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Gong Beauties of Matunggong

By ANNA VIVIENNE

Tense and nervous, the young ladies paced behind the stage of Kg Sumangkap, Matunggong. Attired in beautiful dresses and adorned with an assortment of jewellerys, they looked like models of some exotic wear. Actually, they were in interesting, exotic garbs. The dresses were beautiful and must have been made by talented hands. The traditional Rungus costume was made into something more interesting by additional adornments like miniature gongs. Some had little golden gongs hanging on their waists, pinned to their shoulders and all over their skirts. The dresses were beautiful but definitely something you can't walk around comfortably in, in town.

Their hair all coifed and lacquered their faces finely made-up; they braved the stage and the crowds. The ladies faces were wreathed in brilliant smiles, although some smiles did not reach their eyes. Most of them were nervous; but who would not be if one was to parade in front of four critical judges. The 10 young ladies were participants of the Beauty Pageant held in conjunction with the Matunggong Gong Festival, Oct 30 and 31.

The young ladies were aged between 16 to mid-20 and came from in and around Matunggong district. As in all beauty contests, the par-



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