Nicolas Césard, Antonio Guerreiro, and Antonia Soriente (eds.)

Petualangan Unjung dan Mbui Kuvong: Sastra lisan dan Kamus Punan Tuvu' dari Kalimantan. Jakarta: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia and École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2015, 381 pp. [Series Naskah dan Dokumen Nusantara 35.] ISBN 9789799109767 (Indonesia); 9782855391977 (France). Price: IDR 55,000.00 (paperback).

The Punan Tuvu' (Tubu) is a community of former nomadic hunter-gatherers in north Kalimantan, Borneo, upriver (*hulu*) along the Tubu. This Punan linguistic/ethnic group is the largest of the nomadic groups in Kalimantan with about 4,000 people, yet their language is endangered (p. 26).

Antonio Guerreiro, tells in the preface how he initiated the book project in discussions with the École française d'Extrême-Orient. The idea was to build on material from a previous Culture and Conservation project, primarily two publications that never reached a large audience: a dictionary and folk story book compiled by Dollop Mamung, a Punan Tuvu' man (Mamung 1998).

Antonia Soriente and Nicolas Césard, who both have extensive experience researching Borneo languages and communities, were invited to carry out the work and serve as editors. They provided additional documentation, including new recordings. Soriente, working closely with Mamung and in consultation with several local informants, revised the phonology, expanded the dictionary, and revised the oral literature texts.

This publication brings together a Punan Tuvu'-Indonesian dictionary (177 pp.), folk tales known in Punan Tuvu' as *mbui* (100 pp.), and a section about medicinal plants (20 pp.). The latter was compiled by a local expert and lists 44 species with user guidelines. Punan Tuvu' oral literature also consists of songs, epics, and healing ritual texts. The included tales are but a small sample of the recorded corpus that primarily consists of *mbui*. Most recordings are not yet annotated, but exist as a 'digital archive' (pp. 35–6). It would add great value if the recordings and annotations could be accessed online, a common goal in the documentation of endangered languages.

Soriente and Césard have written a comprehensive introduction (pp. 21–45) to the history of the Punan Tuvu', the adaptation to a settled life with farming, and the language situation. They report that the young Punan Tuvu' rarely use their own language, many parents do not speak it to their children, and adults below forty are not fluent in Punan Tuvu'. With such a transmission failure the language is clearly endangered, and a prime motivation behind the publication is the local need for revitalizing resources.

Soriente's general description of the language (pp. 47–62) discusses classification, phonology, and morphology, especially the prefix system. Soriente

follows the Ethnologue classification (North Sarawakan, North Borneo), but suggests that Punan Tuvu' can belong to the Kayan subgroup and points out that Punan Merap should be regarded as a Punan Tuvu' variant. Although brief, the description makes it possible to follow the syntax in the Punan Tuvu' texts. The orthography is practical and based on that of Indonesian. Stress, or glottal stop, is marked with an apostrophe after the last syllable to distinguish between non-homonyms that are otherwise spelled the same.

The folk tales and the medicinal section are presented in Punan Tuvu' and Indonesian on facing pages, benefiting those interested in learning the language. With the aid of the dictionary I can read the vernacular texts thanks to the well-conceived orthography and the carefully edited transcriptions.

The book's title is taken from two characters in the folk tales: Unjung, a brave and independent woman who has various adventures in the forest, and Kuvong, a male, more reckless, hero type. The fables and myths have a moral, they tell of how dependent humans are on the forest and how important each species are. The purpose of the cicada, for instance, is to play noisily so that the plants bear fruits. Animals often interact with each other and with humans as if they are persons. The story of how food came about is a short variant of a widely distributed maiden sacrifice myth, known—for example—as *Ine Pare* in Palu'e (Flores), where I have conducted fieldwork. Based on divination, a maiden is sacrificed by her family. Her blood and body parts are spread and planted in the barren land, so that it will be fertile.

The longer tales provide a window into the worldview of the hunter-gatherers, how they imagine their world, how humans and animals interact. The stories about Unjung's adventures invoke a world of free, egalitarian, independent human beings that roam a vast space. Some of the tales are humorous, exploiting the bodily lower stratum. After Mbui Kuvong learns intercourse from a couple of ferrets he cannot stop making love to his wife Unyu'. She finally gets so fed up that she decides to deceive him. Unyu' fools Mbui Kuvong to chase after her genitals in the river, and his hands get stuck beneath a rock—for fifteen years.

The dictionary has over 3,000 entries. It uses example sentences, but not full sentences for the majority of entries. Subentries are many, including the different forms a word may take, such as the verb form of a noun entry. Numbers in the glossary separate homonyms, instead of making them individual entries. On the other hand, a small amount of words that exist in different pronunciations appear twice as entries, such as the dialectic variation of words beginning with *s* or *c* /tʃ/. I find the dictionary consistent and convenient.

Many of the North Borneo languages have not been documented comprehensively, and publications resulting from the documentation of these languages are rare. Archived collections are not always accessible or used, espe-

cially by the relatively isolated language communities, and a book is still a good and sufficiently lasting way to present results. These facts, and that the forest nomad peoples are less known compared to the larger non-nomadic ethnic groups, make this publication particularly welcome. Dozens of individuals have been involved in the project, but I infer that Mamung and Soriente have carried out the lion's share of the work, followed by Césard. Mamung, it appears to me, should be considered one of the book's main author-editors, along with Soriente who did the bulk of the linguistic work.

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Reference

Mamung, Dollop, (1998) 'Kamus Punan-Indonesia: Bah ngguh Punan Tufu.' Manuscript. Pusat Kebudayaan dan Alam Kalimantan, WWF Indonesia Proyek Kayan Mentarang.