

## BOOK REVIEWS

NATIVE LAW IN SABAH AND SARAWAK. By M.B. HOOKER. [Singapore: Malayan Law Journal. 1980. xii+91 pp. S\$15.00]

Legal historians, comparative lawyers and anthropologists, whose fields of study are in South East Asian law have good reason for being appreciative of, and grateful for, the works of M.B. Hooker, Reader in Law at the University of Kent at Canterbury, United Kingdom. His contributions to the analysis of legal pluralism in the post-colonial era and to a realisation of the immense value to a Western lawyer of even a superficial understanding of adat law cannot be overstated. This small volume of ninety pages, inclusive of Appendix and references, maintains the extremely high standard one has come to expect from him. The book comprises a brief history of native law administration and an outline of its sources and substantive principles of family law and land law. An amazing amount of detail is presented clearly and concisely, with reference to the primary sources utilised and further reading suggestions. Emphasis is laid upon demonstrating the degree of integration of native law within the formal legal system, for the author's conclusion is that for native law to continue to play an important and effective role in the rapidly changing economic and social conditions of East Malaysia, integration must be furthered, preferably through the promulgation of a general Native Law Code to be administered by the present court system.

While the subject matter of the book may appear narrow and erudite, readers' interest in it should be wider. The chapter on native law administration provides insight into colonial administration in Northern Borneo and makes useful comparisons with the British practice elsewhere, notably in Burma and India. Finally, the scrutiny of the very concept of native law, as well as of its form and application should provide food for thought to scholars of jurisprudence.

C. M. CHINKIN