



Fig. 4: Jacket with designs stitched on using shells (*buri*), showing stylized dragons and curvilinear tendrils and hooks (*karawit/kait*)

bill effigy (*kenyalang*) "is invariably represented with a snake in its claws" (1974: 83–84). The close symbolic link between hawk and hornbill is strikingly demonstrated in Schärer's study of the Ngaju (1963: 37, 76, 90, 92, 109, 143, 144 f., 149, 151).¹² Furthermore, there would also seem to be a symbolic connection between hornbill and leopard. Harrisson indicates that imitation incisor teeth of the clouded leopard or 'tiger-cat

¹² Gill refers to the hawk-hornbill identification among the Kayan-Kenyah as well (1968: 110, 117–118).

teeth' are made by Kenyah and Kayan from the casque of the Helmeted Hornbill, and used by aristocrats as ear decorations (1951: 405, 407–408).

Returning to the dragon motif, what is clear is that it is a common mark of rank, prestige, and power in Borneo.¹³ Even the Berawan of Sarawak who do not have a clearly discernible class structure, but, according to Metcalf, a fairly fluid system of prestige ranking, use the dragon design. Metcalf points to the "water spirit design" which represents "a sort of dragon that lives in the river" and which is employed to decorate the mausoleums of chiefly families (1976: 133). I might add here that the Berawan would seem to be a society transitional between the highly stratified peoples of Central Borneo described above and the egalitarian people such as the Iban. There is some evidence that the Berawan are indeed culturally related to various other Central Borneo stratified peoples including the Kajang-Melanau and Punan Bah and possibly more distantly connected to the Lun Dayeh and Lun Bawang peoples (in earlier literature classified as 'Murut') and the Kelabit. All these groups

¹³ There are numerous examples in Borneo material culture of the *aso* design and related motifs used as a mark of rank, and depicted either independently or linked together with hornbills and human figures and faces. See, for example, the illustrations of an Apo-Kayan chief's apartment door (pl. 54, p. 103 and pl. 55, p. 104) and a knife handle with a 'mythical dog' carved in deer horn (pl. 63, p. 108) in Stöhr (ed.) n.d.; there are beautifully carved *aso* designs on the apartment door of a Mendalam Kayan aristocrat in Nieuwenhuis (1900/I: pl. VIII, opp. p. 45; II: pl. CII, CIII); in Chin (1980: pl. 10.5, p. 81) there is an illustration of a Kenyah wood-carving in the form of a dragon-like dog figure with a leopard, and also a carved wooden table, 'the legs in the form of [a] dragon-like dog figure' (pl. 10.9, p. 82); in *Kalimantan. Mythe en Kunst* there are several examples of Kayan-Kenyah carvings, including *aso* on doors (1973: pl. 20, p. 53; 21, p. 54; 22, p. 55; 23, p. 56); an *aso* design on Kayan barkcloth can be found in Gittinger (1979: pl. 176, p. 224); see also coloured photographs in Wong (1979: 134–135), and examples in Zainie (1969: 22 ff., 30, 42–43, 45–46); Vredendregt too provides examples of Ngaju watersnake and crocodile carvings (1981: figs. 20, 21, pp. 46–47; fig. 45, p. 56). Some truly excellent examples of Kayan-Kenyah work from the upper Mahakam area of Kalimantan can be found in Nieuwenhuis (1925: 66–92).