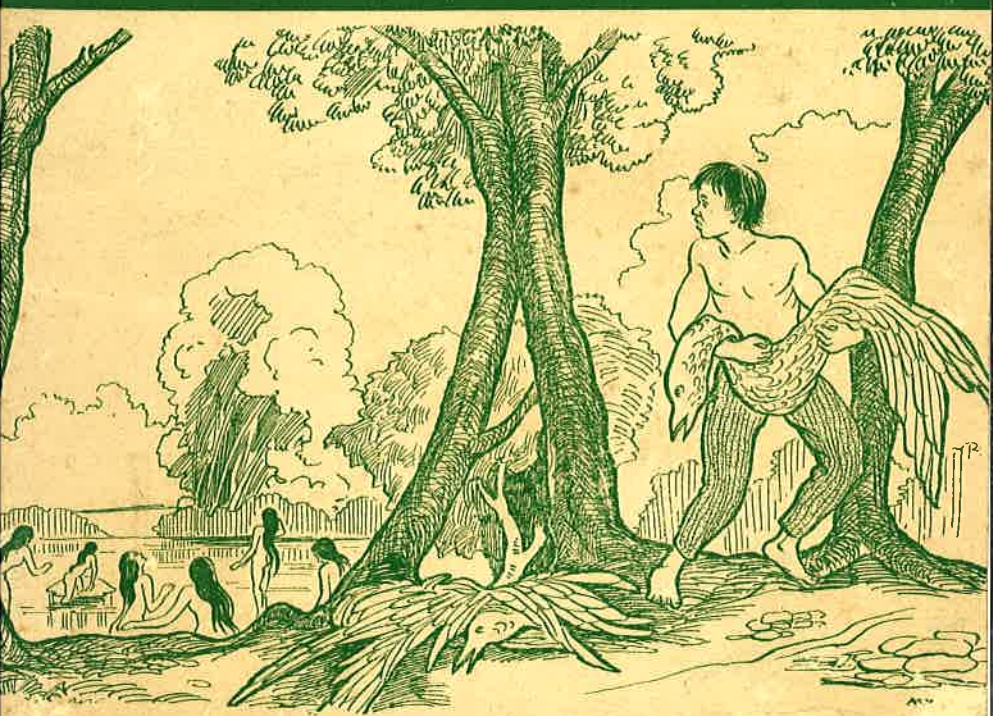


# DUSUN STORIES

FROM

## KOTA BELUD



BORNEO LITERATURE BUREAU

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## KOTA BELUD

*Retold for Primary Schools by*

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Acknowledgement is made to the Cambridge University Press for permission to adapt those stories which have been published in "The Religion of the Tempasuk Dusuns of North Borneo" by the late Mr. I. H. N. Evans.

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| PERPUSTAKAAN DSP/ |      |
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| No. Temutehau:    |      |
| Tarikh:           | T.T. |

Printed by  
YE OLDE PRINTERIE, LTD.  
HONG KONG

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*Now Kinoringan lives in heaven.*

## HOW THE WORLD WAS MADE

KINORINGAN MADE the world. At first he and his wife Yumun lived alone in the sky, but one day Kinoringan said, 'Our place would be better if there were people below us.'

So Kinoringan took his shield and a round rice tray. He put the shield upside down with the tray on top of it, and lowered them down. The shield became the earth and the tray above it became the sky.

When the shield had become the earth, Kinoringan and Yumun came down to it and said, 'This earth is not heavy enough.' So Kinoringan brought a large stone and placed it in the centre of the earth, and this became Mount Kinabalu. But the earth was still not heavy enough, so Kinoringan put another stone in the earth, and this became the Mantanani Islands.

Then Kinoringan and Yumun dug with their hands a hole, which they made into the sea. They walked about on the new, soft earth and, as their feet sank into the ground, the places where they stepped became valleys.

'Now we must make people,' said Kinoringan. First, they made a man and a woman out of stone, but these could not talk or walk. So they

made a man and a woman out of wood, but although these could talk, they could not walk. At last Kinoringan and Yumun made two people out of earth from an ants' nest and these could walk and talk. And so the human race began.

Kinoringan now lives in heaven. He looks like an old man with seven-branched horns upon his head, and he is king of all the spirits.

Every time a child is born, Kinoringan takes a piece of cord and ties a number of knots along it. The cord is the length of the child's future life, and the knots stand for the number of years that he will live. Each year Kinoringan unties one knot. When the last one is untied, the life is ended.

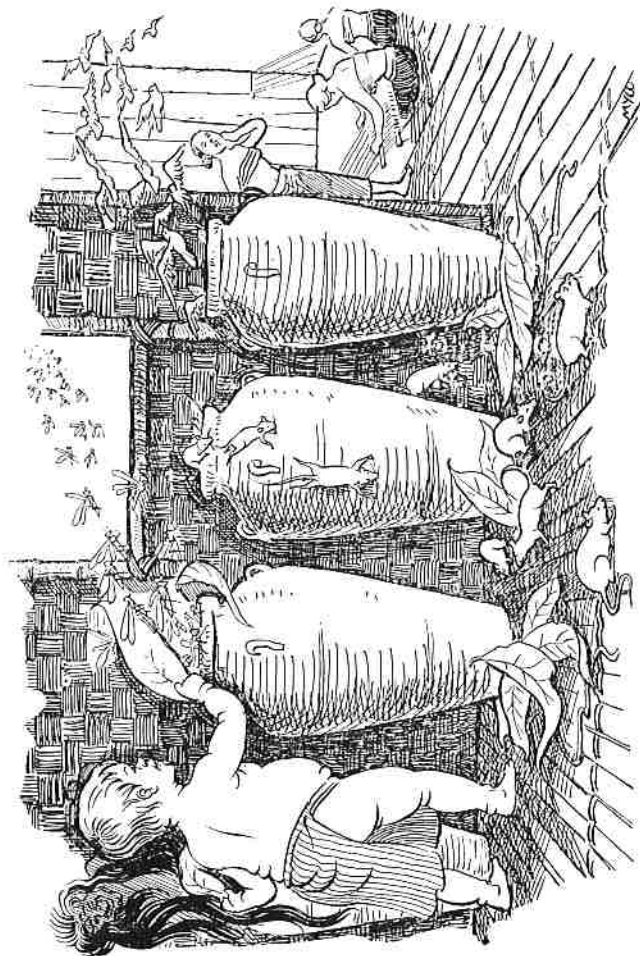
Sometimes Kinoringan falls asleep as he is tying the knots, and when he wakes he always takes up a new piece of cord. That is why some people have many knots on their cord and live a long life, while others have only a few knots and die young. If Kinoringan falls asleep before he has finished the first knot, the child will die before it is one year old.

When people die, their souls go to Mount Kinabalu. On their way they must cross the Tampasuk River by the house of Oduk Mangatob, who is an old woman, the daughter of Kinoringan. When a soul comes to her house, Oduk Mangatob looks to see if the last knot on its life cord

has been untied. If it has not, she sends the soul back home. If it has, the soul crosses the river and builds a ladder to climb Kinabalu. This takes seven days. When the soul reaches the top of the mountain, it bathes in the waterfall and becomes clean. Then it gathers some grass from the top of Kinabalu, to show that it has really been there, and returns to earth.

Some people say that the souls of dead people live in heaven. Others say that Kinoringan turns them into butterflies, or swallows, or winds that blow across the earth.





*Towadakon opened all the jars.*

## THE COMING OF RICE PLAGUES

IN THE house where Kinoringan and Yumun live in heaven, there were once seven large jars, and the mouths of these jars were closed with leaves.

Now Kinoringan had a son called Towadakon, and the boy was very naughty. One day when his father and mother were away, Towadakon ran about in the house and annoyed the girls who were weaving cloth. He trod on all the pieces of cloth, and took no notice when the girls grew angry with him.

The next day, when his father and mother went out, they said to Towadakon, 'Stay here while we are away and be good. Do not trouble the girls who are weaving, and do not open the mouths of the seven jars that are closed with leaves.'

As soon as his parents had gone, Towadakon went to the jars and looked at them. He wanted to know why the jars were always kept closed. He pulled the leaves out of the mouth of the first jar, and out came rice-birds, which flew straight away to eat the Dusuns' crops.

Then Towadakon opened all the other jars. Out of one came rats, out of another locusts, and

from the fourth came the evil spirit with long hair, called Rogon. The fifth jar contained wild pigs, the sixth nasty smelling insects which eat padi, and the seventh held deer and barking deer.

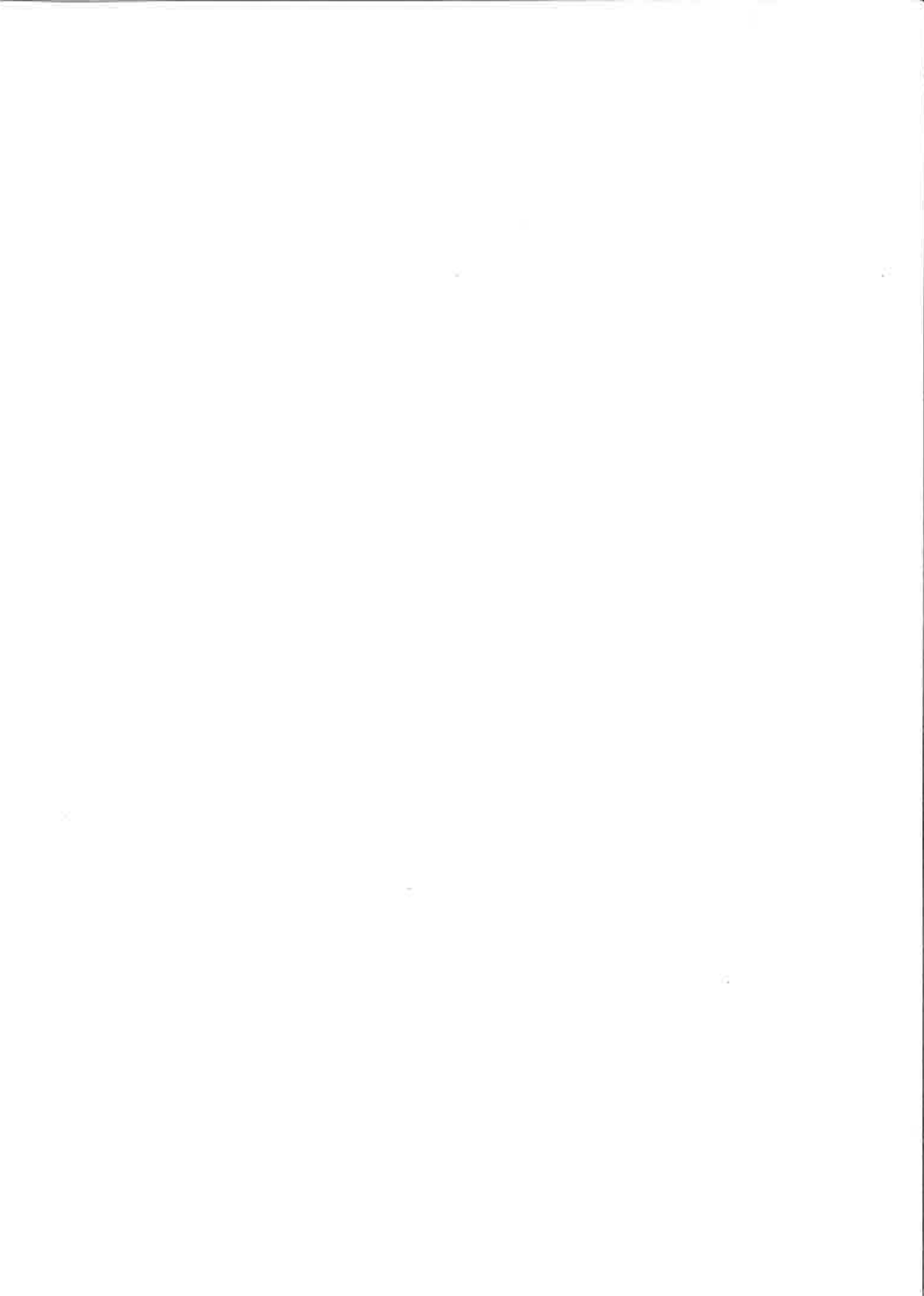
As soon as all these things were free, they ran away to earth, and have caused great trouble to the people who live there ever since.

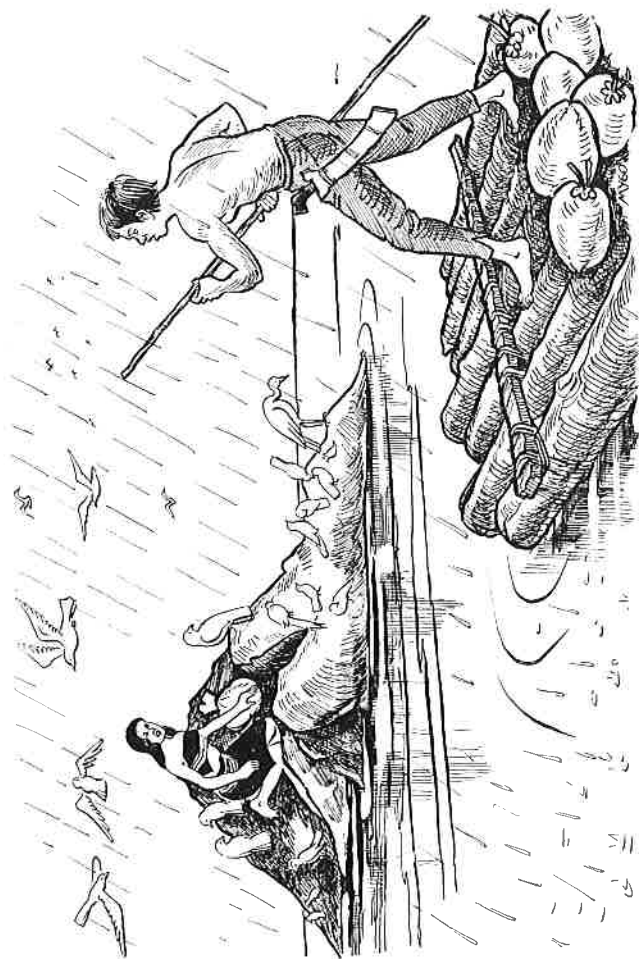
When Kinoringan and Yumun came home and saw that their jars had been opened, they were very angry. 'You are no good,' said Kinoringan to his son, and he took the boy and threw him out of heaven.

Now Towadakon lives on earth. He lives at the source of all the rivers and brings illness to people who harm him. To get well again they must sacrifice fowls and pigs and cattle and buffaloes.

He casts his net over the Dusuns' rice crops and draws the rice up and eats it. When the people have plenty of rice, Towadakon is thin and his mouth is large. When there is only a little rice for the people, Towadakon is fat and his mouth is small, for he has taken the rice for himself.

Towadakon got his name from the *towadak* pumpkin, which is as fat as he is when he has stolen rice, and which, like him, likes to live in wet places.





*Rokian's raft drifted to Kinabalu.*

## THE GREAT FLOOD

THERE WAS once a girl named Sumandak who had seven brothers. One night, the girl dreamed that a man came to her and said, 'You must prepare a lot of rice, because this country is going to be covered by a great flood.'

When Sumandak awoke, she told her brothers about her dream, but they all laughed at her. 'How could this country be covered by a flood?' they asked. 'You must be mad!'

So Sumandak did not speak about her dream again, but she pounded a lot of padi and prepared the rice.

At about the same time, a young man named Rokian also had a dream. In his dream a youth came to him and said, 'There will soon be a great flood. You must get rotan and make a raft, and then you will not be drowned.'

When the young man awoke he went out and got rotan and made a raft, which he tied by a rope to a large stone in the village. All the people in the village laughed at him. 'You are mad' they said, 'to build a raft when there is no water!'

The girl Sumandak had another dream. She dreamed that the man came again and said, 'Have you prepared the rice?' Sumandak replied, 'I have

prepared plenty of rice, but my brothers will not believe that a flood is coming.'

'Then your brothers will die,' said the man. 'Take your rice and go to the top of Kinabalu.'

Next morning Sumandak told her brothers about her dream, and they laughed even more. But Sumandak was frightened. She took her rice and climbed to the top of Mount Kinabalu.

The next day it started to rain, and rain fell for a whole month, and some people died because their food was all eaten and they could not go anywhere because of the rain.

At the end of the month a great flood rose over the whole country, and the water became higher and higher every day. When it reached the floors of the houses, Rokian got on to his raft, taking with him seven coconuts. The water went on rising until the houses were covered and all the people drowned, and even the tops of the coconut trees could not be seen, but Rokian's raft floated up with the water.

At last the sky brightened and the rain stopped, and the raft drifted to Kinabalu. The mountain was surrounded by water, but at the very top was a small patch of dry ground, not much bigger than a winnowing tray.

Here sat the young girl Sumandak with her rice, and all around her were many birds, which had flown to the mountain for safety. Rokian

climbed off his raft on to the top of Mount Kinabalu, and the girl gave him rice to eat.

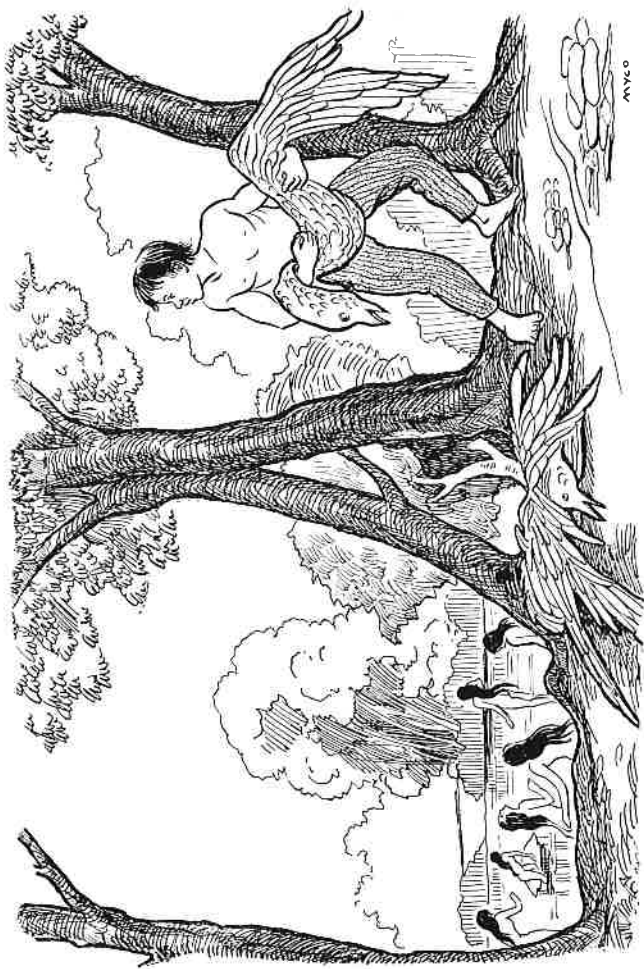
They stayed there for a long time, until the water started to go down again. Then Rokian said, 'The floods are going down, and I wish to go home. Will you come with me?' Sumandak replied, 'I will go with you, for my brothers are dead and I am afraid to stay here on my own.'

So Rokian and Sumandak sailed away on the raft, and when the water was nearly gone and the land could be seen, Rokian threw out a coconut on to the ground. But it sank out of sight, for the earth was still soft.

Some days later he threw out another coconut, but this too sank into the soft ground. After a little while Rokian threw out a third coconut, and this one rested on the surface of the earth. Then they knew that the ground had become hard.

Then Rokian and Sumandak came down from the raft and built a house. It is from their children that the people of this country are descended.





*Urut-Turut stole the clothes.*

## URUT-TURUT AND HIS WIFE

ONE DAY a man named Urut-turut was walking by a river. He sat down beside a tree to rest, and seven red rice-birds came flying down from the sky and landed on the river bank. While Urut-turut watched from behind his tree, the seven birds took off their clothing of feathers and changed into seven beautiful women, who went into the river to bathe.

Then Urut-turut crept out and stole the clothes of one of the women and hid them. When the beautiful women had finished bathing, six of them put on their clothes, changed back into birds and flew away. But the seventh woman wept, because her clothes had gone. Urut-turut came out from behind his tree and took the weeping girl home to his mother's house. He buried the clothes secretly, and he and the beautiful woman were married, and after a time they had a little son.

One day, however, when Urut-turut was away at a feast, the child dug a hole in the ground and found his mother's clothes. When the mother saw them she put them on, and straight away she changed into a bird and flew off into the sky.

Urut-turut came home from the feast, and his mother told him what had happened. Then

Urut-turut took some rice and a cooking pot and, carrying the child, set off to look for his wife.

On the way he came to a little stream which some ants were trying to cross. 'Help us, Urut-turut,' they begged. So Urut-turut took a stick and laid it across the stream and the ants were able to pass over the water.

Urut-turut went on and presently he came to a river. Here there was an eel, with a fishing hook stuck in its mouth. 'Help me, Urut-turut,' the eel asked. So Urut-turut took out the fishing hook and threw it away.

A little further down the river, Urut-turut found a firefly, which had fallen into the water and was drowning. 'Help me, Urut-turut,' it cried. So Urut-turut lifted the firefly out of the water and put it in the sun to dry.

Urut-turut went on further and found a squirrel which was caught in a trap but was still alive. 'Oh, Urut-turut, save me,' cried the squirrel. So he opened the trap and set the little animal free.

After he had travelled a long way, Urut-turut met a large white bird called a *luung*. 'Where are you going, Urut-turut?' asked the bird, and Urut-turut replied, 'I am going to the sky to look for my wife, who has changed into a bird and flown away.'

The *luung* said, 'The sky is not far from here, but you cannot reach it without help. Tie your

child on to your back and take hold of my leg, and I will carry you up to the sky.'

So Urut-turut tied his child firmly on to his back with a piece of cloth, caught hold of the luung's leg, and the bird flew up into the air.



*The ants came and soon collected the rice.*

## URUT-TURUT REACHES HEAVEN

WHEN THE luung bird got to heaven, he said to Urut-turut, 'Let go my leg now and walk. We have reached the house where your wife lives.'

Urut-turut thanked the bird and, carrying his child, went to the house. But there was nobody there, so he sat down on the ground outside. At the end of the day, an old woman came to the house and said, 'Urut-turut, go up.' So he entered the house, but looking back he saw that the old woman had vanished.

He sat down on the verandah to wait, and suddenly a brass box of betel-nut appeared in front of him. Urut-turut said to himself, 'I am ashamed to chew betel-nut with nobody here.' Then the old woman appeared again and told him to chew the betel, and when he had finished she brought him a little rice to eat. Urut-turut and his child ate rice until they were full, but still the rice was not finished, and Urut-turut was surprised.

The old woman asked him where he had come from, and Urut-turut told her that he was searching for his wife. The old woman said, 'Your wife is here, and she is one of my daughters. But before you can see her you must do what I command.'

That night Urut-turut slept in the house. Next morning the old woman took a gantang measure full of rice and threw it all out into the bushes. 'Gather up all that rice,' she said, 'or the people of the house will kill you.'

Poor Urut-turut took the measure and went to look for the rice. But it was so scattered that he could only find a few grains. He sat down and wept, but suddenly he remembered the ants whom he had helped to cross the stream. 'Oh, ants,' he called, 'I helped you before. Now come and help me.' Then the ants came and soon collected the full measure of rice.

When Urut-turut took it to the old woman, she said, 'You are clever, but you must do more than this. Take this fishing-net and fill it up with water from the river.'

Urut-turut took the fishing-net and, as soon as he reached the river, he called, 'Eel, eel, I helped you once. Come and help me now.' Then the eel swam up and stopped up the holes in the fishing-net with mud so that Urut-turut could fill the net with water and take it back to the house.

The old woman said, 'You are clever, but there is more to do. Now you must climb that tall, thin betel-nut palm and get its fruit.' The betel-nut palm was very tall and so slim that, when the wind blew, the top of the palm nearly bent to the ground, but Urut-turut knew what to

do. He called for the squirrel whom he had freed from a trap, and the squirrel climbed the tree for him and brought back the betel-nuts.

'That is enough,' said the old woman when she saw the fruit. 'Wait here and soon your wife will come.'

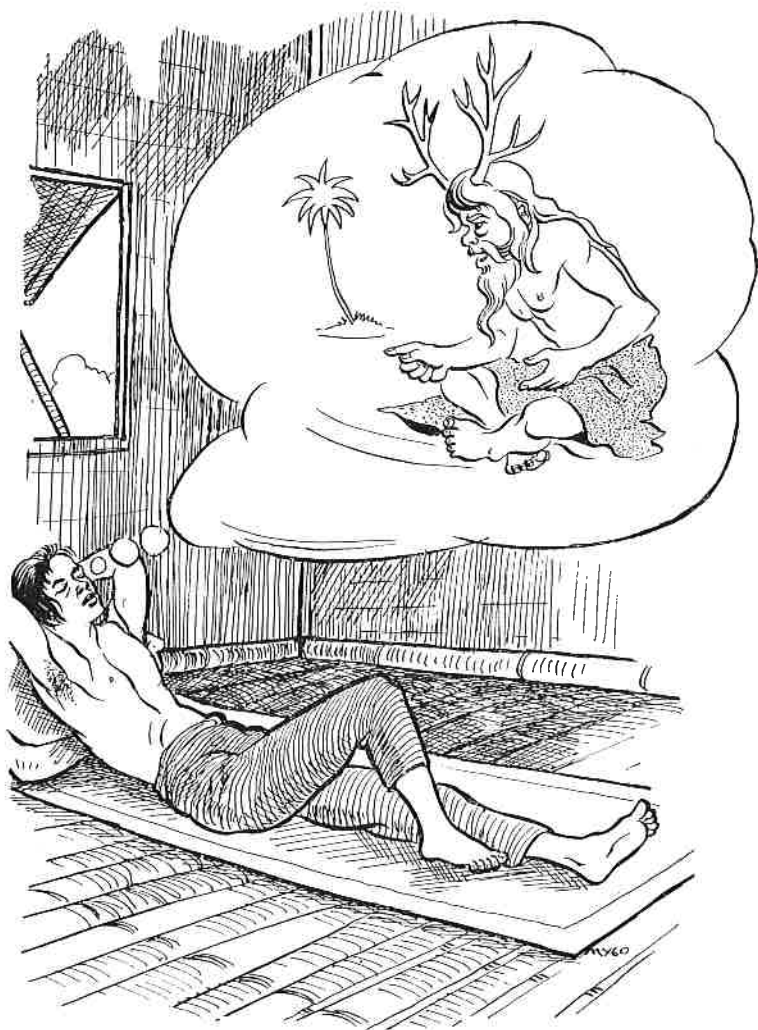
When it was dark, seven beautiful women came up into the house, and Urut-turut could not see which one was his wife. But his child caught hold of the last woman, knowing his mother, and the woman picked him up and carried him off with her.

That night the old woman said, 'You can go to your wife but, if you enter the wrong room, the people here will kill you.'

Urut-turut was frightened, for he could not see where to go in the dark, but at last he remembered the firefly whom he had saved. 'Firefly,' he cried, 'I helped you once. Come and help me now.' When the firefly came, it flew into all the rooms in the house and soon discovered the one there Urut-turut's wife was.

When Urut-turut went in, his wife was awake. 'You have been very lucky to find your way here,' she said, and Urut-turut stayed with his wife from that time onwards.





*'I am Kinoringan,' said the old man.*

## THE TWO COCONUT PALMS

THERE WAS once a man named Daud who was very poor. He and his wife and child often did not have enough to eat.

One day Daud went hunting in the jungle, taking with him his dogs. The best dog was called Londuk. When the man had hunted all day and found no deer, he wanted to go home but Londuk would not follow him. Daud called and called, but Londuk stayed in the jungle, barking.

At last the man went to see why his dog would not come, and he found Londuk in a small clearing in the jungle barking at two old coconuts which were lying on the ground. Nothing would make the dog leave the coconuts, so the man had to pick them up and take them home with him.

When he reached the river, he planted the coconuts beside it and went to his house. His wife asked, 'Did you catch any deer?' Daud replied, 'No. I only found two coconuts and I planted them by the river, for they are old and have started to grow leaves'. His wife was angry because Daud had not caught a deer.

Next day Daud went to the river to bathe, and he found that the coconuts had put out long leaves, so he built a fence round them. In seven

days the coconut palms were tall, and Daud made a cut in one of them to collect coconut wine, while the other one was soon heavy with fruit.

Now the man and his wife became rich, for many people came to buy the wine and the coconuts. Sometimes they brought rice or salt in exchange, so that Daud's rice bin was never empty.

But Daud's wife was angry, because he had built a little hut near the river beside his wonderful coconut palms and slept there at night. 'You must come home at night,' scolded his wife, 'and help me to look after our child.'

That day many people came to buy coconut wine, and to drink it. Daud also drank it and forgot what his wife had said. Next day he went to market and did not go home at all.

His wife was very angry and went to the river to look for her husband. He was not there, so she took his knife and cut off the top of the coconut palm which gave wine.

In the evening, Daud came home and his wife said, 'Where have you been?' The man replied, 'I have been to market.' Then his wife told him what she had done. Daud ran quickly to the river, but his coconut palms had gone. They had been pulled up by the roots, and as Daud stood sorrowfully in the place where the palms had been, rain started to fall.

He went home, and that night he had a dream.

An old man with seven-branched horns came to him and said, 'I am Kinoringan. I pitied you because you were poor, and I gave you the magic coconuts. But now that your wife has cut the top off one of them, I have taken them back into the sky. Look up at the stars tonight, and you will see them.'

And that night Daud saw two new groups of stars in the sky, one like a coconut palm with leaves, and one like a palm without a head. These stars are called the *Miasau-Piasau*, and when they appear in the sky Dusun people say that it will rain — and the rain always comes.



*The men of Rangalan ran across the bridge.*

## KANSURING'S HEAD

MANY, MANY years ago, when the Dusuns were headhunters, seven men came from the village of Sinorob to the village of Rangalan to take a head.

They found a woman named Kansuring in her rice field, and she was sacrificing a hen to the rice spirits so that her harvest should be good. When she saw the headhunters, Kansuring said, 'You must not kill me while I am praying to the rice spirits, or you will have very bad luck.'

But the men of Sinorob took no notice. They killed Kansuring and cut off her head and went home, and the skull was hung up in their house.

One day a woman was weaving in the room where the head hung, and it fell and hit her, and she died. Then people remembered what Kansuring had said. 'It is true that her head brings bad luck,' they said. 'Let us destroy it.' So they put the skull in a mortar and pounded it to pieces.

But while they were pounding it, powder flew up from the bones into their eyes and blinded them so that they could never see again.

'Alas!' they cried, 'How can we get rid of this head?'

Some of the other villagers took the pieces

of bone and threw them into the river, where every piece changed into a crocodile. Now the people of Sinorob were in trouble. They could not go down to the river to bathe or wash their clothes, for if they did so the crocodiles ate them. Even if they went far away along the bank, some of the crocodiles followed them.

Just at this time some men came from Kansuring's village to Sinorob to take heads in revenge. But the people of Sinorob saw them and chased them and they ran away. When they came to the river, it was in flood, and they did not know how to get across.

'How can we escape?' they asked, and then a wonderful thing happened. All the crocodiles in the river swam up and joined themselves side by side to make a bridge and the men of Kansuring's village ran across the bridge safely.

But when the Sinorob people, chasing after them, ran on to the bridge of crocodiles, the crocodiles swam away from each other and all the people fell into the water. Then the crocodiles ate them, and so Kansuring was revenged.







*The woman stooped to see the golden egg.*

## THE FAITHFUL HUSBAND

BAIABOH HAD a wife whom he loved dearly, but she died. Then he covered her body with a cloth, took his young child in his arms, and set out to follow his wife's soul.

After he had gone a long way, Baiaboh came to a place where someone had been cooking rice. The ashes of the fire were still warm, so Baiaboh went on. Presently he reached another place where someone had cooked rice, and the fire was still burning, so Baiaboh hurried on and at last he reached the house of Oduk Mangatob, who guards the path to Kinabalu.

'Why have you come here, Baiaboh, carrying your child?' asked Oduk Mangatob.

'I am looking for my wife, who has died,' he replied.

'You are lucky', said the old woman, 'for the last knot on your wife's life-cord has not yet been untied. If it had been untied, I could not have helped you.'

'Where is my wife?' asked Baiaboh.

'She is making a boat to cross the river,' said Oduk Mangatob. 'If she sees you, she will run away. Hide until night time.'

So Baiaboh and his child hid themselves, and

in the evening his wife came to the house. 'Have you finished your boat?' Oduk Mangatob asked the woman. 'No,' she replied. 'It will be finished tomorrow.'

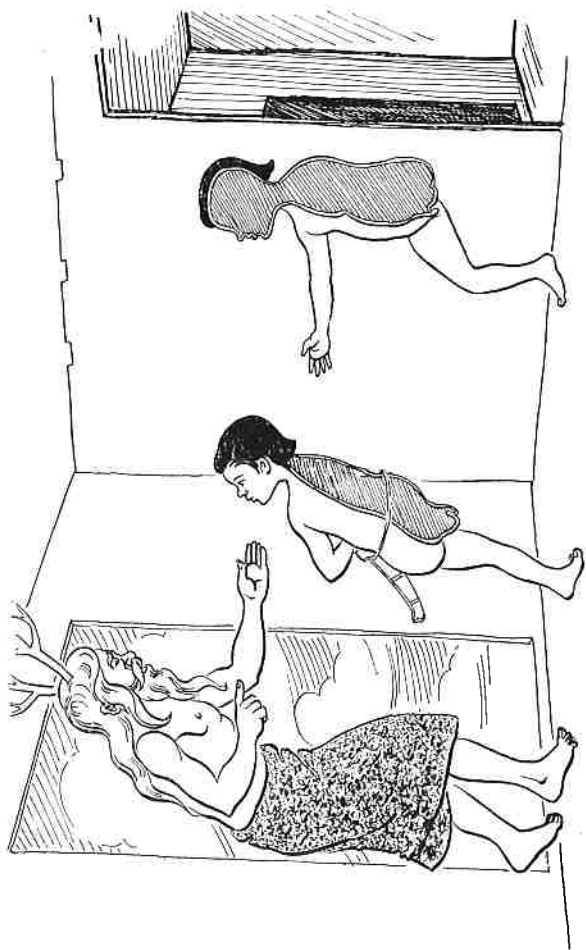
Next morning Baiaboh's wife went down to the river to finish her boat, and Oduk Mangatob gave Baiaboh a wonderful egg which shone like gold, and a blowpipe, and said, 'Go to the river and hide on the bank. Throw this egg into your wife's boat and, while she is looking at it, put the blowpipe to your mouth and draw in your breath.'

So Baiaboh left his child at the house and went down to the river bank. He threw the egg into the boat and his wife stopped to see what it was that shone like gold. Then Baiaboh put the blowpipe to his lips and sucked in his breath, and the soul of his wife was drawn inside.

When he returned to the house, Oduk Mangatob said, 'Close up both ends of the blowpipe and go home carefully.' Baiaboh did so, and when he reached home he put down his child and placed the blowpipe gently under the cloth which covered the body of his wife.

Then he lit a fire and began to boil rice, and, before it was cooked his wife awoke and said, 'Baiaboh, give me some rice for I am very hungry.' And he gave her rice to eat, and told her all that had happened.





MYGO

*'Your other side is here,' said Kinoringan.*

## LITTLE ONE-SIDE

ODUK MANGATOB has a son named Tarob, and Tarob is very greedy. He has a huge mouth and swallows up rice and rice-bins, and sometimes if that is not enough, he swallows up the moon.

Then there is an eclipse, and all the Dusun people beat gongs and call on Tarob to give them everything they wish for. 'Tarob!' they cry, 'Give us more rice!' or 'Tarob, give us riches!' or 'Tarob, give me a wife!' They lay their mats on the ground, and in a little while Tarob vomits up the moon, and sometimes he throws up rice and other things which people on earth desire.

Once there was a man and his wife who had no children. For many years the wife waited and wished that she might have a child, but in vain. Then one night there was an eclipse of the moon and all the Dusun people brought out their gongs and asked Tarob to give them what they desired.

This woman, too, called to Tarob. 'Give me a child,' she cried, 'and even if it is only half a child I shall be glad to receive it.'

Tarob vomited up the moon, and many people got what they wanted. After a time the woman gave birth to a child, but he was only half a child. He had one arm, one leg, half a face with

one eye in it and half a body. As he grew up, he could not walk, but could only hop on his one foot. So they called him Sanpapas, which means One-side.

One day, the little half-boy was hopping about the house where the young women were weaving. He jumped about and broke the weaving threads. 'You are no good, Sanpapas,' scolded the women. 'Go out into the world and look for your other half.'

'How can I go out into the world?' asked the half-boy. So the women tied his father's kris round his little half-body, and off he hopped.

After a long time he came to a house and hopped up the steps. Here he found an old man, and the old man was Kinoringan.

Kinoringan said, 'Why have you come here, Sanpapas?' Sanpapas replied, 'The people in my country say I am no good, because there is only half of me. I have come to look for my other side.'

Then Kinoringan said, 'When Tarob swallowed up the moon, and the other people asked for rice and riches, your mother asked for a child with one side only. But your other side is here — come, and we will get it.'

Then they went a little way and Sanpapas saw another half, just like himself, and the two halves hopped together and became one whole.

'Now we must call you Sanginan and not Sanpapas any longer,' said Kinoringan. For Sanginan means One-body.

Sanginan wanted to stay with Kinoringan, but Kinoringan sent him home. 'Go and tell your people', he said, 'that they must not plant their rice until the group of stars called *Muruh-puruh* appears in the sky, or the husks will be empty.'

So when Sanginan came home he told his people, and to this day the Dusuns do not plant their rice before *Muruh-puruh* appears in the sky, lest their harvest should be poor and the rice husks hold no grain.





*Many fish came and attacked him.*

## THE COUNTRY OF THE FISHES

ONCE A poor man named Rokian was cutting wood by a river, when the head of his axe fell off and dropped into the water.

Rokian dived into the river, and at the bottom he saw a house, so he climbed up the steps and went inside. An old man was there, and he asked, 'Where do you come from, Rokian?' Rokian answered, 'I was cutting down a tree, when the head of my axe fell into the water, so I came down here to find it.'

'Your axe-head is here,' said the old man. 'But do not go yet. Sleep in this house tonight.' Then the old man called his wife and daughters and told them to cook rice.

When it was ready the wife said, 'The rice is cooked, but we have nothing to eat with it.' So the old man asked some boys who were in the house, 'Who wants to be a fish?' They all cried out, 'I do! I do!'

'Only one,' said the old man and, choosing one of the boys, he threw him into the river that flowed by the house. The boy changed into a fish. The other boys caught it, and it was cooked for the meal.

But Rokian would not eat any fish. 'My

father and my grandfather never ate fish,' he said, 'and neither do I.' And all the people whispered that Rokian must be a good man if he did not eat fish.

When the meal was finished, and all the fish eaten except for the head, they collected the fish bones and threw them into another river nearby, and they changed back into a boy. Then the boy came up into the house and ate the fish's head which had been left.

Then the old man asked Rokian, 'Can you make nets for fishing?' and Rokian answered, 'No.' The old man seemed pleased, and next morning, when Rokian was leaving, he gave him many gongs and plenty of cloth as well as the axe-head to take home.

All Rokian's friends were amazed at his good luck, and one neighbour decided to do the same himself. He went to the river and loosened his axe-head and let it fall into the water. Then he jumped in after it and soon reached the house at the bottom.

'Where do you come from?' asked the old man, and Rokian's neighbour told him. 'You must sleep here tonight,' said the old man, and he called his wife and daughters to cook rice, and a boy was changed into a fish, just as before.

But Rokian's neighbour was a greedy man and ate a lot of the fish. 'Do you like fish to eat?'

asked the old man. 'Of course I like fish!' replied his guest with a laugh. 'We eat plenty of fish in my own house.'

'Can you make fishing nets?' asked the old man. 'Yes I can,' said the other, 'I make nets and I catch lots of fish.'

In the morning the old man gave Rokian's neighbour his axe-head and a few gongs and a few pieces of cloth.

The man left the house, but as he was swimming up from the bottom of the river, a great many fish came and attacked him. They hurt him so much that he dropped everything — the gongs and the cloth and the axe-head — and only just managed to escape alive on to the river bank. Then he went home with empty hands.

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