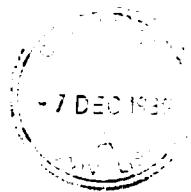


A JOURNEY AMONG THE PEOPLES
OF CENTRAL BORNEO
IN WORD AND PICTURE

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Leiden



SINGAPORE
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
OXFORD NEW YORK
1989

Preface and Acknowledgements

THE National Museum of Ethnology (Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde) in Leiden, the Netherlands, houses the complete photographic collection of the late Dr Hendrik Freerk Tillema, the well-known Dutch writer, traveller, and hygienist, who devoted much of his life to the study of the Netherlands East Indies.¹ It was while I was assisting Drs Jan Avé, the former keeper of the Indonesian ethnographic collection at the Museum, in the preparations for the major Dutch exhibition on Borneo in 1985, that I became aware of the Tillema Collection. It is kept in the photographic archives of the Museum, and we consulted it in our search for suitable illustrations for the exhibition. I paid a return visit to the Museum in late July–early August 1986 to examine the materials in detail, and more especially to begin cataloguing the holdings on Indonesian Borneo (Kalimantan). I then spent a further period at the Museum in September 1987 to complete my survey of the photographs on Kalimantan, specifically those on the Apo Kayan (Kayan Plateau) area of Central Borneo, compile a bibliography of Tillema's main writings on Borneo, and collect information in the archives on Tillema's life and work.

To my knowledge very little use has been made of this Leiden collection since it was donated to the Museum, although the very well-produced catalogue *Kalimantan. Mythe en Kunst* (1973), which accompanied the exhibition of that name at the Indonesisch Ethnografisch Museum, Delft, from February to December 1973, contained twenty-one plates reproduced from the Tillema Collection. Drs Avé wrote

¹ I have already written short preliminary pieces on Hendrik Tillema and the Leiden Collection (King, 1987a, 1987b), and I should like to thank the editors of *Indonesia Circle* and the editor of the *Borneo Research Bulletin*, for granting me permission to use extracts from these articles in this Preface and in the Editor's Introduction.

the Introduction to that catalogue; he was much involved in the preparations for the Delft exhibition, and it was through his co-operation that the Tillema photographs were made available to the Delft Museum. The Museum für Volkenkunde in Berlin has also made use of some of Tillema's materials for its records. During my 1985 visit to Leiden, I thought it a pity that such a valuable photographic resource had been so neglected and I determined to publicize the collection, especially that part on Borneo, and see in what ways some of the photographs might be published.

The collection has been with the National Museum for some forty-five years. In the Museum's annual report (*Jaarverslag*) for the year 1938 it was announced by the then Director, Dr W. H. Rassers, that Hendrik Tillema, 'the well-known writer on the Indies', had bequeathed his complete collection of photographic materials and films to the Museum (p. 8). In fact, Tillema had made the bequest in a letter to Rassers dated 31 May 1938. He had also previously donated a few material artefacts, such as Borneo textiles and baskets, to the Museum. According to the 1938 report, the photographs and films were to become the sole property of the Netherlands state three months after Tillema's death, and to be housed in the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde. The gift at that time comprised approximately 3,000 photographic negatives, about 6,000 prints (with no negatives), 10,000 metres of film, about 1,500 printed plates, a large number of photographs which had already been published, and over 300 books, including a complete bound set of the journal *Nederlandsch-Indië Oud en Nieuw*. All the material concerned the lands and peoples of the Netherlands East Indies. Tillema had intended to keep his collection until he was too old to continue working on it himself, but because of wartime conditions and the fact that he had to be evacuated

from his residence in Bloemendaal to live with his second son Anne in Eindhoven, he decided to transfer his materials to the Museum in 1942. They therefore came to the Museum earlier than expected and have remained there ever since. It is clear in his correspondence with Tillema that Rassers was in no doubt about the ethnographic value of the gift, and he was indeed pleased to receive it on behalf of the Museum. Hendrik Tillema died on 26 November 1952 at the ripe old age of eighty-two, and his bequest was duly confirmed as the property of the Museum by the Director of the time, Dr G. W. Locher, in the annual report for 1952 (p. 159; *Verlagen 's Rijks Verzamelingen van Geschiedenis en Kunst, 1953*, pt. LXXV, 's-Gravenhage, 1954).

Tillema's photographs are kept in large hard-covered ring-binders. Of the total of thirty-five binders, covering various parts of the Indonesian archipelago, there are thirteen which comprise prints of Borneo, though some other binders have varying amounts of Borneo material scattered in them. The main Borneo binders are labelled 5f to 15p, and, in addition, 30ll and 33. The approximate numbers of photographs in each binder are given in brackets: 5f (335), 6g (286), 7h (238), 8i (273), 9j (132), 10k (219), 11l (215), 12m (278), 13n (323), 14o (308), 15p (137), 30ll (337). There are therefore over 3,000 prints in these binders, though several of them are duplicates. A further binder labelled 33 'Borneo/Celebes' contains a large number of photographic plates from Tillema's published work, most of them on Borneo. Other binders contain a mixture of prints; in 4e, there are 194 photographs of the Mahakam area of south-eastern and Central Borneo; in 20w, there are 105 prints of Banjarmasin and south-east Borneo, though these were apparently not taken by Tillema; in 21x, there are a further 104 prints, mainly of Samarinda and the Mahakam, and yet again some have been given to Tillema by others.

Of the main binders, 5f to 12m contain the photographs taken during Tillema's 1928 travels in Borneo. Those from 5f to 8i record Tillema's journey in south-east and south-central Borneo along the Barito River from Banjarmasin to Puruk Cahu in the interior. Most of the photographs show various aspects of Siang Dayak² culture, an Ot Danum group of the Upper Barito basin: *hampatong* or carved ritual posts; tattooing; divining boards, and shamans and funeral paraphernalia.³ The

latter part of binder 8i records the sea voyage along the east coast of Borneo to Tanjung Redeb, Sambaliung, and Gunung Tabur. Folders 9j to the first quarter of 11l principally concern various aspects of life among the peoples of the Kelai and Segah Rivers. There are numerous striking portraits of local people in these latter binders.

The remainder of 11l and the whole binder 12m contain photographs of the Dutch Western Division of Borneo; from the coastal capital of Pontianak, Tillema sailed up the mighty Kapuas River to Putus Sibau. He also made brief trips along the Sekayam River, into the Upper Kapuas Lakes area, and to the Mendalam River, as well as along the coast northwards to Singkawang. There is a series of pictures of the Roman Catholic centre for the care of lepers in Singkawang. Most of the other photographs are portraits of various Dayak groups of the Kapuas basin such as the Land Dayaks (Bidayuhs) and the Batang Lupars (Ibans). Binder 30ll consists of photographs of West Borneo taken not by Tillema but by the Capuchin missionaries there. Copies were sent to Tillema at his request by the Capuchin priest, Pastor Gregorius, in March 1937. Many of these had already appeared in various Catholic mission publications, especially the *Borneo Almanak*, but also in the *Zondagsblad*, *Christus-Koning*, and *Fidelisklokje*. Evidently Tillema wanted these for his own study and records on West Borneo. At the very end of binder 30ll, there are also 17 prints of the Melawi River

²The term 'Dayak' is commonly used to refer to the non-Muslim native populations of Borneo, though sometimes it is not extended to the hunting-gathering groups, such as the Punan.

³Certain photographs in the English translation of Hans Schärer's *Die Gotesidee der Ngaju Dayak in Süd-Borneo* are to be found in the Tillema archives, and I assume were taken by Tillema during his journey along the Barito River. They are Plate XVIII, Illustration 21: *Basir* from Kuala Kapuas, and Plate XXII, Illustration 26: *Pantan timpung* (sacred enclosure of sacred cloths) (see Hans Schärer, *Ngaju Religion. The Conception of God among a South Borneo People*, translated by Rodney Needham, 1965. Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Translation Series 6, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff). I have asked Professor Needham whether he has any information on the provenance of these photographs, but he tells me he does not (pers. comm. 3 June 1988). I have no record of Tillema having obtained copies of them from Schärer or anyone else, so, without any information to the contrary, I assume that the Koninklijk Instituut consulted the Tillema archives for suitable illustrative material for the English translation.

area in West Borneo taken by the local Dutch administrator (controleur) W. C. ten Cate.

The three binders, 13n, 14o, and 15p, are devoted exclusively to the Apo Kayan, and form the substance of this present edition of Tillema's book. Many of the pictures in 13n and 14o were used in Tillema's book *Apo-Kajan. Een fibureis naar en door Centraal-Borneo*, first published in 1938. The book emerged from Tillema's second expedition to Borneo in 1932, along with numerous articles and a moving film. Many of the prints which appeared in *Apo-Kajan* had also been used elsewhere in Tillema's series of papers in journals and periodicals (see below).

During my research in Leiden, the most interesting folder in the whole Tillema collection on Borneo turned out to be that of 15p, not so much for its contents, for these were mainly duplicates of prints already contained in binders 13n and 14o, but for what this last folder pointed towards. Folder 15p contained some 137 photographs (some others had been removed and were not included in the count, but nearly all of them were subsequently traced). Fastened into the binder was a 37-page typed manuscript in English entitled 'Explanation of photographs'. For a time I pondered the significance of this ring-binder, until I happened to be consulting some of Tillema's correspondence in the Museum's administrative archive. In a letter written by Tillema to Rassers, dated 30 May 1938, a proposal for an English edition of *Apo-Kajan* was mentioned. Apparently Tillema had been in contact with the Dutch publishing house Martinus Nijhoff, to enquire whether it might be able to assist in getting an English version of *Apo-Kajan* into print. Nijhoff had suggested the possibility of contacting and co-operating with a London publisher.

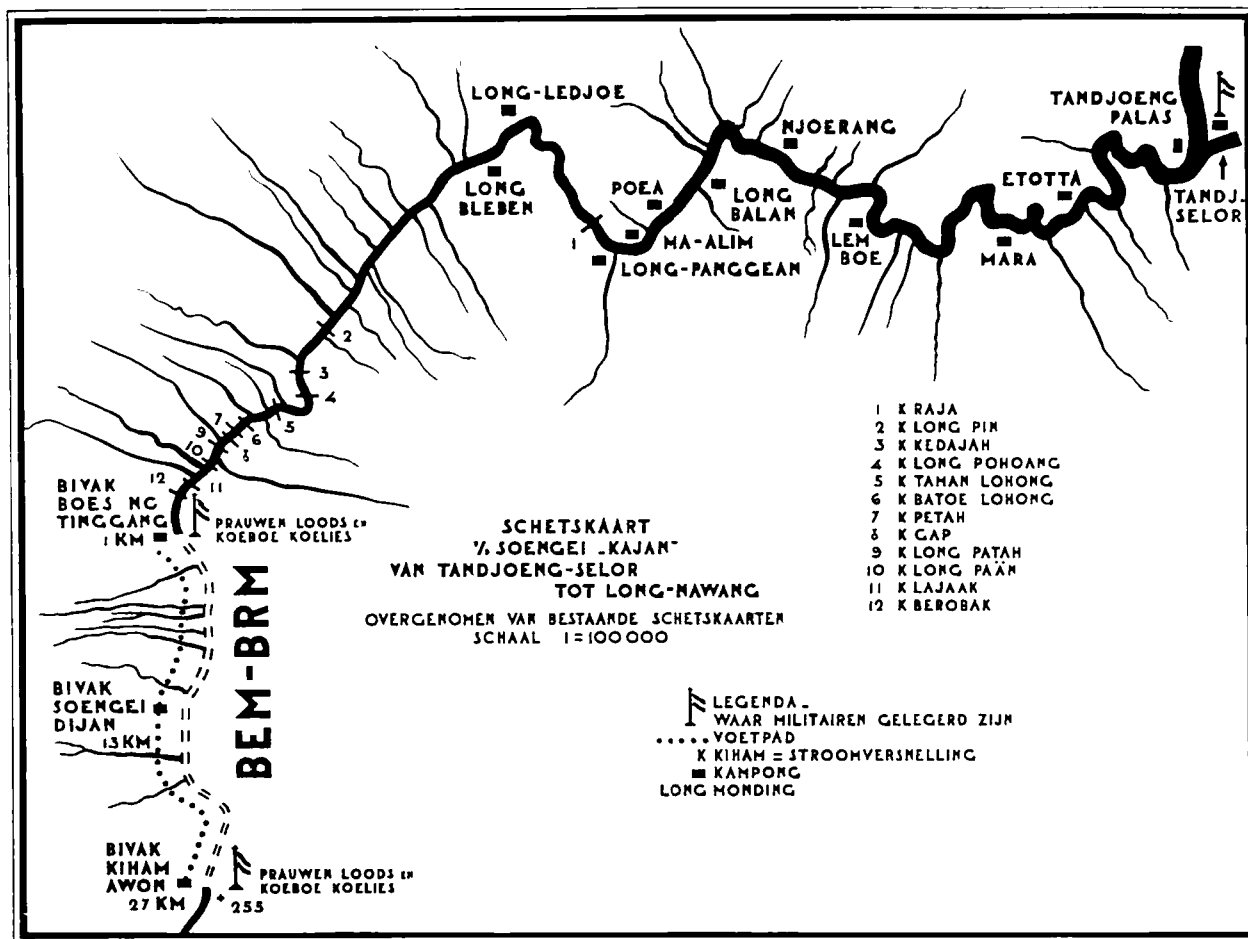
Obviously nothing came of Tillema's enterprise. I was unable to find any other relevant correspondence in the archives, so I have no precise idea why Tillema did not succeed in seeing his English edition published. Perhaps the War and evacuation interrupted his plans; remember that he transferred his collection prematurely to the Museum in 1942. At the end of the War, Tillema was already seventy-five years old, and perhaps he decided that it was too late to turn his mind to another major project. But clearly binder 15p, with its selection of photographs from the other two Apo Kayan folders and its short

English manuscript, represents the beginnings of Tillema's English edition.

I decided that I would attempt to fulfil Tillema's ambition, as a tribute to him, and produce an English edition. Copies of the Dutch publication are now difficult to find, and a new edition of *Apo-Kajan* would provide the opportunity to make a large selection of Tillema's photographs more widely available. However, completing the English text has been no easy task, and it has demanded the support, co-operation, and goodwill of a large number of people.

Since Tillema had not left a main text for his English edition, only captions, I had to use the existing Dutch text of *Apo-Kajan*. I would like to thank Professor Peter King, Alan Deighton, and Jan Avé for their assistance in translating this text. Some alterations have been made to Tillema's original. In one instance I have combined text and a very lengthy caption from pp. 218–20 of *Apo-Kajan* to avoid repetition. There were also some errors in Tillema's original statistical data, especially in the table on p. 254 and the accompanying text, and I have corrected these. I have also used the modern spelling of Malay/Indonesian/Dayak words, though I have placed Tillema's original transcription in brackets on the first occasion a given word appears. I have also compiled a short glossary for ease of reference. Where the text, in my view, required explanation or elaboration, I have inserted editorial footnotes, and I have added notes in brackets after certain captions of photographs. In this Preface, and in my Introduction and footnotes, I have also used the modern Indonesian orthography for local words.

I had to make a decision about the captions to the photographs. Wherever possible I have used Tillema's captions from the English manuscript, but, in some cases, where fuller or additional information is available from the captions in the Dutch edition, I have combined it with or added it to the English material. In other cases, where captions merely repeat what is already in the text, I have simply reduced the caption. I have also utilized a large number of other photographs in this English edition, which Tillema had not selected for ring-binder 15p. Most of these have already been published in the original *Apo-Kajan*, but some have not appeared in print before. In all these cases, captions from the Dutch text of *Apo-Kajan* have been used to explain the photo-



Map 4. Sketch map of the Kayan River from the coast to the main rapids.

since there is always a chance of a *banjir*.

I was happy to leave my hard bench at the end of a long day, for I was having trouble with saddle soreness; unfamiliarity. One of the rowers brought me a few cans of water so that I could bathe. A few branches stuck in the ground served as clothes- and bath-towel-hangers. Bathing was no pleasure because of the presence of *agas* and leeches.

After six days we reached Long Pangian [Panggean] where there is a fixed camp, a relic of a former small military post. By the camp lived a Chinese who traded with the Dayaks. He showed me a set of rhinoceros horns and a set of nails. Every part of a rhinoceros is valuable: horns, nails, skin, and excrement. In a good year, a set of horns could bring in about f. 400, a set of nails f. 25. The Chinese buy them. They cut up the skin into little 'rosettes' to

boil up for soup. From the horns and nails they make medicines which serve as aphrodisiacs. The Dayaks hunt rhinoceros with a smooth-bore gun. They aim between the shoulder-blades if possible, since the skin is thinner there. If the animal is not dead after being hit, they pursue it with spear and blowpipe. To that end, they will track the animal for days and even weeks through the forest, a strenuous task involving many hardships. This hunting is now banned, because the rhinoceros is one of the 'protected' species. I was told by the Chinese of a nice detail about determining whether the animal was male or female from the traces left on the trees in the forest; the male has two horns, a large and a small one, while the female has only one. The males break off the branch whose leaves they want to eat, by getting it between their two horns and turning their head. This

causes the branch to break. The females cannot do this, and so have to bite the branch off. Whether this information is true or not, I do not know. The horns are cut off with the skin. There is no cavity inside, as there is with a cow's horn. The horn is one with the skin. That evening there was a heavy rainstorm at the camp. But I let the downpour pass over calmly in the safety of the fixed camp.

We were to have left the camp at seven next day. At about six, the convoy commander, the Heer de Waard, came to tell me that we could not get away because there was a *banjir* and the water was rising. I had naturally noticed this, but thought nothing of it, being unfamiliar with the technique of sailing. So that was a disappointment. I had a good deal of reading matter in one of my many trunks, and I ferreted it out, not without difficulty. While reading, I looked at the swelling waters continually. I marked

the water-level with a knife on the steps which led to the river. Again and again, they disappeared under water. At about five in the evening, I observed that the level was constant. By the morning, the water turned out to have fallen by a metre. 'If it goes down another metre, the branches will come out of the water, and we shall be able to get under them,' said de Waard, the convoy commander. It continued to fall, and we could leave. We left. My beautiful shelter had been knocked down. Sadly, I could use it no more. Since we had to travel under the trees, as I have already mentioned, the shelter would have caused problems when the water was so high, and would also have been too dangerous what with the currents, and eddies, and the manoeuvres. Progress was by no means fast against the fierce current, yet we made a few kilometres that day. And now a singular feature of my journeys in Borneo; on the

33. Right in the waves and whirlpools of a rapid.





Long Nawang, that the Verkade nightlights, needed to make prints from photo-negatives with the help of pieces of magnesium ribbon, had melted together! And you know already that film materials cannot endure heat! Finally, the *perahu* were unloaded and the first *perahu* pushed off. The *kepala* steersman stood on the front, bolt upright, like a statue. Another experienced steersman sat at the back. Several dozen Dayaks held the tow-ropes and pulled the *perahu* along. The man at the bow kept an eagle-eyed watch for danger points, sitting down when danger threatened, with a shout to warn the man at the stern. With a single stroke of the *dayung*, the *perahu* moved right or left, and the danger was averted. I saw the Dayak headman standing about half-way along the *kiham*. He was pointing with a paddle at a spot in the river, as a warning to the steersman. He would not have been able, in all the rush, to see that there was a rock under the water in all the muddiness caused by the *banjir*. If the *perahu* should hit the rock, the steersman would be unable to hold it in the right direction and it would be carried into the immediately adjacent stream of whirlpools, and inevitably come to grief. The headman shouted to the bow steersman that he should hold to the left so that there was still the chance of avoiding the stone by a few centimetres. He gave instructions to the men on the ropes on the direction to pull. The tension was great, but everything went well. At the

ulu [*oeloe*] (the top), they were moored with a few men keeping watch. All eleven boats were guided through the *kiham* in this way. It had taken hours. The men then boiled up their pot, and had something to eat—cheerfully, after an anxious night and hours of unbelievably hard work! The *perahu* were reloaded, each can, each crate and each trunk going into its own *perahu*. There was no question of disorder or having to sort things out! The fleet went on. But a few hundred metres further on, little white waves were again dancing on the river. Again there were deliberations. Again the same enormous efforts, the same struggles with currents, whirlpools, rocks, stones, and waves. Evening fell. De Waard found a suitable place for the *perahu* and the camp. He called a halt and had the camp set up. It had been a heavy day, for me as well, for the walking and jumping over the slippery rocks and stones along the bank and the choosing of good moments for filming had all been very tiring, and after an almost sleepless night with its many emotions at that. We had made 3–4 kilometres progress that day. And there were many such days! On the first section of the journey as well as the third. Just look at the dashes on the maps!

The notorious *kiham* region was uninhabited. At one of the *kiham*, de Waard showed me the characteristic, fresh spoor of a rhinoceros on the river bank. Traces of deer and boar were plentiful. The military are allowed to shoot game *en route* to obtain fresh



52. 'The cook in the kitchen!' One of our rowers near his small cooking pot (a paraffin can) on the fire. It is amazing how quickly the Dayaks can build a wood fire, even if it is raining! They collect dead twigs, which are always very plentiful, make small chips with them, and then light them with a match. On our journey, they

always used a match, but otherwise they would have used a steel and tinder. Formerly, the Dayaks employed the fire-saw or a rough bamboo with a fire-stone. The cook wears a decoration in his ear, made from the casque of a hornbill. This was formerly an attribute of a head-hunter.

food, which is highly prized. De Waard was a very good shot, as our Dayaks, who are particularly partial to pork, knew full well. A boar has to be seen before it can be shot! And the men of nature were masters at that! Many a time my rowers pointed to the river bank and said, 'Tuan, babi' [Toewen, baboei], but I never saw the boar however much I tried! But de Waard could see it with his practised eye. When he fired, he hit every time. And then the Dayaks stormed off in the direction in their *perahu*. They got there unbelievably quickly. They leapt from the *perahu* after the wounded boar, *mandau* in hand. On one occasion, a Dayak struck the boar such a mighty blow on the head that he could not get his weapon free. The animal ran into the forest with its head shaking violently. A few seconds later, it received the

coup de grâce. I had felt some sympathy for the animal, but still it was funny to see the beast fleeing with the *mandau* across its head! Another time, the wounded animal fled into the river and attempted to save its life by swimming. Again a *perahu* full of wildly shouting Dayaks was there in less than no time. One of the Dayaks leapt from the boat, and tried to grab the beast by the tail and finish it off while swimming. But he could not manage to get hold of the tail. Surrounding the animal there were five boats from which there suddenly arose a thunderous shout; the animal had no tail! But of course its fate was quickly decided, surrounded as it was by all those *perahu* full of Dayaks. Such pursuits should not be undertaken too lightly; a boar is a dangerous animal with its great tusks and formidable strength,