

# Representation of cultural values in *Tempuutn Senarikng* of Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung tribes



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The community of Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung tribes in Indonesia has mythical folklores telling the origins of humans called *Tempuutn Senarikng*. This research aims to represent the cultural values in *Tempuutn Senarikng*. This study is qualitative research using an ethnographic approach and interactive model data analysis techniques. The results show that *Tempuutn Senarikng* contains cultural values of the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung tribal communities explaining that: (1) The nature of the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung people's life is to try to avoid being cursed by praying and performing ceremonial rituals. (2) The nature of the work of the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung tribes is oriented to being a living. The work commonly carried out by the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung people is farming. (3) Human nature in space and time is oriented to the future so what they do now will also have an impact on the future. However, they do not forget the past as part of life lessons. Therefore, they always make offerings in the form of sacrificial animal blood and cooked food in every ceremony to be grateful for what they have obtained in life, to avoid disaster and to facilitate all hopes and (4) The nature of human relations with nature is by always maintaining harmony. They always conduct various ceremonial activities to get rid of disturbing spirits from human life and vice versa, they are always accompanied by good spirits. In other words, the folklore of *Tempuutn Senarikng* is the forerunner of the traditions and culture of the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung tribal communities continuing to be undertaken to this day.

**Contribution:** The article results can be used in scientific research in verbal literature, folklore and ethnology fields.

**Keywords:** myth; Dayak tribe; cultural value; the origin of human, *Tempuutn Senarikng*, Benuaq and Tunjung, Indonesia, East Borneo.

## Introduction

The Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung people in Indonesia believe that myth is the forerunner to the emergence of a tradition passed down to today's generation. In the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung tribes, myths arose before tradition because myths tell about the beginning of life or events giving birth to a tradition and customs lived by the community, such as traditional ceremonies, customary law and all things included in the concept of custom. The origins of customary law and ritual ceremonies are explained so that everything is followed properly (Madrah & Karaakng 1997).

This research is socially relevant to preserve Indonesian tradition as stated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 10 of 2014 concerning Guidelines for Preserving Tradition in Article 1 stating that Preservation of Tradition is to protect, develop and utilise community groups habits and supporters of a culture in which distribution and inheritance take place from generation to generation. One of the traditional preservation objects as stated in Article 4 is the Tradition Preservation Object including: (1) traditional ceremonies, namely sacred events related to powers beyond human ability (occult) with natural events and life cycles and (2) folklore, namely stories disseminated and passed down orally and classified into such three major groups as myths, legends and fairy tales. This research focuses on the mythical folklore becoming the beginning of the emergence of various traditional ceremonies of the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung communities. Hence, this research is worth conducting because it has scientific values representing cultural values and preserving the folklore traditions in Indonesia.

Myth is belief in a certain tribe (Bulduk 2016; Gürçay 2017:72) in the form of stories considered sacred in society concerning how something is created (Kayaba 2016:167). Myth is a significant mediator in maintaining culture from the past to the present (Sivri & Akbaba 2018:53). The society has negatively portrayed Dayak tribe since colonial times. This negative image has affected

various programmes to 'civilise' the Dayak community in the New Order government (Maunati 2004:8). Through *Tempuutn Senarikng*, the cultural values of the Dayak community can be explored and understood positively from different perspectives.

The representation of cultural values is to understand the differences of a community group in carrying out the principles of life (Mazzula, Hage & Carter 2010:113) through cosmic relations (Cordoneanu 2012:133). Cultural values are expected to represent the views and behaviour of a particular community group since basically, culture is designed for a group to form an orderly way of life (Easthope 1991:69; Kluckhohn 2018:26) different from other groups' way (Kluckhohn 1949:34). Cultural landscapes can be understood through cultural values reflected in social behaviour and activities (Czepczyński 2008:29) in constructing cultural identity through cultural symbols (eds. Gentz & Kramer 2006:1). By examining the cultural values of the mythical texts and disseminating the study results, the researchers can indirectly participate in preserving the intangible cultural heritage based on the meaning of the cultural heritage symbol, which can be preserved through the development of folklore.

Previous research on myths was conducted by Milčinski (2015:281) about the characteristics of Chinese mythology later transforming into the tradition of the Yin Yang power as the origin of the cosmology of the Xia and Shang dynasties. Other studies revealed comparisons of Lithuanian, Polish and Russian legends with the Mahābhārata in the ancient Indian epics later reconstructing the mythical fragment on the God (Lajoye 2018:21). This current research focuses on myths like previous studies. However, differently, this study concerns the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung tribes in West Kutai, East Kalimantan, Indonesia, and presents cultural values contained in *Tempuutn* becoming traditions and still being carried out by both tribal communities. In Indonesia, research on the myth of the Dayak tribe was conducted by Purwana (2019:65) regarding the mythical function of the origin of rice in the Dayak Bidayuh community in West Kalimantan. Another study was carried out by Mirim (2018:1) regarding the study of mythology, function and meaning of the *Batang Haring* [tree of life] in the Ngaju Dayak community. Meanwhile, the novelty of this study is the research on Dayak myths in Indonesia, namely examining the cultural values in *Tempuutn* regarding the myth of human origins in the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung tribal communities in East Kalimantan.

*Tempuutn Senarikng* of Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung is one of the Indonesian myths telling the process of creating humans and serving as a source of culture in the folklore genre (Frankfurter 2009:244). The Dayak community's belief in *Tempuutn* and the impact preserved by the community can be explained clearly by researchers because of the communication patterns and traditions in myths and rituals (Finnegan 1992:1). Meanwhile, the tradition is part of the cultural reproduction processes (Oring 2021:1). In other

words, the *Tempuutn* of the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung tribes contains various cultural values.

The Dayaks refer to the indigenous people of Kalimantan Island as the majority ethnic group. Despite being the majority, they have little role in that island. For example, during the New Order regime of President Soeharto in Indonesia, they were not given the opportunity to become other formal leaders in government institutions. This does not mean that there were no qualified Dayak leaders or intellectuals. Perhaps, this was because the system prevented them from gaining political positions. Thus, they were exiled in their own land or 'home' (Sada, Alas & Ansari 2019:3).

The Dayak tribe is one of the majority ethnic groups in the Kalimantan region. The Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung tribes live in West Kutai Regency, East Kalimantan Province, Indonesia. Both tribes still practise everything set in the myth to this day. Based on the results of interviews and observations, both tribes still carry out everything that has been set out in the myth, namely in the traditional ceremonies, implementation requirements, procedures for implementation and obligated offerings in every ceremonial activity. This is in line with sources stating that until now; some Dayak customs are still being preserved (Darmadi 2017:42).

The Dayak tribe has been rarely researched, and therefore, the literature concerning this particular tribe is minimum, and its cultural heritage is not widespread and unknown to other people. Through this paper, the positive sides of the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung tribe culture can provide new insights, diminish cultural misunderstandings, and thus the noble values of a culture can be understood and passed on by generations of the nation through folklore, especially the myth known in Dayak terms as *Tempuutn*. In addition, this research is significant to preserve the traditions contained in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 10 of 2014 concerning Guidelines for Preserving Tradition, one of which includes traditional ceremonies and folklores in the form of myths. The results of this study contribute to exposing that the cultural values of the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung tribes are reflected in beliefs, customs, nature conservation and relationships with others implemented on the social and cultural behaviour of the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung people.

## Theories

### Myth

Myths form the worldview of ancient people, believed to be true, considered sacred, often related to the origin of the cosmos in certain tribes (Magoulick 2017:35) and appear to explain the metaphor (Ackerman 2002:28). Coupe (2009:6) explains the metaphor stating that myths are traditional sacred stories often associated with rituals. The told characters are usually gods, demigods, spirits or ghosts or in the supernatural world. Hence, myth can be called sacred stories (Ulvydienè 2018). This is in line with Lévi-Strauss (2001:8) stating that mythological thoughts were often

considered irrational in the past yet through myth analysis, diverse explanations underlying these thoughts would be found.

Myth primitively manifests ancient culture and acts as a cultural entity identical to belief so that it is culturally universally accepted by the supporting community (Falco 2010:89–116). Bronner (2007:56) states that myth is a significant source explaining the process of forming the world and human life to become what it is today so that it can be a guide for humans to behave (Frias, Isidori & Papaellina 2015:595). This shows that beliefs and myths have been embedded in their consciousness (Gürçay 2017:72). Also, folklore is a medium for preserving ancient fragments, cultures considered inferior and primitive human culture (Storey 2003:6).

To sum up, myth is a sacred story telling the origin of the creation of the world and everything in it in certain tribes to form a culture passed down orally from generation to generation aiming at guiding human behaviour. Furthermore, myth has been carried out by its supporter community from ancient times to the present.

The Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung people view myth or *Tempuutn* as the essence of the life philosophy of both tribal communities including all the most basic concepts and beliefs, as well as maintaining the culture alive. Myths are significant as they do not only tell how something happened but also explain why certain customs can survive and must be obeyed (Madrah & Karaakng 1997:2–3).

### **Tempuutn of Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung**

*Tempuutn* is in the form of folk tales telling supernatural things from primitive ideas and shaping culture and ritual practices (Koven 2008:27). Folklore is part of a culture including knowledge, understanding, attitudes and beliefs traditionally transmitted orally by one person to another one (Hariis 2008:viii). Folklore refers to stories widely accepted in a particular culture. Although folklore looks ridiculous or cannot be understood by other groups of people, it contains a wealth of symbolic meanings for people supporting it (Harrison 2007:5). Intercultural education would not exist without folklore (Rosenberg 2019:1). A collection of folklore from various tribes all over the world summarises how stories lived in reality in the past and then gave rise to an attitude of belief in the traditions of these folklores (Naithani 2014:73). Folklore can affect the spiritual identity and cultural awareness of the community holistically (Elior 2008:50).

Folklore is considered to be an ornament of culture, beliefs, traditions and rituals (Sims & Stephens 2005:22). Folklore can analyse the cultural attitudes (Onainor 2019:6) since basically folklore shows how to judge from the past by documenting the stories, sayings and attitudes that they then share in the present (Wilson 2017:3).

*Tempuutn* is a myth telling the story of the world and everything occurring in and above it from before the world was created, which is essential in human civilisation (Joyce 2003:xii). *Tempuutn* denotes something more than folklore or local belief systems (Schneider 2017:69) and became the forerunner of the emergence of customs run by the supporting community. The customs are such as traditional ceremonies, norms, values of social life and all matters regarding the concept of custom. Custom is part of a traditional belief (Russell 2014:81) linking social groups with spiritual and environmental contexts through rituals (Cohen 2013:9).

In line with this, until now, the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung people still carry out various traditional ceremonial rituals, such as the death [*kewangkey*] ceremony, treatment [*balian*] and believe in gods and spirits. The origin of the customary law and ritual ceremonies is explained along with the places so that they can be followed correctly in *tempuutn*. In other words, *tempuutn* is a folklore in the form of a myth revealing events and becoming a habit until it becomes the essence of the philosophy of the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung people related to the most basic concepts in a belief system so that the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung culture remain to exist until now.

### **Dayak tribe**

Dayak is a general term referring to non-Muslim indigenous people on Kalimantan Island, who inhabit the middle and upper reaches of the river in Kalimantan (Ting, Tan & John 2017:22). The Dayaks do not inhabit the coast of the area, but generally, they live upstream and along smaller creeks or in the hills as far as water can be easily obtained (Staal 2018:55).

The Dayaks describe themselves as people struggling against neo-colonialism, ecological destruction and economic marginalisation (King 2018:2). For the Dayak people, the environment is not just nature, but it becomes an inseparable part (Luardini, Asi & Garner 2019:83). The Dayak tribe is divided into seven races or ethnicities and grouped into 405 sub-ethnics spread across various regions on Kalimantan Island (Murhaini & Achmadi 2021:1).

In conclusion, the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung tribes are two tribes in Indonesia that still perform various traditional and ritual activities to live in harmony with nature. This harmony aims at realising the community's belief system.

### **Cultural representation**

In an oral tradition, all cultural representations are easy to remember (Cordoneanu 2012:133). Supporting communities believe that some sacred rituals and stories are a divine truth (Saikia 2018:29). Ritual is the embodiment of myth (Gasarov 2021:115). Traditional knowledge and folklore are significant cultural heritages as they create an identity for the community (Dimova & Sarafova 2011:2358; Janthaluck & Laila 2012:219). Moreover, traditional knowledge and folklore are part of the

culture of indigenous and non-indigenous communities (Society 2004:297).

The representation system is related to the awareness of life reflecting the real existence of society (Procter & Hall 2004). Indirectly, cultural representation can reach back to the state of society from the past to the present (Bendix 2018:105). The culture is correlated to an inner order in society (Goody 2000:71) and held firmly by every individual in the social and cultural environment (Rapport & Overing 2000:53)

In short, cultural representation is a state representing human knowledge in understanding the environment through folklore describing the identity of the tribe.

### Cultural values

Cultural values are a crucial aspect, serve as a way of life (Wittgenstein 1980:107) and contain a cultural heritage of traditions preserved and passed down from generation to the next generation (Tursyn et al. 2013:37) reflected in social behaviour and activities undertaken (Czeczayński 2008:29). Cultural values in each culture have five basic issues forming the basis for the framework of variations in the cultural value system (Kluckhohn 2018), namely:

- the essence of life
- the nature of human work
- the essence of the human position in space and time
- the essence of human relations with the natural surroundings and
- the essence of human relations with their fellow human beings (Koentjaraningrat 2009).

The five main cultural values construct cultural identity through discursive formations and cultural symbols (eds. Gentz & Kramer 2006:1). Through these variations in the orientation of cultural values, an overview of the cultural value system of the ethnic community in Indonesia, especially the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung tribes, will be obtained. This effort is intended to promote intracultural and intercultural values as an effort to know the culture of one of the tribes in Indonesia (Arbona & Chireac 2015:60) because basically culture is a significant sign of the identity of a nation (Bankauskaitė & Andriukevičiūtė 2018). In other words, cultural values describe social behaviour in society related to human relations and the cosmos.

This study employed cultural values from Kluckhohn's point of view as it can relate the basic issues of culture to the construction of community identity. Hence, the concept has a relationship that can explore the cultural values of the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung ethnic groups in Indonesia.

### Research problems

Based on the above explanation, the research problems of this study are focused on the cultural values of Kluckhohn in *Tempuutn Senarikng* as the basis of the cultural value system

forming the cultural identity of the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung communities, namely:

- the essence of life
- the essence of work or human work
- the essence of human position in space and time and
- the essence of human relationship with the natural surroundings.

### Materials and method

This study is qualitative research using an ethnographic strategy. Ethnography is used to examine the social and cultural life of the community (LeCompte & Schensul 2010:1; Shagrir 2017:9). Basically, ethnographic research holistically describes people and their way of life (Angrosino 2007:17; Vannini 2018:4). Through the various orientations of cultural values, an overview of the cultural value system in ethnic communities in Indonesia, especially the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung tribes, will be obtained.

The research data are in the form of myth quotes regarding the formulation of the problem. The source of research data is the folklore of *Tempuutn Senarikng* [the origins of humans] from the book *Tempuutn Myths of the Benuaq and Tunjung Dayak* by Michael Hopes, Madrah and Karaakng (Indonesian version). The source of data is also obtained from information in the form of field notes from interviews with Emanuel as the leader of the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung communities. The researcher collected the stories from the informant and obtained the outline similar to the secondary story source. However, as *Tempuutn* is sacred, the names of characters, places and events should not be wrongly written and pronounced to avoid *puluq*, namely a curse bringing about premature death (Madrah & Karaakng 1997:4). Therefore, the researchers used secondary story sources for the writing of characters, places and events are in accordance with the Dayak pronunciation.

The research was conducted for 6 months from November 2021 to April 2022. The selected informants are Dayak community leaders becoming the observers in every ceremonial activity as well. Data collection techniques in this study are recording, shooting, careful observation and taking notes. Moreover, this study also conducted participant observation and semi-structured interviews to investigate the social and cultural life of the community (Ullman, Mangelsdorf & Muñoz 2021:10). Validity in oral literature uses triangulation as a validity procedure focusing on researchers looking for more convergence among different sources of information to form themes or categories in research (Leavy 2011:149). Triangulation is employed to examine the conclusions drawn (Gray 2003:72). The interactive model data analysis technique used in this study consisted of three components of activities occurring simultaneously, namely data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing or verification (Miles, Huberman & Saldana 2014:13).

## Results

### *Tempuutn Senarikng* (the origin of human)

According to the beliefs of the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung tribes, after the heavens and the earth were created, then humans were created from a semi-finished statue inserted into a Suko (bark) swing facing the rising sun. Then, the feet and hands of the statue moved and became the first human named Temirukng Langit. After that, he threw his ribs, and the ribs falling on the ground became a woman. The woman's incarnation into a human would be complete on the eighth day. On the seventh day, she has been forcibly brought home with her feet still attached to the ground by scraping the soil. Soon, the woman became pregnant. Because the body was still made of soil and she was imperfect when she was created, the woman died in the water, but the child lived. When her daughter grew up, the father married his daughter. However, soon, the child died leaving behind a daughter. The father intended to marry that daughter, yet she refused for fear of the curse. Then, the father went around the earth for 8 years. When he returned, he had changed his face and with his cunning tricks, he could deceive his daughter so that she did not realise that he was her father. Subsequently, they got married. Gradually, the daughter realised that the person she married was her father. To avoid the curse then, she said prayers and changed her name.

When the wife will give birth she was assisted by special spirits. There were dozens of children born. Some were disabled, such as not having legs and arms, only having one leg, etc. Other descendants became the forerunner of tigers, bears, monkeys, wild boars and other animals. Some eventually became the beginning of ghosts, *juata* [name of spirits in water], *tonooi* [name of spirits on the ground], *nayuuq* [group of spirits living in heaven and earth], *nyahuq* [spirits in the form of birds or other animals to tell good and bad things for the future] and other spirits. The last was *Puneen*, the forerunner of human descent to this day. Figure 1 illustrates a female character giving birth to many children later becoming the origins of various animals, ghosts, spirits, and humans to this day (Hopes et al., 1997:30).

Before the parents went to the field, they advised their children if their younger brother or sister in the swing woke up then slaughter the *piaak bura* [white chicken] to eat, but they misheard and slaughtered their brother or sister waking up to eat. The child who ate raw meat and blood was transformed into an evil spirit disturbing humans and did not live on earth. Others became animals. Meanwhile, those who ate cooked meat became human companion spirits. Father advised Puneen not to forget their brothers or sisters who had changed their forms and lived in different places to make offerings in every ceremonial activity.

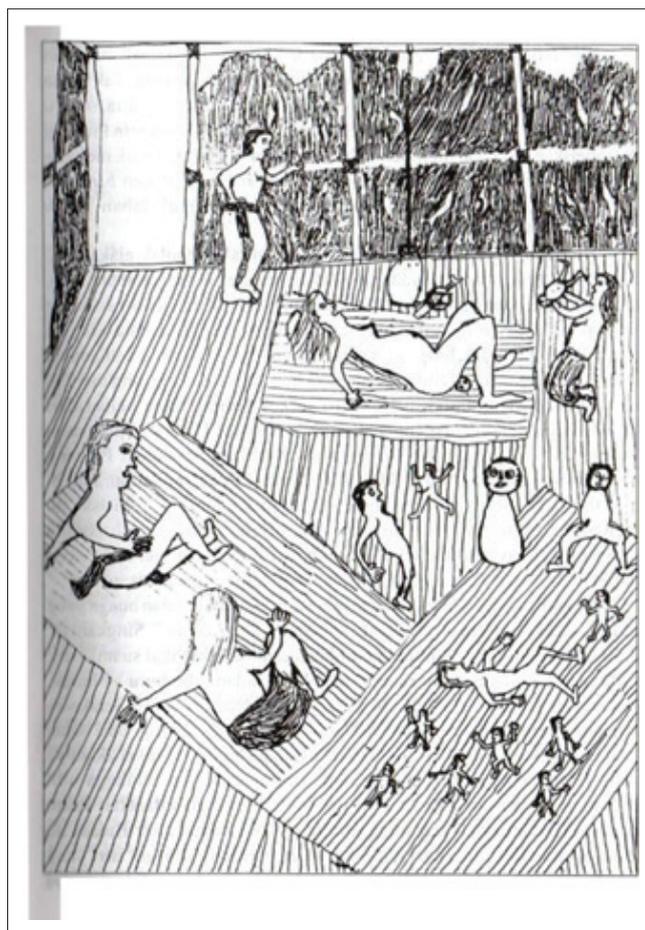
### The life essence

The story in *Tempuutn Senarikng* explains that the life essence for the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung people is that although

life is bad, humans must strive to live a good life, for example by trying to distance themselves from curses by praying. The essence is based on the quote from the mythical story of *Tempuutn Senarikng* as follows:

She was very upset because all this time she had been lied to by her husband who turned out to be her own father. Her husband woke up and her anger was running high. While weeping, Serakeetn Pinaang said, 'Father you are too much, to lie and marry your own daughter, you are a liar'. Merajaaq Poteek Konaat tried to calm her down by saying, 'It's okay because it's already been done'. However, she was still like a fighting cock that has already been fitted with spurs. She was still trying to dodge the curse so that the two of them wouldn't fall. Then, she said a prayer for the curse to fly upwards back to Heaven of Tenukng Siit Lili Nayao Sontre Olo, entered the prophet's chest and Perejadiq's betel basket (*Letala*). (Hopes et al. 1997:31, para. 1)

This is in accordance with the statement that through their traditional religion, the Benuaq Dayak people believe that all elements of the earth have a soul, and thus proper offerings must be made to maintain cosmic harmony (Crevello 2004:70).



Source: Hopes, M., Madrah, D. & Karaankn, 1997, *Tempuutn myths of the Benuaq and Tunjung Dayak*, Puspa Swara, Jakarta.

Note: Some eventually became ghosts, Juata, Tonooi, Nayuuq, Nyahuq and other spirits. Then, the last descendant, Puneen, is the forerunner of human descent to this day (Hopes et al. 1997:30).

**FIGURE 1:** Illustration of *Ayaakng Serakeetn Pinaang* [female character] giving birth to many children becoming the forerunners of tigers, bears, monkeys, wild boars and other animals.

## The work essence

The work essence is that the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung people consider work as a living. The work commonly executed by the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung people is farming. This relies on the quote of *Tempuutn Senarikng* story as follows:

Diaakng Ayaakng Bura was commanded by their parents to look after the swings of their younger siblings. One day, Tataau Lisaatn Tungukng and Ayaakng Dilaakng Tunyukng went to the fields. (Hopes et al. 1997:33, para. 1)

Throughout history, the Dayaks have heavily relied on forest resources. As people who live in the forest, the environment has shaped their culture and way of life. The Dayaks have intertwined with their environment and developed a complex system of cultural aspects concerning the forests on which they depend for survival from agricultural products cultivated on shifting cultivation and forest gardens. Their customary knowledge systems are deeply integrated into the mosaic of their land use practices (Crevello 2004:70).

## The human essence in the space and time

Customs are part of folklore (Bronner 2007:55), one of which is related to the perspective of the Dayak community regarding the human essence in space and time oriented to the future so that what they carry out in the present will impact the future if they remember the past as part of life lessons:

Diaakng Ayaakng Bura was given the task by their parents to look after the swings of their younger siblings. One day, Tataau Lisaatn Tungukng and Ayaakng Dilaakng Tunyukng went to the fields. Before leaving, the two of them advised all the children, of course, not including the child in the swing. When they arrived at the door, they said, 'When your brother in the swing wakes up, slaughter the *piaak bura* (white chicken) for you to eat together'. Most of them had misheard, so when their younger brother in the swing woke up, they instead slaughtered the diaakng ayaakng bura. Some of them, after eating raw meat and drinking fresh blood of the diaakng ayaakng bura, transformed into evil spirits dangerous to humans' life and some of them turned into animals. Some of them ate the cooked meat of the diaakng ayaakng bura, and they all turned into human companion spirits. They are called *Nayuuq Sanuuq* and *Timaang Tangaai* or are commonly called *Tangaai Tamui*. (Hopes et al. 1997:33, para. 1)

After that, it was also reminded, for those who ate raw *bura*, gave them the blood of sacrificed animals at every ceremony. And gave the cooked food to their brethren who have become companion spirits and protectors of human life, and did not forget them. After that, Tataau Lisaatn Tunyukng with Ayaakng Dilaakng Tungukng from Bawo Ujukng Langit (earth) returned to Langit Usuk Wari. There, he and his wife lived accompanied by Perejadiq Peretikaq Bantikng Tuhaaq with the title Seniang Penitah. (Hopes et al. 1997:35, para. 1)

For example, based on the above quote, when a child misheard his parents' instructions, he ate the flesh and blood of his sibling, then turned into an evil spirit harming

humans. Meanwhile, those eating the cooked meat became human companion spirits. Then, his father reminded the other children that in every ceremonial activity to offer the blood of the sacrificial animal and cooked food to feed them (offerings) and not forget them. Consequently, until now, they always make offerings in the form of sacrificial animal blood and cooked food in every ceremony. *Tempuutn* became the forerunner of the tradition carried out until now in line with the theory stating that folklore is considered to be an ornament of state culture in the form of stories, beliefs, traditions and rituals (Sims & Stephens 2005:23). Rituals related to the supernatural offer a unique kind of joy that is communication-related to the spirits of the dead (Tucker 2008:114). In this case, the ritual is associated with the giving of offerings in every ceremonial ritual activity. Figure 2 shows the tool used to invite gods and spirits in healing ceremonies. Meanwhile, figure 3 demonstrates the offerings that humans make for the spirits in healing ceremonies (both figures 2 and 3 are confidential documentation taken on 16 January, 2020).

In addition, the life essence of the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung people trying to live a good life is depicted in the story of *Tempuutn Senarikng*.

The wooden statue originally swung to face the setting sun did not move. However, when the wooden statue was swung facing the rising sun, soon the statue moved and became a human. This indicates that humans must attempt to do good deeds and get rid of bad things. This is because the Dayak Benuaq people believe that good things come from the rising sun and bad things



**FIGURE 2:** Pencawakng is used in *balian* healing ceremonies by chanting a spell inviting gods and spirits to aid the healing process.



FIGURE 3: Balian healing ceremonies with various offerings.

come from the sunset and these symbols are demonstrated in movement in every ceremonial activity. (Emanuel pers. comm., 29 December 2021)

### The essence of relationship between human and nature

The Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung people view that the essence of the relationship between humans and nature is to always maintain harmony. This is in line with the interview results.

The Dayak community has a way of life protecting the environment. They believe that destroying nature can cause the anger of the spirit and bring about disaster. In addition, the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung people also protect nature by not torturing animals since they believe that they come from the same lineage. (Emanuel pers. comm., 29 December 2021)

For the Dayaks, the environment is not just nature (Luardini et al. 2019:83) so they always perform various ceremonial activities to get rid of disturbing spirits from human life and be accompanied by good spirits. This tradition continues to this day. Various ceremonies performed by the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung communities are reinforced by the statement that these activities imply the dynamics of transmitting cultural heritage from generation to the next generation (Ben-Amos 2020:30).

## Discussion

The myth about the creation of a female human from the rib of a male in the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung tribes is in line with the Cheyenne creation myth of 'How the World Was Created', describing Maheo, the Supreme Spirit, forming humans from a rib taken from his right side and a woman from his left side (Jane & Hasan 2004:59). Through the story, *Tempuutn Senarikng* represents the cultural values of the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung people since basically, a myth exists as a culture (Javornik 2007:59).

The life essence in the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung communities is to believe that in living life, humans also need to avoid all disasters and curses through prayer ritual activities. This can happen since the conception of divinity in traditional religion places myth as a significant reference, which can explain the position and role of supernatural

powers in people's lives. Those illustrate concepts and theological constructions taken from mythical sources developed in local cultural settings. In every traditional religion, there is a tradition becoming its characteristic. This form of religion does not only involve belief in God, but it is also used as a group or ethnic identity (Izzuddin et al. 2022:1)

Maintaining life carried out by the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung people as the work essence is by carrying out farming activities. Farming is one of the main jobs undertaken since the Dayak people live in the interior forests of Kalimantan and depend on agriculture for their livelihood in the form of shifting cultivation and forest plantations. Throughout history, the Dayak people have heavily relied on forest resources. As people living in the forest, the environment has shaped their culture and way of life. The Dayaks have intertwined with their environment and developed a complex system of cultural aspects related to the forests on which they depend for survival (Crevello 2004:69).

The human essence in space and time in the Dayak community orients to the future. They believe that what happens in the future is the result of what is carried out in the present. They believe that the past can be a valuable lesson. The story at *Tempuutn Senarikng* was the beginning of the birth of the tradition of making offerings in the form of sacrificial animal blood and food cooked in every ritual activity in the traditional religion still applied today. Offerings for spiritual activities are also carried out by the Bapedi community, by making offerings and pouring blood, water, beer and putting tobacco on the ground as sacrifices to appease the ancestors. Each ancestor obtained a sacred item offered individually to them (Lebaka 2019:1). Myths are related to events born in the past with aiming at being the basis for human ritual actions at this time (Malan 2016:3). This happens since based on the myth-ritual theory, people believe in the existence of a numinus, namely some gods associated with humans and the events they live in (Groenewald 2006:913).

The Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung communities believe that humans must always maintain harmony with nature. This is in line with research results stating that the Dayaks place the environment and nature as an inseparable part of the whole series and cycle of their life (Murhaini & Achmadi 2021:1). Furthermore, the Dayak people are very concerned about the welfare of nature and know how nature works as well as how to preserve nature (Tsao 2016:688).

## Conclusion

*Tempuutn Senarikng* contains the cultural values of the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung communities and explains that:

- The people's lives essence is that they are obliged to strive to have a better life and avoid being cursed by praying and performing ceremonial rituals.

- The work essence from the perspective of the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung people is that work is a living. The work commonly carried out by the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung people is farming.
- The Dayaks' view regarding the human essence in space and time is oriented to the future so what they do in the present will impact the future as long as they remember the past as part of life lessons. Therefore, they always make offerings in the form of sacrificial animal blood and cooked food in every ceremony to be grateful for what they have obtained in life, to avoid disaster and facilitate all hopes.
- The Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung people consider that the essence of the relationship between humans and nature is to always maintain harmony. They always conduct various ceremonial activities to get rid of disturbing spirits from human life and be always accompanied by good spirits. In other words, the folklore of *Tempuutn Senarikng* became the forerunner of the traditions and culture of the Dayak Benuaq and Tunjung tribal communities continuing to be implemented to this day.

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### Competing interests

The authors have declared that no competing interest exists.

### Authors' contributions

All the authors of this manuscript have substantially contributed to the conception and design of the study, data acquisition, analysis and interpretation of data, drafting the article and revising it critically for significant intellectual content and final approval of the version to be submitted.

### Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards of research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

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### Data availability

This publication is supported by some data available on the locations stated in the references. All data supporting this research are provided as additional information accompanying this manuscript. All data are provided in the result section of this manuscript.

## Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the authors.

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