

**Short Note**

## **Book Review ‘The Golden Son of The Kadazan’**

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This book is a biography of Datuk Peter J. Mojuntin. It dedicated to the Mojuntin family in tribute to an illustrious son of Sabah whose struggle for human dignity is a source of pride and inspiration. It traces the period before Sabah (British North Borneo) attained its Independence through Malaysia on 16th September 1963, to the era that witnessed the rise and fall of political forces, culminating in Peter’s tragic death on board the Nomad Aircraft on 6th June 1976. Peter was then only 37 years old. Wherever possible attempts have been made to include relevant topics of public interest that occurred during his life. The formation of Political Parties in Sabah preceding Independence; the State and Federal Elections during the post-independence period; the tragic eviction of Singapore from Malaysia on 9th August 1963; the unconstitutional removal of Dato Stephen Kalon Ningkan as Chief Minister of Sarawak in September 1966; the manoeuvres and manipulations engineered to destroy a tyrannical and corrupt regime and the restoration of democracy with the ascendancy of Parti Berjaya.

In writing this book the author has tried to project the cultural heritage of that unique community. The Kadazan Community is perhaps the largest and oldest in the state of Sabah. The origin of the Kadazan race is still obscure although it has been narrowed down to two possible theories. One School of Thought is of the opinion that the Kadazan are descendents of early Chinese settlers, dating back to perhaps several thousand

years. Professor K. G. Tregonning described them as being proud of their Chinese heritage for they 'still wear the queue' and many Chinese customs and usages are part of their culture. The other theory is the concept that the Kadazan originated from the Philippines or around the Borneo Islands. F. G. Whelan called them the 'mild men of Borneo since they all are honest and peace loving'. They are also known to retaliate vehemently if their rights are threatened, and this can be verified from several case histories. The Kadazan and the Muruts are the oldest settlers of Sabah. The Kadazan are by far the overwhelming majority. They are predominantly found in the districts of Penampang, Tuaran, Keningau, Ranau, Tambunan, Kudat, Kuala Penyu and parts of the East Coast. In this book the author has also tried to give a kaleidoscopic view of the Harvest Festival and the socio-economic aspects of the Kadazan Community. It was into this community Simon Peter Joinod Mountin was born on October 10, 1939 in the village of Hungab, in the Penampang district.

In writing this book the author has relied primarily on the correspondence of Datuk Peter J. Mojuntin, on newspaper accounts and on personal interviews. Where facts and details are found to be wanting, the author apologises because of the acute pressure of time in discharging his responsibilities as an elected Member of the Malacca State Legislative Assembly and the separation of 1200 miles from the scene of activity. The author cannot deny that there are others who have made sacrifices and contributed much towards the restoration of democracy in Sabah. Like Datuk Peter, they too deserve mention but it will happen to them at a different place and time in history and others may sing their praises.

The author does not claim that what is presented in this short biography is the complete story of Datuk Peter J. Mojuntin. He hopes others who may attempt to document the achievements of Datuk Peter may include those aspects of his life that have been inadvertently omitted in this book. However, it is a well known fact and none can deny it, that in the political turmoil in Sabah, when no one dared to protest against USNO, Datuk Peter stood resolutely and steadfast, against the tide of oppression, tyranny and corruption. He did not achieve much but he spoke up without fear. In those utterances, he gave his people hope, strength and the courage to withstand the agonies of oppression. His dreams are to preserve and protect the integrity, independence and the Democratic Status of Sabah, bring about a more equitable distribution of wealth and opportunities than those existing in the present system, work with other parties in the Federation to establish an economic order which will give all citizens the right to work and obtain full economic returns for their labour and skill and finally ensure decent living and social security for all.