



HAL
open science

The Spell of the Ancestors at the “Feast of Victory” (Nemlaay): From Initiation Ritual to Community Blessings

Antonio J. Guerreiro

► **To cite this version:**

Antonio J. Guerreiro. The Spell of the Ancestors at the “Feast of Victory” (Nemlaay): From Initiation Ritual to Community Blessings. *Moussons : recherches en sciences humaines sur l’Asie du Sud-Est*, 2024, 44, pp.5-39. 10.4000/134x0 . hal-04921272

HAL Id: hal-04921272

<https://cnrs.hal.science/hal-04921272v1>

Submitted on 30 Jan 2025

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L’archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d’enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



Distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution - NonCommercial - ShareAlike 4.0 International License

The Spell of the Ancestors at the “Feast of Victory” (Nemlaay): From Initiation Ritual to Community Blessings

Alliance avec les ancêtres lors de la « Fête de la Victoire », Nemlaay : de l'initiation à la revitalisation de la société

Antonio J. Guerreiro

**Electronic version**

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/moussons/11885>

DOI: 10.4000/134x0

ISSN: 2262-8363

Publisher

Presses Universitaires de Provence

Printed version

Date of publication: December 15, 2024

Number of pages: 5-39

ISBN: 979-10-320-0543-9

ISSN: 1620-3224

Provided by Aix-Marseille Université (AMU)

**Electronic reference**

Antonio J. Guerreiro, “The Spell of the Ancestors at the “Feast of Victory” (Nemlaay): From Initiation Ritual to Community Blessings”, *Moussons* [Online], 44 | 2024, Online since 15 November 2024, connection on 30 January 2025. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/moussons/11885>; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/134x0>



The text only may be used under licence CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. All other elements (illustrations, imported files) are “All rights reserved”, unless otherwise stated.

The Spell of the Ancestors at the “Feast of Victory” (Nemlaay) From Initiation Ritual to Community Blessings

Antonio J. Guerreiro *

Aix Marseille Univ, CNRS, IrAsia, Marseille, France

INTRODUCTION

In the month of June 2004, the village of Long Tuyo’—the first village above the rapids in the upper Mahakam area, population 502 inhabitants—decided to commemorate the anniversary of its foundation on the site (1904) by celebrating the Nemlaay Festival, more properly named the “Feast of Victory.” The Festival forms an initiation ritual for the young men and boys, besides a celebration of the warrior group proper.¹ Until the late 1940s, it was mostly connected to a victorious headhunting expedition and it was practiced frequently in the village, almost yearly or every two years. Then since the early 1960s the impact of the conversion to Catholicism, including in Long Tuyo’, and the implementation of

* Anthropologist, linguist and museographer, Antonio J. Guerreiro is a senior research associate at the Institute of Asiatic Researches, IrAsia (Aix Marseille Univ, CNRS, Marseille, France). He is a member of ICOM-France. Currently executive-secretary of the Society of Euro-Asiatic Studies (SEEA) in the Musée du Quai Branly, Paris, Dr. Guerreiro has carried out research on Indianized and Tribal cultures in Southeast Asia since the 1970s. He specialized later on the peoples of Borneo. He did many studies and published on various topics related to the local cultures in insular Southeast Asia (Borneo, Sumatra, Bali, Sumba, Timor). In the 1990s, he started working as a consultant for museographical projects in France and abroad (Indonesia, Malaysia, The Philippines).

the Provincial administration in the upper Mahakam area made it difficult to organize. Because of its lavish expenses, the feast was considered irrelevant to the actual living conditions. The last time Nemlaay was actually celebrated, before the revival of the *adat* traditions, was in 1966 after the *Konfrontasi* with Malaysia (Sarawak) when warriors returned to the village. It is noteworthy that Nemlaay was performed only again in 1993, then as a prestigious celebration of the Long Glaat culture in the frame of the revival of the *adat* traditions that took place since the early 1990s (Florus *et al.* 1994: 40ff; Roedy Haryo Widjono 1998: 14ff). At this occasion, the leadership of Belawing Belarè', after the passing of his father Bo' Belarè' Liah (Po' Delay) in 1987, was established at regional level. He was the administrative *adat* chief for the whole upper Mahakam (*kepala adat-istiadat besar*, i.e. paramount customary chief). His son inherited the title as well. In this sense, the revival of the ritual was also an attempt to revive the political and ritual hegemony of the Long Glaat, established by military campaigns about two centuries ago (Nieuwenhuis 1904, I: 275-284). All the chiefs and leading men from other communities in the upper and middle Mahakam area were invited. On the other hand, initiation rites for boys and warriors which are the backbone of the ritual had lost their appeal because of the development of the educational system by the Catholic mission since the early 1970s.²



Fig. 1. Sketch Map of Borneo Island

Adapted from Hermansyah (2010).

However, recently the Nemlaay took other meanings, while conserving a core of representations linked to the social and ritual status of men (*edaat lekay*). Long Tuyo’ is the most important village of the Long Glaat³ where the chiefly line is still keeping the traditions of the people although they are mixed with two Busang subgroups, the Uma’ Tepé and Uma’ Palah.⁴ While the Uma’ Lekwé (Uma’ Manuk Kwé) do live nearby in a separate community—still administratively under Long Tuyo’s *desa* jurisdiction. The village of Long Tuyo’ has been occupying the site since 1904 on the right bank of the Mahakam river. However, at the end of the 1950s, it moved downstream to the mouth of the Tepay River during a few years. The move was motivated by an unusual number of deaths that had occurred in the community, the dreams of the elders inhabitants (*tempiin éak*) suggested that the change could be a good idea. Then the village came back to the same site in 1960. At that time a Nemlaay was performed under the direction of the chief Po’ Delaay—he was also high priest (*lun daung puyn*) of the community—and paramount customary chief for the whole area above the rapids (Sellato 1980). The Feast celebrates lavishly the brave ancestors of the village and its chiefly line, since they migrated to the Mahakam in the late 18th century.

In the early 2000s the Nemlaay and related rites were part of a revival of *adat* traditions, linking the culture and social life, tourism and development in the Upper Mahakam district (*kecamatan* Mahakam Ulu). The annual Hudo’ Mask Festival taking place in the area, from Ujoh Bilang to Long Pahangai, at *padi* sowing time in September-October, constitutes another aspect of these processes. It sustains the exchanges between the ethnic subgroups and promotes Bahau Busang peoples’ cultural identity, at the same time revitalizing their heritage and history (compare Schiller 1997 for the Ngaju area). Such events usually get exposure in the local press, involving also government officials—as special permits from the *kabupaten* and *kecamatan* offices are necessary to hold these large ceremonies. Besides, there is a possibility of getting a grant from the *kecamatan* office in the frame of local “cultural activities” (*kegiatan kebudayaan*), generally administrated under the Kabupaten Tourism Bureau (Dinas Parawisata Kutai Barat). However, in contrast to the open to all Hudo’ Festival, the scale of Nemlaay during six days, and the restricted participation to the initiation rites—only initiated villagers being admitted to the first/second phases taking place outside the village and in the men’s house *peteh*—make it unique. Then, the cost of the ceremony, including feeding hundreds of guests from other villages, preparing the warrior’s ornaments and gear, limits its occurrence. In 2004, “big men” and chiefs from various Kayanic groups in the Mahakam Basin and far as West Kalimantan (Mendalam Kayaan people) joined in the celebration in Long Tuyo’. On the other hand, the Dangé (Busang), Nè’ Belaam (LG) Great Feast, “To Care for Life,” which is carried out during six days, is more often performed among the Bahau Busang, also in Long Tuyo’ (Blawing Belareq 2007). At this occasion the women ritual specialists’ (*dayung*) are in charge of the ceremonies, including name-giving rites for the children (*na’ araan anaak/nè’ ngeliin niak*). This later ceremony includes restricted rites, i.e. those performed by the priestesses in the Dangei hut, when uttering invocations and singing, which



Fig. 3. Carved figures

Carved figures of hornbill and anthropomorph suspended on bamboo poles at the main landing-place for welcoming a victorious headhunting party and the guests in the village before Nemlaay actually starts.

Photo: Antonio J. Guerreiro, Long Tuyo', May 30th, 2004

are closed to the other participants. In contrast to Nemlaay, it is meant to “invite” (lit. *dangé*) and feast distinct categories of spirits, as well as peoples from other villages. The core of Dangé rites, performed by Kayaan and Bahau Busang, are connected to agriculture, family life and prosperity, establishing harmony within the community and the whole region, not praising war and the murder of enemies. Nevertheless, in the early 2000s the performance of Nemlaay as those of the Dangé and Hudo’ Festival, had become an opportunity for fellow villagers, relatives and friends from neighbouring communities to meet and renew old links.⁵

THE TRADITIONAL FEATURES OF THE RITUAL

The Nemlaay belongs to the category of initiation rituals, in central Borneo such rites are specifically linked to the head-taking Festival.⁶ The ritual comprises several phases and the initiation of boys and adolescents constitutes its main social aspect, besides lesser functions (grade-taking for the warriors, purification of the village, founding of a new settlement, etc.). Despite the overall similarity in the structure of the initiation ritual and grade-taking in the region, the distinctive aspect of the Long Glaat’s and Long Way’s Nemlaay, or the Wehèa’s Nemlèn, would appear to be related to the presence of the men’s house institution (*peteh*). Among the Wehèa of the Telen-Wahau rivers, the right to build an *ewéang*, a men’s house, is inherited according to the descent line of the aristocrats (Guerreiro 1992, 1993b, 1998). However, among the Loong Glit, the ceremonies are taking place in the chief’s “great house” gallery, the *peteh puyin*. Actually, the chief’s house (*mesooa puyin*) forms a separate building, standing in the centre of the settlement (Guerreiro 1997, 2003). This pattern was still used during the last celebrations of the Nemlaay in 1993 and 2004.

At the occasion of such ceremonies the relations of the people to the spirits of the recent dead and remote ancestors are *made visible* for society. The collective representations suppose that they bestow their protection in exchange of the respect shown to them by their relatives, fellow villagers who are members of a ritual unit of various size (age group, gender group, household, village, etc.). The food offerings, vegetal and animal, are a material expression to that. Then, status and rank of past ancestors are to be reckoned with. Because in this ritualized context they encompass the social values and activities (settlement founding, war, hunting, agriculture, special skills, etc.), linked to the reproduction and growth of society. Bad and good ancestors, like people who have died a “bad death” or a normal death, are also distinguished and they receive ritual treatment accordingly. The foremost individuals could be praised in epics and songs as well.⁷ This is done in order that their influence on human affairs should turn beneficial rather than dangerous.

Among Kayanic speakers and related peoples, aristocratic descent lines are a distinct feature of these societies. To the point that social hierarchy—of a hereditary character—, overlaps at a certain extent with ritual hierarchy (compare Bell [1992: 171ff]; Rio & Smedal [2009: 34 ff]; Rousseau [1990, 1998]). Then culture

heroes whose deeds are evoked in myths and/or epics can be considered as “lower deities”: they have introduced new activities (agriculture, ritual traditions, etc.) and/or rules of social behaviour, i.e. the custom (*adat*). Other figures do form a category of the “spirits of a place,” i.e. of the land. They are mentioned in the etiological myths as the “persons of such and such places,” the spots referred usually include flat river banks, stones, mountains and rivers, marshes or even trees. These spirit entities are remembered by their proper name and small offerings are made when travelling to these places or even when passing in front of them. However, the “bad dead” do belong also to this category. The same can be remarked about important chiefs, when paying respects to their mausoleums (*blah, bilah*). I remark that Kayanic and Modang-speaking groups (Bahau Saa’, Long Way, Long Tesah, Long Glaat, Wehèa, Menga’ay and related Pnaan peoples in Berau area) have more interest for ancestral spirits than their neighbours in central Borneo. Among these peoples long genealogies (*pehuu’*, *sot* “descent lines”) are a testimony to the importance of the ancestors, especially for the chief’s and leading aristocratic families. The ancestral names’ (*ngelan po’bo’*), used in the genealogies are also relevant in this regard, the mnemonic formulation usually combines the term for “descent” (*pehuu’*) and the ancestral name of an individual, formed of two or three segments: e.g. *pehuu’ Lung Wang Ding*: “the descendants of Lung Wang Ding” (see Appendix). At this point reciting the lineal genealogy in a ritual context constitutes an invocation of the ancestral spirits, which are considered as protective entities of the house or whole village, especially in the case of a village chief’s household (Guerreiro 1983, 1993b, 1999, 2002a, 2002b).

THE NEMLAAY RITUAL

The ritual sequence of Nemlaay, as it was practiced traditionally in Long Tuyu’, can be summarized as follows, it comprised three main phases (I am presenting below the core rites performed during the Nemlaay):

1. Upstream of the village in a forest camp on the left bank of the Mahakam, the elders, *edaat* specialists and the village chief spend three days and nights. Under the leadership of the elders and the chief, the fire (*poa*) is kept burning in the camp during the whole period to let it out would be causing misfortune (*duway’*) to the group. During this phase, the main rites are “bird augury” (*lè’ nyuhuun* lit. “to take the omens”) actually to “look for luck,” especially the positive omen of the bird *menauk sayts*—called *burung jantung* in Kutai Malay—, it is accomplished by the chief and the elders. Then, the *nengkiek* “to give offerings” is performed by the *hapooy* chief as a master of the ritual, the essence of the head trophy and the eggs are presented first to the six higher deities and the forest spirits, the Thunders, on an altar in front of the river, decorated with a victory pole (*belawaèny*).

On the third night, the group of warriors and younger participants coming from the village, gather in the large gallery of the chief’s house, the *peteh puyn*. Then, in the middle of the night they leave for the camp (*piea nyehuun*) to assemble with



Fig. 4. Initiated old warrior at the forest camp,
on the night before returning to the village

The man wears panther teeth inserted in holes in the upper cavity of the ear (*udaang*), a symbol of warrior status.

Photo: Antonio J. Guerreiro, Long Tuyo', May 31st /June 1st, 2004

the elders who had been preparing the site the day before. They all come back to the village on the fourth day morning, together on the same canoes. The ritual processing of the head trophies (*kahaung*)⁸ by all participants, takes place then in the early morning. The trophy heads, or fragments of old skulls (*kahaung*), are kept in palm leaves bundles (*baung woèh*, *Licuala* sp.).

2. During their journey back to the village, the participants’ longboats are tied together like a raft. Upon their return, the participants go to sleep in the gallery of the chief’s great house, the *peteh*. There they perform prayers, offerings and sacrifices to different categories of spirits during two whole days.

On the 5th day, in the morning and late afternoons, they go out of the *peteh* and perform various rites, processions; the dances are also enacted by the warriors with their weapons and shields on the main plaza in front of the chief’s house/*peteh*, at this occasion they are joined by a group of women and girls

3. On the 6th day, in the late afternoon, they return to sleep in their respective households. The following morning (7th day), a closing rite takes place on the beach (*neha*) in the island/sand bank facing the camp, there they partake of a ritual meal, while invocations to the gods and ancestors are uttered by the chief in order to lift the prohibitions (*plii*) and obtain the final blessings for the community.

On some occasions, the Nemlaay was celebrated after a longhouse was gutted by fire or an epidemic. Another good reason is the death of a chief or his spouse. The ritual would thus purify the community of the pollution caused by death, then head-taking as a form a blood-letting was compulsory, even if the fresh head came from a neighbouring village.⁹

The main function of the ritual was, until the end of the interethnic wars and headhunting expeditions (*ngeniu*), to process ritually the “fresh trophy heads” (*kahaung*) collected by the warriors before their return to the village to “celebrate the victory lavishly,” which is the literal meaning of the intransitive verb *nemlaay*. Several phases of the ceremony taking place in the forest camp upstream (*mi piea nemlaay*) had the function of repelling the spiritual dangers coming from the spirits of the severed heads, it explains that tobacco and betel-quid were offered to the skulls trophies, just after drying them. The offerings and sacrifices were supposed to make them harmless and also to increase the “luck” of the warriors in future expeditions. The coming of one or more skull trophies in the community should bring by itself many blessings, according to the beliefs of the Loong Glit, i.e. the demographical growth of the village, bountiful *padi* harvests and good health for all the inhabitants (*ne’ belaam kah* lit. “to make the good life”). In the socio-religious representations of the Long Glaat, health, virility and fertility are linked causally as expressions of “life,” and they were related implicitly to the coming of a fresh head trophy in the community (Needham 1976).

The ritual was meant as well to purify the warriors after their stay in the dangerous realm of the forest where the malevolent spirits, especially those of the “bad dead” (*lun petay éak*), are staying. Also of the contact with the “hot” pollution of death and the murder of enemies (*benu*), in order that they could resume a normal, “cool” life (*belaam hangaam*) back in the village. It is why the first phase of the

ritual takes place in the camp, where the returning warriors spend three days and three nights together, before coming back to the community as “full men.” During the stay in the camp, they are considered to be in an intermediary state between spiritual beings (*meta*) and ordinary men. The participants are thus cleansed by the offerings and “reintegrated” into society by the ritual process which operates a transformation upon them, after a separation period. In the camp they could be approached in dreams (*tempiin*) by major deities, ancestral spirits, or their personal helping spirits (*tuun*). The men and boys actually seek these encounters. It is considered highly lucky to have such dreams. Alliances with spirits entities of different nature are thus established by the men, outside the inner space of the village. In the forest, the men are clearly subordinated to the deities and various spirits of the “wilderness” including the Thunders, while in the village, protected by their founding *hapooy* ancestors and the heroes of the past, they are bold enough to ask for a “good life” for the community. In the same time, the village space is purified by the feast taking place on the central plaza and in the *peteh puyn*.

Structurally, the process of attracting the combining flows of blessings from the spirits in order to renew the health and fertility of men and women in the village, could be compared to the notion that the “soul of padi” (*welguen pellè*), which is “hooked” yearly by the *hapooy* chief of the masks (*lun hapooy*) at the *hedo*’ masked dance ritual, does regenerates the plant fertility and thus facilitates its growth. At the same time, the ritual fights against the pests and spiritual diseases, malevolent spirits’ influences. The main difference lies in the fact that the *hedo*’ rituals are performed yearly, now on four days at several intervals of time during the *padi* sowing period (late September/October to early November).¹⁰ While the Nemlaay concentrate *at one time* all its beneficial effects, *belaaam kah*, the “good life” when the ritual is fully completed according to *edaat*. Furthermore, during the performance of Nemlaay, ritual time and space were clearly marked in opposition to normal social life. No other activity, except ritual cockfighting, was permitted during the Feast. The Nemlaay should be considered as well in the frame of the annual *padi* cycle: it takes place after the *padi* harvest is completed in the months of May/June, and when sufficient supplies have been gathered in order to feed the numerous guests,—all the important men (*lun puyn*) and chiefs (*hapooy*) from neighbouring villages are invited, even far afield.¹¹ It takes place also before the starting of the new swidden agricultural year (about the end of June/early July).

THE INITIATION RITES

During their stay at the camp, the young men should learn the various songs (*daung*) of the Nemlaay which are sung by the elders. They also learn to make the plaiting ornaments from *Licuala* sp. palms (*baung woéh*), they are used as headgear, armlets and leg rings: wearing these ornaments signify that they are participants in the ritual. At the camp, the elders would tell stories and anecdotes of past headhunting expeditions to the adolescent boys. The participants are divided into two broad categories: the “warriors” who have already accomplished one

or several war expeditions against enemies and the younger adolescent boys, who take part for the first time to the ceremony in the camp (on the third night of Nemlaay). It is considered broadly as a “warrior training.” The boys are permitted to hit symbolically the processed skull placed in a plaiting of *Licuala* palms (*nyekiit kahaung* lit. “to spear the head”), also with their *mandau* sword while uttering loud victory screams (*nge’u*). The warriors and the adolescents are submitted to the same taboos, which are meant to protect and, at the same time to increase their strength (not to drink water, not to eat other food than steamed rice). I was told that at the last Nemlaay in Long Tuyó’ (1993), smoking or betel-nut chewing was not permitted as well.¹²

Finally, on the last afternoon (6th day) all the participants coming out of the *peteh puyn* proceed to plant a post of light wood around the plaza (formerly it was done on the river bank as photographs of the 1953 Nemlaay do show [Ivanoff 1955]). This rite is named *enjaap saauk*, lit. “to strike the *saauk* post” (the post shows three bark rings or indentations made with the *malat*). The post forms the material sign of their participation to the Nemlaay, it is left to decay on the spot. Then the whole group, including the boys followed by their fathers, move to dance on the plaza (*lehaan*) from left to right in a circle, dressed in full paraphernalia and holding painted dance shields. Later, they hung the last bamboo plaited offerings trays (*lege’*) on the rafters of the *peteh*. This is the last day, the main rites have been performed in the village. Now, they can go back to sleep in their households as spiritually “stronger” men and boys.

The Nemlaay ritual categories provide also a set of ranking (graded status) for boys and men in the community, these are relevant mostly to the village inner space not the camp outside:

1. *Ma’aaits*: very young male children (age 3-5), that their fathers bring to the Nemlaay, afterwards, their hair can be cut ritually for the first time. The father should take the child with him in order to practice the *ma’aaits* rite.
2. *Penbih*, the first time young adolescent boys participate in Nemlaay. After this event they are considered as full human beings. Subsequently, it is compulsory for them to join in all Nemlaay celebrations organised in the village.
3. *Empuh Nemlaay*, this the level above the *penbih* corresponding to a second participation to the ceremony, then the adolescents reach adulthood: they are now allowed to flirt with girls, and later to marry if they wish to.
4. *Ne’ Kenayn*, becoming an adult male (*lekay*), a participant is entitled to wear and use the family heirlooms which are considered as sacred (spear, blowpipe, *mandau* sword, shield) as well as war charms and a set of special clothes (loincloth, armour, hat).
5. *Lemlai’ Pèn gui*, joining in the feast is synonymous to re-entering the village as a full member for those have lived outside the community for a long time, away from the region or abroad, it is basically a thanksgiving for their safe return.

6. *Sekay*: these are important men from neighbouring Dayak villages or even far afield, mostly of *hipuy* rank but commoners of high status/brave warriors can join too. Besides the “newcomers,” i.e. strangers who have married in the community or settled there, are acknowledged as full village members by participating in the rites.
7. *Empeak eak*: participating in the Nemlaay cleanses a widower of the pollution caused by the death of his wife; the same notion applies to beavered men still in mourning (either commoners or aristocrats of various status). By joining in Nemlaay, the man’s household is purified from the stain and spiritual risks caused by death, as he obtains blessings from the spirits or “luck” (*ton*).

Table 1. Nemlaay’s Participants Ranking and Status

| Name | Grade & Meaning |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 st Ma’aaits | low; lit.: “to cut” [the hair]; it applies to male infants only |
| 2 nd Penbih | low; lit.: “first timer” for young boys |
| 3 rd Empuh Nemlaay | low; lit.: “nemlaay couple” applies to adolescents |
| 4 th Nè’ Kenayn | high; lit.: “making the attire” for young men |
| 5 th Lemlai’ Pèn Gui | high; lit.: “returning” (from outside the village) |
| Sekay | lit.: “guest” |
| Empeak Eak | lit. “to throw out evil,” the name refers to both widowers and bereaved men |

Further precisions on Nemlaay ranking are necessary. As far as seasoned warriors (*lun lekin*) are concerned, those who did participate in the ritual at least *three times* undergo a grade system each time. They are allowed to wear some particular ornaments—a set number of hornbill feathers/argus feasant feathers—, and a clouded leopard teeth in the upper lobe of the ear. The system reckons up to the 17th participation to Nemlaay. The upper and last grade in the hierarchical scale being called *Sentauk* (lit. “unique”). Then the warrior whatever his social rank, noble or commoner, wears only *one single* hornbill feather (*kelèp teguyn*) placed vertically on his rattan cap (*tepa lege*). According to *edaat*, each grade is named by a different term: after participating to Nemlaay, a warrior can thus wear a number of hornbill feathers (*Buceros rhinoceros*), and, for the upper grades (after the 9th time) some long feathers of helmeted horbill (*Rhinoplax vigil*). In practicing the rites under the village chief’s authority, an important distinction is established between warriors of noble rank (*hapooy, penguwé*) and those coming from the commoner’s rank (*pengayn*), notably in their dress and ornaments. At this occasion, they sacrifice to the higher deities, including the Thunders, and Sky deities, and on separate days to their own protective spirits (*tuun*). Until the late

1950s, dependants (*megui*) owned by the village’s chief (*hapooy puyn*) had no right to participate in Nemlaay. Obviously, the ritual exalts the higher social status of the nobles and that of upper ranks’ commoners. Besides, animal sacrifices (pigs, piglets, fowls), are very expensive, they contribute to the prestige of the whole household. During Nemlaay each participant ought to sacrifice an adult pig as well as a piglet during the ceremony, what is actually called the “cattle” (*taan* lit. [to sacrifice] cattle).¹³ The ritual prohibitions experienced by the initiates during the first and second phases of Nemlaay are less popular among the Loong Glit since the practice of headtaking has been suppressed. The Feast token value for younger adolescents lies mostly in the warrior’s outfit, the processions and merrymaking taking place on the last days of the ceremony.

OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES TO THE SPIRITS

Not surprisingly, the ritual relationships of the participants to their ancestors, both male and female, takes place in the internal village space. The first day upon their return to the village (4th day of Nemlaay), when entering the *peteh* (*entum la peteh*), the men should ask permission first to their ancestor’s spirits in male line, i.e. their fathers, grandfathers great-greatfathers, to carry on the Nemlaay *edaat*. The food (rice and egg) is offered to their personal helping spirits, then it is cooked in a bamboo on the fire of the *peteh*. The participants, especially the younger boys do touch the food on banana leaves, then some of it is set apart to be given as offerings to the protective spirits of the warriors. The men and boys taking part in the rituals put on a bead bracelet on their right wrist (*ngatong leko*), before moving into the *peteh*. This is done in order to “strengthen their souls” (*menghayn welguen*) when they will be invoking the different classes of spirits, all being considered as powerful *meta*—as the soul may escape by the wrist. During the celebration of the rituals by the warriors under the chief and the elders’ direction, a distinction is made between the people of noble rank (*hapooy* and *penguwe*) and the ordinary commoners (*pengayn*), first regarding the ornaments they are allowed to wear. Secondly, they make sacrifices to the higher deities, a series of six deities, ancestral spirits of their own descent line, also to other entities including Thunder spirits’ (*delaay*), heroes of the past and helping spirits (*tuun*) on two separate days. In making the offerings, they have to follow the order of precedence distinguishing social ranks, because the spirits themselves are conceived of belonging to different estates (the three main strata mentioned above).¹⁴ These spirits are invited to come to the *peteh* to partake of the offerings by reciting long invocations (*nyekéang*), each man first calls upon the deities and ancestral spirits (*meta*), then to his personal helping spirit (*tuun*).¹⁵

The personal prayers of the *hapooy* men (they are called *nyèngngiin* in this context, lit. “to hold one’s breath”), are addressed to the higher deities and lesser spirits, including their ancestors (*po*), to convey both individual and more general concerns. Traditionally each participant of *hapooy* rank had to sacrifice an adult pig (*jum*) and also a piglet (*niak jum*). The blood is used at first to make an onction

(*m̄laa*) on the men's right arm and on banana leaves for a ritual fanning of all the participants (*nguwoong*). Interestingly, the offerings (*pekiin*) are also of two categories, raw and cooked, respectively the *pekiin séak* and *pekiin metè'*. The first are given to the higher deities and the ancestral spirits of the men, while the second are made for the lower spirits and "Thunders." At this point, the *inversion* of the nature of the offerings suggests that the "spirits helpers" and Thunders are probably considered closer to the world of men than the higher spirits including the foremost male ancestors of the *hapooy*.

Then on the early morning of the 5th day, coming out of the *peteh puyn*, the men and boys perform the main ritual *engkoh po'*. Then the souls of the ancestors of the participants and those of the inhabitants are "raised" in order that they participate in daily tasks in the realm of the dead, just like their living grandparents of both sexes (*po'*) in the village of the living. At the difference of the prayers made in the *peteh*, which are addressed only to the male ancestors of the participants, at this occasion all the dead relatives and remote ancestors of the inhabitants are called upon *collectively*. The rite takes place just before dawn. The elders warriors and the younger boys who are initiated would go down to the river bank and use banana leaves of a particular species (*Musa paradisiaca*, *uun petoa liin*) to fan the water, downstream then upstream, while singing the song *engkoh po'* in each direction, first in the raising/setting sun directions, then towards the river and the mountain. Finally, they would spat on the ground (*nè' tehui*) screaming together *hui!* This is supposed to avoid bad luck (*duway'*) in the future, be it in trade, farming or war activities.

Clearly at this point the ancestral spirits called upon, mostly of a collective nature, are associated to the closing of the performance of the Nemlaay in the village, while numerous culture heroes, great men of the past have been mentioned by name in the invocations in the *peteh* during the previous (last) day—they are possibly former chiefs, war leaders, big men or priests (see Metcalf [1982: 218-222, 247-248, 1989]). Most of these figures are characters from the oral tradition mentioned in the *sekéang* invocations (see Appendix). However, the souls of the ancestors (*welguen po'*) of the aristocrats and *edaat* specialists, in the male line (*sut lekay*), are also addressed in their individual prayers (*nyèngngiin*). Usually, they can reckon up to about the tenth or twelve ascending generation for the main *hapooy* lines,¹⁶ much less for the lesser nobles and "good" commoners (*pengayn kah*), usually only four to seven.

VALUES OF NEMLAAY

The gender relationship is a prerequisite of the Nemlaay, as men should abstain to have intercourse with their wife or even physical contacts with other women or girls during the ritual. Other rituals would rather stress the women's role.¹⁷ On the third night of the Nemlaay, just after the village participants' have left to join the returning warriors in the forest camp, the ladies' group (*sah ledoh*), mostly married women, perform a series of rites to protect the men's souls (*welguen sah*



Fig. 5. Matrons in the village

Within the village inner space, matrons beat flat gongs to call in the participants to the main piazza in the center of the village, *welguiny méyn*.

Photo: Antonio J. Guerreiro, Long Tuyo', June, 2004

lekay) from all spiritual dangers. In turn, when the Nemlaay participants return to the village in style, the women's group and the girls assemble on the plaza *lehaan* (formerly it was on the raised platform *deluyn*, in front of the chief's gallery, the *peteh puyn*). Then, the girls and women would lift the *mandau* sword of each passing participant out of its scabbard, before he enters the *peteh*, it is the rite called *lè' pele' lay* (lit. "to take a gift"). Maybe this is done to achieve a reciprocity in the ritual. On one hand the women gaining thus a part of the men's strength, or it may represent fertility. Then, it would be expressed metonymically by the steel of the most lethal weapon, the *mandau* sword—literally meaning "head cutting"—moving back and forth into the scabbard? By analogy, the *motion of the sword* would magically increase the fertility of the women and girls. Actually, all married women and unmarried young girls, from adolescence to old age, lift swords, which are kept clean, and the steel is shining. They take the sword by the handle and put it again into the scabbard in a rapid motion (Mauss 1950a, 1950b).

Table 2. Ritual oppositions and blessings during Nemlaay

| OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE | :: | INSIDE THE VILLAGE |
|--|----|--------------------------------------|
| SPIRITS (+) > (MEN (-) > | | MEN, BOYS (- +) |
| ALLIANCES TO THE DEITIES/ SPIRITS > | | GROUP BLESSINGS (+) |
| WARRIORS' GROUP (+) | | |
| /INDIVIDUAL LUCK (+) | | > BLESSINGS FOR THE COMMUNITY (+) |
| | | -MEN/WOMEN/ CHILDREN (- +) |

+ : more valued status

- : less valued status

Back in the village central space, the dances and sacrifices offered to the deities, culture heroes and important ancestors, are made by the warriors and younger men to exalt the social and ritual status of the participants. Near the end of the Nemlaay, on the sixth day, the women and girls are invited to dance, however *outside the circle of the warriors and boys*, on the main plaza in front of the *peteh*. Accordingly, after the main rites and dances are completed in the *peteh*, the 6th day at night, the men are allowed to go back to their houses and wives, having interactions with female relatives in the household. This is done in order to avoid any risks of "bad luck" in the future. While in the forest camp and also in the *peteh*, the men are cooking for themselves. The background idea that the contact with



Fig. 6. On the first day

On the first day of Nemlaay in the village, the eldest warrior of high ranking, dressed in full war gear, invokes (*nykéang*) his tutelary spirits and the protecting ancestors of the community on the behalf of villagers and guests. He addresses the spirits in front of a *telkéak* altar with an egg offering.

Photo: Antonio J. Guerreiro, Long Tuyo', June 1st, 2004

menstrual blood can pollute the warriors and the boys, causing misfortune to the headhunting party, is still particularly strong. On the reverse, headhunting maybe be considered as well as a kind of “impurity” *inflicted on the women by men*.¹⁸

INTERPRETATION OF NEMLAAY

In short, I suggest that the Nemlaay aims at renewing periodically the bonds of the Long Tuyu’ community with the major deities and the strong spirits of the environment (sky, forest, mountain and river), which are considered ambivalent. Besides, the ancestral spirits of the *hapooy* chiefly line (*kum po’sah hapooy*), they include named “culture heroes” supposed to be from the aristocratic and commoners ranks. However, no actual genealogical links can be established by the participants to these epic characters. Generally, the benevolent spirits are credited of the “good luck,” i.e. prosperity, growth and continuity of the village against the enemies and all the looming dangers (fire, epidemics, climatic imbalance, etc.). While the souls of the ancestors of the community (*welguen po’*) are called upon collectively during the *engkoh po’* rite, lit. “to wake up the ancestors,” in order to pay their respects to them, but only at the end of the Nemlaay, after the main sacrifices and offerings to the *meta* spirits are over. This is done discreetly in the middle of the night. How these blessings are conceived and sought after by the community necessitates a larger, comparative, frame of reference. Reimar Schefold has analysed in the modalities of the “stream of blessings” in three Indonesian (Western/Eastern Austronesian) societies (Schefold 2001). The ritual order on which the “internal coherence” of society is based in these cases can be related to a holistic core. Furthermore, as Schefold remarks, quoting Schulte Norholt (1971), the ritual order is never in a state of equilibrium. The case of the Nemlaay in Long Tuyu’ illustrates the point fairly well. Schefold relates the communal rituals of the Sakkudei (Mentawai), the initiation rites of the Merina of Madagascar (after Bloch, 1986), and the all-embracing ceremonies of the Tana ‘Ai of Flores, besides those of other Indonesian societies (Nias, Laboya in Sumba, Roti).

In connection to the argument proposed in this article, that in central Borneo, as much as in other Austronesian areas, a large community ritual *renews periodically the bond of the community* with gods, culture heroes and ancestors alike (see Puyuma exemple, Cauquelin [1992, 2004]; Dozier [1967]; Lebar [1974]; Rosaldo [1980]; Sather [1980, 1993]), the Sakkudei’s case proposed by Schefold is particularly relevant because it involves headhunting as well. I am outlining only the main points of the analysis which stress the convergence as the cultural differences, expressed between two mains categories of blessings. In Sakkudei society on Siberut Island, off West Sumatra, the relationships between blessings from the spirits of wilderness—those of animals, forests, rivers, and mountains—, and the genealogical ancestors blessings’, appear to be associated to the flows of blessings obtained in large-scale rituals organized at community level. Both categories of blessings are sought after to be *transferred on the living*. In the great *Puliaijat* ritual

which renews the society annually, two main sources of blessings are expected by the *uma*, the ritual longhouse community of the Sakkudei (Schefold 1988). The order of precedence is also relevant in this patrilineal descent society organized along clan lines: first the Sakkudei sacrifice to the spirits of the genealogical ancestors of their *uma* to ask their protection. Then, to the spirits of the forest, including animal spirits: at this occasion the meat of the monkeys hunted ritually is an important source of food. A favorable hunt is also a sign that the spirits do “approve” of the offerings made to them. Significantly, the hunt realizes the “transfer” of the blessings of the indigenous forces of the forest to the world of humans which depends on it for its well-being. Schefold noted that the modalities of the blessings demonstrate at this point an ambivalent character, it shows the dependency of the men, the “receivers” of the blessings, upon the “givers” of blessings, the spirits. It clearly involves a *form of compensation*: the sacrifices and offerings.¹⁹ In this connection, I note that to be successful, the Loong Glit headhunting forey depends also on the support of the higher deities, the omens given by them or the ancestors, and the help of ambivalent forest spirits. Besides, it could be remarked that the association of various flows of blessings, congruent with the notions of *physical health and well-being*—in Siberut it is called “life” *purimanuaijat*—is stressed more than “fertility” itself in the ritual. As I pointed out above, the goal of the Nemlaay is expressed as to achieve a continuous “good life” and “luck,” i.e. prosperity for the community.

A recurring theme in Indonesian cosmologies is that the situation prevailing in the spirit world—or in the world beyond—is the *reverse* to the one that exists in the human world, could also explain *the inversion of food offerings* made to the two categories of spirits taking place in the *peteh puyn*. The higher deities and ancestral spirits of the chiefs’ line—considered as “founders” of community, they do form the source of “origin” and they are thought as *meta* or deities—get crude pork meat offerings while the spirits of the forest, headhunting victims, ambivalent thunders spirits (*delaay*) are offered pieces of cooked meat, roasted on the fire (*poa*) in the *peteh*. The inversion of precedence at this point could perhaps be related to an *initial human dependency* on the first category of spirits. This idea could be further explained in connection to the concept of headhunting. Schefold remarked that:

Headhunting can be viewed, at least in certain respects, as an extreme way of securing the autochthonous spirits, various Indonesian headhunting rituals reveal that the custom is certainly more than just acquiring a kind of “life force” from a slain enemy. (Schefold 2001: 371.)

In short, to the community headhunting does imply a lasting bond with a certain category of spirits in order to obtain a flow of blessings, i.e. prosperity, fertility and good health, as it is expressed literally in ritual statements. In this respect, the “receiver” of the blessings *is the community itself and not only the warriors’ group*, humans are able to reciprocate, but only imperfectly. Thus, they remain in *the spirits’ debt*, and the bond has to be renewed periodically by obtaining a supply of fresh trophy heads. It means also that trophy heads *before being the warriors’ gift*

to the community are a sacrificial offering made to the spirits and deities. In this perspective, it is striking that specific sets of oppositions that direct the flows of the blessings are underlying both the Sakkudei and Loong Glit headhunting rituals, albeit with some distinctions that I am pointing out.²⁰ In the ritual, it appears that protection is granted by a former category of remote deities, while “luck” and prosperity, attached in securing the “spirit of the trophy head” (*meta kahaung*), would derive from spirit agencies, as summarized below (table 3).

Table 3. Flows of spirit blessings and oppositions during Nemlaay

| | | |
|---|-----|--|
| spirits (upper world/lower world) | >>> | humans (<i>uma/méyn</i> /village) (outside x inside/men x women) |
| ° ancestors' spirits | x | autochthonous and other forest spirits |
| ° higher deities/ ancestral spirits of the chief | x | lesser spirits of commoners |

x: opposite to

Another complementary interpretation can be added. I have argued that the birds and other omen animals could be well a manifestation of ancestral spirit entities, as they point to “good” and “bad” behaviour according to *edaa*t rules. Omens are taken before or during any important undertaking, and especially headhunting raids. In such a way, that long past ancestors *have become anonymous in the course of time*, and they have come to be identified with the “ambivalent” forest spirits in opposition to the malevolent spirits of “bad dead” (*petay éak*) of both sexes, the latter being called *wéén*, “ghosts.”²¹

During the Nemlaay, in the personal prayers of the chief and elder men (*nyèn-ngiin*), their dead relatives can be addressed either by their personal names (*ngeliin po'*) or only by kinship terms (father, grandfather, great-grandfather, great-greatgrandfather, collectively or not, according to the individual). The ancestral spirits of the *hapooy* and the great men are considered indeed as protective agencies for the warriors, besides other lower spirits, which are their familiars' or “helping spirits” (*tuun*) similar to those of the shamans, *daung*. The latter category may include natural elements or mythical animals' spirits (the great Thunder deity, Tiger, Bear, Panther and heroic characters of the epics, compare Li' Long & Ding Ngo [1984]). The *kempöè* helping spirits of the Wehèa men, are showing similar characteristics. They bestow special powers (*ton*) on the men to whom they are allied by an “agreement,” *petde'* (Guerreiro 2002a: 97-98). Ordinary male ancestors play almost no role in Nemlaay because they are not a source of blessings or “powers,” then warriors just pay their respects to them. While culture heroes

and deified spirits of famous *hapooy* chiefs have become *meta*, these half-human and half-spirits heroes are particularly sought as protectors and not only by their lineal relatives, but by all men, because they are considered as the forebears of the whole village.

Among the Loong Glit, it is the famous two brothers *hapooy* who have conquered the upper Mahakam area and founded the main settlements above and below the rapids in the first half of the 19th century, Po’ Lejiu Li’ and Po’ Ibau Li’. Besides, a strong leader named Po’ Ding Tong, who initiated the move from the Kejiin high plateau (Apo Kayan) to the Mahakam watershed, is remembered by the elders (Ding Ngo 1987). After about two centuries and a half of living together, the Lung Glaat follow presently the avoidance of the dead which is characteristic of the Busang and Kayaan people in the upper Mahakam. They have taken to the beliefs of their more numerous neighbours. Formerly, the chief’s wooden coffins and those of their household members would be placed high up in caves or cavities on rock faces (*gueng utaa* or *liaang* in Busang language).²²

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Although the core of the Nemlaay, i.e. the initiation rites and warrior training for the young boys and men—the live-saving force of the village during headhunting times—, remains a martial value in society, the changes have been tremendous.

After the celebration of the 2004 Nemlaay, a “memorial” remains in Long Tuyo’, near the *hapooy*’s great house in the centre of the village, a pillar with hand stencils of the major participants (government officials, mature men who have a warrior status and guests from other communities) stuck in cement.²³ It bears testimony to the proud heritage of Long Tuyo’ and its inhabitants, a new feature in a centuries-old ritual.

During the last twenty years the elders, warriors who had practiced headhunting in their youth, intimately connected to the traditional life in Long Tuyo’ and other villages have passed away. Although, ritual knowledge has been transmitted to the people of succeeding generations, they are now living in a different world. The impact of mobile internet, *Whatsapp* groups’, television shows and dynamic political activities related to East Kalimantan local elections and development projects is being felt (infrastructures, urbanisation, a new Indonesian capital in Penajam, Pasir, *Ibu Kota Nusantara*, IKN). University education has also become popular among the aristocratic elite and the wealthier families. While Christian beliefs are being more pervasive in everyday life, the lifestyle related to the *padi* agricultural cycle becomes less relevant to society. Great rituals such as the Dangé can be performed every five years or so in a village, although in a reduced form, showing a Catholic varnish. For the villagers, blessings sought from Christ and the Church are joining those of the Busang higher deities, To’/Tipang Tenangan, Tamei Tingé. While the yearly Hudo’ Mask Festival, with its exciting dances and merry moments, meant to neutralize the pests of *padi*, has become the Bahau Busang peoples—including the Lung Glaat in Long Tuyo’—, key identity ritual.



Fig. 7. The commemorative pole (*jehoa nemlaay*)

It is carved with the figure of a dancing warrior holding up his mandau sword and a shield (*tup*) on a large jar. Actually, this ironwood pole was made in 1993 at the conclusion of the last Nemlaay in Long Tuyo', then it was moved to the side of the *peteh puyn*. A bulbed gong is placed on the top of the pole.

Photo: Antonio J. Guerreiro, Long Tuyo', June 7th, 2004

It attracts also tourist attention through the *kabupaten* and Provincial tourism office network. The village chosen to be the host of the celebration, lasting about three days, in the upper Mahakam area (Hulu Mahakam), is known in advance and advertised several months ahead in the local press.²⁴ Then the legacy of Nemlaay in Long Tuyu’ has become a relic from a glorious past.

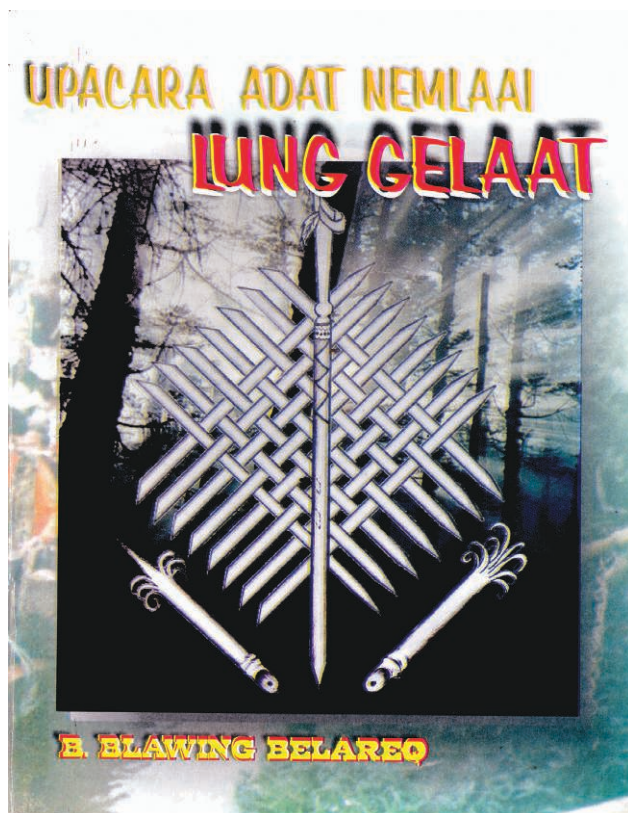


Fig. 8. Cover of booklet by B. Blawing Belareq

The background design shows a bamboo offering tray (*lege*) which is woven by the warriors for placing their personal food offerings in the *peteh puyn* with its phallic shaped decorations (*lau' tebeloong*); in the middle of the picture stands the carved pole marking the participation of each warrior in the ritual *saauk*.

Source: Blawing Belareq (n.d. 1)

Notes

1. I should point out that as an honorary member of the village, I was able to participate all the phases of Nemlaay and document them *in situ* with the help of the elders and ritual specialists, besides I filmed on video the most important ritual acts performed during Nemlaay. The tapes have been now transferred to dvds and should be edited

in the near future. Photographs taken by the French Expedition to the upper Mahakam in 1952-1953 were also used to elicit information about the phases of the ritual, the implements and ornaments used during Nemlaay. I conducted interview sessions in the chief's house with the chief and his advisers before the ceremony actually started and exchanged with the warriors during the night I spent in the forest camp. Precisions on the meaning of the rites were obtained after the ceremony was completed (compare Ivanoff [1955]; Raymond de Seynes, member of the Ivanoff expedition p.c.). There are very few visual sources about Nemlaay, and other ceremonies of this category in Borneo. The film made during Ivanoff's expedition was shot in 16mm, a copy is kept at the National Museum of Natural History (MNHN) in Paris.

2. The schools are being managed by a private institute (*yayasan*) in Samarinda's bishopric, integrated into the Indonesian State educational system.
3. Loong Glit, lit. the "mouth of the Glit River," being their autonym in their own language.
4. In Long Tuyo' the vehicular Busang language is the common *lingua franca* among the inhabitants as in other communities of *kecamatan* Long Pahangai, maybe at the exception of Long Kuling, where the "mixed" Kayaan language is spoken by a large majority of the people, although most males do understand and speak Busang (compare Barth 1910: xii-xiii; Nieuwenhuis 1904 vol. I: 275-276). Now, the Uma' Lung Glat are part of a "Bahau Busang" cultural group of the upper Mahakam, to the point that the *adat* for marriage and fines (*hukum*) is shared by the Uma' Suling and the Long Gelaat (Anonymous 1986; Blawing Belareq n.d. 1). Despite their small numbers in the upper Mahakam region the Long Glat still retain an important political influence in the region. Until the present generation they have maintained a unique ethnic and linguistic identity in the upriver villages. Besides they are part of the Busang peoples, known as *Busang Lung Glat*. Loong Glit speakers are still found below the great rapids in the Bahau villages of Ujoh Bilang and Long Hubung, since the late 1980s they have renewed the old links between the "Modang" speaking-groups and the Bahau Saa', by developing intermarriages and trade relationships. In short, the revitalization of the Loong Glit language seemed possible in 2004, while in the 1980s it was disappearing fast (in an historical perspective compare Barth 1910; Coomans 1980; Guerreiro 1993b, forthcoming 2; Tromp 1889; Nieuwenhuis 1900, 1904 [I], 1907 [II]; Sellato 1980).
5. In Long Tuyo' during the length of Nemlaay stalls selling handicrafts, cheap jewelry, beadwork, and clothes, warung offering snacks and drinks, were popular with the villagers and guests. Interestingly, Long Tuyo' villagers and VIP guests were offered a white polo shirt with the wording on the back: DANGAAI NEMLAAI HUT 100 TAHUN LONG TUYOQ.
6. It is practiced on a various scale among the Kayan, Modang and Kenyah subgroups and related peoples such as the Berawan, Sebup, and the Kajang peoples in Sarawak: Achmad (1942); Baling (2002); Belawing Belareq, no date 2 ; Ding Ngo (1987); Elshout (1926); Galvin (1966, 1968, 1974); Guerreiro (1992, 1993a, 1993b, 1998); Harrisson (1966); Lebar (1972); Liah Hong Djeng (1969); Lumholz (1920); Mapping Madang & Galvin (1966); Metcalf (1982); Rousseau (1988, 1998); Sellato (1992, 2002); Strickland (1995); Tillema (1938, 1990); compare Dozier (1967), Rosaldo (1980) (Northern Luzon, Philippines).

7. See Lii’ Long & Ding Ngo (1985); Mering Ngo (1991); Strickland (1995) about a Kejaman-Sekepan epic.
8. The classification of trophy skulls by the Loong Glit distinguishes: a) human trophy skulls obtained at war *kahaung lun*, b) orang utan skulls (*halaung letiin*, hunting trophies) and c) *ben’u* skulls; the latter are considered to be “incarnations” of deities from the Apo Lagaan/Po’ Legiin region of the upper world that have been thrown out down to earth—they are only known from oral tradition and myths.
9. It was the case in 1954 in the Long Pahangai area when a Nemlaay was celebrated after the burial of the first wife of the chief of Long Tuyo’, then a fresh head was procured from a neighbouring village, probably that of a former slave, *dipen* (Hans Sombroek, p. c.1989). The last time the Nemlaay was performed in 1993, it still followed a traditional pattern. A previous celebration took place in 1966 when the men returning from the *Konfrontasi* with Malaysia on the international Indonesian-Malaysian border were reintegrated ritually in the community. The 2004 “Feast of Victory” lasted from June 1st (night) to June 5th (morning). The night preceding the ceremony, May 31st, a preliminary rite was performed in the upriver camp until dawn, fire (*poa*) was being lighted ritually there using the traditional way.
10. On the *hudo’/hedo’* ritual, the spirit masks *hudo’ kayo’* and related beliefs, see Baling (2002); Devung et al. (1985-1986: 41-44), Devung (1992); Ding Ngo (1987); Guerreiro (1992, 2018); Heppell (1992); Hose & MacDougall (1912); Jaang Paran (1988); Liah Hong Djeng (1969); Nieuwhenuis (1900, 1904 vol. I: 323-331, 1907 vol. II); Rassers (1928); Sombroek (1980a).
11. Word is given months ahead that a Nemlaay will be taking place in the village an appointed day, so that important men of warrior status and leaders of other communities have time to prepare for the journey.
12. According to *edaat Nemlaay*, in order to strengthen their resistance during their stay in the camp, the participants of all age, ritual status and social ranks should respect the following taboos—they recall the difficult conditions of life in the forest during a headhunting expedition (*ngeniu*) lasting more than one month, with very little food: – eat only rice cooked in bamboos; – do not use salt with rice; – meat, fish or vegetables are not permitted as side dishes with rice; – not sleeping either during the day or night; – using clothes during the night (a *sarong* or bark-cloth blankets) is forbidden;– if they are too sleepy, the participants should take a bath in the river, even at night; – in the morning, at dawn, they should also bathe. In 2004 all these prohibitions were reduced to a symbolic role. However, a key taboo was maintained during the Nemlaay: participants should not sleep or have a close physical contact with women. On the other hand, in the recent past, the *first participation to a Nemlaay* would allow the adolescent boys to wear a *palang* bar in their penis (Loong Glit *kaléng*), beginning thus their official sex life. The use of a penis pin being a way of boasting of their sexual capacity. Headhunting and virility were associated in the thinking of the Loong Glit, and generally of Modang-Manga’ay, Bahau and Kayaan peoples (Guerreiro forthcoming 1).
13. However, at the last celebrations of Nemlaay (1993, 2004) the number of animals sacrificed was limited. It should be noted that the pigs’ meat is eaten in the course of the ceremony, after that the spirits have “received” the sacrifice and blood unctions (*m’laa’*) are performed by the elders and the chief. While the piglets serve also for divination, their gall bladders being examined by the elders in order to foretell of good

- or bad omens for the village. Then a couple of large pigs and three piglets are sufficient for the whole village.
14. According to custom, the slaves, originating from the prisoners of war or their descendants, cannot participate in Nemlaay.
 15. Often these spirits are associated to special charms kept by the warriors (Guerreiro 2022). Conversely, weapons such as *mandau* swords according to the steel alloy used are credited with special powers, Guerreiro (2002a, 2002b).
 16. Among the Modang and related groups (Medéang/Long Way, Wehèa, Long Blah, Manga'ay), aristocrats do have an extensive genealogical knowledge, especially women (Guerreiro 1983).
 17. During the *Dangé* (Busang) or *Nè' Belaam* Feast, lit. "To Care for Life" ceremony made on a smaller scale female deities and ancestresses' souls are invited to come to the village and the older women priestesses are in charge of the ceremonies, including name-giving rites for the children (*na' araan anaak/nè' ngeliin niak*), see Blawing Belareq (2007); Sombroek (1980c); Lumholz (1920); Nieuwenhuis (1900, 1904, 1907) compare Guerreiro (1999).
 18. On this connection, see Metcalf (1982: 152-153); Guerreiro (2002a). The general idea is that flowing menstrual blood metonymically may equates to *a wound* during war or headhunting expeditions.
 19. It can be noted that among the Sakuddei these sacrificial offerings are not exactly parallel to the compensation of goods in the symmetrical matrimonial exchanges of one *uma* with another *uma* (Schefold [1988]; compare De Josselin de Jong [1977, 1982]).
 20. Sakkudei society, rather of an egalitarian character, does not show a formal hierarchy or a ranking system, only the priests and seers (*rimata*) having a superior ritual position and status compared to the other members of the community. However, Sakkudei society presents a distinction between rich and poor households. The ritual longhouse *uma* serves essentially during large-scale communal rituals (Schefold 1988, 2001).
 21. Among the Modang-Ga'ay in general these spirit agencies are also distinct from a category of male Thunder spirits. While the omens spirits (*nyehuun, nehon*) are supposed to protect the members of the village *in their own territory*, by giving advice periodically by bird's and animal's cries or encounters. Obviously, the process of augury is lessening anxiety in difficult situations, and it is the time when the cultural heroes/ancestors' support, is sought by uttering *sekéang* invocations in ritual contexts, outside/inside the village protected space (among the Wehèa compare the role of *enjuk* invocations inside the village, Guerreiro [2002a, 2023]; on invocations and oral style, Metcalf [1989]).
 22. It is not the case anymore, about the "journey of the dead," see Sombroek (1980b). The Long Tuyó' cemetery shared by Lung Glaat and Busang peoples, located on the other side of the river from the village, lies downriver. After a burial has been performed, it is considered as a "dangerous place" (*gueng éak*): the roaming soul of the dead is still lingering near the coffin during the decomposition period of the corpse (*oang*). Later, the dead person's soul (*welguen lun petay*), is conceived to be moving to the village of the dead. While the vital principle or "breath" (*ngiin*), dissolves into the air at the moment of death. In practice, the coffin is brought on a barge to the cemetery at Liu Mulang, at this stage it is accompanied only by the close relatives of the deceased

person. However, in the case of a village chief, a larger crowd escort him to its last residence on earth, but then only *older men* can move up the coffin to the mausoleum (*blah*), or now the tomb-hut, because they have stronger souls than women and young men. According to Bahau Busang’s belief, the latter when their souls are been “snatched” by the spirits of the dead, could not resist it. In the afterworld, the souls of the ordinary dead gather in a community of the dead (compare Lii’ Long & Ding Ngo [1984, I: 263-265]; Hose & MacDougall [1912, II: 42-43]; Leach [1952]; Metcalf [1982: 233-239, 248-250]; Rousseau [1998: 298-323]; Sellato [2002]; Sombroek in Coomans [1980: 296-316]).

23. At the close of 1993’s Nemlaay, a wooden anthropomorphic post was carved up, it was erected on the upstream side of the main plaza where the ceremony did take place.
24. For instance, in *Tribun Kaltim* and *Kaltim Post*, both dailies are published in Balikpapan. Videos of the Festival appears on YouTube (“Hudo’ Festival Mahakam Hulu”). In the same line it is noteworthy that “Upacara Dangai Bahau Busang” is represented on the Internet, on YouTube and on several web sites, including short articles in Bahasa Indonesia.

References

- ACHMAD, S., 1942, “Dajakse adat in Goenoeng Taboer”, *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 101: 1-48.
- ANONYMOUS, 1986, *Undang-Undang Adat Umaq Suling dan Long Gelaat tentang Perkawinan*, Long Pahangai, Kantor Kecamatan Long Pahangai, mimeogr.
- BALING (Lake’), 2002, *The Old Kayan Religion and the Bungan Religious Reform*, translated and annotated by Jérôme Rousseau, Samarahan: Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Institute of East Asian Studies.
- BARTH, J. P. B., 1910 *Boesangsch-Nederlandsch Wordenboek*, Batavia: Landsdrukkerij.
- BLAWING BELAREQ, n.d. 1, *Upacara Adat Nemlaay. Lung Glaat*, Samarinda: Blawing B.
- BLAWING BELAREQ, n.d. 2, *Upacara Kayo Bahau*, Samarinda: Blawing Belareq.
- BLAWING BELAREQ, 2007, *Belayan Hadui Adat Dangai. Bahau Busang Kayaan Mekam*, Alexander Ajang, ed., 2nd edition, Samarinda: Adrianus Liah.
- BELL, Catherine, 1992, *Ritual Theory. Ritual Practice*, London-New York: Oxford University Press.
- COOMANS, Michael, 1980, *Evangelisatie en Kultuurverandering*, St Augustin: Steyler Verlag, “Studia Instituti Missiologici Verbi Divini 28”.
- CAUQUELIN, Josiane, 1992, “La ritualité puyuma (Taiwan)”, *Bulletin de l’École Française d’Extrême-Orient*, 79 (2): 67-101.
- CAUQUELIN, Josiane, 2004, *The Aborigenes of Taiwan. The Puyuma: From Head-hunting to the Modern World*, Routledge: London & New York.
- DE JOSSELIN DE JONG, P. E., ed., 1977, *Structural Anthropology in the Netherlands. A Reader*, The Hage: Martinus Nijhoff.

- DE JOSSELIN DE JONG, Patrick. E., 1982, "Introduction", in *Pandji, The Culture Hero. A Structural Study of Religion in Java*, W. H. Rassers, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff "KITLV Translation Series 3".
- DEVUNG, Simon, ed., 1985-1986, *Naskah Rekaman Upacara Tradisional 'Lali' Ugaal' Suku Dayak Bahau Hwang Triing Kalimantan Timur*, Samarinda: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (Proyek Inventarisasi dan Dokumentasi Kebudayaan Daerah).
- DEVUNG, Simon, 1992, "Latar belakang mitologis", in *Hudoq Indonesia. East Kalimantan (East Borneo)*, Zailani Idris, ed., Tenggarong: Lembaga Perkembangan Kebudayaan Kutai (LPKK), pp. 17-21.
- DING NGO, A. J., 1987, *Sejarah Orang Kayan*, Padua: Mendalam, mimeogra.
- DOZIER, Edward. P., 1967, *The Kalinga of Northern Luzon, Philippines*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- ELSHOUT, Jacob M., 1926, *De Kenya-Dajaks uit de Apo-Kajangebied*, s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff.
- FLORUS, Paulus, DJUWENG, Stepanus, BAMBA, John & ANDASPUTRA, Nico, 1994, *Kebudayaan Dayak. Aktualisasi dan Transformasi*, Jakarta: Grasindo/ Gramedia/ LPS3 - Institute of Dayakology.
- GALVIN, Anthony D., 1966, "Mamat: Leppo Tau-Long Moh", *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 13: 296-304.
- GALVIN, Anthony D., 1968, "Mamat Chants and Ceremonies, Long Moh, (upper Baram)", *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 16: 235-248.
- GALVIN, Anthony D., 1974, "Headhunting: Fact of Fiction? (An Enquiry into the Religious Aspects of the "Mamat Ulu" festival of the Leppo" Tau Kenyah, Long Moh), *Brunei Museum Journal*, 3 (2): 16-143.
- GUERREIRO, Antonio J., 1981-1982, 2004-2005, Unpublished field notes, upper Mahakam area.
- GUERREIRO, Antonio J., 1983, "Le Nom des ancêtres et la continuité", *Asie du Sud-Est et Monde Insulindien*, XIV (1-2): 51-68.
- GUERREIRO, Antonio J., 1992, "Intégration au rituel des groupements Modang Wehèa", *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, 79 (2): 9-44.
- GUERREIRO, Antonio J., 1993a, "Towards a Reconsideration of the Role of Adat in Central Borneo, in *Development and Change in Borneo*, V. Sutlive, ed., Williamsburg: Borneo Research Council, Proceeding Series, pp. 129-148.
- GUERREIRO, Antonio J., 1993b, "Modang", in *Encyclopedia of World Cultures. East and Southeast Asia*, vol 5, P. Hockings, ed., Boston: G. K. Hall, pp. 185-187.
- GUERREIRO, Antonio J., 1994, "Prières kayan lors des semis du riz (Sarawak, Bornéo). Un essai d'interprétation", in *Texts from the Islands. Oral and Written Traditions of Indonesia and the Malay World*, W. Marshall, ed., Ethnologica Bernensia 4, Bern: Institut d'Ethnologie, pp. 43-73.
- GUERREIRO, Antonio J., 1997, "Modang", in *Encyclopedia of the Vernacular Architecture of the World*, vol. 1., Paul Oliver, ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1139-1140.

- GUERREIRO, Antonio J., 1998, “The Modang’s Men’s House in regard to Social and Cultural Values”, in *Indigenous Architecture in Borneo: Traditional Patterns and New Developments*, R. L. Winzeler, ed., Philipps (Maine): Borneo Research Council Proceedings Series n° 4, pp. 69-87.
- GUERREIRO, Antonio J., 1999, “Le mythe de Long Déang Yung. Récit Modang Wehèa de l’origine du riz et des augures”, *La Mandragore. Revue des littératures orales* (Parthenay), pp. 142-163
- GUERREIRO, Antonio J., 2002a, “A Note on ‘Spirits Helpers’ in the Lung Lejie Epic of the Wehèa Modang”, in *Between Worlds. Linguistic Papers in memory of David John Prentice*, K. Alexander Adelaar & R. Blust, eds., Canberra: Pacific Linguistics 529, pp. 95-110.
- GUERREIRO, Antonio J., 2002b, “L’Esprit de la forge dans le Sud-Est Asiatique: croyances et techniques”, *Eurasie*, 11: 31-74.
- GUERREIRO, Antonio J., 2003, “The Bornean Longhouse in Historical Perspective: Social Processes and Adaptation to Changes” in *Indonesian Houses*, P. Nas & R. Schefold, eds., Leiden: KITLV Press, pp. 283-328.
- GUERREIRO, Antonio J., 2018, “Coming Down to Earth: Dance of the Hudo’ Spirit Mask”, in *Treasures from Nusantara: Objects Stories for a New Sarawak Museum*, Grace Balan-Law, ed., Kuching: Sarawak Museum Campus Project (SMCP), pp. 3-6.
- GUERREIRO, Antonio J., 2022, “Token of the Spirits: Charms and Amulets of Borneo”, in *Borneo à cœur. Hommage à Bernard Sellato. L’Argonaute de la forêt tropicale*, Pierre Le Roux, ed., Auxonne: Le Murmure Éditeur, pp. 363-399.
- GUERREIRO, Antonio J., 2023, “The Wehèa’s Shamanic Healing and Rites: An Anxiety-Reducing Mechanism?”, *Shaman*, 31 (1-2): 5-32.
- GUERREIRO, Antonio J., forthcoming 1, “The penis pin in Borneo and the Philippines”, in *Oxford Handbook of Body Mutilations*, F. Manni, ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- GUERREIRO, Antonio J., forthcoming 2, *Kamus Bahasa Long Glaat-Bahasa Indonesia*, ms.
- HARRISSON, Tom, 1966, “A Kalimantan Writing Board and the Mamat Festival”, *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 13: 287-295.
- HEPPELL, Michael, 1992, *Masks of Kalimantan*, Melbourne: Indonesia Arts Society (exhibition catalogue).
- HERMANSYAH, 2010, *Ilmu Gaib di Kalimantan Barat*, Jakarta: KPG Gramedia, EFEQ, Stain Pontianak/KITLV.
- HOSE, Charles & MACDOUGALL, William, 1912, *Pagan Tribes of Borneo*, London: Macmillan and co., 2 vols
- IVANOFF, Pierre, 1955, *Coupeurs de têtes de Bornéo*, Paris: Arthaud.
- JAANG PARAN, 1988, *Petengaraan hudo’* [The speech of the mask], Long Isun, Kecamatan Long Pahangai, ms.
- JUYNBOLL, H. H., 1910, *Catalogus van het Rijkmuseum. Borneo. Deel I (Borneo eerste gedeelte), deel II, (Borneo tweede gedeelte)*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, Kecamatan Long Pahangai, Kaltim.

- LEACH, Edmund, 1952, "A Kejaman Tomb Post from the Belaga Area of Sarawak", *Man*, 50: 133-136.
- LEBAR, Frank M., ed., 1972, *Ethnic Groups of Insular Southeast Asia, vol. 1. Indonesia, Andaman Islands and Madagascar*, New Haven Yale University Press.
- LEBAR, Frank M., 1974, *Ethnic Groups of Insular Southeast Asia, vol. II. The Philippines and Formosa*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- LIAH HONG DJENG, 1969, *Masyarakat Modang dan Pengaruh adatnja*, Samarinda, Skripsi Akademi Pemerintah Dalam Negeri n° 116, mimeogr.
- LII' LONG, S. & DING NGO, A. J., 1984, *Syair Lawe'. Palawan demi kekasih*, 5 vols., Jogyakarta: Gajah Mada University Press.
- LUMHOLTZ, Carl, 1920, *Through Central Borneo*, 2 vol., New York: Charles Scribner's and sons.
- MAPING MADANG & GALVIN, Anthony D., 1966, "Adat Suen (Sebob graded rites)", *Sarawak Museum Journal*, Special Monograph I: 305-320.
- MAUSS, Marcel, 1950a, "Esquisse d'une théorie générale de la magie", *Année Sociologique* 1903-1904, in *Sociologie et anthropologie*, Paris: Puf, pp. 3-141.
- MAUSS, Marcel, 1950b, "Essai sur le don. Forme et raison de l'Échange dans les sociétés archaïques", *Année Sociologique* 1923-1924, in *Sociologie et anthropologie*, Paris: Puf, pp. 145-279.
- MERING NGO, 1991, "Les ancêtres, les chefs et leurs descendants" in *Bornéo. Des 'chasseurs de têtes' aux écologistes*, Antonio Guerreiro & Pascal Couderc, eds., Paris: Éditions Autrement, "série Monde 52", pp. 118-124.
- METCALF, Peter, 1982, *A Borneo Journey into Death. Berawan Eschatology from its Rituals*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- METCALF, Peter, 1989, *Where are You Spirits? Style and Theme in Berawan Prayer*, Washington-London: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- NEEDHAM, Rodney, 1976, "Skulls and Causality", *Man*, 11: 71-88.
- NIEUWENHUIS, Anton W., 1900, *In central Borneo. Een reis van Pontianak naar Samarinda*, 2 vols, Leiden: E. J. Brill.
- NIEUWENHUIS, Anton W., 1904, *Quer Durch Borneo*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, vol. I.
- NIEUWENHUIS, Anton W., 1907, *Quer Duch Borneo*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, vol. II.
- RASSERS, Willem H., 1928, "Naar aanleiding naar eenige masks van Borneo", *Nederlandsch-Indië Oud en Nieuw*, 13: 35-64.
- RIO, Knut M. & SMEDAL, Olaf B., eds., 2009, *Hierarchy. Persistence and Transformation in Social Formations*, Oxford-New York: Berghahn Books.
- ROEDY HARYO WIDJONO, 1998, *Masyarakat Dayak Menatap hari Esok*, Jakarta: Grasindo/Gramedia.
- ROSALDO, Renato, 1980, *Ilongot Headhunting 1883-1974. A Study in Society and History*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- ROUSSEAU, Jérôme, 1988 *Central Borneo. A Bibliography. Sarawak Museum Journal*, vol. XXXVIII, n°59 (Sarawak Museum Journal Special Monograph n° 5).
- ROUSSEAU, Jérôme, 1990, *Central Borneo. Ethnic Identity and Social Life in a Stratified Society*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

- ROUSSEAU, Jérôme, 1998, *Kayan Religion. Ritual life and Religious Reform in Central Borneo*, Leiden: KITLV Press, Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde 180.
- SATHER, Clifford, 1980, "Introduction", in *Iban Adat & Augury*, Benedicte Sandin, Penang: University Sains Malaysia, pp. XI-XLV.
- SATHER, Clifford, 1993, "Posts, Hearths and Thresholds: The Iban Longhouse as a Ritual Structure", in *Inside Austronesian Houses; Perspectives on domestic designs for living*, James J. Fox, ed., Canberra: Department of Anthropology, Research School of Pacific Studies, pp. 64-115.
- SCHEFOLD, Reimar, 1988, *Lia. Das grosse Ritual auf der Mentawai Inseln*, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag.
- SCHEFOLD, Reimar, 2001, "Three Sources of Ritual Blessings in Traditional Indonesian Societies", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 157 (2): 359-381.
- SCHILLER, Ann, 1997, *Small Sacrifices. Religious Change and Cultural Identity among the Ngaju of Indonesia*, New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- SCHULTE NORDHOLT, Herman G, 1971, *The Political System of the Atoni of Timor*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Leiden VKIV, volume 60.
- SELLATO, Bernard, 1980, "The Upper Mahakam Area", *Borneo Research Bulletin*, 12: 40-46.
- SELLATO, Bernard, 1992, "Rituel, politique, organisation sociale et ethnogène: les Aoheng de Bornéo", *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, 79 (2): 45-66.
- SELLATO, Bernard, 2002, "Castrated Dead. The making of Un-ancestors among the Aoheng, and some Considerations on the Dead and Ancestors in Borneo", in *The Potent Dead: Ancestors, Saints and Heroes in Contemporary Indonesia*, H. Chambert-Loir & A. Reid, eds., Crows Nest, NSW, Australia: Allen & Unwin; and Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, pp. 1-16.
- SOMBROEK, Hans MSF, 1980a, "Bijlage I: Petengaran Hudo (Toespraak van de Hudo)", *Evangelisatie en Kultuurverandering*, in M. Coomans, ed., St Augustin: Steyler Verlag, "Studia Instituti Missiologici Verbi Divini 28", pp. 287-295.
- SOMBROEK, Hans MSF, 1980b, "Bijlage II & III: 'Pelka to'", in *Evangelisatie en Kultuurverandering*, M. Coomans, St Augustin: Steyler Verlag, "Studia Instituti Missiologici Verbi Divini 28", pp. 296-313
- SOMBROEK, Hans MSF, 1980c, *Dangei*, Samarinda/Ritan Baru, ms. (dutch translation with notes of the manuscript of the Dangé ritual by Domenikus Ding Tukau and Bu' Bulan Li', Bu' Hunyaang Gerang.
- SOMBROEK, Hans MSF, 1989, Personal communication, Zaandam, The Netherlands.
- STRICKLAND, Simon, 1995, "Materials for the Study of the Kajaman-Sekapan Oral Tradition", *Sarawak Museum Journal*, XLIX (70), "Sarawak Museum Journal Special Monograph n° 8", part I and II.

- TILLEMA, Hendrik F., 1938, *Apo-Kajan een filmreis naar and door Centraal Borneo (met 336 afbeeldingen)*, Amsterdam: Van Munster's Uitgevers-Maatschappij.
- TILLEMA, Hendrik F., 1990, *A Journey among the Peoples of Central Borneo in Word and Picture*, edited and with an introduction by Victor T. King, Singapore-Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- TROMP, S. W., 1889, "Een reis naar de bovenlanden van Kutai (11 Aug.-15 Sept. 1885)", *Tijdschrift voor IndischeTaal-Land-en Volkenkunde*, 32: 273-304.

Acknowledgment

The author wishes to thank above all the inhabitants of Long Tuyo' and Long Lunuk for their continued support during return visits. I am especially grateful to Bapak Po' Belawaeny and Ibu Po' Ping, their family in Samarinda, Melak and Long Tuyo'. Special mention should be made of the elders and old friends in Long Tuyo', Po' Bit Hong, Bo' Huvaat, Bo' Paren, Bo' Kawit, among many others. In Samarinda, the late Wakil Gubernur of East Kalimantan, Drs. Yurnalis Ngayoh, and Bapak Octavianus Daud from the Provincial Culture and Tourism office in Samarinda, have been most helpful; the authorities of Regency Kutai Barat (Sendawar), Bapak Bupati Rama Asia, the Camat of Long Pahangai; Pak Battan, Pak Bambang and the staff of the Tourism and Culture Office (Budpar) in Barong Tongkok for their interest in the project; Alain Wodey who joined me in the upper Mahakam during the field survey; the research team "Objects, Culture, Society" (Musée national de l'Histoire naturelle-Musée de l'Homme, Paris), for funding the field surveys in Indonesia.

Abstract: In the month of June 2004, the village of Long Tuyo'—the first village above the rapids in the upper Mahakam area—decided to commemorate the anniversary of its foundation on the site (1904) by celebrating the Nemlaay Festival. The Festival, lasting six days, forms an initiation ritual for the young men and boys, besides a celebration of the warrior group proper. Now, the ceremony connected to headhunting and war until the 1950s, has taken new meanings. Although the core of the Nemlaay, i.e. the initiation rites and warrior training for the young boys and men—the live-saving force of the village during headhunting times—remain a martial value in society. Basically, Nemlaay rites emphasize status and inherited rank in connection to age and descent according to Long Glaat ideas. Since the last performance of the Nemlaay, other rituals and events have taken place in the area, such as the yearly Hudo' Festival organized in turns by villages communities hosting the Festival, which is supported by the local tourism office, and the Dangé Great feast. During the last twenty years, I remark that the changes in the region have been tremendous. The article analyses the ritual processes and their underlying values in the frame of indigenous social and religious representations. Conversely, it gives a detailed account of Nemlaay ritual symbolism, in a comparative Indonesian perspective.

**Alliance avec les ancêtres lors de la « Fête de la Victoire »,
Nemlaay: de l’initiation à la revitalisation de la société**

Résumé: Au mois de Juin 2004, le village de Long Tuyo’, situé en amont des rapides sur le Haut-Mahakam, décida d’organiser le grand rituel Nemlaay, dont le nom signifie la « fête de la Victoire », afin de marquer avec pompe le centième anniversaire de son établissement sur le site éponyme. Selon la tradition *adat* des Long Glaat, le but du Nemlaay est l’initiation et la formation martiale des jeunes gens, outre la valorisation du statut des guerriers dans la société. Jusque dans les années 1950, le Nemlaay était essentiellement la célébration d’une « chasse aux têtes » victorieuse ainsi que des hauts faits guerriers, mais depuis elle a acquis un sens nouveau. Elle concentre un ensemble de représentations liées à la formation guerrière des jeunes gens – garantie de vie du village à l’époque des guerres interethniques et de la chasse aux têtes. Mais surtout, le Nemlaay exalte le statut et le rang des guerriers selon des critères d’âge et de descendance, en rapport à la structure hiérarchique de la société. De sorte qu’elle renforce les liens avec les ancêtres masculins des lignées nobles et roturières. Le Nemlaay constitue aussi un événement à l’échelle régionale du Haut-Mahakam. Depuis la dernière célébration du Nemlaay, d’autres fêtes et rituels, tels que le Festival des masques *hudo’* ou la grande fête du Dangé, sont organisés régulièrement dans la région, avec le soutien du bureau du tourisme. L’article analyse les processus rituels du Nemlaay et les valeurs sous-jacentes, en rapport avec les représentations sociales et religieuses autochtones. Il décrit en détail les phases du rituel et leur symbolisme dans une perspective comparative en Indonésie.

Keywords: Borneo, East Kalimantan, Upper Mahakam, Headhunting, Initiation, Ritual, Warrior ranking, Kayanic

Mots-clés: Bornéo, Kalimantan-Est, Haut-Mahakam, chasse aux têtes, rituel, initiation, gradation des statuts, kayanique

APPENDIX

A NOTE ON NEMLAAY RITUAL INVOCATIONS

I have quoted the names of deities and ancestors mentioned in the sample of the 15 main invocations (*sekéang*), 7 + 8, i.e. even/uneven numbers, and one *daung* song of the Nemlaay.^a Usually address to ancestral deities and culture heroes, follows this pattern; *meta* means according to the context: “spirit,” “ancestral-deity” or “deity.”

While the term *po'* lit. “grandfather”/“grandmother”/“grandparents” (in reference/address) generically means also “ancestors, forefathers.” Besides *po'*, prefixed to a personal name, functions as a term of respect for important individuals of both sexes, e.g. *po'* Ding, Mr. Ding, also *po' glu'*: “Mr/Ms. Teacher”. It corresponds to the meaning of Kayan Busang, *bo'*. When speaking collectively the deities are referred as: *meta tum huyn po' kooy*, “The deities of the time of my ancestors;” another formula is: *kum meta huyn po' maay* (“[you several], deities since the time of our forefathers”). According to an invocation the propitious *meta* are in “the hundreds, in the thousands” (*kum meta metoah meta jemliin*). The ancestors’ souls (*welguen po'*) are collectively called *po'*.

1.^b During the Nemlaay the following set of six main deities (*meta puyn*) are called in turn (called simply *ta* in the invocations): Ta Nyui, Ta Siit, Ta Soa, Ta Wie, Ta Gueng, Ta Sölè’.

They are the main spirits connected with “life,” looking after the safety of the participants in different ritual situations, and especially, during war and headhunting expeditions. *Meta Pennyui*, the spirit “conserving or keeping up the life” of human beings, make sure that they are safe; the first spirit named in the *sekéang*, it is the main protective deity:

Ta Pennyui, ne’ ennyui gueng belaam maay sehuyn sekoot oong hajaung; Ta Pennyui, ennyui nyelay’ éang kay’).

“Ta Pennyui who keeps us safe in our settlements in each main river; Ta Pennyui look out [for us>], you come!”

2. Ta jehooa, Ta daung haluyn, Ta tuwaung, Ta agaung.

(“Spirit of the Post, spirit of the Landing-place, spirit of the Drum, spirit of the Knobbed Gong”).

3. The lower spirits include also the category of “Thunders” (although other “Thunders deities” are also invited during Nemlaay):

Delaay Telaan daung haluyn (“Thunder watching the landing-place”);

Delaay Telaan jehoa (“Thunder watching the posts of houses”);

Delaay Senggéang baung mayn (“Thunder above the village”, he is also looking for the enemies’ war parties);

Delaay Tun peloong yéang (“Thunder protecting the mountain ridge” [?]);
Delaay Baung Benkauk (“Thunder above the Benkauk leaves” [?]);
Delaay Loong Kenwuyn, Delaay Loong Mekiim (“Thunder of the Kenwuyn River”,
“Thunder of the Mahakam River”).

4. The lesser culture heroes, probably past *hapooy* chiefs and war leaders, ancestors (also female), are named in the invocations according to the following formula: “greatchildren of” + “name of ancestor/culture hero”:

mesuun Hiit Ba’ Hala’;
mesuun Ba Lu Duwauk;
mesuun Bieng Wueng Ngook, son of Baits Lay’ Laung;
mesuun Boong Duwaung Geh Dueng and Dueng Luh Leju Petaung;
mesuun Delaay Luh Loong Leju Lay’ Laung;
mesuun Ba Loong Lahaung Yéang Déang...and others.

5. Then “hornbills” (metaphorically flying spirits in the guise of hornbills) are associated with some of these legendary characters:

“Hornbill which is taking *po’* Ba Lay’ Do’
“Hornbill which is taking Lay’ Goong Gueng Diea”
“Hornbill which is taking Jenayn Payn Luh...”

6. The major culture heroes mentioned in the Nemlaay invocations in connection to their war deeds are men (they are called upon to protect the participants in Nemlaay):

Duwaung Halaung Loong
Jelaung Kenwuyn and Beto’ Tua’ Halaan
Tuwieng Waung
Huits Bieng Me’iin and Boa Medaung

Notes

- a. Long Glit words and names in the text are given with a simplified phonological transcription: vowels’ phonemes are: a, è, é, e, ö i, o, u. Besides Long Glit language shows many diphthongs and some triphthongs such as *-iea* (Guerreiro forthcoming 2). The invocations’ free translation gives indications of the categories of spirits invoked during Nemlaay and the invocations’ oral style.
- b. The paragraph numbering corresponds to the protective value during Nemaalay.

