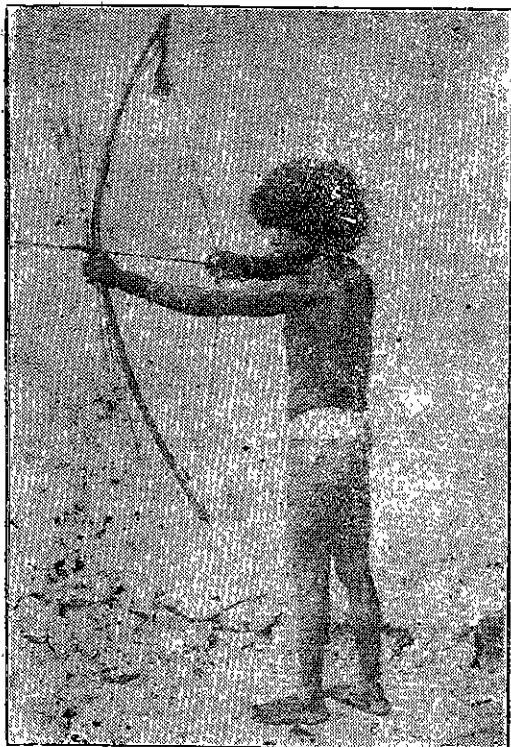


- BORNEO -

A. W., 1929, Oct. 5



A. Dyak of the Interior
of Borneo

-BORNEO-

By Rev. R. A. Jaffray, Wuchow, South China

BORNEO, save Greenland and New Guinea, is the largest island in the world. Roughly speaking it is 690 miles from north to south and 605 miles from east to west, with an area of approximately 300,000 square miles. Like an arrow the equator runs through the heart of Borneo. It is a land of eternal sunshine, and yet a land, spiritually speaking, of deepest and eternal darkness.

Recently the writer travelled up the Mahakam River, a distance of about 300 miles, into the heart of Borneo. The river in serpentine fashion winds itself round the equator. From the coast to the City of Samarinda is a distance of about 80 miles. From Samarinda, inland to Long-Iram is another 220 miles.

The northern section of Borneo is under British rule, while the larger portion, about three-quarters of the area, is under the Dutch flag and forms a part of their vast domain known as the Dutch East Indies. Missionary work is being carried on in British North Borneo, Brunei, and Sarawak to some extent, though there is still great need, especially in the interior of these parts of the island. Recently, a party of missionaries from Australia have gone to Brunei, and from Limbang are entering the interior, from that port to reach the Dyak. On the

south, coast, with Bandjermasin as a base, considerable work has been opened by German and Dutch missions. The American Methodist Episcopal Mission some years ago opened work on the west coast of Borneo with Pontianak and Singawan as a base, but they have now abandoned this work, leaving the Dutch Church alone in this vast field.

The Unreached Areas of Borneo

The entire east coast of Dutch Borneo until now has been entirely without missionary work. On a coast line of approximately 500 miles from north to south on the east coast of Dutch Borneo, there are more than twenty ports, and so far as we are able to learn no mission station has ever been opened in this entire area until our Chinese brethren in South China heard the call. There are now Gospel Halls in Samarinda and Balik-papan. Thank God another centre has been opened for the Gospel by the Alliance Mission, farther north on the east coast of Dutch Borneo, at Boelongan near Tarakan, with a view to reaching the Dyak of the interior. The west coast of Dutch Borneo is also left practically without missionary work. On the south coast, save Bandjermasin, none of the ports have been occupied by resident missionaries.

The Inhabitants

These coast cities are inhabited by a great mixture of Asiatics. This part of the world has been called the "smelting pot" of the Far East. In order of numerical importance, the Malay comes first, then the Javanese, the Sudonese, the Boegisese, the Ambonesé, the Menadonese, and countless other races belonging to these islands. Beside these are to be found strangers from afar, who have come to take up their abode on the coast of Borneo; the Chinese, from a number of the provinces, the Japanese, the Arab, and natives from various parts of India. These Asiatics of many races, with skins of various shades, and with a conglomeration of languages, present a strange spectacle to the European visitor. This very condition, however, makes these ports to excel perhaps in one particular, it is all conducive to the increase of sin. *Should there not be in every one of these coast ports of Borneo a Gospel Hall?*

The happy solution to the diversity of languages is the fact that all these races speak Malay, and Malay is an easy language to acquire. May the Lord hasten the day when a Gospel Hall may be opened in all of these ports.

The Interior of Borneo

Dutch Borneo has no railways and can boast of little in the way of motor roads. Practically the only way into the interior of Borneo is by its rivers. Its most important river is the Barito River, which empties into the Java Sea at Bandjermasin. The Dutch K. P. M. steamers ply regularly from Bandjermasin to the ports of the interior. The river of next importance is the Kutai or the Mahakam, which enters the Makassar Straits below Samarinda. The K. P. M. steamers run up this river intermittently calling at many ports as far as Long-Iram.

The Wild Man of the Interior

The original inhabitants of the Island of Borneo, the Dyaks, have been crowded from the coast away to the interior by the importation of other races, which have settled in the coast towns. In fact, the Dyak has not only been crowded from the coast line, but has been crowded back from the riverways into the mountains and jungles of Central Borneo. Thither must we go after him with the Gospel message. Only here is he to be found in his native, original state. When the Dyak comes to the river port or to the coast port to buy and sell, he dresses up for the occasion, and appears little different from the other

racés, who inhabit the cities. The Dyak has inter-married considerably with Malays and others, and is being somewhat absorbed by them.

In his original state in the interior the Dyak is a pagan, a worshipper of the devil and his idols. A serious factor in his intermixture with the Malay is that the Dyak, being thus absorbed, readily becomes a Mohammedan. In fact, Mohammedanism is spreading rapidly through the instrumentality of Arab missionaries and Malay converts even to the interior of Borneo. The wild man in his wild state in the interior may be hard to reach, and harder yet to win to the truth of the Gospel, but if the Christian missionary carries in distinct disobedience to his Master's command any longer, the poisonous doctrines of Islam will have taken root in his soul, and the task will be a still more difficult one. Have not the followers of the only Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, as much zeal, as much missionary fire, as the Mohammedan Arabs have for their prophet and his doctrine? If the love of the Saviour is burning in our hearts, surely it will constrain us to carry His Message without delay to those in the uttermost parts of the earth.

A Mosque but No Gospel Hall

On the recent trip referred to above, between Samarinda and Long-Iram, about twenty towns were passed on the way. These are inhabited largely by Malays. The farther inland one penetrates, there is a larger sprinkling of Dyaks in the towns, but the pure Dyak lives in the jungle of the interior. Everywhere along the river bank, at each town there is to be seen a Mohammedan mosque. Thank God there is now a Gospel Hall at Samarinda, but there is no Gospel Hall in these interior parts. If the followers of the Lord Jesus were as earnest as the followers of the false prophet *there would be a Gospel Hall at each city on the Mahakam River.* I stood more than once and watched the worshippers of Islam as in goodly numbers they gathered in their mosques, and bowed low murmuring their incantations. What were the thoughts of one's heart? Oh, that there might be a company of lovers of the Lamb here in each of these towns! Shame! shame!! shame!!! I felt. He loved us and died for our sins, but here are multitudes for whom He died also, whom we have never told. He loved these too, as much as He loved us, and died for them, but no one has ever come to tell them. Shall we allow the zeal of the

Arab and the Malay followers of Mohammed to excel our missionary zeal in Borneo?

More Shame

But there was more shame to be felt for our coldness of heart, and our easy-going indifference. The comparison this time was with the world renowned Cantonese merchant. I met them at every port where I landed, friendly, genial, hearty fellows. They beamed upon me with sheer delight when I sat and chatted with them in their own tongue. They were not Christians. Many of them heard the Message for the first time from my lips. Why is this Cantonese merchant located here in the interior of Borneo, far away from his home and much loved native land? He has only one object. He has pressed far into the interior of Borneo with his wares seeking what? Business, money, gold! The Cantonese merchant has gone far beyond the missionary and is away in the interior before the missionary thinks of starting.

The Jungle

On reaching Long-Iram, the terminus of the steamship line, I had half a day, an afternoon, in which to look about. My steamer left for Samarinda again early the next morning. My one object was to try to reach a Dyak village, but I did not succeed. I made three attempts to get into

the country, but was greatly handicapped by not knowing a soul in the place, and not speaking a word of their language. My first attempt as I set out alone, was baffled by bad roads. It seemed impossible to proceed, in fact, I had to return by river in a little dugout. In my second attempt I was more fortunate. I discovered a Cantonese merchant who was very friendly and who offered to be my guide to the nearest Dyak village, but again my way was effectually blocked, this time by high water, which flooded the footpath, so that it was impossible to proceed, and we had to return to Long-Iram. For the third time I set out. This time I was accompanied, not only by my Chinese guide, but also by a Dyak, a "king" indeed, of one of the surrounding villages. My Chinese friend had never been to this village before, but I was very glad to have him as an interpreter. The "king" was manifestly scared to have a European visit his village, but he was so scared that he dared not refuse. My Chinese friend spoke, not only Cantonese and Malay, but also the Dyak language. We set out at a good pace and I soon saw how utterly impossible it would have been to have found the trail without a guide.

The Light That Failed

We tried to ascertain how far it was to our destination from Long-Iram, how long it would take us to walk to the village, but all the answers that we could get were very indefinite and inaccurate, so we walked on. We walked several hours into the dense, thick jungles. The footpath was pretty good, but the forest on either side was absolutely uncleared, and one could easily imagine the kind of inhabitants it contained. In fact it did not appeal to me as the kind of a road that I would like to walk in the dead of night, especially since I had not brought my flashlight with me. The afternoon was wearing on. I kept consulting my watch and looking at the setting sun, reckoning how long it would take us to return to Long-Iram before dark. We again questioned our guide as to how far we still had to go to our destination, and whether we would have time to return to Long-Iram before nightfall, but all still seemed indefinite and uncertain. We finally decided that the better part of wisdom was to return to Long-Iram while daylight lasted; and so we did, and failed to reach the Dyak village. The decision not to go on was a great disappointment to us, but a great relief to the "king." I did not

reach the Dyak village, but I did see a little of the thick jungle, away from the river in the heart of Borneo.

Gold Teeth

My Chinese friend spoke perfect Cantonese and was good company; a most interesting young man. As we tramped along together, I spoke earnest words to him about the Lord Jesus as His Saviour and the salvation of his never-dying soul. He was a dentist and a good example of the zealous, earnest money-maker. His zeal was a rebuke to me. His courage in risking everything, willing to suffer anything almost, to attain his object, put me to shame. With Long-Iram as his headquarters, 300 miles from the coast, in the very heart of Borneo, situated directly on the equator, this young dentist has penetrated another forty days still farther into the interior. There are no steamers, no motor roads, only little native dugouts and footpaths, but this is the only way to reach the Dyak, and so he went. What was the impelling power? Who forced him to go? Did someone pay him a big salary? No! He went to sell gold teeth to the Dyak!

I had noticed that it was quite fashionable for Malay and Dyak to have a full set of gold teeth. The idea is not that one's teeth

are necessarily decayed, but the gold set is ornamental and fits right over the top of one's good teeth! They may be removed at will. This young dentist told me that the Dyaks simply *love* gold teeth, and therefore he had had great success, and made plenty of money selling full sets of gold teeth to the Dyaks, forty days inland from Leng-Iram.

I asked him, "Did you not have any discomfort on such trips?" His answer promptly was, "Yes, plenty." I asked whether he encountered danger. "Yes," he said, "the Dyaks are sometimes treacherous. They are originally head-hunters and cannibals, but I am something of an athlete myself, and can handle any two or three of them nicely, but if a crowd of ten set on me, of course, I would have no chance." He had no Lord Jesus to protect him, but took his life in his own hands, willingly ran all kinds of risks, all for the sake of his business, and for the love of money.

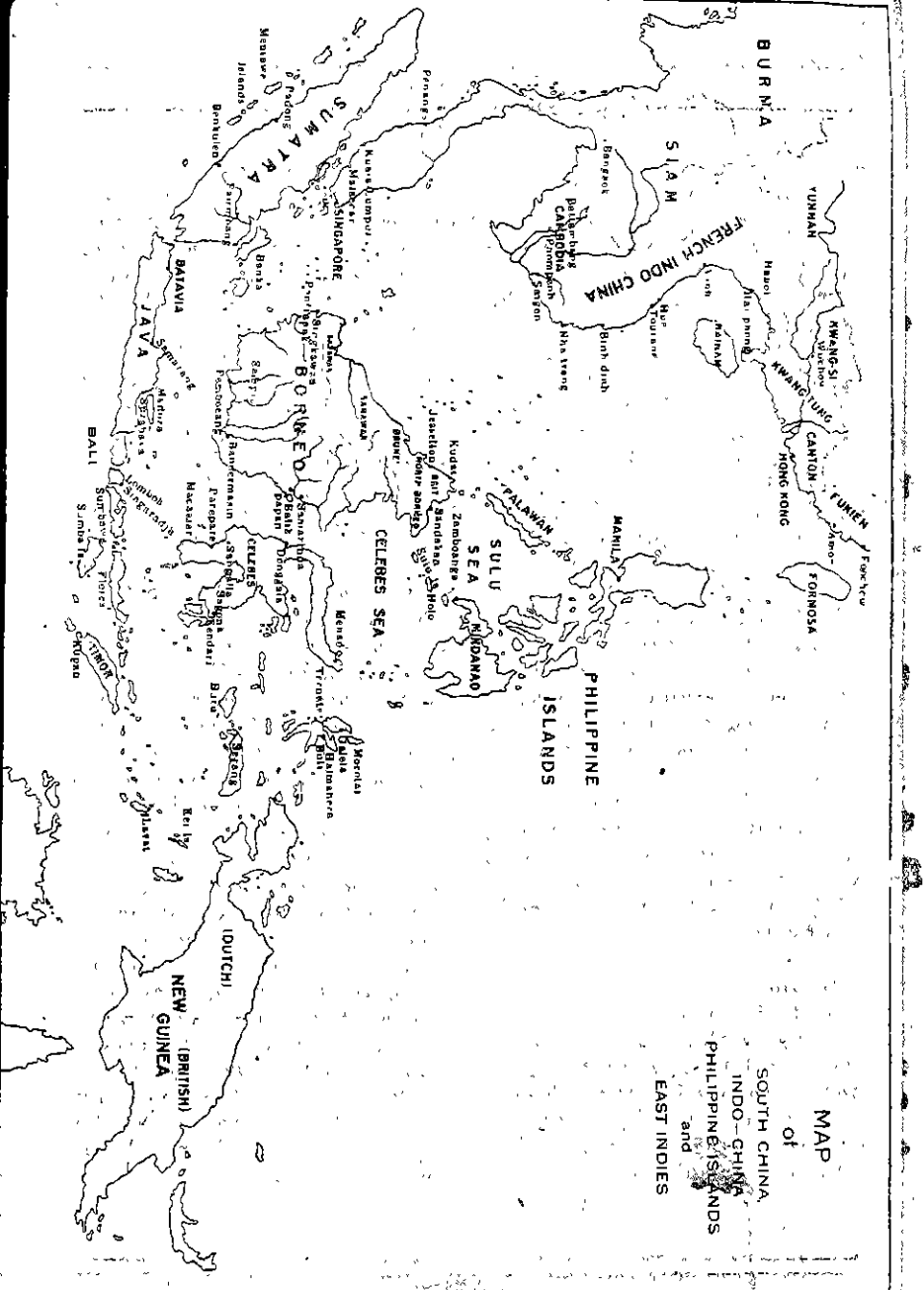
Who Will Go?

Would to God that some consecrated, Spirit-filled young men would go with the pure Gold of the Gospel Message to the poor unreached Dyak! If a Chinese dentist can go, why cannot a Chinese evangelist go? If a Chinese evangelist can go, why

cannot a foreign missionary go? If the Chinese merchant can face discomfort and dangers, risking life itself in the far interior of Borneo, why cannot the missionary for Christ's sake do the same?

On this trip away to the interior of Borneo the Lord spoke to my soul, and laid a great, heavy burden on my heart. I finally cried out with tears,— "Lord Jesus, the chiefest petition of all my prayers, I will now make second to this, 'Save these long-forgotten Dyaks in the vast interior of Borneo.'"

Oh, Borneo! Borneo! When will Christ be brought to your sons and daughters in the interior? When will Christ be born in the heart of Borneo, in the heart of the Dyak? Not until someone is willing at the foot of the Cross of Calvary to lay down all, and count not even his own life dear unto himself. Not until someone leaves the comfortable home and is willing to penetrate into the jungles of Borneo, to climb the mountain steep, and find the Dyak and tell him the Way of Life. Not until someone travails in earnest prayer. God is working today for Borneo and God is calling His people to evangelize the Dyaks. Will you help? How much?



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