

SOUTHEAST ASIA

ADELAAR, K. ALEXANDER (with assistance of Pak Vitus Kaslem). *Salako or Badameà: Sketch Grammar, Texts and Lexicon of a Kanayatn Dialect in West Borneo*. (Frankfurter Forschungen zu Südostasien 2). Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005. viii + 328 pages. Map. Hardcover €78,-/sFr 132,-; ISBN 3-447-05102-7.

West Borneo has emerged in recent years as an area of special interest to linguists. A quick glance at a map of Southeast Asia helps explain why this is so. West Borneo forms the eastern side of a roughly triangular maritime crossroads, linking Johore and the Riau Archipelago on the west and northwest with Java on the south, a region comprising, in short, the central heartland of historical Indo-Malay civilization.

What makes West Borneo of particular interest to linguists is that the area appears to have been the original homeland of Proto-Malayic, the source from which the modern Malay language, in all its diverse forms, derives. Spreading from West Borneo to Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, coastal Java, and beyond, Malay subsequently became, in the course of this dispersal, the great world language and lingua franca of Island Southeast Asia. Later history has, of course, complicated matters. With the development of states and sea-going trade, more recent forms of Malay have spread back to coastal Borneo, here assuming linguistic hegemony over a number of local languages, some of them, like Malay itself, similarly derived from Proto-Malayic.

As a historical linguist, K. A. Adelaar, the author of this book, has been a leading figure in the reconstruction of Proto-Malayic and its early history, including its West Borneo origins. In the opening pages of *Salako or Badameà*, he briefly summarizes this history and the current status of present-day Malayic languages, their internal relations, and place within the larger Austronesian language family. A major source of evidence supporting a proposed West Borneo homeland comes from the presence in the area of a number of indigenous Malayic languages and dialects. Together these form a major regional language group in Borneo of, perhaps, a million speakers. By far the most widely spoken and best known of these languages is Iban, spoken by well over 600,000 persons, the vast majority of them living in the East Malaysian state of Sarawak. Iban is among the best documented languages of Southeast Asia. Much less is known of other West Borneo Malayic languages, however, particularly those of Indonesian West Kalimantan. The significance of Adelaar's book is that it represents the first in-depth publication by a professionally-trained linguist of any West Kalimantan language and, more particularly, the first work of its kind on a non-Iban, West Borneo Malayic language.

Salako or Badameà is divided into four parts: an introduction, a sketch grammar, texts, and a Salako-English lexicon. The introduction, at 14 pages, is by far the shortest of these parts. In it, Adelaar identifies and geographically locates the Salako speech community, describes the West Kalimantan ethnic and linguistic setting, and explains his use of the terms "Salako" and "Kanayatn" as linguistic labels. Here, very briefly, he dispenses with several notable misconceptions, thereby performing a valuable service, not only to linguists, but also to anthropologists and others working in western Borneo.

Salako (or Badameà), as Adelaar uses the term, refers to a speech variety, spoken in the westernmost tip of Sarawak and in discontinuous areas of the Sambas and Bengkayang Regencies of West Kalimantan, which, together with a number of others (Ahe, Banana', etc.) make up a group of mutually intelligible dialects that together constitute, in a strict

linguistic sense, one language, which Adelaar calls “Kanayatn” (or, in Malay, “Kendayan”). In Sarawak, the Salako are more commonly known as “Selako.” The term “Salako” (or “Selako”) is also used as a local ethnic label in Sarawak and the Sambas Regency, but not in Bengkayang or around Singkawang Town, where it is replaced by Badameà or Dameà. Adelaar estimates the total Salako-speaking population at around 34,000.

Confusingly, in Sarawak, the Salako dialect has been mistakenly identified in the past as a variety of Bidayuh (or Land Dayak). While certainly living in close contact and culturally influenced by the Bidayuh, the dialect spoken by the Salako, as Adelaar makes eminently clear, is unmistakably Malayic, not Bidayuh. Present-day Salako speakers generally claim an area near Singkawang, in southern Sambas, as their place of origin. Like many other ethnic labels, the term originally referred to a river. This is reminiscent of many West Kalimantan ethnic terms today which reflect past migrations, in that there are no Salako living along the Salako River. In addition to Salako, other Kanayatn dialects are spoken over areas of the Bengkayang, Pontianak, and Landak Regencies of West Kalimantan. Total numbers are unknown, but most estimates cited by the author place the total Kanayatn-speaking population, including Salako, at around 300,000, making Kanayatn a major regional language of West Kalimantan.

As Adelaar notes, his use of the term “Kanayatn” departs importantly from common usage. As he observes, the term “Kanayatn” was first adopted in the scholarly literature by the Kalimantan scholar Albertus. Here, Adelaar explicitly uses “Kanayatn” to replace his own earlier term “West Malayic Dayak.” However, as he notes, in popular usage the term “Kanayatn” is linguistically imprecise and, reversing the situation in Sarawak, is often applied to neighboring Bidayuh speech communities as well. Here, he reserves the term solely for Malayic speakers, who, like the Salako, speak variants of a “Kanayatn language.” An older view in the West Kalimantan ethnographic literature is that the Kanayatn constitute a non-Malayic Dayak group that has undergone strong Malay influence. This view, identified particularly with the writings of Jan Avé, was subsequently elaborated by Victor King in his popular book *The Peoples of Borneo*. Here, the Kanayatn appear as an intermediating category within a theorized Dayak-Malay assimilation continuum composed of Malayized “Dayaks” in the process of “becoming Malay” (*masuk Melayu*). Another consequence of Adelaar’s work, and that of other recent linguists, is to render this view untenable. Kanayatn speakers in Adelaar’s terms belong, instead, to an indigenous Malayic language stratum in Borneo, whose existence long predates the emergence of modern Malay and its present-day linguistic dominance.

Part Two of *Salako or Badameà* is far more comprehensive than its modest title, “Sketch Grammar,” suggests, covering Salako phonology, morphophonemics (including orthography), and morphosyntax. The account is addressed primarily to linguists, but incorporates some interesting innovations. Part Three, “Texts,” is by far the longest and most accessible to a general reader. It consists of twenty texts, appearing here, except for Text 1 (which includes an additional interlinear gloss), first in vernacular Salako, and then in English translation, with numbered paragraphs to facilitate comparison. The texts, Adelaar tells us, were recorded in Nyarumkop, in the Singkawang Timur District (Bengkayang), from a single language informant, Pak Kaslem, whose assistance the author admirably acknowledges on the title page. The texts consist of both folktales and accounts of traditional customs. The customs described include wedding rules; customs involving childbirth, cremation, killing enemy warriors; and rules for taking fruit from others, keeping gold in jars, farm work, and adultery. Some of the practices described, such as cremation, are no longer observed and in several of the texts the narrator explains how current practices have changed. All of the texts are interesting, but, perhaps, special note should be

taken of that relating the *adat* prescribed for killing an enemy warrior, as very few vernacular texts referring to indigenous headhunting have been recorded for Borneo. The rules themselves are striking and, in context, notably humane.

While West Kalimantan, until a decade ago, was one of the most poorly studied provinces in Indonesia in terms of language, this was not always the case. During the Dutch colonial period a number of important textual works were produced. For Malayic languages, by far the most valuable of these were written by the missionary-ethnographer Donatus Dunselman, who recorded and annotated invaluable language texts, not only for Iban-related groups like the Mualang and Kantu', but also for the Kanayatn-speaking Ahe. It is interesting to note, as Adelaar comments, that versions of several of his Salako folktales, including Text 1, a narrative account of the origins of rice, were previously recorded, almost a century ago, by Dunselman among the Kanayatn-speaking Ahe. Similarly, a number of the Salako tales that appear here have close Iban counterparts, for example, "The story of Ne' Satá curing a crocodile." Three of the ten folktales that Adelaar records concern the Salako comic fool "Pak Aiai," whom Iban audiences would at once identify with their own "Apai Alui."

Finally, Part Four concludes the book with a substantial, 105-page "Lexicon," a major contribution by itself, containing over 2,500 entries, many of them including, in addition to the main entry, example sentences (many taken from the texts in Part Three), derivative forms and idioms.

While Professor Adelaar will no doubt remain best known as a historical linguist for his work on the origin and history of Malay, with *Salako or Badameà* he has made a substantive and lasting contribution to the study of Borneo languages as well.

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