

THE DAYAK SELAKO SHAMANS ORAL TRADITION: INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN PEOPLE, CULTURE AND RELIGION

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ABSTRACT

The Dayak Shamans of Western Kalimantan of Borneo mediate between people and the makhluk halus or invisible beings. The makhluk halus who have their well-defined roles live in the sky, earth, water, and other places, with similar needs as humans. Thus, the relations between humans and spirits in the context of traditional beliefs are inseparable. Interestingly, these beliefs are common to both Dayak Selako Shamanism and Kalimantan Islam. The Malay oral tradition has a major influence on the Dayak Selako culture in Western Kalimantan. Both ethnic groups had originated historically from the same roots, but later separated by Islam and Christianity. Thus, irrespective of their affiliations to the major religions of Christianity and Islam, the Dayak Selako Shamanism and the Islamic spiritual healing practiced in Western Kalimantan follow the same oral tradition when conducting spiritual communication and shamanic healing. For the Malays, communication with the spiritual world begins with the recital of the Islamic verses, forming an essential part of the Malay identity. Interestingly, the Dayak Selako Christians use the same verses. We argue that the Dayak Selako Shaman is not only an intermediary between the Dayaks and their spirits but also between the Dayak, Islam, and Christian religions. The mutual values of oral tradition in shamanism of the Dayak Selako and Malays have created a societal structure based on the natural cycle and life pattern.

Keywords: Shamans Oral tradition; The Dayak Selako; Malay; Dayak Culture.

INTRODUCTION

The impact of modernization, especially the presence of various television channels, has shrunk Dayak's oral tradition. The *pantun*, a Malay poetic form of poetry and story-telling culture, has dwindled. Twenty years ago *pantun* was the communication model when a Dayak man wanted to propose to a Dayak lady. The representatives of both men and women would exchange poems in delivering their intentions of the meeting. During that time, the whole wedding event was featured with strong oral tradition. Unfortunately,

we can't find such oral tradition in Dayak weddings today. The only oral tradition that is still maintained today is the Dayak shamanism and its ability to connect the Dayaks with the spiritual world (Effendi, 2009).

It is undeniable that shamans play an important role in society. A shaman's role is not exclusive, which means that people from any ethnicity and religion can access them for healing. Thus the shaman plays a major role in strengthening ethnic relations (Kristianus, 2017). Although modernization impedes the shaman practices, rural societies still believe that shamans possess the ability to heal diseases resulting from the spiritual world. The data shows that in rural areas you can find at least 4 shamans in every village. There were 14 shamans in Selakau (Kristianus, 2011). Their commended ability to treat fractured bones is acknowledged not only by society, but by doctors. Their other capabilities are related to the spiritual world.

Oral traditions practiced by the Dayak's shaman in their healing sessions as well as dealing with the spiritual world are greatly influenced by Malay culture (Hermansyah, 2014b). The word *bismillah* is usually the initial word expressed by the shaman during healing sessions. Meanwhile, for the spiritual and magical world, the Dayaks keep the manuscripts written in Arabic, in addition to memorizing Malay verses. These circumstances are unique given they are Christians. Conflict and ethnic unrest which frequently occurred in West Kalimantan consequently encouraged the Dayaks to relearn magical knowledge, thus enhancing the role of oral tradition itself. Besides the Protestant Christians, Catholics played an important role in oral tradition development. Notwithstanding being Christians which normally goes against the traditional belief, the Dayak continues with their practice of oral tradition. Thus, it is natural for Catholics to practice Christianity in correspondence to their Dayak culture. The process of acculturation happened whereby elements of local culture were incorporated into the Catholic mass (Kristianus, 2017).

Oral tradition in a form of story and non-story inherited from the ancestors of the Dayak for generations. These oral traditions are very important to the Dayak as it reflects the thoughts, attitudes, and behavior of the Dayak. In addition, oral traditions consist of philosophy, ethics, morals, aesthetics, history, custom set of rules, the religious teachings of native Dayak, science and intermediate technology, as well as the people's entertainment. For the Dayaks, oral tradition connects generations of the past, present, and future (Darmadi, 2018).

ORAL TRADITION, CULTURE AND RELIGION

When we discuss oral tradition, the main discussion is the socio-cultural aspects of society. It encompasses the way of life and attitude of society towards education, economies, politics, art, and customs. A preserved culture is a cultural heritage that has been a soul in the society such as feasts, weddings, and other events which involve relatives and the practice of communal help. The Indonesian Dictionary defines sociocultural as a community relationship with culture (KBBI, 2016). This relationship consists of the way of life, customs and others. Idris et al., state that culture covers the way of life of a society, civilization, behavior, and their progression in thoughts (Idris et al., 2019). The way of life includes the ways of thinking, customs, traditions, art, and matters related to their life such as the political, economic, learning ways, and others. Culture is a value and way of life, a combination of two elements, mind (something pure and chaste), and power (capacity, capability, and physical and spiritual strength). The power of physical strength without spiritual strength cannot create a positive and developed nation. Culture is a sign that humans can think, have feelings, and express creatively through various means including oral traditions (Shils, 1971).

The functional theory is a frame of reference for empirical research, which looks at the community as a social institution in status quo, structure human activities based on the norms embraced together and considered valid and binding the role as well as the man himself. The complex nature of the social institution is a social system that is dependent on each section, to the extent changes in one section will influence other sections, which finally influenced the whole system (Zahorka, 2020). The “cultural value system is a set of abstract conceptions of life in the natural mind of a society, about what is considered valuable and important significance, but also about what is considered trivial and worthless in life” (Koentjaraningrat, 2010). In the life of society, this value system is closely related to attitude, both of which determine patterns of human behavior. Value systems are integral parts of moral ethics, which is outlined in its manifestation in social norms, legal systems, and customs of manners which serve as behavioral rules to govern the discipline of community life. Customs establish how societies act in an orderly manner.

Area cultural values are of course particularistic, which is generally accepted within the typical culture of a particular ethnic group. Since childhood, “individuals have been impregnated by the cultural values of its people so that conceptions have been deeply rooted in their minds and it is difficult to be replaced by the values of other cultures in a short time” (Marzali, 2014). Concerning this, in its manifestation, cultural values that reflect specific

stereotypes, such as Javanese people are identified as polite people, act slowly, low profile, soft-spoken, and so on. The specificity of the cultural values of the area and the practical behavior is of course relatively distinct. With the specificity of cultural values of other ethnic groups, it is thus reflected in the oral tradition of those who live in the community.

Oral tradition refers to all forms of heritage and traditions existing in a community group. The delivery of this oral tradition has shaped the oral intercession. It is one way the society conveys oral history, literature, legislation, and other knowledge across generations without a writing system. According to Msiska, oral tradition is one of the ways a person develops itself in the culture. He added that when the speech and discourse take place, this is where people are putting together knowledge and living up to the norms or values in the ethos or aesthetics. Tradition is a cultural space that is the conceived place to learn, behave, and interpret reality rather than inheritance received in the adage, couplets, proverbs, and the art of the teaching of the good life and happy living. Oral tradition is an oral expression and discourse room before being written in the tradition of writing (Msiska et al., 2018).

THE ESSENTIALS OF THE DAYAKS ORAL TRADITION

For the Dayak Selako, day-to-day life is inseparable from their beliefs and practices, especially in areas that require interaction with nature, underlining the spiritual significance attached to nature (Iyon, 2018). The Dayak *religion* teaches that all events whether good or bad, are influenced by external forces. The term *religi* itself originates from the English word religion that has the Latin root word *religare* (bind together) without having the revelation and Kitab Suci understanding (K. Kristianus et al., 2018) because this religi is inherited by their deceased ancestors in the life of a non-literate society, referred to as Traditional Religi, in which the Dayak Selako called it custom. This can be observed in the oral tradition prayer in each ritual event of the *penyanghotn* (imam):

“Bukotnnyo unang i-mantabok i-marompokng adat aturan anyian, io inurunan ampet i ne’ Unte’ i kaimantotn, ne’ ancino i Tanyukng Bungo, ne’ Sarukng i sampuro, ne’ Rapek i sampero’, ne’ Sai i sabako’, ne’ ramotn i saa’u, ne’ ranyoh i gantekng siokng. Angkowolah angkenyo kami anak parucuè make io dah tingor-kamaningor, dah pahiyak dah goehotn kami ihane.”

(It is not merely *adat* (traditional law) and rules as the results of human construction only, but they have been inherited from the ancestor under the one so-called Nek Unte’ who lives in *kaimantotn*, Nek Bancino (the

Chinese ancestor) who lives in Tanyukng Bungo, Nek Sarukng who live in Bukit Sampuro, Nek Rapek who lives in Sungai Sapiro, Nek Sai who lives in Bukit Sabako, Nek Ramotn who lives in Bukit Saba'u, and Nek Ranyoh in Gantekng Siokng. Therefore, the people living after those leaders use what has been inherited throughout generations and take it as the way of life for them).

This Dayak custom consists of rules, norms, and ethics that govern the relationship between humans, nature, and supernature. The traditional *religi* thus forms the suprastructure from which the practices are adapted to suit the environment (Pratama & Nurcahyo, 2019). This adaptation is immediately visible in the forms of prayer or sacrificial offerings (*buis bantotn*), with great emphasis on minute details such as the position of the sacrificed chicken, types of ritual leaves, and sacred sites. True to its name, traditional *religi* or custom is *non proselytizing*, and it is of concern to the individual alone. The cosmos for the Dayak comprises both the mortal and immortal beings constantly interacting with each other. The Dayaks thus co-exist with their neighbors—the Jubato and Awo Pamo (ancestors) in *subayotn*; the harmonious and balanced relationship fostered by the strict adherence of the Dayaks to their *religi*. The *religi* can thus be viewed as a set of unwritten codes that governs the relationship between the mortals and the immortals.

In the Dayak cosmology, the spirits are known as delicate creatures inhabiting the sky, earth, water, and other places with well-defined roles. They live in a world that cannot be seen, yet share the same needs as humans. Thus their niches overlap often, a condition that could lead to conflict in the absence of magical knowledge. It is the magic that helps the Dyak communicate with the spirits and understand them. This is also aligned with Thomson (2000) saying that as repressive ideologies and political systems started to dissolve, many ethnic groups in Asia and elsewhere began to reflect on their distinctive cultural properties to reconnect themselves with their tradition and their cultural roots. This led to a new appreciation and revival of folklore in various fields such as oral traditions, music, and religion.”

The Dayak Selako believe that compliance and faith in the spirits will bring blessings and rewards in various forms, while the wrath of spirits would only bequeath danger and misfortunes. Therefore, man should strive to communicate with spirits through magic. The Dayak Selako magic is acquired through various means such as meditating, dreams, *rajaki* (luck), *baguru* (learning) by oral tradition, and inherited during birth. This magical power can be divided into two: hot and cold. The former could be used to potentially harm other people. Poisons, *dawak*, *spells*, and ghosts are included in this group. Cold magic is used to pre-empt or recover from hot magic and its

influences. Talismans and counterspells are the most popular manifestations of cold magic. An informant narrated an incident about a villager who was a habitual thief. However, he once earned the wrath of a powerful person whose belongings he happened to steal. This resulted in the thief suffering from an enlarged stomach which was cured only after the individual sought forgiveness from all the individuals from whom he had thieved.

The Dayak community's understanding of humans as part of nature is based on the existence of a deep relationship between the two, the signs and omens. This relationship is understood as a form of communication that is described by the myths of oral tradition, which flourished in the lives of this society (Luardini, 2016). Nature communicates with human beings, among others, through signs and Omens. Communication with nature in turn is possible through praxis (real action and awareness), and religious practices. *Jubato* birds such as *Tingkakok* and *Bungkikik* have a profound influence on the fertility status of all beings in the cosmos, for these birds with their unique sound, ensure that all living beings flourish, breed, and continue their lineage. The cattle at home, animals in the river and forests, crops and fruit trees in the farm and forests- they all owe their productivity to the *Jubato* birds. Hence, rituals involving offerings of *Patek* are often organized to honor these birds. The prayer for these birds goes as follows:

(the *Patek* is taken from glass and put in the hand and say the prayer:)

“Au’ unang nyian patek tampi paribaso si ane’ (sebut nama pemilik kurnan) mirikngi’ kito’am badamo Tingkajok burukng Jawo, Bungkikik, burukng matan. Kito’ an dingaso’an dingarap, ingampioh am batimang. Ame kito’ batimang jawi’, batimang jaji ka manosio, jaji ka piarootn, jaji padi ka umo ka tahutn, jaji ka banir buoh. Kurrra’ patek tampi (and the one doing the prayer move up the patek right on the top of the sacrifice).

(this is an overring of *patek*, which comes first from A (please mention the name of the one doing sacrificing) as an *adat* who is sending you all namely *Tingkakok* the Javanese bird, *Bungkikik* the Matan bird. You all hope to support all living beings to grow well, have fruits, and have descendants. It should be successful. Please support the success, human beings have children, animals live well in the jungle and cattle grow well around human beings, *padi* and the trees have their great fruits. Thank you for being with this *patek tampi*).

HINDU-BUDDHIST INFLUENCES

Dayak culture and oral tradition, in general, have been profoundly influenced by Hindu-Buddhist philosophies. The Selako Dayak people believe in the God Jubata, also referred to as Dervata (Baier, 2007). According to Baier, Dervata is the Land Dayak name of a God from the Sanskrit word *dewata* divinity, deity, gods. We may recall that Land Dayaks have a kind of Hindu Trimurti, viz- Tapa or Yang, the Preserver (Vishnu or Dewa-dewa of Hindus), Jirong-Brama, the creator (Brahma of the Hindus), Triyuh-Kamang, the destroyer (Shiva of the Hindus).

The following are the Dayak cultural practices with visible Hindu-Buddhist influences. *Lala'* is abstinence from actions normally considered as good including eating, doing, or saying something. The aim of *Lala'* is to ensure every member in the society is safe from danger, increase strength, or achieve wishes in work. *Lala'* could last for three, seven, 44, or for the rest of the days of one's life as dictated by the local tradition. *Nyangahatn* is an indigenous Dayak prayer that echoes in the form of *nyangahatn* which is a traditional ceremony widely practiced in customary events such as *liatn*, *lala'remah*, *gawe*, *sampore*, and *'mato*. *Nyangahatn* is also performed while narrating the origin of creations. The aim is to offer thanks, guidance, and protection or notification to Jubata, Ne' Panampa, Ne' Daniang, related to work *Nyangahatn* is equipped with a *palantar* (offerings). *Liatn* is Dayak Selako traditional rituals of magical and sacred significance, marked by dance, rhythmic prose, and prayers. The goal of *liatn* is to heal, pay intentions, and others. *Liatn* led by a *liatn* shaman and assisted by a *panyampakng* and some *panyangahatn*.

There are different types of *liatn* such as *liatn daniang*, *liatnnyande*, *liatn bantal* and *liatn kendayan*, categorised on the basis of rhythms, purposes and the words used. Each *liatn* has its own distinct character. For instance, *liatan danian* with Ne Sinede ' and Ne ' Lampede characters. *Liatn* that are categorized on the basis of purposes are: *liatn batama bohol*, *liatn ngaladak buntikng*, *liatn badingin*, and *liatn ngangkat paridup*. *Liatn batama bohol* is a fertility ceremony to ensure child boon, *liatn ngangkat paridup* fixes a failed *patahunan* (expand *liatn ngaladak buntikng*, *liatn badingin* too). Other *liatn* ceremony are *nyangahatn* at the domestic levels such as, *ngantar roba*, *ka' ayutn*, *baramauan ngamok jalu*, *ka' bawakng*, *bajampi*, *ka' Jubata masaka*, *nyangahatn ngago' sumangat*, *notor* (offerings for evil spirits), *ka' dango bonto*, *ngalainse*, *ngungke*, *ka' paramainan*, and *baripakng*. The duration of the ritual varies from one day one night, to three days three nights. The dance and songs featured in *liatn* are unique and often accompanied by musical instruments such as *agukng*, *dau*, and *tuma'* (*gendang*/local music item like a drum).

All those cultural aspects are essentially manifestations of the Dayak understanding of human-nature relationships, influenced by Hindu-Buddhist philosophies. *Nyangahatn* is a form of traditional oral communication with Gods and the world of the spirits, while *Baliatn* is how Dayak people communicate with their ancestral spirits. The Dayaks regard 'death' as a means to return to or unify the human body with the world (*talino*), and the *semangat* or *ayu* (life) with *Subayotn*. Whenever a human has to leave the world, nature communicates to humans through *Tirantokng*, a mythical creature of the jungle. The sound of *Tirantokn* is heard between 22.00-24.00 hours and resembles that of a large saw tearing through a wooden plinth. This sign is interpreted as the cutting of a human body by the ghost foretelling the imminent death of a Dayak in the village or nearby within the next three days.

Another ritual is called *Mura'atn*. It is ritual seeking protection from misfortunes. Omens play an important role in foretelling such misfortunes and Dayaks predict the nature and extent of danger by relating to the time and direction from where the respective bird/animal sound arises. Known by the Dayak term *palangkahan*, such omens help the Dayaks in choosing the accurate time (hour, day) in performing outdoor activities. This understanding is described in the case of *Kulikng Langit*, a character in the myth of humans getting *pelangkahan* from nek Baruang kulup. Another case as an example of a maniamas myth (who lives in oral tradition) that violates suara rasi dari *kijokng* (kijang) – sebuah rasi keras, rasi orang mati berdarah.

The Dayak Salako believe in the cyclicity of life, and death is a temporal point when a human who originated from nature, returns to and blends with nature. Thus, in the Dyak Selako religion, when a human is *momo* ' (dead) she/he has returned to the *binuo* (original place). Therefore, in line with the evolution of human life, humans gradually evolved from life forms that are lower (Iyon, 2018). Dayaks and Malays share many beliefs related to Hinduism, noting that Malays and Dayaks of Serawai in Melawi, offer offerings at ancient Hindu monuments to obtain high padi yields (Sutama et al., 2020).

THE MALAY BASED ORAL TRADITION OF THE DAYAKS

In addition to being influenced by Hindu-Buddhist culture, Dayak religion is also influenced by their interactions with the Malay community. Among them is *Sampore*, a ritual performed to support individuals recovering from broken/sour relationships. *Sampore* is carried out in the event of *lenggang*, *liatn*, *dendo*, *bapipis*, *batampukng*, *tawar* and *babuis* (because *badi* or *jukat*). The form of the ceremony is not derived from the original *Kanayatn*. The ceremony was performed at the time of paying the intention. This activity is similar to *liatn*

but with the Malay variation (Prasojo, 2011).

For the Dayak Selako, an individual is a combination of the four elements: the body, the spirit (soul), feelings, and life. To enable a man to be alive and healthy, all four elements should work in harmony without disturbances. Human beings cannot escape from experiencing misfortune and illness. The Dayaks also believe that accidents, severe diseases, or misfortune are penalties for violation of custom, attacked by ghosts or spells. Illness arises when the individual's spirit is disturbed and if the disturbance is not stopped to let the spirit return to the state of serenity, it would leave the body in pursuit of the afterlife (Chua, 2011).

Spirits are categorized into three viz., water ghost, the ghost of the forest, and the ghosts that live in the air. There are both male and female spirits and they do not disturb people unless they are not well-fed, or are unable to live happily. When disturbed, or unhappy, the spirits could bring illnesses to humans. Besides, there are also supernatural creatures believed to inhabit specific habitats, usually referred to as "*penunggu*". Passing by such *penunggu* without seeking permission from the creatures, or disturbing them could cause illnesses (Chua, 2015).

In their relationship with the extraordinary power, the Dayaks try to be friendly while also trying to master the extraordinary power of magic. The purpose of mastering extraordinary power is for the interests of the community. They believe that the extraordinary power may bring illnesses and at the same time also help heal illnesses, depending on the intention of the beholder. The beholder hence should be adept in communicating with the spirits; the Dayak shamans follow the Malay tradition while communicating with the spirits. A Dayak shaman in Kampong Sasak healing his patient, greeted Nabi Khaidir when using water as his resource. This is understood from the chant below.

Assalamu'alaikum sahibul bahar sahibul basar
Assalamu'alaikum nabi Hedir
Aku mengambil air untuk tepung tawar
Si (mention the name of the patient)
Salam sejahtera atas pemilik laut dan pemilik darat
Salam sejahtera atas Nabi Khaidir
Aku mengambil air untuk tepung tawar
Si (mention the name of the patient)

One of the key characteristics of Islam practiced by the people of the Malay Archipelago is the staunch faith in The Prophet Khaidir. Lathifah states that The Prophet Khaidir was one of the main prophets among the coastal Malays.

Owing to his reputation as the “lord of the water”, he is more popular among Malays inhabiting the coastal region. This belief is also observed in the coastal district of Kendawangan district of Kabupaten Ketapang, West Kalimantan. For the Malay fishermen, it is important to seek permission from Prophet Khaidir with the prayer *Bismillah Assalamu'alaikum nabi Hidir* (Lathifah, 2018). Any catch obtained from the sea without seeking permission of Prophet Khaidir is considered a stolen catch. For this purpose, yellow-stained rice, *pucuk daun Sabah* (*excocaeria cochinchinensis*) flour, whole plant of *Cordyline fruticosa*, rice water, broken rice, and scissors or kitchen knife are used as offerings.

In addition to Prophet Khaidir, the coastal Malay people also recognize other lords of the seas. These lords are the sources of both positive and negative powers, capable of bringing both fortunes as well as misfortune to the fishermen. One such lord is the (ghost of the sea) who has the vast power to either help or destroy the community. The ghost of the sea could help the fishermen identify spots where fish, shrimp, calamari, and other seafood are abundant. The ghost of the ocean may also help to escape from the threat of sea waves. However, the ghost of the sea who is sometimes also referred to as the caretaker of the sea could also send strong winds and waves which the fishermen are afraid of. At times, the caretakers also present themselves in the form of frightening voices. To tame this ghost, the best possible way is to befriend it. Thus, it is common to find fishermen who ‘keep’ the sea ghost in their custody. The custodianship begins with an agreement or a contract established with the caretaker, which is an offering made at specific times. Dayak Selakos of Sepuk Laut holds a ritual known as *kasi makan laut* aimed at placating the caretaker and obtaining an abundant yield from the sea. Failure to organize the rituals would result in loss of lives, frequent storms, and meager catches. Led by the shaman, this ritual is normally held every year around June, when the northern winds are strong. Avoiding misfortunes in the sea also requires the Dayak Selakos to adhere to a strict code of conduct. Petty actions such as whistling would bring forth strong winds, while usage of foul words would result in fishermen returning with empty hands from the sea.

The influence of Malay Islam on Dayaks also extends to the animal world. The crocodile is one such animal that enjoys a unique relationship with the Dayaks. Known as ‘Orang air’ meaning ‘Man of water’ or ‘orang bawah’ ‘meaning man of the underneath’, crocodiles are not just the most feared water animal, but also considered as the twin sibling of the human. It is the responsibility of the Dayaks to maintain a harmonious relationship with the crocodiles, to avoid misfortunes. This belief towards the lord of water, especially the crocodile can bring danger to humans. This is a belief common to the Malays of West

Kalimantan and the Malay archipelago (Noor, 2013). For the indigenous people of Borneo, it is taboo to refer to animals of the jungle by their names. Instead, they use a metaphor to refer to them, as seen in the case of *Orang Bawa*.

Taboos too have an important place in the Dayak belief system. There are temporal taboos, as well as species and habitat taboos that could be either regulatory or connected to access and withdrawal of resources. An expecting mother in her early pregnancy is forbidden to cross the sea, rivers, or streams to prevent miscarriage. The husband of the pregnant woman is also forbidden to cut the head of fresh *tilan* fish (fire eel: *Mastacembelus erythrotaenia*) to avoid the chances of the baby being born with cleft lips. It is also forbidden to boil the *tilan* fish to remove the slime, as it can cause the baby's skin to scald.

The belief in *badi* is common to all communities of the Malay archipelago although there are variations. *Badi* is the curse of killing an animal that is not usually hunted for food. The human thus earns the wrath of the spirit of the killed animal, or its offspring (Irawati, 2019). For example, a father-to-be is forbidden to cut short trees, and the violation will result in the newborn being born with short hands or legs just like the shortened trees. Even though they know the illnesses resulting from the taboo violation, or miscommunication with the spirits can be cured by modern medicine, the Dayak still believe that illnesses are caused by disturbances from the devil, genie, and other spirits. Therefore, during ill health, a Dayak *selako* would consult both a formally trained physician as well as his shaman. Thus for the Dayaks, diseases and disorders require a hybrid healing regime involving both 'modern medicine' as well as shamanic healing. However, some diseases could be cured exclusively by shamanic healing.

Chants recited by the Dayak shamans during shamanic healing indicate that there is a profound influence of the Malay Islamic tradition. For instance, '*beri makan kampung*' is an annual ritual organized every year after the harvest (Oct- Nov), to safeguard the entire village from mishaps and illnesses. During this ritual, the Shamans recite the Arabic prayer of *tolak bala* followed by the following chant:

Asslamu'alaikum datu' Abdul 'Ain
Nang bekuase tujuh lapis langit tujuh lapis bumi
Inilah siade pengasih an anak buah aku
Aku minta' jagekan anak buah aku sekelian nang bahaye minta' tulung selisihkan

(Assalamu'alaikum Datok Abdul "Ain
 The one controlling seven layers of sky and seven layers of earth
 Only this we may provide you
 I ask you to protect me and all people from bad and dangers).

Beri makan kampung ritual is held at the edge of the village and involves prayer and food offerings to presiding supernatural creatures of the village. The ritual food prepared consists of four varieties of rice (white, black, red, and yellow), seven boiled eggs, three combs of *Berangan* bananas, betel nut, palm sugar, kemenyan, scented oil, and bertih (broken rice), served on a banana leaf laid on the earth. Besides, participants also bring other food such as ketupat and pat lau with dishes. In return for the offerings, the supernatural creature would assure the safety of the villagers. After the *tolak bala* prayers are read, there is an elaborate community feast.

Yet another popular belief among Dayaks is the *Semangat*. A person whose soul has left him does not result in death, but only leads to sickness. Thus, the individual is rendered soulless which is tantamount to the state of 'living dead' or '*tidak berghairah*'. Such an individual would have lost all willpower and energy to live. According to Hermansyah, the soul is possessed by humans and enables humans to have the willpower to face the world (Hermansyah, 2014a). Baier states the soul is the 'spirit of life, vitality, soul'. It leaves the body in sleep, and when absent from the body may be seduced or captured by another person; magic is sometimes used to attract and so win a girl's *semangat* (soul) (Baier, 2007).

The *semangat* could be summoned, exorcized, or rejuvenated. A Dayak facing misfortune such as an unexpected illness due to the loss of soul would therefore approach his shaman to have his soul summoned. An informant narrated an incident where he was once overcome by extreme fear to the extent of being incapable of undertaking even the simplest task. He then approached a village shaman who held a ritual to summon his soul by bathing him while chanting the *teriak semangat* mantra: *Bismillahirrahmanirrahim, kerasnya batu kerasnya semangat si* (mention name), *kerasnya besi kerasnya semangat si* (mention name), *ku semangat* (12 times).

The concept of soul is quintessential to the communities of the Malay Archipelago. Conclude that the soul is the core view of the Malays, especially in magic, because the soul is only part of the human element that needs to be observed. For example, it states that *undoubtedly the most important single element in Malay magic, and the most difficult to define because there are so many different opinions as to what it is, is semangat, the vital cosmic force or*

energy which animates all creation.

THE DAYAK SELAKO SHAMANS

The Dayak Selako shamans play the keystone religion in maintaining the aforementioned belief systems in the Dayak society. They acquire the capability of diagnosing and healing through learning and *wereh*. Learning is the process of acquiring knowledge from other 'experts' who possess healing capabilities. Thus, there are both senior as well as junior shamans that lead to a hierarchical order. Village midwives could also perform the roles of shamans, albeit in a junior capacity. However, midwives of the Dayak Selakho community have been able to secure a formal role in recent times by undertaking formal training in 'child card and delivery' from the hospital in Sambas. *Wereh* is to acquire healing power through the supernatural including dreams and visions. Knowledge acquired through *wereh* cannot be taught to others, lest it would be turned useless- this belief also opens up the window for individual shamans to carve their niche, by possessing unique healing powers.

The close relation between the oral tradition in supernatural healing with the local socio-cultural communities can be traced back to the times when the codified religions of Christianity and Islam began spreading in Southeast Asia. These new religions could not be developed unless they have the answer to illness. Southeast Asian communities believed that formidable spiritual powers influence health and disease. The King of Patani accepted Islam after being healed by a Pasai Syekh. Hermansyah reports the role of supernatural healings in the *Islamization* process of the interior regions of West Kalimantan. In the process, traditional beliefs on unseen illnesses are adapted to conform to the Islamic view on genies and devils. Various formulas in Arabic are combined with local formulas to fight and heal illnesses. This phenomenon is observed throughout the Malay archipelago both in Muslim as well as non-Muslim communities (Hermansyah, 2014a).

CONCLUSION

The oral tradition that lives in the Dayak society has a close relation with culture and religions in the society. In the discussed oral tradition, we observed Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic influences. The Arabs with Islamic backgrounds and Europeans with Christianity changed the social institution in Kalimantan. Institutional change thus affects the oral tradition in society. The oral tradition of the Dayak Selako and Malays in Sambas, especially concerning the spiritual world and shaman healing contributed to strengthening both ethnic groups' relationship. The value of local oral tradition is very distinctive, as it has

characteristics that support its culture. The characteristics generally contained moral values and universal philosophies. For that reason, each individual is trying to sustain their oral traditions.

This research covers a limited number of ethnic groups within sub-Dayak and Malay in the region. And therefore, more coverage of the shamanism practices that exist in West Borneo societies is encouraged for further elaboration of the oral tradition, culture, and religion of the Dayak and Malay in the region. This work recommends that further research on the continuities of the tradition in the modern world is needed to better understand the important changing values and behavior of the shamanism, culture, and religion within Dayak and Malay in West Borneo societies.

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