



## 79. The Manufacture of 'Fuja' in Celebes

Bertild Bekker

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# MAN

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### ORIGINAL ARTICLES

#### THE MANUFACTURE OF 'FUJA' IN CELEBES. *By Mrs. Bertild Bekker. With Plate E*

**79** The remote regions of Central Celebes are inhabited by hill-tribes which, living secluded in the mountains, are least affected by external influences and abide by their old customs and rites, in which they differ greatly from all the other tribes on this island. Also their attire, especially the women's clothes, is entirely different from anything I have seen.

Weaving is not known in these parts and the women make their dresses from *fuja* (bark-cloth) which they make up into a kind of crinoline. Only recently have Chinese traders ventured into this rugged territory, introducing cheap cotton materials, but the women prefer to retain their bark-cloth crinolines.

There are several trees whose bark can be used for making *fuja* but the most suitable is the *capok* tree. First the bark is ripped off in strips and the outer bark put away while the inner bark (bast) is soaked or sometimes boiled to extract the sap (Figs. 1, 2). When the strips have been cooled off they are laid on a plank made of hard wood and resting on two props. The strips are laid side by side (Figs. 3, 4) and beaten slightly until they join to form one piece (Fig. 5); then this large piece is rinsed in clear water, wrapped in a leaf of a fan-palm (Fig. 6) and left for one or two days to ferment, after which the beating process begins.

The most important part in the making of *fuja* is the beating (Figs. 7, 8). This takes place in a special hut outside the natives' homes so that the house spirits will not be disturbed by the noise of pounding. The beating is done first with a club-shaped ebony mallet and then with a stone hammer. The hammers are fastened to rattan handles and are a few inches thick and grooved. The beating must be done with the greatest accuracy, the strokes must be of equal strength and every inch must be covered without ever beating the same area twice in order to keep the material of uniform thickness. When the bast becomes thin and wide, and no more fibre can be seen, the stuff is left to dry in the wind far from the rays of the sun. Before it is quite dry, an extract from some plant is applied to the *fuja* to render it stronger and almost waterproof. The *fuja* will only last a few months, and cannot be washed or mended. The women wear one dress every day until it is torn and ragged, when they make a new one. Only on festive occasions do they wear special dresses.

The beating of *fuja* is hard work. It takes at least a day to finish one yard, and the dresses, which are wide-skirted like crinolines, require several yards. Various dyes are applied to *fuja*; black and brown are most commonly seen, but green and red are also used. All these dyes are obtained from plants and wild fruits found in the jungle. Various ornaments are painted on the *fuja*, especially for festive dresses, and for the head-dresses of prominent men. In former days, when headhunting flourished, the skilled headhunter had painted headdresses; the more heads he took, the more richly was his *fuja* headdress painted, all these designs having a symbolic significance connected with the headhunting.

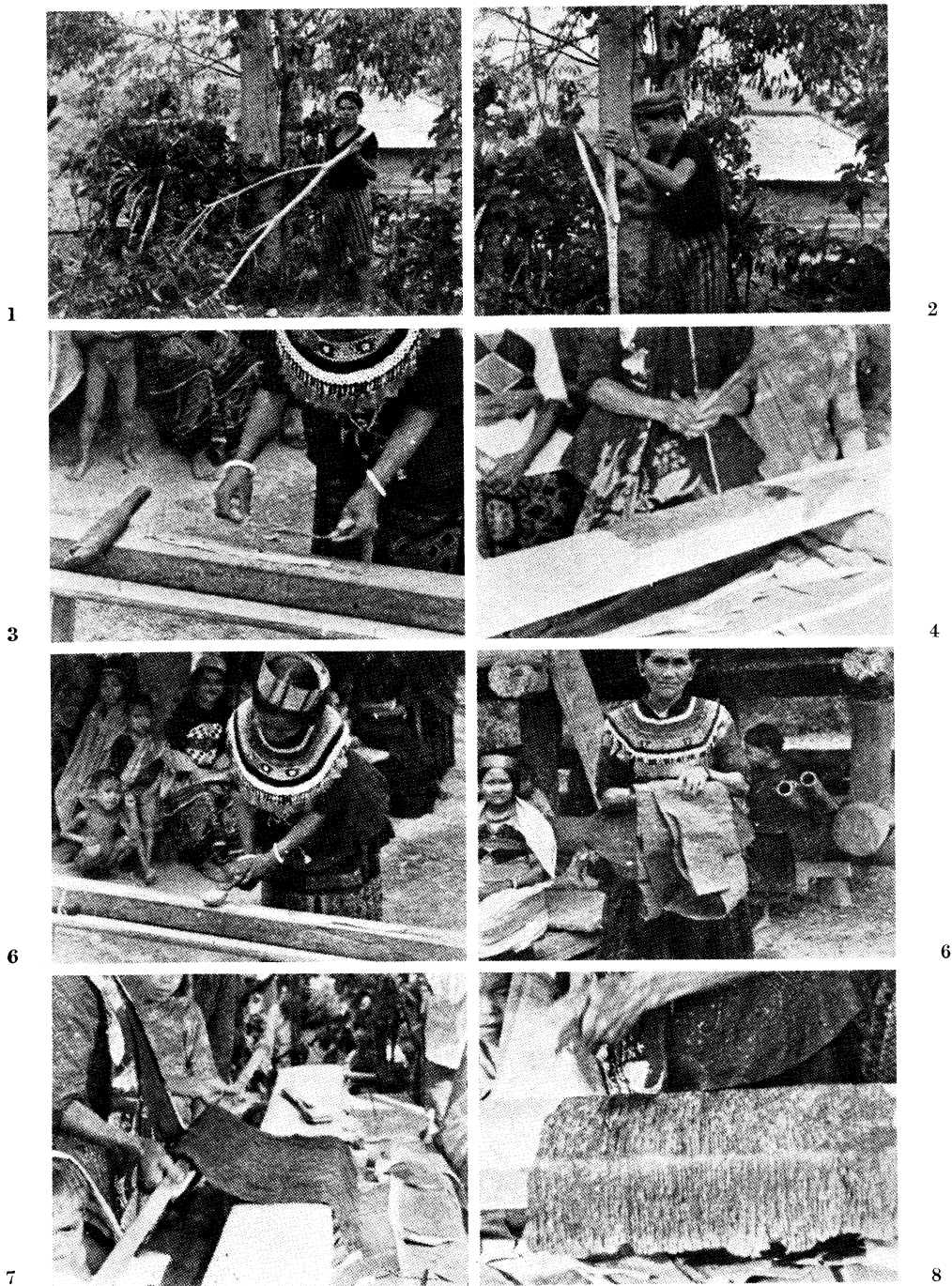
Making *fuja* is an important part of women's work and is done by married women only after the harvest.

#### SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA AND THE WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL AFRICAN INSTITUTE.

*By Professor Daryll Forde, Ph.D., Director of the Institute: abridged from the Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, Vol. 93 (5 Jan., 1945), No. 4682.*

**80** Concern for the social future of the dependent peoples of the world has, in recent years—especially since the political upheaval of the war—spread beyond the limits of the small groups of administrators, scientists and humanitarians hitherto chiefly concerned. However limited may be the immediate

possibilities of undoing the past, there is little doubt that peoples of European stock will never again seek to establish stratified societies in which white aristocracies monopolise political and economic power. In their various ways the colonial powers of the world are groping for the means of transforming imposed



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