

Uma Sambop, Belaga, 25th December 2014

Christmas Present for SK Uma Sambop from ITE Batu Lintang lecturer and researcher

For 19 years, Institute of Teacher Education Batu Lintang lecturer Dr.Chong Pek Lin has been documenting the rich music culture of the Kenyah. In addition to a doctoral dissertation under the guidance of the University of Pretoria "*Kenyah Recreational Songs and their significance to Music Education*" she has written three books with transcriptions and translations of Kenyah songs. The third book, *Introduction to Selected Instrumental Ensembles and Folk Songs of East Malaysia* by Chong with colleague Anne Anthony Lajinga was published in 2011 by ITE Batu Lintang . The book and accompanying audio-cd were published using funds from the ISME-Gibson award, which was bestowed on Chong by the International Society for Music Education in 2006.

A substantial number of the songs in the book were sourced from Uma Sambop, a 72- door longhouse in Belaga . As a mark of appreciation to the people of this culturally rich village for sharing their musical heritage, the authors used part of the proceeds from the sale of the book to purchase musical instruments and presented them to the headmaster of SK Uma Sambop, Mr. Apoi Jok Ngerong on Christmas day. Although under the jurisdiction of Belaga, the shortest route to the village is via a 2-hour road journey from Bintulu plus a trek across a suspension bridge spanning the Belaga river. Mr. Apoi plans to use the instruments to start a marching band and expressed hope that the Parent-Teacher Association of the school would pitch in with further assistance. The school would be grateful for help from other interested organisations.



Photo by Paul Chin shows Dr.Chong (second left) handing over melodians and percussion instruments worth RM 910 to Mr. Apoi (headmaster, SK Uma Sambop, far right) during the closing ceremony of the Christmas day inter-block competitions at the longhouse.

A copy of the book *Introduction to Selected Instrumental Ensembles and Folk Songs of East Malaysia* together with an accompanying audio-cd was also donated to the school. The book is on

sale at RM 65 in Miri (Belle's Bookstore and Spring Bookstore) and Kuching (Sarawak Museum Cafe, My Bookstore, Arco Strings and Sarawak Cultural Village).

For Chong, it was a nostalgic reunion with residents of Uma Sambop, especially with Helen Paya Sufen (far left), a talented traditional singer. Besides several individual sojourns to the village, Chong also recalled leading a 15 -member team of lecturers and students from ITE Batu Lintang in January 2008 to experience Kenyah culture and to carry out ethnic music workshops with SK Uma Sambop and SK Long Gang. She also relished the opportunity to savour Christmas celebrations in an Orang Ulu loghouse and to witness the *Ti-Ngadan* (traditional Kenyah naming ceremony for children, held on the 26th of December).



Ti-Ngadan (Kenyah traditional naming ceremony for infants and toddlers) at Uma Sambop 26th December 2014.