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## Tradition, ritual, and art of the *Baliatn*; The conceptualization of philosophy and the manifestation of spirituality among the Dayak Kanayatn

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# Tradition, ritual, and art of the *Baliatn*

## The conceptualization of philosophy and the manifestation of spirituality among the Dayak Kanayatn

YUDHISTIRA OSCAR OLENDI, JAGAD ADITYA DEWANTARA,  
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### ABSTRACT

Rapid globalization has slowly eroded the survival of the *Baliatn* ritual of the Dayak Kanayatn. Nowadays, the locals only rarely perform this ritual which is a manifestation of their culture. This study describes the *Baliatn* ritual pointing out it is pregnant with the meaningful philosophy of the ancestors. This tradition sets out the relationship between the people and nature; an example of gratitude and spirituality in this modern era. It also discusses the importance of cultural conceptualization through philosophy, art, and spirituality. Importantly, the *Baliatn* is an expression of the Dayak Kanayatn idea of how to live and appreciate life. They believe their closeness to nature allows them to create a harmonious relationship with God. This culture is founded on ancestral traditions, including literature, art, music, and incantations. The writers claim that a good description of the *Baliatn* is essential because it is nearly extinct. They are continuing their research on the *Baliatn* ritual.

### KEYWORDS

Art; *Baliatn*; Dayak Kanayatn; philosophy; spirituality.

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## INTRODUCTION

The *Baliatn* is a traditional ritual of the Kanayatn Dayak of *Kabupaten Landak* in West Kalimantan which is performed to mark special occasions (Clarry Sada, Yabit Alas, and Muhammad Anshari 2019). For example, it can be used to treat an illness, to ease the passing of the deceased, to express gratitude for all they have received, and to supplicate the protection of *Jubata* (God) in the future. *Jubata* is the Lord of Nature and the universe in the Dayak Kanayatn faith and is always ready to lend mankind assistance. The Dayak Kanayatn use the name *Jubata* to refer to God (Maniamas Miden 1999). Performing the *Baliatn* ritual requires various ritual accoutrements among them an *ua'* or swing, *marige* wood, sacrificial animals, meals, and other traditional elements. This ritual has been performed for centuries in West Kalimantan, even before the arrival of the *Binua Dayak*. Despite the ritual's long history, it is rarely performed nowadays. Before the era of the Patih Gumantar Kingdom in the Ne' Sali era, the *Baliatn* ritual was performed in the sub-district Mempawah Hulu or Tunang village, now *Kabupaten Landak* (Apon Angiem 2013). Traditional Dayak Kanayatn musical instruments like *agukng*, *dau*, and *tuma'* are played in the *Baliatn* to accompany to which they are integral. An *agukng* is a Dayak Kanayatn gong. A *dau* is an idiophonic musical instrument which resembles a *bonang* in Javanese gamelan and a *tuma'* is a percussion instrument, played by beating the instrument using both hands.

The main protagonists in the *Baliatn* ritual are the *pamaliatn* or *liatn* priest, the person who comprehends the whole course of the ritual. As it is performed, the *panade'* acts as the *pamaliatn's* assistant when he is in his transcendental state and is also a musician. These two act as mediators who communicate with spirits of the ancestors, conveying people's gratitude for life, health, and their daily bread and entreating the protection of God or *Jubata* in the future. The *pamaliatn* comes from *Desa Bilayuk*, Ne' Maih, *Kabupaten Mempawah Hulu*. As can be inferred from what has just been said, the second in importance is the *panade'* the assistant of the *liatn* priest who sings the ritual songs and acts as the *pamaliatn's* assistant as he communicates with the spirits of the ancestors. Beside answering the *pamaliatn's* questions through the ritual songs, he also prepares all the accoutrements required in the *Baliatn*. The third important group of people are the musicians who consist of an *agukng* (gong) player, a *dau we'nya* player, a *dau naknya* player, and a *gadobokng* player.

Usually, all these rituals are performed over three days. They begin with the stage on which the traditional *Baliatn* musical instruments and ritual accoutrements are laid out in readiness. Once these are ready, the *nyangahatn*, the opening part, can begin with the *nyangahatn* or asking *Jubata's* permission. The *pamaliatn*, *panade'*, and the musicians perform the *Baliatn* ritual for three days. When the *pamaliatn* closes the ritual after his return from the "*Baliatni* world" or from the subconscious to the real world, the *panade'* closes his part, the musicians stop playing and all the traditional set-up and accoutrements lose their spiritual efficacy.

It is important to record the *Baliatn* ritual because this cultural treasure

remains largely unfamiliar to the younger generation, even though this ritual embodies enormous values for its place of origin, Mempawah Hulu, *Kabupaten Landak*. This article is an effort to archive and conserve aspects of Dayak Kanayatn culture like the *Baliatn* ritual, preserving it as national treasure. This study also investigates the philosophy, art, and mysticism enshrined in the *Baliatn* ritual among the Dayak Kanayatn in *Desa Nek Maih*, West Kalimantan (see Map 1). Originally, based on past assumptions, all of versions were considered much the same but more evidence is needed. This is essential not only to the historical study of Dayak arts but also to determine the course which cultural characteristics and Dayak musical forms will take in the future (Alexander Yan Sukanda 2010).



Map 1. Research location in *Desa Nek Maih*. (Created by Yudhistira Oscar Olendo, 2022).

A previous study of the *Baliatn* ritual was conducted by Amir Razak and Ferdinand Ferdinand (2019). They reported that the Dayak Kanayatn musical rhythms were bound up with the lifestyle and customs of the Dayak Kanayatn (Razak and Ferdinand 2019). They recorded that there are various types of *Baliatn* conducted by a *pamaliatn* to treat specific diseases (Razak and Ferdinand 2019). Regina (1997) has described a number of types of *Baliatn* used for medical treatments, they are:

1. *Baliatn Barobat*: to cure diseases
2. *Baliatn Baniat*: an act of gratitude after hopes of a better life have been fulfilled

3. *Baliatn batama' Bohol*: to express a wish to have a child and give birth
4. *Baliatn Tano'*: to pray the safety and health of a baby
5. *Baliatn Narakng*: to pray for the safety of people, houses, and the country
6. *Baliatn Muang sangar*: for forgiving trespasses/sins
7. *Baliatn Ngangkat Paridup*: for hope of an escape from a hard life and a better future to come.

This study focuses on the conceptualization of the philosophy, art, and mysticism of the *Baliatn* ritual. It is still rather limited and a thorough study of the ritual concepts which should uncover more implicit information is still being researched. So far, this sort of research has been very thin on the ground.

#### STORY OF *BALIATN*

The order in which the sections of the *Baliatn* ritual are assembled is dictated by magic, mysticism, and supernatural power. They include (1) the opening rite as the preparation for the main part; (2) the main rite, and (3) the closing rite. This order complies with that stated by various anthropological experts who say that there are always an opening stage, a main stage, and a closing stage in any ritual (Stephanie Morgan and Game Theresia 1992). The *Baliatn* ritual conforms to this with its acknowledgement of magic, mysticism, and supernatural power (M. Ikot Rinding 2006). It is an activity resembling the religious observances performed by a shaman who entreats the help of supernatural powers. A shaman is a person who claims that spirits can possess him or her during a ritual in which he or she supplicates supernatural powers or one in which nature is appreciated and thanked as the source of traditional requirements.

During the performance of the *Baliatn*, a ritual song is sung in which the *pamaliatn* describes the sacred journey and the *panade'* and *pamaliatn* ask and answer questions about the problems in *Baliatn*, for instance, about diseases and also express gratitude to God. The ritual songs sung by the *panade'* are a mixture of magical incantations and spells. Their roots lie in the folk songs and culture of the Dayak Kanayatn. They are restricted to special occasions and are therefore unfamiliar to the general public. Of course, the folk songs, a genre consisting of words and songs, passed down orally to some members of a collective in a traditional form, are familiar to all people (James Danandjaja 2007; Anisa Eka Pratiwi et al. 2018).

These folk songs tell the stories which make up the fabric of *Ne' Baruakng Kulub* folklore, which is a composition of all the oral literature of the Dayak Kanayatn. Their purpose is to make people aware that nature is the source of all fortune and misfortune. It is important to the conservation of nature, ensuring the warding off of any ill effects. Among its many sections is a ritual which could prevent *Ne' Baruakng Kulub* from falling off a cliff (Albert Rufinus et al. 1996). It tells of the exploits and talents of seven *pamaliatn* who were gifted with supernatural powers giving them the ability to treat sufferers; their tasks were always sanctified and completed by *Pamaliatn Maha Sakti*. It is

called *Pamaliatn Maha Sakti* because with his supernatural power the *pamaliatn* is able to cure diseases. The seven *pamaliatn* are:

- 1) *Ne' Si Putih Panara Subayatn* who can reassemble the pieces of the human body;
- 2) *Ne' Petor Batu Buntar Muha* who can restore stability;
- 3) *N' Lidu We' Namputn* who can make somebody breathe again. *Ne' Lidu We' Namputn* comes from *Bawakng*;
- 4) *N' Dendeng We' Angan* who can revive the dead;
- 5) *Ne' Palis* who is gifted with the *Ayu* ability (spirit) – the ability to return the lost spirit to human;
- 6) *Ne' Lantokng Ne' Lede Dalapm Buanatn* who can revive a person's soul;
- 7) *N' Lantokng We' Lana* who can *sukat panyakng* (ease and enable breathing).

These seven *pamaliatn* are completed by the addition of *Pamaliatn Ne' Unte'* of *Tanyukng Bunga*. *Pamaliatn Ne' Unte'* refreshes the whole body of the patient after he or she has been treated by the seven other *pamaliatn*. The treatment by *Ne' Unte'* is symbolized by the scattering of seven rice grains representing the seven other *pamaliatn*, then putting these on the forehead of patient. Rice grains are easily attainable and this is quite a common practice in Dayak Kanayatn tradition.

#### THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND AND THE ART INVOLVED IN THE *BALIATN* RITUAL

During the *Baliatn* ritual, the significance changes from one requirement to the next. For example, the *ngaranto badi* ritual is to determine the unknown cause of a disease. Its purpose is to show that a particular transition takes place when people have to adapt to a new role and integrate into it. Arnold van Gennep, Monika B. Vizedom, and Gabrielle L. Caffee (2013) describe three groups of rites as: (1) Transition rite, which can change a person's social level, (2) Prayer rite which brings a community together to pray, and (3) Personal devotion rite during which a person can make a personal devotion and prays or visits a pilgrimage site. In our case, the *ngaranto badi pamaliatn* ritual can be classified as the first as it involves a transition in the identification of the source of the disease.

However, besides being a transition rite, the *liatn* rite also includes a prayer ritual and a personal devotion ritual. The *pamaliatn, panade'*, musicians, and patient take part in the prayer ritual together. A prayer ritual involves a group of people who pray together for a specific purpose. Personal devotion involves praying for a personal wish, like asking for recovery through the performance of the *liatn* rite.

Music can influence people psychologically. Performing various movements to music can affect a person's emotions as well influencing and controlling emotions to a certain level (Sacks Oliver 2007). Music helps in cases of depression when a person feels that their life is useless. It can encourage people to dance and follow the rhythm. Music plays a larger part than language in the human

brain. Obviously, the traditional music performed in the *Baliatn* ritual produces an audible sound. Sal Murgiyanto (2001) describes this audible musical sound as an essential part in the analysis of performing arts. Music shares meaningful cultural values which relate it to the culture of a community (Rahayu Supanggah 2003). For example, the gong produces a mystical sound, especially when it is played in the *liatn* ritual. The level of the sound has to be normal; not too loud nor not too soft, but moderate. Moreover, the gong or *agukng* is wrapped in a rubber, which serves as a muffler to moderate the sound so as to be in balance with the other musical instruments like the *dau* and the *gadobokng*. Figure 1 shows a picture of musicians as they play the eight *dau* during the ritual. The musicians use a stick as the striking instrument. They are sitting cross-legged on the floor playing enthusiastically.



Figure 1. Two musicians plays eight *dau* and use sticks as the striking instrument. (Photograph by Yudhistira Oscar Olendo, 2020).

Musical instruments like the gong, *dau*, and *gadobokng* are heritage artefacts which are a useful adjunct when describing structure and paradigms. Furthermore, the *agukng*, *gadobokng*, and *dau* are musical instruments which also share in the culture of the ancestors. Nowadays, heritage objects and artefacts passed down from previous generations still influence our attitudes and behaviour (Jakob Sumardjo 2010). Music is a universal human trait. It belongs to all people and knows no hierarchy (Luiz Costa Lima Neto 2011). All musicians are democratic, means that they play the same important role in *Baliatn*.

Costumes are also considered an important adjunct to musicians. An example of the costumes is presented in Figure 2. The costume of the *pamaliatn* includes red items (he wears a red head-cloth and silver bracelets) which match the colour of the stage. He also wears white. Figure 2 shows the *pamaliatn* holding on to a structure for support.



Figure 2. *Pamaliatn* costume which matches the colour of the stage. (Photograph by Yudhistira Oscar Olendo, 2020).

Apparently there are no specific rules about the clothes the musicians wear; they are free to choose. It is a signal that there is no hierarchical structure governing the proceedings. The *pamaliatn*, as the leader of ritual, cannot impose his will on the musicians. Nevertheless, the costume of musicians is an inseparable part of whole musical performance. The pattern and colour of their costumes reflects the meaning of the music. As an illustration, the writers provide a picture of the musicians wearing the *pakis* (the Indonesian for fern) motif on their costumes (Figure 3).



Figure 3. *Pakis* motif on musicians' costumes. (Photograph by Yudhistira Oscar Olendo, 2020).



Figure 3 shows that the musicians in *Baliatn* ritual wearing the *pakis* motif on their sleeveless jackets. The ochre *pakis* motif blends in well with the red which sets it off. The *pakis* motif is also featured on the musicians' headdresses. Ochre yellow is the basic colour of the motif. The musicians can wear the trousers of their choice, as long as these are neat and decent.

*Pakis* is a plant which reproduces by spores. The *pakis* motif symbolizes eternal life (Leonaldy 2015). It is one of various other motifs inspired by nature. For instance, the *kamang* motif. This represents the ancestral spirits of the Dayak people and is used as a motif on loincloths and headdresses. It is also the most usual motif chosen to decorate a Dayak shield. It is believed that, as the guardian of the shield, it can heighten the supernatural power of the people who wear it.

Returning to the role of the musicians, their attitude is highly respectful, showing their appreciation of their instruments. Moving on to the *liatn* rite itself, the musicians who play for this must wear matching costumes but a few differences are allowed. *Dau* musicians are seated cross-legged. The two *dau* musicians sit on the floor with their legs crossed at the ankles and the knees bent outward; in other words, they do not squat. This is a gesture of respect towards and appreciation of the *dau* because this musical instrument is one of vehicles which allows the *pamaliatn* to enter the realm of the spirits. A *dau* melody like *Ka' Bawakng* helps to heighten the aura of mysticism surrounding the ritual. The writers have personally experienced this.

A *gadobokng* musician can either sit on a chair or cross-legged on the floor. When sitting on the chair, he rests the *gadobokng* on both feet, his left arm and elbow holding it steady. He beats the *gadobokng* with his right hand. The right hand is meant to produce the "dum" sound and the left hand produces "pak" sound. The fact that the *gadobokng* musician sits on a chair shows that, like the gong-players, this is a mark of respect for the *gadobokng*. Sitting on a chair like the *gadobokng* and gong musicians shows that these instruments are in balance with each other. Sitting cross-legged like *gadobokng* and *dau* musicians means that their instruments are likewise in harmony.

#### ARTISTIC MEANING AND SYMBOLISM IN DAYAK KANAYATN TRADITIONAL MUSIC

The relationship between a people and their culture is extremely close; people can be called cultural creatures (Efriani Efriani, Donatianus BSE. Praptantya, and Jagad Aditya Dewantara 2020). This is also revealed in people's closeness to ideas, symbols, and virtues (Asep Rudi Casmana et al. 2022; H. Hemafitria and E.O. Octavia 2021). The relationship between people and symbols reveals the ways in which a symbol and its meaning for them affects people. Ideas, feelings, and attitudes are all symbolic expressions. People can appreciate their culture best through the symbols and the values they represent. People can also be called symbolic animals (*Animal simbolicum*). People can see, discover, and learn to know the world directly through symbols (Budiono Herusatoto 2000; Muhammad Jailani, Jagad Aditya Dewantara, and Eka Rahmani 2021; Ryan Taufika et al. 2021). Symbols can be used to represent the relationship between

the Dayak Kanayatn and the real and irreal (supernatural) worlds. A symbol is the expression of an idea with a specific meaning. For the Dayak Kanayatn, symbols describe their concepts of relationships, including those (1) between God and the people, (2) the irreal world and people, (3) between people and people, and (4) the real world and people and these are all translated into Dayak Kanayatn traditional music (Susanne Katherina Langer 1988).

Hence, the proper traditional setting (*sajen*) and music are very important elements in Dayak Kanayatn ceremonies. In the context of the performance, these two are inseparable because they share the same material symbols of appreciation and awe. We hasten to stress that non-material symbols are also invariably present in Dayak Kanayatn traditional music which is played as the channel of communication with the *Awa Pama* or the ancestral spirits and God or *Jubata*. This is encapsulated in an old proverb of the Dayak Kanayatn: “*Nana’ ba musik Jubata bera, nana’ ba pajaji antu bera*” meaning that *Jubata* will be angry if no music is included in the ritual and *Jubata* will also be annoyed if no meal or a proper traditional setting has been prepared (Anika König 2016). A tradition setting needs a great deal of preparation, including the laying out of the religious regalia and supporting accoutrements; in this case with special reference to music (Noerid Haloei Radam 2001).

As mentioned in the explanation above, music and offerings are inseparable elements. The gift of the offerings can include various types of plants and animals. For example, *layang* leaves (*daukng layang*) as this is a wild plant which is very important to the Dayak Kanayatn. These leaves are used to wrap the rice and *kobet* (meal for the ancestors). Nowadays, the Kalimantan forests are under threat and so is the existence of these plants. This means the people are now also in danger.

If the traditional set-up and accompanying accoutrements are incomplete, there can be no traditional ceremony. The faith system of the Dayak Kanayatn enshrines the myths and folklore or *urakng* which tell how the norms and traditions came about. The Dayak Kanayatn firmly believe that myths and symbols recount the life-story of the Dayak Kanayatn from generation to generation (Sumardjo 2010). Returning to the theme of music, all the musical rhythms of the Dayak Kanayatn are grounded in the religious relationship existing between culture, myth, and tradition. The musical rhythms of the Dayak Kanayatn in ceremonies are marked by symbols. These symbols are linked to these names of the various melodies in Dayak Kanayatn traditional music. These symbols are:

1. Purification symbol.

There must be a self-purification before the ritual. The musical symbol of this purification is the *Bagu* melody. *Bagu* is the self-purification of a human. The object of this purification is the human body (physical and spiritual), the various traditional set-ups, and the place in which the ceremony is to be performed. This is a sacred space for humans and a connector to the irreal world. Water is used as the symbol of purification and cleanliness; just as it is used by Muslims before performing their

prayers. Water is also a primary necessity of human life. *Bagu* is the name given to this musical rhythm because it imitates the flowing of a river. Just as India has the Ganges, so the Dayak Kanayatn have the *Bagu* as their place for self purification.

2. Symbolism of a religious journey.

Running parallel to the self-purification in the *Bagu* River is the pilgrimage to Mount *Bawakng*, a mountain the Dayak Kanayatn believe to be the place of origin of their ancestors. Mount *Bawakng* was already considered a sacred place when *Ne' Barukng Kulub* came to Earth and planted paddy for the people (Syam Rufinus 1996). Mount *Bawakng* is also assumed to be the original site of the *Baliatn* ritual, the oldest extant ritual of the Dayak Kanayatn.

3. Symbol of religious relationship.

The relationship between Dayak Kanayatn and *Jubata* is described in terms of faith and religion. A religious relationship is something of an abstraction and hard to grasp as it relates to worship. The Dayak Kanayatn pave the way for spiritual union by using various sacred traditions and music. These symbols provide a pathway to supernatural power. This pattern ties in with the idea of a religious system which needs a symbol created by humans to communicate with the universe (J. van Baal 1988).

In the context of symbols, the Dayak Kanayatn believe the real and unreal worlds are the source and basis of life from which people can obtain great benefit if they manage nature wisely. The Dayak Kanayatn claim that natural objects like stones, wood, bones, and animals can exert a favourable supernatural influence on people. Therefore, when the signs these give are unfavourable, they will postpone their plans. People still believe that nature uses such symbols to hint at the direction their lives should take. These signs can be positive or negative.

There are numerous examples of faith in nature. To give just three examples, the opening a field by observing the weather, stars, flora, and fauna; holding a marriage by taking natural signs into consideration; and the way people are reassured when they find positive signs for making a journey to other places. Of course, the reverse is also true: they cancel these activities when the signs are bad. People still believe that natural signs direct them towards meanings and symbols in their daily lives. These signs or symbols still exist to be interpreted by the community:

(1) Animals: birds, butterflies, deer, snakes, and pigs.

(2) Man-made object: *mangkok merah* (red bowl).

This man-made object refers to a thing made by people with the assistance of the ancestor spirits to communicate about an impending state of war. The meaningfulness of objects or accoutrements in rituals is stressed during ceremonies. After a ceremony, these revert to being ordinary objects, intrinsically returned to the way they were. A good example is the use of a black rooster as the essential sacrificial animal in a ritual. A black rooster is a

suitable offering for the ancestors but it is also an ordinary domestic bird. It shares the same meaning as music in ritual. Music can encompass magical and supernatural power but, when music is played outside a ceremony, its role is as a usual way to entertain people and it is no longer imbued with supernatural power. It is the magical power with which mundane objects and actions are imbued during ceremonies which enables people to communicate with the ancestor spirits. People express their wishes in the ceremony. Nurdien Harry Kistanto (2017) definitions, and theories about the ways of his life, into the conception about culture. Consciousness thus commenced from the gift of reason, his human instincts and feelings, which are not owned by other beings, such as animals. Leslie White (1973) claims that there are several aspects of communication with ancestor spirits in a traditional ceremony. The traditional ceremony and music can merge to form a symbol to communicate with the magical power itself.

(3) Symbols of majesty and greatness.

Majesty and greatness are the true definition of *Jubata*. Through the playing of triumphant, glorious traditional music, *Jubata* is worshipped. There are four types of traditional *Jubata* music: *Jubata Manta*, *Jubata Masak*, *Jubata Babulakng*, and *Jubata Pulakng*. People show their great respect for them in magnificent ceremonies asking for blessings. Their themes are all *Jubata* homage motifs.

(4) Symbols of unity.

Music acts as a symbol of unity for the Dayak Kanayatn. In their traditional music, people are made aware of and learn to comprehend their own musical tradition. Music plays a creative role in the context of family bonds. Music summons up people's awareness of their ancestral heritage. In traditional ceremonies or rituals, ancestor spirits are paid the same respect humans are in the secular world. *Urakng Dayak* (the Dayak) have enshrined the principle of appreciating everybody. For instance, an appreciation of their presence is shown in welcoming guests who are served a meal so they will not be hungry. This is encapsulated in the Dayak proverb "*Jangankan talino, kara' atakng pun kami bare' makan*" meaning as "Not just humans, when monkeys come to us, we also serve them meals".

The Indonesian flag is also a symbol of unity (Iman Pasu Marganda Hadiarto Purba 2017). Physically the flag is composed a stripes of red and white cloth (Martono et al. 2021; Ach Faisol Triwijaya, Yaris Adhial Fajrin, and Arif Prasetyo Wibowo 2020). However, when the red and white are separated, these stripes are just ordinary cloth. Hence, when they are joined to become a flag composed of red and white stripes, it is a national flag and proclaims itself a symbol of unity. This is an analogy to a musical instrument which is played it is meant to be in certain settings. When it is played and produces music, this music becomes a recognized symbol. This underlines that music is a symbol and is part of a philosophy of life of people who accept the music for what it represents - a symbol of unity for them. Musical instruments like the *gadobokng*, *dau*, and *agukng* are played during cultural activities, for

example, at traditional ceremonies and to accompany performing arts. This is a clear statement that music is part and parcel of the culture itself. Tradition is enshrined in music. There is a religious concept which emphasizes three worlds – the Upper World, the Mundane World, and Underworld. This concept of three worlds is a core religious concept which illustrates the relationship between humans and their universe.

Indonesian indigenous beliefs are characterized by a tripartite division: they are the microcosm, macrocosm, and metacosm (Sumardjo 2010). Although something which might relate to the irreal world can a mundane, everyday object but it can be transformed into a spiritual element. Manifesting something “irreal” refers to an action like the prayer *Ka’ Panyugu*. A *panyugu* is a place at which Dayak Kanayatn pray. Something “irreal” relates to a mundane object when it is transformed into a symbol. Material symbols like *sajen* (meals), musical instruments, amulets, and other accoutrements integrate people with the “irreal” object. Material symbols which are used in veneration are often drawn from nature. For instance, the use of *tarap* wood, the sturdy timber which is the link connecting the *pamaliatn* as he swings during the *Baliatn*. *Rinyuakng* leaves or the *andong* plant both act as symbols to ward off evil spirits. Another example is an animal sacrificed in a ritual. In order to keep somebody alive, there must be a sacrifice. This inherited faith lives on in the community, musical instruments, and amulets. The writers have made a deeper investigation into the specific kinds of stones used for amulets and have found that these stones have various particular shapes like a pig’s head. The shape is the crucial factor. As far as the writers have been able to discover, the stones come to the *pamaliatn* as he meditates on a river bank or in the hills. The manifestation of the harmony between people and an irreal element is made even clearer in rituals which reveal the deeper meanings of the symbols. These symbols are then transferred to the traditional musical instruments or patterns of behaviour in traditional ceremonies.

It is not important to relate the empirical properties of traditional objects, all the emphasis is placed on their spiritual relationship and value. One example of a mimetic symbol which is important to the Dayak Kanayatn is the *pantak* (Figure 4). A *pantak* is a figure of an ancient hero carved from ironwood (*ulin* wood). *Ulin* wood is an indigenous timber used for house construction and has a certain aesthetic quality. It is also insect- and temperature-resistant and has unique woody smell. The *pantak* statues are of a human figure, complete with eyes, nose, feet, and hands. A *pantak* is widely acknowledged to be a religious image. The making of a *pantak* is strongly bound up with the faith of the Dayak Kanayatn. Prayers or *nyangahatn* are another form of the relationship between the Dayak Kanayatn and God but this can also be present in natural resources. Even though an earlier *pantak* is now no more than an empty statue, it still represents the form of the ancestral spirit inside it. A *pantak* also acts as an outward and visible connector between the people and their ancestors.



Figure 4. A *pantak* is a statue embodying an ancestor carved from *ulin* wood. (Photograph by Yudhistira Oscar Olendo, 2020).

A *pantak* acts as a protector of the borders of a village and therefore it is believed to prevent diseases. In its empirical and ordinary form, a *pantak* is unimportant. However, its symbolic value is high but it is not as pregnant with symbolism as water. Water symbolizes the source of life and must be consumed on any essential occasion; hence, people consider water holy and it plays a key role in communications with *Jubata*. Water is not only a source of life, it also has a religious aspect as a symbol of the purity of the soul and of physical forms of human life.

#### PHILOSOPHY BEHIND DAYAK KANAYATN TRADITIONAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

The social life of the Dayak Kanayatn is based firmly on their own life principles. This is summed up as *Adil Ka' Talino*, *Bacuramin Ka' Saruga*, *Basengat Ka' Jubata* (Rinding 2006). This philosophy is divided into three meaningful parts:

- (1) *Adil Ka' Talino*: means we have to be fair to others (*talino*). It emphasizes the value of being fair to all individuals or groups in their society.
- (2) *Bacuramin Ka' Saruga*: refers to the ideal which urges people to try to replicate heaven (*saruga*) in their lives. This means they should strive to spread kindness to make human life as much like that in heaven as possible.
- (3) *Basengat Ka' Jubata*: means that during their lives (*sengat*) people should rely entirely on *Jubata*.

The principal idea in Dayak Kanayatn philosophy is integrated into traditional ceremonies, law, and the arts. Everything is focused on justice

(*Adil Ka' Talino*), kindness (*Bacuramin Ka' Saruga*), and a reliance on God (*Basengat Ka' Jubata*). The material symbolism in Dayak Kanayatn music is expressed through the playing of musical instruments. Although these musical instruments have different shapes, all involve circles in their structures. The circle is a reference to the symbolism of the Three Worlds in Dayak Kanayatn faith and religious representations of birth, life, and death. These have the same relationship to each other as that between the melody, rhythm, and harmony in Dayak Kanayatn traditional music (Olendo 2020b).

Figures 5-7 are drawings of how the philosophical concepts of the Dayak Kanayatn are expressed in the shapes of their musical instruments.

1) *Dau* (Figure 5)

The first circle of a *dau*, the *bunjaj* or knob, is located on the top where it represents the Upper World. The *bunjaj* is the uppermost point of the *dau* and is the place on which it is struck (*penjolan*). The second circle is located in the middle. This symbolizes the existence of the Middle or human world. The bottom circle represents the Underworld.

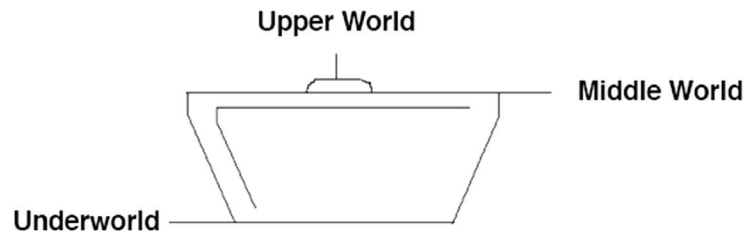


Figure 5. The three circles on a *dau* show the parts of the instrument and the worlds they represent. (Created by Yudhistira Oscar Olendo, 2021).

As said, there are three worlds in Dayak Kanayatn religious concepts and these are also related to animals and natural surroundings. Subterranean and aquatic animals represent the Underworld. Human beings, terrestrial animals, and plants are the living creatures which represent the Middle World. The Upper World is symbolized by the *enggang* (hornbill) and other species of birds. All three worlds need such a connector, both abstract and real. Prescribed actions and accoutrements are the supporting elements in every successful effort in life. People need percussion instruments (Middle World) to help them produce music. The sound of a musical instrument must be produced accurately so as to elicit a beautiful sound and induce proper religious behaviour to maximize its effect. The harmony between religious behaviour and the life system of people is crucial. The idea is that all Dayak Kanayatn should try to replicate the magnanimity of God. This is neatly summed up in the Dayak Kanayatn proverb "*Bacuramin Ka' Saruga*", which means Reflecting Heaven.

2) *Agukng* (Figure 6)

The *agukng* or gong is one of the traditional music instrument played to accompany ritual songs. It has a strong relationship with supernatural power. A musical instrument like the gong “involves supernatural power and influence, to affect something, to change mind or emotion” (Morgan and Game 1992). Morgan dan Game have called the gong as “a powerful musical instrument which has supernatural power”. Furthermore, below is the interview with Mr Sambutok, an *agukng* musician which was conducted on Thursday, 8 October 2020, in the front garden in which the *Baliatn* took place.

*Agukng nian memang barang nana' idup, tapi aya' gunanya. Kade' nana' ada agukng nana' sampe'a manusia bisa baromong man na' enek nya doho' ia. Koalah kade' diri' nabah agukng nian duduk pun ame sambarangan, ame paha diangkat.*

A gong (*agukng*) is not a living creature but it does play a crucial role. If there is no gong, it is quite impossible to communicate with our ancestors. Moreover, we have to be careful about how we sit, observing prohibitions such as the way we lift our thigh on the chair.

The three circles on an *agukng* are replicated in the number of three *agukng*. These are the large *agukng* (the *kanayatn*) which represents the Upper World; the *katuku*, the medium-sized instrument, which stands for the Middle World and the smallest, the *katukeng*, the Underworld (Miden 1997). Through its resonant sound, the *agukng* bestows majesty and greatness of character as it plays the basic beat in Dayak Kanayatn traditional music. When transferred to real life, the *agukng* shares the same religious ideas about life principles. In this instance, the *katuku* represents the people living in this world. The *katuku* has no literal meaning but also refers to patterns of worshipful behaviour. Worship and striving/making an effort which are the way people think about and comprehend the natural phenomenon given by *Jubata*.

The *katukeng* symbolizes the Underworld as a place of ghosts. This world definitely has a relationship to the human world. People and ghosts share the same generation as told in *Ne' Baruakng Kulub*. In this piece of folklore, *Ne' Baruakng Kulub* is the bringer of the paddy-seed to Earth. People believe that there would be no rice without the intervention of *Ne' Baruakng Kulub*. This folk story contains a character who passed away because he fell off a cliff but was cured by a performance of the *Baliatn* ritual.

This snippet of folklore shows people that the *Baliatn* is the oldest and most distinctive ritual of the Dayak Kanayatn (Rufinus 1996). In the context of the *Baliatn* there is a *pamaliatn* who leads the ritual and invites ghosts from Underworld to help him accomplish the healing. The relationship between the *pamaliatn* and the Underworld is revealed in the structure of the *katukeng* musical instrument. This is also played to prevent evil spirits from disturbing the ritual.



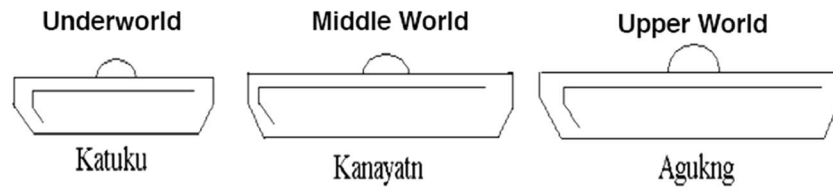


Figure 6. The name of three worlds above three *agukng* musical instruments. (Created by Yudhistira Oscar Olendo, 2021).

Figure 6 illustrates the three worlds of the *agukng* consisting of the *katuku*, *kanayatn*, and *agukng*. These three worlds represent the Upper World, Middle World, and Underworld.

3) *The gadobokng* (Figure 7)

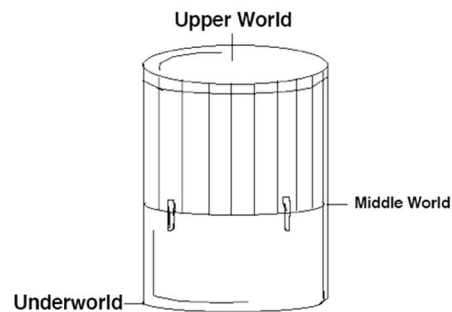


Figure 7. The three circles on a *gadobokng* which explain the three parts and the three worlds. (Created by Yudhistira Oscar Olendo, 2021).

Like the other percussion instruments, the *gadobokng* is played with a stick. All musical performances follow the *gadobokng* which sets the standard for harmonization, underlining the importance of tradition and harmony in society. The upper part of *gadobokng* is a circle as a symbol of the Upper World and represents tradition itself. The middle circle is the Middle World which can transform people's lives along the same lines as tradition. The resonance of the struck membrane produces the sound of the *gadobokng*. The bottom circle symbolizes the Underworld and refers to social norms in society. It represents communalism, respect, and family bonds. Calm and peace indicate the presence of social support.

After looking at the Dayak Kanayatn musical instruments from a philosophical point of view, it is clear that all these instruments are divided into three sections representing the three worlds. The Upper World is symbolized by the *agukng*, the Middle World by the *dau*, and the Underworld by the *gadobokng*. The Upper World is the realm of religious values which govern the relationship between the people and God or *Jubata*. When this relationship is examined from the point of view of traditional law and people's behaviour, it is revealed that this takes

place in the Underworld. The sound produced refers to the initiation of a musical performance, for instance, when striking the musical instrument and singing a song. If this human intervention does not take place, the musical instrument is simply an object and is unable to make music. The harmonization of musical behaviour and the production of sound by the musical instrument make music. In this context, music does not merely connect the notes and produce a harmony, it also becomes the embodiment of the tradition. The harmonization of the musical instrument, musical skill, and the philosophical comprehension of music as a representation of the concept of the three worlds blend to produce Dayak Kanayatn musical rhythm.

The influence of music helps the Dayak Kanayatn to strengthen their religious convictions. Dayak Kanayatn music covers the symbols, functions, and values of the people. The new era of rapid technological advances has meant that the new pop culture is also gradually pushing the Dayak Kanayatn towards abandoning their culture and ritual. There is a very real danger that the *Baliatn* will slowly but surely lose its value and purpose. This encroachment is already affecting the existence of this ritual. People now are already less knowledgeable about it. Although in some regions in West Kalimantan the *Baliatn* is still observed and performed, people are far less aware of the true value and meaning of the ritual. This is a supreme irony because the *Baliatn* acts as a knowledge reservoir and protector of the social norms which support the development of culture. Traditional cultural values are on the decrease and this poses a threat to the existence of the *Baliatn*. This music is slowly being replaced by pop culture which does little if anything to support the cultural development of the people. The gradual extinction of traditional ceremonies and rituals means the extinction of the identity and cultural development of the people. There is a very real danger that the Dayak Kanayatn will lose their identity when they lose the *Baliatn*.

#### CONCEPTUALIZATION OF DAYAK KANAYATN TRADITIONAL MUSIC IN THE *BALIATN* RITUAL

The *Baliatn* ritual is divided into three sections: the opening, the main part, and the closing stage. The opening part of the process is the preparatory stage. The main process is the part in which the objectives of the *Baliatn* ritual are achieved and the closing part rounds it all off. Observation has revealed that the musicians play music based on the striking rhythms. The *pamaliatn* adapts his dancing and singing of ritual songs to the music which plays an absolutely vital role in the *Baliatn* ritual.

In opening stage, the music is supplementary to the process, its purpose is to accompany the chants sung by the *pamaliatn* and *panade'*. It also signals the moment at which the *pamaliatn* attains his transcendental state. Music is also played to accompany the ritual dance of the *pamaliatn* as he leads the ritual and becomes the communicator between the people and the ancestors.

Below is the interview with the *pamaliatn* about the music to which he listened in the *Baliatn* ritual, recorded during a break on Thursday, 8 October 2020.

*Asa ku dangar bunyi agukng, dau, man gadobokng koa, tamulih lain parasaku, nyappppp, rasa tatidur tapi sadar. Katelekatn di'ku sigala awa Pama, sigala na ene' diri' de'e, sigala na' panunggu bukit Samabue, riuh-riuh rami batamu man aku ...*

When I listen to the sounds of the gong, dau and gadobokng, I feel different, (*nyappppp*). It is as if I fall asleep but am still conscious. I am aware that the spirits who are the guardians of the people, our ancestors, the guardians of Mount Samabue, are delighted to meet me ...

Mount Samabue is strongly believed to be the original place of Dayak Kanayatn. In this folklore, Dayak Kanayatn stayed at this mountain because the area was close to the river stream and the forest. In addition, there was a *bujakng nyangko* (a young man) from Samabue that was known as a knight. His role was to rule the land and to expand his area as well as the community. In the present time, Samabue is a common word in *Baliatn* to ask permission or ask blessing, as it is the original place of Dayak Kanayatn.

In the main section of the *Baliatn* ritual, the role of the music is to announce the point at which the *pamaliatn* enters a transcendental state because:

- 1) This music is an intrinsic part of the *pamaliatn's* ritual condition and has a definite effect on his transition into a transcendental state.
- 2) Music in this context already involves mystical elements.

Quite apart from these religious attributes, the *agukng*, *gadobokng*, and *dau* are also ordinary, everyday musical instrument with a conventional function. Their supernatural aspect is assumed only at sacred moments. This supernatural power is bestowed because the *pamaliatn* has requested this in his ritual chants. This also applies to the *agukng*, *gadobokng*, and *dau* whenever they accompany any ritual. In the main part of the *Baliatn* ritual, the rhythm played by these instruments is called *ka' bawakng*. This is an absolute requirement in order to maximize the *pamaliatn's* condition as he awaits his passage into a transcendental state. For example, the *ka' bawakng* rhythm is also supposed to accompany the main section of the the *Liatn* rite, where it is not changed to the *ne' unte* striking motif in the ritual.

In the *Baliatn* ritual, the *adobokng* and *tuma'* share the same basic nature. They are both fashioned from *nangka* (jackfruit) wood (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*) which it grows in the tropical Kalimantan forests. It is often also used for making furniture as well as musical instruments. The reason for using jackfruit wood is because it is easy to work and and it has a beautiful grain. Besides this wood, the other essential material for making musical instruments is deer skin which is used to produce sound of the drums. Deer are well-known game animals. As well as its skin, its antlers are used to make the grip of the *mandau*, the traditional Dayak machete. There is a prohibition on hunting these animals but exemptions are given for traditional uses like making the membranes of musical instrument.

*BALIATN* RITUAL PROCESS1. *NGANTAT SALAPA*

The *Baliatn* begins with the people expressing their wish to perform the ritual before bringing the *salapa* to the *pamaliatn*. The *salapa* is a copper box used as a container for the ingredients to make betel quids (*menyirih*). When it is brought to the *pamaliatn* the ingredients include:

- (1) A piece of slaked lime
- (2) A piece of *gambir*
- (3) 7 plugs of tobacco
- (4) 7 pieces of betel-nut
- (5) 7 rolled cigarettes and 7 unrolled cigarettes
- (6) 7 *karake'* (betel-leaves)
- (7) 75,000 Rupiah
- (8) *Lepet baras* (a pinch of rice)

The *salapa* has to be presented directly to the *pamaliatn* by the person who has requested that the *Baliatn* ritual be performed (Figure 8).



Figure 8. *Ngantat salapa* presented to the *pamaliatn*. (Photograph by Yudhistira Oscar Olendo, 2020).

After the *pamaliatn* has accepted the *salapa*, he has to check its contents. By doing so, he assures himself that these are correct and complete. When the *pamaliatn* is satisfied that everything is in order, he *nyangahatn* (gives a blessing) on the *salapa*. After this, the *pamaliatn* takes a pinch of rice grains which he throws away. This is the sign that the *pamaliatn* is ready to perform the ritual and for the ritual meals to be presented to other attendees to express respect and gratitude. He then makes a quid of the betel-leaves, betel-nut, and *gambir* to chew (*menyirih*). After the *pamaliatn* has chewed the betel-quid he indicates that the *salapa* has been accepted and the ritual can be performed.

## 2. BABIBIS

The *babibis* is the opening ritual during which the space in which the central ritual is to take place is cleaned and prepared. The *babibis* performed on this occasion consisted of *bapadah* (announcing this news), *bakahula* (retelling what happened during ritual), and *bapinta'* (asking the ancestors for protection). The *pamaliatn* then began the *babibis* when he *nyangahatn* (giving a blessing).

As required by custom, the *pamaliatn* took an unblemished rooster (*manok laki tapi ngaranyo*), that is one which has no imperfections and has all its tail feathers. It has to be perfect as it is meant to be a sacred gift to the ancestors. The *pamaliatn* then held the rooster with both hands on the rooster's feet and wings. He recited the incantation (*nyangahatn*) while shaking its wing (Figure 9).



Figure 9. *Pamaliatn* performs *nyangahatn* as he shakes a rooster's wing. (Photograph by Yudhistira Oscar Olendo, 2020).

After this, the *pamaliatn* cut the rooster's throat so as to collect its blood. Its feathers then plucked and had to be cleaned before boiling the carcass without salt. The boiled chicken meat is believed to be the appropriate opening gift for the ancestors. It is thought that it delights the ancestors who have first taste of it.

As can be seen in Figure 10, the accoutrements and materials for this procession were:

- (1) Two small jars (*tapayatn enek*) about 20-30 cm high, used in this ritual for *buah tanga* and *siton kumakng*. *Buah tanga* and *siton kumakng* are the name of two *tapayatn* (jars). These two *tapayatn* then closed with a *lagor* (a seal) made of *penekng unyit* (rice flour, turmeric mixed with a little water). The *penekng unyit* acted as a neutralizer. The relationship between the ingredients in the meal and nature are specifically mirrored in the turmeric which acts as the representative of nature and neutralizer in the ritual.
- (2) Soaked basil stems.
- (3) *Daukng riyuakng* (*andong* leaves). The *rinyuakng* or *andong* is an ornamental plant from Southeast Asia and Australasia with the scientific name

*Cordyline fruticosa*. This is a medicinal plant used in preparations to cure stomach ache, hemoptysis, gingivitis, bruises, and asthma. The writers assume that as it has been empirically proven to be the medicinal plant as it an obligatory attribute in the meal.



Figure 10. Properties: Two jars, soaked basil stems, and *daukng rinyuakng*. (Photograph by Yudhistira Oscar Olendo, 2020).

- (4) After cleaning the rooster, the *pamaliatn* proceeded to the *panyugu* (ritual location) and *ngalantekatn baras* (scattered the rice) around it (Figure 11). This was rice on which a spell had been blessed (*sangahatn*) in the earlier part of the procession.



Figure 11. The *pamaliatn ngalantekatn baras* in the *Baliatn* ritual setting and checks the readiness of the location. (Photograph by Yudhistira Oscar Olendo, 2020).

### 3. MASANG BUAH TANGA'

*Masang buah tanga'* is a ritual held to ensure that it will be *jukat* (free from distractions) during the *Baliatn* ritual. The ritual of *masang buah tanga'* was performed by a man called the *panyangahatn* (Figure 12).



Figure 12. *Panyangahatn* performing *nyangahatn* for *masang buah tanga'* accompanied by the *pamaliatn*. (Photograph by Yudhistira Oscar Olendo, 2020).

The accoutrements for this ritual are:

- 1) A *tapayan* containing *rinjuang* leaves, as it is believed that these leaves will ward off evil spirits and act as a neutralizer.
- 2) A bowl of the basil plant which has been immersed in water.
- 3) A plate of:
  - (1) Four white *kue tumpi'* (a sort of cake) stacked with four pieces of *poe* (*lemang*). *Tumpi'* and *poe'* indicate there is a great willingness to perform the ritual. The *tumpi'* is a traditional Indonesian cake made from sticky rice, brown sugar, and flour. *Poe'* or *lemang* is another traditional cake made from sticky rice which has been steamed inside a bamboo cylinder. The unique aroma of the bamboo enhances its flavour.
  - (2) *Kobet*. *Kobet* is a slice of chicken breast, drumstick, and liver mixed with rice. The chicken used for the *kobet* was the chicken from the earlier stage in the ritual. The *kobet* is a meal for the spirits.
  - (3) Stick/*Sogang*. In the ritual, it represents life, ideas, and breath, which are rooted in the philosophy of the Dayak Kanayatn.
  - (4) *Poe'* which is steamed in a bamboo cylinder.
  - (5) A chicken egg.
  - (6) A coin.
- 4) A betel-set.
- 5) Rooster's blood.
- 6) *Lato' jagung* (fried corn kernels).

The *ua'* rope for the swinging and the offering have to be positioned one in front of the other. This refers to the order in which they are used. The

*pamaliatn* will swing the *ua'* rope to deliver the offerings to the *Subayatn* or the world of the ancestors. The performers in the *Baliatn* ritual are:

- 1) *Pamaliatn* (ritual leader).
- 2) *Panade'* (first assistant who stands by to assist the *pamaliatn* performing the ritual, especially when the *pamaliatn* has attained a transcendental state. There were two *panade'* at this ritual. The first *panade'* attended the *pamaliatn* during the ritual and the second *panade'* was the *gadobokng* musician.
- 3) *Anak Samang* (who prepared all the ritual necessities).
- 4) Musicians.

During the closing procession the next day, the *pamaliatn* bring back all the spirits of accoutrements, offerings, and other properties in the ritual. While spraying water, the *pamaliatn* recites the prayer and spell mentioned below.

*Asa', dua, talu koa nian kita' Jubata Awa Pama. Liatn nian dah laka' dingaraja. Koa kami dah pulaknga' ka dunia kami. Minta' barakat, minta' ringakng gagas samua. Kuurrraaa ...*

One, two, three, O *Jubata*, O all spirits, the *Liatn* ceremony has been performed. We are returning immediately to the (real) world. Asking for blessings, healing and kindness. (Cry to welcome the spirits: *kuurrraaa ...*)

#### 4. NYAMBALEH BABOTN MAN MANOK

The Dayak Kanayatn believe that every object, accoutrement, and every ritual necessity has its own spirit. Hence, the spirits have to go back to where they properly belong to prevent any undesirable problems. The relationship between the people and the sacrificial animal also has its own perspective. It is essential to appreciate and respect animals' spirits, as mentions in *Ne' Baruakng Kulub* (Rufinus et al. 1996). The implicit meaning (Sumardjo 2010) is that there must be a death to keep others alive. In other words, there must be a sacrifice to be successful.

#### REPRESENTATIONS OF NATURE IN DAYAK KANAYATN CULTURE

Nature is the mirror image of Dayak Kanayatn culture. It bestows meaning on the traditions, ritual accoutrements, arts, and sacred objects which represent aspects of it. The *Baliatn* ritual is permeated with all kinds of natural things. For instance, the use of *tarap* bark which a shaman swings during the *Baliatn* ritual. Other ritual properties are also borrowed from nature, like the *rinyuakng* leaves, *bunga salaseh* (basil) leaves, rice, eggs, and so on. Nature mirrors the existence of the *Baliatn* itself. In a nutshell, the Dayak Kanayatn and nature are inseparable.

A pig is one of the sacrifice in this ritual. Why does it have to be a pig? This is a question with many ramifications. The pig as the sacrificial animal suitable to the veneration of the ancestors is related to the Dayak Kanayatn's role as hunters in the Kalimantan forests. Historically, a pig is the first animal hunted which Dayak Kanayatn are accustomed to seeing. Pigs usually live and



reproduce in their vicinity. In addition, a pig reflects the power in the *Baliatn* ritual. There is a proverb which states that there is no *agukng* or gong when there is no pig in the ritual. This is because gong plays the role of the symbol of nobility and majesty making it the most venerated of all the Dayak Kanayatn traditional musical instruments.

Furthermore, sacrificing roosters is another *Baliatn* ritual. In *Ne' Baruakng Kulub* folklore, a rooster is a complementary sacrifice to ask for a good harvest and to treat sufferers. In the *Baliatn* ritual, a rooster also plays a crucial role to symbolize the greatness of *Jubata*. Dayak Kanayatn views the rooster as a symbol of modesty. It therefore means that people have to appreciate nature. In addition, the rooster also plays as the penalty of a common law. Dayak Kanayatn refers to the rooster as a symbol of power, courage, and strength as the sign of the presence of the ancestors' spirits. Moreover, the blood of pig or rooster is believed to neutralize bad and good things. It is also meant as the symbol of the relationship between human and nature.

Dayak Kanayatn music also shows its own characteristics in the names of the striking rhythms. All of these are related to the nature around them. One of the striking motifs in Dayak Kanayatn traditional music is the *bagu* rhythm which is inspired by the sound of flowing water. The name of this rhythm comes from Bawakng Mountain (locates in *Kabupaten* Bengkayang, West Kalimantan) which is the source of the *Bagu* River. Moreover, the Dayak Kanayatn feel that they have an obligation to conserve nature. All traditional activities are heavily bound up with nature, in daily life and in the future.

In Dayak Kanayatn beliefs attached to the *Baliatn* ritual, the leaves and the use of *tarap* bark mentioned above are examples of the efforts to conserve the cultural values of Dayak Kanayatn. Nowadays, Kalimantan forests one of the lungs of the world are ironically under threat. What would people do were nature to become extinct? Nature is the source of traditional activities and folk art. The *Baliatn* is the representation or figurative form of nature itself. Another example of this symbiosis between the Dayak Kanayatn and nature is shown in the use of the *pantak* symbol. It is a constant reminder that the relationship between the spirits of the ancestors and the people is one of unbroken spirituality, timeless, and unbounded. The relationship between the two is conducted and retained through ritual. These kinds of harmonious relationships are celebrated in the ceremonies which link people, nature, and the spirits of the ancestors. There is a ceremony to supplicate for the remission of all sins. This is followed by fasting which has both a physical and a spiritual aspect. It involves some prohibitions, including: no picking of plants, no fresh vegetables, and no meat (Miden 1997). The deeper meaning attached to these prohibition is to maintain the balance in the relationship between people and nature; people show their respect for and nurture of nature by these actions. People always live in and with nature but a world without people is not a world at all. The steady relationship with nature is very important to the Dayak Kanayatn.

The nature of Kalimantan is the source of life's necessities. It is expected to be managed fairly without plundering it. It is the duty of the people to

nurture nature. The Dayak Kanayatn need nature as a place in which they can communicate with God through the *Baliatn* ritual. Nature is the symbol of everything which is required in life. People are a part of the soil and the soil is part of nature. The principal task of people as a part of nature is to create a life balance between people and nature. When there is great damage to one element, this will result to disharmony. The awareness of this issue plays an important role in the idea of creating an improved nature.

Some factors are important in examining people's comprehension of nature. Nature often brings people satisfaction through tourism. One step in valuing nature is observing local wisdom like the Dayak philosophy *Bacuramin Ka' Saruga* which means reflecting heaven and learning from natural knowledge. A harmonious relationship with nature is a form of devotion to God.

Dayak culture needs such tradition ceremonies and rituals which link it to nature. There can be no *Baliatn* ritual when there is no forest as the source of ritual accoutrements and medicinal herbs. It is crystal clear that the forest shares this essential function, and its value is not just economic.

#### CONCLUSION

There are three sections of the *Baliatn* ritual: opening, main, and closing. Each section has a break to take a rest and discuss any problems which might have cropped up during the ritual. The closing ritual is to round off the ritual and return all the accoutrements and instruments used to their normal state. The Dayak Kanayatn believe each object has its own spirit. It is necessary to return the spirit to prevent misfortune in the future. Although the bases for other ritual meals and accoutrements are also drawn from nature, nature is most obviously replicated in Dayak Kanayatn culture through the *Baliatn* ritual. The plants, animals, hills, and rivers around people are the symbols and places which bestow the benefit derived from natural resources. Nature also permeates various other aspects like determining harvest days, making handicrafts, what motifs should be used on clothes and the name of the rhythms to be played. There is an enormous emotional bond throughout all the stages of the *Baliatn* ritual. The movements in the *Baliatn* express a wonderful aesthetic rhythm and form. *Baliatn* is a site in which sacredness meets beauty.

The Dayak Kanayatn realize the importance of nature. The widespread damage to nature nowadays is an obstacle to performing cultural expressions. It is hard to go about one's daily life when nature is slowly but steadily under threat. People have already done their best, including conserving the forest from external threats. They do so because nature is the place in which people, plants, and animals can settle and flourish. People are eager to preserved nature through performing the *Baliatn* ritual, whose art and philosophy are strongly related to nature. Consciously and unconsciously nature influences a host of aspects of life, such as art, textile motifs, and rituals. All transformations are founded on a deep veneration of God. The writers recorded the *Baliatn* ritual in a documentary film from the Ministry of Education and Culture (Olendo 2020a).

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