

FRIEDRICH SELTMANN

Palang and Pûjâ*)

(An analysis of studies of the use of penis-pins and related paraphernalia in certain Southeast Asian countries and an initial treatment of their former ritualistic use in Java)

Tom HARRISON brought new attention to the subject of the *palang* (penis-pin) through his precise articles (1964 and 1966) which include six illustrations of penis-pins. He focuses upon the usage of the penis-pin still in practice among members of the Kayan people in Borneo. Although scholars were aware of this practice in this area as early as to the middle of the 19th century, study of the subject could not gain the adequate interest warranted by this unique custom, because of the general prudery of the era. With supporting evidence, HARRISON claims that Borneo, Celebes and the Philippines are areas in which these instruments are most commonly found; however, he leaves open whether or not this custom could have been practiced in other locations as well. He then quotes R. H. VAN GULIK 'Sexual Life in Ancient China' (Leiden, 1961), who also described the use of penis bands and rings in his work.

To the known documents before 1850 about the *palang* HARRISON adds important sources of information in connection with the practice in the Philippines. In addition to such renowned authors as PIGAFETTA, PERRY/CANDISH and MORGAN the documents of LOARCA (1582), POVEDANO (1578) and especially the BOXER-Codex (about 1590) are mentioned which added important details to the subject of the *palang*. Among the old texts drawn from by HARRISON the publication of BLAIR/ROBERTSON (1903—1909) and the BOXER-Codex (see: BOXER, 1950, and QUIRINO/GARCIA, 1958) were his primary sources of information.

Furthermore, it should be mentioned that the original text of PIGAFETTA is lost and only four copies in Italian, French and English (2) exist. The Italian copy (not the 'Spanish' one as HARRISON writes; 1964: 168) published in 1800 by AMORETTI differs from the French one. The Italian copy states:

Altre strane e sconce costumanze hanno questi popoli. Vanno ignudi, non altro coprendo che le parti vergognose con un pezzo di tela di palma. Tutti, e grandi e piccoli hanno la verga traforata presso il glande, ove passa un cilindretto d' oro o di stagno, grosso quanto una penna d' occhio, il quale a due capi, or ha una specie di stella a raggi, or un disco simile alla testa di grosso chiodo. Il cilindretto però lascia libero il foro per l' orina. S'è strana era la cosa, che io non potea persuadermene, e assaissime volte volli vederla tanto ne' vecchi come ne' giovani. Mai non si levano nè il cilindro, nè le stelle, e dicono che così vogliono le mogli loro; usando poi cert'arte, perchè ciò non impedisca l'atto della generazione: al che pur

*) I would like to acknowledge the assistance of my friends Barbara HICKMAN and Jerry HICKMAN in translating the original German text.