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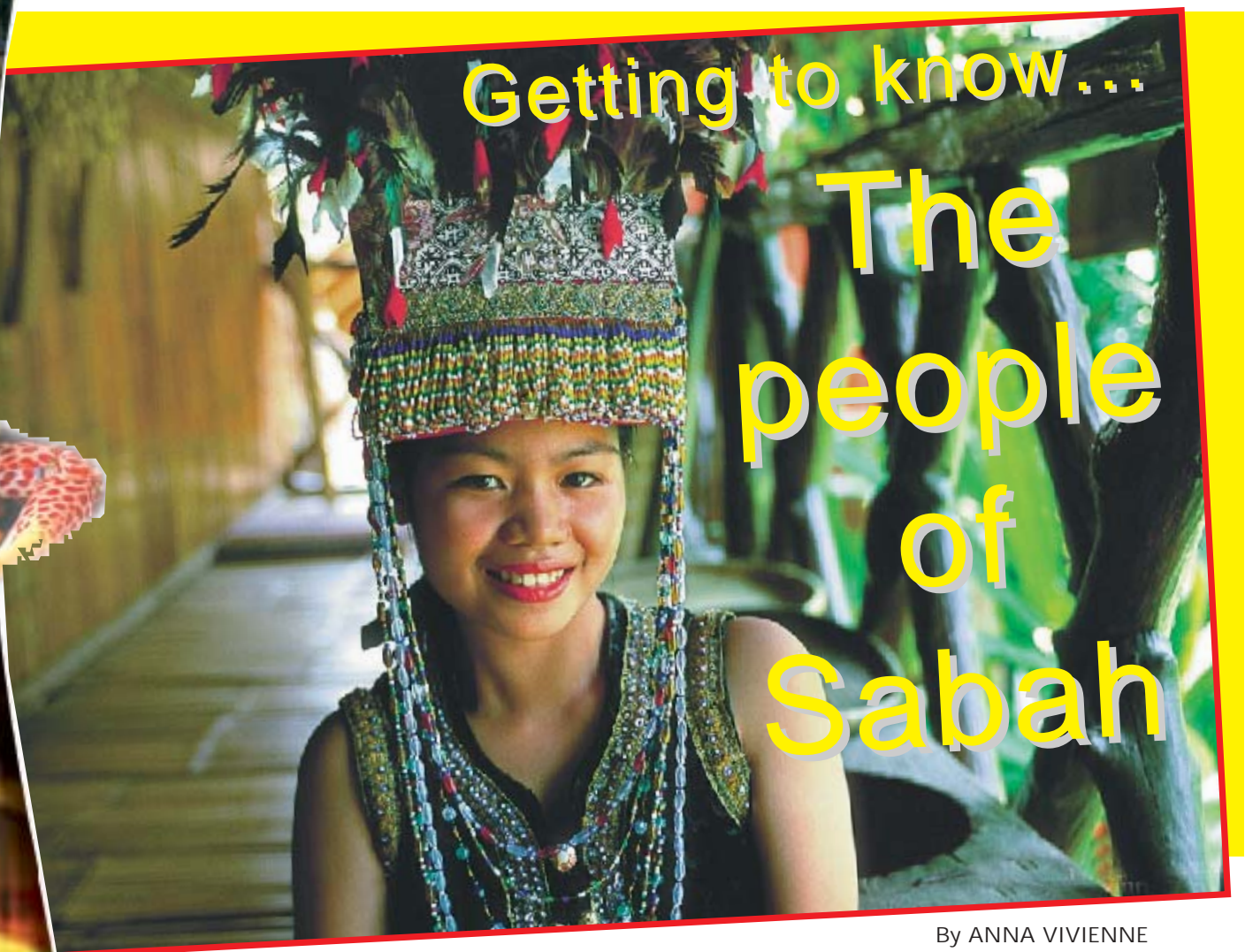
NEW **SABAH TIMES**
Sabah's First Established Paper

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Getting to know...

The people of Sabah



By ANNA VIVIENNE

The population of Sabah, about 2.5 million of them comprises more than 30 ethnic groups, with the largest indigenous group being the Kadazandusuns and the non-indigenous group being the Chinese.

The Kadazandusuns actually comprises of 40 ethnic groups mainly Bonggi, Lundayo, Sukang, Bundu, Makiang, Sungei, Dumpas, Malapi, Tatana, Gana, Mangkaak, Tangara, Garo, Minokok, Tidong, Ida'an, Murut, Tindal, Kadayan, Nabai, Tobilung, Kimaragang, Paitan, Tolinting, Kolobuan, Pingas and Tombonuo. The Kuijau, Rumanau, Tuhawon, Lingkabau, Rungus, Tutung, Liwan, Sinobu, Bisaya, Lobu, Sinorupu, Lotud and Sonsogon are also gathered under the Kadazandusun umbrella.

The language spoken by these various ethnic groups are not similar to one another except for a few words but through intermarriages they can communicate actively. Malay being the national language is spoken across ethnicities.

The Kadazandusuns are well known for their love and passion for wine, music and dance, the latter being an epitome of gentleness with underlying ardour.

Actually the dance belies their nature as they have been known to go to war with as much bloodthirstiness as any warlike tribe. In the olden days the young men's dance was as gentle as their head hunting skills were fierce. If you can talk 'of the record' with elderly people, you will be regaled with fighting prowess of warriors in the past, and how gentle maidens danced to welcome them back with their 'trophies'.

Our visitors may want to get to know the people of Sabah and how to go about meeting them. Actually that is relatively easy.

One of the tribe listed under the Kadazandusun umbrella is the Tombonuo. This tribe lives around Pitas

and Kota Marudu area, in the northern part of Sabah. They are usually farmer, planting catch crops and paddy as well as fruit trees. Their language is akin to the Rungus Dialect but they also understand Dusun of the Bundu-Liwan tongue.

According to Mastupa Pangsanoi, 42, from Kg Sungai Loi, Pitas, the Tombonuo ethnic group are still backward economically and socially.

"It is true that we are developing nowadays and we are happy with the relevant authorities for whatever assistance they have given us. We however hope that the relevant authorities in the tourism industry can help us."

"I am not sure what they can do for us, but we have our dances, our songs and our handicrafts to share with foreign tourists. I have heard of the homestay programme but we do not understand what it is, or what is needed from us to qualify for this programme, so we hope that the authorities concerned can help us."

Mastupa, a Tombonuo Cultural Association (TCA) member, also says that the Tombonuo dance need to be recognised and performed on stage more so that it is recognised by the tourism authority as well as by viewers.

"If a Tombonuo dance can be recognised without being announced (like the Penampang Sumazau or Tambunan sayau), it means that we are already on our way to being recognised and acknowledged by our fellow Kadazandusuns," he shares.

As for their costumes, they have an interesting array of traditional costume. They are all black-based but with colourful piping and linings.

The Kedayans are an ethnic group residing in the Southern part of Sabah mostly Sipitang, Beaufort and Kuala Penyu.

Kedayans are mainly padi farmers or fishermen. They usually live together in clustered villages and are mostly Moslems.

Aduk-Aduk is a ceremonial dance performed by the Kedayan people during holidays, especially at the end of the harvest season.

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