HOW THEY WERE NAMED

BORNEO LITERATURE BUREAU
HOW THEY WERE NAMED

Illustrated by

HUSAINI SULAIMAN
Borneo Literature Bureau have been unable to trace the copyright owners of the following stories, and would welcome any information which would enable them to do so: Santubong, How Sarawak Got Its Name, Rock Road, Batu Susu, Borneo.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kuwi's Pool</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammed Yak Abdul Gapor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Bau and Kuching Got Their Names</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liew Jan Nee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mukah</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. K. Shamsuddin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Kinabalu</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yong Yapp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Kampong Serasot Got Its Name</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johia anak Giap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santubong</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usun Apau Plateau</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Anvie Laing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Sarawak Got Its Name</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Road</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batu Susu</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borneo</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KUWI'S POOL

A very long time ago a man and his wife lived by the Rejang River. The man's name was Tamang Jalak and his wife was called Kuwi. They had two daughters and one son.

One day Tamang Jalak went out to hunt. He heard the noise of an animal on top of a hill. He slowly climbed up the hill holding his parang and his blowpipe. When he got to the top of the hill the noise stopped. He walked slowly through the trees on the hill-top, looking all round.

Soon Tamang Jalak found two big eggs. He took the eggs and put them in his basket. Then he went home. When he got to his house he asked his wife, Kuwi, to cook the eggs. But while he was bathing his wife ate them both! They tasted very good. Tamang Jalak came back from his bath.

"Where are the eggs?" he asked his wife.

"I am very sorry. I was so hungry that I am afraid I have eaten them," she answered.

An hour later Kuwi's body became very hot. She went to bathe in the river to get cool again. But she was still hot. She bathed many times each day and at night, too. But still she was hot.

Then one day she looked at herself. Her skin was hard and shiny. She had no arms, but she had four legs! Her face was ugly. Tears fell from her eyes. Her children cried too. Kuwi was not a woman any more. She had turned into a dragon.

Kuwi asked her husband to make a big flat boat.
When it was ready she climbed on it and sailed away down the river. Her husband and children followed her in their boat. Suddenly Kuwi went down under the water. Nobody saw her again.

You can still see where she went down: it is a deep pool on the Rejang River between Kapit and Song. It is called Kuwi's Pool. Many people say that she is still there, a long way down at the bottom of the river, but no-one ever sees her.
HOW BAU AND KUCHING GOT THEIR NAMES

In this island of Borneo, near the banks of a river, there was once a village called Kampong Sarawak. It was a pretty little village, and a nice cool place to live in.

The men who lived there used often to go out hunting. One day, when they had nearly caught a big pig, a very strange thing happened. A great ‘cat’ jumped out in front of them, and caught the pig. It took it back into the jungle, carrying it as easily as a longhouse cat would have carried a rat!

The hunters were so frightened when they saw this, that they all ran back home as fast as they could. They had never seen an animal like it before. They did not know that it was a tiger. They did not know what it was.

“Oh! they said. ‘What a dreadful animal. We have never seen anything like it, and we never want to again. We are not going back into the jungle to hunt until somebody has killed it. If it can carry off a pig like that, it could easily kill us, too.”

“It was like a great cat,” said another man. “A kuching jahat.” (This, as you know, is the Malay for an evil or a wicked cat.)

The penghulu called all the best hunters to his house. “Somebody will have to go and kill this animal,” he said. “Which of you will do it?”

In Kampong Sarawak there was a boy called Ali. He was seventeen years old, and he was good hunter. He had no father or mother, and he had to work very hard. When he heard what the penghulu said, he stood
up and said, “I will kill the *kuching jahat* for you. Let me try.”

The other men laughed at him. “Sit down,” they said, “you are only a boy. You can’t kill an animal like that. It would kill you! This is men’s work; it is not work for boys.” Ali sat down. He did not say anything more.

But that night, when everybody was asleep, he left his bed and went quietly away into the forest. Over his shoulder he carried a dead dog and in his hand he carried his blowpipe. When he got to the place where the hunters had seen the tiger, he put down the dog and he climbed up a tree.

The smell of the dog was very strong. Quite soon
the tiger came creeping out of the bushes. It stopped
a yard or so from the dog, and looked round.

This was the moment that Ali had been waiting
for . . . down came a poisoned dart from his blowpipe.

The tiger soon lay dead. Ali came down from his
tree and looked at it. There they were together, the
young man and the great tiger. The boy of seventeen
had done what the older hunters feared to do.

Ali ran back to the village, and told everybody what
had happened. At first people would not believe him,
but when they had returned with him and had seen the
tiger dead upon the ground, then they knew that it was
true.

Next came the job of getting rid of the tiger. Some
people wanted to bury it but most people thought it
would be better to carry the beast away as far as they
could. So that is what they did. Ali led the party.

They climbed over mountains, and they crossed
rivers, until they were far from home. At last they saw
a lake and threw the tiger into it. Then they went back
to their kampong again.

The body of the tiger began to go bad. It made a
terrible smell. The smell was so bad that one poor
farmer fell to the ground in a faint! Other people
smelt it too and they all said, “Ugh! Bau,” which meant,
“Ugh! Bad smell!”

That was how Bau got its name and the lake into
which the tiger was thrown was called Bau lake, which
meant, smelly lake!

In Kampong Sarawak everybody was talking about
the tiger. Everybody was talking about the great
HOW THEY WERE NAMED

*Kuching* and the brave boy who killed it. In time people called the village, Kampong Kuching, instead of Kampong Sarawak, and it is still called Kuching today.

That is how Kuching and Bau got their names. As for tigers, there are none to be seen now. I wonder how that one tiger came to be in Sarawak, so long ago? There are tigers in Malaya, and in India. But there are none, so all the books tell us, in Borneo. What a very strange thing it was!
MUKAH

Many years ago a ship came sailing along, close to the land. The men in it were looking for a place where they could get food and water, and sell some of the things that they had brought with them.

It was a lovely night; the full moon was shining down, and it was cool after the hot day.

Suddenly one of the men called out, “Look . . . . look at that!”

The others turned to see and then they too cried out in surprise.

They could all see the face of a beautiful woman in
the air above them. As they watched she seemed to grow more and more lovely.

The men quickly jumped into a little boat and rowed towards her. They went very fast but they could not catch her. At last they were near enough to the land to jump into the sea, and run up the sand to try to get nearer to her.

As they ran the face moved away from them. At last they could see it no more. It had gone.

Sadly the men went back to their boat.

They never saw the face again and neither did anybody else. But from that time onwards people called the place Muka. *Muka* means face in Malay. Over the years the spelling has changed to Mukah. It is still a beautiful place but not quite as beautiful as the face which the men saw there, so long ago.
MOUNT KINABALU

Long, long ago this island of Borneo was just thick jungle. Only a few people lived here and very few strangers ever visited it.

But one day a big boat came to the north part of the island. It was a sailing boat from China. It sailed quietly in on the blue water. The men on the boat had brought beautiful things with them to sell. People came from far away to see the boat and to buy the lovely things. One very pretty girl came too. Her face was like a flower and her hair shone in the sunshine. She had a sweet smile and a lovely voice.

A man from the boat saw this pretty girl. When his boat sailed away to China he did not go with it. He stayed behind and he asked her to be his wife. They were soon married and they lived together very happily.

One day another boat came from China. When he saw it, the man decided to go back to his homeland. He wanted to see his father and mother again. He said goodbye to his wife and went away. “I will come back soon,” he said, before he left. His wife climbed to the top of a high mountain. She saw the boat go away across the sea. She was very sad. “I shall not be happy until he comes back,” she said.

Every day she went up the mountain. She looked across the sea. But the boat did not come. Day after day, week after week, year after year she waited. But still it did not come. Every morning she climbed the mountain to look out across the sea. Every evening she went sadly down the mountain again. She did not eat. She became very thin and weak.
Then one day, as she sat at the top of the mountain, she saw a sail. A boat was coming. It got nearer and nearer and she thought her husband was returning to her. She stood up. He was coming at last.

But when the boat came nearer she saw it was only a fishing boat. He was not there. She was so sad that she could not go down the mountain that evening, and when her friends came to find her, the next morning, they could do nothing to help her. She lay dead.

The mountain was called Chinabalu which helps us to remember the beautiful girl, who died of sadness when her husband left her. In Malay *China* means Chinese, and *Balu* means widow. But later on, the people changed the spelling to Kinabalu.
HOW KAMPONG SERASOT GOT ITS NAME

Once upon a time there was a man called Kopiel, who lived at Biratek. One hot sunny day in 1819 he went hunting with two of his friends. At that time he was only nineteen, but he was a very brave hunter. He needed to be brave because in those days hunters could be killed not only by angry pythons, crocodiles or bears, but by head-hunters too.

Kopiel and his friends had bad luck with their hunting, and so did not manage to get any fresh meat at all. They did not catch a deer, or a pig, or anything which they could smoke and take back to their longhouse. They spent nine days on Tibawang Laya (which is now called
HOW THEY WERE NAMED

Jagoi Gunong), before they gave up, and started on the long journey home again.

One day, when they were not so very far away from it, they sat down for a rest under a big tree by the river. You can guess how tired and hungry they were! They had been away for a long time and had walked for days and days, and they had had nothing to eat but a few ferns and leaves for almost a week.

As they sat there Kopiel looked up into the tree above him. He saw a squirrel eating fruit there. With a happy cry he jumped up, and climbed the tree. Soon his mouth was full of the lovely fruit too, and he was dropping more down to his friends below.

After this they all felt much better, and with their stomachs full, and their baskets heavy with the lovely fruit they made their way home.

In 1841 Kopiel went back again to Tibawang, and this time he stayed there for two years. This was because he married a lovely girl who lived in one of the houses there. At the end of the two years they moved away to fresh land to start their own farm.

They went down towards the old home of Kopiel, and they stopped by the side of the river. It was quite near to the fruit tree which Kopiel had climbed so long ago. “We will stay here,” said Kopiel. “It is a lucky place, and we shall be happy if we make our home here. We will call it Serasot.” (Rasot is a Land Dayak word meaning fruit tree.)

Serasot really was a lucky place for Kopiel and his wife. Soon other people came to join them there, and now Kampong Serasot has one hundred and ten doors,
HOW KAMPONG SERASOT GOT ITS NAME

a shop and a school. It is about nine miles from Bau, and it is still a nice to place to live in, as you will see if you are ever fortunate enough to go there. But I am afraid that the fruit tree has gone. After all, it was an old tree when Kopiel first saw it, nearly one hundred and fifty years ago.
LONG AGO there used to be a big white pig which lived on the side of Santubong mountain. He was so old that his two big teeth had grown and grown and grown.

People said that these teeth were magic teeth, and that the pig could never be killed. They said that it was king of all the pigs.

There was a Chinese farmer living there who had a very nice garden; but every night the pig came and ate as much as he could from that poor man’s garden.

At last he said to himself, “He may be king of the pigs and he may have magic teeth, but I am going to kill him. Every night he eats my tapioca, my beans and my cucumbers. It has got to stop.”

He took up his spear, and he waited beside the path which the pig used every night. At last he heard it coming.

As the great animal passed him, he tried to stick his spear deeply into it. But it would not go in at all. Again and again he tried, but each time the spear slipped away. The pig was not hurt a bit.

Then the great animal turned round. It put its head down; it opened its terrible mouth; it ran at that poor Chinese farmer!

Dropping his spear the man did the only thing he could. He jumped up, caught the branch above him and pulled himself onto the tree. He was safe.

But the pig stood below, making a terrible noise and waiting for him to come down again.

Then the man said to himself, “If this branch should
break, I should fall down and the pig would kill me. I must get my friends to come and help me. San tu bong,” he called. “San tu bong . . . San tu bong . . . San tu bong . . . San tu bong.”

In Hakka Chinese this means “Wild King Pig,” and when his friends heard this, they knew what had happened and they knew what they must do.

Everybody came running to help him. They beat gongs, they lit fires and they frightened the king pig away. Then the man came down from the tree, and said that he never would try to kill the pig again.

After that the village at the foot of the mountain was always called Santubong. It still is, but the pig with the magic teeth went away many years ago.
USUN APAU PLATEAU

Long, long ago there was a man called Jelivān. He was so good and clever that people called him Jelivān Hingan or Jelivān the Great.

When he was a boy Jelivān Hingan was very happy. Every day he went out hunting with his father. He learnt all about the forest and the birds and animals that lived there.

When he got older and was tall and strong, there was no better hunter anywhere than Jelivān Hingan.

In the forest near his house there was a big dark hole in the rocks. People were afraid to go there. Hunters who did so were never seen again. Jelivān was not afraid. He was not afraid of anything in the forest.

"I will go and find out what is inside that hole," he said. "I will stop it from killing our people!"

He went near the big dark hole. As he stood there looking at it, he suddenly heard a loud noise, and the ground shook. A cloud of smoke came out of the hole. Through the smoke Jelivān Hingan saw a very big dragon coming towards him.

Jelivān knew he must kill this dangerous animal, or it would kill him. He got his long spear ready and went nearer and nearer to the great beast.

The dragon saw him! It turned its head this way and that way and it roared with anger. At last Jelivān jumped forward and pushed his spear right into its mouth.

But the dragon just ate the spear!

Jelivān had only his parang left. He threw it at the
dragon, as hard as he could.

But that went down inside the dragon’s mouth too!

Then the dragon opened its great mouth even wider, and swallowed Jelivan Hingan. He went head first down into the great hole of its mouth.

Inside the dragon it was very dark, but there was room for Jelivan to stand up. He could even walk round! That was how he got back his spear and parang. They were lying there in the dragon’s stomach, and he found them. Once he had them in his hands he felt better, for he knew that with their help he could escape.

It was then that he heard the drumming of the great beast’s heart. It was that which helped him to kill it.

He made his way to where the noise was loudest, and
then he pushed his *parang* through its stomach, and deep into its heart.

For a few seconds nothing happened. Then the animal slowly fell over, onto its side. It lay dead.

Jelivan climbed out of its mouth and stood once again in the sunshine, breathing the sweet clean air. Then he ran back to his house as fast as he could.

As he came close he called out, “It's over, there is no more need to worry. No more of our hunters will be lost. I have killed the beast which lives in the great dark hole.”

Everybody went to see the dragon’s body. It was too big to take away, so they left it. The dragon’s body lay there for years and years. Earth came on top of it; then small trees grew on it and it got bigger and bigger. At last it turned into a mountain. Today people call it Usun Apau—Dragon’s Plateau in memory of the dragon that Jelivan killed there long ago.
HOW SARAWAK GOT ITS NAME

Many, many years ago, before you, or your father, or your grandfather, or your great-grandfather had been born, Sarawak had no proper name. People would call it, The Land of the Big Rivers, or, The Land of the Trees. They had no special name for it.

At that time there were not very many people living in the country, but all of them had very hoarse voices. People from other places laughed about them, and after a time they called them, The Serak People. (In Malay serak means hoarse voice!)
HOW THEY WERE NAMED

The word *serak* very slowly changed Sarawak. After a time instead of calling it, The Land of the Big Rivers, people called it, The Land of Sarawak. That is how the country got its name. But I do not think that the people of Sarawak have hoarse voices, now, do you?
ROCK ROAD

These days Rock Road in Kuching is a very busy road. Cars, busses, lorries, bicycles, motorcycles and people, rush up and down it from morning until night. Even at night it is never really quiet.

It was made a long time ago. It was made during the time of the Second Rajah of Sarawak. It took a long time to make because in those days, there were no big lorries to carry the stones or machines to dig and roll and pull and push. Everything had to be done by men.

When the workmen had made about two miles of the road, they came to a big rock.
"That’s good," they said. "We can break this big rock up, and then we shall have good stones for the road. We shall not have to carry them from a long way away. It will be much easier for us," and they got ready to break up the rock.

But as soon as they started, they had to stop, for they all became very ill. They could not work any more.

"This is a sign that the rock is angry with us for trying to break it up," they said. "We will not touch it any more. We will get stones from another place."

When people heard what had happened they all came to see the rock. They built a little house on top of it, and they put flowers and food there. People believed that if the rock could take care of itself so well, it could take care of them, too.

After this everybody called the new road, Rock Road, and many people still believe that the rock is a magic one and can help them.

There is still a little house on top of it, and people still put flowers there.
LONG AGO there lived a Land Dayak called Susu. He was a very clever hunter and killed many animals. One day his wife said to him, “Susu, I am tired of eating wild pig. Every day you go hunting in the forest and you always bring back wild pig. Why don’t you go into the forest and kill a new kind of animal?”

Susu was a very good hunter. He wanted to please his wife. He went off into the forest to look for a new kind of animal to kill. After walking for an hour he saw a monkey sitting up in a tree. “That is a new animal,” he thought. “I’ll kill it and take it back to my wife.”

Susu killed the monkey and took it home. His wife and son were very pleased. This was a new kind of meat to eat. They made a big fire and put the dead monkey on it to cook.

Susu’s son was looking at the fire. Suddenly he called out, “Look mother! look Father! The animal in the fire is holding a piece of wood in its hand!” and he laughed.

“How can a dead animal hold a piece of wood?” said Susu. He ran to the fire to look. His son was right. The dead monkey did have a piece of wood in its hand. Then Susu and his wife laughed too.

But as they laughed at the animal, the sky got blacker and blacker. Soon it was quite dark. Susu and his wife and son were very frightened. They wanted to hide until the danger was over. They tried to run away, but they could not move!

Then, when the clouds had hidden the sun and the
day had turned to night, Susu and his wife and son, turned into stone.

The next day a friend came to see Susu. All he could see was a big stone in the river. The stone was in three parts. When he saw this he knew what had happened.

Batu Susu means Susu’s stone. You can still see it in the river near Tebakang. It is a big stone and the three parts are called the father, the mother and the son.

It is not nice to be a stone in the river, for ever, and ever and ever, but that is what might happen to people who laugh at animals.
BORNEO

Long ago this island of Borneo had no name. People said, "That place over there," and pointed, when they spoke about it. They did not call it anything, because they did not know anything about it. You have to know something about a place to be able to give it a name.

One day, some men thought that they would go and see what they could find on the island they knew so little about.

They went in a boat, and they were a little frightened; but as they got near, the island looked so pretty that they forgot to be frightened any more. When they saw a man on the sand, they left their boat and went up to
him. They asked him the name of the fruit he was eating.

“What is it called?” they asked. “We have no fruit like that in our country.”

“We call it Buah Nyiur,” answered the man. (Buah Nyiur is the Malay name for coconut.)

The strangers tried to say this word but they could not get it quite right. They kept saying, “Bor Neo!” But they did like the fruit. “I wish that we had some like this at home,” they said. “We like Bor Neo fruit; it tastes lovely.”

They took some of the fruit away with them in their boat. When they got home again, they gave it to their friends to eat. When their friends tasted the fruit, they all liked it very much and they said, “What is the name of this fruit and where did it come from?”

“It is Bor Neo fruit,” said the men who had found it. “Well, go back to Bor Neo and get some more,” came the reply. “We will try to grow it in our country, too. Perhaps it will grow here as well as it does in Bor Neo.”

That is how Borneo got its name. Certainly there are a lot of coconuts growing here, it is a good name for this beautiful island.