

PART III

MEGALITHIC AND MICRO-MEGALITHIC

First I published a book on stones, in four chapters; it distracted my mind from the worries of daily life and made me dwell among mists and coloured hazes.

Lin Yu-lin, 1614 A.D.

CHAPTER 17

MEGALITHIC CULTURES IN HISTORICAL WEST BORNEO

The opening chapter in this third section of our Data Paper is intended to give the necessary minimum of background for a closer look at the curious association between gold and stone, already noted in passing in the previous section (II.8, etc.) and now to emerge as importantly persistent, beginning with the pebble-beds and petroglyphic rock-carvings and cuttings at Jaong in the delta's earlier iron-working site. To understand what happened in the past--to try, that is, to reconstruct those happenings of a millennium or so ago--it is both needful and helpful to survey what has gone on in later times (and sometimes into the present century) in this same field of activity with stone.¹

On the basis of the present survey, supported by a separate bibliography for those who wish to pursue the subject further, we must then more seriously consider, in following chapters, the meaning of some curious features in delta sites, starting with a fresh analysis of the archaeological evidence from Jaong (III.18-21)t. From this Jaong experience, we offer a new approach to the particular aspect of megalithic which seems so especially to link with gold; micro-megalithic is the term we venture to propose (III.22-23) to reflect the relationship between *small*, usually unshaped, pebbles and larger stone and the larger operations generally classed as "megalithic"--tfor instance:

megalith: one of the huge undressed items used in various prehistoric monuments.²

The humble pebble, closely spaced, belongs equally with the menhir and dolmen, Batu Gambar and Stonehenge, as the micro-sibling of this thought through stone, we think.

After a reassessment of Jaong in depth it is possible to see the hitherto puzzling "Tantric" shrine at Bongkizam, the later delta site, in a fresh light (III.24)t. Out of this inspection, with eyes aglow, comes time to take a widertlook again, and glance across the whole Southeast Asia landscape of stone and gold, to find what support there is more widely for our limited delta hypotheses (III.25-26) and to relate all this to specific ritual and other accounts which triggered the whole process (IV.27-28)t.

There are four main areas with considerable discovered megalithic activity in West Borneo--and so far none of significance in the rest of the island. These are now taken in sequence from north to south.

a. Around Kota Kinabalu, Sabah

Single menhirs (upright placed stones, always unshaped in Borneo) are scattered over quite a wide area in the foothills of Mt. Kinabalu--highest mountain in Southeast Asia--where inhabited by the people broadly called "Kadazan" or "Dusun." But the only major, concentrated and readily recognizable megalithic activity in Sabah is in a narrow belt close to the Sabah state capital, Kota Kinabalu. As nothing has yet been published on this work, it will be treated rather more fully than is necessary for the other three areas, where the local literature is more adequate.⁵

The motor road from Kota Kinabalu to Papar (opened in 1964) passes through wide areas of cultivated rice fields where isolated standing stones form a striking part of the landscape, specifically after the fields have been flooded and while the padi is still young. One is over seven feet above ground; many are over five feet, massively proportioned. They mostly stand on bunds between rice fields; some, even more conspicuously, in the glittering waters inside the irrigation *sawahs*.⁶

The main part of the study was confined to the main roads, with sorties up selected valleys and hillsides. In all, particulars were taken for 113 stones and two "stone substitutes" of wood (see below). Stones selected as representative of various "types" were visited and measured at distances between 20 and 1,500 yards from the road, and also checked by air survey. The survey indicates a concentration of palpably "megalithic" type of upright stones--technically menhirs--within a long strip of irrigated Kadazan Dusun rice land on the sub-coastal plain between the low foothills and the immediate coastal band (often approximating to the railway line) which is now occupied by Mohammedan Bajaus. Extensive inquiry and examination outside and beyond the ends of this strip only produced two small stones, both acceptable in the more familiar Sabah "oath-stone" context. These were just after Sungai Damit, beyond Tamparuli on the road past Tuaran to Kota Belud. Verbal reports indicate stones in the Tamparuli district, but investigation in this area provided nothing except this small pair. It was also evident that there was nothing comparable in scale with regard to surviving megalithic remains to the north in the Kota Belud and Kudat road area, and again in the south on the now richly (but mainly recently) irrigated plain round Papar.

No doubt other upright stones were once erected and will be found later in these places; but these do not constitute a conspicuous or visually significant part of the modern *landscape* as they do north from Mile 23 on the Papar side to Mile 11 on the Tuaran side of Kota Kinabalu--a direct distance of under thirty miles, entirely populated by Kadazans.

Table 5 lists menhirs still standing conspicuously upright within sight of the main roads running north and south of Kota Kinabalu starting from the north.

Table 5. Standing Upright Menhirs Located on Ground, Sabah
Kadazan Area

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|----|-------------------------|
| a) Kota Belud road (at Sungei Damit) | 2 | (both small; see above) |
| b) Tuaran road | | |
| Miles 11-10 | 4 | |
| 10- 9 | 3 | |
| 9- 8 | 0 | |
| 6- 7 | 3 | |
| | | 12 |
| c) Papar road | | |
| Miles 6- 7 | 19 | |
| 7-11 | 49 | |
| 11-15 | 4 | |
| 15-19 | 11 | |
| 19-23 | 7 | |
| | | 90 |
| Total, upright | | 102 |

Taking the main megalithic belt as very roughly thirty miles long and half a mile deep (a fair average even allowing for the major part which is not under wet rice but in trees) there are nearly seven megaliths per square mile. In one place, during the July condition of padi growth, it was possible to count and check with field glasses no less than fourteen menhirs from one spot on the Papar road.

These are usually well spaced, the nearest "pair" having one just under a hundred yards from the next--in this case one of five standing *in the middle of* flooded padi *sawah* its neighbor in the more usual position on top of an irrigation bund.

Although most stones are now on banked bunds, three of those visible were away from the irrigation altogether. There is strong reason for believing that others have been moved on to areas only opened up for irrigation in comparatively recent times; others again have been moved out of the center of the *sawahs*, where they now present a considerable inconvenience to buffalo ploughing and other rice agriculture.

Included in Table 5 are two large stones which have in fact fallen over or been knocked down by buffalo and are lying on the top of bunds at the present time. It is probable that others so fallen would, nowadays, be incorporated into the substructure of the bund themselves, acting as valuable reinforcement and thereby rendered invisible. No doubt a number of factors have operated to reduce the possible numbers. Those present may represent a fraction of what might have been seen, say, at the turn of the century? Where there is no continuing, contemporary respect, stones would be deliberately moved, ditched, buried or broken up.

This is well illustrated by results of a follow-up on a specific stone at the end of the survey, at Mile 6, close to Penampang, heart-land of the Kadazans. This, a five foot high menhir, notably stands on dry grassland in front of a house, opposite a creek in a small area which has evidently never been irrigated or ploughed. On closer examination, we found, seven feet away behind this big stone, a pair of smaller ones, six inches apart and seven feet from the original. On the other side of the original, three feet away, was a very large stone which had fallen. A further twelve yards on, a fifth massive rock was aslant, not visible from the road. Eighty feet from this was the sixth of the group, a short but thick upright menhir on the very edge of an eroding creek, seen on previous days from the road.

The owner of this property, Mr. Raphael Jau, said that in his grandfather's time this corner had still been jungle; it had never been under rice. In clearing it for housing and grazing, these stones, then *all* upright, were revealed. The balance had been knocked down by family buffaloes, one of them in his own lifetime. He was emphatic that they represent a "very ancient" burial ground, where bodies were placed in jars. The bones had long perished; but pieces of the jars were sometimes found around in the ground, he said. With his permission, in a few minutes we picked up a series of worn Chinese stoneware sherds clearly not recent. Many other sherds were encountered near other menhirs as the study proceeded.

In February 1966, an aerial search was made over the southern half of the previous main study area, on either side of the Papar Road and the start of the Tuaran Road--all but five of the observed stones stand in this section.⁷

The rice harvest was in, except for odd pockets; the weather ideal. Flying between 500 and 50 feet, up all main irrigated side valleys and other places which could not have been examined from the road, results were tabulated on the same lines of the previous observations, thus

Table 6. Sabah Menhirs Seen from the Air

| Section | 1966 From Air Only (New) | 1965 Road (Table 5) |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| a) Tuaran Road | | |
| Miles 6-11 | not fully examined | 10 |
| 0- 6 | 2 | 0 |
| b) Papar Road | | |
| Miles 0- 6 | 2 | 0 |
| 6- 7 | 4 | 19 |
| 7-11 | 9 | 49 |
| 11-15 | 2 | 4 |
| 15-19 | 6 | 11 |
| 19-23 | 6 | 7 |
| 23+ | 0 | 0 |
| Total (excluding Kota Belud) | 31 (new) | 100 (previous) |
| Grand Total | 133 menhirs | |

It is evident from the ground and air search that this "megalithic area" was once much more extensive than now. Only where the native peoples have remained relatively undisturbed *both* topographically and theologically can these fossils of the socio-spiritual past be readily recognized in our time. Even so, the spoken record shows that there has been plenty of *local* disturbance affecting the belt of menhirs which do remain.

The Kadazans in the Tuaran-Papar area vary in their attitudes towards these stones. Some accept the previous colonial "boundary stone" explanation (less often that of "oath stone"); mainly among the young. Some are vague or not interested. But others show much interest and pleasure at having the subject raised; these often offered lively information on the subject. Without better data on the earlier beliefs and observances of these folk, one cannot evaluate such information in detail. But inter-related, overlapping, recurring themes require record, especially since they are often consistent with the more elabora

"megalithic thinking" expressed by Sarawak's upland Kelabits, 150 miles further south—who have no known contact with the Kadazans (c. below)t

These themes express four main situations causing megalithic activities around Kota Kinabalu:

- (i) Distribution of property by the heirless (*Minagang*)a
- (ii) Status feasting and "bravery testing."t
- (iii) Funerary rites.
- (iv) Memorializing.

These are not here intended to be four distinct categories. It would be possible, for instance, to erect a menhir under all four categories simultaneously, as well as with only one idea specifically in mind--and no doubt, in the lost past, for other "reasons" too.

i. Distribution of Property by the Heirless (*Minagang*)

The commonest single explanation offered for the presence of these stones was on this account. A number had been erected during the lifetime of older living people. Details of the number of costly animals and jars of rice wine consumed were remembered. The extent of these memorable feastings was in fact, a significant *status marker*.

With these Kadazans, land normally belongs to the family as a form of *pusaka* (Malay *pasaka*)o A childless man's land goes to brothers or nephews, not his wife. If it is the wife's land by direct inheritance it will not revert to her husband on death, but to her own kin. The threat or fear of "his" side acquiring the property by precedent and possession has certainly made this megalithic usage of special value to widows in establishing rightful claims before own death (cf. further under wooden figures below and at d. following).

ii. Status Feasting and "Bravery Testing"

Big menhirs were sometimes erected in the past to reaffirm and enforce the *status* of a wealthy family. This could be a function combined with childlessness. The two were merged in a joint feast where those of the non-childless, who contributed a large share, would normally be the closest kin (siblings, nephews, etc.) of the childless. This cooperation would then give a special claim to the land. The childless could then and

there guarantee these allocations of the property to the cooperators. However, more generalized observances could be held *without* any elaborate material implications, marked with the movement and erection of a stonet

The idea was to express your statutand "throw a party" with your surplus wealth. This conferred indirect but important status benefits on the feast givers and involved reciprocal obligations, socio-psychologically, from those in position to reciprocate at a later date; and thus established superiority to near-equals who failed to do so. It also had an up-grading overall effect on the whole community.

It is also stressed by some older men that in pre-European times a stone-erection often took place to commemorate, accentuate, or even stimulate an act of bravery in an already powerful family or group. A local chief, Orang Tua John Goninu of Kampong Ramaya, about 60 years old in 1965, who was taught about stone-erection by his grandfather, told us that the stones came from Tagangan Island off the Putatan coast, miles away, and that they were erected as a proof of rich and powerful status, as a memorial to bravery, or to mark the grave of a person. He statedt

As the stones were collected from a distant place, those bringing the stones were likely to meet with all sorts of enemies. Head-hunting at that time was frequent. To erect a stone would therefore need a strong force. A great gang of people was needed to meet these dangers and to transport the stone to the erecting spot. Only big stones were used by powerful families. It involved three to four days to get a stone to its destination.

The ceremonies were almost the same whatever the reason for erecting the stone. One buffalo a day was killed for bravery; one buffalo and one pig a day were killed for status--and the same number was necessary for childlessness. The total number of animals depended on the number of days involved in the operation of erecting the stone.

Repeat ceremonies took place yearly following the erection of the stone.

It is hardly possible, these days, to see such a seemingly simple act by a group of men going to gather and carry a big rock as signifying much in courage or virility. But in earlier times it was so, literally as well as symbolically. For the necessary object of desire, the potential menhir, lay back in the hills or off the coast, populated by hostile and war-like

folk. The people of the foothills resented intrusion of this sort, particularly if the intruders were out to remove stuff from the native soil--an altogether threatening, offensive idea over much of the island. Sorties from the plain became difficult acts, definable as bravery by traditional standards: tantamount in effect to head-hunting raids.

iii. Funerary Rites

There are strong indications that in earlier times the funerary aspect of these megaliths was more important than it has been within human memory. It is probably that this funerary usage is ancient and pre-dates the extension of the Kadazan (Dusun) peoples into the fully irrigated rice activities of this coastal plain. One menhir on the Papar Road recorded in 1962 had a ceramic burial jar of an early Ming date, placed into the hillside closely behind. Many ceramic fragments were also indicated on the surface. When we came to re-examine this in 1965, the hill had been leveled off for road construction and *no trace could be recovered!*

Similar ceramic fragments were associated with two upright stones near Kinarut and other areas, as already mentioned. All these were Chinese-imported coarse stonewares, mostly jars, of usually ancient types, but of indistinct character and in such poor preservation that definite identification has not proved possible. The possibility that urn burials were conducted even fairly recently, directly beside and with stones is strengthened by a definite tradition that megaliths were used in funerary ceremonies for shamans--mostly, here, women. In at least two places impressive menhirs are regarded as marking either the burial places or the burial *rites* of important spirit mediums of the past. One such was told by Majtulan Damidal of Kampong Sugud, 90 years old in 1965, who had the story from his father, who had it from his grandfather. He emphasized the large number of people involved in the rites:

A relative of the deceased takes charge of erecting the stone and pays the expenses involved. They call together a group of ten to twenty-five villagers to locate a suitable stone and survey the task that lies ahead. The stone usually came from Ulu Sugud, along the Tanlungug River, about 3 miles from Kampong Sugud. After the inspection they return to the village home of the deceased for a feast to which all the villagers are invited. This lasts for the rest of the day and the following night. One pig and enough chickens are killed to feed the people, and there is plenty of drink.

Next morning, people gather in the house of the deceased. A small meal is given, the feast lasting about an hour, with another pig killed. Drinks are served as well, but not enough to get people really drunk. Then the men go out to fetch the stone.

After arriving at the place, they are shown the selected stone. They gather a large number of long wooden poles. They place a number across the stone, others further out, and fasten cross-poles over them at right angles so as to form a frame around the stone. They use the skin of a young bamboo as ropes. Then one man stands in each square formed by the crossed poles, ready to lift and carry the stone. A large stone might need a frame big enough to accommodate as many as one hundred men.

On the first day the men move the stone about a quarter of the way. On the second day, more people come to help to carry it further. Once they reach the flat land, progress is more rapid. Feasting continues at the work site. A buffalo is killed each day to feed the workers carrying a large stone. At pig might be sufficient for a smaller one.

Prayers are said by a shaman (*bobohizon*) before the stone is erected--usually in the corner of a field of the deceased, inclined slightly towards it. The erection of the stone is followed by further ceremonies held by the shaman. Animal blood (from sacrifices for the feast to follow) is collected in a basin and poured over a stone. Two long poles are finally put up next to the stone, the one facing the field topped with leaves, the other with a bloody cloth tied on to it. This done, all go to the house of the deceased for a feast lasting at least one day and night, depending on the wealth of the deceased.

Another informant was Chet Manlanggum of Kampong Limbanak, near Penampang, claimed as the oldest man in the district in 1965. Venerable citizens like these have for some time been dated by the single sure yardstick for the island, the explosion of the great Krakatoa Volcano off Java. Malanggum was given the former credit of "he is 100."⁸ He had the following account from his father, long dead, passed on to him from previous generations. His father had once told him these stories, taking him to the group of stones on the hill near his house--one that has since been destroyed:

About ten generations ago there was a long-house on the hill where the stones used to stand. The Bangkaakan, forefathers of the present Penampang Kadazans,

lived there. They were big people, said to average 6 ft. in height. They practiced head-hunting at that time. The Bangkaakan lived in long-houses as a means of protection against the Taga'as, who cultivated padi on nearby hills. The Taga'as, ancestors of the present Tambunan Kadazans, raided the Bangkaakan villages for heads. They burnt houses and threw *sapod* [pointed sticks tied together as a tripod] behind them to make the pursuers fall; then took their heads. The Taga'as were not after the land of the Bangkaakan, only their heads. It was considered an act of bravery at that time. When a person took a head there was a ceremony and the skull was kept.

The stones that were on that hill were brought from hill areas occupied by the Taga'as and used as gravestones. It was very dangerous to get them in the first place. When the Bangkaakan went upstream, Taga'as would try to cut their heads. The big stones came from areas closer than the smaller stones.

It took many men to carry a stone, depending on the size. When an important person died, a large stone--requiring perhaps forty men--was erected. A buffalo was killed during the erection of the stone.

iv. Memorializing

This function is a by-product of the previous three. One particular stone is said to have been put up simply to commemorate a rich individual, with no other frills. Here is the account of this menhir, nowadays called *Sansa'abon* and standing six feet above ground, as given by Majtulan Damidal of Kampong Sugud. This erudite aged man also stressed that in the old days every stone carried a name: the name of the person who was mainly responsible for erecting it (for whatever purpose). His account of this special stone is interesting also in that the operation evidently failed in its nominal intention (to memorialize a name "for all time"):

The large stone situated 200 yards from my house is called "*Sansa'abon*." It was erected by Libu, great-great-grandfather of the wife of Native Chief Logimon. The name "*Sansa'abon*" is thus not the name of the man who erected it or the man in whose honor the stone was erected, whose name has been forgotten.

Libu, who erected the stone, fetched it from Ulu Sugud, at a place about six miles from Kampong Sugud.

Fifty men went to inspect it before bringing it to its destined site.

It took five days to carry the stone six miles. Seven buffalos, five pigs and one cow were killed to "feed" the workers while they transported and erected the stone.

This informant--like many others--incidentally insisted that the stonedid *not* have any particular boundary function either then or later. The actual stone and the spiritual relationships of moving it from one place to another, were bound up with deep feelings inside these peoples; nowadays only mental fragments remain.

* * *

So: most of the menhirs still standing around Kota Kinabal were brought down from the adjacent hills rising inland from the irrigated plain. As we have seen from the testimony of knowledgeable old men, getting them could be a dangerous business. Some stones were brought from further afield however, and even across the sea, as described by Orang Tua Goninu. Geological examination of the rock types does not get us far because all the megaliths examined are of a soft sandstone widely distributed all over this part of Sabah. It seems clear that at no time was stone selected because of texture, hardness, color. The selection was for size (within the limits of possible transportation) and, to some extent, shape.

In this Sabah megalithic, the stones were never decorated with incised or relief figures, or symbols. Nor were they cut into seats, "planks," bridged or grouped and balanced to form dolmens, cysts, tables, slab graves or other arranged structures (all of which are found, for instance, in the Kelabit uplands; see c.). The megaliths here are exclusively single uprights of natural stone.

Thus, the more than 100 stones studied vary widely in size and proportion, yet are fundamentally "alike." Long, long ago some sort of "ideal form" was established locally. Thereafter, any stones to be selected, carried and erected must not be too "unlike" this model prototype. None of our menhirs are round or triangular, or very thin; or very irregular in outline. None have a hole in them or a major protuberance upon them. There are none with big lumps of agglomerate or other non-sandstone intrusions; all are pure, coarse-grained sandstone, pale buff or grayish-white in color. The single commonest characteristic is also negative; none of them are markedly angular, nearly all smooth-domed or gently curved in outline. A few are more or less flat along the top, but in at least one case this is due to subsequent weathering and breakage.

The general form is a stone averaging between four and five feet high above the ground, and up to two feet or more under ground, weighing up to half a ton, between three and six feet in circumference--this tending to vary on any one stone, so that the circumference is less towards the top than at the bottom, giving a tapering effect. The sides are usually uneven but fairly distinctively faceted, with three to five faces, often four. The top is usually gently rounded but sometimes slightly pointed--especially where the stone is somewhat recurved and one side more concave, arching slightly to a nearly hooked point. The lines of direction are always gentle, making transitions smooth.

After this passage of time, so long away from the origins of this megalithic concept, it is difficult even to guess why an anomalous, simple, rather conventional natural form so particularly predominates. One could call it "phallic" in the masculine sense, but it would not be easy to justify such a term except on rather involved psychological grounds. Or you might think of the moon in its various phases! Any such classification lies in the eyes of the beholder; and when the beholders are "outsiders," it is likely to be particularly inappropriate. Native friends were unable to throw any light on this aspect.

Stone endures where nearly all else perishes in the equatorial climate of Borneo. This produces a danger for the pre-historian. It is easy, seeing only the stone, to forget that the same human activity may very well have been conducted in other and less durable materials. The danger is that one does not see the wood and other materials--bone, shell, clay, bark, etc.--for the rocks. Therefore one must be careful not to assume that a megalithic activity in this setting is something isolated and conducted exclusively in the metaphor of rock. Moreover, it is not necessary to assume that all megalithic activity is from one source or similarly motivated.

The stone megalith was only *one* expression of a wider view. For the Papar-Tuaran belt of Sabah, we have similar and extremely interesting indications in the use of wooden figures within the general megalithic pattern we have been discussing. These figures--of which two survive--were particularly associated with distribution of property by the heirless (i, above). Moreover, there is an interesting distinction in the two surviving wood figures and the information obtained about them: they are male and female, implying again that some of the stone menhirs were likewise sexed.

Both figures stood on land belonging to Kampong Tempasuk--not to be confused with Tempasuk at Kota Belud--about half a mile on the Kota Kinabalu side off Kinarut, along Papar Road.

The male figure, more than 100 yards from the road, when recovered in 1965 was tilted over at an angle of 45° from the edge of a bund in the irrigated rice fields. The female figure stood nearly a mile away, in a beautiful irrigated valley (shared with an imposing stone menhir), slightly tilted over on top of a bund.⁹

Both figures are carved from the same, fairly hard, wood, locally known as *tembusuq* scientifically *Fagraea cochinchinensis*. The local view is that this wood would not last more than about 50 years in the open. There are vague local memories of other figures which have disintegrated in the past. G. C. Wooley photographed one at Putatan in September 1911 which at that time looked frail, with one arm missing; it cannot be located today.[†]

Both figures at Kinarut stood on land now belonging to a Christian Kadazan, Kemuje bin Lajumin, who helpfully cooperated in preserving them for the future. All agreed that the female figure was erected approximately 50 years ago, in favor of a widow with no children. The wooden woman, six feet six inches high, wears a conical hat of the sort commonly used, otherwise no clothing is shown. The sex is indicated by a small pair of breasts. The treatment of the face, and particularly the hollowing of the "eyes" is unusual in Borneo wood-carving. Quite usual are the bands of geometric parallel lines or crossed lines below the block on which she is seated, and this treatment is more elaborately extended to the "male" figure nearer the road, identified as such by its "penis character."[†] This "male" one has a total exposed length of 6 feet 4 inches, with circumference varying from 1 foot 8 inches to 2 feet 11 inches.

Zinjangi was the name of the widow commemorated by the female figure. She dedicated the land to Lajumin's father. When she died he arranged for the special *minagang* ceremony for the heirless, killing three buffaloes and providing much feasting. He commissioned a then famous craftsman, Lajoman, from Kampong Maan near Penampang, to do the woodwork for the traditional fee: a bundle of padi, 10 *gantangs* of rice, a black *sarong* cloth and a chicken. Additional payments over and above this would have been an ill omen, damaging to Lajoman's craft-- and this low fee is one reason why the craft has now disappeared.

This direct substitution of decorated wooden carvings for plain unworked menhirs so clearly used here, is of wider significance in the Borneo prehistoric mega-situation. Owing to climatic conditions favoring rapid decay, we are deprived even of "post-hole" information about told wood-work in the Sarawak River delta and other open sites. No wood of any kind, except charcoal, has been recovered from Jaong or Bongkisam. In the case of the latter, this may particularly affect any past super-

structure over the gold-rich shrine (III.24. below)t As our friend Hiram Woodward, Jr., has recently put it, with force:

Any knowledge of the ethno-terminology of the modern megalith builders suggests that the term *megalith* itself may be about as accurate as Balinese music played on a pianot Tom Harrisson has pointed out that among the Kelabit of the upland central Borneo, the digging of ditches for irrigation, for instance, or to make an easy path over a mountain crest, is considered an activity just as "megalithic" as erecting a stone monument (1958: 698)t Elsewhere, what might appear to be the main criterion of megalithic cultures, namely that they be *megalithic*, is disregarded; among the Aos and Semas of Assam and among various tribes of central India, forked wooden posts are substituted for menhirs (Furer-Haimendorf, 1939)t (Such a substitution, incidentally suggests a possible origin of megalithic activity: stone forked posts with bas-relief carvings in imitation of wooden ones appear at the historical site of Dimapur in Assam (Bloch, 1906); perhaps the less advanced societies respond to the Indian lithicization of carved wooden forms--here at Dimapur or in the case of the Sanchi railing--by appropriating the material of stone as a replacement for wood without having the tools to carve it, or perhaps without needing to carve it)t Stone and wood may have class connotations; it is said, for instance, that among the Lawa of Siam, who may have been responsible for groups of menhirs near Chiangmai (Hutchinson, 1954), stone menhirs were erected not far from the actual graves, in honor of chiefs or important men; wooden posts were erected in honor of ordinary people (Chin You-di, 1965: 40-41). The interchangeability of wood and stone in certain cultures suggests that wooden forms now lost to the archaeologist, might have preceded stone in some places and filled gaps of time and space in others.t²

Wood for stone, stone for wood, these are substitutions which are characteristic too of the whole tone of the only Borneo megalithic which remained fully alive and observed into the second half of this century, the upland Kelabit (c, below)t In a sense, as Mr. Woodward says, megalithic ceases to be an adequate term--and indeed too much has been made of it at times (cf. III.25). In northwest Sabah, anyway, the use of stone was only part of a much wider intellectual and ritual activity, which finds other expressions among peoples adjacent to the Kadazans. A little further north, the Kiau Dusuns, high on Mt. Kinabalu, intensively studied by I. H. N. Evans, concentrate their specifically megalithic interest in "guardian stones," as protection against evil spirits and epidemics. The wonderful

black granite rock mass of Mt. Kinabalu, 13,545 feet, itself is the focus of vital religious beliefs.¹³ Other groups of Dusun (in the Sabah ethnological usage) put emphasis on heaps of stones, or arranged as walls which also serve a spirit-protection purpose.

The Tengilah Dusuns made small cromlechs into recent times, as described by H. G. Keith and far inland further south a curious rock has been shaped in the ancient past and is still in use as an "oath-stone" and arbiter of truth among the Sapulut Muruts (Harrisson, 1967: 111). Slabs of stone are put up as grave markers around Kota Belud and elsewhere; locally they are interchangeable with stoneware jars for this purpose.¹⁴

From library study of Evans' and others' published materials, Münsterberger has concluded that Sabah creation myths demonstrate a significant level of megalithic interest and activity in the ancient past even though megaliths play a physically small part in present day life--he did not know, of course about the vigorous Kota Kinabalu megalithic when he wrote.¹⁵

We accept that view, and believe that round Kota Kinabalu we see only a living fossil of a once much more powerful and variegated expression of stone and related usage. There is, moreover, another rather different fossil form, much less conspicuous, recognized on a small island off the Sabah coast, associated especially with the use of stone heaps and little stones.

b. Usukan Island and the Sea Nomads¹⁶

Usukan, in the mouth of the Abai River, about 20 miles up the coast from Kota Kinabalu, is one of many small islands around the northern end of Sabah which are not permanently inhabited but irregularly frequented by sea-going people called "Ubians," who have no permanent dwellings ashore. These sea nomads are part of a wider grouping which includes elements of the Bajau, Samal and Illanun folk roaming widely through Southeast Asian waters. Some of these people have been at sea in one way or another since early in the Christian era, if not before. With the development of the island trade in the iron age, some of them became active as carriers of value commodities between Borneo, other islands, and the mainland.¹⁷

The Ubians and their associates made their cemeteries and ritual centers on small islands off the coast, where they would not be readily disturbed by other humans, scavenging pigs and the rest. Usukan is one of several islets with a long tradition of use in this way, although difficulty was experienced in

getting a satisfactory background picture of Ubian folklore and belief. Indeed, it is not easy to get in close touch with any Ubian. Like most wise nomads, they fade into inscrutability, if not invisibility, at the approach of a curious stranger

The occasional inhabitants of Usukan are currently based mainly on the larger and more remote Mantanawi Island, but return periodically to guard coconuts maturing on the islet. These were being damaged by a small army of the beautiful Silver Leaf Monkey (*Presbytis chrysomelas*)—a vivacious and vociferous island element—when T.H. visited there with some Bajaus in December 1960. In recent years the place has thus earned its rating on modern maps as "Abandoned" But the human ties remain firmly identified, in a small but conspicuous cemetery immediately beside the beach. The edge of this cemetery is an erosion clifflet on the estuarine side, slowly eating inward.

The cemetery contains several varieties of burial arrangement around a central theme of stone—and latterly cement. Most conspicuous, because newest, are four square surrounds of narrow, quadrangular cement, inscribed with names in *jawi* script, sometimes romanized Malay as well (including "Ini Sayak punya ibu," "This is my ma," on one). Of these four, one (dated 1935) is roofed; with corrugated iron sheets on four wooden posts. It has a low wall of medium-size broad stones piled inside the cement surround to a height of 18 inches. Inside the square enclosed is a layer of fine white beach pebbles, but no upright or other marker stones.

The other three cement squares enclose nothing but the buried remains and natural grasses. There are no associated stones; but a piece of a broken Doulton Ware (English) plate is associated with one and a battered big biscuit tin with another.

Two large and one small stone-walled enclosures, non-cement, are clearly older; the largest still with the ruins of a carved wood canopy, ornate, over the area of the grave. These stone-walled sections are becoming slowly overgrown with shrubs and may be difficult to distinguish in another decade. No enclosed stones are now identifiable.

More distinctive and lasting is a deliberate row of three single upright stones, natural shaped small boulders placed as menhirs, set 8-15 inches above ground level, in a line at right angles to the beach 4 feet apart. Two others were probably in continuation of this line but have fallen over.

Parallel to the line of single stones—in effect menhirs—there is a line of three pairs of stones, arranged in the Mohammedan *nisan* way found in some Borneo Malay graves. Close by and also parallel are three small rings of three to five flat

stones; each ring containing within two uprights, paired menhirs. These rings have diameters (external) between 2 feet and 3 feet. The stone is all natural sandstone or consolidated coral-sand agglomerate (in rock form).

The whole effect is of a *miniature* megalithic. It was evidently, also, once larger in extent. Scattered around are about fifty loose stones, some up to a foot in length, which clearly formed part of the same system in earlier times. Our Plate 53 shows these loose stones, which well illustrate the sort used--and perhaps re-used and moved about over centuries. It will be seen that all can be easily lifted by an adult, weighing 4-10 pounds. We have here, in effect, another version, albeit coarse, of the pebble-bed at Jaong (III.19), there buried by ten centuries of overlying deposit--just as these, on Usukan, are already beginning to be submerged by the turf. It is this *sort* of scatter-pattern of small natural stones, not erected or much arranged, that we would particularly describe as "microt megalithic" (further at III.22).

The Ubians are, theoretically at least, followers of Mohammed. Their island practice clearly overlaps Islamic. They have merged, perhaps, an older pagan concept with the newer (since c. 1400 A.D.) Moslem practice of marking graves with small *shaped*, usually squared and oftentcarved stones or wood posts, at one or both ends of the buried body position.

In other parts of West Borneo small pebbles are regularly placed as covering on Moslem graves along the coastal plain. In the Sarawak River area of the southwest, Malays sometimes make special expeditions to Satang Island, off Santubong, to collect the small (3-5 inches average) rounded smooth black pebbles of andesite on the beach there, and these are used in several local cemeteries. The earliest Moslem graves in this part of Borneo are those of Malay nobles who died before the first white Rajah arrived (1838), and were buried behind what later became the Brooke *Astana* (Palace). These had wooden marker posts, but were well covered with andesite pebbles--an effect faithfully reproduced when these were moved, at Moslem request, to their present position outside the Sarawak Museum (see Plate 54). Here, as often in Borneo, new religious practice both absorbed and was absorbed by an older, indigenous attitude--and this applies most relevantly, with other pebble usage as between Jaong and Bongkizam (III.24 below). A similar situation evidently applies in Celebes--and no doubt elsewhere--where Bennett Kempers has commented on the megalithic content of Moslem tombs; at Ralla in South Celebes some "have menhirs up to three metres high, that is 10 feet (Heekeren: 58)."

c. The Living Megalithic of the Far Uplands¹⁹

The only active large-scale and conspicuous megalithic activity to continue on the main island of Borneo fully into the second half of the twentieth century has been restricted to a small area, about 600 square miles, of the north-central interior above 3,000 feet. Here, the upland Kelabits, with the closely related Sabans and Potoks, who live far inland where Sarawak, North Borneo and Kalimantan meet, until 1963 lived subject to less outside influence, directly and physically, than almost any other people in Borneo. Nearly all the other really remote settled people of the interior have, in the past century, come into easier contact with administration, cash economy, and the rest of modern civilization--with accelerated cultural effects for themselves.

The range of this megalithic--which has been studied by one of us during two decades--is very large and even striking. It will be useful here to summarize the range of Kelabit *burial* methods which are directly related to and largely responsible for the megaliths in this sector; in association with status feasts of merit (*irau*) and the disposal of the bones of the dead in secondary burial. First; *primary burial* methods:

1. Wooden lidded coffin in house; on legs and with drainage bamboo:
 - a. *balang* type ("tiger dragon") carved;
 - b. *payou* type ("antlered dragon") carved;
 - c. complicated decoration but not carved;
 - d. simple.
2. Direct, tied up, crouched, into a Chinese stoneware jar, cut open along median joint with red-hot wire.
3. With or without a few planks as coffin, but direct into ground on a knoll, in grassland or scrub.
4. Buried in ground under house (still-born child)t
5. Body left out in jungle, far away (exceptional); usually "crime" or "outsider"t
6. Bodies taken by father in basket and buried in jungle near normal cemetery (twins)t

Of these methods, the first is much the commonest at the primary stage, and ordinarily, in recent times, secondary burial did not take place except from this method; or, less often, from the rarer jar *primary*; there is thus no retreatment for (4 to 6). Secondary burial methods are more diverse still, and these are all directly associated with megalithic activities.

7. Jar placed on top of high ground--sometimes simply on a mountain pass beside the path, sometimes several in line onto a lower knoll. (Jars run from heavy T'ang stoneware to Ming porcelain and later; all Chinese made.)
8. Jar with stone menhir erected alongside (or sometimes another form of megalithic monument, including a stone seat or rock-carving)t
9. Jar placed at one end of a *nabang* ditch, intersecting a path; or as part of an irrigation project, or diversion scheme; sometimes including a dam or fishwall of stones across a river, and often a cut to straighten out a bend in river course.
10. Bones direct into stone cyst or "slab gravet"
11. Bones placed (sometimes buried or in small pot) underneath stone "table" (cf. seat)t
12. Remains inside stone urn or vat (made of soft sandstone, some 5 ft. long)t
13. Remains placed in specifically made small grottos worked into big sandstone boulder.
14. Stone pile on knoll beside stream often topped with a massive dolmen--relics of the deceased covered with thousands of stones and pebbles (see details at the bottom, below)t
15. Bones taken in basket and hung up in association with somebody else's jar/megalithic or other secondary burial (childless widow, etc.); basket may also be placed among rocks.
16. Bones buried separately under a lean-to roof on a knoll or thrown into a deep rock crevasse.
17. Whole coffin carried to rock-shelter, without being opened (one record, *payou* type 1.b, direct transfer)t
18. Whole jar carried to rock-shelter, or high point (direct transfer of 2).
19. Jar with bones; tied up in tree--only see at Bawang valley, six instances.

There is also a distinct *tertiary* stage, until recently very important:

20. Hiding skull, finger and some other bones (local variants) in a remote rock crevice or river bed hollow
21. Separate burial of finger and toe bones in *tiny earthenware pots*.

The above is the briefest account of what is an elaborate pattern, with many other variants. The list at least serves to suggest the range of variation, past and present. The Kelabits themselves scarcely recognize such differences. For them, death is viable, a fluctuating continuation of uncertain life. Its observances may last over generations, involving the same sorts of individual decision, volatile emotion, shifting economic and topographical circumstances which produce the rich texture and exuberance of Kelabit living.

In addition, there are many separate stone megaliths in this small highland area, and a very few more extending southward into the Batang Kayan river now inhabited by Kayans and Kenyahs (who have no such recent megalithic tradition). Scattered about in the jungle and rivers on natural boulders of the Kelabit country are carvings on rocks, mainly of human figures (mostly spreadeagled) or monsters (including a "man-eating hornbill") of unknown antiquity (see below). There are also block cut rocks, much in the style of those exposed by the Jaong excavations (see Plates 49-50 here; and cf. III.18 below). All these appear to have been cut or chipped with *iron points*.⁰

The commonest single usage, however, is the placing of bones in large Chinese stoneware jars, and these number many thousands still identifiable in the uplands. In addition, smaller stoneware vessels and glass beads are used as funerary furniture in virtually all these activities. Gold was not known to these people until recently and is never so found; iron often -- and *no* megalith has ever been identified as certainly pre-iron, there is no neolithic linkage at all (to date). In this area, stonewares are considered interchangeable with stone. The big dragon jars are, indeed, the only protection the Kelabits have against their deepest underlying fears of the past: the fear of being petrified by hail.¹

It is difficult here to follow Dr. Heine-Geldern's theory that clay materials have "nothing to do" with the megalithic, as supported by Helmut Loofs (1967) -- except in so far as this megalithic belongs so strongly to the "iron age," which is as well marked by imported hard ceramics as by iron technology itself.²

Excluding the jars as such, some idea of the scale and range of this activity (excluding the Batang Kayan) can be obtained from an estimate made in 1964 and now slightly updated (Table 7).

Table 7. Upland Megalithic-Type Activities in North Central Borneo³

| Type of Activity | Approximate Number Located Since 1945 | Supposed Antiquity |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| <u>Stone Only</u> | | |
| 1. Rock-carvings | | |
| i. Humanistic (N) | 25 | Prehistoric |
| ii. Animal, etc. | 80 | Prehistoric to 1950 |
| iii. "Symbols" | 40 | Prehistoric |
| 2. Cut-stones, "seats," etc. | 40 | Until recently |
| 3. i. Parapun stone mounds with dolmens (N); cf. e, below | 6 | Prehistoric |
| ii. Parapun plain | 20 | More recent intot this century) |
| iii. Dolmens without mounds | 12 | Prehistoric |
| 4. Slab graves, "cysts," etc. (S) | 45 | Prehistoric, but re-used |
| 5. Menhirs | | |
| i. Rows, groups | 9 | Prehistoric |
| ii. Pair, single | c. 100 | Mostly 1880-1950 |
| 6. Stone vats, urns, etc. etc. (S) | 20 | Prehistoric |
| 7. Dams, walls | 15 | Until c. 1920 |
| 8. Grottos cut in cliffs, etc. (S) | 8+ | Prehistoric, but re-used |
| <u>Earth and Stone</u> | | |
| 9. Cut ditches and "rides" (<i>nabang</i>) | 250+ | Until 1950 (re-used in rice irrigation) |
| 10. Stone "bridges" (over <i>nabang</i>) | 30 | Until recently (mostly old) |
| 11. Big circular ditch (N) | 1 | Prehistoric |
| 12. Natural Rock shelters (adapted) | 4 | Continuously re-use |

(N) or (S) indicate concentration in northern or southern part of area (as far as present evidence permits any particularization of validity; in view of the great deal that must have been completely lost from the past)

Over and above the emphasis that should be put on the diversity and elasticity of Borneo's only identifiable worked megalithic--but which almost certainly applied through the island in the past--note is taken here of the use of small stones, and especially the moving of these in river beds to make diversions and irrigations which are regarded as exactly equivalent in "value" to the erection of large menhirs or any of the other listed activities. To save space here, a single and striking usage for small stones will now be examined separately, since it is so illuminating to what follows.

d. Parapun of the Northern Kelabits

We have earlier seen the important role played by "heirlessness" among the Kadazans of Sabah's coastal plain--who are weeks away from the Kelabits and know not of their existence. The most impressive of upland megaliths derive from rather the same thinking. This is the *parapunq*, a great pile of stones and pebbles which may be capped by a massive dolmen (see Plate 46). Three excavated in 1963 were each composed of many thousands of natural, readily transportable stones, clearly transported from not very nearby stream beds and placed in the jungle, mixed in with smashed stonewares, iron, glass and carnelian beads, human bone (often charred) where this was protected from decay by a dolmen roof. This is what happened, as described in 1959:

The great death difficulty arises when there are no direct or near heirs. Usually, parents will adopt a child. There is maneuvering within the family as to who should be adopted if there is an old jar or many valuable beads at stake. But sometimes a couple will be obstinate about this in a kind of reverse, frustrated spite--though in Kelabit terms it does not seem like spite so much as self-respect, the individual right. Hardest of all is the case of a childless widower or a confirmed bachelor who is rich. About one in every two or three hundred Kelabit men does not marry. This will always be of his own choosing. Even the deaf-mute moron at P'Umur has a wife, though no children. Sometimes a man does not marry for physical reasons; but there are also odd men who dislike women, sometimes who treasure their individuality and inner personality too much to share any piece of it with another person. The Kelabits have devised a solution for this problem: it aims to preclude the most violent source of argument, the permanent property in old beads and jars, by simply destroying it all. What happens is this . . .

"I am in middle age, a wealthy aristocrat. My possessions are unchallengeably mine as the only heir and I having performed all the necessary measures for my father's and mother's departure and monuments. I possess five buffaloes, sundry other cattle and pigs, most of which are not in my possession but owed to me in my own and three adjacent long-houses; also I am owed a buffalo, two fattypigs and two hundred salt which I invested by contributing to the death feasts of kin, and which they must repay me or my heirs for my own. But I have no direct heirs. And I can only see trouble if my nephews and nieces get into thist There are many of them. They have all been *most* kind. But I do not really want to be dependent on any of them, can support my old age with a few ordinary jars and cattle if I live too long to work (which I doubt I will)t If I go they will merely fight if I leave it to some, inheriting ill willt

"I have one very fine old jar, red earth, three dragons, six ears with only one chipped, also eleven other lesser jars, four of them valuable, five of them modern; several good plates, and two fine blue and white bowls hanging in frames on the wall for use on special occasions. I have a great many beads from my mother, including an excellent cap with more than three hundred orange cane beads, as well as two necklaces of rounded green glass ones of the kind we know to be oldest of all. Two good gongs, a set of full-size cooking pans for salt making, two fine parang knives from the Batang Kayan; all the planks and boards for my part of the house and a lot more I have lent to Tama Labang these recent years. Two blow-pipes, a dancing cloak of hornbill feathers, two huts full of rice and other usual things.

"As my further future seems somewhat uncertain, I had better settle the matter myself while I am still active and entirely alive. I will put aside the planks and boards, three of the lesser jars and some of the animals. The whole of the perishable rest, salt, rice, pigs, buffalo as well as many other things to purchase, like tobacco, betel nut, eels and labour, I will expend with due notice at a mighty feast after the next rice harvest. I am in a position to give a very big feast. Hundreds of people will come,

including my relatives over in the Kerayan and Bawang to the east and as far as Pa Tik beyond Kubaan to the west. It will be a splendid amusement, tremendous exchange.

"On the last day I will declare my monument. All my imperishable property is to be collected in a heap on the ground over there, a dart's flight from the long-house ladder. Every man present will come out when it has stopped raining and form a line from the fine old dragon jar in the center of the slope down to the single bank in the stream bed. Along this living chain, from hand to hand, should pass first the small surface stones and gradually, as the work goes down, larger stones and then boulders. All this will travel from the river bed up the bank on to the little knoll above flood level, slowly shaping a pile of stone. Presently this will grow into a mound higher than the long-house is off the ground, and twice the width anyone can leap. All mine.

"Thus will my belongings be secured forever. Thus my own memory will stand to eternity. It will be larger than any ordinary man's can be, because so many come to my feast and are so well entertained--since I have nothing to keep and pass on, I can, I will spend the lot in one great final display; and in consequence make a mighty effort to do well by me, piling rock upon boulder upon pebble upon stone.'"

There are twenty-one of these impressive stone mounds surviving round the Plain of Bah. Others no doubt have gradually vanished, as the allipowerful jungle has submerged them from above and undermined them with groping roots from below. Some parts of the highlands are situated on such small streams and in such stoneless ground that these mounds cannot be made. (Harrisson, 1959: 111-112)⁴

Geological considerations must always be borne in mind in an island like Borneo, where it is possible to go for long distances without finding exposed stone, even pebbles; and where there are some large areas with little or no hard, durable rock exposures. *Absence* of any traces of megalithic activity must therefore be treated with special caution as evidence in this setting. On the other hand, so strong is (or was) the character of the upland megalithic that it would *not* be impossible to advance arguments in favor of significant culture impacts having

spread thence down the river lines of trade into the lowlands, there meeting up with other sets of mega-standard, to and fro

It is striking, too, that the Kelabits living in the quite tiny upland zone of major megalithic activity always associate all this with the most elaborate feasts of merit, *irau* elaborated to an extent unknown in the surrounding communities. *Irau* normally relate to death rites, especially to the secondary treatment of "primary burials" (as listed intc, above), though they can also be held on other special occasions in the life cycle, such as the birth of a son to a leading citizen. In all cases, they involve elaborate economic exchanges centered around the consumption of wealth in the form of buffalos, domestic pigs, salt, rice and much else, at expense to the feast sponsors and principally to one or more families establishing or maintaining socio-economic status (and ascendancy) in the process. To go into the very complex, rich structure of *irau* would lead us too far afield here. A brief general account is included in the 1959 book already cited, and much else in note form remains to be published. Suffice it to stress, at this stage, that no sort of megalithic or near-megalithic can ever have been made, placed, or even considered among the Kelabits except as part and parcel of the *irau* itself essentially, integrally, linked with the journey of life and death--and with the great importance of identifying status (and protecting it) all along the way.

e. The Vanished Serus

At the other, further end of the scale--and the last appreciable megalithism in Borneo as now known--are four half life-size moveable stone carvings (never found among the Kelabits) attributed to a people extinct in this century, the Serus, swamped and submerged by the dynamic Sea Dayaks (Iban) since 700 A.D.⁵

All four figures are rather crudely cut in a soft soapy stone, which easily cracks and breaks. They appear to be naked and one appears to be female (male sex is rarely identified, e.g., in Kelabit stone carvings). The faces are placid, almost smiling. There is distortion of the ears, common to so many Borneo figures (and humans). They were found about fifty miles upriver near Saratok in the Second Division of Sarawak in 1928, and no details or associations are available. As pointed out elsewhere:

The closest parallel, however, is with some megalithic material from the Central Celebes. The type of "face" as so clearly shown in the Awik figure number 1, resembles especially in the eye-brow treatment, a face at Bada, Central Celebes, figured by Kaudern (1938,

figs. 64, 65). Others from that area are also rather similar (figures 50, 66, 27, etc.) though the arm and sexual treatment is never like that in the Awik figures. The parallels between Sarawak and Celebes are therefore only small and may be of no significance. It should be mentioned, however, that Kaudern relates the well-known human figure at Santubong, mouth of the Sarawak River (see Ling Roth, 1896; more fully examined in Harrisson, 1949c) with one found by Kruyt. This figure bears some similarity to certain Kelabit rock-carvings.²⁶

Loofs (1967: 82) accepts the possibility of a Celebes parallel.²⁷

In brief, these figures--now in the Sarawak Museum--present just one more facet of the very variegated megalithic strains that can only have once been much more numerous and powerful through Borneo. It is against this background of diversity in and around stone that attention may now be focused down on the prehistoric megalithic of the Sarawak River delta (For a wider summary of all this, see at III.25 following.)

CHAPTER 18

BATU GAMBAR AND SUNGEI JAONG'S

PETROGLYPHIC BOULDERS

We started this Data Paper with introductory matter on the Sarawak River delta sites of prehistoric iron-working and related trade and here took a quick look at the one well-known human figure carved, pecked out of the fairly soft sandstone boulders with a metal point, in rock, the Batu Gambar at Sungei Jaong, probably dating around or before 1000 A.D. (I.2). The rest of the Jaong mega-activity has not previously been published except for a brief summary in our previous Data Paper (H.O. 277)†; it deserves more attention at this point. Just as the protohistorical or recent megaliths of Kota Kinabalu, Usukan Island, the Far Uplands and the Serus each differ considerably across a wide spectrum of variety, so again the Jaong formations are not really like any of the others, except in so far as any patterns pecked on rock faces tend to resemble each other somewhat.

Redefining the petroglyphic forms, involving some 30 large rocks, these can be best summarized as:

- (i) Larger human figures, cut in high relief, principally Batu Gambar (4 on 3 rocks)†
- (ii) Smaller human and other figures shown as incised grooves, pecked out, which are difficult to see, often impossible, unless in reflected light or chalked (about 40 on 13 rocks)†
- (iii) Less clear incised forms, pecked out, sometimes resembling "characters" or triangular patterns which may represent human genitalia [about 100; same rocks as (ii)†].
- (iv) Geometrical shapes chipped out in relief, mostly fairly well-shaped parallelograms--termed in the dig record books "block cuts.†"
- (v) Round holes chipped and gouged out of the rock.†⁸

This classification is artificial. The whole lot patently belongs to one single system, perhaps executed over a fairly short period of time, in a local metaphor. All are on the natural sandstone boulders, and were covered in with dense foliage and

even great trees when this study began. All are situated in the sector of intensive human frequentation, iron-working, Chinese ceramics, etc. Some of the boulders carved are encrusted with iron-slag from the workings (H.D.: 232).

These petroglyphs are on most of the natural boulders in the sector, and as the soft sandstone crumbles easily and weathers off it is likely there were or are others no longer identifiable as man-made. It is, moreover, essential to realize that those surviving are nearly always unclear, in the weathered and fissured soft rock face, so that the exact outline and what to consider as such is open to a considerable degree of subjective choice. The numerous examples shown in the Plates (each with trench number and a scale in six-inch bands) indicate the range and common style, subject always to this qualification as regards outline interpretation.

What is one to say in summary of these figures and forms? Many scholars have examined them at Jaong as well as on photos, with contradictory and inconsistent results. For we are looking at something quite unfamiliar in 1970, a simple but vivid lost language of the stone.

The basic theme often seems to be a human figure, never showing distinct male genitalia, either arms and legs spread-eagle or dancing or in some perhaps emphatic shamanistic mood--according largely to your interpretation. As with Batu Gambar, the largest and most distinct figure, there is often some kind of headdress or asymmetrical head structure. These are often surrounded by odd lines or dots, and the whole series gives the sense of a linear system of discontinuous contour lines bounding simple, flattened shapes, many of them either anthropomorphic or biomorphic. There does not seem to be any single or simple system of special relationships either between several figures on the same rock or as between adjacent rocks. The less clearly anthropomorphic figures tend to come in small clusters, but with no single ground line or consistent perspective system.

There is a tendency for most of the figures to be on the creek side of the natural boulders, which might in the past have given a mural, gallery effect for anyone moving from Batu Gambar downstream. This could also have the effect of delineating the land from the water, defining a major axis of ancient settlement space. But the trouble here is that the rocks themselves to some extent demand this treatment, because the more level, workable, gently sloping spaces face towards the old river line (and perhaps in part result from older river erosion at a time when they formed the actual river bank, leaving the other, inland side of the rock too steep to be readily worked with even the faintest degree of finesse).

It is also noteworthy that despite the maritime context, there is no sign of any aquatic creature or boat--so frequently seen in similar circumstances elsewhere in Southeast Asia and Australasia, as also in the roughly contemporary Painted Cave at Niah (cf. II.12 above). It is as if these small "pictures" had to be executed as part of some much larger ritual or other expressive act. They cannot, as a whole, be said to be monumental in any way, and the artist or artists left untouched the large possibilities of the extensive rock surfaces available near the creek--though these have been better exploited with Batu Gambar and the block-cuts a little higher up. This also raises the question of whether or not all these smaller outlines were not executed by one man over a fairly short period of time? They mostly do appear to belong to one general, somewhat naive tradition (see especially the figures shown from trenches I/1, E/3, and to a lesser extent L/1). One has a certain sense of them being almost but not quite incidental, as it were scholarly footnotes to Batu Gambar and the "block-cuts."

The vocabulary of design elements on these outlines, particularly their discontinuity, is very distinctly unlike the contemporary idiom of virtually all Bornean native art, which whether expressed in carving or wall painting, beadwork or matting, is based on complex, dynamic, continuing and (where possible) curvilinear patterns of outline.

The scattered dots which show conspicuously on some rocks--and may be present on others and more numerous, the man-made ones are particularly hard to separate from natural erosion forms found on identical boulders elsewhere in the delta--would seem to represent single sculptural impacts, like someone with a spiked dibble-stick, preparing seed-holes for the padi grain. In some cases one gets the feeling that someone was metaphorically striking, spearing, into or around the represented body in the symbolism of murder or sacrifice; this sacrificial mood is present in the splayed-out body of Batu Gambar too.

In G (see Plate 36) another effect is particularly striking the left side of the figure dissolves into a spray of dots, positioned as key elements in the design--suggesting the ejection of sperm conceivably (cf. III.21.d further). This sexual analogy is given special force by the carefully positioned large dots placed inside a triangle on several rocks (e.g., D, E/2, J/3, and marginally F/4). These constitute, we believe, a metaphor for the female pudenda--and nearly everyone who has examined this material agrees on this one point at least. By the same token, the line pattern on B (Plate 37) can be read as a copulating couple. Incidentally, in Celebes stone figures the sex organs are usually well shown, "three times as many male as female."²⁹

This emphasis on the feminine at Jaong may well be part of the strong linkage between megalithic practices in general and the concept of fertility, Mother Earth, and ancestral respect (for more masculine manifestations see III.22.b following). These irregular figures could, in fact, represent the ancestors whose remains were placed with the pebble-beds close by or among the rocks themselves. Of course, megaliths and bodies do not necessarily go together—in the case of actual rock megaliths, not often so among the modern Kelabits. [There is also, here, the equally relevant and much more certain, demonstrable association with iron working and the magical beliefs almost always attached to this earth mining process in the past (H.O.i 77-83, cf. IV.27).]

It would be easy to differentiate these smaller outlines from the monumental surface of Batu Gambar itself, and of the "block cuts" (type iv) which are found on other rocks away a little from the creek. Those can be said to show a different, tougher technique. But on close study, in the field, this proves to be largely, if not entirely, a matter of degree. The larger are in effect little more than extensions in space, especially depth, of the smaller; while some of the smaller forms remain very close to Batu Gambar in verve of style.

The more formalized "block cuts" are very much easier to decipher visually; they stand out like scales upon a pangolin, in bold relief. They do not occur on the same natural boulders as types (i) to (iii), but usually several together on larger rocks a little higher up (like Batu Gambar), itself on the slight slope from the Jaong creek along a 690 foot strip and in the immediate vicinity of the gold finds and pebble-beds (II.8, cf. III.19). They could, then, represent a different phase from the smaller "representational" incised outlines though there is little technological change required and they can perhaps be better explained as special forms used as one variant on the local megalithic metaphor to focus on something happening on that part of the Jaong site. But again, one is faced with bafflement at seeking a satisfactory "explanation" for these recurrent rough but strong parallelograms. They are clearly without "function" in the utility sense, since they occur at all angles and on all aspects of the rocks. One rock between iron-rich X/3 and the Raso brook is cut in this way all over its domed surface of some 300 square feet. Others have been revealed 12 inches and more down in the excavation, buried by human and jungle detritus.

It just might be argued that the human figures and feminine organs "happened to be there" before the iron-ceramics trade came along and settled coincidentally at the same place. This will not do at any stretch for the block forms, which dominate

the rockscape, show the same pecking technique with iron points, and are mixed up with the slag, including slag concentrations, even more fully than the others.

The rock carvers were probably already there--or already rock-carving, anyway--when the iron-workers influence came in. But that in this place the *whole* petroglyphic operation precedes the megalithic is inconceivable, with the two thus intermixed, yet with none of the equally suitable and workable rock faces on the other side of the brook or elsewhere in the Sarawak River basin touched--and search for parallels on the abundant other boulders all round Santubong Mountain has over the years been as intense as it has been unsuccessful.

Many attempts have been made, by the present writers now and numerous expert visitors over the years, to "explain" these block-cuts. They show no obvious symbolism, though once more the sex link is occasionally, more thinly, indicated. They did not serve any utility function. They were not left as pieces of the soft sandstone chipped out for some other purpose. The shape and outline vary, but the same form and exactly the same "pecking" technique is repeated again and again. They are

- roughly parallelograms;
- never with major curves;
- but occasionally with 1 or 2 small *holes* pitted inside the line, usually near one or both ends (? sex motif);
- usually on top of the boulder, but also anywhere, especially if the top is already used--e.g., on an overhung rounded side.

The most emphatic cuts are in the junction between the Raso brook and the Jaong creek, around and among the slag concentrations. Many lesser rocks and groups of rocks are cut and no doubt others with the cuts still buried. Table 8 reports the sizes of the cuts for two main rock groups. It will be seen that there is--by delta standards--considerable consistency in dimensions. None are less than 18 inches nor more than 3 feet long, less than 5 inches or more than 12 inches broad.

The measurements cited below are representative for a large series studies, all closely similar. It will be seen that in *no case is the length less than twice the breadth*, and in most cases three times. Further, the longer the block-cut the more the tendency for this ratio to increase (see Table 9). The larger the cut, the higher the length:breadth ratio is likely to be. In brief, by no manner or means can the shapes so cut be regarded as other than deliberately arranged, reflecting specific ideas in the sculpting mind.

Table 8. Jaongi Block Cuttings

| Rock Code | Number of Blocks on This Rock | Sizes (from the east side of each rock anticlockwise) | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------|---|-----------------|------------------|
| | | Length (feet) | Length (inches) | Breadth (inches) |
| 1 | 8 | 2 | 11 | 9 |
| | | 2 | 11 | 8 |
| | | 2 | 8 | 8 |
| | | 2 | 8 | 5 |
| | | 2 | 7 | 6½ |
| | | 2 | 6 | 8 |
| | | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| | | 2 | 3 | 5½ |
| 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 7 |
| | | 2 | 1 | 6 |
| | | 1 | 6 | 6 |
| 3 | 7 | 2 | 8½ | 9 |
| | | 2 | 7 | 5 |
| | | 2 | 6 | 9 |
| | | 2 | 5 | 8 |
| | | 2 | 3 | 11 |
| | | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| | | 2 | 1 | 9 |
| 4 | 10 | 2 | 9 | 9 |
| | | 1 | 11 | 7 |
| | | 1 | 6 | 7 |
| | | 1 | 4 | 9 |
| | | 1 | 4 | 7 |
| | | 1 | 3 | 7 |
| | | 1 | 1 | 7 |
| | | 1 | 1 | 7 |
| | | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| | | 1 | 1 | 6 |

Table 9. Jaongi Variation in Block-Cut Sample Measurements (in inches)

| | Maximum | Minimum | Total Range |
|---------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Length | 39 | 13 | 26 |
| Breadth | 11 | 5 | 6 |

To those who today cannot see any sexual phallic symbolism, these blocks cut long ago in the living rock may be offered alternatively as king-size memorializations of the clay crucible in the ground below and all around (H.O.: 100).

We have chosen two large boulders exposed by the 1957 excavations as Plates 7-14 here, to indicate the way in which these block cuts are arranged. The roughly quadrangular outlines are placed thus

Table 10. Position on Boulders (cft Plates 7-14)

| Rock | North | East | West | South | All |
|------|-------|------|------|-------|-----|
| A | 3 | 7 | 8 | 10 | 28 |
| B | 6 | 1 | 11 | 7 | 25 |

Most of the cuts broadly follow the slope of the boulder up and down, but there are many exceptions (notably A/East). The irregularities in outline are partly the result of weathering; in some places whole blocks have weathered right out where the face is not buried under the deposit.

One block only is cut on the same rock as a figure. This is on the downstream side of B1, and the figure is of type (i), a relief form, badly weathered and broken (hands gone). The block is cut just below the figure's legs, strongly suggesting a sexual metaphor again. More broadly, we are inclined to believe that these blocks, especially those with holes inside, do represent a symbolism of sexual organs connected with the prehistoric iron industry and the pebble-beds too. Likewise, the holes or depressions gouged out of the soft rock, large cousins of the dots on the smaller incised work--more than 3, mostly c. 6 inches deep, in one rock overhanging trench P; some of the holes hold stoneware sherds and soft pottery.

One block-cut was found on the *same level* as the pebble-bed in trench F/1 x 9 and F/1 x 11, exactly continuous from the pebbles onto the cut rock face (cf. III.19). One piece of *gold foil* was found beside a buried cut-block in F/2 and it could also be that these foil shapes further reflect the same broad symbolism as the block cuts and the incised and holed triangles.

CHAPTER 19

THE JAONG PEBBLE-BEDS (AND GOLD AGAIN)

A famed prospector and pioneer business-man of Sarawak, L. V. Helms, wrote a tantalizing piece about his youthful experiences of a century or so ago, thus:

That there were at some period considerable settlements in many parts where the solitude of the fishermen reigns, I had often occasion to notice when exploring the country. Often would the pick or spade, used for the purposes of mineral exploration, reveal thick layers of pottery and china of antique, apparently Chinese in make. On one occasion we found a number of square paving tiles some four inches thick, beautifully made of pebbles, concrete, quartz, etc.; they had been polished, were clearly very old, and made by people of a higher civilization.³⁰

Maybe he was prospecting in the Sarawak River delta for gold: it is probable. Alas, these tiles have not been rediscovered--they are probably disguised under rubber right now. The nearest to them known in Borneo are the few square feet of crude tile-work at the Bongkizam shrine (III.24 below) and what we believe to be one source of the shrine's development, the pebble-beds of Jaong, which now require more detailed attention.

a. 50,000+ Pebbles

These pebble-bedst--a term first adopted in 1952--are difficult to map and define exactly in the ground, because the density varies so much, from thick layers to thin outliers. These basic characteristics may be stated thus:

A layer (or layers) of small (under 6") easily hand-held natural, river-worn, rounded small stones (pebbles) retaining a more or less identifiable dense horizontal band through the prehistoric levels of the deposit.¹

As gradually exposed over the years, the parts of Jaong which fall within the above definition fully have proved to be parts of three adjacent trench series broadly lying back from the incised figure "character" petroglyphs near the creek--in behind the main iron-workings, often close to the "block-cut" boulders.

The more important part of this sector is the F/Series, involving 19 positively pebble-bed trenches, each 5 x 2 ft., positioned 15 to 20 yards from the creek edge on flat land at the foot of the low knoll which runs across to the Batu Gambar rock-carving on its east side.

At an angle of 45° with a gap of 18 feet from the F/Series, runs S/, with 16 positive pebble-bed trenches, rich in stone but much weaker in associated artifacts; and marginal to the two, a narrow band of E/Series, which was followed up later. To quote from the actual 1952 field report:

There were two pebble zones discovered in the Jaong excavation. They were called the pebble zones because of the two pebble beds which lay on the top of the white sand layer of these two zones. . . . As the name implies, pebble beds were beds of pebbles laid out in thickness of one foot. However, they were not of uniform thickness, but unevenly ranging from three inches to twelve inches and more. . . . The pebbles in the second bed were more uniform in size than that from the first one, as the upper part of the first bed was of smaller pebbles than the lower part.

With later extensions, in all over 1000 square feet were pebble-bedded, 700 square feet densely. Nothing of this was visible on the surface. In no case did the layering start nearer than six inches below the present top. (See Table 11.) The principal trench depths involved--these were marked with cement posts, often also identifying finds of importance, checked still in good order in 1967--are shown in Table 12.

The outline of this underground pebble concentration is thus irregular in plan as also--as Table 12 shows--in depth, partly owing to variable subsequent deposition factors overhead. It is enough to say that the bed starts six inches or more under the present surface. Since there are abundant sherds, slag and other material above the bed, reaching up to the top inch or two, the bed is not the original top or end of Jaong activity. For instance, taking the number of stoneware and earthenware sherds clearly *above* the top of the pebble-bed, we get the results shown in Table 13. Such calculations are subject to a wide range of error under these circumstances. But, allowing the utmost for that, there are enough sherds on top and enough whole stoneware vessels intact below (none above) the beds (III.21) to confirm that the normal system of stratification, weak as it is in the delta, retains its logic here.

The number and thickness of this bed also varies irregularly. Every pebble was counted for E, and in part for S (to nearest 5). The results are presented in Table 14.

Table 11. Layering of Pebble-Beds, F/, S/, and E/Series

| Trench | Top of Pebble-Bed From Ground Surface (inches) | Trench | Top of Pebble-Bed From Ground Surface (inches) |
|---------|--|---------|--|
| F1 x 1 | 12 | S1 | 15 |
| F1 x 2 | 12 | S3 | 9 |
| F1 x 3 | 12 | S4 | 9 |
| F1 x 5 | 12 | S5 | 9 |
| F1 x 6 | 12 | S7 | 8 |
| F1 x 7 | 12 | S8 | 8 |
| F1 x 8 | 12 | S9 | 12 |
| F1 x 9 | 12 | S10 | 9 |
| F1 x 10 | 6 | S11 | 6 |
| F1 x 11 | 6 | S13 | 6 |
| F1 x 12 | 6 | S15 | 6 |
| F1 x 13 | 6 | S16 | 6 |
| F1 x 14 | 6 | S17 | 6 |
| F1 x 15 | 6 | S18 | 12 |
| F1 x 16 | 8 | S19 | 14 |
| F1 x 17 | 8 | S22 | 12 |
| F4 x 1 | 12 | E1 x 30 | 6 |
| F4 x 2 | 12 | E1 x 40 | 6 |
| F4 x 3 | 12 | E2 x 40 | 6 |

Table 12. Level of Pebble-Bed Start

| Series | Number of Trenches | Depth Below Surface in Inches | | | | | | Total |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| | | 6 | 8 | 9 | 12 | 14 | 15 | |
| E | 3 | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | 3 |
| F | 19 | 6 | 2 | - | 11 | - | - | 19 |
| S | 16 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 16 |
| Total | 38 | 14 | 4 | 4 | 14 | 1 | 1 | 38 |

Table 13. Potsherds Above Pebble-Bed, Jaong (All Types)

| Series | Trenches | Number of Potsherds |
|--------|----------|------------------------|
| F | 19 | 2,538 |
| S | 16 | 882 |

Table 14. Number of Pebbles, Jaongt

| Series | Trenches | Total Pebbles | Average per Trench |
|--------|----------|---------------|--------------------|
| E | 3 | 2,415 | c. 750 |
| F | 19 | 25,750 | c. 1400 |
| S* | 16 | c. 25,000 | ? |
| Total | | 50,000+ | |

* 17,330 pebbles were actually counted in S, the balance for part of 10 trenches estimated, as other work pressures precluded complete figures.

The broad average of pebbles per surface square foot in what can be regarded as a real pebble-bed may be given at *between 40 and 100 per square foot*, each pebble averaging about 3 to 5 inches long and 1 to 2 inches in width.

This is not to say that the bed is just one thin flat layer. For six of the F/ trenches (where the pebble-bed started at 12 inches, see Table 11) counts were made in six-inch excavational layers from the surface down, shown in Table 15.

Table 15. Pebbles in Six Jaong Deeper Pebble-Bed Trenches (12" start in F)

| Depth Below Surface (inches) | Number of Pebbles | As Percentage |
|------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 0 - 6 | 8 | 0 |
| 6 - 12 | 15 | 1 |
| 12 - 18 | 1,413 | 80 |
| 18 - 24 | 328 | 19 |
| 24 - | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 1,764 | 100 |
| Average pebbles per trench | 294 | |

These pebbles cluster rather sharply at under 12 inches, mainly around 15-19 inches. In the shallower starting beds, the majority (22 out of 38 trenches), a sample were more precisely measured. Six with 6 inch starts were recorded by 1 inch levels from below the start line, with the results shown in Table 16.

Table 16. Pebbles in Six Jaong Shallower Pebble-Bed Trenches
(6" starts in F)

| Depth Below Surface (inches) | Number of Pebbles (to nearest 5) | As Percentage |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| 0 - 6 | 40 | - |
| - 7 | 7,220 | 39 |
| - 8 | 4,525 | 24 |
| - 9 | 5,520 | 29 |
| -10 | 860 | 4 |
| -11 | 445 | 3 |
| -12 | 80 | 1 |
| Total | 18,690 | 100 |
| Average pebbles in trench | 3,115 | |

It will at once be observed that the pebble-bed is much *thicker* in the six starting at 6 inches than at 12 inches, averaging over 3000 pebbles a trench to a little less than 300 pebbles in the 12 inch starters, identical trenches in the same series, which in fact represent the fringe and tilt-out of the main bed, in so far as this can be specified.

To check, two intermediate F trenches where the bed started at 8 inches were similarly counted by 1 inch layers (Table 17).

Table 17. Pebbles in Two Jaong Median Pebble-Bed Trenches
(8" starts in F)

| Depth Below Surface (inches) | Number of Pebbles (to nearest 5) | As Percentage |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| 0 - 6 | 5 | - |
| - 7 | 10 | 1 |
| - 8 | 25 | 2 |
| - 9 | 570 | 37 |
| -10 | 610 | 39 |
| -11 | 160 | 11 |
| -12 | 100 | 7 |
| -13 | 40 | 3 |
| Total | 1,520 | 100 |
| Average pebbles per trench | 760 | |

What happens here is that the thicker pebble beds come up nearer the present surface, the thinner start deeper and also tend to run deeper, partly perhaps owing to easy sinking into the sand there (see below). No doubt if such exhausting counts were extended, other variables would appear; but basically this is the system inside one pretty distinct part of the Jaong formation. Put another way:

Table 18. Pebbles by Depth in Three Sorts of Pebble-Bed F/ Trenches at Jaong (as percentages)

| Depth in 6" Layer | Depth at Which Main Pebble Bed Starts | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| | 12" | 8" | 6" |
| 0 - 6 | - | - | - |
| 6 - 12 | 1 | 97 | 100 |
| 12 - 18 | 80 | 3 | - |
| 18 - 24 | 19 | - | - |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Another way of describing this would be *tilting*. It is often where the pebblebed is nearest to the surface (shallowest) that artifacts--especially gold and stoneware vessels--are most strongly present.

The percentage figures may give a slightly misleading comparison above, too. Gross figures, similarly arranged, perhaps provide an idea of the bulk effect of this pebble effort as a whole.

Table 19. Pebbles by Depth, Fourteen Jaong F/Trenches (as previously tabulated)

| Depth Below Surface (inches) | Depth of Start | | | Total All | Percentage All |
|---------------------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------|
| | 12" (six) | 8" (two) | 6" (six) | | |
| 0 - 6 | 8 | 5 | 40 | 53 | 0 |
| 6 - 12 | 15 | 1,475 | 18,650 | 20,140 | 92 |
| 12 - 18 | 1,413 | 40 | 0 | 1,453 | 7 |
| 18 - 24 | 328 | 0 | 0 | 328 | 1 |
| Total | 1,764 | 1,520 | 18,690 | 21,974 | 100 |
| Average pebbles per trench | 294 | 760 | 3,115 | | |

The fullest pebble-beds are nearer to the surface, densely packed in a thinner band. Some of the others reflect tilt away from the center and other unknown factors--for instance, possible boundaries or different sorts of mark \ddot{t} if any real significance at all (cf. IV.28 below). Not much needs to be made of these differences in detail. The casual factors of over-deposit \ddot{t} under soil, sinking, are among the several that can affect any detailed point to point analysis. More important is the simple fact that here we have a big bulk of selected pebbles, not less than 50,000, placed in narrow sectors of the Jaong site. These 50,000 and more are all pebbles brought to the spot from a distance--definitely not naturally deposited.

There are probably in all approaching 100,000 placed pebbles in the area between the Batu Gambar carved rock and the junction of the Raso Brook with the main Jaong creek (I.2). Further careful counts of the 1966 season in Jaong showed that some pebbles taper away from F-S to spread widely in the site. An extension of scattered pebbles was traced out in the A and Y/sectors, though on a much thinner scale than in 1952-7. The largest number were in the three trenches, 347 pebbles in 75 square feet, of which 307 (89%) were here *below* 24 inches \ddot{t} a further tilt and over-deposit effect here correlated with a higher degree of iron-slag deposition than in the E-F-S sector (cf. H.O.: 235 table and III.22.a below).

Even these outlying, non-dense pebbles are extraneous--as the geologists report for two random samples of Y/pebbles from *below* 24 inches.

These two groups of (excavated) stone probably selectively placed at one site, because they consist almost entirely of one sort of stone namely hornfels (metamorphosed shale); the stream (adjacent) contains a greater variety of rocks but the two samples dug only contained three and one *non*-hornfels specimen respectively. Also probably collected because of exceptional roundness; therefore not a random stream sample, but highly selective. (H.O.: 236)

There are no comparable riverine pebble occurrences beyond the casual in the later Buah and Bongkizam sites despite exact parallels in other respects with Jaong. Thus in typical Series W/ and E/ at Buah, 130 square feet, only 9 stones of all sorts were excavated, compared to a thousand times that density in the Jaong concentrations.³

b. Overlying Soils and Underlying Sands

The general character of the ground at Jaong varies from arid sand without top soil over towards the Raso brook to deep

mud on the creek bank. Between these two extremes, in the part which is archaeologically so positive and which was clothed with vegetation up to patches of full rain forest when this study began, there is a fairly consistent structure through the relevant deposit, though much varied by abundant sandstone rock outcrops and affected when the slight hillocks are ascended and old water-levels thus affected. This may be formalized thus:

Table 20. Structure of the Ground at Jaong

| Sequence | Formation | Archaeology | Usual Depth of Layer Where Present (in inches) |
|----------|--------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Surface humus and plants | Nil | - 1 |
| 2 | Black soil-I | Recent formation, since occupation | 1 - 4 |
| 3 | Black soil-II | Often reddened and impregnated with iron slag; main artifact zone | 10 - 40 |
| 4 | Yellow sand | Affected by overspill of artifacts | 2 - 8 |
| 5 | White sand | Old aquatic and erosion effects usually sterile unless pebble-bed present | - 12 |
| 6 | Yellow clay | Old silt always sterile | 6 - bedrock |
| 8 | Sandstone | Bedrock | ? |

The pebble-beds start in at layer 3 always, though they may run down to 4 or 5. The gold leaf, whole stoneware vessels and other things may then occur down to layer 5, otherwise sterile.

The pebbles sometimes seem to be placed on layers 4 or 5, but this is never simple and clear-cut, owing to subsequent deposition and infiltration of earth among the pebbles from above. However, in *no case* is there a simple relationship of pebbles and sand WITHOUT at least 6 inches of black soil above (cf. Table 11), and with numerous slags or sherds above the pebbles. It is therefore impossible to see the pebbles as having been laid as an entirely separate operation, independent of the rest of the Jaong activities. Rather, they were intimately a part of it; and perhaps of *all* of it.

It is the *sand* which represents the "floor" of the Jaong structure, from the archaeological point of view--although it is, in a sense, the ceiling in terms of geology. In this connection, it must be noted that sometimes the black soil lies directly on yellow clay; and that white sand may occur between the latter and bedrock (e.g., in a hillock-top trench). A blackish sand also occurs sparsely, in some cases layered thus: black soil (to 18"), yellow clay (5-6"), black sand (5-6"), white sand (7-8"), black sand again (3"), yellow clay (10-26"), then bedrock (uphill, D/17). In such cases--the result of complex and much more ancient erosion, flooding and submergence, no present concern--artifactual material is only found sparsely in the black soil, as is generally the rule for all sand *unless* a pebblebed or at least grouped extraneous placed pebbles are present to *lower* the artifact stratification potential.

c. The Pebbled Gold

Much has been said about gold and the pebble-bed set-up in the previous section (II) of this Data Paper. It is hardly necessary to elaborate on the theme: that gold artifacts, especially pieces of gold-leaf foil, often cut with a median breach-line, are regularly found in association with small, whole, Chinese stoneware vessels to be detailed in the next but one chapter (III.21), and other human materials, occurring with or under the aforesaid pebble-beds or in a few cases with groups of pebbles less thickly arranged. The following extract from the Jaong records will serve to sum up on this in a rather different way; from the main F sector, starting with F/1 on (Table 21).

Table 21. Position of Some Gold Artifacts in Association with Other Objects at Jaong.

| Depth (inches) | Position (layer) | Gold Object | Remarks |
|----------------|----------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 21 | White sand | Ring | Just under pebble-bed with perfect vessels |
| 20 | White sand | Leaf-foil | - |
| 17 | White sand | Leaves (3) | Just below black soil |
| 18 | White sand | Leaf-foil | - |
| 18 | White sand | Leaf-foil | - |
| 9-10 | <i>Black sand</i> | Small fragment leaf (broken) | In stoneware bowl; just above white sand, 4" under pebble-bed |
| 9-10 | <i>Black sand</i> | As above | |
| 13 | <i>Black SOIL</i> | Leaf-foil | Just <i>above</i> white sand |
| 24 | White sand | Small beads | - |
| 6 | <i>In pebble-bed</i> | Bead | The only gold object actually found among <i>dense</i> pebbles |
| 29 | White sand | Ear-ring | Close to perfect stoneware vessel |
| 15 | White sand | Leaf fragment | Inside a perfect bowl |

CHAPTER 20

TOUCHSTONES

Pebbles and gold have another and very direct connection, going far beyond Jaong and into the shadows of an even earlier antiquity. Known in Greece--and mentioned by Plato, Sophocles, Heroditus and Aristotle--by the sixth century B.C., but reaching China only some twenty centuries later, little research has been done on the touchstone in Southeast Asia, although it is an everyday tool of the smith and known to all the coastal populations today.

A touchstone is in Borneo at least--a small black pebble (2-4") of jasper (basonite), very hard, seldom found, exchanged through the island hand to hand. If gold is rubbed on it, a clear golden trace is left upon the flinty surface, easy to see. Fake gold will not show. It is thus the immediate way of distinguishing gold from ungold here. But it can be used more subtly, to measure the offered gold piece against a standard measurement and thus in effect "assess" the quality. Medieval metallurgists had 24 "needles," tiny bars of gold from 1 to 24 carats. By rubbing one or more of these alongside the streak left by the offered gold, its carat-quality could be quite well measured. Until the development of more sophisticated acid tests, this was the common method.

Nowadays, Chinese goldsmiths in Kuching commonly employ nitric acid, but still using the touchstone. They drop the acid onto the streak. If the trace at once vanishes, it is poor stuff. Good stuff, 18 carats and more, will not discolor at all. By using bottles with various strengths of nitric acid, the smith can get the same effect as with the needles.¹⁴

Jaong pebbles often resemble touchstones, the hornfels mainly used looking quite like jasper. The parallel need not be purely casual.¹⁵ The possibility that gold was extensively worked--as it certainly was--on the spot round Jaong and in the delta generally must not be overlooked. This may have occurred, on a smaller scale, alongside the massive iron-workings. The techniques required are so simple, compared with iron, that such activity could easily be overlooked even in the long sequence of site excavations since 1947. This would also relate gold and pebbles even more intimately, in craft as well as in ritual, interchangeably (see also IV.31.i).¹⁶

CHAPTER 21

STONEWARE VESSELS AND PEBBLE-BEDS AT JAONG

a. Vessel Positions and Associations

The Pebble-Beds at Jaong are notable not only for associated gold objects but almost equally for perfect or broken but complete vessels of hard, monochrome, stoneware-porcelain. These are always small, including saucers and bowls, little jars, lidded boxes and one water dropper shaped as a human figurine. They have been discussed and illustrated in color in several earlier papers. All were made in southern China and may be regarded as late T'ang into early Sung--about a century either side of 1000 A.D. In common with the very many sherds of broken stonewares, in all sizes, this ceramic material is one indicator of the earlier delta trade for Jaong, as compared with Buah and Bongkissam.³⁷

What concerns us here is the presence, regularly, of these small, intact vessels concentrated largely in the pebble sector. Nearly fifty have been excavated in this part of Jaong over the years; only two elsewhere in Jaong; and less than a dozen for the whole of the rest of the excavations. It is unmistakably clear that in many cases the object was deliberately deposited as part of the pebble-bed association. Here is a cross-section of depth data for a series excavated at Jaong towards the end of the 1952 season:

1. Bowl, broken but complete, 18"t
2. Spouted pot with cover, 8"t
3. Perfect porcelain bowl, 10".
4. Bowl, broken, complete, 19"t
- 5-6. Spouted pot with handle at 6½" and broken but complete white bowl, 9".
7. The lower portion of white lidded pot, 8"t
8. Black bowl, broken but complete, 6-12"t
9. Bowl, broken but complete, 18".
10. Brown-glaze long neck spouted pot, neck broken, 3".
- 11-12t Two-ear perfect pot and broken but complete bowl, 19"--
the bowl on top of the pot
- 13t White bowl, broken but complete, 22".
14. Lower portion of lidded pot, 7"t
15. Upper portion (lid) of a lidded pot, 18"t
- 16t Perfect white bowl, 18".
17. Perfect saucer, a perfect pot and an iron implement found together with 93tbeads at 29".

18. Perfect vase, 20".
19. Broken but complete bowl, 24".
20. Broken but complete bowl with iron implement, 11" (3" under pebble-bed).
21. White bowl, perfect, 12", with 19 beads around it.
22. Perfect bowl, 27".
23. Broken but complete bowl, 25".
24. Perfect saucer with gold earring and 182 beads, 29".
25. Broken but complete bowl with beads around, 36".
26. Perfect saucer with 4 beads *inside*, 28".
27. Perfect saucer, 20".
28. Broken but complete bowl found with a big white bead, 18".
29. Perfect bowl, 22".³⁸

Among the above all are regarded as whole pieces, including where the vessel is broken but easily reconstructed from the sherds in the *immediate* vicinity, showing that it was left or placed as a complete unit *in situ*. This is in contrast to 99+% of the sherds throughout the rest of Jaong and the delta generally, where the pattern is one of wide scatter--pieces of the same (often incomplete) pot occurring 10 feet and up to 50 feet apart (H.O.: 269).

Moreover, as pointed out for broken sherds in our previous study:

Below 18" in normal site patterns stoneware sherds become *scarce* except under particular conditions at Buah with the very deep iron concentration trenches there. But even the deepest sherds within a site do not prove to be different or exceptional, let alone earlier pieces within the time phase at that site. (H.O.: 273).

Over half the whole pieces at Jaong, however, are at 18 inches or below, as indicated in the preceding list.

"Absolute depth" has little significance in Jaong; and the irregular nature of the pebble-beds makes exact position definition even more uncertain. It is easy, in this terrain, for pebbles or associated objects to be displaced sufficiently to obscure precise deposit level. Even so, the picture is quite clear. To quote from an interim field report entry back in 1952:

All the perfect porcelain articles and most of the broken but complete pieces were from under the beds . . . only the long neck pot in E1 x 40 was *on top* of the pebble-bed at three inches under the ground surface in black soil.

A later analysis confirmed this trend:

Table 22. Whole Stoneware Vessels, Jaong

| | Position in Relation to Pebble-Bed | | | | Total |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|-------|------|-----------|-------|
| | Under | Above | Near | Elsewhere | |
| Perfect | 14 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 17 |
| Broken but complete | 22 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 27 |
| Total | 36 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 44 |

As it became clear that this whole vessel relationship with pebble-beds (and other things) was more than casual, particular attention was made to measure, sketch, describe and photograph the exact position of each as it was excavated carefully out. (It should be added that none of the "complete but broken" vessels were broken by the excellent excavation staff and skills at any time.) Where two whole vessels occurred together this was of particular interest; for instance, in brief:

- (i) *Saucer and vase* The saucer was in upside position, while the vase lay on its side, the mouth facing into the other, 1" apart. An iron knife lay obliquely to the saucer, 1½" away, running 45° from the saucer jar axis, its far end 7" from the vase base. 93 beads (27 blue, 39 yellow, 27 red) were inside the saucer, and between this and the vase, along with a decomposed bronze piece (? bracelet), 29".
- (ii) *Two saucers*. High-footed saucer upright, *Yueh* one on top of it. Gold object 3" away, beads inside and outside saucers, 29".
- (iii) *Black pot and saucer*. Almost upright, slightly tilted; the pot's mouth is closely covered by slightly broken but complete bowl, 19".³⁹

Position data could be exactly assessed for 16 perfect pieces in pebble-beds, as shown in Table 23. In 1966, we took a further look at the pebble-bed problem, extending down towards the creek in a set of eight trenches, A/1-8, linking to 1952-7 vessel sectors, but now working among large buried boulders and away from the main beds. Here, under a surface area of 279 square feet, we excavated 8 perfect vessels, four concentrated together in A/1 (25 square feet). These lay nestled among the boulders and on the sand of the old river bed, with some pebbles and

large stones placed around or near them, as if there had been an overflow of funerary or other use into this corner and treated in a slightly simpler way, with an average of one whole vessel per 25 square feet.⁴⁰

Table 23. Position of Jaong Perfect Vessels

| Position | Bowls and Saucers | Pots and Vases | Total |
|-------------|-------------------|----------------|-------|
| Upright | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| On side | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Upside down | 9 | 0 | 9 |
| Total | 12 | 4 | 16 |

The "pomegranate" lidded box of A/6 was of interest not only as a repeat of an unusual 1952 Jaong form, but also in its own right, since the base was found at 5 inches in the deposit, and the top at 7 inches below its bottom, as if placed upside down--as with most of the bowls and saucers in the previous table.

Compare these Jaong A results with the trenches made to test sectors previously pursued as bedless but rich in slag or related materials. We dug 88 square feet of this at Jaong in 1966, without finding a whole vessel--or anything nearly complete, only fragmented and scattered sherds. Likewise, in 875 square feet at Buah and Bongkizam, as also in 687 square feet of lesser sites, no whole vessel (or sign of one) was revealed in this season.

b. Characteristics of Jaong Stoneware (cf. Plates 15-19)

The *common features* of all these stonewares excavated perfect or whole at Jaong may be summarized thus:

- (i) Most are small, some "miniature," of Yueh or closely related wares.
- (ii) Far and away the greater part are simply monochrome, in no case are two main glazes employed for contrast.
- (iii) The forms are generally "simple" though often "forceful"; seldom elegant or delicate--from the point of view of the Western fine-art collector, that is.⁴¹
- (iv) There are a variety of molded and relief designs or incised patterns, particularly of lotus and other simple floral motives.

- (v) Although none of the wares and forms are unknown elsewhere, some of the commonest are sparsely represented in other collections and countries.
- (vi) All are acceptable as "T'ang" or early "Sung,t" in Chinese dynastic terms.

Although the range of whole pieces is not great in quality, there is a considerable area of technical achievement and artistic skill.⁴² Perhaps the most unusual in this respect is the "water-dropper" from Jaong in 1957t

1. It is of stoneware, 100 mm. high--with the fine whitey-buff body of nearly all whole pieces found in Jaong.
2. The glaze is--or was, for it only remains clear in one place on the back--blueish white and of Ying Ch'ing sort.
3. The glaze is much discolored and deteriorated, in place almost black--and peeled off at one point.
4. The figure clearly represents a child as judged by the large and "naif" head, and a bib-like cloth round the neck and tied with a string, round the back at the waist.
5. The child is holding a double gourdt(= bag) with the effect of a long spouted mouth in the top (cf. bagpipe)
6. The object, as a whole, could be a water dropper, but one-holed. The hole is not in the gourd (which, being held upright in this instance, comes high to the child's face)t, but neatly made in the center of the back. Filled with water, it can fulfill the function of wetting an inkstone.⁴³ (And see Appendix D).

This unusual figurine has been compared with a closely similar one found among the Ying-Ch'ing stonewares of the Sung dynasty from South China in the "Sutra-mound" at Kyo-zuka in Japan, which is in similar condition, but with a single hole in the *gourd* instead of the back. Both may well be funerary ware (cf. Chinese "mortuary whistles") rather than water-droppers. In any case, this is the only item of its kind from Jaong, where all other stonewares are ordinary sorts of vessels, including five miniature eared jars. Dishes run larger, average 3 inches high and 6 inches across the mouth, 2-2½ inches foot diameter. Little spouted ewers go 3½ to 7 inches, about 2½ inches foot diameter. Lidded boxes are from 1½ to 3 inches high, with one larger one.

A distinctive sort of lidded pot is usually molded with ridges and with a small knob or blob on the top center of the lid, suggesting a fruit (probably pomegranate); one of these, 15 inches high, is much the bulkiest thing yet found whole at Jaong. Two bowls and lids have similarly molded outside designs of lotus. Similar molding of chrysanthemum or other floral decoration occurs on several of the dishes and bowls; though most are plain. There is no animal decoration; except fish scales⁴

The foot is always unglazed and except in smaller ewers; saucers and potlets inset with a deep foot ridge. In some little dishes and potlets these ridges are reduced; and one (the only inscribed piece) has a slightly convex foot. But the style; texture and glaze treatment is about the same in all of them. Although there is a clear if wide common mood and workmanship for the lot; the range of shapes and use of colors is far from "mass production."

Three other pieces need special mention--one for its "bare ring," one for its glaze, and one for an inscription.

- (i) A small bowl has a broad unglazed bare ring inside; around the bottom but with glaze again in a small central ring.
- (ii) One small flat dish stands out; although "typical" in other respects; the glaze is rich apple green. This color has apparently been applied after firing. It overlaps; on the outer side, a lotus (?) leaf pattern; unusually elaborate.
- (iii) A lidded pot with a molded "fruit" (pomegranate?) pattern has the slightly *concave* foot (already mentioned). Upon this is stamped an inscription; very rare on any Borneo ceramics. The bottom sign is obscured and the whole has presented difficult to available Chinese scholars. The inscription is the name of a member of the *Chen* or *Chin* family; a private chop of no help to us. Five characters (somewhat unusually) run in downward lines.

A second "pomegranate" lidded pot; but with *flat* foot, was excavated in the 1966 season, after the above classification was completed (see Plate 17). The eight whole vessels of that season all came from trenches A/1-8, extensions of the pebble sector as earlier discussed (a). All conformed precisely to the earlier criteria of style, shape, glaze, and so on, though the spouted vessel in A/1 was rather heavier than average, with a flat foot, heavily marked with the potter's trimming tool; very similar to one previously excavated in the Tanjong Kubor cemetery (broadly contemporary with Jaong).⁵

Table 24. Inventory of 1966 Whole Vessels, Jaong

| Trench | Depth (inches) | Form | Glaze (regardless of decay) | Foot |
|--------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| A1 | 12 - 18 | Spouted pot | Brownish-olive | Flat |
| A1 | 12 - 18 | Heavy bowl | Fatty white | Typical |
| A1 | 12 - 18 | Box (bottom only) | Yueh olive | Typical |
| A1 | 18 - 24 | Small bowl | Greenish grey | Typical |
| A3 | @ 19 | Small bowl | ? (wholly dis- colored) | Typical and flared ri |
| A4 | @ 12½ | Small bowl | Yueh green | Typical and bare rim) |
| A6 | 5 - 7 | Lidded box | Yueh green | Flat |
| A7 | @ 18 | Fat pot | Bluish white (Ching-pai) | Typical |

All eight feet are bare. "Typical" is as earlier described and as illustrated in the drawings by Miss Selene Fung (Plates 14-17)t

c. Meaning of These Vessels for Borneo

It is impossible to doubt that these little, simple, strong Chinese-made vessels--broadly Yueh and associated wares were placed *under* the pebble-beds at Jaong, as part of some purposeful operation. The similar positioning of breach-cut gold leaf and other gold artifacts (II.8) is equally "intentional.t" And despite a thousand yards of site disturbance, the direct linkage between *whole stoneware vessels and gold pieces* is too frequent to be coincidental: it is part of a set of regular, related placings in sand on or under the surface then overlain with pebbles and subsequently with the deposition of earth-making humus, etc.

Although only a few fragments of (unidentified) bone have ever been found with the vessels, that is no surprise in this climate. The indications at this stage would seem to be that the vessels not only contained gold and beads, but perhaps ashes or charred bone also. An exactly parallel compound was formed in the pebble mounds of the Kelabit *parapun* (III.17.d)t, though the vessels there were deliberately smashed by the pebbles. Symbolically, the pebble-beds at Jaong may have been intended to seal in the stonewares in somewhat the same way.4f

We have equally seen the association of Chinese and other (later) stonewares with the Kota Kinabalu menhirs, the Usukan Island pebbles and stones, the upland idea of stoneware jars

used as secondary burial urns in active association with and sometimes as alternative to stone megalithic usages (including urns made of actual stone). All this points to a much closer link between hard ceramics and the megalithic than has yet been fully recognized.

d. The "China" Angle

The reader will not have failed to notice the emphasis on Chinese stonewares at many points in this and preceding chapters. This could be misleading. So a few words of clarification.^{#7}

At the time of the Santubong sites, the only hard pottery--that is, stoneware or porcelain--available was being made in China. Not until the fifteenth century were alternatives coming in from central Thailand. One of the kilns there originated largely under the influence of Chinese potters. These hard wares filled a real need in Borneo life. They solved many problems of storage preservation, not least providing big jars which could protect the bones of the dead against pigs and the numerous other native destroyers of flesh and bone, a role previously achievable only by stone urns and slab graves; or by sealing the remains in coffins on high poles or high in the long-houses.

Stoneware became, therefore, a major import into Borneo. Not only did it penetrate the furthest corners of the hinterland, but everywhere inland it became highly esteemed, often a center of status values, class symbolism and much of ritual life. In some places, this pottery became the most important material feature of life.

There is (at present) no direct proof that this soon important form of trade goods came to West Borneo in Chinese bottoms. It is much more likely that, so far southeast, most if not all of it during the T'ang and Sung dynasty periods were brought in locally made and manned Indonesian and Malaysian ships, on a place to place barter basis--at Santubong to barter heavily for smelted iron back to the mainland, including perhaps China again (H.O.: 199, etc.).

The evidence of a trade in gold itself to or from China is very weak to date, as we have seen (I.4). There is equally no indication of direct Chinese influence on gold smithing for any of the Borneo artifacts (II.7, 14, and 15). On the other hand, such influences and intercourses as can now be effectively detected either for raw or worked gold tend to be to or from the west, through western Indonesia towards the Indian Ocean. In contrast to this, our friend Dr. Cheng Te'k'un has argued for a major Chinese impact into west Borneo from early times, basing

this partly on our studies. But again, Dr. Marschall has adduce quite an impressive body of texts to imply that this island area if not this actual island, was long known far to the west as the home of gold.⁴⁸

The situation is confusing. We think that really "everything happened." There were influences in all directions, far more complex and even contradictory than tidy-minded western (or northern) scholars have commonly--and very naturally--cared or dared to suppose. The Borneo picture of the past certainly is extremely difficult to reconstruct now and was not much easier if you lived in it a millennium ago. "Chinese" type influences have played a profound part on some fields, "Indian" in others. But the distinction is wearing thin and perhaps bears little relation to past "reality" which made no such boundaries in the mind anymore than in metal.

One concept should be recalled as illuminating and much in keeping with most Bornean thinking heret. The ancient Chinese essence of life, the *chhi*, has as its kernel, its soul, *stone*, the bone of the earth. It is the seminal essence of this--as perhaps of the petroglyph at Jaong (cf. III.18 previously). This seminal essence (*ching*) became, in turn, gold and jade. This concept, parallel to Aristotle's "exhalations," goes back far before the Christian era. Such thinking gave gold, silver and copper a common origin. There were elaborate early beliefs regarding the transformation from earth and greenery to stone, then copper, then gold (or via iron). It took 200 to 500 years for each change to work in nature, and after gold (which could confer immortality) came its own one thousand year transmutation into the magical "Yellow Dragon." Gold--and indeed all these metals--were thus produced by natural process; and man could only accelerate or aberrate this law of universe. That was inevitably done at risk.

R. J. Forbes has written with characteristic clarity of an idea held far beyond China and nearly universal in the past:

. . . who worked these "changed stones" performed a rite full of secret dangers . . . he interfered with the harmonious growth of the metals of the earth. Perhaps the sacrifice of an embryo when building a furnace has the meaning of an expiatory offering, giving one life for the other, or should we read in it the "charging" of the metal with the budding life of the embryo? Purification and sacrifice were necessary when interfering with the processes of Mother Earth.⁴⁹

This Mother Earth approach is entirely applicable to Borneo, and is patently present today in attitudes to and rituals for rice agriculture too. It is against such a spiritual background that

we have to look, albeit through a swampland mist, at the goings-on about Jaong creek, which led to the placing, displacement, cutting or destruction of large and small stones (the *chhi*), gold and iron, stoneware, earthenware and glass.

CHAPTER 22

OTHER JAONG PEBBLE-BED ASSOCIATIONS

However rough and ready the definition of the Jaong pebble-beds (to be refined again in the next chapter, III.24), it is by now clear that they are part of a fairly definite set of activities involving small stones, leaf and other gold as well as small stoneware vessels--conspicuous because perfect--which at that time were only available from China. This chapter briefly indicates other and on the whole less binding, less diagnostic (but not less provoking) elements in this aspect of the Sarawak River delta's rich prehistoric life.

a. Iron Slag and Tools

The basic situation was put well back in a 1952 field report for the F and S sectors of Jaongt

Slag appeared to be in the same state of density above the pebble-bed as in the non-pebble-bed areas but was *absent* under it. There were only one or two isolated pieces of slag dug out from under the bed, but these could have got under it by way of the holes of burrowing animals. . . .⁵⁰

Later and closer analysis of the actual records for these sector shows that when the density is compared, it is clear that there is appreciably less slag overall in pebble sections, so that the first part of the first sentence of the above (only) require amendment. Again, in the smaller pebble concentration of E/series, where most of the trenches were pebbleless:

In this series iron slag was found both over pebble zones and in non-pebble zones, but never *under* pebble zonest

Totbroaden the fact for a wider sample (random for A, all for B) see Table 25. Well over half the bedless trenches have "abundant" slag, and just over three quarters "abundant" plus "moderate"--compared with only one in ten "abundant" for pebble-bed trenches and under one-third "abundant" plus "moderate." Twenty nine percent of layers in bedless trenches have little or not slag compared with seventy percent likewise in pebble-bed trenches. The differences are significant, but (characteristically for the delta) not wholly clear-cut or regular. There is slag all over the place, and its presence *in* the pebble-beds is part of an established pattern for the past.⁵¹

Table 25i Iron Slag Density and Pebble-Beds (Jaong)

| | Number of Trenches Analyzed | Number of 6" Layers Where Slag Is | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|--------|-----|
| | | Abundant | Moderate | Sparse | Nil |
| A. Sample of trenches close to pebble-bed, but without own bed | | | | | |
| L/ and E (part) | 10 | 22 | 11 | 13 | 5 |
| C/ | 9 | 39 | 6 | 7 | 0 |
| F/ (part) | 5 | 8 | 3 | 8 | 5 |
| S/ (part) | 3 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Total All A | 27 | 77 | 22 | 30 | 11 |
| As percentage of A | | 55% | 16% | 21% | 8% |
| B. All trenches with main pebble-bed | | | | | |
| E (pebble part) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 5 |
| F/ (pebble part) | 19 | 9 | 6 | 33 | 10 |
| S/ (pebble part) | 16 | 2 | 15 | 17 | 5 |
| Total All B | 37 | 11 | 21 | 54 | 20 |
| As percentage of B | | 10% | 20% | 51% | 19% |

Iron tools are seldom found complete in delta sites, and evidently this was *not* a center for treating iron beyond the smelting and refining stage. When recovered they are always badly eroded and often almost unrecognizable, owing to weathering. In this instance, too, there is an additional complication absent in the other excavated artifacts: iron tools have been made and used in almost identical style over many centuries, so that it is (on present knowledge anyway) often almost impossible to distinguish prehistoric from historic or even recent knives or spears. As Jaong has at all times been timber-felled (fire-wood and boats), hunted over and at various times dug, cut, and in places sporadically cultivated (e.g., during the Japanese occupation at one point for pineapples), there is a good probability of later iron being deposited.

Of the 13 identifiable iron tools occurring definitely sub-surface at Jaong, one was 3 inches below the pebble-bed and several must have been a deliberate placement there. Another, a small knife, is even more definitely documented, in that it is encrusted and sealed onto and across the lip of a small saucer

recovered perfect and under the pebble-bed. This was evidently deliberately placed across the stoneware vessel.⁵²

b. Waisted and Other Stones

The interesting and special role of waisted stones in connection with the delta's prehistoric iron-working has been earlier demonstrated and the stones described in some detail (H.O.: 240-244)t They are found regularly in Jaong pebble associations, but so they are all through these deposits, like the iron slag with which they are so closely related. In all twenty two waisted stones were mapped in one of the two 1952 pebble-concentrations, however t-and that is high. These were also conspicuously grouped as if placed--including groups of 6, 4 and 3. Pairs were not unusual, and these two were heavily "though not exclusively concentrated in the pebble-bed sector.t' For instance, this is the 1952 record:

Table 26. Waisted Stone Pairs, Jaong

| Trench | Depth of Each (inches) |
|---------|---------------------------|
| F1 x 12 | 5 - 7 |
| F1 x 12 | 5 - 8 |
| F1 x 16 | 5 and t6 |
| F1 x 16 | 2 and 6 |
| F6 x 10 | 2 and 5 |
| F6 x 10 | 5 and 7 |

The above may oversimplify the factors involved. As shown in our earlier monograph, waisted stones occur with and without slag, but mainly in and amongst slag concentrations (H.O.: 242 table)t In fact, there is a distinct tendency for pairing here: Jaong waisted stones, here tabulated; 47% occurred within one foot of each other, as compared with 44% more than two feet apart.⁵³

Three other sorts of shaped stone, barely noted in previous publications, are especially associated with though not necessarily exclusive to Jaong, and found in the pebble-bed sectors: usually hexagonal, faceted, igneous stones, shale "knobs" and granite blocks, all are stones brought into the site from outside. The exact function of all these is unknown. None qualify either

as tools or of use in other ordinary work. The first two have decidedly male, phallic implications for those who see that way. To that extent they may properly be considered in conjunction with the predominantly feminine rock-carvings around them in the ground (III.19)--as if these imported male stones were answers, in the round, to the more vaginal motifs cut flat in the natural sandstone rock.

The *faceted igneous stones* are usually of biotite, always columnar in shape and broken across the center--as if on purpose not from any apparent use or routine. All the larger ones, c. 5-6 inches long, 2-2½ inches across, are hexagonally faceted, though the work is very rough and uneven. Smaller ones, down to 2-3 inches and 1½ inches across, are sometimes octagonal.

The *knobs* are about the oddest things found in twenty years of delta work. The first was excavated at Jaong, B/4, 11 inches, on 26 May 1952, but they have since been recovered at Bongkissam also.

All "knobs" have these features in common:

- of a soft shale or similar stone, either as a pebble or a piece from *in situ* formations (? from river bank);
- narrow but distinct bands in the stone representing alluvial deposition;
- the wider basal part is duller in color, and represents the outer skin of the pebble or weathered coat of the segment;
- the "top" has been naturally or artificially narrowed by wear or cutting (probably both) to produce a head or tip, which shows a different color;
- this color is pale blue, pale green, pale yellow and in one case blue-black, and gives a contrast effect;
- a band of other minor color change may be emphasized out by rubbing, to increase the tip contrast.

All are small, easily held in the hand. The smallest weighs 2 ounces and the largest 25 ounces. These things were carefully prepared and in most cases there are marks of cutting through the "skin" with a metal blade. Three are much alike in form despite the difficulties of finding the right sort of stone, and thus indicate a specific purpose and tradition, varying from the "normal" rounded pebble-bed pebbles to these *curiosa* which unmistakably suggest a macabre version of male sexuality.

The third type consists of three curious granite blocks, found in association with the pebble-bed (at S), each 9-10 inches high, 11-14 inches wide, 15-18 inches long, shaped from the natural stone, one with a ridged back.

While the occurrence of the waisted stones may be related directly to the general dispersed iron slag, these and the other types described can also legitimately be regarded as having another "function" as small, portable, worked forms of stone supplementing the far more numerous pebbles in the ground and relating these, through men's hand, to the worked stone faces on the large boulders in full megalithic flourish. They may, in brief, be shadow micro-megaliths as well (III.23 below)

c. Beads

Glass beads of Jaong do not visibly differ to any marked degree from those of Bongkissam and indeed most pre-Ming but iron-age sites in Southeast Asia from Luzon through to Thailand and Laos. They are nearly all small, monochrome, and with a color range already indicated (in H.O.: 265, where the subject has already been rather fully discussed, with chemical analyses) These beads are believed to have come from the west, and are definitely *not* Chinese.

The largest concentration of glass beads, plus a much smaller number in stone (mainly faceted carnelians) is at Jaong. Many are in the pebble sectors. But these tiny, highly mobile and often fragile things are subject to maximum loss and displacement under these conditions, and especially in amongst the iron-workings. There is, however, a distinct tendency for beads including clusters representing old necklets or wristlets, to be found close to, and sometimes inside, the whole stoneware vessels as earlier shown.

A sample of 178 glass beads individually pinpointed by exact position in pebble-bed concentrations at Jaong gave:

Table 27. Position of Some Jaong Glass Beads

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Above the bed | 17% |
| <i>In</i> the bed | 46 |
| Definitely <i>under</i> | 37 |

Under the circumstances such differences cannot be regarded as significant.

Table 28. Some Carnelian Beads from Jaong, 1952

| Sector | Depth (inches) | Maximum Length or Width (mm) | Shape | Color | Association |
|--------|----------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| S | 15 | 9 | Round, but faceted | Pale watery pink | 2 together below pebble-bed |
| C | 24 | 9 | Round, but faceted | Red to milky | In yellow sand |
| S | 30 | 7 | Round | Watery pink | With beads below pebble-bed |
| F | 24 | 4-5 | Round, irregular | Cherry | 2 together + 16 glass beads and iron tool, below pebble-bed |
| F | 27 | 14 | Round, very smooth | Smokey to pale brown | Below the pebble-bed |
| M | 8-10 | 6 | Round, pitted | Brown to white (blemish?) | Between 2 rocks in SWAMP; with three tiny glass beads |
| X | 14±15 | 5½ | Round, pitted | White (mostly) and brown | In iron slag concentration |
| F | 10 | 20 | Hexagonal | Deep red | --- |
| Q | 6-12 | 20 | Hexagonal; flattened ends | Deep red | 2 together |

Little has been said in previous delta publications on non-glass beads. These are particularly numerous at Jaong, the overwhelming majority being of a pale, pink to red--sometimes brown with white streaks--carnelian agate, usually round or faceted, and of a kind believed to come from Burma and India, found throughout Southeast Asia in prehistoric sites. As these beads are virtually imperishable [unlike their glass cousins], they also remain in use among many inland peoples, such as the Kelabits in central Borneo and the hill-tribes of Indo-China.^{5 4}

Only at Jaong did these worked carnelians occur with such regularity as to earn a separate field classification for on-the-spot tabulation as each one was excavated. The random extract shown in Table 28 gives some idea of this material, and indicates a possible high degree of pebble-bed correlation. The other main type of stone bead is of white quartz crystal or quartz pebbles. These are much less common than carnelian--least numerous, relatively, at Jaong. Table 29 provides a cross section picture for comparison.

Table 29. Quartz Crystals from Delta Sites

| Site | Trench | Depth (inches) | Maximum Length (mm) | Shape | Quality |
|-----------|--------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Kubor | D/m | 18-24 | 45 | Massive pointed hexagon | Exceptionally fine |
| Kubor | D/2 | 12-18 | 27 | Pointed hexagon | Very pitted |
| Jaong | F4 x 6 | 6-12 | 17 | Pointed hexagon | Very dark |
| Jaong | Q2/3 | 12-18 | 17 | Sharp flat chip | White and clear |
| Bongkizam | II | 6-12 | 17 | Rough lump | Dark |
| Bongkizam | Z/1 | 12-18 | 25 | Irregular lump | Perfectly white but very worn |
| Bongkizam | Z/1 | 6-12 | 18 | Pointed hexagon | Thin and fine |
| S. Ayer | W/A | 6-12 | 6 | Tiny fragment | Crystal faceting retained |

d. Earthenware

The soft earthenwares of the delta have not yet been adequately studied, except for the little headland cemetery of Tanjong Kubor--and that took over a year for a Museum team working under the top expertise of Dr. W. G. Solheim.⁵

It can safely be said, however, that earthenwares--mostly made among the islands--are as abundant in and to some extent under the pebble-bed and related sectors at Jaong. Calculations of samples for a series of trenches show that in both pebble and pebbleless sectors earthenware is quite numerous. If anything, the earthenware sherd ratio goes up *below* the pebble-beds.

CHAPTER 23

THE MICRO-MEGALITHIC IDEA⁵⁶

It is here suggested that these pebble-beds at Jaong had a ritual--and perhaps also a metallurgic--"purpose,t" for the people who worked iron (and perhaps also gold), there. Moreover, this use of placed small natural stone is contemporary with and intimately related to the more obvious use of much larger natural stone, the boulders so richly decorated with figures, lines, holes and "block cut" quadrangle forms all along the right bank of the main creek in this sector.

In reality as presumably in past fantasy these pebbles serve as an extension out from the carved rocks into the ground, a continuum over the earth, a cover for chosen places, touched too with gold, stoneware, beads and other valuables of those distant days. Each placed pebble is a miniature boulder or menhir, just as the piled pebbles of the Kelabit *parapun* are so intimately part of the great crowning dolmens (III.17.d).t To treat a pebble as seriously as a rock--or even as the child, or the sperm of the rock--could present no intellectual problem to Borneo people who (as we have seen) regard wood and stone as interchangeable (Kadazan) or an irrigation ditch equivalent to a menhir equivalent to a stoneware urn (Kelabit). We have seen, too, pebbles used over graves on Usukan Island (Ubian, Bajau). And we shall see that pebble-beds in several forms and with several functions occur in surrounding lands, starting notably in strong association with gold jewelry on the little island of Nias.⁵⁷

Beds, mounds, pyramids, heaps, platforms, paths, walls, wells, built-up of pebbles and stones, stone pavements, stone terraces, "altars,t" and other such uses of small, easily handled moveable stone displaced from natural positions for the purpose can all be usefully considered as falling within one loose but identifiable term *micro-megaliths*, where this noun is other than purely "functional.t" The activity of employing or deploying them may thus properly be termed *micro-megalithic*.

We are well aware--and even happy!--that this term is somewhat contradictory. The dictionary definition emphasizes the large size of *megaliths*--unfortunately.⁵⁸ This thinking is indeed largely responsible for the over-attention paid by laymen to large stones as such, and the comparative--sometimes total--neglect of the smaller, less conspicuous stone-pebble aspects. A logical etymological answer would be to call these smaller fry *microliths*. But in archaeological circles (though unknown to

most dictionaries) this lesser term is pre-empted: it describes very small stone artifacts used in the Stone Age, some of the nicest being found in Celebes. We are left, then, with *micro-megaliths*. It is a term easily understood and remembered, while the conjunction of micro and mega helps make the point of inter-relationship; these are not separate systems, but levels of one common, intense, sensitive expression of belief.

In accordance with all that we have been seeing and saying about the megalithic, the idea of interchangeability and diversity of material and form must be reiterated. With the micro-megalithic, therefore, care must be taken to apply the term to *more* than the pebbles or stones nominally involved. It can be that small stoneware vessels or sherds or gold fragments play a micro-part corresponding to that of large stone jars with menhirs in the uplands

For the possible convenience of others, two simple working definitions are offered as suitable to the present purpose:

Pebble: a naturally formed rock (usually water-worn or rounded) which can easily be held in the palm of the hand or put in the pocket= small.

Stone: a large piece of natural rock (not deliberately broken off a geological formation in recent times) which can be lifted and carried with ease by an adult.

Of course there is no definite distinction between a large pebble and a small stone. However, by and large the smallest stones used in any micro-megalithics so far known to us tend to be quite appreciably bigger and heavier than the biggest pebbles --though this may easily be a matter of local geological chance, too.

There must be all sorts of other gradations. For instance, the stones although usually or originally natural-shaped, when used may be re-shaped, cut into bricks or other forms and used to build megalithic type structures in a transition between strictly placing the natural stone (in, for instance, a wall) and the even more deliberate--and in one way less "megalithic"--act of building a structure such as an altar (notable in Bali terraced temples and Polynesian *marae*). But big menhirs do not cease to be such when decorated with design--as they are in West Malaysia, though not East. Nor do the huge hollowed-out urns of the southern Kelabit uplands in north central Borneo or on the Plain of Jars in Laos have to be denied the accolade of megalithism because they have been so intricately and skillfully restructured. The stones of the shrine at Bongkissam indicate this transition between wholly unshaped pebbles or stones and

something approaching a stone brick; and this postulation for the first excavated feature of its kind in Borneo can now be considered in some detail, from this point of view as well as its own right as the largest single source of gold artifacts in the Sarawak River delta.

CHAPTER 24

THE BONGKISAM SHRINE IN THE MICRO-MEGALITHIC MOOD⁹

Until 1966, the Jaong pebblebeds were the only man-made stone formations excavated in the entire Santubong complex. In fact these beds of pebbles, with their rich deposit of valuable objects--gold pieces, glass beads, precious porcelains and stoneware from China and iron tools--were the only ritual structures ever excavated and placed in an orderly context of unquestionable authenticity anywhere in the great island of Borneo. It follows then that the discovery and excavation at Bongkizam in 1966 of a carefully constructed stone platform of ritual purpose came as a dramatic event both for the excavating team and the villagers of Santubong.

We wish to preface the detailed description of the shrine and its ritual deposit by drawing attention to what we consider to be the overriding importance of this material. We believe that this "find" must be seen in the context of the whole Santubong complex and most specifically as a cultural mix of indigenous ideas associated with the Jaong pebble-bed together with the assimilation and adaptation of *later* ideas relating to the Hindu-Buddhist tradition imported from abroad, presumably as a result of trading contacts. The Bongkizam shrine, viewed contextually, is archaeological evidence for the persistence of ancient traditions beneath the veneer of "Indianized" ritual practice. Recently, Professor H. L. Shorto has demonstrated this process in his analysis of textual materials relating to an ancient Mon cult of ancestor worship and cadastral organization. Upon this ancient stratum of belief--involving the worship of a mound of earth and a tree--a Buddhist cult of *stupa* veneration was grafted.⁶⁰

Previously, Professor Paul Mus had demonstrated the same process at work in the ancient kingdom of Champa, which began in the fifth and ended in the fifteenth centuries. There ancestor worship and the cult of the god of the soil were symbolized by a menhir (simple upright stone) placed in the middle of the rice field to symbolize here the unity between the family group and the god of the soil.⁶¹ Upon this base was grafted the Hindu cult of *linga* worship following the development of complex territorial and political units in the kingdom of Champa and the acceptance of aspects of Indian statecraft and religion. Following the destruction of this ancient kingdom under pressure from the advancing Vietnamese, the old practice reemerged--in contemporary times--with the erection of the *kut* steles which represent the deceased ancestors and which were set up in the family padi fields.⁶²

At Bongkizam we believe we see this kind of assimilation and adaptation at work. The exuberant megalithic tradition of Jaong receives a new inflection, with the addition of demonstrably received ritual practices from abroad: the result is the stone platform--a structure which extends the Jaong pebble-bed tradition but with a new look, from unworked stone to brick.

a. The Platform: From Pebble to Brick^{6 3}

Excavation at Bongkizam leading to the discovery of the stone monument and associated ritual deposit began on 12 July 1966. The trench which revealed the first traces of the worked and arranged stones was 5 feet by 2 feet, one of a series of small trenches originally designed to recheck the iron slag and pottery evidence of previous excavation here. When it became apparent that we were in the presence of a plane of carefully laid stones, we extended the area of the trench until by 17 July the entire surface of the platform was exposed. This platform was 11 inches below the surface of the top soil and was a raggedly irregular rectangle 8 feet by 10 feet. The long axis was oriented on a north-south line. The area of greatest eccentricity of outline was along the western perimeter, the disturbance there due to upheaval caused by the root system of large trees. The whole site is now a plantation of rubber and fruit trees; this cultivation has been continuous since about 1912.

The stone in the paving is a shale quite common in the area. It is easily worked and cuts readily into flat planes. The stone blocks of the platform were rectangular, the upper and lower surfaces were quite flat. There was not however any consistency either in measure or (beyond a rather erratic rectilinearity) shape. The largest worked stone was 19 inches long and approximately 10 inches wide. Some were as small as 6 inches by 2 inches. The greatest number, however, were roughly 12 inches by 7 inches. There was a considerable uniformity to the depth of the stones, most of them being cut about 2 inches thick.

There was no attempt to lay these crude bricks in any exact pattern, even one as simple as an alternation of long and short ends. The stones remain neatly joined in those areas that have not been disturbed, but there is no evidence that any adhesive material was employed to band them together. These bricks have been laid in two layers, each about 2 inches thick, resting directly on a base of introduced fine yellow sand. There was no other effort to provide a foundation; no modification of stone-shape on the perimeter to provide moldings or architectural detailing.

The upper surface of the platform wasi-when excavated--littered with small pieces of shale and a number of pebblesi The position of these pieces may be seen in our photographic Plate 29. The concentration of fragments is far in excess of any natural or random occurrence in this sandy soil. For example only 3 stones were recorded in Z/2, an immediately adjoining trench 5 feet by 2 feet which was dug to a depth of 24 inches. Many of the platform's shale fragments, while irregular in outline, had smooth upper and lower facesi-an indication that they may have been dressed stones, deliberately fractured and left lying on the surface of the platformi

Intimately related to the presence of this litter of rock on the platform surface, is the problem of the superstructure of the monument. First of all we may eliminate the possibility that the superstructure was made of heavy masonry. The platform, except for a well or shaft to be discussed below, is without supporting foundation. It is simply a horizontal plane of stone resting on the sand. Any heavy superstructure would certainly have caused sinking. The plan of the platform indicates, too, that it was not for congregational usage. There is no architecturally significant feature that would make an area of emphasized access--no stairs, no shift in the dimensions of the plan to indicate a functional difference between porch and sanctuary as in the Hindu *mandapa* and *vimānao*. It is of course possible that the area of the platform may have been covered by a roof supported by timber struts. There are, however, no shaped stone socles on or round the platform in which the supporting struts might have rested. In any event, whether or not the platform was covered by a light roof would not alter its functional limitations, due to the lack of solid foundations so essential to structural stability in light and shifting soil (see further at 24.ii below).

b. The Central Shaft and Golden Sand

On the photograph of the platform (see Plate 29) it will be noted that there is on the surface of the platform a broad area of irregular outline but of a generally rectilinear character. When first uncovered this area was filled with rubble and it appeared to be merely a zone of intense disturbance possibly caused by tree roots. After the excavating team had brushed the loose soil from all the stones, it was apparent that there was a certain regularity to the outline of this area; and that the jumble of large stones within its perimeter had more the character of purposely selected and positioned rubble than the random breakage and upheaval expected from root damage. Therefore, on 25 July, twelve days after the first indication of the existence of a stone structure at Bongkissam--and after the

completion of a photographic record and scale drawings of the platform in plan and elevation--we began the removal of rubble which extended from the level of the platform to a floor 14 inches below. The rubble consisted largely of irregular pieces of local shale. Some *iron slag* was mixed in with the stones at 3 to 6 inches below the platform surface (cft 21.a above). Several slag pieces were unusually large, the biggest a block 7 inches by 3 inches by 3 inches. Upon removal of the rubble and iron slag, it was found that this area was a shaft or well with a smooth floor of worked shale. Irregular courses of shale formed the walls on three sides, the north side being sand only. The floor of this portion of the shaft was 14 inches below the surface of the stone platform and 25 inches below the level of the top soil. It was made of several large brick-blocks of shale neatly cut into rectangular shape but varying in dimension. The shale was here very soft, subject to fracture even from slight pressure.

Below this flooring of stone slabs, there were six courses of stone, each of large shale blocks (cft III.26 following). They were between 2 inches and 3 inches thick; and they thus made a seal in the shaft extending from 14 inches below the surface of the platform to approximately 28 inches. After the removal of these stones, the shaft was found to be filled with golden yellow sand. It was clearly deposited there by human agency, as the surrounding sand was the light gray to whiteish coralline sand common to Sarawak River delta sites and dominant in Bongkissam. Yellow sand deposit continued to a depth of 31 inches below the level of the platform surface; or a depth of 42 inches below the level of top soil where it shaded off into white sand. Measurements taken at this depth gave the following dimensions: east side 27 inches, south 27 inches, west 25 inches, and north 21 inches.

c. The Ritual Deposit Chamber

There was a large number of objects located in the warm yellow sand which filled the deposit chamber encountered at 28 inches below the surface of the platform. These objects are both numerous and varied. They will be discussed under seven subheadings:

1. The Ritual Deposit Box (with Golden *Linga*)
2. Gold Objects;
3. Semi-precious Stones;
4. Stone Objects;
5. Beads;
6. Earthenware Pottery;
7. Organic Material.

1. The Ritual Deposit Box (with Golden *Liṅga*)⁶⁴

The first object encountered in the deposit chamber was a ritual deposit box of silver. It was lying in the loose sand at about 29 inches below the surface of the stone platform. It had been deposited directly, deliberately, in the golden yellow sand.

The box is made of silver and is almost pyramidal in overall configuration. It consists of three parts. A low disc-like bottom with vertical sides rising to a height of 25 mm. at the flanged rim which fits inside the top of the box. The sides are covered with a band of conspicuous fluting. The dish has a wide and hollow foot rim with concave base. The diameter to the outside edge of the foot rim is 52 mm. and the width of the foot ring itself is 40 mm.

The top of the box is a low, flattened hemisphere with a height of 44 mm. Its interior is worked in a finely chased design divided into three registers. At the very top of the interior lid there is a disc surrounded by several concentric lines from which swirling lines emanate into a "sunburst" pattern. Next there is a narrow-banded zone of decoration which is almost unreadable, but appears to consist of a repeat pattern of a simple geometric motif. Below this there is a large zone of dynamic "vine" pattern, of curves and reflex curves. The silversmith has punched heavy dots into the metal at the places where the tendrils form tight spirals. This creates points of emphasis in the design and gives a greater relief to this lowermost zone.

The design fits the hollow hemispheric shape of the top with great surety. It may very well serve to emphasize that this domical shape is the bowl of the universe. It is interesting to note that there is a definite progression in the palpability of the handling, as one moves from the lightly incised sunburst with its connotation of the spiritual, ethereal, to the heavy and physically tangible handling of the organic material represented in the lowest zone. The whole object in shape, design and execution all reinforces the impression that the top is made to represent a spiritual diagram, an objective correlative for a spiritual universe.

The design would probably have been visible from the outside of the box when it was originally fabricated. Today, however, the surface of the top is covered and encrusted with fine granules of sand, and this epidermal layer has obscured the design, except for small mounds that betray the heavily punched areas of the vine relief inside.

The third part of the deposit box is an inner divider that zones off the lid from the deposited material in the dish below. It thus functions then *as a lid for the dish*. The upper portion is a disc that is 62 mm. in diameter and that rises with a slight swell toward the center, where it is surmounted by a solid gold *linga*, which is a cylinder with a hemispheric top, 14 mm. high. Incised on the *linga* at its base are conventional representations of the glans penis and the frenum. The base of the *linga* is 16 mm. in diameter. When the box was closed, the golden *linga* would be directly under the center of the central disc surrounded by the sunburst pattern on the interior of the domical lid. The *linga* then would provide the spiritual energy and thrust for this diagram of the microcosm.

The lower portion of the inner lid is indented or waisted, then flares out to fit across the diameter of the dish. The lid is thus hollow and it would be possible for any material deposited in the dish to be in contact with the vivifying power of the golden *linga*.

When the deposit box was opened, the entire area between the domical top and the divider-lid was filled with infiltrated sand. The situation below the divider was quite different. The actual bottom of the dish was filled with hard-packed, intrusive sand. Under pressure it had formed a hard crust. Above this zone the dish was filled with black, rich and moist material. It was pressed entirely into the top possibly, or probably, by the sand which had infiltrated the bottom. This material had the consistency of English "black pudding." It could be of considerable importance to an understanding of the local usage of this ritual box (see further at subsection 7 below).

The only other object *inside* the deposit box was an irregularly shaped piece of thin gold foil. It had no definable distinctive shape, no writing or design. In view of the fact that 141 gold objects were outside in the sand in association with the deposit box, some of them being cut into figural shapes and others being decorated (see below), this small--its greatest width is 15 mm.--and shapeless gold foil seems quite incidental to occupy such a privileged position. Yet it can hardly have got in here "by mistake"

The entire box, dish, lid and divider are carefully finished. The design and workmanship of the dish with its fluted sides and well cut flange are a work of solid craftsmanship. The lid with its design integrated physically and iconographically to its domical shape is a very sophisticated thing. The execution of the design is assured. The entire deposit box must surely have been the product of a workshop which had a long tradition.

That the object is of ritual significance is evident both from its context, deep in the earth and sand in a specially prepared chamber; and from the character of the design, the presence of the gold foil piece and the solid gold object clearly representing a *linga*. The specific religious significance and cultural tradition which the box represents will be analyzed (in d, below); the summary can be more conveniently made there after the objects found in the deposit chamber have been described and analyzed. It will, however, be apparent at this stage, from the contents of the box, that it is related to the Hindu-Buddhist tradition which Southeast Asia received primarily from India.

2. Gold Objects

Associated with the silver deposit box were 142 gold objects, that is two-thirds of all the gold pieces excavated in all delta sites since 1947. These 142 gold pieces are clearly of ritual significance. It is possible that many of them were originally placed in a precise and prescriptively determined relationship to the box. Unfortunately, the gold was deposited in loose sand. When revealed during excavation, the objects were found to be scattered and jumbled with no intelligible directional relationship to the box.

The objects are quite varied in type and function. Some are gold foil pieces cut in the shape of animal and human figures. These have a direct iconographic significance and carry a primary load of meaning. Another large group is sumptuous and ornamental, designed primarily for personal adornment. Included in this category are several finger rings, small circular objects of decorative intention, and a large number of gold beads and needles and pins of gold which, no doubt, are designed for display rather than functional use. There is a third category of what might be termed scraps and fragments. These range from fragments of gold blocks to damaged and casual lumps, scraps and odd-and-ends of gold left over from the fabrication of large objects. All these have been described in detail in the earlier inventory of excavated gold objects (II.7.b) and need be considered here only as a special *group*.

The gold objects will therefore now be discussed under the three general types noted above:

- (i) Gold foil objects cut into the shape of human or animal forms;
- (ii) Articles of adornment in gold;
- (iii) Scraps and fragments of gold.

(i) Gold foil objects representing human or animal forms⁵

1. Two gold *lotuses* (B.17 and B.18). They are crudely cut in the foil with considerable irregularity in the size of the petals. One lotus has six petals and the other seven. They weigh 0.38 and 0.13 gm. respectively. Both are pierced in the center and thin gold wire may have passed through this perforation to serve as a stem. There are a number of objects of thin gold wire (E.1-E.5) which could have functioned in this manner. The lotus has a great range of symbolic associations both Hindu and Buddhist, a consistent feature of sacred deposits in the sanctuaries of India, Ceylon and Southeast Asia.
2. Two *elephants* (B.19 and B.20). They are crudely cut from gold foil. The representation of the animal is quite naturalistic. They weigh 1.49 and 1.17 gm. The elephant again is a symbol common to both Hinduism and Buddhism. The animal serves as the symbol for one of the directions of space in Buddhist cosmology and during the aniconic period of early Buddhism, the six-tusked elephant was a symbol for the Buddha. He is thus symbolized in the representation of his birth on the *vedikā* at Bharhut in India. The elephant is also the mount of Indra. It is not endemic to Borneo and unknown in Sarawak.
3. There is one *tortoise* (B.21) represented in plan or bird's-eye perspective. The object is again quite naturalistic in representation. The tortoise occurs in both Hindu and Buddhist contexts. The object weighs 1.30 gm.
4. Two seated *male figures* (B.22 and B.23). These figures are the most curious in the whole assemblage of gold objects. They are seated in a posture of meditation with the legs folded one over the other or crossed. The arms are held with the elbows out away from the body and hands held on hips; the facial mask is curiously indicated by incisions. They weigh respectively 0.68 and 1.06 gm. The posture and position of the hands do not relate to any of the traditional iconography of the Buddha. No cranial protuberance is indicated. Nor is it apparent that it belongs to any of the readily recognized figures of the Hindu pantheon. There is a very close visual parallel between these two figures and a curious and crudely executed figure which Lajonquière encountered at Vieng Sra, an ancient site in peninsular Siam. He includes a line drawing of this figure in his 1909 report.⁶

5. There are six pieces of gold foil in the shape of a *crescent moon* (B.25-B.27 and B.42-B.43). They range in weight from 0.94 to 0.31 gm. The crescent moon is, of course, a symbol intimately associated with Siva. He wears the crescent in his matted locks or *jatā* as a diadem. The crescent of the moon also is a symbol of measure for time. However, some Tantric Buddhist forms of Avalokitesvara which have assimilated much of Hinduism⁶ also wear the crescent. An example is the Hālāhala-Lokesvara.⁷
6. There is a gold *serpent*, apparently a representation of the hooded cobra or *nāga* (B.24). It is very carefully executed and is the most impressive of the objects in the deposit. It weighs 1.22 gm. Here again, there is a wide range of both Hindu and Buddhist associations with the serpent.
7. A gold foil piece cut in the form of a *perfect circle* (B.53) and weighing 0.79 gm. It would seem likely that this would represent the sun.

The condition of the gold foil figures is excellent. There are no stains on the surface; nor is there any evidence of damage. There is no indication of writing on any surfaces.

The figures, with the single exception of the serpent, are rather crudely executed. The lack of precision in the cutting of the foil is particularly evident in the passages requiring abrupt shifts in the direction of the cutting tool. At these points there is often a ragged edge. All of the foil figures, except perhaps the serpent, could easily be the work of the same hand. The relative crudity of execution will be evident if the Bongkizam figures are compared with similar gold objects found buried in a bronze pot at Malang in Java.⁸

(ii) Articles of adornment in gold

1. There are two gold *rings* both carefully finished. The larger (C.6) has a raised molding running completely about its circumference. It weighs 4.73 gm. The smaller (C.5) has a flat depression at the bezil and is further decorated with parallel incised lines running transversally on either side of the bezil. It weighs 2.06 gm.
2. The most delicate craftsmanship of all the objects at Bongkizam are eight thin, hollow *circles of gold* (C.7-14) with a pebbled surface of raised gold dots. Local goldsmiths in Kuching indicated that the precise cutting of

such small units of design would require considerable skill. It would also demand cutting instruments capable of delicate work. The largest weighs 0.36 gm. and the smallest, 0.18 gm.

3. Thirteen patterned gold foil pieces of *cylindrical shape* (B.28-41). They apparently were articles of adornment for clothing or possibly were strung together as a bracelet. Some of the objects are flattened and otherwise damaged. In view of the good condition of other equally fragile objects deposited in the chamber, it is probable that they were already damaged when introduced there. The total weight of all these pieces is 2.02 gm.
4. Seventeen gold *beads* (D.4-20). They have been fully described in the previous Inventory (II.7.b). They range in weight from 0.68 to 0.14 gm. The quality of workmanship is variable and several of them are damaged.
5. Five gold *needles* (E.1-5) and a similar object (E.6) which has been bent in a sharp curve like a fish hook.

(iii) Scraps and fragments of gold

1. Twenty-three irregular fragments of *block gold*. Total weight 12.62 gm. (F.1-23).
2. Nineteen pieces of gold bent into *loops* (E.7-E.25). Many of these objects are in a damaged condition. Total weight 9 gm.
3. Thirty-one pieces of plain gold of *irregular shape*. They are bent, twisted or crumpled and seem to be scraps of gold fabrication (A.35-65). Total weight 6.10 gm.
4. Three "*scrap*" pieces. A crudely cut piece of gold foil that might possibly have an integrity of its own but may be scrap (B.15); it is vaguely shaped like a stylized conch shell. A ragged gold piece with a triangular shape cut out of it (B.52). A scrap of gold foil, damaged at its base, that could have been intended to be a *linga* (B.51).

3. Semi-precious Stones

The following twelve semi-precious stones or minerals were found in the yellow sand in the vicinity of the deposit box and the gold foil objects:

- a large piece of rock crystal;
- a large glossy, pink stone identified as a pink sapphire (corundum);
- a blue-violet aquamarine (beryl);
- a small red stone identified as the gem hyacinth (zircon);
- a small green opaque stone possibly jade;
- a small block of lustrous black mineral identified as stibnite (antimony ore);
- a small lump of cinnabar (mercury sulphide);
- a small piece of amber;
- three fragments of copper pyrite;
- a block of black mineral identified as columbite.

Most of these are small (largest: 7 mm.) and polished or otherwise shaped. Stibnite, cinnabar, amber, and copper pyrite are found in Sarawak. Columbite occurs in Malaya often associated with tin in alluvial soils. Other semi-precious stones are not found naturally in the vicinity, as far as we can learn.⁶⁹

4. Stone Figurine

A small, friable and badly eroded figure of a seated divinity, wearing a high, conical headdress, would appear to be a representation of a female--as the area of the chest has a pronounced convexity; but the deteriorated condition of the object precludes even confident identification of sex. Iconographic analysis is impossible, but the general configuration of the figure, the context of Sung pottery and broadly "Tantric" associations in the other objects in the deposit, allow one to believe that it may represent one of the aspects of Tārāi

5. Beads

A few beads were present in the shrine sector. These do not differ from the general run of glass and stone beads, nearly always monochrome, found widely throughout the excavations.

6. Earthenware Pottery

A few earthenware sherds were present, perhaps by chance, over the shaft and platform. They do not differ from the regular types of such wares common to all delta sites in good abundance. But there does seem to be a rather high concentration of the curious "phallic tops" in this sector. These were first described for the adjacent Tanjong Kubor site by Dr. Solheim.⁷⁰

7. Organic Material

Inside the ritual deposit box, below the divider, was a thick, dark, rich earthy deposit, surrounded by intrusions from the golden sandsurrounding the box outside (see at a, above)t. This is clearly not a geological deposit; nor does it resemble any of the local soils.

Attempts at exact biochemical analysis of a sample in the United States have not yet produced very informative results. Meanwhile, however, a relatively simple test of an over-dry sample was kindly made for us by courtesy of Dr. J. R. Dunsmore, Deputy Director (Research) of the Department of Agriculture, Sarawak. Table 30 is based on a report from their laboratory to T.H., dated 7 July 1967.t We have included part of a series of soil analyses, measured in the same sector of Bongkizam as the shrine, to inditate the difference as revealed by this method.

Table 30. Analyses of Soil Samples, Bongkizam

| Sample Number | Depth | Percent Nitrogen | Percent Carbon | p.p.m.p. |
|---------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------|----------|
| MS 1051 | Deposit box (inside) | 0.226 | 46.48 | 300 |
| MS 1064 | Bongkizam soil, 6-12" | 0.089 | 1.67 | 565 |
| MS 1065 | Bongkizam soil, 12-18" | 0.045 | 1.05 | 405 |
| MS 1066 | Bongkizam soil, 18-24" | 0.002 | 0.48 | 50 |
| M 1067 | Bongkizam soil, 24-30" | 0.027 | 0.22 | 25 |

Both nitrogen and carbon content are relatively *much* higher than in any outside ground sample. This clearly indicates the material in the box was of organic (animal) origin.

d. Conclusion: The Shrine in a Continuing Borneo Tradition

The recovery of the ritual deposit box and associated objects from the Santubong area of the Sarawak River delta affords dramatic evidence that West Borneo participated, at least on the fringe, in the wider impacts of Indian thought and religion. The delta excavations as a whole abundantly prove that this part of Borneo was locked securely into the great web of Asian *trade* as early as the T'ang dynasty; and that a massive commerce of objects changed hands in these trading stations, Jaong, Buah, Bongkizam, Muara Tebas, etc. Indeed, no other area in the

archipelago has yet shown any coastal trade concentration parallel in extent or intensity, solidly proven by artifactual evidence. Pottery, glass beads and other valued objects arrived on these shores with the monsoon winds. By the same agency native products, scented woods, gums and strange objects from the rain forests' teeming life leavened the iron, gold and other metals that flowed out on the following winds. But what of the intangibles of culture, the flux and reflux of ideas that shift the landscape of the mind? The testimony of the *earlier* delta sites reveals only the presence of alien trade goods, material objects, without any evidence that these coastal peoples assimilated the mainland cults, literature or administrative patterns that mark the ancient kingdoms scattered along the shores of the Malay Peninsula, the coasts of Annam, Sumatra or Java. The iconography and ritual intent of the gold cult objects found in the burials at Jaong remains opaque, elusive, a system of belief to which we have today little ready access (II.13). The same is true of the Jaong petroglyphs (III.18). In those matters closest to the core of being--such as death and sexual symbolism and spiritual imagery--the native peoples of the Sarawak River appear to have remained significantly unaffected by the commerce in objects and products in which they so vigorously engaged. The implication is of an already powerful indigenous culture existing to receive and advance this commerce?

With the Bongkissam period, however, we find evidence of later acceptance, by whatever minority or elite, indigenous or extraneous and locally settled, of complex religious practices that have their *origin* and meaning in the religious intuition of India, although not necessarily reaching Borneo direct from the West. Deposits of ritual substances are common to both Hindu and Buddhist monuments. The practice of placing reliquary boxes and other objects in Buddhist *stūpas* can be traced back to the earliest monuments built by the Indian emperor Asoka (Mireille Bénisti, "Etude sur le stūpa dans l'Inde ancienne," *B.E.F.E.O.*, 40, 1962: 41, 49). Ritual deposits are also a feature of the Hindu temple and there are references to them in the *purānas* and in Hindu building manuals in which both the form and the content of these deposits are outlined in detail (Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*: 126-128 and N. K. Bose, *Canons of Orissan Architecture* 62-64; H. D. Smith (Ed.), *Pāncarātraprāsādhanan*, Madras, 1963; and T. Goudrian, *Kāsyapa's Book of Wisdom*, Hague, 1965).¹

There is also extensive archaeological evidence for the existence of ritual deposits in the ancient sanctuaries of Southeast Asia. The following reports are directly relevant:

Champa

L. Arousseau, "Nouvelles fouilles de Dai Hu'u; une fouille au village de Trung-quan (Quang Binh, Annam)," *B.E.F.E.O.*, 26, 1926: 358-369; H. Parmentier, "Nouvelles notes sur le

Sanctuaire de Pô-Nagar à Nhatrang,† *B.E.F.E.O.*, 6, 1906: 291-295; "Découverte d'un nouveau dépôt dans le temple de Pô Nagar de Nha-Tang,† *B.E.F.E.O.*, 9, 1909: 350; and *Inventaire des Monuments chams de l'Annam*, 1918, 2: 414 and Fig. 133; J. Boisselier, *La statuaire du Champa*, 1963: 133.

Cambodia

M. L. Finot, "Phnom Baset,† *B.E.F.E.O.* 3, 1903: 63-70; L. de Lajonquière, *Inventaire Descriptif du Cambodge*, 1902-1911, 1: Fig. 50, and 2: Fig. 106; H. Parmentier, "La Construction dans l'architecture Khmère classique,† *B.E.F.E.O.* 36, 1935: 283-284, and "Chronique: Travaux de la conservation d'Angkor,† *B.E.F.E.O.* 30, 1930: 579-585; G. Coèdes, "La destination funéraire des grands Monuments Khmères,† *B.E.F.E.O.*, 40, 1949: 331-333, "Discovery of the Sacred Deposit of Angkor Wat,† *Annual Bibliography of Indian Art and Archaeology*, 10, 1935: 43-47, and "Un Yantra récemment découvert à Angkor,† *Journal Asiatique* 240, 1952: 465-478; J. Boisselier, *Le Cambodge* Paris, 1966: 205-210.

Thailand

H. G. Q. Wales, "A Stone Casket from Satinpra," *J.S.S.*, 52, 1964: 21-7221; G. Coèdes, "The excavations of P'ong Tuk and their importance for the ancient history of Siam,† *J.S.S.* 21, 1928: 195-210; H. G. Q. Wales, "Further Excavations at P'ong Tuk (Siam),† *Indian Art and Letters*, 10, 1936: 42-48; Fine Arts Department, Thailand, *Guide to Antiquities found at Koo Bua, Ratburi, Bangkok*, 1961: 98.

Malaysia

H. G. Q. Wales, "Archaeological Researches on Ancient India Colonization in Malaya,† *J.M.B.R.A.S.*, 17, 1940; A. Lamb, "Chandi Bukit Batu Pahat,† *F.M.J.*, 5, 1960, and "Chandi Bukit Batu Pahat, Three Additional Notes,† *Papers on South-east Asian Subjects*, 5, 1961: 10-14, and "A Copper Casket from Pondicherry, South India: a possible parallel for the Stone Caskets from Chandi Bukit Batu Pahat, Kedah,† *F.M.J.*, 9, 1960: 19-20.

Indonesia

W. F. Stutterheim, "De Archaeologische Verzaameling,† *Koninklijk Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, Jaarboek*, 5, 1938: 127-129, Figs. 5, 6, and 10; J.t E. Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, "The Dikpalakas in Ancient Java,† *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 3, 1935: 356-384; W.t R. van Hoëvell, *Reis over Java, Madura en Bali in het midden van 1847*, 2, 1847: Figs. 6-8.

A survey of the ritual deposits cited above reveals that there is a great variety both in the container of the deposit and of the objects associated with it. This is of course determined by whether the monument is Hindu or Buddhist; and within each tradition there are varying usages determined by textual prescriptions.

The closest immediate parallel to the Bongkizam deposit is found in a site excavated by Dr. Quaritch Wales in Kedah, his site 16 on the Bujang River (*J.M.B.R.A.S.e*, 1940: 34-36). In a cavity in the ruined foundation of a small sanctuary, Wales found a bronze relic casket. It was a small vessel 4-3/4 inches in diameter, with a hinged top. Inside the casket there was a golden bowl and a small golden lotus, a lion of gold, a horse of copper, a bull of silver and a mass of corroded iron that may have been a small elephant. A number of other objects made of gold and silver were also included: a bow, two arrows, a sword, a dagger, a noose; a staff or spear, a shield, a damaru drum; a bell, a ploughshare, a yoke, and a rectangular piece of gold which Wales speculated, might be a book. In addition there were a number of gems, including a diamond, a zircon, an amethystine quartz, one pearl and two cast yellow glass octahedrons. There was also one bead, of limestone or marble.

Wales considered that the deposit was intended to represent the attributes of a deity; possibly a Tantric form of Bodhisattvai. He suggested a dating between the ninth and the tenth century. Dr. Alastair Lamb, who re-studied this and other Kedah sites, proposed some changes in Wales' dating (*Lamb; Journal of the South Seas Society*, 15, 1959: 110, and cf. II.16.c).

It is not desirable to make very compelling parallels between the Bongkizam deposit and the Kedah material, beyond the fact that both involve the same kinds of things: a reliquary box or casket, semi-precious stones, figures of animals and other objects made of gold and silver. There is not correspondence in detail between the type of boxes or the specific figures represented in metal; the boxes and contents do not conform to similar "textual prescriptions." However, the broad parallels are beyond question.

Wales' inference that his deposit was associated with Tantric practice would seem warranted. Lamb has also tentatively concluded that the ritual deposit boxes he recovered from a ruined sanctuary in the general neighborhood of Wales' site 16, were Tantric in character (*Lamb*, 1959: 107). In addition to semi-precious stones and some apparently organic substances, Lamb's deposit boxes contained objects of gold, silver or copper foil including representations of a bull, a tortoise; a *linga*, a lotus flower and a seated female figure (cf. II.16.c above). These objects were contained in large granite boxes--and were

thus rather different in type from Wales' single copper casket or our silver Bongkizam box.

The Bongkizam deposit fits into this Hindu-Buddhist tradition received ultimately (though not necessarily directly) from India. It is, however, not possible to draw exact parallels with any ritual deposit excavated in Southeast Asia, although there may very well be similar reliquary and associated objects in the treasure room of the Djakarta Museum--where reliquaries are a rather common feature. Inquiry at the Bangkok Museum in Thailand failed to produce any parallel reliquary, although the gold foil figures from Wat Mahatat at Ayuthia (later than fifteenth century) have some similarities, since (among other things) they include gold lotuses, a tortoise, an elephant. The parallel is not so meaningful in either chronological or religious terms, however, since the Mahatat deposit neither contains a *liṅga* nor the seated figures found at Bongkizam--and it would be later in time.

The fact that there is a *liṅga* in the reliquary box does not necessarily mean the religious intention is Hindu. Under the influence of impulses from the monastery colleges, such as Nalanda in Bihar (northeastern India), there was a strong pressure for syncretic religious expression in much of Southeast Asia, especially from the end of the eleventh century, when many monks may have fled Bengal to seek sanctuary in Southeast Asia as a result of the Moslem conquest there. In Tantric Buddhism there was a mingling of Brahmanical deities with the Mahāyāna pantheon, so that a Siva image in Nepal may be found wearing a figurine of Amitābha in his chignon (M. T. de Mallmann, "Divinités Hindoues dans le tantrisme Bouddhique," *Arts Asiatiques*, 10, 1964: 77)t In fact, many Hindu gods are incorporated directly into the spiritual family of a Buddha in Tantric Buddhism. This is possibly the explanation for the occurrence of a *liṅga* in a Mahāyāna Buddhist temple (Nak Pan) in Cambodia (L. Finot, "Lokesvara en Indochine," *Etudes Asiatiques*, 1, 1925: 227-256)t The cult of the Siva-Buddha was vigorous in Indonesia, where the Tantric cults of Kertanagara in East Java and Adityavarman in Central Sumatra are well known (E. J. Bernet-Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art*, 1959: 76; and C. Elliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, 3, 1921: 169)t

The date of the Bongkizam deposit is well within the period when Tantric influences were strong in Southeast Asia. The dating is partly based on the ceramic sherds which were found on the *surface* of the platform, and which are part of a fully analyzed pattern (Zainie and Harrisson, 1968)t All fall well within the standard range of Chinese Sung wares (960-1279 A.D.)t and Yuan (1368 A.D.) which characterize this particular part of this delta site, and can safely be dated almost entirely *after* 1000 A.D. (post-Jaong) and before 1350 A.D. Since the platform

was almost 12 inches *below* the surface of the top soil, there is a presumption that it was not built at the very end of habitation at the site. We believe that a C14 radiocarbon date of c. 1315 A.D. from charcoal in trench Z/3, 9-12 inches, close to the Bongkisam shrine, is near to the true terminal years for this site and for the shrine itself (H.D.: 156).i

The Bongkisam deposit operates along with an elephant tiler, a *stūpa* finial and a Buddha image discovered at adjacent Bukit Maras--uphill from Bongkisam--to add a cluster of "Indianized" objects to the delta picture. Other objects in this tradition surely remain in the ground, since it has been impossible to excavate some potentially rich areas of Bongkisam because of the value of fruit and rubber plantations on the site. It is apparent, however, from the material now available that later delta stations were subject to intellectual and material impacts that affected the spiritual life of the other and (in this sense only) more "developed" areas of Southeast Asia.

If we have had little difficulty in placing the actual contents of the ritual deposit in a Hindu-Buddhist context, the picture is less clear when we turn to the form and function of the platform itself. There are no clues in plan or elevation that reveal its function. It could not have served as a place of public frequentation since it has no foundation. In addition, there is little in its vaguely rectangular plan to suggest a Hindu shrine. Similarly, even if it were a small votive *stūpa* it would seem to require more substantial masonry--or at least if it had a dome that was in proportion to the size of the platform.⁷²

To sum up: the breakage on the surface of the platform and the assemblage of rather large pieces of rubble in the central shaft suggest that the monument may once have supported an upright slab of stone--a menhir; and that we are dealing here with the persistence of the megalithic ideas already familiar in the Jaong pebble-beds and associated petroglyphs (III.18-19). It is then possible to suggest that there was *no* superstructure to the Bongkisam ritual platform; and that features "inexplicable" when compared to conventional Hindu or Buddhist monuments derive from the blend of "Indian" religious influence with local ideas about stone.

In effect, what has happened is that the older, highly indigenous, Jaong cultural activities of c. 1000 A.D. with rock carvings, cut stones, and placed pebbles with gold (among other things) came presently--before 1370 A.D. at latest--into contact with a fresh extraneous influence with a different approach to stone and subsequently to gold. This new approach was at the far easterly extension of range from the west, and not so strong therefore as the resident micro-megalithic and related attitudes

But with foreign prestige the influence was considerable towards formalization of the older, diffuse local ritual expression. Not considerable enough, however, to impose a total outside pattern; instead, the new mood fused with the old to produce a hybrid. The old bed of natural pebbles was replaced by the still very crudely shaped *small* stones (bricks of a sort); the underlying natural sand of Jaong was reflected in the introduced golden sand below the brick platform. The wider Borneo pattern, the impressive menhirs and pebble-burials of coastal Sabah (North Borneo) and the dolmen-crowned pebble mounds or rock carvings of the Kelabit hinterland are two different living fossils of the relatively *un*-influenced Jaongish past, one 500 miles north and the other a week's walking inland, out beyond the Sarawak River contact zone (III.17).^t Nearer home, there are several more formal megaliths not yet mentioned at Bongkissam

e. Other Bongkissam Megaliths

Apart--in space if not necessarily in time--from the fourteenth century Bongkissam shrine, there are three other larger stones which rate as mega-megalithic on the Bongkissam side of Jaong and clearly connect with the general occupation there. The following is from an earlier description, updated to 1970:^{t 3}

(i) *Grave Stones:*

Beyond Bongkissam, between the present village of Santubong and the Batu Gambar upriver are two unusual stone pillars, erected (and now cemented in). One of these is clearly that mentioned by Everett in 1909 as:

"crudely carved stone found at an elevation of 300 feet on the mountain . . . it is about 4 ft. high and 1 ft. broad; its history is quite unknown.^t"

He has a crude text figure of two of its four decorated top faces. The faces are considerably eroded, the clearest and most characteristic being that shown in my plate. It is not now as high as 300 ft. above sea level, but it is not clear whether or not the present site is the original one. For at one time, these stones were removed to the Sarawak Museum. Then people started to cultivate the Bongkissam section and the stones were remembered and their site marked--after a dream which reminded the people of the exactly correct site. Presently Everett was taken ill and treated in Singapore. Treatment was of no avail and he had to go to England. His Dayak wife, Limau Merjan,

very worried lest he be unable to return, made offerings and prayers at the old *kramat* site. Eventually he returned; then she, voicing public opinion, attributed his recovery to the site, and begged him to ask for the return to it of the original (and even more efficacious) stones from the Museum. Everett made representations to the Resident at Kuching who, with the curator, summoned the Santubong people to take the stones back and re-install them (about 1910?). The top of one is now cracked and balances precariously upon the base.

The decorated stone is 2'7" (out of the ground), 11" wide, and 8" deep. It is rectangular, well faced, but the top slopes a little to one side. There is an inset "collar" below the engraved area, 8½" from the top. Some of the locals, who are a mixture of Melanau, Malay, and much else, say the grave is that of a Sultan of Sambas who died here en route to Brunei long ago. But Mary Murjan, niece of Everett, then aged 70, gave the fullest information recorded (Feb. 1949):

"After the stones were returned from the Museum, one of the ruling family of Pontianak came to Santubong. He had heard from his father of ancestral talk that long, long ago one of their family, second brother of the then Sultan of Pontianak, had journeyed to Brunei. In those days Pontianak paid homage to Brunei and made periodical visits. Now he sought his ancestor's grave. At this, the village people thought it must clearly be these stones, and thus informed him, to his delight." (T.Hi 2/49)

This tradition seems to have some historic basis, which may well have been modified subsequently. The story may be older than the Brunei Mohammedan sultanate and date to the "Hindu" period in Brunei. The designs certainly do not appear to equal anything of Mohammedan character, and are vigorously denied as such by leading local Malays.

(ii) *Yoni and Linga*

At Santubong, Everett in 1909 reported a "cylindrical block of sandstone about 6 feet long" with well-smoothed surface and carefully rounded ends, indicating human workmanship. This sounds much like a *linga* and stood "near the Government bungalow." In 1939 the bungalow was rebuilt and the site flattened out more carefully. In the process, this stone (which has not

been otherwise described) was upset and smashed. Examination of the remains suggest that it had been hand-worked, but into a rectangle rather than a cylinder? Local informants now say it stood about 3½ ft. out of the ground and leaned on another stone.

It is tempting to relate this to yet another stone, described by Everett as a large block of sandstone in which a shallow rectangular cavity has been cut. He describes this as near his house. This Bongkisam stone is something between a very crude *yon*i, subsequently worked for another purpose, and a trough deliberately made in the stone. Like Batu Gambar there are quantities of iron slag about, and it is said that several of the gold objects obtained by Everett were found between this and the gravestones. The rock stands 1½ ft. out of the ground, and is about 8 ft long, roughly flat on top. It has a rectangular depression, 4" deep, 30" long and 18" wide, quite well made but worn by constant rain-water.

The above four Bongkisam stones indicate that the micro-megalithic there, as usual, is more broadly associated with the use of the larger stone, but in a different mood from Jaong. It is unlikely that any of these four belong to a post-Bongkisam period, since everything points to human abandonment of this river mouth area after the beginning of the Ming dynasty in China (1368 A.D.) closely followed by the advent of Islam and the new centralization of power up the coast at Brunei (c. 1404 A.D.) until the last century's coastal revival.⁷⁴

Several other probable menhirs, adapted by Islam, into *Kramat* (holy stones) occur in the vicinity, at Muara Tebas and Pulau Laki. Several small stone figurines elsewhere described, more or less "Indian" (Hindu-Buddhist) in character, could also be ascribed to the micro-side of the transitional megalith thinking.

f. Santubong's Petrified Dragon, Golden-Scaled⁵

Under half a mile from the Bongkisam shrine, at the point where the last of Borneo land runs down to the South China Sea, on a rock-strewn stretch in the very mouth of the Sarawak River, at the end of Santubong village, one of the largest natural boulders curiously resembles a giant crocodile's head, jaws agape (see Plate 45). This is *Batu Boya*, a landmark second in fame to but much better known by sight than Batu Gambar--tucked away there upstream on Jaong creek.

Batu Boya is much discussed in the oral folklore both of the Moslem Malays in the delta and of the pagan Land Dayaks who see it guarding the wide mouth when they come down from inland. There are several current versions of the tale involving the rock. In a Land Dayak one the stone originated from the "offense" of Dayang Permaisuri, wife of the great culture hero Datu Merpati, when she went bathing in the river while menstruating. Her menses blood "turned into a dragon with *golden scales*,^t which made her pregnant too. This dragon later led the Datu in search of his wife, who had been abducted to Brunei by Rajah Pigort. In difficulties at sea the dragon--whom the Datu addressed as "son"--held the boat steady and led him safely to Brunei.

Before the dragon disappeared into the depths again, he gave Datu two *golden seeds* for remembrance.

It was the head of this dragon which eventually emerged and petrified into rock at the river mouth. A Santubong Malay vision attributes its origin more directly to a plague of crocodiles which descended upon them some 28 generations ago (c. 1250-1300 A.D.?). The people had a great battle with the beasts, and the head of the largest, "nine fathoms in length" was chopped off and placed in its present position as a warning to others. The head turned to stone, as did the tail, which is placed up-river at Ulu Simbok. This petrification probably occurred as part of a wider disaster where, as a result of laughing dressed up at dogs and cats during a festival, the whole community was overcome in a great storm of godly vengeance, first flooding and then turning to stone. However, the story goes on to introduce Datu Merpati and his wife, who settle near Batu Boya:

Not long after their settlement here, Datu Permaisuri (wife of Datu Merpati) gave birth to a dragon with golden scales (*sisit mas*). He swam out to sea and lived there.

This Moslem account goes on to tell of the later search by the Datu for his wife and the helpful encounter with his dragon-son at sea, where:

Then the dragon raised its head and let Datu Merpati pick some *golden scales* thereon. The dragon advised Datu Merpati that the gold was not for sale, but to be kept for medicine from one generation to another. Its last warning was "those who sell it and spend the price will turn poor and pauper."^t [Curing sickness was by drinking water in which the gold scales were soaked.] Now Datu Merpati set sail on to Brunei. . t .

The striking natural boulder, with its petrified representational tone and its golden associations into the ancient past, links the megalithic and the golden foil in a vague yet subtle metaphor, which deserves a little further attention in a wider context at the last part of this study (IV).

CHAPTER 25

WEST BORNEO'S MEGALITHIC IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Nearly all the known megalithic of Borneo is in the western third of the island, Sarawak, Sabah and inland as far as the northwest Kelabit-Potok-Apo Kayan corner of Kalimantan. This chapter seeks to place what we have been able to reconstruct of this activity--the earliest of it not dateable before 800 A.D., the latest after 1950 A.D.--in the setting of Southeast Asia, primarily in order to assess how far it is "typical," "specialized," or otherwise noteworthy from outside. In this we are assisted by Dr. Loofs' annotated bibliography of 1967, as noted in our Preface.⁷⁶

First, Borneo has two of the very few megalithic "cultures" which have continued alive and active in the archipelago into this century--on the coastal plain of northwest Sabah and at the other geographic extreme in the interior uplands above 3000 feet overlapping the Sarawak-Kalimantan borders where they form a triangle with Sabah (but with no megalithic at any time showing on the Sabah side there); as also, micro-scale, on at least one offshore island south of the Sulu Sea. The only equivalently varied and vigorous modern megaliths of island Southeast Asia are, in further extreme contrast, on the small island of Nias west of Sumatra, where megaliths are wonderfully rich and with a major micro-element of beds, paths, platforms, walls and terraces (cf. III.26.b); and Sumba-Flores (perhaps Timor) with much small stone usage and a special interest in stone boats as well as petrification (cf. also III.26.b and 28). Sumba and Flores, far to the south of Borneo, are 1,500 miles from Niast. This only underlines the "living fossil" character not only of megalithic activity surviving into historic times, but of all megalithics--historic, prehistoric, or uncertain--which can be identified as such today. The inference, in support of the conclusions we have already reached for West Borneo (III.17), is that this type of stone and related (earth, ceramic, metal, wood, gold, and other) work was very general in the past, contemporary with Jaong to Bongkissam, and that much of the rest is lost forever in jungle or river by erosion, destruction and decay.

This universal megalithic is confirmed, too, by the persistence of the same concepts in mythologies where actual megaliths are trivial or absent today such as the people on Mt. Kinabalu in Sabah. And by the occurrence of at least *some* recognizable large megaliths in virtually every corner of South.

east Asia, up to the Himalayas westward and Taiwan northwardi- though we have, as throughout this study, to limit our area to the vast arc contained to the westward by the Isthmus of Kra and the Malay Peninsula, to the east by the Philippines (and Palau).

Starting from the northwest top corner of this huge inverte tuning-fork, in Thailand the evidence is very weak and diffuse, mostly of menhir among the Lawa and other hill tribes. But clearly there is need for more research there--for in adjacent Laos there is a rich prehistoric megalithic, which owes most of its recognition to the industrious fieldwork and detailed publi- cations of Madame Colani. For Cambodia the indications are very slight, again; but in Vietnam there are considerable though localized traces, especially menhirs, stone heaps (to which we return in the next chapter), walls, wells, and a relationship with irrigation generally, which is of specific interest to Borneo in view of the strong wet-rice links with both its major modern megalithicsi-coastal Kadazan Sabah and upland Kelabit Sarawak.^{7⁸}

In the long Malay peninsula (southern Thailand and West Malaysia), the relics are mostly localized in the lowlands, in- cludings some quite impressive sets of menhirs and a few slab- graves, which have again been inadequately examined. Some of these areiso like some Sarawak efforts that a visiting Kelabit chief immediately accepted them as manifestations of his own ancestral upland past--"as a similar integral part of a similar general culture.i"^{7⁹}

Coming down into the wide sweep of the islands, there is a large-scale and well documented (but still largely unexplained) megalithic in West Sumatra, notable through Van der Hoop's work (1932) on the massive carved sarcophagi and rock-faces, often flat-on-the-boulder figures vividly elaborating the simplicity of Batu Gambar at Jaong.i^{8⁰} Moslem Java, which has been well explored from this point of view (like much Indonesian terri- tory, by the Dutch), has a fairly rich and very diffuse set of remains, with some notable stone cists platforms and measurable elements of Hindu-on-pagan influence, which become even more evident on Bali with its persistently non-Moslem culture. Mega- liths, pre-Hindu in origin, continued well into Hindu times. In central Java:

Three types of monuments can be distinguished: those clearly non-Hindu; those with a Hindu-Javanese veneer; and those where Hindu-Javanese and previous elements are of about equal importance . . i the Sundanese must have clung for a long time to their megalithic beliefs in the midst of a more or less strong Hindu-Javanese influence.i^{8¹}

This Javanese (Balinese) process clearly relates closely to that at the Bongkisan shrine, as does a monument near Sukarta in Java which was Hinduized only at the end of the Majapahit empire (c. 16th century). The monuments in question are often terraced.

East of Borneo, Celebes has a large, rich and well published prehistoric and historic megalithic, notable for carvings, stone vats and urns and for the Moslem re-adaptations of the old stonework as earlier noted (III.17.b). This activity continues through Timor and the Moluccas up into the Philippines, where the literature again becomes weak. Most of the recognized Philippine megalithic is in northern Luzon again connected with the rice irrigation and terracing of the Ifugao and other montane peoples, which continues into the present. In another paper Dr. Loofs (1965) has well put the position for Luzon:

Sparse indeed is any information about megalithic elements which might exist in their culture. Besides the mention and sometimes complete descriptions of various head-hunting rituals and *Feasts of Merit* (*Prestige Feasts*) which . . . point towards a megalithic culture the only information is the little summarized by Eggan (1954) on *lookout and gossiping places*; a photo in Barton (1930) showing an absolutely "classic" megalithic gathering place, complete with stone seats, upright stones and wooden posts and finally a photo of a stone-paved place with an upright stone.⁸²

The great gaps in our knowledge are not, therefore, all confined to Borneo, which indeed has in some respects now a longer and wider run of data at different levels--prehistoric, archaeological, ethnological and historic--than most of the zone. What then, is the interpretation to be put on all this in respect of time-scale? In Borneo, we have been unable to find even any faint indications of a neolithic ("stone age") megalithic. All the stone and associated work, even the distinctly related wall paintings of the Painted Cave at Niah, *unmistakably postdate the advent of iron*. The monumental Kelabit *parapung* when excavated in 1963 failed to reveal any neolithic traces but metal paint and hard stonewares dating to not earlier than 1000 A.D. All Borneo petroglyphs, from Jaong to Bario, are metal-made.

By and large, this is also the picture for Southeast Asia generally although the published literature tends to concentrate on the major megalithic and rather neglect the other minor materials on detail--it is always worth digging at and around *any* menhir, dolmen, petroglyph and such like, as Batu Gambar so well proved (I.2). Some attention has been paid to this aspect in Malaya, however, where both H. D. Collings and Michael Tweedie emphasized the iron-age character of prehistoric slab-

graves. Madame Colani is one of several others who has seen the whole mega-procedure as metal age, though for continental Laos she brings in the "Bronze Age," non-existent as a distinct period in Borneo. Van der Hoop puts the Sumatran monuments at the "beginning of the Christian era," and slab graves in western Java are dated to "the first centuries A.D.," although a cist-grave in northwestern Java did contain three stone adzes--a very important, almost unique and unconfirmed record.^{8 3}

The whole approach to a reasonable reconstruction of sequences in this field has been clouded by the brilliant scholarship, thinking and writing of the late Professor Robert Heine-Geldern, who has produced a monumental series of papers on this theme for Southeast Asia and the Pacific which, since 1928, both from their publication and his own university teaching, have filled the minds of others with basic assumptions. Among other things, these assumptions (i) limit the functions of megalithic purpose far below the real life thinking of the "primitive" people who actually do--or did--this their thing; (ii) distinguish on purely stylistic grounds activities which are open to other explanation in many cases; (iii) on this basis, separate the separate "waves" of megalithic culture coming in from outside the Older Megalithic in late neolithic times (2,500 to 1,500 B.C. into Southeast Asia) and the Younger (early Metal Age). This was later elaborated and subdivided, with "Old Pacific Style," Dneistro-Danubian, Shang, Early Chou, Later Chou, and Dongson styles, all of which distinctions were brought to fruition by 1937; much of this, where the megalithic was directly concerned, was in 1958 eventually traced back west to a Mediterranean origin near Heine-Geldern's own heartland. Moreover, an ideological basis of distinction was drawn between the *genealogic megalithic* and the *cosmoemagic megalithic*. By the time Dr. Heine-Geldern, in his old age at 1966, in effect revoked his own original and fundamental distinction between Old and Younger Megalithic, his earlier theories had gained world-wide acceptance as no doubt will some new and equally theoretical ideas he then put forward afresh. Loofs is himself a keen diffusionist and by implication follower of Heine-Geldern as in his Introduction, where he follows the master in rejecting clay urn burials as anything to do with the megalithic, whereas he allows urns of stone.^{8 4}

This Data Paper is not the place to go into these and other diffusionist and "wave" migration theories, except to note them as relevant to seeing the stone for the pebbles; the moods for the rain forest. All that need be said here is this: nothing in the Borneo evidence suggests these wave diffusion theories, however modified, are either adequate or in the final analysis helpful in trying to understand how megalithic activity developed in the area. A wholly different formulation, based on the actual thinking and working of the peoples involved, could give an almost diametrically opposite set of explanations and sequences.

Under the circumstances it is at this time best to concentrate on collecting the largest possible number of new facts about every aspect of the problem, as the basis for a fuller and deeper reevaluation from objective and *scientifically* acceptable all-round evidence. Meanwhile, further pure speculation is likely to add to the present confusion rather than clarify

Unfortunately (for us) the recent prime scholar of early Metal Age sequences in island Southeast Asia, Dr. H. R. van Heekeren of Holland, who has presented a comprehensive general survey of "megalithic cultures" in Indonesia (only) as Chapter II of his *The Bronze-Iron Age of Indonesia* bases his approach on Heine-Geldern's projections, especially the "older" and "younger" beliefs. However, his following text is particularly full and useful as a summary of Dutch work for Java and Sumatra, while for Bali he refers to a 1930 record by V. E. Korn of stone axes in stone sarcophagi near Den Pasar, though *along with metal.*⁸⁵

CHAPTER 26

MICRO-MEGALITHIC ELEMENTS ELSEWHERE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Seeing how much remains unknown, or undecided, for the formal megalithic in this part of the world, it is not surprising that the less massive, nonmonumental aspects tend to have been poorly (when at all) documented. It is also encouraging that new scholars for the area are shedding some of the long-accepted approaches to the megalithic as a whole, and thus freeing the way for the overdue look at the whole subject. Thus, Frits A. Wagner, in his excellent book on Indonesian art, writes

It should not be suggested that megaliths are necessarily always stones of considerable size, although the term "large stones" might lead to the misconception. On the contrary, smaller stone objects must also be classed as megaliths, in as much as they were evidently made with *some particular sacral purpose* in view, and have no connection with implements in the ordinary sense of the word.⁸⁶

The reader will notice, however, that even this "step forward" assumes that smaller stone "objects" have to be evidently "made" for the purpose. This does not clearly allow for the use of unworked small stone, although the same writer follows the universal procedure in accepting any and every large stone placed for any purpose as potentially megalithic, whether "made" or not--and, of course, the vast majority of large stones used in menhirs, dolmens, cromlechs, and cists in Southeast Asia are not shaped, worked, or made in any sense; they are simply *moved* to a new, deliberately selected place, just like the smaller stones.

Where, then, there is no published record, only a negative, on smaller scale placed-stone activity, either on its own or in association with large rocks, it can by no means be assumed that none such existed or exists. The general tendency has been to look at the mega- and very easily overlook the often seemingly casual or insignificant microactivity.

Fortunately, however, some of the large micro-structures have attracted a decent quota of positive attention, which may gain additional points if now briefly re-examined from the Bornean stance. We follow the same sequence geographically as in the previous and parallel gold comparisons.⁸⁷

a. Philippines (and Palau)

The Philippine megalithic is, as we have just seen (end of III.25) meagre if regarded in the usual, massive sense. It is striking, however, that its major total impact, in the mountains of Luzon, is almost entirely in the form we have termed micro-megalithic--in that case, the use of pebbles and stones, largely natural shaped, to build up terraces, walls, and platforms for the purpose of or associated with the particular (and so obviously "sacral" in Dr. Wagner's sense) functions of imagination and montane agriculture. The late Dr. Otley Beyer has described the work involved:

First [in making rice terraces] they level the area behind the wall so as to form a foundation. Over that they put *gravel* and sand, then over that some clay, usually a layer several inches thick of blue or some other very good clay. . . i then inside this lining, they put a foot or so of sand again, and then some gravel, which is brought down from the hillside usually not by merely carrying in by baskets or wooden troughs but by running it down with the aid of water.⁸

Here we smell something of the atmosphere of the old pebble-sand relationship at Jaong and the brick-sand horizons of the Bongkissam shrine's platform and ritual chamber. The description goes on to remind us, quite forcibly, of the Kelabit stone-carrying method of building up the piled *parapun*:

When people in the mountains build rice terraces they . . . i build them out of broken stones. . . i . But later on nature dissolves these broken stones . . . i as they decay and fall out, one-by-one, the people carry up round hard stones from the river, which may be far down the mountain side. They do this . . . i until finally the wall is all made of round stones and there is not a single broken stone in it.⁹

It could be said that this is hardly "megalithic" behavior, in the strict sense. But it is our argument that this strictness has been too severely imposed from outside; that we can only adequately look at all this through the eyes of the people who actually do it and not adopt remote-control definitions which are not only invalid but unhelpful on the Asian spot. As we have seen with the Kelabits and Kadazans of Borneo, such proud distinctions are literally "unthinkable" in their multiple motivation for megalithic (let alone micro-megalithic) operations. Encouragingly, the high authority of Dr. Loofs indirectly supports the view that as a whole the Luzon mountain operations must be regarded as containing much that falls within the megalithic schedule. His summary of this situation has been cited

in the previous chapter (III.25). He goes on to detail other and hitherto largely neglected Luzon stone-works, including stone-paved house platforms, surrounded by stone walls (of natural stones and pebbles), slab seats and back rests, unshaped menhirs, and sometimes elaborate communal meeting places stone paved and formerly used "in some instances (for) religious rituals" and heaps of stones for which "no explanation has been obtainable as to their purpose." He then, oddly, *separates* the similar use of unworked stone in the rice terraces as "independent" in origin, though the evidence adduced for this is (to say the least) "circumstantial," including tentative arguments in favor of a direct and separate diffusion for the "strictly" megalithic traits into mountain Luzon from Vietnam, etc.⁰

We would venture to suggest as an alternative view that the whole complex of Luzon stone use be experimentally considered as a whole--as well as a survival, perhaps, of a much wider, now lost and also lowland Philippine pattern; and that rice terracing may have been just as much a part of this thinking as the last function of the stone-paved platforms and stone heaps, another way of expressing the sense of stone, needing no special explaining away nor pointing to any particular single outside source (or sources) with parallels surviving today. It would also be surprising--and very significant--if no megalithic ever occurred in the southern Philippines and Sulu, so closely related to and in contact with Sabah and northwest Borneo generally, from the neolithic until now. As in Bali, in montane Luzon the micro-megalithic is all about.

Moreover, immediately east of the southern Philippines, on the western fringe of Micronesia, lies the little group of Palau, with one of the richest megalithics in the world. This has been meticulously mapped by Douglas Osborne, who--as well as a great many menhirs--describes stone platforms, altars, stairways and pavements (cf. the Polynesian *marae*); large pyramids of blocks of andesite, a "tower made of coral blocks" up to 15 feet high, and seats for important people. Much of this work is executed with unshaped pebbles, and stones and natural blocks of coral reef. The Visayan and Sulu Islands are thus sandwiched in megalithic manifestations. Dr. Osborne has, indeed, seen direct diffusion connections for prehistoric Palau pottery and suggested that it had "its probable immediate derivation *from* the Philippines." To the contrary effect, the distinguished American linguist, Isadore Dyen, after computerizing 7,000,000 word pairs at Harvard, has suggested that an important element in Philippine languages came *westward* across the Pacific perhaps through northern Melanesia and Palau, while on the Philippines W. H. Scott has shown that the 500 mile oceanic voyage to or from Palau has repeatedly been made in small open boats.¹

b. Indonesia (Especially Nias)

As with gold (II.16.b)‡, so with micro-megalithic, Nias emerges as of exceptional interest. For nowhere else in South-east Asia--and probably for no other place of comparable size in the world--is the literature so rich and often excellent, thanks largely to the work of three scholars, Schnitger, Schröder and Suzuki notably.

We have read and digested the Nias literature, and find in it, again and again, matter directly relevant to the theme of this primarily prehistoric study. Here we have a megalithic in *full*, magnificent flower, adequately studied into present times. On this noble island, westerly outlier into the Indian Ocean, stone-thinking has continued into our times in forms which could easily have been common place and generally spread around the whole archipelago at the time of the Sarawak River delta sites a millennium ago or later. This remains the largest question mark: despite the very full ethnology and anthropology of Nias, the archaeological aspects have hardly yet been touched--and urgently need exploration while present and past can still be linked or separated through living, expert informants.

Despite the vivid attractions of this Nias study in stone, only the bare essentials of a very elaborate set of ideas and actions can be summarized here.†²

The original classical two-volume study of Nias by Schroder (1917) although marred by some naive diffusionist theories, is invaluable for its documentation and for the many good photographs, of which most interesting here are the extensive stone dancing and meeting pavements in village meeting centers (Plates 55, 62-65, 82-85, 88, 89, 110, 116-117, 124-128‡, 134, 200, 204)‡, stone steps (66-67, 91-95, 236)‡, stone seats (60, 76-77)‡, and seat tables, often in rows (102-108, 137)‡; a stone house path (69) and piles of stones (86, 216-217)‡, as well as a detail effect much like some Kelabit *nabang* (112 cf. 118).†³

Other writers have confirmed in detail the extraordinary intensity and diversity of megalithic activity on Nias, combining elaborate stone carvings and figures (and wooden alternatives) and numerous uses of smaller unshaped stones such as those noted above. A particularly impressive transition between these micro-megalithic efforts and full megaliths is provided by the making of a short, high wall or bundle of squared stone, pyramiding up to a flat top, over which jumping contests occur, as the favorite Nias "sport.†" These may be thought of in connection with the curious and frequent carvings of feet found on many Nias megaliths. The Kelabits in Sarawak believe that *all* prehistoric megaliths were produced by or for giants who leaped great distances from boulder to boulder, dolmen to menhir, and

so on, leaving their (now usually invisible) footprints stamped in the rock surfaces.⁹⁴

In all of this, the megalithic is the center of life for Nias, and with it always an intricate association with gold. Stone work is essentially the outcome of Feasts of Merit, called *owasa*, which closely resemble those similarly critical in upland Kelabit life, there called *irau* and an essential prelude to and part of all types of megalithic operation and secondary burial, status assertion and economic distribution. The later work of Peter Suzuki from the University of Leiden has brought this into sharp focus. He brings out, brilliantly, the essential role that golden jewelry *always* plays in Nias megalithic activity of all sorts:

Since scant attention has been paid to the feasts of merit as such, some general remarks with regards to these feasts are in order here. The term used throughout Nias for these feasts is *OWASA*. Whether one is a nobleman or commoner the first thing one does after getting married is to collect together *enough gold and pigs* to sponsor an *OWASA*, which forms a continuum. For example, in S. Nias, after one's marriage, a nobleman or commoner will want to sponsor an *OWASA* with gold and pigs he has accumulated. It is usually the custom to have a piece of jewelry made for one's wife before beginning on one's own piece. At any rate, *one must begin with an earring of gold*. The gold contained in this piece must conform to a fixed standard of quality and quantity. An elaborate and intricate set of weights and measures have been devised to measure gold. The *OWASA* is then given when the piece is to be dedicated. In the ceremony dedicating this piece, a title and status within one's class is acquired either by the man or his wife, depending on the case. Therefore the *OWASA* is a public announcement proclaiming success in achieving a new status and title. The achieving of a still higher status and acquiring a new title then requires having the following prescribed piece of jewelry made: a *gold bracelet*, and an *OWASA* to dedicate it. As one ascends the scale of status and titles, one must have *costlier pieces of jewelry made* and give more elaborate banquets of pork than the previous feast. The commoners in S. Nias may not go beyond making the gold earring, bracelet, and three types of necklaces, since going beyond this would mean acquiring the status of nobleman.⁹⁵

For a Nias commoner the pinnacle of ambition and achievement in life is reached by dedicating the fifth gold ornament; for a nobleman:

. . . only after more than twenty other pieces of jewelry have been made and dedicated--this is not to mention the stone monuments and house he must have constructed in order to reach the limit.

The "ideal pattern" for a Niasan is as expressed in this island text:

Whenever guests visit our village,
Whenever guests come to us,
That is the token of the nobleman,
Let it cost mountains of gold if need be,
Let it be at the expense of our gold,
That is the duty of our class, which the mass scrutinizesi

Relating gold and stone, Suzuki sums up:

like the other items of Nias art, the "megaliths" have *cosmological significance: they represent the total cosmos* These stone carvings are required of those who wish to achieve higher rank and acquire more important titles, and call for sponsoring an OWASA as well, when the carving is to be erected, and dedicated.

Note that this writer puts the word megaliths in quotes, "megaliths.i" That is because he feels the term is devalued by misuse (oversimplification) among anthropologists, and wishes to avoid it where possible. There is much of the deepest significance in this and other accounts of the stone and gold rites on Nias, which we suggest as a survival of something like what may have gone on in other ways and at other levels, in places like Jaong a thousand years ago. There is no space to go into all these Nias relevancies (e.g., on the placing of "male" stones upright, "female" flat, and with holes to take penetration one by the others). We must be content to conclude with the last words of Suzuki's indispensable Chapter VIII:

. . . i goldpieces and stone monuments represent *the total culture and cosmos* successfully merged from antithetical elements.

But at another level, not antithetical at all--at least in Bornean terms--but rather parts of a common synthesis, when gold and iron came from rock; all out of earth and all capable of metamorphosis along the way (as also, differently, in the ancient Chinese and other views; cfi III.21.e). It should also be noticed that Munsterberger, on the basis of myth studies, has (rather confusedly) suggested a *close* relationship between the megalithic of northern Nias and the more central part of Borneo, and of southern Nias and northern Borneo!⁶

Nias has the most developed megalithic in Southeast Asia, and it is full of micro-megalithic elements. But in the much larger islands of Java and Sumatra as well as on smaller ones like Sumba and Flores, there is much to support the same picture *except* that in these places the survivals are pale ghosts, often silent echoes, of the teeming dynamic Nias auro-megalithic.

Of most relevance to the Sarawak River delta in particular are the "sanctuary terraces"--especially well developed in Java, but found also in South Sumatra, Lombok and in Bali--where one later became the State temple, see Appendix A (Loofs, 1967). They occur frequently with menhirs, and also with heaps of stones, stone walls, and paved walks; in part of Java with stone "with artificial depressions or cupmarks," often arranged in rows. Dr. van Heekeren also describes a most remarkable grave sanctuary from the same region of cupmarks:

In the centre was a pile of stone 2.50 metres square which appeared to be a grave lying in the direction north-south. Beside this grave was a smaller one . . . it is an interesting fact that on top of the smaller grave there lies a miniature dolmen. . . .⁹⁷

For South Sumatra the same scholar's account gives the basic plan:

Terrace Graves

These are graves used for more than one corpse. They consist of one or more terraces built of earth, supported round the edges by vertical walls, constructed with river stones. Such terraces occur frequently in Polynesia⁸ and I have personally seen several in South Celebes.⁸

It is to the later versions of these terraced sanctuaries that we would draw particular attention from the micro-megalithic and Bornean angles.

The Bongkissam Shrine would appear to have particular analogies with the later, fifteenth century terrace sanctuaries of Mt. Penanggungan in eastern Java, and especially the terrace sanctuaries of Tjeta and Sukung on Mt. Lawu east of Solo, also in Java--which are of course direct continuations of a much older traditional theme. These terrace sanctuaries climb a sacred mountain, just as the Bongkissam shrine and Jaong beds cling to the foot of Santubong Mountain. They combine megalithic practices, ancestor worship and a cult of salvation. The shrine at Sukung represent, in the good words of F. M. Schnitger, "*megalithic tantricism*."⁹⁹

While Sukung is notable for the form of its main sanctuary --a stepped pyramid--both it and Tjeta also contain a variety

of plain terraces. While these terraces are massive compared to the simple plane of dressed stone at Bongkissam, it is quite easy to see them as part of a similar system of belief.

One piece of evidence that lends force to the possible--though indirect--link between Suku in Java, Besakih in Bali, and Bongkissam in Borneo, is the important and enigmatic relief of a blacksmith's shop on the Suku monument. This is a magical invocation of the blacksmith, seen as Bhima, the principal actor in an ancient cult of salvation.^{t 0 0}

It can only remain conjectural at this point, but we believe that intensive exploration of the jungle-clad lower slopes of Santubong Mountain could disclose other ritual platforms, possibly climaxed by a larger and more complex monument. Although the heights have already been examined by Sarawak Museum teams, such megalithic structures would not offer much in the way of profile after centuries of forest growth. It is instructive to recall that intense excavation in 1955 in already cleared and cultivated rubber land, at Bongkissam came close to the very edge of the ritual platform there without any trace of its existence being discovered, it was revealed quite by chance in 1966--and very nearly missed then.

Thus, the antecedents of this small closed monument in coastal Borneo are to be traced not directly to the monumental architecture of the Indian tradition, but rather on one side to the pebble-beds of Jaong; and on the other by analogy in the sacred mountain sanctuaries of Mts. Lawu and Penanggungantin Java and of Mt. Agung in Bali, originally megalithic and animist, subsequently reshaped by Hindu influence. A. N. van der Hoop (influenced by Heine-Geldern) sought to show that in South Sumatra "ancient graves differ from modern in that they form a small terrace about half a metre high, the upright borders of which are constructed of river stones. On the terrace . . . t upright natural stones stand in pairs.^{t t 0 1}

Schnitger, already cited for terraces, writes of some Sumatran menhirs in a very Bornean mood, thus:

(they are) partly grave monuments . . . partly memorials to the founding of a federation . . . partly the boundary of assembling places where folk games were formerly played. The chiefs sat on the flat stones and leaned against the pillars (menhirs). *Near the pillars buried gold is sometimes found.*^{1 0 2}

Such assembly places, often paved with small and even unshaped stones, so strong as dance, jump-game and ritual grounds on Nias, recur in force south of Borneo in the Lesser Sunda Islands, notably Sumatra and Flores, where they have been richly

illustrated in a posthumous volume of photographs by G. P. Rouffaer.¹⁰³

c. The Malay Peninsula

The Malayan megalithic has not been studied down to the micro-level, as yet. Alastair Lamb's work at Chandi Bukit Batu Pahat, in Kedah, has been discussed for gold earlier (II.16.c); the reconstructed temple shows signs of the same sort of thinking in stone as the Bongkissam shrine, which it predates. Emphasis is put on the way the builders "cut their stone into as small blocks as they could." His Plates 9 and 10 well illustrate the technique. The use of very rough unworked pebbles and rubble is also illustrated in his Fig. 9; and of more carefully arranged unworked river boulders in Fig. 14. The original structure contained at least 100,000 pieces of stone on Dr. Lamb's "conservative estimate."¹⁰⁴

d. Indo-China (and India)

It is not our intention to pursue this argument much further afield, but rather to hope that--as with iron slag in the earlier study--we may stimulate others, expert in other areas, to pursue these lesser and readily overlooked manifestations of human intricacy in more detail. But this section can hardly be closed without mention of another strongly micro-megalithic tendency, which although recorded in Java, Sumatra and Bali, reaches major proportions in Indo-China and on as far west as Assam, Sikkim and Bengal: the erection of heaps or cairns of unshaped pebbles or stones, usually to make graves or memorials for the dead, but also with more elaborate intellectual relationships. Such heaps are reflected in Borneo's Kelabit *parapun*--and we have earlier seen the mega-parallel to Jaong's Batu Gambar in Madame Colani's imposing Indo-Chinese researches.¹⁰⁵

For instance, in his study of the Samre people of the eastern Cambodia, R. Baradat refers to stone mounds along mountain paths, to which each passer-by adds one more pebble while uttering a propitiary invocation.¹⁰⁶ Around Hue in central Vietnam, L. Cadière describes rough riverside shrines of stone to protect against boats smashing on the river rocks, with incense sticks, paper parasols, gold and silver foil paper placed on flat stones. One more elaborate arrangement similarly used includes a mound of broken pots behind a shrine of dry bricks, before which stand five ordinary flat stones, with a hedge to protect the area. In a later paper, the same observer describes itinerant graves marked with pebble hoards, with offerings of

gold and silver leaf paper and beads from passers by who sometimes add a new pebble from the river-bed.¹⁰⁷

Among the hill-tribes fringing northeastern India, there is extensive use of large and small stone, essentially as part of Feasts of Merit. And an ethnologist, H. Siiger, has this useful account from Sikkim:

The Priest was in charge of a peculiar open-air shrine . . . it consisted of two groups of natural stones, a bamboo platform and two poles. The bamboo platform was used for the offerings at the ceremonies and the poles for tying up the sacrificial yak. At first sight the stones seemed to be lying in disorder, but their arrangement became evident when I was told they represented mountain peaks . . . bigger stones represented prominent peaks. The stones were arranged in two groups, each having a bigger stone as centre . . . it became clear that the shrine was constructed as an imitation of the mountain panorama and was, so to speak, an artificial replica of the divine and spiritual environments. With this shrine as a cult centre, the Lepcha of Tingbung annually celebrate their great ceremony for Kong-chen . . . [rest of article describes ceremony in detail].¹⁰⁸

Likewise, long ago iron workers and gold seekers in the Sarawak River delta looked with deep respect upon Santubong Mountain which, rising sheer out of the South China Sea, dominates and overshadows Jaong and Bongkizam, even if we can no longer any more decipher the signals that effect conveyed by and to them, than on the sandstone rock faces, in the shrine bricks, block-cuts, gold-foil shapes, dynamic Batu Gambar, crowded pebbles, hexagonal shapes, granite, questionable vaginal and phallic forms, unbroken stoneware vessels as passive receptacles of breach-cut gold foil--and all the rest. The ultimate secret of all this, indeed, lies locked on and around the striking 2900 foot erection of the peak, up there so often in the clouds and stimulating, on the eastern side, up to 200 inches of rainfall in the humid year.

e. Lost Evidence?

We only know a fraction of what once went on around Santubong. Anyone who investigates the megalithic--let alone micro-megalithic--activities in the field these days will almost anywhere soon realize that he or she is only dealing with a residue, quite apart from deliberate looting of value objects (already discussed in II.15.c). In most places, even in the Kelabit

uplands of interior Borneo, menhirs and other large stones have been broken, upset by buffalo or deliberately removed for re-use (recently for Christian building). Even the great laterite slab which form the walls of Brunei's pre-European capital, Kota Batu ("Fort of Stone") have been extensively pilfered for stone by local Moslems in this century, while a seemingly key Kadazan site outside Kota Kinabalu in Sabah has been accidentally despoiled into disappearance by a government department in the past decade (cf. III.17.a). At Jaong, all but one of several hundred figure carvings were buried in masses of roots, grass and soil when excavations began there in 1952.

The trouble, in West Borneo, is a general scarcity of hard or large stone exposed or readily dug out near the surface over large areas. This puts a premium on it (e.g., as rock metal) nowadays—and always has made it attractive, just as this has also of itself controlled and restricted megalithic activity locally and also tended to favor use of smaller stones locally.

Therefore, it is impossible to doubt that under these circumstances what has been found and *recorded* is only the tip of the iceberg, the fraction that is left showing. Moreover, owing to the great emphasis put on the massive, monumental aspects implicit in the very term *megalithic*, observer attention has been over-oriented towards the large and impressive. Who bothers with a few pebbles beside a dramatic dolmen or a dynamic avenue of menhirs? The early emphasis on megaliths as mysterious or as markers of great cultural movements across the world has further focused attention on the big rather than the small, the greater over the lesser, naturally enough.

It is thus all the more certain that where the big has suffered at the hands of time, man, jungle, erosion and deposition, the small may well have suffered that much more. Smaller stone has been washed or carried over, more often simply overgrown and submerged in grass, roots and soil. This can in fact happen, in Borneo or anywhere in the tropics, within a couple of years. Indeed, such things as the pebble-beds at Jaong are, at one level, attempts to offset the overwhelming wet mud, decay and impermanence of this fundamentally jungled world. The big megaliths are other expressions of this effort to catch moments of permanence, to memorialize the present on into immortality, in an ecological setting which relentlessly operates in the opposite direction.

In surveying, measuring and above all in drawing conclusions on the use of stone in Southeast Asia, these severe limitations on the evidence have to be constantly borne in mind. This, also, puts a special premium on careful exploration and then careful excavation at located megaliths, in search of

"subsidiary" stone and other materials. This aspect has not been sufficiently considered in the area. The big stuff so easily steals the show.