atmosphere to the performance, they were not practical for a series of songs in different keys. In recent performances, I have struck a balance by using the traditional and contemporary instruments for separate songs. In Chapter 3, recent attempts by several Kenyah musicians to combine vocal and instrumental accompaniment, particularly *sape* and *jatung utang*, were described. It was evident that they also face similar problems, and a workable formula has yet to materialize.

Another factor to consider is that *sape* playing requires some aptitude and perseverance to master, and the instrument itself is at present difficult to obtain commercially and requires considerable maintenance, necessitating skill in tuning, replacing strings and dropped *nden*. A practical alternative in school, used by a few trainees, and suggested by an experienced secondary school music teacher during a recent workshop, is the use of synthetic guitar tones from electronic keyboards which resemble the timbre of *sape*.

Rather than the instrument itself, the texture and harmony employed in the accompaniment (or added vocal parts) are more often the offending elements. It would probably be advisable to compose arrangements with ‘native’ textures and motifs to avoid an overly ‘Western’ sound. In his discussion of the Celtic *a capella* pentatonic song tradition, Chapman (1994:39) observed:

*The confrontation of older pentatonic styles with newer melodic and harmonic conventions has been a gradual move across the social and geographic map ... those arranging Gaelic songs for performance by Gaelic choirs ... have regularly used classical harmonic structures. .... This has the unfortunate effect, however, that pentatonic tunes of*

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<sup>46</sup>*kiep* is an alternate term in another Kenyah dialect for the frets on the melody string, used in Gorlinski (1988).

great beauty are de-natured by their passage through a system based on a 12-note tempered scale and functional harmony.

The issue of authenticity in the music classroom, however, should be reconsidered, as Green (2006:114) points out in a discussion on the technical difficulties of replicating professionally produced popular music in the classroom. She suggests that we should aim, “not for the authenticity of the musical product, but for the authenticity of the music learning practice. In fact, the general lack of literature on the subject seems to imply that addition of instrumental accompaniment is almost a non-issue, at least in music education and choral music circles. Unless the class or choir is capable of singing totally *a capella*, it is generally assumed that for any folksong, accompaniment (generally piano accompaniment) would be necessary.

Musical change has accelerated towards the end of the last century, and with folksongs transported to the classroom, could this be part of the inevitable change? In the opinion of Fung (2002:193) changes and adjustments in music to match a student’s abilities or to recreate musical experience in a different way from the original tradition must be based on “a thorough understanding of the musical tradition and must have good reasons for change”.

**Table 6.9 Responses to Section B Question 4 (suggestions for instrumental accompaniment)**

Class	Teacher	Suggested instruments of accompaniment									
		Sape	Piano/ keyboard	Guitar	Violin	Cello	Flute	Recorder	Jatung utang	Lutong	Percussion Instrument
P1	Lee Yik Kang	1	10	13							
P2	Teo Lei Teng	16	4								
P4	Yong Shiau Gin	36									
P5b	Kong Chak Leong	25	15	12	22	5	1				
P6	Elhanne Chua	29	13								
R1	Chong Pek Lin	24	6		1		6	6	5	4	
R2	Desmond Ikal	15									
R3	Stanley Anak Neddy Nangoi	14					12		7	7	
R4	Herwandy Bin Nordin	14	1								
R5	Haslina Bt. Padiel										22
<b>Total</b>		<b>174</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	
<b>Instrument ranking</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>5</b>				

#### Suggestions for accompanying instruments from schoolchildren

Referring to Table 6.9, Question 4 elicited a variety of responses. Many (174 responses) as expected named the *sape*, as the instrument is so widely associated with Kenyah culture. In the case of R1 (and four other schools) the students had actually played (or watched their teacher and friends play) the *sape* in class. The piano or keyboard was the next most popular, perhaps because this was the most widely used during the actual teaching of the songs. Guitar and violin also polled a significant number of votes. The teacher for P5b, Chak Leong, did use the guitar on occasion,

possibly influencing the number of votes for the instrument, but this may also be attributed to the similarity of its tone-quality to the *sape*. He did not play the violin, yet many (22) of his students also suggested this instrument. 19 students suggested flute, showing their musical sensibilities. Besides the fact that the Kenyah do play several traditional forms of flute, this delicate-sounding instrument would offer a tone quality compatible with sentimental Kenyah songs, as would the violin (which garnered 23 votes) and cello (5 votes).

12 students (from R1 and R3) named the *jatung utang*, which I had demonstrated to R1, but for R3 the teacher (Stanley Nddy) had not personally brought to class. It is significant that this instrument (though suitable for the dance-tunes and associated songs) polled fewer votes than *sape*, piano, violin and flute, as its percussive nature renders it inappropriate for the nostalgic, sentimental *belian dado'*. It was gratifying to note that 11 children answered *lutong*, an instrument neither of us had brought to class, but which had been featured in slides and photos in printed hand-outs. The responses from R5 all featured simple percussion instruments which the children had probably used in their music class activities (probably as this teacher did not use any other instrument in class).

In comparison, suggestions for accompaniment from adult workshop participants (whose responses to the same questionnaire are described in 6.8.2) featured *sape* and *jatung utang* (both used as accompaniment during the workshops) as the most popular choices, with piano, keyboard and guitar also receiving significant numbers of votes. Two suggested flute. A practical suggestion (from a music specialist teacher) was the employment of synthetic guitar tone on the keyboard simulating the timbre of the *sape*. Thus the responses from the schoolchildren and workshop participants reflected their actual experiences with instrumental accompaniment during class/workshops, as well as what they envisaged as acoustically or culturally suitable instruments.

### **6.6.2 Adaptations for Stage Presentations: Orientation, Movements and Tempo**

Although *belian dado'* are traditionally sung while dancing in a circular orientation, this would not be effective for staged choir performances. Since 1996, I have tried to portray these enchanting songs to the urban public through choir and other stage performances. These include occasions such as the UNIMAS convocation in 1997, and the ITE Batu Lintang convocations of 1998–2011, various concerts and the *Sarawak Borneo International Ethnic Music Conference* in 2004. Several adaptations (introduced to enhance the presentation) which met with the approval of students of Kenyah descent include:

- (i) Having the whole choir face front, performing stationary movements selected from the movement vocabulary of *belian dado'*
- (ii) Getting several members of the choir to dance in front, with the rest remaining stationary
- (iii) Introducing movement vocabulary from other Kenyah dances such as *Datun Julud*
- (iv) Modifying the tempo of the songs

Many of these modifications were employed in the inter-college musical drama competition in February 2007, *Dayang Petri and the Magic Rice* (Plate 45), which I had co-directed with my colleague Angelia Lee. The tale was based on an Iban rice-legend, but it also featured a prominent Kenyah village scene. Although the main theme songs were composed, all the songs for the Kenyah village scene were genuine folksongs, with authentic dances and instruments, although presented in new ‘non-traditional’ combinations. These included accompaniment of the *belian dado’ Ateklan* with *sape* duet, and arranging dancers to perform the *datun julud* at the same time. *Jatung utang* was used to accompany another song, while off-stage piano accompaniment provided support for three other songs. The drama was a great success<sup>47</sup>.



**Plate 45: Scene 3 from the musical drama *Dayang Petri and the Magic Rice* 2007.  
The Iban protagonist Sigi (Greg Hansen, wearing Iban costume with Argus pheasant feathers) visits a Kenyah village in his search for “magic food”**

One criticism that I received from a music lecturer who is familiar with Kenyah music culture about earlier choir performances was that the tempo was too fast. During a recent seminar, after viewing a recorded version of a 2009 Batu Lintang choir performance (accompanied by *sape*), he remarked that the singing was done at a much more ‘culturally acceptable’ pace, resembling the relaxed, unhurried pace of *sape* music. I recalled that at practices, I had to keep reminding the choir to slow down to keep in time with the *sape*-players<sup>48</sup>. It also helped that they were performing dance-steps along with the music; **stamp** brush, step, brush, thus enacting the beat emphasized by the strumming of *sape* ostinato chords. As noted before, in the original context, it is this resounding communal stamping which helps to keep the singers in rhythm.

<sup>47</sup> ITE Batu Lintang wrested the challenge trophy from arch-rivals, ITE Tun Abdul Razak, and won prizes in 6 categories.

<sup>48</sup> Greg Hansen Anak Riyis and Aldrige Dunggat Anak Andrew (Plate 46), ITE Batu Lintang B.Ed. TESL students who were also facilitators for the ISME-Gibson project. Skilled guitar players, they picked up the *sape* as freshmen in 2006 with help from senior student Bernerd Anak Girak (Plate 35).



**Plate 46: ITE Batu Lintang choir performing *Ateklan* accompanied by *sape* at the national-level launching of Bulan Bahasa Kebangsaan (National Language Month)<sup>49</sup>, 2009.**

## 6.7 AUTHENTICITY: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CULTURE-BEARERS

Kenyah students at IPBL and the Kenyah schoolchildren we met during our workshops were gratified as before this they may have been aware of the songs, but were only able to sing one or two on their own. Also, most of them had not previously recognized the artistic worth of the songs.

Moureen Padan, a Baram Kenyah, admitted that in the past, she had never appreciated Kenyah songs. It was only after she first learnt to sing *belian dado'* with the college choir (and later as a facilitator for dissemination projects), that she began to value the beauty and intricacy of the melodies and harmonies.

Kenyah informants, on viewing video-clips of stage performances of the songs, were pleasantly surprised that their repertoire could be presented in this way. Many were initially bemused that people of other races would be interested in their songs. On a recent trip to Miri, acquaintances from Long Moh happily sang along with a video-recording of the Batu Lintang choir, but their children of school-going age were not familiar with the songs, and could only respond to the composed patriotic song that was presented at the same occasion. They were happy that our trainee-teachers could sing their songs, songs which their own children could no longer perform.

Some of my ex-students are now posted to schools in Kenyah-Kayan areas and teach the songs to the children of the culture-bearers. It would be interesting to follow up on this ‘re-

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<sup>49</sup> The other songs were accompanied by piano.

introduction of repertoire' by non-Kenya. According to Melrance Chris Anak Louis (referring to the audio-CD provided with my second book):

*My students are mostly Kayans, while some are of mixed Kenyah-Kayan parentage. When I teach Kenyah songs in class, some students can relate to the songs. They said that the lyrics reflect their lifestyle in the Baram area. Their parents also like the songs very much and asked me to 'burn' the CD for them. They have also never heard some of the songs on the CD. The Kenyah elders of the village can't believe that somebody has made a CD of Kenyah songs with the original lyrics. They thank you for your effort in making the CD.*

Many Kenyah have thanked me for helping them to preserve their rich music culture, among them Madam Theresa Ubong Nawan and Juliana Usun Kallang, grand-daughters of Temenggong Oyong Lawai Jau, who were among the guests at a presentation and workshop on Kenyah and Kadazandusun songs at ITE Batu Lintang in May 2012. They were immensely moved when the students performed the songs of their childhood and Juliana could not resist singing along softly with the choir (however she noticed that I had added a composed descant to *Kun Nelan-e*, "I know that song, but did you change it?"

In January 2008, I led a team of 13 students from IPBL to Bintulu, Uma Sambop and Uma Badang for a dual mission under the ISME-Gibson project. The team aimed to learn Kenyah music culture directly from the culture bearers in the longhouse context, as well as to introduce the songs with a Kodály-style solfa approach in three schools. We also took the opportunity to perform Kenyah songs to our hosts at both longhouses. Our performance was received with surprise (that non-Kenya could sing their songs, whereas many of their own children could not), enthusiasm (that their culture was valued and relevant to these future young teachers) and amusement. They laughed when the students sang the ending of one song in a choppy way "*lan-e-he-he-he-he*" (due to software shortcomings, my transcription had read "*lan-e-e-e-e-e*") instead of one long smooth ending vowel as in "*lan- e \_\_\_\_\_*". It was a useful lesson for us and the youngsters took it sportingly, laughing at themselves too. The episode also brought out the dangers of relying entirely on transcriptions.

Two days later, at Uma Badang, we met Jangan Kiong, the music teacher at the local school. Although a very competent singer with a wide repertoire of songs, he had never introduced Kenyah songs in school. Prior to this, the education department had supplied his school with my book (Chong, 2006) but neglected to send the audio-visual materials. He was grateful to receive the audio-CD from us, as this would then guide him as to which tune to match to the words<sup>50</sup>.

The next day, we conducted a combined workshop for 65 children aged 9–12 years from two primary schools, SK Long Gang and SK Uma Sambop. It was a historic occasion, as we taught (among other genres) Kenyah songs to a group of predominantly Kenyah children. We had anticipated a critical audience, but the warmth of the response from the eager young participants and the keen interest of the teachers from both schools quickly dispelled the apprehensions we had had about the accuracy of our renditions.

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<sup>50</sup> Although many tunes were similar, the lyrics often differed from village to village.



**Plate 47: Joining in the *belian dado'* line at Uma Badang, 2008  
(Jangan Kiong, Nicholas, Greg, Chak Leong and Aldridge)**



**Plate 48: Wee Tat, Elsie and Karen introduce the *peruncong* to schoolchildren from SK Long Gang and SK Uma Sambop, 2008**

Of the children (mostly Kenyah, some Kayan), perhaps 30% seemed familiar with some of the songs we had chosen. It was a novelty to them to be able to read text in Kenyah in school. An unexpected outcome was that even the teacher Jangan was enthusiastic about the *peruncong* (Bidayuh bamboo idiophones) that we introduced. He even requested that we loan him one so that he could make his own set for the school. He claimed that the Kenyah had used such instruments (the original form of the *teluhan tangbut*) in the past, but had forgotten how to make them.

However, the feedback was not all positive. The 2006 publication (Chong, 2006) had included a compilation of video-clips showing actual footage of Kenyah songs, instrumental music and dances, and an audio-recording of each song as laid out in the book, sung by a group of my students. There were several reasons for doing so. Many of the original audio-recordings were not

very clear, as singing and dancing had taken place simultaneously, and often the lyrics that I had succeeded in translating fully did not match the verses sung in good recordings. These were intended purely to help teachers who could not sight-read well to teach the songs in school.

When I asked for feedback from some of the urban Lepo' Tau, two comments soon brought home to me a crucial error. One comment was "It (referring to the studio audio-recordings of my student's singing) doesn't sound like us!" The main cause of their dissatisfaction, I realized, lay in the audio-CD. The recordings we had produced to help non-music reading teachers had been taken as a true representation of authentic Kenyah style. In the original plan, that role should have been played by the video-CD. However, out of practical and budget considerations, this had been limited to 20 minutes. Also, much of the video- recordings had been edited out because songs are much less visually interesting than dance, and recordings had taken place without proper lighting at night.

Our recontextualized audio-recordings, although suitable for urban classroom teachers, could only be considered adaptations and not reproductions of true Kenyah singing. Kenyah women generally prefer to sing at a very low pitch, out of the vocal range of an average child. Many songs were sung at very slow tempos, which we had speeded up to keep the interest of listeners. We used *sape* and *jatung* to accompany a few songs, and keyboard and cello for the rest. The vocal style used in our recordings also differed considerably from Kenyah traditional styles.

Pitch, tempo and vocal style had been altered, and instrumental accompaniment added. Pronunciation must have fallen short of expectations. Also, where there were different variations of a song, we had only recorded one version, thus alienating those who were familiar with other variations.

Considering the low pitch of their singing (six *belian dekieng leto* performed in succession in Uma Sambop by Helen Paya and her sisters were sung in the key of F#, encompassing an effective range from C# below middle C to F# just above middle C), it is uncertain how the songs are imparted to children; perhaps then the adults migrate to keys outside their normal comfort zone. My video-recordings show that whereas *Tai Uyau Along* (tone-set *d r m f s l t d'*) was sung in the key of B-flat by a group of children on the verandah of a Long Moh longhouse one afternoon, a middle-aged woman sitting nearby sang it a perfect fourth lower, in F major. That night, a group of adults sang the same song in F major. A minority, whose comfort zone may be in a higher range, sing part of these unison songs an octave higher while for multipart songs there are always enough 'descant' voices. The starting pitch for group singing is arrived at by consensus. Lead singers often take their cue from instrumental music performed just before a *belian dado'* session, as evidenced by the key of a series of songs performed in Long Semiyang, after a series of dances accompanied by ensemble playing in C-do. The first three songs were sung in C-do, the next five approximated B-do, followed by a solo in B-flat-do (details in Appendix B).

Our dissemination efforts have encouraged some Kenyah to rediscover these valuable songs, and redouble their own efforts at preservation and transmission. In 2008, and later in 2011, I presented copies of my book to Helen Paya and sang some of the Baram songs to her. As she listened, she studied the Lepo' Tau lyrics, and soon recalled similar songs from Uma Sambop culture. She offered

to tape-record additional songs in future and resolved to begin her own mission to record songs for her grandchildren. In Long Moh, Ulau Lupa had tried to garner support from her fellow villagers to put on a worthy performance for my recording purposes in the hope that this would enhance the reputation of their village. A colleague, Litat Bilung, is now using the latest book (Chong & Lajingga, 2011) to teach the songs to members of the Kuching Kenyah Lepo' Kulit association ( like many urban Kenyah, they faintly remember snatches of tunes but cannot recall complete verses or melodies) and they hope to include some of the songs in an upcoming performance.

## 6.8 FEEDBACK FROM FACILITATORS FOR DISSEMINATION PROJECTS ON KENYAH SONGS

Most of the written responses considered so far have been from young children in elementary schools. It would be salient to compare these with responses to similar questions posed to adult facilitators (trainee-teachers) and participants (teachers and high-school students) during the 2006 dissemination workshops for the project with the Sarawak Development Institute (SDI). This is discussed in 6.8.1. The written reflections of a second group of facilitators, who participated in the ISME-Gibson project from 2007–2009, are described in 6.8.2.

### 6.8.1 Feedback from Facilitators and Participants of the Workshops in 2006

The nineteen facilitators<sup>51</sup> for the SDI project were an unusually varied group in terms of ethnic and regional representation. They comprised seven different ethnic groups: Iban, Bidayuh, Bisaya, Malay, Kadazandusun, Bajau and Brunei (the last three are ethnic communities from Sabah.). They displayed great enthusiasm for the project and the Sabahans remarked on the similarities of Kenyah songs to Kadazandusun songs<sup>52</sup>. Despite a packed schedule, they mastered the songs within five weeks, singing them from memory, in harmony, with traditional movements and *sape* and *jatung utang* accompaniment. From May–June 2006, they efficiently facilitated a series of five workshops held in Kuching and Miri.

The participants for the Miri-leg of the dissemination project comprised a mix of ethnic, regional and educational levels, as shown in Table 6.10. An interesting element was the presence of participants of Kenyah descent. As Miri is the nearest city to the Kenyah heartland of Upper Baram, there are a sizeable number of teachers and students of Kenyah descent in its schools. Dance movements, which other participants had found fun but challenging to master, came easily to the Kenyah and Kayan teachers and students. They also enlightened us with insights into interpretations of the lyrics. However, they had to learn most of the specific lyrics, melodies and harmonies from us. Some Kenyah teachers who had read my first book (Chong, 1998) expressed gratitude for the efforts to preserve their songs.

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<sup>51</sup> Due to budget constraints for the trip to Miri, only ten of the nineteen facilitators were involved.

<sup>52</sup> Anhemitonic pentatonic tunes are common among the Kadazandusun.



**Plate 49: Batu Lintang student facilitators for the Miri workshops on Kenyah songs, 2006**

**Table 6.10 Demography of Miri participants at 2006 workshops**

Ethnicity of respondents		State of origin of respondents		Occupation (but not all submitted responses)	
Kenyah	7	Sarawak	28	Primary school teachers	11
Kayan/Kelabit/Lun Bawang	5			Secondary School teachers	6
Iban/Bidayuh/Bisaya	6				
Chinese	7	Brunei	1	Primary school students	4
Malay/Melanau/Brunei	6	West Malaysia	1	Secondary school students	16
Kadazan/Bajau/ Sino-Kadazan	3	Sabah	3	Teacher-trainees	20
Unknown ethnicity	3	Unknown	3	Lecturers	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>

The same questionnaire (as described in 6.3.1.2 for the schoolchildren) was administered to both the facilitators and the participants of the above-mentioned workshops. Their responses are summarised below.

**Section B Question 1** triggered an overwhelmingly positive response. Among their supporting reasons for including Kenyah songs in the curriculum:

“more interesting ... melodies attractive”, “more natural ... reflect feelings and actual experiences”, “introduction to local culture”, “mastering a different language”, “local culture seldom emphasized in KBSR songs”, “catchy pentatonic tunes”, “very special, especially in terms of melody”

and rhythm”, “possess a unique quality in melody not found in KBSR songs”, “preservation of our traditional songs”, “suitable for all levels of schooling”, “lyrics are more interesting” and “easy to remember”.

**Section B Question 2:** There was no clear favourite song among the facilitators, with the votes distributed fairly evenly among four songs: *Ateklan*, *Liling*, *Hip Balip* and *Nombor Satu Nombor Dua*. Three of the more sentimental songs: *Mudung Ina*, *Taroi* and *Kun Nelan-e* received a smaller, but significant number of votes. Their comments on the songs were quoted earlier in 6.2.1.

Among the participants, the overwhelming favourite was *Liling*, reflecting their familiarity with the song. *Liling* is probably the only Kenyah song widely known in urban areas, especially in Miri. Other popular choices were *Taroi*, *Ateklan* and *Hip Balip*. Supporting reasons given included “catchy, attractive melodies”, “pleasing harmonies” and “enjoyable movements”.

**Section B Question 3:** There was unanimous agreement that the harmonies were attractive. While the majority felt that the harmonies were easy to learn, a significant number thought them challenging, even difficult, but could be mastered given sufficient time and practice.

**Section B Question 4** (suggestions for accompaniment) has been taken account of in 6.6.1.

**Table 6.11 Responses to Section A by three different groups (workshop facilitators, workshop participants and schoolchildren)**

Item no.	Statement	(a) Student Facilitators, (2006)	(b) Workshop Participants, Miri (2006)	(c) Schoolchildren (2011–2012)
1	Kenyah songs have attractive melodies	4.74	4.47	4.47
2	Kenyah song rhythms are suitable for music class activities in school	4.68	4.39	4.03
3	The lyrics of the Kenyah songs are better able to portray local culture than KBSR songs	4.53	4.31	4.15
4	More songs from the different ethnic groups of Malaysia should be included in KBSR books	4.89	4.47	4.43
5	The traditional Kenyah lyrics can be mastered easily by schoolchildren	4.42	4.14	4.16 (adjusted value)
6	Sabah and Sarawak songs should be introduced throughout Malaysia	4.95	4.78	4.53

#### Comparison of responses from the three different groups

The three groups had been introduced to the songs in different ways. The 19 facilitators learnt 13 songs incorporated during 5 weeks of my lectures and additional practices, while the workshop participants were introduced to 11 songs during half-day ethnic music workshops, aided by an

enthusiastic team of demonstrators. The primary school students were taught 4–5 Kenyah songs along with other repertoire during their normal classes by one teacher over 8–10 weeks.

The level of agreement of the three groups with all six statements was high (greater than 4.01), with group (a) (the facilitators) displaying the highest scores for every statement (average value = 4.70). This could be attributed to a longer (compared to the workshop participants) period of contact with and more intense (compared to the schoolchildren) exposure to the songs. With this experience, many of them developed a personal attachment to the songs and, in addition, a ‘sense of ownership’ as facilitators.

Comparing groups (b) and (c), the participants in the Miri workshops displayed higher levels of agreement than the schoolchildren for statements 2, 3 and 6. The presence of multiple demonstrators at the workshops, as compared to a single teacher in the classroom, probably enhanced the appeal of the songs. However, it is noteworthy that the schoolchildren gave an equally enthusiastic vote for the aesthetic appeal of the melodies (mean values for statement 1 were equal at 4.47). In addition, statement 4 (inclusion of songs from other ethnic groups) and statement 5 (ease of mastery of Kenyah lyrics) both garnered almost equal support from the two groups (applying the adjusted value for statement 5).

Similarities in the pattern of response to the statements are noted below. For each group items are listed according to score values in decreasing order:

- (a) Facilitators (all 19 facilitators for 2006): 6, 4, 1, 2, 3, 5
- (b) Participants (2006 workshops in Miri): 6, 1 & 4, 2, 3, 5
- (c) Schoolchildren (2011–2012): 6, 1, 4, 5, 3, 2 (using the adjusted value for statement 5).

Echoing the findings in 6.3.2.2 for group (c), there was especially strong agreement with three statements: 1, 4 and 6 for groups (a) and (b), implying that all three groups agreed that Kenyah songs have attractive melodies, that more songs from different ethnic groups should be taught, and that Sabah and Sarawak songs should be introduced throughout Malaysia. Statement 5 attracted the fewest votes from groups (a) and (b) indicating that they were less sure that the Kenyah lyrics could be mastered easily.

### **6.8.2 Impressions of Kenyah Music from Members of the Team (2007–2009)**

For the ISME-Gibson project, with time and scheduling constraints, it had been found expedient to combine field-trips with workshops for schools in rural areas. The team of students who were chosen to study the music and culture of Kenyah villages in Belaga and Iban villages in Lubok Antu also acted as workshop facilitators in nearby schools in the daytime. The team<sup>53</sup> of facilitators served from July 2007 until September 2008 in a series of workshops for four rural primary schools, two urban secondary schools, a neighbouring teachers’ college and two groups of teachers and music lecturers.

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<sup>53</sup> Altogether 25 students were involved, though at any one workshop only 12–14 took part, due to different schedules in different programs.

The core group consisted of those who had been learning and performing Kenyah songs since July 2006, as choir-members and as actors, singers and dancers for the inter-college musical drama in 2007. They represented several ethnic groups: Chinese, Iban, Bidayuh, Kenyah, Bisaya and Malay. Extracts from their written impressions of Kenyah music and culture are given below:

*Among these, Kenyah songs attracted our interest because the music was so special. The melodies were easy (to learn) because the songs were usually in pentatonic scale [d r m s l], lyrics are easy to remember even though they were in Kenyah and we can translate them to other languages. We were also drawn to Kenyah songs that are sentimental and tell of friends, love and nature. This has encouraged us to delve more deeply into Kenyah culture ... [Chain Wee Tat].*

*His hands are so nimble and quick while playing the jatung utang. It was so unbelievable that they had never been to specific music lessons ... There, I found that the pentatonic scales not only can form nice music but also easier for instrument .... Without any music background, they sing in harmony ... They are also very keen in their hearing. I still remember when there is a key which is slightly out of pitch; they could just tune it without any help of other instruments. It was so unbelievable for me that there is a group of people in Borneo ... so talented in music as if they were born to be musicians ... They shared their culture, everything they have generously ... Their talent of music is a gift from God ... [Karen Ma Sieng Shin].*

*While singing the song (Telu Tiang) one feels touched by the tender melody in a slow tempo. The lyrics describe the atmosphere of a quiet night in a longhouse ... This brings out Sarawak's uniqueness [Lee Yik Kang].*

*Crossing the bridge was breathtaking but it was terrifying to some of our members ... We had a great time at the riverbank and we felt like we wanted to stay longer... I discovered that Kenyahs have over 10 different dialects depending on their origin. ... wonderful, warm feeling which fills the longhouse while the singing and dancing is going on ... [Greg Hansen Anak Riyis].*

*I was having a ball (of a time) with the Kenyah children. We swam in the river together... The villagers showed us the belian dado' beside the river. They could sing in harmony. We followed them and formed a line while they were singing. I enjoyed myself very much ... [Kong Chak Leong].*

The above responses reveal the impact of a sustained encounter with the culture and the songs. All were fascinated with the very different lifestyle that the Kenyah led, but what emerged most strongly was a sense of wonder about the high level of musicality that the Kenyah exhibited. Contextual appreciation of the lyrics was a secondary, though important consideration. They were attracted spontaneously to the beauty of the form of the music. A more detailed analysis of why the music culture was attractive emerged from those who had studied music formally. These included comments on the ability to sing in harmony, the unusually accurate perception of pitch and the fact that using pentatonic scales led to the freedom to improvise.



**Plate 50: Batu Lintang students singing *belian dado*<sup>54</sup> with Uma Sambop<sup>55</sup> residents by the riverside, 2008**

Apart from music lectures in Batu Lintang, few of the facilitators have received formal instruction in music. Only Karen has taken private instrumental studio lessons until advanced levels in piano, violin and *guzheng*<sup>55</sup>. Yik Kang, with some elementary studio-based instruction, is adept at keyboard/piano while Wee Tat plays several instruments including the *erhu* and flute, with limited semi-formal instruction during Chinese orchestra practices. Chak Leong plays guitar and keyboard while Greg plays guitar and *sape*). Perhaps Karen, who has the highest level of training in music, both Western and Chinese, was the most appreciative of their technical dexterity and other musical talents. She was awe-struck at how the Kenyah could achieve such a high level of sophistication with no “formal music learning or high-tech instruments”. She had come to realise that many of these musical elements that they had mastered were essentially the same as those pursued so rigorously under a Western classical system.

## 6.9 KENYAH SONGS –IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHER COUNTRIES

Although this was not explored in the investigations described in this chapter, there is good reason to believe that the songs would be applicable to schools in other parts of the world. On the international stage, South-East Asia is under-represented in world music publications (Volk, 2006:244), and often, even when the region is included, e.g. as in Anderson and Campbell (1989), emphasis is often on Indonesian (Javanese and Balinese) gamelan and the music of mainland South-East Asia. The music of Borneo, the largest island in the world is not even mentioned. The authors state that unfortunately they have little information on the music of Malaysia, and that Malaysian

<sup>54</sup> Visible in the background is the suspension bridge connecting the village of Uma Sambop by land to Bintulu to the West and the Bakun dam to the South).

<sup>55</sup> *Guzheng* and *erhu* are Chinese traditional instruments.

music resembles the Islamic influenced styles of (Indonesian) Java and Sumatra. This is true only for one section of the populace (the Malay community), whereas Malaysia is composed of a balanced mix of various ethnicities, of which the Bornean indigenous groups form a significant proportion. In contrast to the cultures mentioned in the book (Thai, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Javanese, and Balinese) Bornean ethnic groups display a performing arts tradition relatively free of the influence of Chinese, Indian and Islamic civilizations. Similarities with mainland South-East Asian ethnic groups could be explored such as the predominance of pentatonic scales in the folk<sup>56</sup> music of Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia, and the *kaen* (a free-reed mouth-organ similar to the *kedire*) as an example of homophonic texture in contrast to the heterophony of the classical *pi phat* orchestra.

As emphasised before, the songs are useful material for the teaching of harmony, thus constituting an invaluable tool internationally. Besides, the songs have been shown to be attractive and accessible to children of a variety of ethnicities, particularly the largely urban Chinese community, whose language, culture and lifestyle are far-removed from those of the Kenyah. I have also received positive feedback on the appeal of the ease of learning this repertoire from West Malaysian, American and Australian lecturers/teachers who have tried out samples in their classes. The songs are thought to be easily accessible as they bear some features in common with standard ‘Western’ repertoire (‘Western-tempered’ tuning, metric rhythms) yet also differ (mode, context, language, occasional melisma, and form, dance-movements) sufficiently to whet the interest of the would-be-learners.

## 6.10 SUMMARY

This chapter relates the reactions of teacher-trainees, schoolchildren and others towards the songs, as presented in recontextualized versions, and for some, in actual encounters with the culture-bearers.

Their written responses indicate a widespread recognition of the aesthetic appeal of the melodies and harmonies, as well as the cultural worth of the lyrics. Many agreed that the songs were suitable and easily mastered in schools. Responses from 10 –11 year-old children were surprisingly insightful, showing a real appreciation of the characteristics of Kenyah melody, for example descriptions such as “peaceful, gentle melody” and “more soothing to the spirit than other KBSR songs”. A surprising observation was that, in schools where the more challenging, sentimental songs were taught, these were preferred over the simpler, jolly songs, previously thought more suitable for younger children.

Responses from adult participants and facilitators of workshops showed similar trends. The pattern of response to the statements was very similar, with the most positive responses observed for statements 1 (melodic appeal of Kenyah songs), 4 (inclusion of songs from different ethnic groups) and 6 (introduction of Sabah and Sarawak songs). Examples of significant comments include

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<sup>56</sup> in contrast to the heptatonic scales with equidistant intervals used in their art music

references to contextual relevance: “more natural … reflect feelings and actual experiences” and also to melodic characteristics: “possess a unique quality in melody not found in KBSR songs”.

Although there were signs of doubt regarding statement 5 in the questionnaire (the ease of mastery of the Kenyah lyrics), comparison of pre-learning and post-learning responses indicated that, after being taught several songs, a significant number of children changed their minds about this, as well as statements 1, 2 and 3 (melodic appeal, suitability of rhythms and portrayal of local culture), resulting in much higher values for the post-learning scores. This could simply be the effect of familiarity, or, as Green (2006:102) reasoned: their response to inherent meaning (melodic appeal of the songs) could have influenced or changed their response to delineated meaning (feeling positive towards the culture and language of the Kenyah). The converse is also possible: that the more they understood about Kenyah culture, the more they could appreciate the melodic and rhythmic appeal of the songs.

All three groups displayed appreciation for the traditional harmonies, and in response to Section B question 3, many answered that it was “easy” to master the harmonies. A significant insight (from both children and adults) was that although learning to sing in harmony may be challenging initially, it could be achieved “easily” provided the learner was willing to make the effort: “Difficult at first but easy after practising/Easy if we are interested”(responses from R1).

The student teachers provided many valuable observations. A disturbing finding was that children in some schools were unaware of the existence of many of the ethnic groups in Sarawak. Many reported that the children enjoyed the novelty of singing in a different language, showing perseverance in mastering the more challenging songs when the teacher had captured their interest through innovative strategies or simply by singing well. Pair-teaching was found to be an effective technique in teaching harmony, for example as described by the teacher for P1for the song *Ateklan* in section 6.4.

During field-trips to Kenyah villages, the student teachers who witnessed the music culture first-hand were appreciative of the musical skill displayed and filled with a sense of wonder at the harmonious rendition of traditional songs. The reactions of the culture-bearers towards the inevitable recontextualization has been mainly warm and positive, though there have been some noteworthy criticisms to bear in mind for future dissemination strategies.

The implications for music education are many, and their use as teaching materials in Malaysian schools, despite the unfamiliar culture and language, has been shown to be not only feasible, but a timely addition to the existing repertoire available.

# CHAPTER 7

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 7.1 Overall Summary

The thesis began with a description of the rich vocal repertoire of the Kenyah, an indigenous ethnic group residing in the interior of Central Borneo (An ethnographic profile of the Kenyah, focusing on two subgroups, the Lepo' Tau and the Sambop was presented in Chapter 2). Although the Kenyah are a minority ethnic community, their music, dance and visual arts are widely admired for their artistic value and are frequently taken as representative of the richness and diversity of Malaysian culture. However, the continued survival of the songs is not guaranteed as they exist only in the memories of the older members of the community. Contemporary music influences and large-scale migration to urban areas increasingly threaten to erode this great tradition.

The focus then shifted to classrooms in Malaysian schools where music teachers have very limited access to suitable materials for meaningful lessons. The present state of music education in Malaysia was examined, highlighting the urgent need for educational materials, particularly Malaysian folksongs in a variety of modes.

The connection between the seemingly diverse issues was then clarified by reviewing past and current trends in the two fields of ethnomusicology and music education. Over the past 40 years, developments in both disciplines have led to their convergence at certain points, resulting in the emergence of a new field, that of world music pedagogy. The application of specific ethnomusicological findings to music education was discussed, in particular the revival of folksongs, once devalued as belonging to 'small' cultures. Current developments in music education philosophy and contemporary pedagogical approaches were discussed, in particular the growing emphasis on multiculturalism, as opposed to a purely Western-based aesthetic. It was noted that although the philosophy of incorporating multiculturalism in music education is widely supported, there is a lack of consensus on issues such as choice of repertoire and methods of implementation in the classroom.

With its multiracial profile, Malaysia definitely subscribes to the philosophy of multiculturalism but there is little material available on Malaysian folk music. According to the country's current educational policy, international music education approaches such as those of Kodály and Orff should be implemented in schools, but in order to do so, music teachers would have to overcome the shortage of suitable songs, especially songs in non-diatonic scales. The past practice of commissioning groups of music teachers to compose songs for the schools has not yielded effective materials. Not only were the songs overwhelmingly diatonic, they were monotonously similar in form and lacked character and musical variety. In addition lyrics were contrived and moralistic. Another

major flaw was that most of the songs did not reflect the musical traditions of any ethnic group in the country.

As explained in Chapter 1, although the Kenyah possess many other categories of songs, the focus of the thesis has been on recreational songs with characteristics which might appeal to music teachers; songs which could be appreciated by schoolchildren for their inherent and delineated meanings besides being useful for imparting musical concepts. The main question on which this research was based (1.2.2): “What are the musical structures, textual content and performance contexts of Kenyah recreational songs and how can these be applied to music education?” has been addressed in Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6.

The recreational songs discussed in the thesis fall mainly into the categories *belian dado*', *belian menat kanjet*, *belian pesalau anak*, *belian anak dumit*, *belian dekieng leto* and ‘songs associated with instrumental tunes’. The performance contexts of these songs were described in Chapter 3. These included the depiction of the singing of *belian dado*' (long-dance songs) during large community gatherings held along the longhouse verandah or at outdoor locations such as on the banks of a river. *Belian dado*', which comprise the largest category, were described as being performed *a capella*, characterised by appealing melodies, choral harmony and accompanied by simple, rhythmic dance movements. It was noted that these songs are open to participation by anyone present at such gatherings, regardless of age, gender, status or ability.

This was followed by descriptions of smaller, more intimate gatherings held in family apartments (*amin*) featuring *belian lutong* and *belian dekieng leto*. *Belian lutong* melodies (associated with the *lutong*, an almost extinct instrument) were once widely used to convey messages between lovers and rivals in love. *Belian dekieng leto* were discovered to have arisen from the adaptation (by adolescent Kenyah girls) of songs and movements performed by Gurkha soldiers posted in Belaga in the 1960s. Songs associated with *sape* and *jatung utang* and other ‘fun-songs’ were demonstrated to me during informal sessions with small groups of musicians gathered along the *use* or in individual *amin*. During such sessions, many songs with the same melodies as well-known instrumental tunes emerged, such as *Chut Tunyang* and *Sai Ulai*.

The close connection between song, dance and instrumental music was noted in Chapter 3. *Tu'ut dado*' (the dance accompanying *belian dado*') and the movements accompanying *belian dekieng leto* and *belian lutong*, described briefly in Chapters 3 and 4, would later prove to be immensely popular activities with children and adults alike (as described in Chapter 6). It was observed that performances of dance, song and instrumental music often occur in quick succession and that *belian menat kanjet* and *belian tu'ut* (which both have lyrics alluding to dance movements and costumes) often precede performances of solo dances (*kanjet laki* and *kanjet leto*).

The musical structures and textual content of various categories of recreational songs were addressed in Chapters 3 and 4. The ethnosemantics of Kenyah music were explored in section 3.2, a system of classification of songs by function (derived from Gorlinski, 1995) laid out in 3.3.1 and the

general structure of *belian dado'* elaborated in 3.3.4.1. Brief descriptions of other categories of songs were presented in subsequent sections (3.5–3.8). The detailed analysis of the above-mentioned categories of song from the perspective of music education was then carried out in Chapter 4.

With reference to musical structure, transcriptions and detailed analysis of over 50 songs were presented together with the tabulation of the musical features of over 80 songs. The melodies were found to differ greatly from the formulaic KBSR songs in aspects such as tonality, phrase lengths, form and implied harmonic progressions. *Belian dado'* were found to display the widest range in tonalities: predominantly (74.5%) anhemitonic pentatonic, 14.9% major, while 10.6 % were in *la*-tetratonic, hemitonic-pentatonic and other tonalities resembling those of *kanjet leto* melodies and older categories of songs such as *kerintuk*. Within specific songs, for instance as shown for *Mudung Ina*, ‘tonal duality’ (shifting between *do*-pentatonic and *la*-pentatonic tonalities) was shown to recur, mirroring the emotional duality characteristic of *belian dado'*: a mixture of joy and sadness. *Belian dekieng leto*, songs associated with instrumental melodies and children’s songs displayed simpler structures and mostly pentatonic tone-sets.

Many of the songs being ‘dance-songs’ it was not surprising that the majority were found to display rhythmic consistency. Melodic variety was also implied through the analysis of ambitus and podia. Over 50% of *belian dado'* were found have an ambitus greater than an octave and the overwhelming majority (83%) of *belian dado'* were found to be heteropodic, contrasting with the neatly composed KBSR songs where phrases are usually of equal length. Implied harmonic progressions were also found to be varied, for example VI II V VI I in *Mudung Ina*.

Textual content was examined in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 which included the presentation of the lyrics and translations for over 50 songs. The songs were shown to feature an assortment of themes reflecting various aspects of Kenyah culture. Among the examples featured were: the atmosphere of a community gathering (e.g. *Lan-e*), invitation to solo dancers to perform (e.g. *Miling Mubai*), courting rituals (e.g. *Chut Tunyang*), reminiscence and longing (e.g. *Kun Nelane*), long boat journeys (e.g. *Nombor Satu Nombor Dua*) and actual historical events (e.g. *Nai Bilun Merika*). The lyrics, in strophic verse form, were found to bear a natural relation to the melodies, unlike the almost 100% syllabic relation in the KBSR songs. Examination of the meanings of the verse revealed an abundance of poetic imagery capable of appreciation at different levels. Accompanying dance-movements, if unique to a particular song, were described alongside the transcriptions. Interesting content such as allusions to rare species of animals and plants such as the argus pheasant and fan-palm was noted.

Along with the detailed analysis of musical and textual features, various applications to music education were suggested theoretically in Chapter 4, while actual experiences in the teaching of the songs in classroom contexts and dissemination workshops were evaluated in Chapter 6. The ensuing discussion thus also addressed the first sub-question: “Which genres would be suitable as teaching materials for classroom teaching and choral ensemble in schools?”

In Chapter 4, after musical and textual analysis, the selected songs from various categories (in line with Gorlinski's classification by function, 'category' is used in preference to 'genre') were appraised for pedagogical interest. The categories examined (*belian dado*', *belian menat kanjet*, *belian pesalau anak*, *belian anak dumit*, *belian dekieng leto* and 'songs associated with instrumental tunes') exhibited characteristics which rendered them valuable as teaching materials. Unlike the songs currently found in school music texts, Kenyah songs were found to display a variety of tonalities. As concluded in 4.1, the many anhemitonic songs would fit well into the earlier stages of both Kodály and Orff approaches, while the *so*-hexatonic, *la*-pentatonic and hemitonic songs would contribute a hint of 'Asian exoticism' to the usual 'bland' fare of composed songs (overwhelmingly major in tonality) in Malaysian schools.

The small tone sets and shorter phrases of *belian dekieng leto*, songs associated with instrumental melodies and children's songs would be suitable for basic tonic-solfa practice and combination with ostinato and/or bordun accompaniment, imitating the traditional style of accompaniment in Kenyah music culture. The multipart singing exhibited in *belian dado*' where the 'accompanying voice' generally constitutes an attractive melody on its own were found to be particularly significant. As described in 4.1.2 and 5.3.1, the melodious 'descant' or 'alto' could be taught by rote or by solfa, and offers an attractive way to introduce harmonic concepts.

From the perspective of music education, the song-texts as described in Chapter 4 harbour a wealth of cultural and historical information, colourfully reflecting life in a rural Malaysian community in ways that songs composed by urban-bred music teachers could not possibly do. Emotional depth was reflected in both lyrics and melody. As explained in Chapter 4, a major advantage of the songs is the fact that they are recreational songs, with a context acceptable to all students, regardless of ethnicity or religion.

The above suggestions for applications in education contexts were implemented in dissemination workshops from 2006–2009 and actual school contexts from 2011–2012 as described in Chapter 6. Data in the form of personal experience, direct observation, oral feedback and written responses to questionnaires confirmed that selected examples from the various categories of songs mentioned were viable materials for the music classroom. The hypothesis that the songs would be appealing to children as well as adults was borne out by the enthusiastic participation of schoolchildren aged from 8–11 years of age, and of adults during dissemination workshops. Written responses to questionnaires from schoolchildren, workshop participants and trainee-teachers (who served as facilitators for the workshops) clearly indicated that the songs had a strong melodic appeal, and that there was a genuine appreciation for specific musical characteristics of Kenyah songs.

*Belian dado*' such as *Ateklan* were described as having "attractive melodies with easy to learn harmonies". Others, such as *Nombor Satu Nombor Dua* were popular for their "lively rhythms" and associated movements, while sentimental numbers such as *Kun Nelan-e* and *Ilun Kuai* brought out affective responses reflected in descriptors such as: "melody arouses sadness", "song is peaceful",

“soothing” and “wistful”. A significant finding was that *belian dado*’ songs with sentimental melodies and themes were better appreciated than straightforward, jolly songs. *Kun Nelan-e*, a nostalgic song with long melodic phrases (deemed, in Chapter 4, as more suitable for older children), became the favourite song of a class of 10 year-olds. As related in Chapter 6, this class, from a Chinese medium school, sang it from memory with nuance and expression. For another class of 11 year-olds, the song *Ilun Kuai* was appreciated for its sad, gentle tune and mysterious lyrics revolving around the argus pheasant. The song also aroused their curiosity and empathy for this endangered animal.

*Belian dekieng leto* such as *Sun Suma*, although essentially meaningless as their lyrics could not be translated, were popular with 10 year-olds as well as older workshop participants for their catchy melodies and rhythms and ‘fun’ dance-movements. These, along with songs associated with instruments, e.g. *Pui Ngeleput* and *Sai Ulai*, were easily mastered. They were amenable to the incorporation of rhythmic activities, imparting solfa patterns, and activities such as melody and ostinato.

All three groups (schoolchildren, trainee-teachers and workshop participants) indicated their appreciation for the beauty of the choral harmony in *belian dado*'. A significant insight which emerged was that although learning to sing in harmony may appear challenging initially, it could be achieved “easily” with practice. From experiences in the classroom and during workshops, it was clear that the presence of a second demonstrator (or multiple demonstrators) greatly speeded up the learning of two-part songs.

As described in Chapter 6, numerous performances of *belian dado*' by the ITE Batu Lintang choir over a period of 15 years (and more recently by schoolchildren) have attested to the widespread appreciation of their melodic and harmonic characteristics.

In relation to the above discussion, experiences in the classroom and workshops from 2006-2012 also presented answers to the second sub-question “What are the dilemmas faced in transmitting the songs to children of a different cultural background and in different contexts?”

In the process of bringing the songs to the modern classroom and the urban stage, several dilemmas arose. In the original longhouse context, the songs were performed *a capella*, in a language familiar to the ‘performers’ while simultaneously dancing in circular formation on a wooden ‘stage’. Residents learnt the songs by oral transmission, memorizing lyrics, melodies and harmonies by listening and imitating others. While I have endeavoured to portray the songs in their traditional form, in order to facilitate their transmission to an urban populace who are unfamiliar with the language and vocal style and are not skilled in singing *a capella*, I felt it was expedient to introduce some modifications. As discussed in 6.6, these included translating some songs into singable versions in Malay, adding instrumental accompaniment, modifying the tempo and pitch of the singing, changing the orientation of dancer movements and adding vocal harmonies. The justifications for some of these measures (discussed in 6.6) is summarised below along with ensuing criticisms.

**Language and cultural issues:** The fact that the Kenyah constitute only a small fraction of the population often gives rise to the conjecture that the average Malaysian would have difficulty singing in an unfamiliar language and identifying with the culture of a minority group.

This perceived problem was largely dispelled through fifteen years of experience in the teaching and performance of the songs. As described in Chapter 6, the response to the songs from schoolchildren and music educators representing at least ten ethnic groups has been highly positive. From classroom observations and feedback in formal and informal surveys, it was clear that the songs constituted an attractive addition to songbooks and a culturally relevant alternative to the composed songs in the KBSR books. As described in 6.8, the trainee-teachers (comprising different ethnic groups from East and West Malaysia) who were involved in performances and dissemination workshops featuring the songs were full of enthusiasm and those who experienced the music culture first-hand in Kenyah villages were awe-struck by the high level of musicality displayed.

Admittedly, indifferent, even negative responses to the songs sometimes emerged as discussed in 6.2.1 with regard to the attitudes of a group of West-Malaysian teacher-trainees towards ‘Sarawak culture’ and in 6.3.2.1 with regard to the attitudes of some schoolchildren in a Chinese medium school. Both groups expressed lack of interest; they were unable to appreciate the inherent meanings of the songs as long as they represented an alien and unfriendly culture. It was observed that this initial bias could be overcome with strategies to familiarise students with the culture beforehand (such as live demonstrations with ethnic instruments, showing video-clips of actual longhouse performances, bringing handicrafts and costumes or making imitations of these in class).

A strategy employed to speed up the process of learning, as discussed in 6.2.3, was to teach the songs with singable translations to a language with which they were familiar (Malay or Chinese), before substituting the original Kenyah. Such translation efforts can be a controversial matter as subtle shades of meaning are inevitably lost (Burton, 2002). The recommendation that singable translations should be overseen by a culture-bearer was not viable given the remoteness of Kenyah villages, the myriad dialects and lack of dictionaries. One of the most daunting challenges of my research has been efforts to obtain even literal translations and interpretation of the lyrics which often involve the indirect *sebelang* speech and metaphors characteristic of *isiu ipet*.

Nevertheless, the eventual goal in all transmission efforts was that the songs could be sung by the target group with original lyrics and accompanied by traditional movements. The positive response of the majority of students (discussed in 6.3.2) and workshop participants (discussed in 6.8.1) could be attributed to the fact that Kenyah, although a minority language, is accessible to most Malaysians because it is an Austronesian language, with a phonetic system very similar to the national language, Malay. Even the children from Chinese medium schools (for whom even the Malay language is often seen as ‘alien’ and the majority were not even aware of the existence of the Kenyah) showed enthusiasm for the songs, with some classes achieving mastery of challenging songs such as *Kun Nelan-e*. It is also possible that their appreciation of the inherent meaning — the musical

characteristics of the songs, especially melodic appeal (a feature agreed upon by most respondents in the questionnaires) overcame their tendency to resist unfamiliar cultural elements, or motivated them sufficiently to overcome the difficulties of mastering the lyrics. As one teacher-trainee reported (in 6.3.2.3), when his students first tried to learn a Kenyah song, half the class had struggled with the lyrics, but they persevered because they were “so interested in the song” after he had sung it to them.

**Instrumental accompaniment:** Although the songs are traditionally performed *a capella*, instrumental accompaniment was often added, chiefly to keep students (in the classroom) or the choir (in stage performances) in correct pitch and rhythm. As detailed in 6.6.1, the instruments most commonly used were the piano and digital keyboards. Although many quarters have objected to the resultant “Western” effect, and proposed that traditional instruments such as *sape* and *jatung utang* be used, these were employed on occasion, but their wider application was hampered by (among other factors) inflexibility to key-changes. In this respect it was recognised that to avoid an ‘overly Western sound’, as suggested by Chapman (1994:39), there was a need to design formulas other than classical harmonies to suit ‘older pentatonic styles’.

As discussed in 6.7, reactions from the Kenyah themselves (to stage performances and recordings of these ‘recontextualised versions’ of the songs) have been mainly warm and positive, though there have been small points of criticisms, pertaining to style, pronunciation and tempo. Many were surprised and moved that students of other races could perform the songs of their ancestors, songs their own children could no longer sing, as traditional transmission processes have broken down (due to factors discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 such as the rural-urban drift and the fact that children spend most of their time in boarding-schools).

The third sub-question “How is musicality nurtured in Kenyah culture and what are the implications for music education? is addressed mainly in Chapters 3 and 5.

The vibrant performing arts tradition of the Kenyah and their penchant for choral singing were illustrated in Chapter 3 with narrations of musical gatherings observed in several Kenyah villages. As emphasised in Chapter 5, music and dance permeate the daily lives of the Kenyah, contrasting sharply with the environment in most schools. The roots of Kenyah musicality were then investigated, in particular the development of the unusual multipart choral tradition.

Kenyah aptitude for the performing arts, in particular the capacity for musical improvisation and skill in choral singing, were traced to cultural and historical factors. These include, among others, a tendency to use leisure for musically creative play, frequent communal gatherings, the structure of the longhouse itself (which facilitates participation in informal musical gatherings and the merging of ‘performers’ with ‘audience’) and an expectation that everybody, regardless of age or gender, is capable of ‘performance’. Children in traditional Kenyah communities (this was also noted to be true for other ‘singing cultures’ around the world) are immersed in a musically rich environment, and, like the Kenyah, acquire the skill of choral singing from a young age. It was proposed that some of these practices could be translated into effective teaching strategies in the field of music education.

In response to the last sub-question, a combination of educational, social, economic and religious factors over the last few decades have brought about significant changes in Kenyah music culture. As depicted in Chapter 3, several instruments formerly played in most Kenyah villages (such as the *kedire'*, *keringut* and *lutong buloq*) are now almost extinct, and other aspects of both vocal and instrumental music have evolved significantly.

This “changing musical landscape” was depicted in section 3.5. With widespread conversion to Christianity and blurring of class boundaries, *belian dado'* (once regarded by the nobility as “aimless” songs) have replaced older categories such as *kerintuk* to become the defining songs for contemporary Kenyah society (Gorlinski, 2005). The increasing ‘invasion’ of logging roads into the vicinity of remote villages (improving access to urban areas and vastly increasing the influence of the ‘outside world’) and the pervasive music of the mass media have resulted in the displacement of traditional forms of entertainment. Traditionally, singing was closely associated with the consumption of *burak* (rice-wine). Among some SIB (evangelical protestant) communities, the policy of abstinence from alcohol has resulted in a general disdain for traditional songs, and ensemble music increasingly features church and Western tunes. Even among Catholic communities, hymns with contemporary diatonic tunes sung in unison are displacing hymns which were set to Kenyah tunes (modified *belian dado'*) and formerly sung in harmony. With the increasing rural-urban drift, many Kenyah children now grow up in urban areas where traditional musical gatherings are seldom held. Even in the interior, the majority of the children spend most of the year in boarding schools, where they are not exposed to any Kenyah music. Thus the traditional channel of oral transmission of songs to the younger generation has broken down.

The nature of dance music accompaniment has also changed. With the rising popularity of the *jatung utang* (often combined with guitars, harmonicas and occasionally the *lutong kayu* in ensemble), the soft-toned *sape* is overshadowed, and compelled to confine itself to fixed key and tone-set of the *jatung utang*. Thus, melodies such as *kanjet leto* tunes based on hemitonic scales such as *d r f s ta* are rarely played. Fledgling attempts at combining vocal and instrumental music and the move towards the diatonic scale is also described. Changes in musical structure of *belian dado'* were discussed in Chapter 5 (5.2.3) with reference also to the influence of instrumental harmony on vocal harmony.

## 7.2 Conclusions and Recommendations

The main argument in the thesis is that Kenyah recreational songs constitute a unique and attractive contribution to world music repertoire, and are of particular significance to music education in Malaysia. The inherent musical value of the songs resides in their melodic, rhythmic and harmonic structure. Unlike many other Asian genres, they are compatible with Western classical musical syntax. Yet they also display a tonal range which distinguishes them from ‘Western’ repertoire. As teaching materials, they serve the dual purpose of illustrating musical concepts present in a standard school curriculum (such as solfa, tone-set, metre, rhythm) and the characteristics of a specific Asian

folk tradition (such as anhemitonic and hemitonic pentatonic modes, melisma, and asymmetrical form). They are also highly unusual in that they display multipart, homophonic harmony. This characteristic is not only surprising in South-East Asia, which is typified by monophonic and heterophonic music; it also presents a useful and unique educational tool in the teaching of harmonic skills. It is this feature of Kenyah songs which make it an especially valuable addition to classrooms around the world. Referring back to the discussion in Chapter 1 (pg. 11), Schipper's (1996:20) proposal that a programme of world musics should focus on the musical uses and principles underlying the music and Seeger's (2002) suggestion that teachers draw from a selection of traditions to form a balanced combination of musical concepts, Kenyah songs would be an effective choice for the teaching of harmonic structures.

Apart from their musical characteristics, Kenyah songs constitute a rich reservoir of teaching-resources for their textual features. The lyrics feature poetic references to a multitude of subjects reflecting Kenyah culture, history, and nature. Music education does not take place in a vacuum; imparting music concepts in the classroom is often more effective when related to a real-world context. These songs, with their allusion to folk tales, endangered flora and fauna, love and war could be used to relate music to social sciences and environmental studies (Teachers in these two fields could also gainfully apply the songs in their own classes). The songs would also provide insights into aspects of Kenyah culture which echo those of a great many other indigenous groups in the country. For a multiracial country like Malaysia, this is especially significant as many people are only vaguely aware of the existence of the smaller ethnic communities (a fact discovered by the teacher-trainees posted at Chinese medium schools during practicum).

Given the dearth of material presently available, more concerted efforts should be made to document music from communities all over the country, especially East Malaysia, which is under-represented and inaccurately portrayed in current school-texts. In this respect, there was overwhelming agreement among the respondents to the questionnaires regarding the need to introduce more songs from Sabah and Sarawak into primary school song books. The present collection of Kenyah songs, along with songs from other communities, could be put into a 'song-bank'. In emulation of the 'Kodály-inspired' Hungarian system, the songs could then be analysed and categorised according to tone-set, rhythmic structure and form, then sorted into graded resource books suitable for different levels of music education. In the classroom, the songs could be sung *a capella* or accompanied on instruments such as the piano, keyboard or guitar. *Sape* or *jatung utang*, if available, could be preferably employed in accompaniment. On the international stage, as mentioned in Chapter 6, South-East Asia is under-represented in world music publications emphasis is often on instrumental music, especially Indonesian (Javanese and Balinese) gamelan or the music of mainland South-East Asia. Malaysia is rarely mentioned, and Borneo even less so.

As evidenced by Kenyah musical culture (and also by other singing cultures mentioned in Chapter 5), singing in harmony is a skill which can be mastered even by young children, merely

through listening and direct participation. This negates the widely held notion that it can only be achieved with musical literacy and years of formal training. Thus, introducing multipart choral exercises, using songs such as *belian dado*<sup>1</sup> in the early stages of music education, could be an effective alternative approach. As I realised during dissemination efforts, the presence of multiple demonstrators (simulating the longhouse environment) greatly aided the process of teaching multipart singing. In the school context, this might be achieved through pair-teaching, or arranging for small groups of musically talented students to act as facilitators. Based on the occurrence of multipart singing among the Kenyah, which showed similarities to those of Taiwanese indigenous groups such as the Bunun and Ami, comparative studies could provide musical evidence for theories of Austronesian migration routes.

The emulation of some aspects of Kenyah music culture could aid the development of musical ability in school. In imitation of the warm informality and performance-friendly structure of the longhouse, the layout of the music classroom could be modified to a flexible, informal setting designed to encourage informal group interactions and to facilitate the learning of music by a combination of oral and notational routes. The advantages of informal learning practices (as discussed by Green, 2006) and combining ‘playing by ear’ with notation (as discussed by Lilliestam, 1996) also apply here. Outside the classroom, weekly musical gatherings could be organised, where informal performances and audience participation is maximised. Teachers should play an active role here, serving as role models for the ‘no age or gender bias’ participation in musicking. They would, of course, need to cultivate some confidence in this area first. It would be helpful if teacher-training institutes modify the present curriculum to include more exposure to music and dance.

Audio-visual aids offer a crucial additional teaching tool. After attending our Kenyah song workshops, most teachers were eager to introduce the songs in school, but were hampered by their lack of sight-reading skills. They badly needed audio-recordings of the songs. This need has been partially met through the final part of the project, *From upriver longhouses to the modern classroom*, which involved the production and distribution of audio compact discs featuring Kenyah songs, and video-compact discs featuring field-recordings of the songs, dances and instrumental music. In order to improve on the quality of these recordings and to reach a bigger audience, it is timely that better recordings of the songs be made (including singing by the actual culture-bearers) and uploaded to web-sites accessible to the general populace, and those specifically for teachers.

To improve the process of transmission, it might be feasible, especially in Orang Ulu areas, to invite the culture-bearers themselves to schools to demonstrate song, instrumental music or dance during music classes or during co-curricular sessions. Over 50 years ago, a similar measure was implemented by Penghulu Oyong Lawai Jau, who arranged for a skilled dancer from Long Moh to travel down to Long San every weekend to teach dance to the schoolboys boarding in St. Pius<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>One of only three primary schools in the Upper Baram at the time (there were no secondary schools then)..

primary school. Incidentally, a few years ago, during a brief stop at Long San on my way to Long Moh, I heard the song *Oh my darling, Clementine*<sup>2</sup> ringing out from a classroom at this school. It seemed ironic that the children probably knew this song better than any Kenyah song (from my observations, very few longhouse residents under the age of forty could sing any of the songs).

The search for the meanings to the lyrics and the origins of the songs has led to the discovery of many fascinating facts about Kenyah culture, history and habitat. It has also brought to the fore the pressing need for Kenyah dictionaries. As there is a multitude of dialects, researchers could begin with the Lepo' Tau and Sambop dialects as they are closely related, and are used extensively in the songs.

The problem of vanishing cultural heritage, as described in Chapter 1, is lamented by all the interior peoples of Sarawak. There was previously only a vague perception of the magnitude of the loss. This study has indicated the enormous value of Kenyah songs to the field of music education. The documentation, publication and dissemination of these songs are a timely move towards the preservation of this heritage. The best chance for survival of this great tradition lies in its continued relevance to the modern world. Music education is one potent avenue through which the rich repertoire of Kenyah songs can continue to thrive. If these valuable songs ceased to exist, it would be a tragic loss to the world.

### ***Postlude***

Perhaps the last words on the matter should be expressed in song, as Sigau Langat so eloquently did in Long Moh:

*Nenai ala' ne iko  
Dau tira  
Dau tira, dau tira  
Le tipa tapa*

*Ne man merekod na' ini  
Nyalo nya  
Nyalo nya, nyalo nya  
Tira' uran*

**Because you come to hear  
To hear us sing  
To hear us sing, to hear us sing,  
Our voices ring**

**You come to record our songs  
And what we say,  
And what we say, and what we say  
For all to know**

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<sup>2</sup> The melody of this particular song is well-known throughout Malaysia, often sung with the Malay lyrics “Goreng pisang” meaning “Fried Banana”.

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<sup>1</sup> As there are no surnames in Malay and Sarawak indigenous names (people are known by their given name, followed by their father's name), instead of following the usual convention of surname and initials, I have spelt out the full names, unless the author concerned has a Christian name, which is then initialized, as in Anyie Ajang, H. for Henry Anyie Ajang)

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## Appendix A: Details of Field Trips, Kenyah Villages and Informants

### I Details of Field Trips

Fieldwork in Kenyah music and dance was carried out in two river systems:

- (a) Baram: Long Mekaba, Long Semiyang, Long Moh, Long Tungan
- (b) Balui/Belaga: Uma Sambop, Uma Badang, Uma Baka'.

In addition, fieldwork for Iban music and dance (not within the scope of the thesis) was conducted in Lubok Antu district, while ethnic music workshops were conducted with SK Lubok Antu and SK Nanga Delok in Lubok Antu, SK Long Gang in Belaga, SMK Bintulu in Bintulu, and various other institutions at locations in the cities of Miri and Kuching.

**Table A.1 Fieldwork locations, focus, main informants and companions**

Date	Village	Focus	Informants	Companions
18 <sup>th</sup> –21 <sup>st</sup> November 2002 4 days	Long Mekaba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dance</b> <i>kanjet leto</i> <i>kanjet laki</i> <i>belian dado'</i></li> <li>• <b>Instrumental music</b> <i>sape</i> <i>jatung utang</i></li> </ul>	<b>Long Mekaba</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awieng Tanyit</li> <li>• Beatrice Bulan</li> <li>• Jalong Tanyit</li> <li>• Lian Jalong</li> <li>• Nellie Jalong</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dave Lumenta, Anthropologist from Indonesia</li> <li>• Francisco Englis, Ethnomusicologist from Iligan Institute of Technology, Mindanao</li> </ul>
<b>2004–2006: Sarawak Development Institute project<sup>1</sup>, <i>From Upriver Longhouses to the Modern Classroom</i></b>				
10 <sup>th</sup> –17 <sup>th</sup> June 2004 8 days	Long Semiyang Long Moh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dance</b> <i>kanjet leto</i> <i>kanjet laki</i> <i>ngarang pinggai</i><sup>2</sup></li> <li>• <b>Songs</b> <i>belian dado'</i> <i>belian tu'ut</i> <i>belian lutong</i></li> <li>• <b>Instrumental music</b> <i>lutong buloq</i> <i>lutong kayu</i> <i>keringut</i> <i>sape</i> <i>jatung utang</i></li> </ul>	<b>Long Semiyang</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baun Lenjau</li> <li>• Bun Kalang</li> <li>• Mat Jau</li> <li>• Matthew Ngau Jau</li> <li>• Paya Kajan</li> <li>• Uding Jau</li> </ul> <b>Long Moh</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lian Langgang</li> <li>• Sigau Langat</li> <li>• Ulau Lupa</li> <li>• Unjung Lawai</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candy Biron</li> <li>• Matthew Ngau Jau</li> </ul>
12 <sup>th</sup> –16 <sup>th</sup> November 2004 5 days	Uma Sambop Uma Badang Uma Baka'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dance</b> <i>kanjet leto</i> <i>kanjet laki</i> <i>kanjet kiut</i><sup>3</sup></li> <li>• <b>Songs</b> <i>belian dado'</i></li> </ul>	<b>Uma Sambop</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helen Paya Sufen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candy Biron</li> <li>• Matthew Ngau Jau</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Funded by The United States Department of State.

<sup>2</sup> Plate dance.

<sup>3</sup> Plate dance.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Instrumental music</b></li> <li><i>sape</i></li> <li><i>jatung utang</i></li> <li><i>sape bio</i></li> </ul>	<b>Uma Badang</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asang Lawai</li> <li>Tengit Lusat</li> </ul> <b>Uma Baka</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ulut Libut</li> </ul>	
24 <sup>th</sup> –29 <sup>th</sup> March 2005 5 days	Long Semiyang Long Moh Long Tungan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>belian dado'</i></li> <li>other songs and dances during the Upper Baram Easter Festival</li> </ul>	<b>Long Semiyang</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uding Jau</li> </ul> <b>Long Moh</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sigau Langat</li> <li>Kalang Taja</li> <li>Uding Dudong</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Angela Chong</li> <li>Candy Biron</li> <li>Guillermo Vega</li> <li>Marilina Vega</li> <li>Matthew Ngau Jau</li> </ul>
<b>ISME-Gibson project (2007–2008): <i>Introducing East Malaysian ensembles and folksongs to Malaysian schoolchildren</i></b>				
25 <sup>th</sup> –28 <sup>th</sup> July 2007 4 days	Lubok Antu Kaong Ulu Nanga Delok	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Iban dance and music</li> <li><b>Workshops</b> on ethnic songs and instruments with the schools</li> </ul>	Various informants for Iban music and dance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12 students<sup>4</sup> from ITE Batu Lintang (facilitators for workshops)</li> <li>Anong Magal</li> <li>Roseline Liu</li> </ul>
18 <sup>th</sup> –21 <sup>st</sup> January 2008 4 days	Uma Sambop Uma Badang Bintulu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Songs</b> <i>belian anak dumit</i> <i>belian dekieng leto</i> <i>badi(belian dado')</i></li> <li><b>Workshops</b> on ethnic songs and instruments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helen Paya Sufen</li> <li>Ramiah Sufen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12 students<sup>5</sup> from ITE Batu Lintang (facilitators for workshops)</li> <li>Tay Teck Pin</li> <li>Julia Chin Yen Tze</li> </ul>
12 <sup>th</sup> –14 <sup>th</sup> December 2008 3 days	Uma Sambop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Songs</b> various categories</li> <li><b>Instrumental music</b></li> <li><i>sape</i></li> <li><i>jatung utang</i></li> <li>gongs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helen Paya Sufen</li> <li>Ramiah Sufen</li> <li>Saging Sufen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Darren Chin Wen<sup>6</sup> Min</li> <li>Julia Chin Yen Tze</li> <li>Paul Chin Khiun Kuek</li> </ul>
<b>Self-funded</b>				
28 <sup>th</sup> January– 9 <sup>th</sup> February 2009 2 weeks	Long Moh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Songs</b> various categories</li> <li><b>Instrumental music</b></li> <li><i>sambe asal</i></li> <li><i>sape</i></li> <li><i>jatung utang</i></li> <li><b>Mamat</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Baun Bilung</li> <li>Bilong Tingang</li> <li>Edmund Ngau</li> <li>John Lido Mat</li> <li>Lian Langgang</li> <li>Merang Iban</li> <li>Ulau Lupa</li> <li>Lian Langgang</li> <li>Merang Iban</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Darren Chin Wen Min</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> Aldridge Dunggat Anak Andrew, Chain Wee Tat, Elhanne Chua Tze Han, Elsie Agnes Sedi, Galvin Anak Entalai, Karen Ma Sieng Shin, Kevin Wong Chung Kiat, Kong Chak Leong, Lee Yik Kang, Moureen Padan, Phyllis Thiang Yuan Tong and Yong Shieu Gin.

<sup>5</sup> Aldridge Dunggat Anak Andrew, Chain Wee Tat, Elhanne Chua Tze Han, Elsie Agnes Sedi, Grace Tan Huimin, Greg Hansen Anak Riyis, Karen Ma Sieng Shin, Kong Chak Leong, Lee Yik Kang, Moureen Padan, Nicholas Nyelang Anak Jalin and Phyllis Thiang Yuan Tong.

<sup>6</sup> My children Darren and Julia assisted in research on music and dance while my husband Paul took photographs.

## II Travel in the Baram

In the past, the only route to the Kenyah heartland of the Upper Baram was by river, requiring expert navigation through a series of hazardous rapids. With the advent of timber camps and the ensuing logging roads cutting deep into the interior over the past 10–15 years, most people now opt for the faster and cheaper alternative: by land over treacherous rough logging-trails, followed by short boat-rides to different villages. However, this still involves considerable planning, risk, and expense.

The journey overland from Miri to several key upper Baram villages is a dangerous one, beginning with an ill-maintained public clay road which leads to the shanty town of Lapok. This town serves as the main log-pond for the Sam Ling logging company. After this point, there are no more public roads, thus vehicles venturing further inland have to make use of logging trails owned by Sam Ling. With the continual expansion of these roads, the people of the Upper Baram are slowly abandoning their trusty boats for uncomfortable but speedy four-wheel drives. At the time of my last field-trip in 2009, the roads had reached four strategic locations: Long San, Betao (upstream from Long Mekaba), Long Semiyang and Lio Matu, all situated near timber camps. Other villages were still only accessible by river, and thus at a disadvantage economically, as there emerged an added handling cost for oil, gas and other staples, which now increasingly came through these four villages.

## III Long Moh

### (i) Long Moh: Physical Appearance and Background

Long Moh is actually made up of two separate villages, distinguished by the qualification *hulu* (upriver) and *hilir* (downriver). Long Moh Hulu, populated by Lepo' Tau under the leadership of headman (the Lepo Tau use the term *Kapong*) Bilong Tingang, consists of seven main longhouses, each with 4–12 *amin*, and several ‘single’ houses. The two main longhouses are closest to the river (the headman’s *amin* is located in the first longhouse, while the former *penghulu*’s family dwells in the second). Along the verandah of each of these two houses hangs an imposing *jatung* (eight-foot long drum). Long Moh Hilir, populated by Lepo' Jingan, is led by a different headman. Although they maintain a separate residence, identity and hierarchy, the Lepo' Jingan seem to be fully integrated socially and culturally with the Lepo' Tau, speaking the latter’s language fluently and cooperating in social, religious, cultural and economic activities. In fact one of Log Moh’s leading musicians, Matthew Lenjau Anau, aged 65, hails from this community. He has been playing the *sambe asal*, *jatung utang* and harmonica for at least 13 years.

Until very recently, Long Moh was only accessible by river, as is evident from the large number of boats visible below the houses. Unlike many other modernized villages (where the lower level has been cemented ), Long Moh maintains the traditional longhouse structure, keeping the lower level free for storing boats, firewood and other paraphernalia, besides providing shelter for dogs and chickens. The abundance of boats, hunting dogs, firewood and fishing nets are clear indicators of the economic activities and hardships of the village.

A considerable number of *amin* are deserted for much of the year, as the owners maintain an alternative residence in urban areas such as Long Lama, Marudi, Miri, Bintulu and Kuching.

Secondary schoolchildren attend boarding school in Long San or other schools in town areas, while the primary schoolchildren board at SK Long Moh, situated in Lepu'an Sapi on the opposite bank of the river from Long Moh village (now accessible by suspension bridge).

The village is also divided along religious lines. At present, the majority are Roman Catholics, while 5 *amin* are still adherents of *adet Bungan*. Even though the SIB mission only commands the allegiance of 2 *amin*, it still maintains a church and two resident pastors (husband and wife) who also serve the neighboring villages of Long Selaan and Long Semiyang. Christianity's relatively short period of influence can be gauged from several sources of information. Baun Bilung recalled that her immediate family was among the first converts, estimated around 1976. The congregation then was small, with gatherings held in one *amin*. The headman Bilung Tingang only became Christian in 1991, the year that St. Mary's Church was inaugurated at Long Moh.

## **(ii) Long Moh Informants**

### **Ulau Lupa**

Ulau Lupa, who had proved to be an effective dance-coach cum Kenyah language teacher during my previous visits to Long Moh, generously agreed to host my two-week stay in 2009. She is a widow from the *paren* class whose two adopted children live in Kuala Lumpur and Bintulu respectively. Ulau's late husband Erang Kuleh, younger brother of the former *penghulu*, was a much respected government hospital assistant who passed away in the late eighties, leaving her to fend for her teenage daughter and 12-year old son. It must have been then that she started her canteen business. Although Ulau's *amin* was officially that of the former *penghulu*'s, she moved out, preferring to stay alone at the canteen, which she modified into a spartan home. Strong willed and independent, she completed most of the renovations herself. Besides being an adept businesswoman, she is a respected dancer and viewed as a cultural leader.

**Table A.2 Ulau's Siblings**

	Name	Sex	Age	Occupation/location	Other information
1	Usun Lupa	Female	60+	Farming/Long Moh	Married with 6–7 children
2	Bilung Lupa	Male	60 +	Farming/Long Moh Plays the <i>sape</i>	Widower with 4 children
3	Ulau Lupa	Female	60+	Canteen operator & farming/Long Moh	Widow with 2 children
4	Anap Lupa	Female	50+	Farming/Long Moh	Married /no children
5	Asung Lupa	Female	50+	Nurse at Lio Matu	Unmarried/she adopted Bilung's youngest daughter
6	Merang Lupa	Male	40+	Unknown, Kuching	Married with children
7	Lawai Lupa	Male	40+	Unknown, Bintulu	Married with children
<b>Step-sibling</b>					
8	Unjong Lawai	Female	40+	Farming/Long Moh Plays the <i>lutong</i>	Married with children

## Baun Bilung and Edmund Ngau Bilung

Baun Bilung, daughter of Ulau's brother Bilung, was one of my most prolific informants in Long Moh. Born into a musically inclined family (her father and brother both play *sape*, while her grandmother played the *lutong*) she is articulate, musical and culturally aware. She enlightened me on the nuances of language in song lyrics as well as the connection between instrumental and vocal repertoire, and confidently sang many songs which others only hazily recalled.

The anomaly that such an intelligent and capable girl did not hold possess any paper qualifications could be traced to the lax official government documentation prevalent in upriver Sarawak. This may be due to the time-consuming, expensive and hazardous journeys involved. By the time Baun managed (by making a journey downriver to Long Lama at the age of 15) to get hold of an identity card, she was too late to take the PMR (Lower Certificate of Education) examinations. After working for a number of years in Miri, she returned home to marriage and farming. Her family serves as an apt illustration of the hardships faced in the interior.

Her eldest brother Balan was born retarded, and generally makes himself a cheerful nuisance in the village. Another brother, Edmund Ngau, fondly known as Suok, also handicapped by a lack of paper qualifications, worked as a mechanic in towns, and then tried unsuccessfully to establish a musical business in Miri. Suok too, was another valuable informant. Like many other Kenyah musicians, he is also adept at carving, making and playing his own *sape* and *jatung utang*. Unlike most traditional musicians, however, he is also conversant with western music terminology, and participated for some years in church musical activities in Miri, experimenting with combining *sape* and *jatung utang* with other modern instruments as accompaniment to choir performances.

Maternal mortality must be relatively high in Long Moh, as Baun's mother died giving birth to her, while Flora, her half-sister (whom I later met in Lio Matu<sup>7</sup>) had also lost her mother in childbirth. The motherless Baun was close to her late grandmother, Sika Njok, who had been an ardent practitioner of the *lutong*. Thus, Baun could identify songs related to *lutong* tunes, and could explain the significance behind the tunes.

## Jon Lido Mat and *kanjet laki*

In 2004, I had been greatly impressed by the first dance soloist of the night of June 13<sup>th</sup> at Long Moh. The young man moved with exceptional agility and grace, displaying an unusual sensitivity to the music and dramatic use of the *kelempit* (shield) and *ba'eng* (sword). As he held the *kelempit* close to his body as if in real combat, he turned the *ba'eng* expressively, in concert with the music. He exhibited the full gamut of the Kenyah male dancer's skill par excellence: the expressive use of the arms, the slow, expertly-balanced spiral descent to the ground, followed by the sudden whirling ascent, leap and war-cry.

<sup>7</sup> Lio Matu, the last major outpost in the Baram, is the first Kenyah village from the source of the river, and is equipped with a sizeable government clinic, school and helicopter landing pad. Incessant rain in February brought landslides which cut off access to Long Semiyang from Miri. Thus, for our return journey, we took an alternative route back to Miri via Lio Matu. We made our way upstream to Lio Matu in a boat steered expertly by Jon Lido.

In March 2005, he represented Long Moh for the dance competition at the Upper Baram Easter festival, where I learnt his name, Jon Lido Mat. In his early thirties now, John is one of a small number of younger men who remain in the village. Orphaned at a young age (his father died while on a journey to Long Lama to make his birth certificate), he, like many others, lacked the resources to continue his education.

In 2009, I sought him out as a dance teacher for my son Darren who had accompanied me to Long Moh. Jon was an excellent instructor, patiently explaining to Darren the finer points of the movements. Jon related that many years before he had observed, and approached for advice, a renowned dancer in Long Moh. The older man had obliged by demonstrating the movements and techniques which form part of John's impressive repertoire. For accompaniment, John used the same recording of *Gut Garut* as in his previous performances. This piece is an especially appropriate setting for the *kanjet laki*, the slow ostinato accompaniment in sync with the calm, controlled movements of the first half of the dance. Acoustically, the buildup of tension in the second half of the dance comes not from the music, but from the sound of the dancer's movements, handling of sword and shield and shouts.

### **(iii) Experiencing life in Long Moh**

For a fortnight in early 2009, my son Darren and I stayed with Ulau in the simple home- cum -canteen that she had built herself. Arriving at her doorstep after a boat-ride downstream from Long Semiyang, we were immediately made to feel welcome, and she declared that from thence on I was her 'daughter' and Darren her 'grandson'. I thus addressed her henceforth as Uwe' Ulau, while Darren called her "Uko" (grandmother).

Darren and I set out to learn the Lepo' Tau dialect, and as much as possible about their music and dance. The one week break for the Chinese New Year holidays gave us the chance to meet the children, who would otherwise be away at boarding school (secondary school at Long San; primary school at Lepu'an Sapi. The children were our most eager and patient language teachers. In this small community, we quickly learned to deflect the seemingly intrusive question "Tai kembali?" (Where are you going) with "Tai masat" (go walking), rather than give everyone details of our every movement.

Due to the high price of oil, hardly anyone switched on their generators, thus most nights were dimly lit by oil-lamps, and I could not charge my camera batteries without specifically requesting residents to turn on their generators. Thus, every alternate day, Darren and I gingerly picked our way across the swaying suspension bridge to Lepu'an Sapi to charge batteries at the primary school (all the students were boarders with the exception of the pre-schoolers who, wearing life-jackets, were escorted to and fro by their parents across the bridge daily).

Ulau tried to organize several song and dance sessions, which were unfortunately hampered by heavy rain most nights, as January is normally the wettest month of the year. To add to my woes, the day after I arrived, music and dance came to a temporary halt with the passing of Maria Awing Lido, a *paren* woman whose husband Tusau Alang (one of the many Indonesian Kenyah from Long Nawang who came to Sarawak seeking temporary jobs but ended up settling down permanently) I had

just interviewed the afternoon before. Singing and dancing were prohibited until the burial which would only take place after seven days of Catholic prayer gatherings at the longhouse of the deceased. Nevertheless, this sad event gave me the opportunity to witness Kenyah funeral customs.

One night, after several days of heavy rain, the river swelled ominously, its level rising more than 30 feet overnight. Most of the villagers including Ulau rushed around, bailing out water from the boats and rescuing all their precious gas tanks and other belongings floating away from under the longhouses. Ulau even had to swim out to recover her boat which had come loose from its moorings. These hardships paled in comparison with what happened in Long Semiyang. That same night, Mat Jau<sup>8</sup>, a skilled dancer and singer who had performed for me in 2004 had been swept away in the flood waters. Despite the efforts of search parties from three neighbouring villages, his body was only found 3 weeks later (after the flood-waters had subsided), buried beneath the jetty of Long Selaan.

## **IV Uma Sambop**

### **(i) Uma Sambop: Physical appearance and background**

Prior to the construction of the Bakun Hydro-electric dam, the only route to Balui-Belaga villages had been by river, past a series of rapids. To facilitate the construction of the dam, roads to the interior had to be built. Thus, although the building of the controversial dam has caused much hardship, compelling many upriver villages such as Uma Baka' and Uma Badang to relocate, it has also brought considerable progress. Despite the fact that the residents had to abandon their homes, farming lands and ancestral graves and move into poorly constructed longhouses provided by government authorities, the villagers now have easy access and proximity to urban centres,

Uma Sambop has the best of both worlds. Located beyond the zone designated for the dam, it still stands majestically on its original site. In 2003, with the construction of a suspension bridge linking the village to the trunk road, it is only 2 ½ hours by four-wheel drive from the town of Bintulu, whereas previously it was a week's journey by river. Unlike many other villages in the Baram and Belaga, Uma Sambop is thriving, with a healthy increase in population. A 76-door longhouse with 900 residents, it has occupied the present site at Long Semutut, Ulu Belaga, for over 50 years. To accommodate the government clinic, the longhouse, on expansion, adopted an unusual rectangular structure, with a quadrangle in the centre.

### **(ii) Uma Sambop Informants**

#### **Helen Paya Sufen and family**

Helen Paya Sufen, her sister Ramiah Barak Sufen and their siblings were my chief informants at Uma Sambop. Members of the *paren* class (known as *maren* in Belaga), their late father Sufen was the maternal uncle of the present headman. Helen is a widowed, retired nursing assistant who spends her time shuttling between Uma Sambop and Miri (where her daughter and grandchildren reside). Articulate and musical, she could identify tunes from snatches of Baram songs sung to her, then

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<sup>8</sup> Plate 51.

immediately respond with Uma Sambop equivalents. She is also a confident exponent of a wide repertoire of songs and dances, even demonstrating *kanjet laki* steps. She even painstakingly wrote down sets of lyrics for me

Her sister Ramiah is one of the regular resident dance-coaches for young girls at Uma Sambop (unlike Long Moh, the primary school is situated in the village itself, so the children stay at home), while her brother Saging Sufen gave invaluable information on the history of the subgroup, and demonstrated gong music (previously prominent under *adet pu'un* and *adet Bungan*, now almost never played), playing the gongs from his substantial family collection.

**Table A.3 Helen Paya's family**

	Helen's siblings	Age (in 2009)
1	Saging Sufen	60+
2	Helen Paya Sufen	53
3	Lucy Bulan Sufen	52
4	Ramiah Barak Sufen	51
	<b>Step-siblings<sup>9</sup></b>	
5	Marcus Misin Liling	40+
6	Dominic Liling	40+
7	Francis Bandang Liling	42
8	Roseline Tipung Liling	30+

## V Long Mekaba

Long Mekaba, sister-village to Long Moh, lies on the Silat river, a tributary of the Upper Baram (Map 2). Previously, it was one of the most inaccessible villages due to its location just beyond an especially perilous stretch of rapids. A rough logging road now circumvents these rapids, offering an uncomfortable drive of twelve hours from Miri, past Long San, to Betao, a logging camp on the upper reaches of the Silat. From there, it is then an easy one-hour boat-ride down-stream to Long Mekaba.

For my trip in 2002, I was accompanied by two Asia Pacific Institute researchers, Francisco Englis (an ethnomusicologist from the University of Mindanao) and Dave Lumenta (an anthropologist researching on cross-border movements of the Kenyah and Iban) from Sulawesi. We had followed one of my college students (Beatrice Bulan Jalong), on her journey back home for the holidays. Beatrice's grandfather, Tanyit Paren, was a former headman, while her father, Jalong Tanyit, five

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<sup>9</sup> When Ramiah was 18 months old, her father died. Her mother remarried. Judging from the maze of step-siblings present in almost every family tree that I came across in both Long Moh and Uma Sambop, it appears to be a common practice for both widows and widowers to remarry.

years after my visit, was appointed *penghulu* of the Upper Baram. An exemplary aristocrat, Jalong Tanyit is also an internationally renowned exponent of the *sape*.

## VI Long Semiyang

The third Kenyah settlement from the source of the Baram, Long Semiyang was formerly a riverine farming village. With the establishment of a logging camp a few miles away, the situation has changed vastly. It has become almost independent of boats, as four-wheel drives and trucks ply between village and farms daily. The farms are no longer accessible by river. Road access has brought development, but also results in dwindling supplies of fish and wild boar due to encroachment by the projects of urban businessmen.

The residents of Long Semiyang consist predominantly of the Ngurek subgroup, and a sizable number of the Lepo Ke', a different subgroup who migrated from Kalimantan about 20 years ago. The Lepo Ke' live in a separate longhouse, but mix socially and combine musically (they are the leading exponents of the *lutong kayu*) with the Ngurek at musical gatherings. They retain their own dialect, which is related to the Lepo' Tau and may have facilitated the Ngurek's mastery of *belian dado'*.

Matthew Ngau Jau (not to be confused with the late Mat Ngau), a member of the ruling *paren* family in Long Semiyang, is a former schoolteacher who has since become a free-lance *sape* player and artist of repute. He and his wife Candy Biron (they are normally based in the Bidayuh-majority district of Bau, but maintain a house in Long Semiyang), accompanied me on field-trips to Baram and Belaga for the project in 2004–2005.

## Appendix B: Additional Transcriptions and Lists of recordings

### I Transcriptions of songs

#### Transcription 57: *Liling* version 1 (Chong, 2006:26)

$\text{♩} = 68$

#### Lyrics

1. *Alem ini telu tiang pemong jaiee  
Pemong jaiee tawai uyan*  
**Chorus:**  
*Liling, liling, liling, liling  
Liling Uyau Along Liling e-lan*
2. *Ayen saiee, telu tuyang  
Masat kuse, masat kuse  
Uma luan*

#### Translation

- Tonight my friends we gather  
We gather together and reminisce  
**Chorus:**  
Turn around, turn around and around  
Turn around Uyau Along
- Do not be shy, my friends  
When you walk, when you walk  
Along the verandah of another house

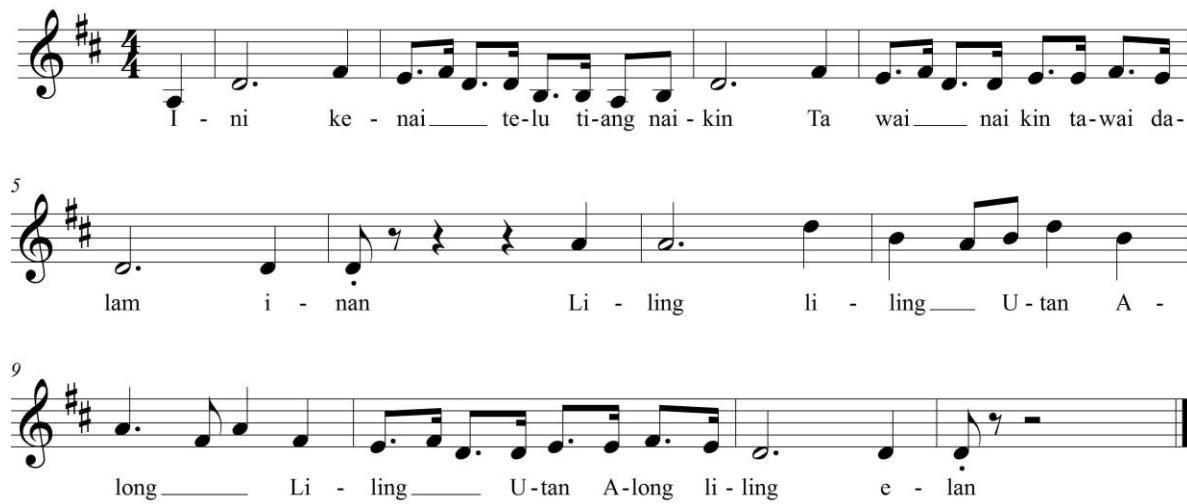
#### Dance movements:

During the singing of the chorus, the following actions are commonly performed:

- i. Turn to face out from the circle
- ii. Step right, brush left foot; step left, brush right foot  
(Arm swings follow the direction of the weighted foot)
- iii. Repeat (ii) until the end of the chorus
- iv. On the last syllable “lan”, turn back to face the original direction and stamp right foot

**Transcription 58: *Liling* version 2** (as sung by visitors from Uma Bakong)

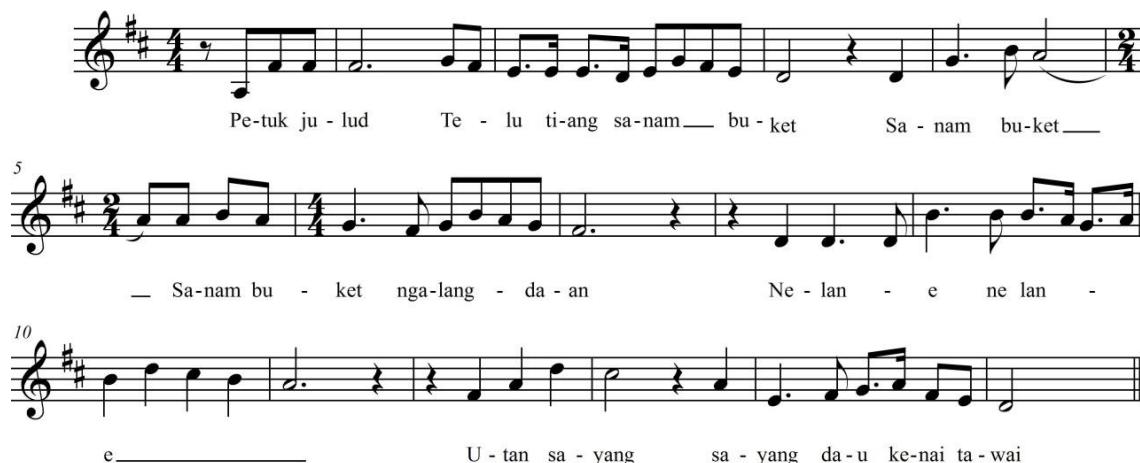
$\text{♩} = 70$



I - ni ke - nai te-lu ti-ang nai - kin Ta wai nai kin ta-wai da-  
 lam i - nan Li - ling li - ling U - tan A -  
 long Li - ling U - tan A - long li - ling e - lan

**Transcription 59: *Sayang Dau Kenai Tawai*** (Chong, 2006:38)

$\text{♩} = 72$



Pe-tuk ju - lud Te - lu ti-ang sa-nam bu - ket Sa - nam bu - ket - -  
 - Sa-nam bu - ket nga-lang - da - an Ne - lan - e ne lan - e  
 e U - tan sa - yang sa - yang da - u ke-nai ta - wai

**Lyrics**

*Petuk Julud*

*Telu tiang sanam buket*

*Sanam buket, sanam buket ngalang daan*

**Translation**

We walk in a file

My friends, like a row of red ants

Red ants, red ants, trailing on a branch

**Chorus:**

*Nelane, nelane*

*Utan sayang,*

*Sayang dau kenai tawai*

**Chorus:**

Truly so, truly so

Beloved Utan

My love for you (so deep) it cannot be spoken

### Transcription 60: *Ruti Kendusang* (Chong, 2011:51)

*Belian tu'ut* as sung by Mat Jau, Long Semiyang before performing *kanjet laki* (Plate51)

*Sung with flexibility in the beat*

♩ = 72

Soprano

I - ni Ta - pong i - ni i - ni ta - pong meng - e lang<sup>3</sup> i - dang

Alto

Ta - pong I - dang

S

sa - kit - - - tau Eh ru - ti - ken - du - sang

A

ah - - - tau du - sang lan ta -

S

be - su - nong ka - ding i - ni be - su - nong ka - ding

A

lau

eh. in similar style

eh.

ka - ding

#### Lyrics

*Ini tapong*

*Mengelang idang sakit tau*

*Eh ruti kendusang*

*Ini besunong kading*

*Ngujat ngembienng Usun Apau*

*Eh ruti kendusang*

*Ini besunong buang*

*Pun makang*

*Lambap Ngau*

*Eh ruti kendusang*

*Ini ba'eng*

*Maloh Musap mitieng miau*

*Eh ruti kendusang*

#### Translation

This is the hat

That shields me from the sun's heat

*Eh ruti kendusang*

This is the cloak made from goat-skin,

The goat which feeds on grass from Usun Apau

*Eh ruti kendusang*

This is the cloak made from the skin ,

Of a bear which attacked

In the night

*Eh ruti kendusang*

This is the sword

That rasps as it cuts

*Eh ruti kendusang*



**Plate 51: Mat Jau dancing *kanjet laki* after singing *Ruti kendusang***

**Transcription 61: *Hip Balip*** (Chong, 2006:59)

$\text{♩} = 88$

Ma-ri ka - wan ka - wan me-na - ri ber - sa - ma Ta-ri - an Ken-yah i - ni Hip Ba -  
 lip ne - lan - e Hip ba - lip ne - lan - e Hip ba - lip!

This song and dance routine was taught by Henry Anyie Ajang at the Dayak Cultural foundation classes for Orang Ulu dance, using Malays lyrics. I have never heard it sung with Kenyah lyrics. Only the chorus retains the original Kenyah. The words *Hip Balip* mean ‘let’s do this together’, indicating the possibility of its origin as a work-song. The verse is improvised to suit the nature of the activity.

**Translation:** ‘Come friends, let’s dance together’.

**Movements:** Dance movements are performed as follows during the chorus. On the last syllable of the verse, everyone turns to face inwards and performs the sequence while placing their hands on their hips as if holding a fan of hornbill feathers, “*kirep*”.

## Lyrics

## Movements

<i>Hip Balip Ne-</i>	Step left, heel right
<i>Lan-e</i>	Step right, heel left
<i>Hip Balip Ne-</i>	Step left, heel right
<i>Lan-e</i>	Step right, heel left
<i>Hip Balip</i>	Turn to face forward and stamp right foot

## II List of Songs Recorded in June 2004

### (i) Long Semiyang, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2004

#### Morning session

The following sequence of songs was recorded on the morning of 11<sup>th</sup> June after the ensemble had performed in C-do. Unless stated otherwise, all were group songs, sung by all the gathered community.

1. *Liling*
2. *Kun Nelan-e*
3. *Lan-e version 1*
4. *Are Ruti*
5. *Mudung Ina*
6. *Kejaing* (solo)
7. *Ne Lan-e*
8. *Kendi Ruti* (solo with group chorus)
9. *Ule Lio* (solo)

**Pitch of songs:** Songs 1, 2 and 3 were sung with C-do, songs 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 approximate B-do and song 9 was sung with B flat-do.

#### Night session

10. *Ne Lan De Tiang*
11. *Naon Name Inu*
12. *Cap Apek*
13. *Pesalau* (solo with group chorus)
14. *Lan-e Tuyang*
15. *Burung Kechin* (version 2 )
16. *Nombor Satu Nombor Dua*

**Pitch of songs:** Songs 10, 11 and 12 were sung with C-do, song 13 with A flat-do, and songs 14-16 with B-do.

(ii) **Long Moh, 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> June 2004**

*Belian dado'* sung on the night of June 13<sup>th</sup>

1. *Nombor Satu, Nombor Dua*
2. *Lan-e version 1*
3. *Mudung Ina*
4. *Abe Na'on Nekun*
5. *Saping Sapau*
6. *Lan-e Tuyang*
7. *Bampa Lale*
8. *Ule Ule Lan Lian*
9. *Taroi*
10. *Ilun Kuai*
11. *Burung Kechin* (version 1b)

**Songs associated with *lutong* or *jatung utang* sung in Ulau Lupa's residence, 14<sup>th</sup> June**

12. *Ti Ruti Lun*
13. *Tut-tut Nang*
14. *Letata* (metit hantu – associated with supernatural beings)
15. *Chat chat luchat*
16. *Ilun Butit*
17. *Lalut Utan Usun*
18. *Matai Busong* (a curse song)
19. *Chut Tunyang*

## Appendix C: Questionnaires, Consent Forms and Letters Authorising Research

As most of the letters and questionnaires were prepared in the Malay language, translated versions are given below. Scanned copies of the letters of authorisation received are also included.

### 1.1 Letters seeking permission to carry out research were sent to the following departments:

- (a) Educational Planning and Research Division of the Ministry of Education, Malaysia (EPRD)
- (b) Sarawak State Education Department
- (c) All schools involved.

The translated version of the letter to (a) is given below. After (a) had granted permission, letters to (b) and (c) were written. The contents were basically condensed versions of (a).

#### 1.1.1 Letter to Education Planning and Research Division (EPRD)

The Director  
Educational Planning and Research Division of the Ministry of Education  
Aras 1-4, Blok E8,  
Kompleks Kerajaan Parcel E  
Pusat Pentadbiran Kerajaan Persekutuan  
62604 PUTRAJAYA

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a lecturer with the Institute of Teacher Education, Batu Lintang Campus, and am currently working on a doctoral thesis in music (DMus) with the University of Pretoria, South Africa. My research project is entitled: *Kenyah recreational songs and their significance to music education*.

The aim of this study is to transcribe and analyze examples of the different genres of Kenyah recreational songs and to appraise the suitability of Kenyah recreational songs for music education, particularly in Malaysia.

The first part of the project (the documentation of the songs), carried out in Baram and Belaga districts, has been completed. This second stage of the research involves introducing a set of Kenyah songs to students, teachers and interested agencies who then are asked to complete the attached music questionnaire based on the songs introduced. With reference to the research questions stated in the proposal attached, the relevant sub-questions for my investigation in schools in 2011 were:

- (i) *Which genres would be suitable as teaching materials for classroom teaching and choral ensemble in schools?*
- (ii) *What are the dilemmas faced in transmitting the songs to children of a different cultural background and in different contexts?*

The instruments used will be questionnaires for teachers and schoolchildren involved in observation of classroom teaching and interviews with the teachers involved. The teaching of these songs is in line with the Malaysian national philosophy of education and the current school curriculum

I humbly seek your permission to carry out these investigations in selected primary schools throughout Sarawak. The samples of schoolchildren involved will be from Primary 2-5 while the teachers involved will include both serving teachers and student teachers from ITE Batu Lintang taking music as an elective, who are familiar with the songs and have been trained in the Kodály method of music teaching.

Attached please find:

- (i) form BPPDP1
- (ii) a copy of my research proposal
- (iii) research instruments:
  - (a) questionnaires for teachers (Form A)
  - (b) questionnaires for schoolchildren (Form B)
- (iv) a copy of the following book, with accompanying audio-cd and VCD:  
*Songs from The Baram: Kenyah Songs from Upriver Longhouses* (Chong, 2006)  
(as examples of the repertoire to be introduced).

Yours faithfully,

.....  
Chong Pek Lin: Researcher

## **1.2 Letters of authorisation from various departments/agencies**

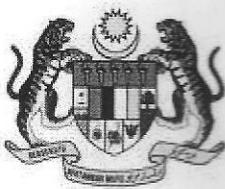
- (i) Scanned versions of the replies in Malay from (a), (b) and from the headmaster of SK Ong Tiang Swee are given in the next few pages. The translated version of the first letter and a brief summary of the next two are given

**1.1.2 Reply from EPRD** (pg. 321)

**1.1.3 Reply from Sarawak State Education Department** (pg. 322)

**1.1.4 Reply from SK Ong Tiang Swee** (pg. 323)

- (ii) Letter of confirmation of appointed researchers for the project “From upriver villages to the modern classroom” from the Sarawak Development Institute (pg 324)



BAHAGIAN PERANCANGAN DAN PENYELIDIKAN DASAR PENDIDIKAN  
KEMENTERIAN PELAJARAN MALAYSIA  
ARAS 1 - 4, BLOK E - 8,  
KOMPLEKS KERAJAAN PARCEL E  
PUSAT PENTADBIRAN KERAJAAN PERSEKUTUAN  
62604 PUTRAJAYA

Telefon : 03-88846591  
Faks : 03-88846579

Puan Chong Pek Lin  
110 Jln Tun Haji Openg  
93000 Kuching  
Sarawak

Tuan/Puan,

**Kelulusan Untuk Menjalankan Kajian Di Sekolah, Institut Perguruan, Jabatan Pelajaran Negeri dan Bahagian-Bahagian di Bawah Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia**

Adalah saya dengan hormatnya diarah memaklumkan bahawa permohonan tuan/puan untuk menjalankan kajian bertajuk:

***Kenyah Recreational Songs And Their Significance To Music Education***

diluluskan.

2.. Kelulusan ini adalah berdasarkan kepada cadangan penyelidikan dan instrumen kajian yang tuan/puan kemukakan ke Bahagian ini. Kebenaran bagi menggunakan sampel kajian perlu diperoleh dari Ketua Bahagian / Pengarah Pelajaran Negeri yang berkenaan.

3. Sila tuan/puan kemukakan ke Bahagian ini senaskah laporan akhir kajian setelah selesai kelak. Tuan/Puan juga diingatkan supaya mendapat kebenaran terlebih dahulu daripada Bahagian ini sekiranya sebahagian atau sepenuhnya dapatan kajian tersebut hendak dibentangkan di mana-mana forum atau seminar atau diumumkan kepada media

Sekian untuk makluman dan tindakan tuan/puan selanjutnya. Terima kasih.

**"BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA"**

Saya yang menurut perintah,

**(DR. SOON SENG THAH)**

Ketua Sektor  
Sektor Penyelidikan dan Penilaian  
b.p. Pengarah  
Bahagian Perancangan dan Penyelidikan Dasar Pendidikan  
Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia



JABATAN PELAJARAN NEGERI SARAWAK  
BANGUNAN TUN DATUK PATINGGI  
TUANKU HAJI BUJANG  
JALAN SIMPANG TIGA  
93604 KUCHING  
SARAWAK

Telefon: 082-243201  
FAX: 082-246750  
Kawat: PENDIDIKAN

Ruj Kami : JPS(W)/SK2P/(Lat)153/08/02/05/Jld. 38 ( 104 )

Tarikh : 10 NOV 2011

Chong Pek Lin

110 Jalan Tun Haji Openg  
93000 Kuching  
Sarawak

Tuan/puan

**KEBENARAN UNTUK MENJALANKAN KAJIAN DI SEKOLAH-SEKOLAH, INSTITUT-INSTITUT PERGURUAN, JABATAN-JABATAN PELAJARAN DAN BAHAGIAN-BAHAGIAN DI BAWAH KEMENTERIAN PELAJARAN MALAYSIA**

Dengan hormatnya saya diarah merujuk kepada perkara di atas.

2. Sukacita dimaklumkan bahawa pada dasarnya Jabatan Pelajaran Negeri Sarawak tiada sebarang halangan untuk membenarkan tuan menjalankan kajian bertajuk :

**“Kenyah Recreational Songs and Their Significance To Music Education ”**

3. Sukacita diingatkan bahawa sepanjang tempoh kajian tersebut, tuan adalah tertakluk kepada peraturan yang sedang berkuatkuasa dan menjalankan kajian seperti tajuk yang diluluskan oleh Bahagian Perancangan dan Penyelidikan Dasar Pendidikan, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia bil. KP(BPPDP)603/5/JLD.05(259) bertarikh 31 Mei 2011.

4. Jabatan ini memohon agar sesalinan laporan kajian dihantar ke Unit Latihan Dan Kemajuan Staf, Jabatan Pelajaran Negeri Sarawak sebaik sahaja selesai untuk tujuan rekod dan rujukan. Dengan surat ini, Pegawai berkenaan adalah dimohon untuk memberi bantuan dan kerjasama yang sewajarnya bagi menjayakan kajian tersebut.

Sekian. Terima kasih.

**“BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA”**

Saya yang menurut perintah,

  
[KUSWADY BIN CHIL]  
Sektor Khidmat Pengurusan Dan Pembangunan  
b.p Pengarah Pelajaran  
Sarawak.



**SEKOLAH KEBANGSAAN JALAN ONG TIANG SWEE  
(YBB 1206)**

JALAN ONG TIANG SWEE, 93200 KUCHING  
Tel: +6 082-258335 Fax: +6 082-258375  
e-mel: skjotsedu@yahoo.com



Ruj. Kami : JPS(W)/SKJOTS(Perj)/153/08/03/03

Tarikh : 22 November 2011

Institut Pendidikan Guru,  
Kampus Batu Lintang,  
Jalan Kolej,  
93250 Kuching.  
(u.p Chong Pek Lin)  
Unit Muzik

Tuan/puan,

**KEBENARAN UNTUK MENJALANKAN PENYELIDIKAN DI SK JALAN ONG TIANG SWEE**

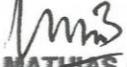
Dengan segala hormatnya saya merujuk kepada perkara yang tersebut di atas.

2. Sukacita dimaklumkan pada dasarnya sekolah tiada sebarang halangan untuk membenarkan tuan menjalankan kajian di kelas muzik tahun 4 di SK Jalan Ong Tiang Swee.

Sekian, terima kasih.

**"BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA"**

Saya yang menurut perintah,

  
**(MOHD.MATHIAS ABDULLAH)**  
Guru Besar,  
SK Jalan Ong Tiang Swee,  
Kuching.

saf



Kompleks AZAM, Jalan Crookshank,  
93000 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia  
Tel: +6082-415484, 416484 Fax: +6082-412799 E-mail: sdi@po.jaring.my  
URL: <http://www.sdi.com.my>

Company No. 36557IH

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SDI/ACT/RES/AmbassFund (6)

28 January 2005

**To Whom It May Concern**

This is to certify that **Madam Chong Pek Lin, Mr. Matthew Ngau and Madam Cindy Biron** are undertaking a research on "*From upriver longhouses to the modern classroom: Documenting and introducing Kenyah songs, dances and instrumental music to Malaysian schoolchildren*" for the Sarawak Development Institute (SDI). The study is approved by the State Government and is sponsored by the US Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Restoration 2004.

- I would be grateful if you can render any assistance that Madam Chong, Mr. Matthew and Madam Cindy may require.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



**SIM AH HUA**  
Acting Senior Research Fellow  
Sarawak Development Institute

## Translation of 1.1.2

Education Planning and Research Division,  
Ministry of Education, Malaysia  
62604 PutraJaya

---

Mdm Chong Pek Lin

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **Permission to Carry out Research in Schools, Institutes of Education, State Education Departments and other Divisions under the Jurisdiction of The Ministry of Education, Malaysia**

I have been directed to inform you that your application to carry out the research project entitled *Kenyah recreational songs and their significance to music education* has been approved.

This approval is based on the proposal and research instrument that you have submitted to this department. Permission to use the specific sample under investigation should be sought from the state education department concerned.

Please submit a copy of your final report to this department on completion of your research. You will also need to seek permission from this department if you wish to present the findings from this research in any forum or seminar, or include them in public statements to the media.

Thank you.

(Dr. Soon Seng Thah)

Head of Research and Evaluation Section,  
on behalf of The Director,  
Education Planning and Research Division,  
Ministry of Education, Malaysia

## **Summary of contents of 1.1.3 and 1.1.4**

The letter from the Sarawak State Education department also expresses consent, requesting, too, a copy of the final report and (copying the letter to all heads of schools in Sarawak) requesting that the relevant education officers render full cooperation. The letter from the headmaster of SK Ong Tiang Swee expresses his consent for me to carry out research in his school.

### 1.3 Letter to teachers/trainee teachers and schoolchildren involved (translations of the actual letters in Malay)

Dear Sir/Madam

I am currently working on a doctoral thesis in music (DMus) at the University of Pretoria, South Africa entitled *Kenyah recreational songs and their significance to music education*. The aim of this study is to transcribe and analyze examples of the different genres of Kenyah recreational songs and to appraise the suitability of Kenyah recreational songs for music education. The first part of the project (the documentation of the songs) has been completed. This second stage of the research involves introducing a set of Kenyah songs to students and/or teachers, who then are asked to complete the attached music questionnaire based on the songs introduced.

You are cordially invited to participate in this research project. Participation is completely voluntary and no remuneration will be offered. Taking part in the workshops will not in any way be a disadvantage to you. You will be free to withdraw at any time and have the choice of answering or not answering any of the questions. All information gathered will be treated with confidentiality and information will be safely stored for the number of years required by the university and used for academic purposes only.

Yours faithfully

.....  
Chong Pek Lin: Researcher

(To be completed and signed by participants)

---

I, ..... have read and understood the contents of this letter and agree to participate in this project.

Signature: .....

Name of participant:

School/ Institute:

(For trainee teachers from Institute of Teacher Education Campus Batu Lintang )

Course and year of study:

#### 1.4 Letter to Parents of Schoolchildren

Dear Sir/Madam

I am currently working on a doctoral thesis in music (DMus) at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. My research project is entitled: *Kenyah recreational songs and their significance to music education.*

The aim of this study is to transcribe and analyze examples of the different genres of Kenyah recreational songs and to appraise the suitability of Kenyah recreational songs for music education. The first part of the project (the documentation of the songs) has been completed. This second stage of the research involves introducing a set of Kenyah songs to students or teachers, who then are asked to complete the attached music questionnaire based on the songs introduced.

I request permission to involve your child in this research project.

Yours faithfully

.....  
Chong Pek Lin: Researcher

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#### Declaration of participation - Parent's or guardian's authorization

I, ..... have read and understand the contents of this letter and give permission to the researcher to involve my son/daughter ..... in this research project.

Signature: .....

## 2. Questionnaires

### 2.1 Form A: Questionnaire for teachers and teacher-trainees

*Sections A and B also appear in Form B (questionnaire for schoolchildren)*

List the songs you have taught to the class concerned.

Example:

	Title of song	Scale	Tone-set	Accompaniment/Strategy
1	Pui Ngeleput	Pentatonic	s l d r m s	Sape and jatung utang ostinato & solfa hand-signs
2	Det Diet	Pentatonic	d r m s l	
3	Ateklan	Pentatonic	s l d r m s	2-part traditional harmony

### Section A

Please give your views on the use of traditional Kenyah songs in Malaysian schools.

Indicate your responses in the boxes provided according to the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

Item no.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	Kenyah songs have attractive melodies					
2	Kenyah song rhythms are suitable for music class activities in school					
3	The lyrics of the Kenyah songs are better able to portray local culture than KBSR <sup>10</sup> songs					
4	More songs from different ethnic groups of Malaysia should be included in KBSR books					
5	The traditional Kenyah lyrics can be mastered easily by schoolchildren					
6	East Malaysian (Sabah and Sarawak) songs should be introduced throughout Malaysia					

<sup>10</sup> KBSR: New Primary school curriculum.

## Section B

Please answer briefly:

1. Do you feel that Kenyah songs are suitable for teaching in class/or for performance in school events? Compare them with the composed songs in the existing KBSR (primary-school) books.
2. Choose two songs that you particularly like and explain why you like them.
3. What is your opinion on Kenyah traditional multipart-singing, e.g. is it easy to learn/are the songs effective as teaching material for harmony in schools?
4. What are your suggestions for instrumental accompaniment?

## Section C

1. Have you ever been involved in stage performances, documentation or dissemination projects for Kenyah songs? Please give details.
2. Describe your feelings about participating in this project/performance.
3. Have you ever visited a Kenyah longhouse (or longhouses of other ethnic groups) in Sarawak? Did this experience influence your opinion on the relevance of songs from the Kenyah and other indigenous communities to the Malaysian school context?
4. Have you ever documented any traditional songs from any community in Malaysia?

## Section D

- I.** Apart from KBSR songs have you used other folksongs in your teaching? Give examples.
- II.** Describe how you have used Kenyah songs in the classroom or for performance in school contexts and the reactions of your students and other members of the community towards the songs. You have the option of answering this section freely or, if you prefer, briefly according to the following guided questions in III, in either English or Malay.
- III. Feedback on teaching of Kenyah songs**
  - 1. What is the (approximate) racial make-up of the class/classes you are teaching?**
  - 2. Introducing the Kenyah**
    - a. (For schools in areas other than Kenyah/Kayan areas)
      - (i) Did your students know about the Kenyah before you introduced the songs to them?
      - (ii) How did you introduce the Kenyah to them?
    - b. (For schools in predominantly Kenyah/Kayan areas)
      - (i) What was the reaction of the populace/parents to the songs you taught in school?
      - (iii) Did they ever sing these songs before or hear their families sing them?
  - 3. Introducing the songs**
    - a. How did you introduce Kenyah songs to them?
    - b. What was the first Kenyah song you taught?
  - 4. Initial reactions**

What were their initial reactions? If mixed, who showed more interest?

**5. Reactions to lyrics**

What was their initial reaction to:

- a. the lyrics in Kenyah , e.g. were they intrigued, amused, disinterested?
- b. (If you taught a translated version)

Was this a literal translation or a singable version in another language? Specify what language.

**6. Appeal of melodies and movements**

- a. Name one or two songs you have taught successfully.
- b. How long did the class take to learn each song?
- c. (For songs with movements)

What were their reactions to the movements?

**7. Melodies and musical concepts**

- a. Give examples of effective strategies you have used for teaching
  - (i) solfa patterns with song?
  - (ii) rhythm patterns with any song?

**8. Harmony**

- a. Have you tried teaching any song in two parts? Name the song.
- b. What strategy did you use?
- c. Have the children succeeded in learning it?

## 2.2 Form B (for Schoolchildren)

### Section A

Please give your views on the use of traditional Kenyah songs in Malaysian schools. Indicate your responses in the boxes provided according to the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

Item no.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	Kenyah songs have attractive melodies					
2	Kenyah song rhythms are suitable for music class activities in school					
3	The lyrics of the Kenyah songs are better able to portray local culture than KBSR <sup>11</sup> songs					
4	More songs from the different ethnic groups of Malaysia should be included in KBSR books					
5	The traditional Kenyah lyrics can be mastered easily by schoolchildren					
6	East Malaysian (Sabah and Sarawak) songs should be introduced throughout Malaysia					

### Section B

1. Do you feel that Kenyah songs are suitable for teaching in class/or for performance at school events? Compare them with the composed songs in the existing KBSR (primary-school) and pre-school books.
2. Choose two songs that you particularly like and explain why you like them.
3. What is your opinion on Kenyah traditional multipart-singing, for example, is it easy to learn/are the songs effective as teaching material for harmony<sup>12</sup> in schools?
4. What are your suggestions for instrumental accompaniment?
5. Have you ever been involved in a stage performance of Kenyah songs? Please give details.

<sup>11</sup> KBSR: Integrated Primary School Curriculum.

<sup>12</sup> An unusual feature of Kenyah songs is the presence of two-part harmony, rare in Asian folk music. In Malaysia it is generally considered difficult to teach children to sing in harmony. Yet the Kenyah achieve this effortlessly. It would be interesting to see if the average teacher can teach this two-part harmony in class.

### 2.3 Record of teaching at SK Ong Tiang Swee (Time span: 10<sup>th</sup> Jan–10<sup>th</sup> April 2012)

Week	Date	Topic /song	Activity	Audio visual aids	Instruments
1.	10 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Introduction to the Kenyah and their music <b>Songs</b> <i>Sai Ulai</i> Score and solfa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>singing with original lyrics</li> <li>traditional movements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>slide presentation and video-clips</li> <li>demonstration of <i>sape</i> and <i>jatung utang</i></li> </ul>	<i>sape</i> , <i>jatung utang</i>
2	17 <sup>th</sup> Jan	<i>Sai Ulai</i> <i>Ilun Pesak Pakui</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>played the tunes with recorder</li> <li>some played <i>jatung utang</i> and <i>sape</i></li> </ul>	slide presentation and video-clips	<i>sape</i> , <i>jatung utang</i> played ostinato and melody
<b>Chinese New Year holidays (23-27 Feb)</b>					
3	31 <sup>st</sup> Jan	<i>Sai Ulai</i> <i>Ilun Pesak Pakui</i>  <i>Ateklan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sang with ostinato accompanied with <i>sape</i></li> <li>sang melody with Malay lyrics and performed dance steps</li> </ul>	presentation of slides and video excerpts from musical drama <i>Dayang Petri and the Magic Rice</i> (scene featuring Batu Lintang students involved in singing and dancing <i>Ateklan</i> , with <i>sape</i> accompaniment)	<i>sape</i> keyboard recorder
4	7 <sup>th</sup> Feb (14 <sup>th</sup> Feb away)	<i>Ilun Kuai</i> – talked about the Argus pheasant, an endangered animal and the use of feathers in Iban and Kenyah culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>divided into groups</li> <li>each group assigned one verse for group presentation</li> <li>Harmony : some sang the lower voice; others sang or played descant on recorder</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>feathers of Argus pheasant (<i>Kuai</i>)</li> <li>Iban and Kenyah hats</li> <li>Kenyah warrior cloak (<i>besunong</i>)</li> <li>women's headdress</li> <li>Kenyah bead necklaces</li> </ul>	recorder keyboard
5	21 <sup>st</sup> Feb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Ilun Kuai</i></li> <li><i>Sai Ulai</i></li> </ul> Practice for group-presentation	Each group sang, danced and acted, accompanied with recorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assorted pieces of cloth in various colours to simulate birds</li> <li>Kenyah costumes and accessories</li> </ul>	recorder keyboard
6	28 <sup>th</sup> Feb	<i>Ateklan</i> melody and descant (harmony)  <b>Choir practice</b> <i>Berjaya</i> (patriotic song in Malay) <i>Ateklan, Ilun Kuai, Telu Tiang</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sang melody while performing <i>tu'ut dado'</i> movements</li> <li>accompanied by <i>sape</i> (ostinato)</li> <li>Harmony: two-part (melody and descant)</li> </ul>	Video-clips of ITE Batu Lintang students performing <i>Ateklan</i> and other songs with <i>sape</i> accompaniment	<i>sape</i> keyboard

<b>5<sup>th</sup> –9<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>Term exams</b>				
<b>12<sup>th</sup> –16<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>Intra-semester break</b>				
<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic /song</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Audio visual aids</b>	<b>Instruments</b>
7	13 <sup>th</sup> March	<b>Choir practice</b> <i>Berjaya</i> <i>Ateklan, Ilun</i> <i>Kuai, Telu Tiang</i>	Choir practised singing in two part harmony with <i>tu'ut dado</i> movements	Video-clips of ITE Batu Lintang students performing <i>Ateklan</i> with <i>sape</i> accompaniment	keyboard
8	22 <sup>nd</sup> March	Revised songs and held an inter-group competition – dramatisation <b>Choir-practice:</b> <i>Berjaya, Ateklan, Ilun</i> <i>Kuai, Telu Tiang</i>	Assorted costumes		keyboard recorder
9	10 <sup>th</sup> April	Revised all songs and administered questionnaire			keyboard

## 2.4 Midterm review: Feedback on the teaching of Kenyah songs

### Discussion:

*Please share your experiences freely. Our discussion will be based on the following questions (slide display featuring the questions in the survey form).*

*It would be helpful if you could write down the main points in this survey form as well.*

### Contents of slide presentation

#### Slide 1: Issues already included in questionnaire

- What did you notice about participants' responses to the songs?
- What strategies were effective in facilitating learning of the songs?

#### Slide 2: Reflections on teaching of Kenyah songs in Chinese medium schools

- What is the (approximate) racial make-up of the class/classes you are teaching?
- Were they familiar with the names of the different ethnic groups in Sarawak?

#### Slide 3: Introducing the Kenyah

- Did your students know about the Kenyah before you introduced the songs to them?
- How did you introduce the Kenyah to them?

#### Slide 4: Introducing the songs

- How did you introduce Kenyah songs to them?
- What was the first Kenyah song you taught?

### Slide 5: Initial reactions

- What were their initial reactions? If mixed, who showed more interest?
- Did you alter your strategies?

### Slide 6: Reactions to lyrics

What was their initial reaction to

- the lyrics in Kenyah e.g. were they intrigued/amused/disinterested/hostile ?
- the translated version of the lyrics?
- Was this literal translation or approximate singable version in Chinese/Malay?

### Slide 7: Melodies and movements

- Name one or two songs you have taught successfully.
- How long did they take to learn each song?
- Did they seem to enjoy singing?
- (For songs with movements): What were their reactions to the movements?

### Slide 8: Melodies and musical concepts

- Did you teach:
  - (i) solfa patterns with any song?
  - (ii) rhythm patterns with any song?
- Do you think they were effective?

### Slide 9: Harmony

- Have you tried teaching any song in two parts? Name the song.
- What strategy did you use?
- Have the children succeeded in learning it?

### Slide 10: Exposure to other songs

- Do they seem to prefer any specific type of song (contemporary songs, Chinese or American pop-songs, children's songs, folksongs)?
- Have you taught any other folksongs to them?
- Name them.

## Appendix D: Notes on *Mamat*

The origins of *mamat* according to the *adet pu'un* view runs as follows:

*When Apoi Akar had grown to manhood, he was told in a dream by Bungan Malan to kill one man of his own race for him to start the Mamat cult. After a man had been slain, his head was taken, smoked and dried outside the village. As soon as the head was dried, a feast of Mamat was held for the reception of the trophy. It was brought to the house by the Mamat feast chief with a grand celebration and lemalo songs sung by the men* (Sandin, 1980:28).

Harrison described *mamat* (1966:287–291) as the greatest of the Lepo' Tau feasts, and a sequence of initiation into a “Brotherhood of Braves”. Only males were allowed to take an active part, and the objective was to raise the spirits of the members, and admit new ones. Describing how he was presented with a precious 20” writing board detailing the 33 *suhān* grades taken by the board-owner at different *mamat* festivals, he cited this as proof that Kenyah society once had a written script. According to his research at Long Nawang, the maximum number of grades reached by an individual was 44. The costumes worn by participants at each feast were also pre-ordained, as listed in detail in Sandin (1980) for 38 successive feasts. For instance, a young man attending his 12<sup>th</sup> *mamat* should wear “a hat adorned with four beaks and four tails of a hornbill, called *Mujan Temengang Pat*” (Sandin, 1980:31).

In Long Nawang, the *adet pu'un* festivities lasted eight to nine days. Elshout (1926:281) in Belawing et. al., 2006:2) described the following sequence for the *adet pu'un* version of the *mamat*:

First day: *pejaka* (headhunters come up from the river)

Second day: *napo sang* in the morning, *pedahu* in the evening

Third day: *Pelubit batu* (rolling the stones)

Fourth day: *Napo ulu yap* (offering a chicken head)

Fifth day: *Mendang daon k'uko ame kuman hang keramen*, hanging on the *keramen* the leaves on which we placed our food

Sixth day: *Tei naho* (going to the fields)

Seventh day: *Dau ketuju pejaka: moko* (People stay home)

Eighth day: *Tei naho*: going to the fields again

Ninth day: *Dau ketuju pelewa: moko* (People stay home).

Some of the rituals as elaborated in Sandin (1980) are given below:

The war-party was welcomed ceremoniously with war-cries (*lemalo*) and food offerings were presented to the headman. On the second day, referred to as *napo sang*, the men collected *sang* leaves which were tied decoratively to the *belawing* pole, on the hill outside the village. At night, all the men gathered in the headman's room and eight dancers, accompanied by eight drummers, would perform until midnight. A second group, who had petitions and prayers for Bungan Malan, would take their place and dance until three o'clock in the morning. On the third day, eight girls walked in procession with chickens, circling eight times around the eight sacred *batu tuloi*. This was followed by a

procession of hundreds of boys walking eight times round the *batu tuloi*. Afterwards, the boys sat around the stones and rolled them eight times each in a circle. Prayers were subsequently recited and the “feast chief” would take the skull and raise it on a pole known as *baway*. Every man present came forward to touch the sacred *baway*. The skull was then brought down and handed to the young men who brought it into the village, singing the *lemalo*. Each family then brought a chicken to be slaughtered by the *paren lepo*’, after which celebrations continued until night (Sandin, 1980:28–30).

The 1968 Bungan ceremony in Long Moh described by Galvin (1968:235–248) lasted only four days. Extracts of his detailed narrative are given below.

On the first day of the feast, the ‘head’(*ulu kayu*) was fashioned from wood at a destination upstream during an earlier ceremony by a contingent of young men: “They all attack the wooden head and raise the war-cry (*lemalo*) and then each stab the head led by the master of ceremonies” (Galvin 1968:248). Prayers were offered to Bungan to ask for blessings and prosperity, and through the intercession of the *sang* leaves, to cleanse all the young men from spirits which bring sickness. He notes that one of the significant differences between *adet pu'un* and *adet Bungan mamaat* ceremonies was that in the latter, the chants seem to have lost their “secret and shamanistic quality” (Galvin, 1968:247) and were in general no more than simple requests to Bungan to ward off sickness and grant health. He also observed what he termed the gradual change from animistic beliefs to belief in a personal deity (Bungan), as shown in an extract from the chants:

<i>Man ulu ni</i>	With the help of this head
<i>Muet ame' man sang ni</i>	and the <i>sang</i> leaves, cleanse us
<i>Apan tega apan jaya</i>	So that goodness and success
<i>Nyalembau ame Lepo' Tau ini</i>	Will be upon us the Lepo' Tau
<i>Singget bulan, singget uman</i>	Every month, every year,
<i>Abe lisa pabe baya</i>	And ever after

When they returned to the longhouse, young boys were invited to stab the head: when the head was hung in front of the longhouse everyone stamped and shouted, while the gongs were played. All four longhouses joined in the beating of the gongs. Compared to Sandin’s version, there was added emphasis on the rank of the participants. The procession of girls on the third day walked 28 times round in order of social rank, and only those of *ketau* rank smeared blood on *ketau* boys. On the fourth day the extra rite of *mending* (rite to ward off sickness) was performed.

## Appendix E: Tonality, Harmony and Emotional response to music

The following section features a summary of recent investigations into the emotional response to music by researchers in the fields of psychology, acoustics, neuroscience, emotion and music, which were briefly referred to in Chapter 5 (5.2.1).

For centuries, Western composers have employed devices such as changes in mode, harmonic progression, tempo, rhythm and melodic contour to evoke a range of emotions in their audience. Some may have done so intuitively, others carefully applying formulas involving minor adjustment of tones and rhythmic patterns, which they knew were effective. The reasons for these effects are now being investigated by combining perspectives from different fields such as those mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Zbikowski (2002) cites both Rameau (1754) and Schonberg (1911) in discussing tonality having its origins in acoustic phenomena. He examines a variety of songs from various periods in Western music. He cites Rameau's analysis (Zbikowski, 2002:123) of Lully's *Armide* recitative, which features a passage in E minor followed by a D major (dominant chord, in an ascending passage suggesting anger), followed by G major , G7, and the subdominant C major accompanied by melodic descent conveying weakness. He discusses how this is related to Rameau's theory of overtones (Rameau,1754) to explain the acoustic basis of harmony and serves to illustrate his theory (Rameau,1737) of "undertones" and how they could account for the origins of the minor mode. These undertones are also used to explain the affectual qualities of subdominant (weakness, tenderness) in contrast to the dominant (as the product of overtones, arouses feelings of vigour and joy). To further illustrate the role of musical syntax, Zbikowski compares (2002:264) Schubert's and Klein's setting of the same poem, Muller's *Trokne Blumen*. The first half of the song potrays the hopelessness and despair that the miller feels for his shattered love-affair, while the second half is full of hope as the miller envisions a happier future. Some similarities include the employment of a shift from minor to major mode; avoidance of a definitive cadence on the tonic and the use of relatively delicate textures, especially in the first half of the song. In his analysis (2002:229-230) of Henderson's and Morton's *Bye Bye Blackbird*, he points out how winter and the "blackbird's doleful pronouncements" are portrayed in a minor mode, changing to G major when the protagonist looks at the sunshine and thinks of his lover and later, in the second verse, back to minor mode in references to longing and hours of waiting.

As suggested in the first paragraph of this section, over the last two decades, a considerable body of research in the fields of psychology, neurobiology and acoustics has been conducted on music and emotional perception. Among the findings, evidence has emerged to support the theory that the perception of emotion in music can be attributed to psychophysical factors, rather than purely cultural factors. Some of these studies were empirical cross-cultural studies, with participants from a range of ethnicities, and using varied genres of music excerpts from a variety of cultures.

Balkwill et al (1999) investigated whether sensitivity to emotion in the music, apart from enculturation to the conventions of a culture's tonal system, may also reflect responses to

psychophysical dimensions of sound that are independent of musical experience. Using a cross-cultural approach (Western listeners rated the degree of joy, sadness, anger and peace in 12 Hindustani raga excerpts and rated four psychophysical variables: tempo, rhythmic complexity, melodic complexity and pitch range) the researchers found that Western listeners were sensitive to the intended emotions in an unfamiliar tonal system (Hindustani ragas) and the raga-rasa system of conveying moods, succeeding for the perception of joy, sadness and anger. They extended this study (Balkwill et al, 2004) to emotional responses (joy, sadness and anger) from a group of Japanese, listening to excerpts of Japanese, Western and Hindustani music. The results showed that listeners were sensitive to intended emotions in music from all three cultures and that this was associated with perception of acoustic cues transcending cultural boundaries (e.g. high ratings of joy were associated with music judged to be in fast tempo and melodically simple; sadness with slow tempo and melodically complex).

Various studies have shown that emotion in music is closely related to speech patterns; e.g. Curtis and Bharucha (2010) demonstrated that the minor third communicates sadness in speech, mirroring its use in music. Using fundamental frequency and frequency ratios as measures, Bowling et al. (2010) showed that differences in major and minor modes in Western music paralleled the differences between prosodic and spectral characteristics of voiced speech sounds (in English) in corresponding emotional states (excited, happy, bright, for major mode versus subdued, sad or dark emotions for minor mode). In a later study (Bowling et al, 2012) they investigated whether tonality and emotion were similarly linked in Carnatic (South Indian) music (with Tamil speech). Their results showed that the tonal relationships used to express positive/excited and negative/subdued emotions in classical South Indian music are much the same as those used in Western music, and matched tonal variations in the prosody of English and Tamil speech. These results are consistent with the hypothesis that the association between musical tonality and emotion is based on universal vocal characteristics of different affective states. These findings support the hypothesis that the association between music tonality and emotion is based on universal vocal characteristics of different affective states.

In his book *Tone of Voice and Mind*, Cook (2002) expounds on neurophysiology (how neurons produce subjective feeling), neuropsychology (how the human cerebral hemispheres undertake complementary information-processing), intonation studies (how the emotions are encoded in the tone of voice) and music perception (how human beings hear and feel harmony). In later papers, Cook (2006, 2009) examines the psychophysics of harmony perception. Maintaining that “although it is fashionable to dismiss the common perception of major and minor harmonies as being merely a cultural artifact” there is a deep bias for children as young as 3 years-old (citing Kastner and Crowder, 1990) and for adults of various cultures to hear ‘sadness’ in minor chords and ‘happiness’ in major chords. He reasons that previous unsuccessful attempts to explain harmony perception relied on psychoacoustic models of dissonance among partials of chord tones. He demonstrates how, by introducing a three-tone “tension” factor , the sonority of triads (major>minor>diminished>

augmented) can be explained and that by invoking the frequency code of linguistics and comparative ethology (the sound symbolism of rising/falling pitch in speech intonations), the characteristic positive/negative valence of the major/minor chords is shown to have an acoustic basis.

A considerable number of recent empirical studies have focused on measuring emotional responses and perceptions of these responses, related to mode and tempo. In many of these, positive valence was associated with major mode and fast tempo, while negative valence was associated with minor mode and slow tempo. Hunter et al (2010) examined responses of 49 undergraduates at the University of Toronto to excerpts of harpsichord music by J. S Bach in both modes at different tempos, comparing “happiness and sadness ratings”. They found that happiness ratings were elevated for fast-tempo and major-key stimuli, sadness ratings were elevated for slow-tempo and minor-key stimuli. Mixed emotional responses (higher happiness and sadness ratings) were elevated for music with mixed cues to happiness and sadness (fast-minor, slow-major). Brattico et al (2011), using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) studies, investigated the effect of “happy and sad music” with and without lyrics. Citing previous studies e.g. by Khalfa et al (2005) with classical pieces using “sad pieces in minor mode contrasted with happy pieces in major mode”, they extended the investigations using participants’ self-selected music, mainly from pop and rock genres. Using participants’ behavioural ratings, it was shown that happy music without lyrics induced stronger positive emotions than happy music with lyrics. These findings point to the role of acoustic cues for the experience of happiness in music.