

Beliatnt Sentiyu: Traditional Healing Ceremony in Loa Adat Benuaq, East Borneo

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Abstract

This paper discusses a traditional East Bornean Dayak Benuaq rite of healing called *Beliatnt Sentiyu*. According to the Dayak Benuaq's theory of sickness, disharmony in the universe could cause illness and suffering. The Dayak Benuaq classifies illness into two types: *tahapt rotatn* and *ele rotatn*. Amongst the Dayak Benuaq, it is believed that illness may be caused, for instance, by an-individual's disregard for proper or harmonious relations with his/her physical as well as spiritual world. When sickness or illness occur a traditional healing ceremony or *beliatnt* would be held to restore stability and harmony in the community. This paper is mainly focused on a *beliatnt sentiyu* that was conducted on a patient (*rotatn*) who was suffering from spirit possession. The ceremony was performed by one traditional healer (*pemeliatn*) aided by his personal assistant (*pengugu* or *pengugu harrow*) who is responsible for preparing the required ritual paraphernalia and one accompanying musician (*penu'ung*). The *beliatnt sentiyu* is one important element in the Dayak Benuaq religious system. A *beliatnt sentiyu* healing ceremony is normally held at the patient's own house or longhouse (*lou*) and is performed for a period of a day or more, depending on the gravity of sickness or illness. It may also involve a number of traditional healers. Normally the expenses required for performing the ceremony are borne by the patient or members of his/her family.