

Lim Poh Chiang and Longhouse Photo Supply, Sibü

Lim Poh Chiang was born in 1924, in Lembangan, Sibü.

He was educated in Singapore, and on his return started a career in the banking sector, in Sibü. However after some time he left banking and set up as a trader in antiques and handicrafts (Longhouse Arts and Crafts) at 19, High Street, Sibü.

He had a deep interest in photography and spent a lot of time exploring the Rejang River looking for photographic inspiration. Some of this work is to be found in early post-war black and white, real photographs of subjects. These are typically annotated by hand and are very rare. Subsequently proper postcards, with a divided back, were produced by the Longhouse Photo Supply, Sibü, Sarawak. These are not numbered, or annotated in any way, so we have no idea of the number produced.

In the early 1960's, he began publishing a series of colour postcards (Numbered from SS1). Produced in the USA, using four colour, half tone printing, these cards were taken directly from colour photographs.

Plan

- 1] Longhouse Arts and Crafts
- 2] Early Real Photographs
- 3] 1950's Black and white Postcards
- 4] The first SS series
- 5] Later SS Series Cards



林寶昌 Lim Poh Chiang

Scan from Lim Poh Chiang's book:
Among the Dayaks



LONGHOUSE

ARTS AND CRAFTS

No. 19, HIGH STREET,

P. O. BOX NO. 7,

SIBU, SARAWAK.

長屋

Date 28th July, 1977.

Mr. Allen R. Maxwell,
1205 Riverside Dr., No. 2
Tuscaloosa, Al 35401
Alabama, U. S. A.

Dear Mr. Allen,

We thank you for your letter of July 16th expressing your interest in purchasing postcards of Sarawak, Brunei, Labuan and Sabah scenes. We are sending you 50 picture postcards, one copy of each different scene. Since we do not know what postcards you purchased previously, you may find some duplications. There hasn't been very many new buildings in the past few years so there haven't been many new postcards.

Each postcard costs Malaysian cents 30. Plus 2nd Class air-mail Registered postage the total cost is M\$22.60. You may send us a cash note of US\$10.00 to cover the total cost. (Better by registered post).

Thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely,


Lim Poh Chiang.

SARAWAK NATIVES HANDICRAFTS: (DAYAK, KAYAN, KENYAH AND MELANAU WOOD CARVINGS),
SOUVENIR ARTICLES, NATIVES PHOTOS, CURIOS AND RARE ARTIFACTS.

2] Early Black and White Photographs

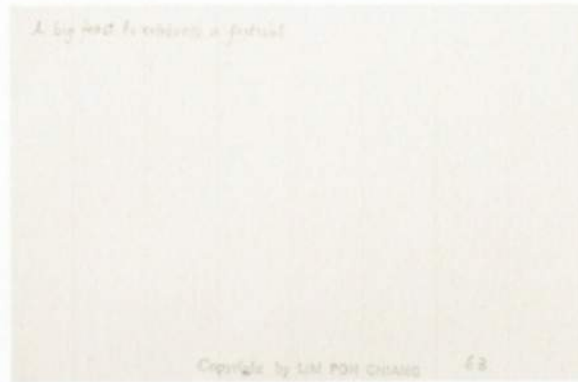


A Dayak Warrior

Annotated 44

Within Borneo, in the early post-war period, supplies of virtually everything were difficult, or impossible, to come by. Pre-printed photographic paper, for post cards, was non-existent and would not become available until sometime in the mid 1950's. Lim Poh Chiang therefore had to initially produce his photographic postcards with just a pencil title and a straight line rubber stamp " Copyright by LIM POH CHIANG" and a number on the back.

All of these black and white photographs are printed on a lightly texture paper, again because the equipment for producing glossy prints, that had existed before the war, had been lost or destroyed during the Japanese occupation.



An Iban warrior carrying a skull

Annotated 51



A big feast to celebrate a festival. Annotated 63



2] Early Black and White Photographs

At some point Lim Poh Chiang was able to obtain more sophisticated rubber hand-stamps, for his business, and these were used on the backs of the photographs, to replace the simple straight line stamp.

In the mid 1950's (exact period as yet unidentified) divided back photographic paper became available: initially this was just a simple marking dividing the back and broken lines for the address.



A Dayak kitchen of the Longhouse. Annotated 61



An Iban paddle maker

Annotated 76



A young Iban Beauty

Annotated 74



74



61

Penan

The Penan were the only true nomadic people in Sarawak, and were amongst the last of the world's hunter gatherers. The Penan roamed deep in the rainforest, hunting wild boar and deer using a blowpipe firing poisoned darts to kill their prey.



A Penan with wild boar, outside one of their temporary longhouses.



Two Penan with a catch of fish; possibly Sebarau.

Redmond O'Hanlan, in his book "Into the Heart of Borneo" wrote;

It had dawned on me that the fish and rice in my mess tin would need all the attention I could give it. The sebarau was tasteless, which did not matter, and full of bones, which did. It was like a hair brush caked in lard. James had made the same discovery. "Redmond, don't worry" he whispered "If you need a Tracheotomy I have a biro tube in my baggage."

Kayan

An indigenous tribe in central Borneo, the Kayan people are similar to their neighbours, the [Kenyah](#) tribe, with which they are grouped together under the Bahau ethnic group. They are known for the fine bead work and intricate woven baskets.



A Kayan Woman weaving an intricately patterned basket from reeds. These are used for carrying a wide variety of things including babies and small infants.



Two young Kayan girls their large beaded hats.

Kayan

At the 1947 census there were only 6,183 Kayan's recorded. The tribal groups were located in the northern interiors of Sarawak midway on the Baram River, the upper Rejang River and the lower Tubau river. Traditionally they were headhunters, adept in dry-rice cultivation, and having extensive tattoos and stretched earlobes amongst both sexes. They were also well known for their boat making skills, carving the boats from a single block of the belian; strongest of the tropical hardwoods.



Kayan's celebrating the Harvest Festival.

In the background a typical longhouse.



A Kayan tribal group.

Location unspecified.

Chinese

Chinese people first came to Borneo as traders and explorers in the 6th century. In the early years of Charles Brooke's reign they occupied a unique place in that they formed a state within a state. They were rich and powerful from working the gold and antimony mines at Bau. In 1857 the Chinese rose up and attacked Kuching murdering many of the European's, plundering the town and setting fire to it.

Today, they make up 24% of the population of Sarawak and consist of communities built from the economic migrants of the 19th and early 20th centuries and are amongst Sarawak's most prosperous ethnic groups.

Interestingly most of the photographers of the colonial and post-colonial period were Chinese, but there are very few pictures of the Chinese. The postcard below is thus unusual.



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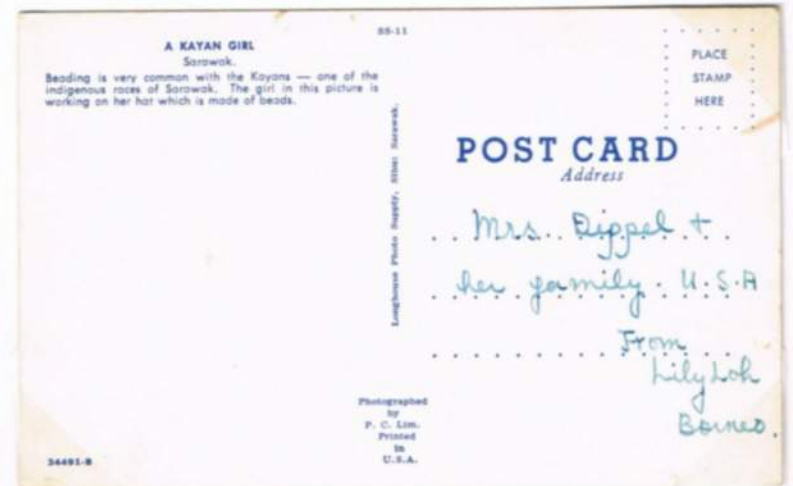
4] The First SS series Cards

The Complete SS series of cards cover a wide range of subjects and extends from SS 1 to at least SS 96 although not all have yet been recorded. In all cases the annotation on the back reads only Sarawak, with no mention of Malaysia, so it might be conjectured that they were initially produced during the colonial era.

Lim Poh Chiang is directly credited for some of these cards, and in all cases they are annotated (Photographed by P. C. Lim. Printed in the USA). SS1 to SS18 are by Lim Poh Chiang and were probably produced by him. A second group SS61 to SS67 are also credited to him.



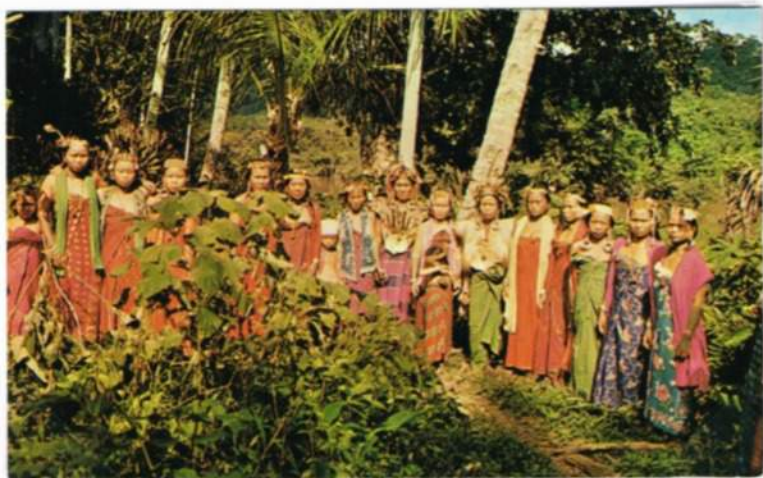
Front of card SS11 showing a Kayan girl working on a beaded hat.



Reverse of card SS11 showing the annotation for P. C. Lim.

The First SS series Cards

These first cards appear to have been taken as original colour photographs, rather than having been coloured from black and white photographs. So far none of the photographs on SS cards have been found as black and white images.



Kayan's celebrating the Harvest Festival at Belaga.

This shows the brightly coloured dresses of the women of the tribe.

Photo by P. C. Lim.
Longhouse Photo Supply, Sibiu.

Card N^o. SS1

The First SS series Cards

Most of the cards in the first group have very similar colour balances; however one or two cards show a distinctly different colour bias which suggests that at some time Lim Poh Chiang used a distinctly different film type.



Card SS10 showing Dayak girls pounding rice in a longhouse: typical colour balance.

Winners of Dayak Beauties (sic) Sarawak

The winners of these Dayak beauties are crowned after their beauty contest. This contest annually held in Sarawak.

Photo by P. C. Lim.
Longhouse Photo Supply, Sibiu.

Card N^o. SS2



Card SS14 with two Dayak girls looking at water lilies: a very strong blue bias to the colour.

5] Later SS series Cards



Dayaks in their traditional dress Sarawak.

One of the subjects has the extensive tattoo's that were typical of the Dayaks until more recently.

Photo by P. C. Lim. Longhouse Photo Supply, Sibü.

Card N^o SS 61

A Dayak Chief Sarawak

A Dayak chief appears in his national costume.

Photo by P. C. Lim. Longhouse Photo Supply, Sibü.

Card N^o SS63



Later SS series Cards



Rice pounding women in Sarawak.

The picture shows hard-working Dayak women pounding rice in the longhouse.

Photo by P. C. Lim. Longhouse Photo Supply, Sibü.

Card N^o SS 65

One of the famous Kenyah dancers in Sarawak.

No additional data is on the card, but it was posted in January 1966

Photo by P. C. Lim. Longhouse Photo Supply, Sibü.

Card N^o SS 67

