

SEA DAYAK CARVING

By E. BANKS.

(PLATES IX — XXII).

The source of the many designs illustrated here is rather obscure but it is believed they were prepared many years ago by the late Rev. E. W. Howell of Simanggang and they have lain in the Museum ever since. They consist of drawings on paper now so fragile that the originals do not lend themselves to direct reproduction: in addition the Museum possesses twenty boards, about two feet long and eight inches broad, on which are carved in relief many patterns identical to those depicted here on paper: they were drawn by a Sea-Dayak, in the Undup River and on account of their similarity to the drawings, are not reproduced here.

Dr. Haddon has recorded elsewhere (Man. 1905 No. 39) that the textile designs of the Iban women are quite distinct from the patterns carved by Iban men on bamboo and wood, the women employing a great many patterns depicting men and animals, as well as flowers, the men keeping to flowers or natural phenomena and avoiding representations of men or animals, very much as do Malays, who are so prevented by religious influences, as the Dayak men certainly are not. In the accompanying drawings animal representations are unusual, save for a few references to caterpillars, one to a centipede and one to a deer's tongue (*dila rusa*—not reproduced here). They therefore bear out Dr. Haddons contention and animal carvings among Sea Dayak men seems to be mainly confined to the Hornbill and the Dragon used in religious festivals, unlike the Kayans, Kenyahs and Kelamats who make frequent use as well of the Dog, the Prawn and other animals in their wood carvings.

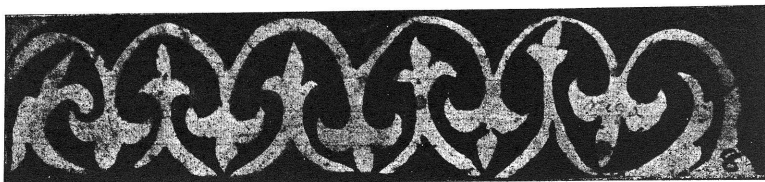
The Sea Dayaks are a very literal sort of people and this is expressed in their carvings as in the rest of their lives. Natural phenomena appear to have caught the eye and in Plate IX are depicted a number of drawings of clouds. Fig. 1 represents no particular conventional design as far as can be ascertained, but in Fig. 2 occur a series of separate, upright and inverted, interlocking "fleur-de-lys", with all that they imply. In Fig. 3, the settled clouds have been truncated and enormously expanded at the expense of the inverted pattern, with which they are now in direct contact and in Fig. 4, the drifting clouds, the modified, once upright, fleur-de-lys patterns have been inclined rightwards

¹Custom has sanctioned the spelling "Dayak" but there is no other support forthcoming for such a misspelling: whether the origin be from the word *daggak*=a fisherman or the more generally accepted *daya*, or *darat*=inland, signifying an inhabitant of the interior, such as *dayaks* are, the vernacular spelling *دایک* seems to clinch the argument, the initial "a" being included rather at the expense of the final one.

to indicate direction. In Fig. 5, the increasing clouds, the fleur-de-lys patterns as they lie on their sides have merely been duplicated to indicate numbers: in Fig. 6, successive clouds, the patterns have been attenuated to portray stringing out in succession. Viewed from an upright position they strongly recall the throat tattoo pattern usual in most Sea Dayaks.



1. Niga, the clouds.



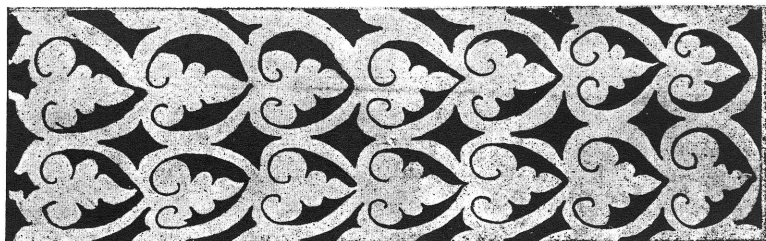
2. Niga, the clouds.



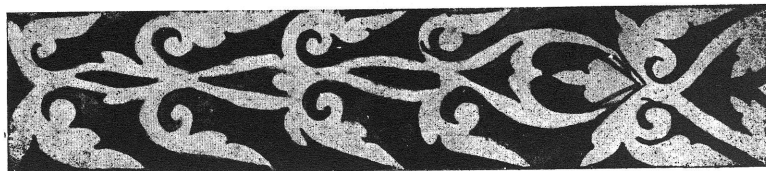
3. Niga Dudok, the settled clouds.



4. Niga Rarat, clouds that drift away.



5. Niga Betankir, clouds that keep increasing.



6. Niga....., clouds that are in succession.

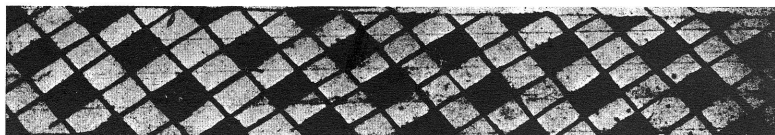
In Plate X are a number of designs, some of which have no more than a mechanical or geometrical basis. Figs. 1—4 are simple patterns of which the first two represent every day objects, whose patterns in design are more or less mechanical, whilst there is more than a possible suspicion that the purely geometrical patterns in Figs. 3 and 4 have suggested the appearance of the natural phenomena whose names they bear. Fig. 5, the cut-off sudap patterns, again suggest a modified fleur-de-lys pattern as in the clouds. In Fig. 6, the sudaps that rest on one another, the crowns are scarcely recognizable and contact has been established between successive upright and inverted stalks, a connection which is broken again in Fig. 7, the single sudaps, wherein the upper and lower fleur-de-lys components of the cut-off sudap pattern in Fig. 5 have been lengthened and spread out until their origin is no longer recognizable, save by tracing the stages through which it has passed.



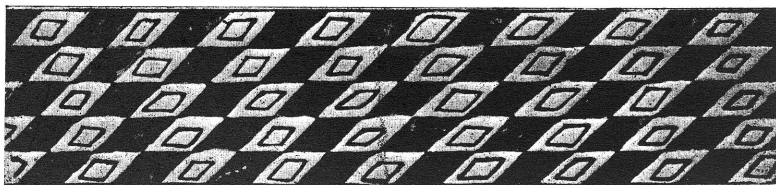
1. Ukir Betali, the rope pattern.



2. Sanggit Dinding, imitating how a partition is tied.



3. Raga Bunut, the diamond-shaped fencing.



4. Buah Angkong, the horse mango.



5. Sudap Kepong, the cut-off sudap pattern.



6. Sudap Panggal, the sudaps that rest on one another.



7. Sudap Tunggal, the single sudap.

The few zoomorphic patterns are shown in Plate XI. Fig. 1 literally and graphically represents a section of a fowl's gizzard with that almost realistic faithfulness that characterizes so many Sea Dayak actions. In Fig. 2 are depicted the legs of the centipede, a beast which on account of its bite causes the Dayak a good deal of concern about the house, the remaining patterns representing variations of the caterpillar design. Fig. 3 is in some ways the most elaborate, Figs. 4 and 5 simplified elongations, Fig. 6 a break up of the pattern rare in Dayak carvings, Figs. 7 and 8 designs scarcely recognizable from the original, save by a comparison of intervening stages.



1. Prut Manok, a fowls stomach.



2. The legs of the Nyembayar centipede.



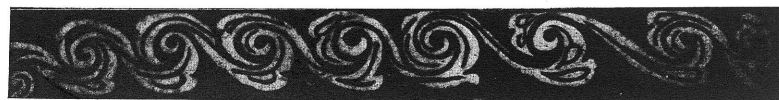
3. Entadu Bendar, the caterpillar.



4. Entadu Bendar, the caterpillar.



5.



6. Entadu Bekait, caterpillars hooked on to one another.

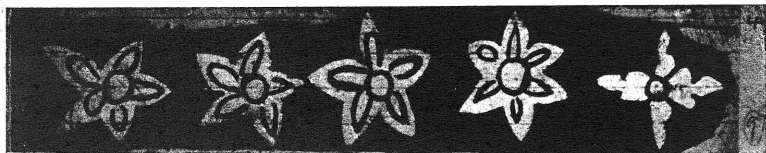


7. Entadu Bunga Trong, the egg plant caterpillar.



8. Entadu Rutus.

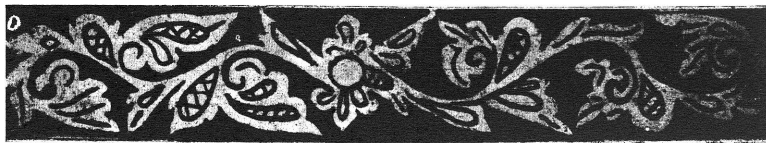
In Plate XII are a number of smaller patterns, Fig 1, star-shaped, representing the flowers of the egg-plant, a design from which the sugar loaf pattern in Fig. 2 can be derived with fair ease. Figs. 3, 4 and 5, the unwavering pattern, is perhaps the commonest among Sea Dayaks and is repeated again in Plate XIV Figs. 5 and 6 and again in Plate XVI, Fig. 2; actually it is almost impossible to see any connection between these many patterns with the same name. The stems of the senggang water-lily in Fig. 7 are also reproduced on Plate XIX but again there is no apparent connection between the two designs.



1. Bunga Trong, flowers of the egg plant.



2. Encherbong, the sugar loaf carving.



3. Buah Sigi or Ukir Bebatang, the unwavering carving



4. Buah Sigi or Ukir Bebatang, the unwavering carving.



5. Buah Sigi or Ukir Bebatang, the unwavering carving.



6. Tambit Ladong, tying up the carriers basket.

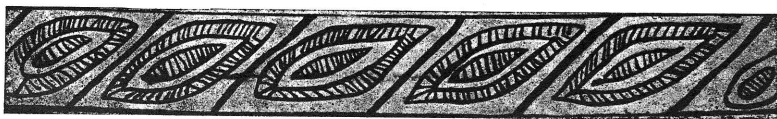


7. Berinka Senggang, the stems of the senggang lily.



8. Buah Genok, the gourd.

On Plate XIII are a number of cross-hatch designs at first very different from all the others. Fig. 2, the orchid leaf, is distinctly original and when held upright the design in Fig. 4, tying up the carrier's basket (as in Plate XII Fig. 6.), is a more or less exact imitation of the interlaced rotan fastening between the two free sides at the back of a normal carrying basket. The flowers of the egg plant in Fig. 5 bear the same name but no other apparent resemblance to the design in Plate XII Fig. 1.



1. Buah Emplanjau, the emplanjau fruit.



2. Daun Rajang, the orchid leaf.



3. Akar or Randau the creeper.



4. Tambit Ladong, tying up the carrier's basket.

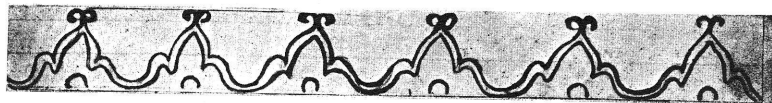


5. Bunga Trong, the flowers of the egg plant.

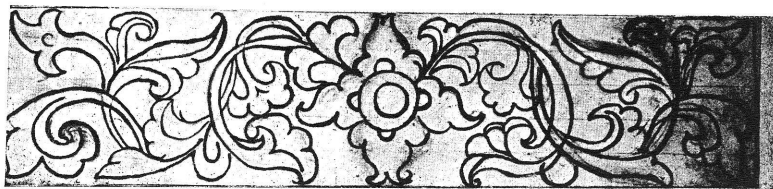
On Plate XIV Fig. 2, represents bamboo shoots, a very common Malay design. Figs. 3 and 4 are remarkably alike, though they bear different titles and so are Figs. 5 and 6, the very common Buah Sigi pattern.



1. Buah Andu, the fruit of the andu creeper.



2. Pemuchok Rebong, bamboo shoots.



3. Tangkai Randau, the fruit stalks of a creeper.



4. Rajang Terberurut, the orchid that hangs down.



5. Buah Sigi or Ukir Bebatang, the unwavering carving.



6. Buah Sigi Beranak, the same with more decorations.

The remaining illustrations show typical meander patterns, whose origin and significance are usually comparatively obscure. On Plate XVI Figs. 1 and 2 show a revival of the fleur-de-lys formerly associated with clouds (Plate IX) but the remaining designs are distinctly allegorical, with little obvious meaning save in the mind of their creator.



1. Randau Anak Dalam, a tiny creeper found in old jungle.



2. Randau Merurut, the creeper that descends.



3. Bunga Apong, nipah palm flowers.



4.





5. Kara Jangkit, the Ficus that spreads far and wide.



6. Ukir Bebatang or Buah Sigi, the single fruit or unwavering carving.



5. Ai Muleh, the backwater or eddy.





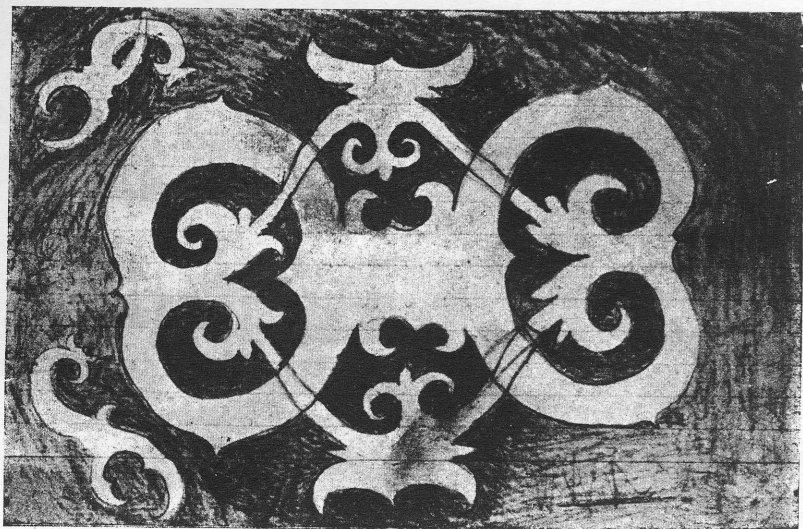
Daun Salambar.



Daun Rajang, the leaf of the orchid.



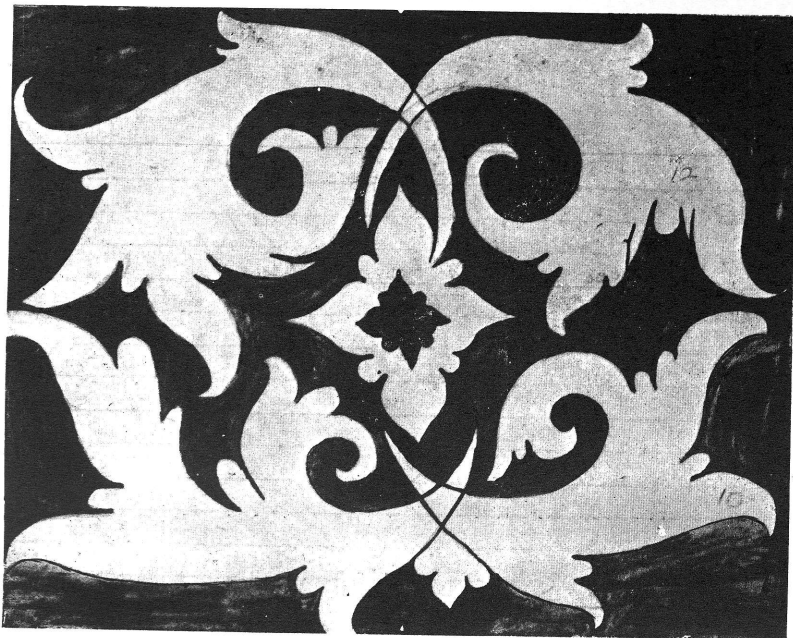
Randau Sa-Lumpong, one piece of a creeper.



Bringka Senggang, the roots or stems of the senggang lily...



Galigas or Buah Slabit, representing how a carrier's basket is plaited.



Tangkai Rambang, Fruit Stalks of the rambang creeper.



Sayap Lelayang, the swallows wings.



Balu Menyagu, the much admired widow.