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HISTORY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY AREA

Historical Background of Old Kampung Tampasak[1]

Kampung Tampasak derived its name from a native tree called *tampasak*. This tree was said to grow most often near the upper reaches of the Tampasak River, a tributary of the Babagon River. The wood of the Tampasak tree was ideal for house pillars, as a matured tree was extremely tall and sturdy.

According to oral tradition, the *Tulu Ragang* (original descendant) pioneers first settled in Kampung Tampasak eight generations ago. Boliking Sabata, a fifth descendant of the *Tulu Ragang* generation, disclosed that his village was established more than 400 years ago, with the blood of his ancestors and their generations. Hence Kampung Tampasak was the abode of his ancestors.[2]

The Physical Setting of the Village

The old Kampung Tampasak was situated at the northern boundary of Babagon in the West Coast district of Penampang. It was inaccessible by vehicles except four-wheel drives. The nearest town was Donggongon, located about 15 km away, whereas the capital city, Kota Kinabalu was about 30 km by road.

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[1] The description here refers to the time when the village was not yet submerged by the Babagon Dam project and the community still not resettled. Information was obtained from articles in the village magazine, *Majalah Kampung Tampasak* vol:001/1996 as well as interviews and personal conversations with members of the village during my fieldwork period.

[2] Insofar as the origin of the village was concerned, I did not come across any existing account or archival document written on it, or any other version other than that of the villagers themselves. This information was translated from the original in the Kadazandusun language.

Houses on the outer part of the village were connected by gravel road to the Penampang-Tambunan trunk road, while the furthest house could only be reached by walking along narrow footpaths. Though remote, the village had a primary school called the Sekolah Kebangsaan Tampasak, Penampang with living quarters for teachers and students, a community hall (*balai-raya*), a chapel, a playing field, a *sepak takraw* court, grazing field, burial ground, and a hanging bridge. These infrastructures were either provided by the government through the Penampang District Office or built by the villagers. A few small stores in the front porch or open space of these houses were meeting points for the elderly women and men especially. Here, many smoking, drinking and chatting sessions were held. Kampung Tampasak also had a weekly open market (*tamu*), often a significant feature in a rural indigenous village. Noodles and other cooked food in plastic bags, handicrafts as well as forest harvest such as ferns, fruits and medicines were regularly found at the *tamu* in Kampung Tampasak.

Kampung Tampasak and its neighbouring village, Kampung Babagon were known for their rivers with clear running water, the Tampasak River and the Babagon River, which the two villagers were respectively named after. These rivers were ideal for relaxation and recreation, a pastime enjoyed by the villagers and outsiders alike. More importantly, since treated piped water and electricity were not available, the villagers relied on the Babagon River and its tributaries to supply them their daily water needs. Some houses, however, had been installed with gravity-source water from small streams. Almost all the houses used candles or kerosene lamps at night except for a few houses that had generators.

The total population of Kampung Tampasak was about 200 persons. Almost all were of the Kadazandusun[3] ethnic group and they had embraced Catholicism. Most of the people were originally from Kampung Tampasak and they were related to each other through family ties or marriage. Their original pattern of settlement had been along or close to the clear-running rivers and streams that abound in the Babagon-Tampasak area. Cultivated farm areas and forests separated the houses, although relatives tended to cluster near to each other (see Plate 1). All, even children, knew their way around the forests and homes of their relatives and neighbours. The forests, then, was an integral part of the community's way of life.

Plate 1
The physical setting of the original village, Kampung Tampasak. *(Photo courtesy of Blasius Soinggan, one of the villagers).*

Traditional Village Economy

The Kampung Tampasak community had a long tradition of swidden cultivation. They had access to land for the growing of hill rice and other food crops. They also had access to rivers and streams, which were important resources of fish and shells.

[3] See Chapter 1 for a description on the origin of the word 'Kadazandusun'.

The villagers depended on the forest for a variety of subsistence needs as well as income particularly from rubber or fruit trees. Smaller animals such as deer, squirrel, and anteater foraged freely in the area, while large animals such as wild boar were found deeper in the forest.

The rural household economy of Kampung Tampasak was based on subsistence rice production, often carried out in swiddens (see Plate 2).

Plate 2
The rural household economy of Kampung Tampasak. This was based on subsistence rice production, often carried out in swiddens. In fact, the vast majority of the villagers were subsistence farmers growing hill rice and other food crops, before their resettlement, while some families cultivated cash crops as well. The resettlement of Kampung Tampasak from the Babagon Dam has given grave implications on the traditional village economy. *(Photo courtesy of Blasius Soinggan).*

In fact, the vast majority of the villagers were subsistence farmers growing hill rice (*mongumo parai tidong*) while three families cultivated wet paddy as well. In swidden rice farming, as was also in most non-rice farming activities, the entire family put in their labour. The men first chose a fallow swidden (*mananga*). When a suitable site was identified, women and children cleared the undergrowth and small

trees (*rumilik*) while men cleared the dense brush and bigger trees (*managad*). This was often carried out from January through March.

After the slash was dried for about three to four months, the field was burned (*monutud*) in July. Meanwhile, the women also planted vegetables and maize (*papasad sayur*). At the end of August, the planting began; the men dibbled holes in the ground (*mangasok*) while the women sowed the rice seeds (*monumpos*). From September to January, women mostly tended to the weeds, planted tapioca and identified good rice seedlings for the next planting season (*gumamas*). Exchange labour groups (*gotong royong*), comprising women and men, often worked together to harvest the rice at around mid January (*mongomot*). Children often tagged along to play in the fields, and helped to collect the harvested stalks during their breaks.

Besides rice, the farmers also planted cash crops like tobacco and rubber in the surrounding land. The fertile places in their backyard were grown with vegetables and other food crops. *Sirih* (betel leaf) plant and fruit trees were cultivated on plots known as *tanah umoon* (*Majalah Kampung Tampasak*, vol:001/1996, p.10). These plots were established under the customary law in relation to land, whereby individuals could claim rights to land they had opened, cultivated or occupied. After a crop was harvested the plot was left fallow for minimally three years to allow the soil to naturally regain its fertility before the plot was used again. This concept of land use and management was recognised in the community.

Their source of protein was mostly derived from their own livestock such as goats, pigs, chickens and ducks. Some families also reared freshwater fish for their dietary protein. Furthermore, the proximity to the Babagon and Tampasak Rivers gave them

access to a rich source of fish, shellfish, shrimps and other aquatic animals (see Plate 3). Most families were also engaged in gathering and hunting for birds and small animals.

Plate 3
Villagers with their catch of the day. The proximity to the Babagon and Tampasak Rivers gave the Kampung Tampasak community access to a rich source of fish, shells, shrimps and other aquatic animals.

Like their ancestors, the people of Kampung Tampasak relied on the land and forests for many of their basic subsistence needs. The forest provided them with edible palms and ferns, fruits, medicines, raw materials for their crafts, wood for building houses and for fuel, and fodder for domestic animals. Many villagers were skilled in making nets, baskets and traps for their farming, fishing, and hunting activities.

The village had one sundry shopkeeper who sold all kinds of things, like candies, groceries, tobacco, medicines, sweets, bottled soft drinks, tinned food and other household necessities. He also owned a van and transported villagers, for a small fee, to and fro, for example to its nearest town, Donggongon. Private vans were also

available, though infrequently. Urban employment was also available for some of the educated villagers who worked in both the private and government sectors. A very small number, mostly men, were transient waged workers in Brunei, Sarawak or Peninsular Malaysia. A fair number, predominantly women, also dabbled in market activity such as selling craft products, vegetables, fruits, *daun sirih* and other farm produce at the *tamu*, or weekly market.

Religion and Traditional Practices

Except for an elderly couple who were animists, most families were Christians. Despite their conversion to Christianity, many families still observed their traditional customs related to birth and death, and animist rituals called *sogit kampong* and *sogit kuburan*, which involved offerings to appease and ward off the village spirits and other spirits of the dead. They also believed in the existence of a supreme deity called *Kinoingan* as well as malevolent spirits that sometimes possessed people or caused illnesses (*rogon*).

Traditional medicine and ritual healing were practiced by a number of skilled women and men, usually the elders, who were called the *bobolian/bobohizan*. Some elders with the foresight to preserve their indigenous knowledge and culture also passed down their skills and knowledge on hunting, swidden agriculture, foraging, and traditional medicine to the younger generation. In the Kadazandusun culture and tradition, women and men have equal access and rights to inherit or learn about the *adat*, or customary laws particularly those associated with hill paddy cultivation and ritual activities.

As with other indigenous groups in Sabah, the people of Kampung Tampasak still maintained much of their community values and practices. Its remoteness had also helped the village to keep many of the traditional practices. For example, the practice of mutual help and co-operation in doing certain tasks known as *gotong royong* was still common. The three practices of *gotong royong* common in Kampung Tampasak were *mokitulung*, *mitabang* and *mokiruyung*.[4]

Mokitulung was mostly sought by families who needed help in the physically heavier tasks such as carrying the harvested rice, carrying house pillars or cementing floors. Whereas backbreaking tasks such as planting, weeding and harvesting rice were usually done using *mitabang*. No cash flowed in the practice of *mokitulung* and *mitabang* since co-operation was customary and was reciprocated by the families involved. Help was usually given to any family who asked and this was often reciprocated. Refusing to offer one's labour especially in rice cultivation, when asked, was considered disrespectful of the custom.

While working, the members often shared about the happenings in the village, gossiped about their relatives and neighbours, or taught the younger helpers to recite Kadazandusun poems and stories. After the work was done, the people shared in the food and drinks provided by the host family. This helped to strengthen social relationships between the families. In contrast, the practice of *mokiruyung* entailed a small payment for the labour offered. Social activities like cleaning the church compound were usually done using this practice.

[4] Taken from "Konsep Gotong-Royong", *Majalah KMPGG*, Vol:02/98.

Today, the importance of these traditional *gotong royong* practices is fading, in particular those that do not have cash incentives such as *mokitulung* and *mitabang*. Furthermore, subsistence-based activities are being replaced with waged economies that thrive on competition and capital, and as a result, people tended to be more individualistic. The change in attitude towards the *adat*, over time, is prevalent among the younger people and those who have moved to Kota Kinabalu and other towns to work or to study. The dissociation from village life is causing them to lose interest as well as familiarity with such practices.

Village Leadership and Power

The remoteness of Kampung Tampasak from the urban centres had kept agriculture as the main subsistence activity of the villagers. There was no rigid system of village administration and governance. The village leadership comprised the Council of Elders, and the members were chosen for their experience and knowledge in the *adat*. The council was responsible for ensuring harmony in the village, resolving village disputes, and passing down the *adat* knowledge to the younger generation, among other roles. Traditional healers and ritual specialists called *bobolian/bobohizan* were also accorded respect. Over time, however, different systems were introduced which changed the traditional fabric of political and community power. Cases in point were the appointment of the village head (*ketua kampung*) by the government, and the creation of the Village Development and Security Committee, or *Jawatankuasa Kemajuan dan Keselamatan Kampung* (JKKK) which became the official liaison between the villagers and the government.

Inside the Household

Kampung Tampasak was a close-knitted community. Family size was relatively large, with an average of six members. Extended households were common, which usually included several generations (grandparents, parents and children) or several nuclear families (married siblings). Men were more often accepted by the community as the head of households, but later, widowed or divorced women were also accepted as the head of their households. Cases of divorce and remarriage were common among the men and women alike. The family and the community were instrumental in passing down the *adat* and traditional practices, including religious and social taboos, sayings, dress, language, and rituals.

Many of the domestic workload was seen as the responsibility of the women, although the men in some households helped to take care of the children, prepared the meals or washed the clothes. A woman's daily activities inside the house included cooking, washing, child rearing, caring for the sick family members and socialising children. In cases where the members were all working, the burden of housework was the responsibility of members whose labour was available. This arrangement also applied to households where all the members were male, such as a widower and his sons, or vice-versa. Decision making on family needs, land use, savings, children's education and marriage was usually decided by the parents or the older members irrespective of sex, whereas matters on the family income, installment purchases and community affairs reflected some level of male authority.

Socio-Economic Background of the Resettlement Site

The Babagon Dam was mooted in the early 1980s. The Sabah State government saw the construction of the dam as a water mitigation measure in the Kota Kinabalu,

Tuaran, Papar and Penampang areas along the West Coast, which were constantly faced with water shortage problems. The surveying of the villagers' land was carried out in mid-1987 through to 1990. The actual construction work on the dam, however, started in 1992. Two years later, in February 1994, the resettlement site was established and the relocation of the first six families from the old Kampung Tampasak undertaken. In November 1994, the Sabah Chief Minister laid the foundation stone of the Babagon Dam. By February 1995, all the affected families were moved out of Kampung Tampasak to the new resettlement site, the present day Kampung Tampasak. The site is a piece of land below the dam site, in the fringes of the old village that the state government had "offered" to the displaced villagers.

The resettlement site (*Penempatan Kampung Tampasak*) is under the jurisdiction of Jetama Sdn. Bhd., the main concessionaire of the Babagon Dam Project. This being so, the resettlement site has no legal entity of its own since it is yet to be gazetted as a village (*Kampung Simpanan*). The data gathered from the household survey conducted at the present day Kampung Tampasak, which is the Phase 1 resettlement site of the community, is given below.

Population

The population of the resettlement in 1997 was 191 persons, of whom 184 (96%) comprised Kadazandusuns and the remaining 7 (4%) comprised Sino-Kadazans, Rungus, Chinese and Filipina. A survey of the 30 families in the resettlement site showed that 19 families (63%) have moved at least once before being relocated to the resettlement site. In most cases, the families moved elsewhere to search for land or work, and to follow their families or relatives. The details of the migration patterns of the respondents' families are found in Appendix 2. Gender distribution is

quite even with male-to-female ratio being 1.04:1. Table 3.1 below details the gender breakdown of the population in the resettlement site.

Table 3.1

Distribution of population in the resettlement site by gender

Male		Female		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
98	51	93	49	191	100

Twenty-nine (31%) out of the total 93 women and 24 (24%) out of the 98 men were found to be unemployed, excluding the non-working children and students. Another 15 women (16%) and 7 men (7%) said that they were farmers. Contrary to the above findings on unemployment, almost all adult members of the village are involved in some form of activities and tasks. However, many of these tasks are often unremunerated. In the case of outside salaried work, men are equally divided between working in the government and private sectors, whereas women are more found in the private sectors.

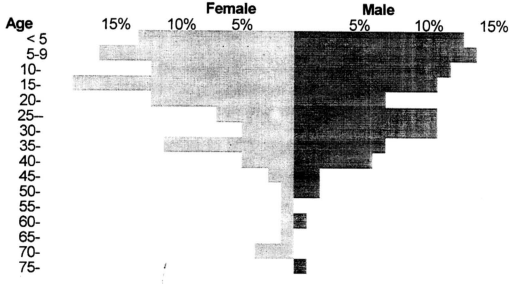
The age composition of the population is characteristic of many rural societies, with 53 per cent below the age of 20. This young age structure implies a high dependency burden upon the population of working age, or productive population. The percentage of those above 64 years old is four per cent for women and one per cent for men.

The population by age-sex profile is shown in Table 3.2 and Figure 3.1 below.

Table 3.2: Age-sex profile of population in the resettlement site

Age groups	Number		Per cent	
(years)	Female	Male	Female	Male
Less than 5	11	13	12	13
5-9	14	14	15	14
10-14	10	12	11	12
15-19	16	11	17	11
20-24	10	7	11	7
25—29	6	11	6	11
30-34	4	11	4	11
35-39	9	7	10	7
40-44	4	6	4	6
45-49	2	2	2	2
50-54	1	2	1	2
55-59	1	-	1	-
60-64	1	1	1	1
65-69	1	-	1	-
70-74	3	-	3	-
75-79	-	1	-	1
Total	93	98	100	100

Figure 3.1
Age-sex profile of population in the resettlement site



Regarding the marital status of the population, 54 of the 93 women (58%) and 70 of the 98 men (71%) were unmarried. Married women accounted slightly higher as compared to the men, that is, 30 women (32%) and 24 men (24%). It is not surprising to find that more women are married or that they marry earlier. Marriage often starts later in life for men whereas women are often expected 'to be married' by a certain age, usually by the age of 20. In fact, in the past, failure to marry and have children meant the end to her generation (*nopunso'*). Thus from one generation to another, parents often mould their daughters from childhood into roles of being good wives and mothers. It is also noteworthy to point out the high rate of remarriage in Kampung Tampasak where the rate of remarriage between women and men is in the ratio of 1:2 with more men married for a second time or more. The rate of remarriage between women and men is in the ratio of 1:2. There are seven women-led families, where four cases are due to divorce and three cases are due to the death of their husbands. In the survey, there are no males in the divorced or widowed categories because they have all remarried (four men).

The literacy level of the community is quite high. At least 64 out of the 93 women (69%) and 78 out of the 98 men (80%) have had some schooling, be it pre-school, adult class, primary, secondary or higher education.

Changes in Religion and Traditional Practices

The community is rather homogenous in their religious belief and is predominantly Catholic Christians. Of the total 191 members, only an elderly couple is still practicing their indigenous religion (*agama asal*). In fact, the woman is a *Bobolian/Bobohizan*, or a ritual specialist. She is also a healer and the villagers have, in the past, sought her help to heal their sickness or ward off evil spirits (*rogon*) that

befall the person. Today, as in the past, she still continues to practice this belief system, and had once told me:

> Customarily, all good and evil spirits reside in the natural environment such as forests, mountains, rivers, caves, or earth beneath. That is why we need to hold ceremonies to appease or ward off these spirits, and why we need spirit mediums.[5]

With strong influences from modern religions such as Christianity, many of the village members are beginning to find such traditional beliefs very separate from their own lives. Some families, however, try to combine traditional beliefs with their Christian beliefs. Most of them are devoted Christians, especially the middle-aged women – if going to church, holding home prayer groups and rosary (devotional prayers) at least once a week, or hanging holy pictures on their walls are yardsticks. Interestingly, many do not know exactly when their conversion to Christianity happened, or by whom, but they are aware that their families have been Christians "for a long time".

A small group of younger members have little appreciation for both the indigenous religion and Christianity. One such person is 31-year old JJ whose Sunday morning activity is watching fellow villagers busy in their preparation for worship. When interviewed, she said that while her husband and her "remained converted because of our families," they have actually stopped going to church because "nothing good comes out of it...we are convinced that if we want to do good, we can do so even without having to go to church." An 18-year old school leaver told me that she joins the weekly rosary sessions because "I follow my mother."

[5] Personal communications with the village *Bobolian/Bobohizan*, 5 February 1998.

Possessions and Ancestral Property

Among indigenous peoples, including the Kampung Tampasak community, both women and men have access to and control over their ancestral property. This is in accordance with the indigenous customary law, or adat, which recognises women's inheritance rights in land and other ancestral property and assets. In Kampung Tampasak, in terms of ancestral possessions and assets by gender, more men possess ancient jars, which were swapped by Chinese traders with the local indigenous communities for rice. Gongs, blowpipes and swords are mostly male inheritance, whereas traditional costume, costume accessories and copper tobacco containers are female inheritance. Women and men jointly own other items such as traditional hill rice seed and traditional medicinal concoctions. Table 3.3 below shows the ownership of household ancestral property by gender.

Table 3.3
Ownership of traditional/ancestral household property by gender
(N = 30 households)

Item	Main use	Households with item		Percentage of ownership by gender		
		No.	Per cent	Female	Male	Joint
Tagong (big gong)	Ceremony	28	93	21	75	4
Tajau (Chinese jar)	Storage/ceremony	26	87	23	62	15
Basket/jar of rice seeds	New planting	26	87	46	42	12
Female costume	Ceremony	23	77	91	9	-
Collection of herbs/medicine	Healing	21	70	33	62	5
Betel chewing box	Storage/brideprice	20	67	95	5	-
Brass-rings for costume	Ceremony	16	53	88	13	-
Male costume	Ceremony	13	43	62	39	-
Blowpipe	Ornament	10	33	10	90	-
Sword	Ornament	8	27	-	100	-
Gandang (drum)	Ceremony	6	20	-	100	-
Sigah (headgear/headcloth)	Ceremony	6	20	17	83	-
Gulintangan (small gong)	Ceremony	4	13	-	100	-
Others (decorative jars)	Storage/ceremony	3	10	33	67	-

Nearly all families own some modern household assets, notably radio, television, refrigerator and cushion set which are bought either by cash or installments by the male members of the families. Only a small number of family own vehicles like cars, vans and motorcycles, as well as generators and chainsaws. Most of these items are under male control. This means that the men are the main purchasers and users of the items. The bicycle is popular with the children, as the sewing machine is with the women. Most families seem to own some savings in the form of share investment. All families, except one, have fans in their houses. All households have a gas stove, a majority of which got it free during their relocation. See table 3.4 below.

Table 3.4
Household Assets Ownership
(N = 30 households)

Item	Households who own item	
	Number	Per cent
Gas Stove	30	100
Fan	29	97
Refrigerator	29	97
Radio	28	93
Television	22	73
Sofa Set	18	60
Bicycle	13	43
Sewing Machine	11	37
Chain Saw	10	33
Van	7	23
Car	6	20
Motorcycle	6	20
Generator	5	17

Land ownership will be dealt with in the section on compensation since some form of compensation was given to the affected families whose lands were acquired by the state government for the dam project.

General Observations of the Resettlement Site

Present day Tampasak is typical of a government resettlement project, where the resettlement site consists of two parallel blocs of wood-and-zinc houses on stilts. Each house has three bedrooms, a kitchen, a bathroom, a hall and verandah. Phase I of the resettlement site has 30 houses. Phase II has an additional 15 houses, which were occupied by the 15 designated families in May 1999.

The resettlement site has amenities such as gravity piped water and electricity supply. Most of the houses own a television and a radio set, but due to poor reception they have not been able to receive any programmes clearly. Yet many households own a television set and other electrical items as a new measurement of one's social standing. Families who own a video player can watch videotapes. One family has subscribed to Astro, a cable service television provided by a private broadcasting station, which boosted the popularity of this house especially during times when certain programmes are 'hot', such as the World Cup France 1998 football matches.

In the past four years, some aspects of the houses have been improved after the families made numerous appeals to the agencies involved in the resettlement project. Examples of the 'successful' demands are the extension of the kitchen, the allocation of a five-acre cemetery bordering the resettlement site, the provision of materials to construct the gravity pipes and the construction of a bitumen approach tar road from the houses to the base of the resettlement site. According to the members of the village organisation, KMPGG, demands that are not yet fulfilled include the provision of a community hall, a playing field and a grazing ground. In addition, the

resettlement site is not yet gazetted as a Reserve Village and thus does not have a village status.

Tired of waiting, some families forked out their own money to 'upgrade' their houses in various forms, such as extending the verandah, replacing the staircase, adding extra rooms, widening the kitchen or installing new features like a store-room, car shed, compound fence or grill gate. Some families have also converted their compound or backyard into food-stalls, storage areas or vegetable gardens.

A temporary pre-school (*tadika*) is managed by the villagers themselves with the support of a non-governmental organisation based in Penampang called the Partners of Community Organisations (PACOS). The pre-school pupils, ranging from ages 4 to 6, are from the Kampung Tampasak resettlement site and the adjacent villages of Kampung Babagon, Kampung Notorus and Kampung Timpoluon. A proper pre-school building-cum-community hall is being constructed in an empty lot between Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the resettlement site. This building is a community initiative with support from the Community Education Programme of PACOS and with funding from the Canada Initiative Fund under the Canadian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur.

During the time when this study was conducted, four families have opened sundry shops in their homes and another two families have eateries in the extended portions of their houses. A few more are keen to dabble in similar enterprises. Some of the younger women are employed in the nearby factory, packaging foodstuff, while those who own vans ply passengers to and from the resettlement and adjacent villages to Penampang.

The housing site, without proper fencing and located near a trunk road, has made movement of large numbers of people relatively easy. In December 1998, eight months after I conducted my second fieldwork in Kampung Tampasak, I went back to the resettlement village. The first striking feature as one entered the resettlement site was that the 'no entry' signpost to the Phase II housing site was removed and the adjoining road between Phase I and Phase II was usable. Following the completion of Phase II, the 15 families had moved in to occupy the houses. The resettlement site seemed 'more populated' with the families now scattered. Other common sights were the children running freely about, groups of women squatting by the roadside to chat or boisterous drinking taking place in one of the houses.

However, several tragic incidences had occurred in the resettlement site. Firstly, in August 1998, a 17-year old boy was killed when he fell from a pick-up truck as it was maneuvering a steep bend. The truck was carrying the boy and a group of villagers returning from the farm.

Secondly, on one November night, a 75-year old widow was brutally strangled and all her cash savings and jewelry were stolen.[6] The murder went unnoticed until the next day; the victim's daughter suspected something was amiss at not seeing her mother opened her sundry shop. Following the murder, many of the families took measures such as fastening grill bars on the windows and doors, checking unfamiliar faces that entered the village, double-locking the doors, and staying indoors after dark. ZM, the victim's daughter lamented:

> For a few months, we lived in fear and great shock over the murder. The killer had smashed open the wooden back door but my mother,

6. The actual amount of cash and jewelry stolen was unknown even to family members, but they suspected the loss was big because the deceased had large savings and cash compensation.

> being deaf, did not hear anything. Who had committed such a brutal act on an old woman? We suspected that the killer was a foreigner because we never hurt our own people this way. This resettlement site is a curse. In our old village, such an incident never happened. Here, strangers can come and go as they like.

Such expression of emotions was understandable, as the murder incident had placed the resettled families in situations of powerlessness and vulnerability to unprecedented forces beyond their control. The experience of insecurity in the new environment due to the open access to outsiders, in addition to the breakdown of traditional social structures and support systems, seemed to have set off racial prejudice as the villagers suspected the culprit to be a foreigner as alleged by the victim's daughter: "We suspected that the killer was a foreigner."

Another change happening in the village was the opening of doors to 'strangers' to reside in the resettlement site through ownership of a house. A case in point was the acquisition by a Chinese man of the house of the former JKKK head when he moved out of the resettlement site. Two families had also rented out their house to outsiders. The increasing numbers of outsiders is worrying to the villagers who see the further disintegration of the old community.

Summary

Before resettlement, the families in Kampung Tampasak practiced swidden cultivation with the growing of hill rice as the main subsistence crop. The rural household economy was also largely based on resources and produce from the land, forests, and rivers. Although the villagers were predominantly Christians, they had retained many of the Kadazandusun practices and customs. The village leadership and power structure was in accordance with their customary law or *adat* and respect

was accorded to the elders, women and men alike, for their skills and knowledge of the *adat*.

Within the family itself, the Kadazandusun *adat* of inheritance accords males and females equal rights of access to land and to inheritance which traditionally consists of Chinese jars, bronze gongs, traditional dress, to name just a few examples. In other words, Kadazandusun women have a right to land and ancestral property. Traditional Kadazandusun society is egalitarian in this respect.

Both women and men participate in swidden agriculture, especially hill paddy cultivation. It is significant to note that Kadazandusun women are, to a large extent, the mainstay in farming and rituals associated with farming. In some household activities, there is no clear division of labour of women and men, as essentially the tasks are performed based on the availability of labour which is gender-neutral. For example, gathering firewood, collecting water and looking for wild vegetables and palm shoots are carried out by both women and men on their way home from the fields. However, cooking, washing, child rearing and caring for the sick seem to be the responsibility of the women, whereas matters related to arranging installment purchases and community affairs are relegated to the men.

Changes in Kampung Tampasak have been brought on by the resettlement and these have important consequences on the community and on women's lives in particular. These changes will be investigated in the next two chapters.