

SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS IN *TANGON* AND THEIR CONNECTION WITH ETHNIC RANAU DUSUN BELIEFS

(Unsur-unsur Keajaiban dalam Tangon dan Perkaitannya dengan Konteks Kepercayaan Etnik Dusun di Ranau)

Steeffi Yalim

Stafie_631@yahoo.com

*Low Kok On

lowkokon@ums.edu.my

Faculty of Humanities, Arts & Heritage,
University Malaysia Sabah.

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Abstract

Storytelling (*monusui*) is an oral tradition handed down from generation to generation among the Dusun ethnic group in Sabah. In the past, the narration of *tangon* (folktales) was a form of entertainment and an informal medium of education for the Dusun ethnic. A total of 44 *tangon* were successfully collected during fieldworks conducted in the state of Ranau. On examining the 44 *tangon*, 13 were found to be stories that contain supernatural elements or elements of magic. Among these are phenomena such as “humans being resurrected”, “humans giving birth to animals”, “humans morphing into birds”, and many more. These elements in *tangon* are the result of its creator’s imagination and creativity. The issue here is that if these elements are not analysed and highlighted, we will not be able to comprehend the imagination, creativity, and beliefs of the previous generations. The result of the analysis by way of interpretation of these supernatural elements in *tangon* shows that the Ranau Dusun ethnic group had a rich imagination and a great deal of creativity in conceiving these

magical elements. In addition, their beliefs, which were part of the Ranau Dusun practices in the past, were also inserted in *tangon*.

Keywords: Magic in *tangon*, Ranau Dusun, creativity, supernatural elements, beliefs

Abstrak

Bercerita (monusui) ialah budaya turun-temurun dalam kalangan etnik Dusun di Sabah. Penyampaian tangon (cerita rakyat) pula merupakan hiburan dan medium pendidikan secara tidak formal dalam kalangan etnik Dusun di Sabah pada suatu ketika dahulu. Sejumlah 44 buah tangon telah berjaya dikumpulkan dalam kerja lapangan yang dilakukan di Daerah Ranau. Setelah diteliti, 12 tangon didapati kaya dengan unsur keajaiban. Antara unsur keajaiban yang dimaksudkan adalah seperti “manusia dihidupkan semula”, “manusia melahirkan binatang”, “manusia menjelma menjadi burung” dan banyak lagi. Unsur keajaiban ini merupakan imaginasi dan kreativiti si pencipta tangon. Permasalahan yang timbul di sini ialah jika unsur-unsur ini tidak dianalisis dan ditonjolkan, maka imaginasi, kreativiti dan kepercayaan rakyat pada suatu ketika dahulu tidak akan kita fahami. Hasil analisis secara interpretasi terhadap unsur-unsur keajaiban tangon Dusun Ranau mendapati bahawa etnik Dusun Ranau kaya dengan kreativiti dan imaginasi dalam penciptaan unsur-unsur keajaiban. Selain itu, dalam tangon Dusun Ranau juga, didapati ada menyelitkan unsur kepercayaan yang menjadi sebahagian daripada amalan yang diamalkan oleh masyarakat Dusun suatu ketika dahulu.

Kata kunci: Tangon magis, Dusun Ranau, kreativiti, unsur-unsur keajaiban, kepercayaan

INTRODUCTION

In the past, the Dusun people were fond of narrating folktales as a form of entertainment during leisure time. Such storytelling usually occurred when the villagers worked, or rested in the fields, or socialized with friends at home. At night, these folktales were also narrated to help put young children to sleep (informants: Sintia Lubak, Zita Giba Sari and Dumi Koriki). According to Pugh-Kitingan (2012, p. 147), the Dusun society referred to these folktales as *tangon* which in the Dusun Liwan language

means “stories of the past”. They were told by those who worked in the fields as a form of entertainment (Gallus and Low, 2016, p. 28). Ismail (2001, p. 3) noted that oral stories played an important role in conveying lessons and moral education in traditional societies. Similarly, *tangon* also served as a form of informal education that included values and lessons for listeners among the Dusun ethnic group in the past.

Normally, the Ranau Dusun *tangon* would be recounted by the elders, and although its listeners come from all walks of life, they would mostly be youngsters or children. The *tangon* storyteller would normally deliver his stories using his own creativity to make it more interesting (informants: Aban Kumporo and Sintia Lubak; Shamsuddin Kasim, 1963, p. 532). As a result, most *tangon* are narrated in tones that differ from the normal speaking voice, depending on the variety of themes and messages in the stories (Harun, 2003, p. 57).

Research into the folklore of the Dusun ethnic group in Sabah has been minimal. Based on the study of its literature, Dusun ethnic folktales were first published as reading material for school students. This task was undertaken due to the awareness that the various ethnic folklore in Sabah at that time should be preserved. Based on the records preserved in Sabah State Archives, St. Francis Xavier’s Secondary School was the first institution in Sabah to collect and publish *tangon* in 1968 as reading material for its students. This was followed by Sabah Museum and State Archives, which collected and published Sabah folktales in 1986 and 1990. Researchers found that all these publications were simply a retelling of Dusun folktales that were obtained during some fieldwork and without any form of academic research. Thus, they were only suitable for general light reading.

Low’s (2014) study focused on the humorous story of Abu Nawas, which was obtained during fieldwork conducted across various places in Sabah. His study’s discussion was on the comparative analysis between the original story of Abu Nawas and its Sabahan version using the theory of superiority. He found that both versions contain the elements of “sudden victory” and “the people’s feeling of superiority”, which elicited hilarity in the listeners. Additionally, he found that the original version has more than one motive in each story.

Subsequently, Gallus and Low (2016) collected and analysed the themes in the folktales of the Dusun Liwan ethnic group in Tambunan. Among the several themes they identified and highlighted are deception for one’s own interest, greed that leads to one’s downfall, intelligence that

brings reward, envy towards other people's possessions, love for another, magic that brings wealth, unending regret, cruel mothers, foolishness that leads to downfall, and bullying of weaker folks. In the researchers' observation, the themes of Dusun Liwan folktales that were identified by Gallus and Low (2016) can be divided into positive and negative themes. The positive themes are intelligence that brings reward, love for another, and magic that brings wealth. The negative themes are deception for one's own interest, greed that leads to one's downfall, envy towards other people's possessions, cruel mothers, foolishness that results in downfall, and bullying of weaker folks.

Based on the above discussion about the earlier research done on the folktales of various Sabah ethnic groups, there is much potential for further research on Sabah folktales. In this study, the researchers have chosen to analyse the *tangon* of the Ranau Dusun ethnic group. After examining the *tangon* gathered from around Ranau District, the researchers have found that they contain many elements of a supernatural nature. The issue is that if these elements are not analysed and highlighted, then the imagination, creativity, and beliefs of the people in the past will not be understood. Consequently, the researchers have chosen to analyse how these elements relate to Ranau Dusun beliefs. Before presenting the result of the fieldworks in which the *tangon* were collected, it is best to first introduce the Ranau Dusun ethnic group.

THE RANAU DUSUN ETHNIC GROUP

The Dusun ethnic group who live in Ranau District are generally known as Ranau Dusun. Ranau District is situated in the middle of Sabah and is surrounded by seven other districts, namely Tuaran, Kota Belud, Tambunan, Keningau, Pitas, Kota Marudu, and Beluran (Figure 1). Based on an article in Kinabalu Magazine (1953, p. 33), the word "Ranau" comes from the word *danau* in Dusun language, meaning lake. According to myth, the current town of Ranau used to be a lake. The official website of the Ranau District Office (2011) puts forth that the name "Ranau" originates from *ranahon*, which is the Dusun word for paddy field. It is believed that the current town of Ranau was previously inhabited by nomadic people who cultivated hill paddy, tobacco, and other plants in the hilly terrains.

Regarding their origin, the Ranau Dusun ethnic group believe that their ancestors came from Nunu Karagan (Nunuk Ragang), a location that is close to Kg. Tampias on the eastern side of Ranau. According to oral

tradition, the Dusun people originated in Sungai Labuk before arriving and settling in Nunu Karagan (*Kinabalu Magazine*, 1953, p. 35). On closer examination, it appears that most Kadazan and Dusun ethnic groups associate their ancestors as coming from Nunuk Ragang before migrating across Sabah and forming other Kadazan-Dusun ethnic groups that exist today (Low, 2005, p. 36; Low, 2006, p. 44; Low & Azlan Shafie, 2014, p. 74).

In an interview, Mohd. Din Solinggong (informant: District Officer Ranau) told that there are 12 Dusun ethnic groups in Ranau, which are Liwan, Tuhauon, Sarawon, Tinagas, Lobou, Bundu, Talantang, Kogosingan, Tagahas, Sungai, Tombonuo, and Putih. In this study, most of the *tangon* were obtained from the Dusun Budu, Liwan, Sarawon, and Tagahas ethnic informants.

Hamiddun (1991, p. 19) reported that the majority of Ranau inhabitants first became involved in hill paddy cultivation around the 1920s. This was followed by the introduction of rubber and coffee cultivation in the 1940s. Due to the fall in prices of rubber and coffee, other plants such as highland vegetables were introduced, particularly in the highlands of Kundasang. In the Ranau valleys, vegetables and *markisa* (passion fruit) began to be cultivated. In addition, grazing fields and the opening of freshwater fish ponds were also carried out. Hamiddun (1991, p. 21) further adds that plants such as cocoa and tea, which were introduced in the 1980s, were well received, especially in Napalak, Paginatan, and several other areas in Ranau District.

The establishment of educational institutions provided opportunities for Ranau inhabitants to seek education. Hamiddun (1991, p. 22) and Mohd. Din Solinggong (informant: District Officer of Ranau) related that a significant population of Ranau inhabitants also worked in the government and private sectors. Apart from that, the tourism sector became one of the main sources of revenue for Ranau (Daerah Ranau, 2011). For example, dairy cattle rearing in Kundasang has become one of the many tourist attractions (*Sektor Penternakan Lembu Tenusu*, 2016).

RANAU DUSUN *TANGON* COLLECTION FIELDWORK

Four series of fieldwork for collecting *tangon* were carried out in nine selected villages of the Dusun ethnic group in Ranau District. Figure 1 shows the villages visited for the purpose of collecting *tangon*. The first round of fieldwork was carried out from August to November 2016, the

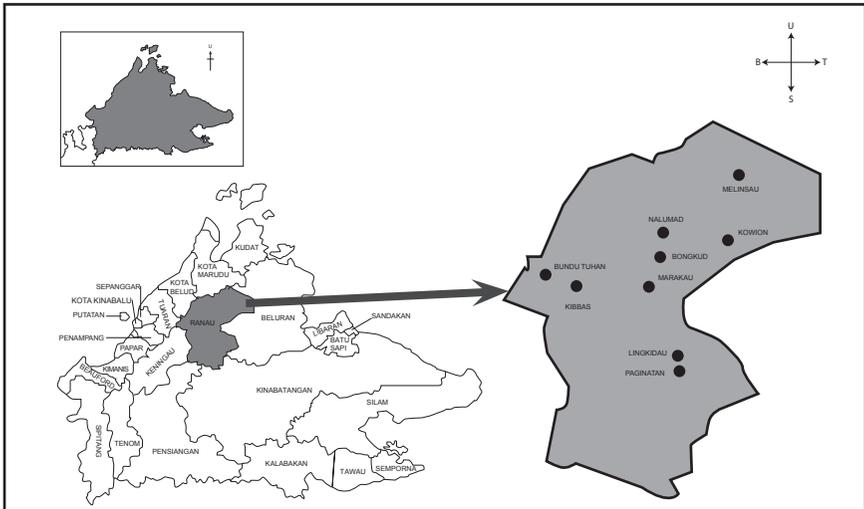


Figure 1 Map of villages visited by researchers.
(Source: Land and Survey Department, Ranau)

second was carried out from June to October 2017, the third was carried out from January to August 2018, and the final round was carried out in April 2019. During these fieldworks, 27 informants were interviewed either individually or in groups. As a result of the fieldworks, 44 *tangon* were collected, 13 of which contain supernatural elements and, as such, were selected for analysis in this study (Appendix I).

After obtaining the 44 *tangon* from the fieldworks conducted, the next important step was to transcribe them into verbatim text. Once the transcription process was completed, the researchers counterchecked the written *tangon* against the original recordings made during the fieldworks. This was then followed by translating the transcribed *tangon* into Malay language then English in this article (Appendix II). For terms that were not clearly understood, the researchers either referred to *Komiboros Dictionary Kamus Dusun Melayu-Dusun-English* (2014) or directly contacted the informants to get clarification for the said terms. After the context and function of the Ranau Dusun *tangon* were examined, the researchers began to analyse the supernatural elements in the selected 13 *tangon*.

THE CONTEXT OF RANAU DUSUN *TANGON*'S DELIVERY

Dundes (1980, p. 23) stated that the context of a folklore item depends on its presentation in a specific social institution. According to Debes *et al.* (2005, p. 63), context means the position, the society's identity, the time or day, and temperature or season. In this study, several contexts of the *tangon* have been identified, which involve the time and place of the storytelling.

Zita Giba Sari, Sintia Lubak, and Simah Bt Kinang (informants) stated that, in the past, the Ranau Dusun ethnic group delivered *tangon* at night for the purpose of putting their babies to sleep. This was the normal context for the delivery of *tangon* by other ethnic groups and races. Taha Abd. Kadir (1985, p. ii) cited as example that Malay storytellers would relate these stories to their children and grandchildren as entertainment or bedtime stories. In this context, the grandparents or parents would be the storyteller and the children would be the listeners. The researchers found that apart from being a form of entertainment for the whole family, the practice of relating folktales was a good way to put young children to sleep. There were parents who had to complete tasks at night and, therefore, use storytelling to put their children to sleep first so as not to be disturbed.

According to Dumi Koriki (informant), storytelling was not confined only to the home; in fact, it was also done while people worked in the paddy fields or hills during planting season. In this context, the activity of relating folktales was done to alleviate the feeling of fatigue endured by the Dusun Ranau farmers. As recorded by Ismail (2001, p. 3), Malay farmers related stories to entertain themselves while they worked in the paddy fields and farms.

Apart from that, storytelling also took place when people stayed up late at night in the event of the death of a Ranau villager. This context happened in the past and sometimes happens in the present day. In relation to this, Sintia Lubak (informant) stated that when a villager dies, it remains customary for close family members and other villagers to visit and keep vigil with family members of the deceased. While holding night vigil, among the activities of the guests would be to share stories through *tangon* delivery sessions. This activity is carried out to prevent those who are keeping vigil from falling asleep. Here, Sintia Lubak (informant) stressed that the stories shared are not humorous, out of respect for the family members mourning the deceased. In order to avoid storytelling that might

lead to laughter, relating *tangon* while keeping vigil is sometimes scrapped altogether.

Storytelling also occurs while clearing paddy planting areas, though it takes place within the family circle only. The grandparents or parents would narrate stories to their youngsters who help with the land clearing. Other than helping to divert attention away from fatigue, this activity indirectly helps to convey admonitions or advice to children on moral values that are contained in the story or *tangon* related by the grandparents or parents (informants: Aban Kumporo and Losibit Kaatik).

The contexts in which *tangon* are related within the Ranau Dusun ethnic group are not limited to specific situations only, but it can also take place in other social situations, such as entertaining house guests and visitors whereby chats are interwoven with storytelling sessions. Sometimes, *tangon* storytelling also occurs when villagers gather at a resting place after a long day's work, reaffirming that it can take place at any time.

SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS AND THEIR CONNECTION TO RANAU DUSUN ETHNIC BELIEFS

The supernatural elements that appears in most folktales are associated with the illogical characteristics of folklore. Syed Abdullah (2011, p. 2) stated that culture and tradition that evolve from folklore cannot be questioned in terms of logic as it is prelogical. In Ranau Dusun *tangon*, illogical supernatural elements are also inserted in the stories, some of which are related to Ranau Dusun beliefs.

In general, the Aarne-Thompson-Uther (ATU) Classification of Folk Tales catalogue (*Multilingual Folk Tale Database*, n.d.) is the most frequently used system of categorization of folktales by literary researchers (Harryizman & Zulaikha, 2013, p. 353; Gallus & Low, 2016, p. 29). Upon further examination, the 13 *tangon* that were selected from the 44 *tangon* collected in this study's fieldworks were found to contain elements of magic under the category of "Tales of Magic" in the ATU catalogue.

Under the "Tales of Magic" category, miraculous stories include "The Axe Falls into the Stream", "The Miraculous Child" and many more that contain supernatural elements. In the story "The Miraculous Child", for example, a princess gives birth to a monster that eventually turns into a prince. From the *tangon* collected in the fieldworks, the supernatural element that was first identified is "humans and animals can fly". Such a

phenomenon can be found in the Ranau Dusun *tangon* entitled “Raja Teuka” and “Gintawasoi” (Appendix II). In “Raja Teuka”, the title character has a winged horse that could fly through the skies. He rides this horse to help his father who was losing a battle. The winged horse is a familiar feature in the folklore of other countries. For example, in Greek mythology, a winged horse named Pegasus appears (Godfrey, 2009, p. 24) and is ridden by Bellerophon (Shapiro, 1983, p. 114). In Nusantara mythology, the winged horse is known as *kuda semberani*. In Javanese folklore, *kuda semberani* is ridden by a king, queen, or commander (Adnand, 2016, p. 115). The winged horse in Dusun *tangon* and other folktales gives the idea that it is a status symbol or reflection of a person’s hierarchy at that time. This is because, evidently, the horse rider is always of royalty, a deity, or a demigod. Although in “Raja Teuka”, it is not mentioned specifically how the title character obtained the winged horse, his status as a prince suggests that it is ridden and owned by royalty. Similarly, Bellerophon, the son of Glaukos, was gifted with golden reins to tame Pegasus (Shapiro, 1983, p. 114).

In the context of Dusun beliefs, a horse is said to be the incarnation of an evil spirit known as Duarung (informant: Aban Kumporo), which can also morph into a deer, pig, or buffalo. Duarung is also believed to bring about diseases such as *sampar* (an epidemic spread by animals), which can cause multiple instant human deaths. In order to expel Duarung and prevent its disturbance among the villagers, a ritual is carried out by a *bobolian* (master of ritual) whereby an animal is slaughtered and fed to Duarung (Arena Wati, 1978, p. 59). This shows that the appearance of a horse in Ranau Dusun *tangon* is closely related to their belief about the spirit Duarung.

In the *tangon* “Gintawasoi”, the title character possesses magic powers that turn taro leaves into wings for himself. With these, he is able to fly to the heavens to kill his daughter, who is hidden by his wife in a stilt house that she built. Upon reaching, Gintawasoi blows a dart at his daughter, who then dies. The portrayal of Gintawasoi here is similar to the spirit of rain on a hot day, known as “Sarau” in Dusun beliefs. This is because Gintawasoi told his wife that he would return home when it rains on a hot day. As such, the Dusun people believe that when it rains on a hot day, evil spirits will abound and Sarau will emerge with a blowpipe and blow darts; those who are hit by its darts will fall sick and may even die (Arena Wati, 1978, p. 68). This is the reason why it is taboo for Dusun people to work or be outdoors when it rains on a hot day. It is therefore understandable

that this phenomenon is considered significant enough to be known, made taboo, and even included in *tangon* among the Dusun society in order to avoid catastrophe.

Apart from this, there are other *tangon* that highlight the element of transformation such as animals turning into humans, humans turning into animals, and humans appearing as objects. For instance, in the *tangon* “Bulontoi and the Owl”, the owl would turn into a beautiful woman whenever Bulontoi goes to the fields. In the *tangon* “Keumi Si Mongindapu”, the owner of the house that Keumi intrudes when he is lost in the jungle could transform into a wild boar. Every dinner time, one of the house owner’s family members would dive into the river and come out as a wild boar. The boar would then be cut up, cooked, and eaten. Not long after eating dinner, the one who had transformed into the wild boar would magically return to life again. In the *tangon* “Nopung”, Yanak Anak’s wife turns into dry leaves and twigs while journeying to her parents’ house. Similarly, in the *tangon* “Ro’o Bakas” (Jaws of a Boar), the jaws of a wild boar that was roasted by Kakie transforms into a human when it is getting married to a girl who was willing to marry the jaws of a boar.

Upon scrutiny, the phenomenon of transformation from one form to another is found to be rooted in Kadazan-Dusun ethnic beliefs. According to Kadazan ethnic beliefs, the spirit of paddy can be incarnated as a woman. There is also a Dusun ethnic legend that tells the tale of a woman who appears during harvesting season to test the farmers—those who help her would reap a good harvest. In Kadazan-Dusun myth, there is a tale that connects *bambarayon* (the spirit of paddy) to the blood of the daughter of “Kinoingan” (the creator); Huminudon is sacrificed by Kinoingan to become various types of paddy, which serve as staple food for human beings (Low & Lee, 2012, p. 70; Low & Sri Ningsih, 2013, p. 46). The Murut Tahol ethnic group who live in the interior of Sabah also believe that there is a spirit from the unseen world that can turn into a beautiful woman, and an enchanted snake that can turn into medicinal leaves (Normadiyah *et al.*, 2017, p. 67). Thus, it can be concluded that the supernatural element of transformation is a unique feature in not only Ranau Dusun *tangon*, but also in the beliefs of the ethnic natives of Sabah.

The supernatural element of “resurrection after death” is also found in Ranau Dusun *tangon*. For example, in “Nopung”, Yanak Anak marries a woman (in the form of a spirit or ghost) without his knowledge. When he discovers that his wife has died and is buried, he requests for her body to be exhumed. He then bathes her with the blood of a chicken, buffalo,

and pig until she is revived. In this tale, animal blood is deemed to be miraculous and can revive a dead person. On further study, it is found that this ritual is also used in the Dusun society to calm down a situation (Low, 2006, p. 80). The use of animal blood in this *tangon* can be interpreted as a “calming ritual” to soothe Yanak Anak’s in-laws, who are angry with him for desecrating their daughter’s grave. Secondly, after Yanak Anak’s wife is resurrected, his in-laws express their gratitude by refusing to accept his dowry, which should have been given previously, and instead holding a feast as a sign of gratitude.

The element of “resurrection after death” is also found in “Gintawasoi”. In this *tangon*, the character of Torindak Domot is resurrected by an unnamed man who finds Kosumbui after hearing her cries. The man immerses the ends of his hair in a bowl of water and sprinkles the water onto Torindak Domot’s corpse. Immediately, Torindak Domot comes back to life and the wounds on her body disappear. This act of immersing hair in water, which is then used to revive a dead person in this *tangon*, is closely related to the Dusun ethnic ritual of Mintuhun. Evans (1953, p. 89) reported that water is used in the Mintuhun ritual to save a baby from a taboo that has attracted evil spirits to it, after being kept in a room for seven days. Evans (1953, p. 89) also reported on the use of water in a ritual called *Mintuhun Moniud-siud*. In this ritual, the baby would be immediately bathed with water that has been mixed with seven blades of grass picked by the mother. It is believed that this ritual will extend the life of the baby’s soul by one day and also keep it cheerful. One can interpret this situation of mixing hair and water to be similar to the ritual of a few Dusun ethnic groups that combine water and hair to create magic. This shows that the elements contained in *tangon* are closely related to Dusun ethnic beliefs.

The phenomenon of humans being resurrected, as portrayed in the *tangon* above, is related to Ranau Dusun beliefs about an evil spirit known as “Sarongan”, which is fond of reviving the dead that, in turn, will attack living humans. In order to dissuade Sarongan from disturbing the dead, *parang* (machete), knives, and sharp weapons are impaled into the corpse (Arena Wati, 1978, p. 69; Fung, 1996, p. 8). In addition to that, there is another Ranau Dusun belief about corpses being resurrected if cats jump over them (informant: Yalim Aban). The Dusun people in general also believe this, which is why when a person dies, cats will be confined to prevent this from happening. Thus, it can be concluded that supernatural elements in *tangon* are not randomly included, but are tied to Ranau Dusun beliefs.

The phenomenon of extraordinary birth is another supernatural element found in the researchers' *tangon* collection. For example, in the *tangon* "Tangkayau", the character Kodu gives birth to a human heart. While such a birth is extraordinary, it is even more extraordinary that Hati (the heart as a character) turns into a beautiful woman. On further analysis, it is found that extraordinary birth exists in the folklore of other cultures. Krappe (1944, p. 45), in his comparison of "Tangkayau", reported that stories of women giving birth to animals can be found across the world. The folklore of societies living in Indonesian islands such as Java, Sumatera, Celebes, Timor, and Geram imagine women often giving birth to both a baby and a crocodile. The crocodile would be sent to the river and the family would be tasked with feeding it. If they fail to do so, they would fall ill or even die (Krappe, 1944, p. 48).

This kind of story is also found among the Kamma community in northern Laos. To them, such stories are beliefs passed down from generation to generation and are considered as "totem tales" (stories of spirits and holy objects) and "ancestor thing" (Lindell, 1984, p. 6). Other examples are found in the totem tales of the Kamma community in China. One story is about a man who forbids his child from leaving the house because a fortune teller told him that his child would be eaten by a tiger. One day, a hunter brought a dead tiger. The man and his child goes to see the tiger and proceeds to mock and insult it. Suddenly, the tiger comes to life and devours the man and his child. Due to this incident, the descendants of this man are very respectful of tigers and have made tigers as their totem (Lindell, 1984, p. 7). In Evans' research (1953, p. 160), it is noted that there is a belief in Kadamaian, Sabah, about a woman who gave birth to a python. Consequently, the people in Kadamaian regard pythons as sacred and will not eat them. The *tangon* "Tangkayau" and other stories discussed above contain the element of extraordinary birth, in accordance with the context and function of the tale in different cultures.

In the *tangon* "Togolirung" and "Bulontoi and Tugarang", the characters of Lintaguh and Tugarang cannot be harmed or killed with a *parang*. They also cannot be wounded if attacked with a *parang*. Lintaguh can only be killed if she is pierced on her thumb with the root of a weed, whereas Tunggarang can only be killed if its ear is pierced with a root. This kind of extreme supernatural element can be found in the Dusun Tambunan folktale entitled "Matahari dan Bulan" (The Sun and The Moon). In this tale, two events are depicted in an excessive manner. Firstly, Kinomulok's belly bursts due to the searing heat of two suns. Secondly, Kinomulok dies

due to the heat of the suns, causing her husband, Puruan Sigar, to blow a dart at one of them. The sun that is hit dies, after which it is known as the moon (Manis Gillid, 2016, pp. 141-143). As a comparison, among the Kenyah ethnic group in Sarawak, there is a tale about Bungan, Balan's wife, who dies when she pricks her finger with a needle. Determined to save his wife, Balan digs a hole in the sky and saves her soul from among the other souls of the dead (Othman & Aripin, 2008, p. 35).

Sintia Lubak (informant) said that the *tangon* that were narrated apparently actually happened in the past. Even though the events depicted in the *tangon* cannot be accepted by today's modern reasoning, the depiction of supernatural elements possessed by the characters are interesting and, thus, attracted the listeners' attention in the past. Bascom (1954, p. 343) stated that the main function of a folktale is none other than to entertain. Based on this, it can be said that the supernatural elements in the Ranau Dusun *tangon* also function as a means to entertain its listeners.

CONCLUSION

All the *tangon* analysed in this study show that the Ranau Dusun ethnic group are full of imagination and creativity in terms of creating interesting and extraordinary supernatural elements in their *tangon*. There are elements in these *tangon* that are similar to those in the folklore of other cultures, among them being "humans riding winged horses", "humans transforming into animals", "animals transforming into humans", "humans giving birth to non-humans", and "resurrection after death".

To conclude, the Ranau Dusun ethnic group are certainly rich in its supernatural folklore that is both interesting and entertaining. Some of the elements that are found to be closely related to their beliefs, such as the various spirits around them, are passed on from generation to generation. The uniqueness of Ranau Dusun *tangon* is a testament to the people's creativity in producing *tangon* that entertain and educate, as well as embody their beliefs.

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APPENDIX I

List of Informants

| No. | Name Of Informant | Gender | Village | Occupation |
|-----|---|--------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Aban Kumporo | Man | Kibbas | Farmer |
| 2 | Zita Giba Sari | Woman | Gondohon | Farmer |
| 3 | Dumi Koriki | Woman | Gondohon | Farmer |
| 4 | Laniah Gumpu | Woman | Kibbas | Farmer |
| 5 | Alim Biun | Man | Muhibbah | Research Officer |
| 6 | Joseph S. Sariman | Man | Bundu Tuhan | Community Head |
| 7 | Chlerry Seechlesyia Ubid | Woman | Paginatan | Housewife |
| 8 | Rosita Langi | Woman | Kawiyan | Student |
| 9 | Gitom Gumpol | Woman | Sokid, Bundu Tuhan | Farmer |
| 10 | Santim Limban | Woman | Sokid, Bundu Tuhan | Farmer |
| 11 | Wendy Shakira Shandine Anthony Jamita | Woman | Marakau | Student |
| 12 | Duliah Suana | Woman | Marakau | Housewife |
| 13 | Yalim Aban | Man | Kibbas | Farmer |
| 14 | Haitie Peter | Woman | Nalumad | Housewife |
| 15 | Refley Magansap | Man | Sokid, Bundu Tuhan | Farmer |
| 16 | Willfred Selestin | Man | Bongkud | Enterpreneur |
| 17 | Sintia Lubak | Man | Kibbas | Farmer |
| 18 | Elgie Peter | Woman | Nalumad | Self-employed |
| 19 | Harry Gopog | Man | Kibbas | Teacher |
| 20 | Jhovlie Suani | Man | Kibbas | Teacher |
| 21 | O.K.K Mohd Haji Din Solinggong | Man | Malinsau | District Officer Ranau |
| 22 | Bindang Mantakag | Man | Bongkud | Village Chief |
| 23 | Witer Gunik | Man | Marakau | Teacher |
| 24 | Elsi Jumi | Woman | Paginatan | Self-employed |
| 25 | Noor Atikah Raili | Woman | Matan | Food Preparation Assistant |
| 26 | Siti@Simah Bt Kinang | Woman | Paginatan | Housewife |
| 27 | Mikha Zain | Woman | Paginatan | Enterpreneur |

Summary of Selected Ranau Dusun Tangon

| No. | <i>Tangon</i> | Synopsis of <i>Tangon</i> |
|-----|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Tangkayau | This <i>tangon</i> is about a couple, Kodu (woman) and Kakie (man), who have been married for some time but are childless. One day, she leaves for her parents' house after separating from Kakie as she did not bear him a child. On her journey, a mouse passes in front of her. Due to their beliefs, Kodu returns to her husband's house. Not long after, she becomes pregnant. What is shocking is that she gives birth to <i>tangkayau</i> (heart). Whenever Kodu and Kakie go to the fields, <i>tangkayau</i> would transform into a beautiful girl by the name of Kinomulakan. She would clean the house and prepare meals for Kodu and Kakie. One day, Kinomulakan goes to the king's place to sell cakes. There, a prince falls in love with her. Although he knows that Kinomulakan is just a heart, he still marries her. When the prince brings <i>tangkayau</i> to bathe in the river, <i>tangkayau</i> is swept away but is saved by the prince. Finally, <i>tangkayau</i> changes into Kinomulakan forever. They live happily ever after. |
| 2 | Raja Budak | This <i>tangon</i> tells of a poor couple. Kakie is married to Mosikin. They have a son named Raja Budak. One day, Kakie constructs a well and pours chillies into the water. After that, he tells Raja Budak to soak his clothes in the well. He also tells Raja Budak to soak himself in the well overnight. After that, he tells Raja Budak to go and play with the tiger owned by the king. The king promises that if Raja Budak is not harmed by the tiger, then Raja Budak could wed his daughter, Dayang Sembini. The tiger does not eat Raja Budak because his body tastes of chillies. Finally, Raja Budak marries Dayang Sembini. Kakie and Kodu become rich. |
| 3 | Sandaran Bulan and Sandaran Matahari | This <i>tangon</i> is about a pregnant buffalo that gives birth to two girls. Buffalo names the girls Sandaran Bulan and Sandaran Matahari. When they grow up, Sandaran Matahari leaves Buffalo and meets a man. After Sandaran Matahari leaves, Buffalo falls ill. Sandaran Matahari refuses to return and see Buffalo and Sandaran Bulan. Then Buffalo places a curse on Sandaran Matahari in which everything planted by Sandaran Matahari would turn into snakes and worms, whereas whatever is planted by Sandaran Bulan would thrive. After Buffalo's death, Sandaran Matahari suffers because everything she plants become either snakes or worms. Sandaran Bulan lives a happy life because everything she plants thrive and yield healthy plants. |
| 4 | Yamit and Don | This <i>tangon</i> is about sons being born to a tiger and a deer respectively. The son of the tiger is called Don and the son of the deer is called Yamit. Yamit decides to wander far away after his mother, who is then eaten by the tiger. Yamit goes to a village belonging to Gintawasoi, an ugly monster. He tries his luck to solve a puzzle by Gintawasoi but fails and is imprisoned. Don decides to follow Yamit after the betel nuts he plants have ripened. Don thus goes to the village owned by Gintawasoi. He was able to solve the puzzle given by Gintawasoi. As a reward, Don is married off to Sinundu. Yamit is also freed. The three return home. Yamit decides to go wandering again. In his travels, he meets a girl, Linundus, and they marry. |

| No. | <i>Tangon</i> | Synopsis of <i>Tangon</i> |
|-----|-------------------------|--|
| 5 | Kondongot | <p>This <i>tangon</i> is about a poor man named Kondongot. One day, while Kondongot is trying to dry the small amount of paddy that he had, the wind blows it all away. Kondongot becomes enraged. He then goes to the jungle to look for <i>sopilot</i> (<i>kelulut</i> resin). He succeeds in collecting a large amount of the resin, which he then uses to plug the source of the wind after seeking it. The child of the wind is unable to breathe as their center is blocked. The wind appeals to Kondongot to remove the resin. As Kondongot is very angry, he refuses. The wind gives Kondongot a flute that can fulfil whatever Kondongot wishes for. Kondongot blows on the flute and asks for food. Immediately, food is spread in front of him. Kondongot brings the flute home. After that, Kondongot changes his lifestyle and marries a girl that he likes. The source of the wind then opens on its own. The wind then blows as it normally does.</p> |
| 6 | Togorilung and Lintaguh | <p>In the olden days, there were two girls who had magical powers. Togorilung was a beautiful girl. It is said that if she passes by, all the plants would die. Togorilung was married to Bulontoi. The second protagonist was Lintaguh, who was also a beautiful girl. She also fell in love with Bulontoi. One day, she went to Togorilung's house with the intention of taking away Bulontoi. She poured acid on Togorilung, thus making the latter look ugly. Bulontoi no longer recognized Togorilung. Lintaguh asked Bulontoi to sell the ugly Togorilung. Bulontoi agreed and brought Togorilung to be sold. At the time, Togorilung was pregnant. During the journey, Togorilung escaped so that she could deliver her baby. Bulontoi lived together with Lintaguh without knowing the truth. However, the secret was finally revealed when Bulontoi discovered his son, who was singing his name near a river. Bulontoi became enraged and tried to kill Lintaguh with a <i>parang</i>. Finally, Lintaguh revealed to Bulontoi that she could only be killed by spearing her thumb with a piece of root, which he did. After Lintaguh's death, Bulontoi was reunited with Togorilung and their son.</p> |
| 7 | Raja Teuka | <p>King Koiondu has six daughters and a son by the name of Raja Teuka. He has married off all six princesses to princes. Raja Teuka is always asked to do chores at the palace even though there are many assistants. He is disliked by his father and always does things to anger King Koiondu. If he is asked to sweep the floor, he would become angry and scatter ash all over the floor. One day, the King's enemy threatens him and asks him to look for a bird with seven types of feathers. Initially, he asks his six sons-in-law to look for the bird but they do not succeed. As a result, King Koiondu is attacked by the enemy. When the King's army is on the brink of defeat, Raja Teuka comes to their aid. He comes on a winged horse with sacks filled with pieces of wood, twigs and dry leaves. When all these are scattered, they transform into soldiers. With the aid of these incarnated soldiers, the battle is won. King Koiondu regrets his treatment of Raja Teuka all this while. Finally, he allows Raja Teuka to succeed him on the throne.</p> |

| No. | <i>Tangon</i> | Synopsis of <i>Tangon</i> |
|-----|----------------------------|---|
| 8 | Bulontoi and The Owl | <p>Once upon a time, an owl became pregnant after it accidentally drank Bulontoi's urine. As a result, the owl gave birth to a son. When the son grew up, he played near the river with the village children. There, the owl's son sang the name of Bulontoi. The village children informed Bulontoi about this. Bulontoi became curious and met with the owl's son. Bulontoi asked him to bring him to meet his mother. After meeting the owl, Bulontoi finally learnt the truth. He invited the owl and her son to stay at his house.</p> <p>They lived together and when Bulontoi went to the fields, the owl would transform into a woman and would go the field to help Bulontoi fell trees, catch fish, and cook, all without Bulontoi's knowledge. One day, Bulontoi went home earlier than usual to find out who cooked the meals at his house. He was shocked to see the owl turning into a woman. The woman was the one who often came to the fields to help him. It seems that once Bulontoi witnessed the transformation, she could not turn back into an owl. In the end, Bulontoi lived together with the woman.</p> |
| 9 | Keumi si <i>Mongindapu</i> | <p>There was a man named Keumi who lost his way in the jungle while hunting. In the jungle, Keumi spotted a house. He went inside and ate the food that was in the house as he was very hungry. Keumi waited for the houseowner to return so that he could apologise for what he did. When the houseowner returned, Keumi apologized for having eaten the food without asking for permission. The owner was not angry and, instead, he allowed Keumi to stay with him and his family. Keumi agreed to stay with them. They promised to send Keumi home when the time came. What shocked Keumi was that these people could transform into wild boars. Each time, when night fell, one of them would dive into the river and return home as boars. The boar would then be slaughtered, cut up and cooked. However, not long after dinner, the one who had transformed into a boar would appear again as a human. After living with them for some time, Keumi was sent home on a boar's back. The boar reminded him to always share his food or any boar that he caught while hunting. Since then, Keumi would invite the villagers to eat at his house whenever he managed to catch a boar.</p> |
| 10 | Nopung | <p>This <i>tangon</i> tells of Yanak Anak, who meets a beautiful girl while he is catching frogs. Yanak Anak brings the girl home and marries her without <i>nupong</i> (dowry). Not long after getting married, the girl becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son. When the son grows up, Yanak Anak plans to send some <i>nopung</i> to his wife's parents. At first, his wife does not agree but eventually he convinces her. Strangely, while journeying to her parents' house, his wife transforms into a piece of wood and dry leaf. On arrival, his parents-in-law and their relatives scold him when he tells them of the reason for his visit. They are angry because their daughter has already passed away. Yanak asks that his wife's grave is dug up to exhume her body. His in-laws and relatives plan to kill him if he is not able to bring her back to life. Yanak Anak asks that he is given the chance to do so. He bathes his wife with the blood of a buffalo, a pig, and a chicken. In the end, his wife comes back to life. As her parents are very grateful, they return the <i>nopung</i> from Yanak Anak and hold a big feast out of gratitude.</p> |

| No. | <i>Tangon</i> | Synopsis of <i>Tangon</i> |
|-----|---|---|
| 11 | <i>Ro'o Bakas</i> (Wild Boar's Jaws) | <p>Kakie and Kodu are a childless married couple. One day, Kakie catches a large wild boar (<i>bakas</i>) while hunting. When the boar was cut up, Kakie does not throw away its head; he slices away the skin and does not separate the head from its jaws. Kakie roasts the head of the boar on a rack. A year goes by, Kakie dreams that he meets a very handsome man and the man says he is Kakie's son. At first, Kakie ignores his dream but then begins to have the same dream frequently.</p> <p>In fact, the young man in his dream admits that he is the jaws of the boar that is kept on the rack. One day, Kakie dreams again and the young man in his dream asks Kakie to find a bride for him. Kakie wanders far and wide to find a girl who is willing to marry the jaws of a boar. After a year of wandering around, he finally finds a girl who is willing. On the wedding day, the boar's jaws transforms into a handsome young man. At that moment, Kakie believes that his dream has come true. The boar's jaws that has transformed into a human marries the girl that Kakie soughted for him.</p> |
| 12 | <i>Bulontoi and tugarang</i> | <p>This is a tale about Bulontoi who was married to Sintorong. They lived simply and happily although Bulontoi was just a farmer. Sintorong often helped Bulontoi to cultivate the fields. One day, Tugarang (whose body is similar to that of a lizard) came to see Sintorong, who was heavily pregnant, while Bulontoi was not at home. Tugarang called Sinturong's name from outside the house but she did not respond. Tugarang became angry and changed into a cockroach to enter Sintorong's house. Inside the house, Tugarang offered to comb Sinturong's hair but she did not allow it. Nonetheless, Tugarang looked for a comb and combed Sinturong's hair. Then, Tugarang purposely dropped the comb through the spaces in the bamboo floor. Tugarang asked Sintorong to get the comb. At first, Sintorong refused but after being harassed by Tugarang, she went below the house to get the comb, which had been purposely dropped by Tugarang. While she was down there, she looked up to look for the comb; at the same time, Tugarang poured glutinous rice on her. Tugarang then imprisoned her in a big jar. Tugarang ate the food prepared by Bulontoi before he left for the fields. Tugarang then wrapped itself in a blanket. When Bulontoi returned home, he found the kitchen in a mess, as if a thief had been there. Tugarang told Bulontoi that a dog had entered the house and it did not have the strength to chase the dog away as it was not well. Bulontoi believed Tugarang without knowing that his wife had been stashed in a jar. In the following days, Bulontoi found the kitchen in a mess because Tugarang ate the food prepared by Bulontoi for his wife. Tugarang still maintained that it was sick and unable to clean the kitchen. One day, Tugarang said that it had a dream and asked Bulontoi to send the jar containing Sintorong to her mother's house. Bulontoi agreed and sent the jar to Sintorong's house. Bulontoi lived with Tugarang without knowing what really happened. The next day, Sintorong's mother heard the cries of a baby from the jar. She was shocked to see Sintorong, who had already given birth to her baby in the jar.</p> |

| No. | <i>Tangon</i> | Synopsis of <i>Tangon</i> |
|-----|------------------------------|---|
| 12 | Bulontoi and <i>tugarang</i> | <p>When Sintorung's child grew up, he went to the river with a village boy. There, Sintorung's son sang the name of Bulontoi. When Bulontoi heard about it, he went to his mother-in-law's house and was shocked to see Sintorung there. Sintorung related to Bulontoi what really transpired. Thus, Sintorung found out that it was Tugarang and not his wife who was at his house. Enraged, Bulontoi went home and sharpened his <i>parang</i>. Tugarang said that he would not be able to kill it with a <i>parang</i>. He told Bulontoi that it could only be killed if its ear was pierced with the root of a weed. Bulontoi took the weed root and pierced Tugarang's ear with it. Tugarang died and Bulontoi was reunited with Sintorung and their child.</p> |
| 13 | Gintawasoi | <p>Gintawasoi is married to Imot and they are blessed with a son. One day, Imot goes to the jungle to look for firewood while Gintawasoi looks after their son at home. After gathering firewood, Imot returns home when she remembers that she has to breastfeed her son. Upon arrival, Gintawasoi asks Imot to bathe and then eat. After bathing, Imot goes to the kitchen to eat. While she is eating, Imot sees a baby's hand in the food cooked by Gintawasoi. Imot becomes shocked so she just eats the porridge. When Gintawasoi sees that his wife did not eat the dish he had cooked, he eats it all, including the hands and fingers of a baby inside it. When Imot looked inside the cradle, she finds an ugly puppy. Not long after this incident, Imot becomes pregnant again. While Gintawasoi goes on a journey, Imot goes to her mother-in-law's house and tells her the story. Not far from her in-law's house, she builds a stilt house. Imot gives birth there and her in-laws look after the baby. When Gintawasoi returns, he sees blood stains on Imot's <i>sarong</i>. Imot tells him that their child and Gintawasoi's mother have died. Gintawasoi believes her. Each time she goes to see her child and in-laws, she would tell Gintawasoi that she is catching shrimp. Gintawasoi allows it as he thought she is pregnant again. However, as time goes by, he becomes suspicious and follows Imot. Gintawasoi finally learns that his wife has deceived him. In anger, he climbs the ladder of the hut built by Imot. Imot pushes the ladder and Gintawasoi falls to the ground. Undeterred, he takes some taro leaves to form wings. With these, he flies to the top to kill his child. Without thinking, Gintawasoi blows a dart towards the child, killing it. Imot and her mother-in-law cry upon seeing the child dead. Suddenly, a handsome man comes when he heard the cries of Imot and her mother-in-law. The man sees Torindak Domot, Imot's child, lifeless. The man asks Imot to get some water, which she gives to him. The handsome man immerses the ends of his hair into the water and sprinkles it onto Torindak Domot's body. Immediately, she returns to life. Imot and her mother-in-law are so happy. Torindak Domot falls in love with the man who had brought her back to life. The man agrees to marry her but they would have to follow him back to his place. Before leaving, Gintawasoi's mother kills Gintawasoi. Imot, her mother-in-law and Torindak Domot follow the handsome man back to his home.</p> |