

## Animism is Applied Ethnobotany: A Shamanic Healing Ritual with the Dayak Benuaq Ohookng / East Kalimantan

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### ABSTRACT

The Dayak Benuaq Ohookng people believe in many and diverse territorial ghosts/spirits (*wook*) who exist in the environment, some of which have the power to remove the soul (*juus*) of a human body part or organ and, at the same time, implant disease. Consequently, this body part or organ gets sick. The mission of the shamans (*pembeliatn*), as mediums to the spiritual world, is to identify the ghost/spirit responsible during nocturnal rituals and to submit all of the diverse ritual offerings possible, including making an exchange of a “soul” (*kelakar*) made from ironwood (*Eusideroxylon zwageri*). To get rid of the disease, the patient smears some of his/her own saliva onto a carved statue (*sepatukng silih*), depicting the ghost/spirit concerned, after the shaman activated it. Later, this statue is taken to the forest. The shaman can also extract the disease from the sick body part by help of a thinly spliced banana leaf (*telolo*). The disease can also be attached to the statue or put into the blood of sacrificial animals. In order to finally find and identify the lost soul of the patient's sick body part, the shaman performs a vigorous dance and then falls into a trance, during which he receives a message about where to catch the soul. To discover the soul and capture it, he uses a bamboo stick filled with boiled rice (*tolakng tintikng*). The captured soul is then massaged into the sick body part of the patient. To perform this ritual, a great number of traditional and institutionalized plants are essential. They are arranged around the altar (*balai sianca jadi*) and used for ritual objects. White rice and rice colored with black, red, yellow and green dyes plays an important role in attracting and satisfying the ghosts.

Keywords: Animism, Borneo, Dayak, *Eusideroxylon zwageri*, ritual, shaman

### INTRODUCTION

The Dayak Benuaq Ohookng referred to in this article are settlers of the longhouse villages of Pentat, Lempunah, Muara Nayan, Mancong and the former Keranau, all situated along the Ohong (*Ohookng* in their language) River, and of the Tanjung Isui area in Kecamatan Jempang, Kutai Barat, East-Kalimantan. Culturally and linguistically, they belong to the Dayak Luangan group (Sillander, 1995).

In their traditional beliefs, a living human has a spirit soul (*semangat*) and in addition, seven body-part souls (*juus*). The head has the *juus puaq*, the abdomen the *juus sentunkng*, the heart has the *juus lemposu*, the bones have the *juus tulakng*, the flesh the *juus issi*, and each eye has an *ilang anak majang*. Diverse terrestrial ghosts or spirits (*wook*) have the power to “eat” the *juus* of a human body part or organ and, at the same time implant a disease. Consequently, this body part or organ gets sick. Efforts to cure such diseases can be

successful only if the disease of the body part or organ is removed and the missing *juus* is replaced.

This is the mission of the shamans, *pembeliatn* or *beliatn*, who act as mediums to the spirits/ghosts or *wook*. During nocturnal sessions, generally performing the rites of *belian sentiu*, (also *sentiyu*), these mediums have to identify the *wook* responsible for the illness and to submit all the diverse ritual offerings, including a small-carved statue, the “exchange soul” or *kelakar*, made of ironwood (*Eusideroxylon zwageri*).

If the identified *wook* agrees, he will take back the disease. To get the missing *juus* back to the patient, the *beliatn* performs a furious dance and falls into a trance. In this state, he gets inspiration from the *wook* about where to find and catch the *juus* for re-implantation into the patient’s body.

A *belian sentiu* ritual can generally last up to four nights, with enhancing activities and increasing amounts of ritual equipment. To perform this type of ritual, a great number of traditional and institutionalized plants and offerings, or *ramuan*, are essential, and every one of them has a special function or is associated to a category of *wook*. Many are medicinal plants (Susiarti, 2005). Up to 59 species of 32 botanic families are used in shamanistic rituals (Gönner, 2002).

## REQUIREMENTS FOR THE HEALING PERFORMANCE

### 1. The Altar, or *Balai Sianca Jadi* and the Shaman’s Protective Measures

To perform a *belian* ritual a rectangular-shaped altar or shrine *balai sianca jadi* (Figure 1) is constructed from *potukng* wood (*Melicope incana*, syn. *Euodia alba*, Rutaceae). This is the type of wood related to many *wook*. The altar furniture includes small wooden houses for the *wook*, two *antaakng* (*Tempayan*, antique Chinese jars, home of spirits), a *genikng* (big antique gong, also home to a spirit), a short ladder, and a specific superstructure. The altar is surrounded by high stalks or branches of the following eight-obligatoriqe plant species (eight is an important number in *belian* rituals):

1. *Jelmoq* (*Pisang*, Banana), *Musa paradisiaca* L., Musaceae
2. *Sepootn* (*Pinang*), *Areca catechu* L., Palmae
3. *Touq*, *Costus* sp., Zingiberaceae
4. *Ukor*, *Cariota mitis* Loureiro, Palmae
5. *Biowo*, *Cordyline fruticosa* (L.) A. Chevalier, Liliaceae
6. *Teluyatn* (Ironwood), *Eusideroxylon zwageri* Teysm. & Binnend., Lauraceae
7. *Potukng*, *Melicope incana* T.G.Hartley, Rutaceae, Syn. *Euodia alba* Hook.f.
8. *Nancakng*, *Macaranga triloba* (Blume) Muell. Arg., Euphorbiaceae

Of the two most important of these items, *teluyatn*, *Eusideroxylon*, and *potukng*, *Melicope*, two specimens are present. These plant species are related to distinct *wook* families. Their wood is always used with ritual performances and worked into ritual objects. *Potukng*, rich in alkaloids, it is the “spirits’ wood”. *Teluyatn*, also called *belian*, incorporates mystic power and calls helpful spirits. (Figure1). The *Balai Sianca Jadi* altar with the *Awiir* fabric).

The *beliatn* has to be successful to lure all the various *wook* from the forest, the field, the trees and the waterside into the room so that they get access to the offerings and become supportive. When the altar is beautifully decorated, then the *wook* will settle on the branches of the plants or in the small houses. The bowls and plates containing offerings are crowned

with a cone made from young leaves of the coconut tree. The fringed panels on the side of the room are made of the same material. Special fringes and objects intended to attract spirits are made of the young leaves of *tuak*, the Aren Palm *Arenga pinnata* (Wurmb.) Merrill. Ornamental fringes in red and yellow are often from the young leaves of *paleh* (also *palas*), a small palm, *Licuala sp.* that keeps evil *wook* away.

To get the attention of the spirits, the acting *beliatn* starts the Séance with a sharp whistle produced from the hollowed fang of the sunbear (*Helarctos malayanus*). To protect himself of malefic *wook* he besmears his front, neck, chest, and arms with white rice paste and sprinkles himself and all of the people in the room with fragrant *danum bungaq mayang* (*danum* = water and *bungaq mayang* = the flower of *sepootn* or the *Areca catechu*). For sprinkling, he uses a small twig of *ngeraseh*, which is basil (*Ocimum basilicum* L., Caesalpiniaceae). This “holy-water” ritual seems to be part of an ancient Hindu heritage from the Mulawarman and following Kingdoms, which existed in this area until the arrival of Islam. It produced the first stone inscriptions in Sanskrit with Pallava letters in the region now known as Indonesia at about 350 AD. This assumption may also apply to the use of incense at the beginning of the ritual. Small pieces of tuber root from the *luaq* or *luwee* plant, (*Dianella ensifolia* (L.) DC., Liliaceae), which contains an insecticide, are heated in a small pan over glowing charcoal. Also, raisin incense can be used.

Finally, the *beliatn* throws *wajiq* yellow sacral rice over his shoulder toward the direction to the entrance three times. This ritual calls the rice spirit *lolakng luikng* (*lolakng* means “beautiful woman”). This female spirit, which seems to be of ancient Hindu origin, transmits the messages between the *beliatn* and his helpers, the *mulukng* spirits. The yellow dye for the rice is *kunyt*, extracted from the rhizome of *Curcuma longa* L., Zingiberaceae. Yellow dye is also extracted from *siraakng*, which is *Codiaeum variegatum* (L.) Bl., Euphorbiaceae.

The most effective defense weapon of the *beliatn* against dangerous *wook*, however, is his “leaf sword”, the *biowo*. It is a leaf of the *Cordyline fruticosa* (L.) A. Chevalier, Liliaceae, artfully decorated with cuts and tied young leaves of the coconut tree (Figure 2). The crown and the cuffs of the *beliatn* are made of the same material. The people plant *biowo* plants in their garden and in the fields to keep evil spirits away.

Then, in long-lasting songs in a euphemistic and poetic language called *mempakn beliatn*, the *beliatn* calls all the spirits and ghost families by their names and recounts all the offerings ready for them.

## 2. *Awiir*, the Shaman’s Spiritual Link to the World of Spirits/Ghosts

With the *biowo* in his hand, the *beliatn* dances in a counterclockwise direction around a white or patterned long cloth, which is hanging from the ceiling. At the top, this fabric is decorated with hanging young green inflorescences from *sepootn*, the Pinang Palm (*Areca catechu* L.), as well as some ornamental palm leaves. This is the *awiir*, the most sacred attribute of each *Belian* ritual (Figure 1, Figure 2). It is the vehicle of the medial *beliatn*, linking him to the world of the spirits and reverse. By this, his *semangat* will journey upwards into the realm of the spirits. Hidden at the top is a wooden cross within a ring. This symbolizes the crossroad leading the *beliatn* to the eight levels of skies where the spirits live in their villages.



Figure 1. The Balai Sianca Jadi altar with the Awiir fabric



Figure 2. Beliatn Moya performing Belian Sentiu Ritual

One after another, all offerings are placed at the foot of the *awiir* and the *beliatn* presents them singing to the spirits with devote gestures. This is also the place where the *beliatn* strives for enlightenment to identifying the *wook* responsible for the disease. To help him achieve enlightenment, the shaman's small pots contain bee wax torches, a small mirror, rice and twigs from *siraakng*, *Codiaeum variegatum*, whose green leaves are spotted with yellow marks that look like yellow sacral rice. This medicinal plant has a magical significance because it is considered immortal. Often it is planted on graves. Even if all signs of the grave vanish after several decades, *Codiaeum* will still be growing there to mark the spot. Any primitive effort of vegetative propagation is always successful.

All performances and activities of the *beliatn* are accompanied by the sounds of several booming *gimar* drums, the *genikng* big gongs, and six small *kentangan* or *saron* gongs, which play the melody. Rhythm and melody vary according to the action of the *beliatn*.

### 3. Tempting Food Offerings and Exchange Souls for the Spirit

The most important alluring food for the *wook* is boiled white rice together with boiled rice colored with black, red, yellow and green dyes. This "five-color-rice" fills dozens of hanging and standing platforms. The black dye is extracted from the leaves of *sopaakng piaq*, which is the *Leguminosa Archidendron* sp. The red dye comes from the fruits of *gelinapm* (also *gilinggam*), *Bixa orellana* L., Bixaceae. The yellow dye comes from *komaat*, *Codiaeum variegatum* L., Euphorbiaceae and *kunyit*, which is from the root of the *Curcuma longa* L., Zingiberaceae. Finally, the green dye is derived from the leaves of *puput*, *Jasminum sambac* Aiton, Oleaceae, or from the leaves of *biowo*, *Cordyline fruticosa*.

Small platforms in front of the house constructed with *potukng* wood and loaded with five-color rice are intended to lure the *wook* into the house (Figure 3, Pentat 2006). At the center of the plate with the colored rice are red petals for decoration. The posts of the left platform are pointed like the hats the most powerful ghosts are generally depicted with. To accommodate a great number of *wook*, particularly the *nyahuq* omen spirits in the room, swing-shaped constructions *kelengkakng eboq* (*kelengkakng* = swing) with many "sitting



boards”, one on top of the other, hang from a beam. Each storey of the swings harbors a banana leaf covered with the five-color rice.



Figure 3. Rice with the five colors for the spirits

Some *beliatn* offer the colors additionally in liquid form, particularly to the *juata* water spirits. The four glasses of colored liquid are accompanied by four-*sepatukng kokooq*, dog-like figures carved of *potukng* wood (*sepatukng* = statue, *kokooq* = dog). The white color appears in the white rice at the center. The purpose of this set of offerings is probably to attract the *wook* from all four points of the compass. This idea could also originate from ancient Hindu influence, as the four directions play an important role in Hinduism.

A big dog-shaped figure on the side of the *belian* depicts the *timang* (tiger), a spirit protecting the *beliatn*, which is also carved out of *potukng* wood. The figure is generally carefully dressed with a typically Benuaq *ikat* fabriq *ulap doyo* woven from the fibers of the leaves of *doyo*, *Curculigo latifolia* Dryander, Amaryllidaceae. Figures and statues, which depict or attract *wook*, or which should be occupied by a *wook* have to be made of *potukng* wood. Mostly these figures take a human-like shape.

Other, similar, carved figures, which are made of ironwood, *teluyatn*, *Eusideroxylon zwageri*, have an entirely different function. These are the exchange souls, the *kelakar*. Several of them are generally displayed within the altar area and each is designated as a compensation (*ganti*) or exchange soul for a patient. They are offered without a special ritual. Their length can differ; however, they always show their sex: the male with loincloth, the female with skirt. The *kelakar* can be considered a symbolic substitute for a human sacrifice, a simulacrum.

#### 4. Some of the Spirits/Ghosts the *Beliatn* have to deal with

While the spirits originally worshipped by adherents of an archaic animism are located in and belong to individual animals, plants, natural phenomena and ritual objects (Zahorka, 2004), the spirits of the Benuaq roam the natural environment. They are not the spirits of individual plants or animals, but they are associated with trees, forests, mountains, swamps, water, fields or villages. They are territorial spirits. Most of them are generally benevolent if rewarded by the *beliatn* with adequate offerings.

A helpful sky spirit associated with (former) headhunting raids (and so with the color of red) is *nayug*. He controls the keeping of the *adat* (customary) rules and is an aid to the *beliatn*, as is the *timang* spirit during *Belian* rituals. However, both punish people, who disregard the *adat*, with sicknesses. The mediating friendly rice spirit, *lolakng luikng*, has already been mentioned.

A group of generally good spirits, which the *beliatn* asks for aid, is the *tangkai*. The helpful *mulukng* (already mentioned) belong to them, as do the *juata* water spirits, the *madakng*, the *nyahuq* and the *tonoi*. The *juata* spirits are associated with the rainbow, with pregnancy and delivery, but they are also responsible for diarrhea and dysentery. The *madakng* are mountain spirits that can create body pain. The *nyahuq* are associated with the omen birds and with *puti* that is the *Mangris* tree *Koompassia excelsa* (Becc.) Taub., Caesalpiniaceae. The *nyahuq* also lead the soul of the deceased to the other world. The *tonoi* earth spirits guard the village and the ritual objects like the gongs, the *tempayan* and the *mandaus*. They are not as powerful as the others are, but they are the protective spirits in the village, and are associated with the color white. The *kuyakng* are tree spirits associated with the color green and with the *Waringin* tree *nunuq ringin*, a strangling fig, *Ficus benyamina* L., Moraceae. These spirits can cure, and they can even influence life expectancy, though, they also can create madness.

The great varieties of mountain and forest spirits that are called *wook* are associated with the color black. They include the *mulaakng* family who can abduct a *juus* if not rewarded with adequate offerings. This family is associated with the *deraya sepatukng* tree, which is *Horsfieldia grandis*, Myristicaceae.

Specified as evil are the spirits known as the *banci*, the *bongai* and the *tentowijaq*. The *Banci*, a powerful female *wook*, is responsible for many severe diseases like malaria and encephalitis. There are some remarkable parallels between the *banci* and the Bali-Hindu witch *Rangda*. To pacify her, a great variety of offerings and blood are needed. *Bongai* and *tentowijaq* are powerful forest *wook* that can create a bulk of various diseases by abducting human *juus*. To attempt them to return a *juus*, the blood of sacrificed animals is obligatory. Unspecified groups of evil spirits are also called *papaq* or *papaiq*. Local variations exist.

## 5. Attracting and Luring the Spirits to Enter and the Diagnosis

To look into the cause of the disease and to identify the responsible spirit (the diagnosis), the *beliatn* listens to the long-winded reports of some family members of the patients about the history of the sicknesses (“*case history*”, anamnesis) and about the dreams and strange encounters they have had recently.

Then, all spirits have to be lured into the room. They are supposed to settle within the altar environment and in the swing-shaped constructions with the five-color rice, the *kelenkakng eboq*. These efforts are made during the second and third night of a four-night *belian sentiu* session. On the second night, to accommodate the spirits’ entering the room, the last platform in front of the house is connected with a long string of *rotan wentonik* to the top of the altar. On the third night a ladder-shaped connection, *tukar wook* (*tukar* = ladder), made of *bete tuak* (*bete* = leaf), the leaves of the *Aren* palm *Arenga pinnata*, (partially visible in Figure 1 and Figure 4) is added.

When the ritual starts on the third night, a heap of long branches is piled in front of the house. These are the homes to the spirits. The branches are from the eight plant species surrounding the altar and some more, like *tae*, *Canarium* sp., Burseraceae; *kelebahuq*, *Glochidion obscurum* var. *macrocalyx* J. J. Smith, Euphorbiaceae; *kayutn arakng*, *Diospyros* sp., Ebenaceae and *nunuq ringin*, *Ficus benyamina* L., Moraceae. Inviting bee wax torches

light and brighten the entrance. The *beliatn* appears in the door taking up a polite, devote attitude, and sings, demanding that the spirits enter the room (Figure 4). After a while, the branches are laid down in front of the altar and afterwards on the altar. During this time, the *beliatn* are singing and performing inviting gestures. When the spirits have settled at the altar, the branches are carried out. Now, the room is teeming with spirits. Some *beliatn* use a swing fixed in the open door to allure the spirits to enter the room. It is called *kelengkakng wook* (*kelengkakng* = swing). The fringes of the swing have to be of *bete tuak*, the leaves of the Aren palm *Arenga pinnata*.

During the third night, the diagnosis has to be established, and that means the spirit causing the disease must be identified.



Figure 4. Inviting the spirits to enter

## THE RITUAL PROPHYLAXIS AND THE BLOOD SACRIFICE

To avoid the spreading of the sickness to healthy relatives of the patient, the *beliatn* provides prophylactic rituals. All people present get some white rice paste (and later also blood from the sacrificed animals) rubbed onto their fronts, and fragrant “holy water” *danum bungaq mayang* is sprayed over them. The *beliatn* also keeps his “leaf sword” *biowo* and torches, as well as red and yellow fabrics, on hand, while singing over their heads in order to avert evil spirits.

For prophylaxis, family members also have to sit on a throne-like *pantiq* in front of the house. The *beliatn* holds a big branch of *nunuq ringin*, *Ficus benjamina*, over their head and pours a large quantity of “holy water” over branches and individuals. *Nunuq ringin* is the home of the *kuyakng* tree spirits, which can heal and influence the life span, though; they also can make people mad. The singing *beliatn* requests that the *kuyakng* provide a positive influence on the person concerned (Figure 5).

All *Belian* rituals afford a blood sacrifice of chickens, *piaq*, or pigs, *uneq*, and, on major occasions, even a buffalo. The offerings are the immaterial *semangat* and the *juus* of the sacrificed animal, not the body. This offering is directly dedicated to the identified spirit responsible for the malady. Then the spirit will respond with a blessing. The blood is the stuff for protecting from evil spirits and for purification.



Figure 5. *Beliatn* Ran performing prophylaxis

After these offerings have been made, the *beliatn* starts to thoroughly read and judge all the parts of the sacrificed pig's liver (*ate*) and of the spleen (*lapikng*), as if they were segments of a map. When he encounters special patterns, he can distinguish messages from the spirit concerning the success of the ritual, the health of the people involved in the ritual and on future events.

## THE RITUAL THERAPY

### (1) The Extraction of the Disease with the *Telolo* and its Return to the Causing Spirit Depicted in the *Sepatukng Silih*, the “Spittle Statue”

The *telolo* is an important instrument of the *beliatn* in his therapy. It is a half leaf of a banana tree thinly split and bundled together on one side. He puts it on the sick body part of the patient and extracts the disease with it (Figure 6). He then carefully shakes or plucks the disease from the *telolo* and hands it over to the blood in the bowl or to the five-color rice in the *kelenkakng eboq*.

However, if the illness causing spirit is already “personally” identified and the signs on the liver show that he is willing to take the disease back, then the *beliatn* attaches the disease directly to a statue which depicts this spirit “personally”. This statue is the *sepatukng silih*, the “spittle statue” (*silih* = saliva). It is carved from *potukng* wood, *Melicope incana*.

The following describes a ritual in which two *beliatn* have identified the powerful *tentowajak* spirit as the culprit. His *sepatukng silih* has a pointed hat (an attribute of dangerous spirits), a face surrounded with red paint, and painted arms without hands. He is adorned with the fragrant flowers of basil. The most appalling thing about this spirit statue, however, is the painted bag hanging around his neck. With this bag, he is supposed to carry the disease back to his abode. This peculiar object, *kolit sepootn*, is the bag-shaped first bract (botanic *prophyll*) borne on the inflorescence of the *Pinang* palm, *Areca catechu*. To activate the spirit in the statue, the *beliatn* keeps it to the *awiir* and sings for a long time.





Figure 6. Extracting the disease with the *Telolo*

After that, the patients smear (or spit) their own saliva on/at the figure to get rid of the disease. Alternatively, the mother performs this with the saliva of her sick child (Figure 7). Moreover, the *beliatn* presses and rubs the *telolo*, with the extracted disease, on the spirit's bag to transfer the disease into it. Afterwards, somebody carries the statue with the diseases in the bag back to the forest. The Dayak Basap of the Mangkalihat Peninsula do a similar thing with their disease bearing statues (Zahorka, 2002).



Figure 7. Saliva to be applied to the *Sepatukng Silih*

## (2) Catching the Lost *Juus* with the *Tolakng Tintikng* and its Re-implanting into the Patient's Body

*Tolakng bulaan* is *Bambusa vulgaris* Schrader, Poaceae, and *tintikng* is the boiled rice inside. This is a pre-ceramic technique used to boil food. The *tolakng tintikng* is a piece of bamboo filled with boiled rice and often decorated at the front with coconut leaves, or blackened. It is the most important instrument of the *beliatn* because it acts like a magnet to the lost souls. During the third night, these objects are fixed below each rung of the ladder,

and bundles of them, together with a fried chicken sitting on them, are kept over the heads of the patients.

At the last performance during a *belian sentiu* session, the *beliatn* dances with furious drumming and falls into a trance. The helper covers him with a fabric. This lasts at least half a minute. In this state, the spirit reveals to him the hiding place of the soul. Then the *beliatn* jumps up, grasps a *tolakng tintikng* and pokes eagerly into the spot that was revealed to him (Figure 8). This can be the branch of a plant or the bottom of a *tempayan* or one of the small houses for spirits as shown in the figure. Then, from the front of the bamboo stick, he pulls out a tiny thread-shaped soul and on closer examination and assessment he recognizes to which patient the soul belongs. Then, he massages the soul thoroughly into the sick body part of the concerned patient.



Figure 8. Soul-catching with the *Tolakng Tintikng*

After the disease is extracted with the *telolo* and the missing *juus* re-implanted, the patient is supposed to become healthy. The following day, after the end of the curing ritual, the crown of the *beliatn* is hung in front of the door indicating that the house is now *tuhing*, which means taboo, to nonresidents for four days.

Another healing ritual, but with much more furious dancing and drumming, is the *belian bawo*, which was last performed in the Lempunah longhouse in 1976 on occasion of a *gugu tautn* ritual (Bonoh, 1985). The historically younger *belian sentiu* ritual has now replaced it. The *belian* curing rituals of the Benuaq are shamanistic rites combining elements of medium ship, wandering and possession shamanisms (Massing, 1982; Herrmans, 2004).

### SOME ADDITIONAL NOTES

The Benuaq rituals are part of their religion, which they call *adat nahaa*. The official Indonesian term for this traditional tribal belief is Hindu Kaharingan, but this name is unknown among the Benuaq (Weinstock, 1983). Yet, several elements of their faith are obviously related to ancient Hinduism. For example, their creator and highest spirit is *Letala*, etymologically most probably derived from the ancient highest Hindu authority *Batara* (with the *Badui* also *Batara*). Under his deity's spiritual authority, according to the myths of the

Benuaq, are a great number of *Seniang* or *Sangiang* spirits who are responsible for the sun, the moon, the stars, the rain, the winds; they are the ancestors of the animals and of many *wook*. On behalf of *Letala* they watch over human *adat* and over their morals and taboos. Within this pantheon, they exist above the *wook*.

Another evidence of the Hindu influence on the *belian* rituals of the Dayak Benuaq is they do not use palm wine or other alcoholic beverages in contrast to other tribes in Kalimantan, for example the Ot Danum Dayak (Helbig, 1982) or the Tumon Dayak (Zahorka, 2001) where plenty of *tuak* during rituals is compulsory. Though many Benuaq are now member of Christian denominations, they still faithfully perform their rituals as a part of their cultural heritage and *adat*.

The payment for the *beliatn* is small; however, he and his helpers get the right halves of the sacrificed pig. The total expense of a four-day *belian senti*u executed for two families performed by two *beliatn* and with two sacrificed pigs in Zahorka (2007b) was told at least IDR 6,000,000, at this time at least USD 400.

After one ritual, *Beliatn* Ran did something rather profane, which I would like to share here. At the end in the last night, at 3 a.m., the hosts served boiled pig meat and rice as a late dinner for all of the people present. When I got greasy fingers, *Beliatn* Ran, grinning, offered me his *telolo* as a tissue. I used it appropriately and then shook it jokingly over the bowl with the blood sacrifice; all of which drew a laugh from the gathering.

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