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# The Analysis of Food Symbols in the ‘Serarang’ Ritual of the Melanau Likow Community in Dalat, Sarawak

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The *Serarang* ritual is a form of performance performed in the Melanau *Likow* community to be presented to *Ipok*. The presentation consists of symbolic elements based on each type of food served. These symbolic elements are involved with the belief and cosmological system that surround the lives of Melanau *Likow*. The main focus of this research is to analyse the symbol of food in the *Serarang* ritual from the viewpoint of non-verbal communication. This research used an ethnographic approach and the researchers also participated in the ritual. The data was collected through an in-depth interview with the main informant, *Tama Kaul*, and with the other ritual practitioners. The research was conducted in Kampung Medong, Dalat Sarawak. The data analysis found that the food that was delivered to *Ipok* had its own meaning and could be interpreted through shape, colour, and the way it was presented. The food in the *Serarang* tray means love, gratitude, prayer, and hope for more sustenance in the upcoming year. The research also found that the ritual is still practiced to this day by the Melanau *Likow* community and becomes the identity of its existence in the state of Sarawak.

**Keywords:** *Symbol; Food; Serarang ritual; Kaul; Melanau Likow*



## Introduction

Sarawak<sup>1</sup> is a state that is rich in its own cultural heritage and diversity. This cultural diversity is influenced by the diversity of the ethnic community that lives in the Sarawak area. According to the statistics of the Population and Housing Census (2010), issued by the Department of Statistics Malaysia, Melanau is Sarawak's fifth largest ethnic group, with five per cent of the population, which is 123,410 people out of a total of 2,471,140 people. The majority of the Melanau ethnics in Sarawak have embraced Islam and the others Christianity. However, there is the Melanau *Likow* community in Dalat, Sarawak that has preserved their identity through the way of life and culture of ancestors.

The culture and community cannot be separated from the members of the community, since it is the medium for them to convey a message through the symbols in ritual tradition (Mohamed et al., 2010). The symbol and taboos of their ancestors are still deeply embedded in the culture and traditions of the Melanau *Likow* tribe. The belief system and traditions have been their guidance in achieving a better life. It has become a fundamental basis for determining their view of life, behaviours, movements, and ways of thinking. The community of Melanau *Likow* believes in mystic symbols such as ghosts, jinn, *jembalang*, storms, hurricanes, and things that they are scared of. Therefore, to escape all the troubles of life, they worship the extraordinary spirit for the ritual. These symbols have influenced every corner of their lives, whether it brings good luck or vice versa and also brings its meaning. The existence of symbols in the ritual is based on the understanding from the influence of the past generations through imagination, intellectual and emotional experiences and incorporates the psychological and sociological value in the growth of the human soul. The symbols have been used through foods, clothing and jewellery, also there is no need for interpretation or discussion because it is easily understood by individuals and communities with similar experiences and culture. This condition also has been acknowledged by Corbin (1988) while studying Avicenna (Ibn Sina), which is '*the symbol is mediator because it is silence, it speaks and does not speak; and precisely thus it states what it alone can speak*'. Similarly, in the practice of *Serarang* ritual, the symbols used in both food and objects are languages that reflect on the meaning behind the ritual. The meaning of the symbol will be interpreted with the understanding agreed upon by the proponents of the ritual.

There are several studies on food; the patterns of food taken until the symbol is found in foods are within the scope of anthropological studies that have been conducted by Levi- Strauss: 1965, Sutton: 2001. Thus, food refers not only to the daily needs of humans, but is beyond that. This is because the hidden meaning behind the food served is conveyed through non-verbal communication methods such as teaching. According to Knapp (1972), non-verbal communication refers to almost every form of communication that happens in human life except for speech or written text.



Normally, ancient people tend to express their guidance of instructions through existing symbols such as body gestures, facial expressions and objects (symbols) used to convey the meaning. Hence, the existence of this symbol is generally regarded as a measure that carries the meaning that has been stimulated according to the culture of the executed community. This statement is parallel with the culture of the Melanau *Likow* community that also uses food as the element (symbol) which has a certain meaning for a religious event or ritual. For example, *Kubo Beliseng* is an object that is synonymous with the cosmology of the Melanau *Likow* community that brings its meaning to the folklore.

### **Melanau People**

The research of Morris (1953) titled, 'A Melanau Sago Producing Community in Sarawak' discovered some of the origins of this Melanau ethnic group. According to Turner (1999), the word of Melanau has been on the map of Europe since 1595 when the word of 'Melanau' was called '*Millanows*', '*Millanowes*', '*Milanos*', '*Milano*', and also '*A- Liko*'. The Malays in Sarawak used to call the Melanau people 'Melano', meanwhile the Iban community called them '*Lawut*'. According to Turner (1966), *Lawut* means 'people of the river', meanwhile Morris (1953) defined Melanau *Likow* or *A-Liko* as the people from the river. In the past colonial era, this community has been known as 'Melanau Pagan' or 'Melanau Liko'. This statement has been supported by Hassan (2006) that with regard to the Mukah area, the term is used to distinguish them from the Muslim Melanau and Christian Melanau. The term of *A-Liko* is represented solely based on the residents of this community majority living in the rural area, Rajang's riverbank, an area near to the river. According to Amir (2001), the life of the Melanau people is closely related to the river and sea because, for both of them, it is the main source of economy in moulding their way of life. Additionally, the characteristics of their territories tend to the area that has many sources from the river or the sea. This results in their culture and life being closely linked to the practices of the river and the sea, which are eventually expressed into their arts of culture.

The culture of Melanau *Likow* has its uniqueness where they still have various ways to achieve prosperity in their lives. According to Magiman (2012), the prosperity that one wants to achieve in life is an attempt to save its practitioners from any misfortune or catastrophe. As an effort to assist its people, there are various forms of performances or rituals with intentions to seek help from various practices, such as religion or supernatural powers for those who still practice the tradition. Moreover, the matter related to the tradition is inseparable from the practice of culture, because in the culture of the community a gap still exists. Hence, rituals or ceremonies still play an important role in peoples' lives. When it comes to the culture of the Melanau *Likow* community, the rituals have a specific purpose, for example, the celebration of the Kaul Festival has become established in Melanau community's calendar



and is celebrated annually. But when looking at it in reality, the Kaul Festival should become a tourist attraction, a festival month, and others. However, the people are not really clear that the mother of Festival Kaul is actually known as *Serarang*. In performing '*Serarang*', it has various steps that need to be performed through the ritual of *Serarang*.

### ***Serarang* Ritual**

According to Gold (2007), *Serarang* in Malay means '*ancak*' or the tray of presentation. *Serarang* is a 'head' of dowry to *Ipok* which is placed in a basket and flat round on seven feet of a bamboo pole. It is made from bamboo of *tedieng*, *semat*, *iseng* leaf, and *tigoh* leaf. The ritual of *Serarang* is a religious tradition that must be practiced in January of each year for the self-purification of the whole village. The ritual is purposely to express the feelings of gratitude and thanks to the *Ipok* for the fortune that has been given throughout the previous year and also to seek protection from disaster and catastrophe. According to the Melanau *Likow* community, the source of fortune comes from *Ipok* which is an extraordinary power that has been responsible for controlling and protecting the universe. According to Amir (1984), the *Serarang* ritual is the cultural heritage that has become an emblem or symbol of life to the Melanau *Likow* people. When it comes to the food served, there is a similarity between the symbol of the meaning of food served by the Javanese people in Indonesia in the ritual of *Sedekah Laut* and in the ritual of the Melanau *Likow* community. The food served is almost the same, with the presence of yellow glutinous rice or *pulut kuning*, and *penyaram*, which are important components in this ritual because it is one of the ways of non-verbal communication with the extraordinary power. This is also due to the practice of the ritual purification of the village that is embedded with several symbols that carry various meanings.

The ritual of *Serarang* is a peak in the life of the Melanau *Likow* community, where it is coloured with various shapes, cultures, and certain taboos. This is also stated by Amir (2000) in his writing of '*Kaul Memujuk Ipok*'; when the *Ipok* is served, the people believe that *Ipok* will grant a safe, peaceful, and harmonious life to the individual that asked for it. In other words, this ritual applies a various form of ritual beneath it that is related to human life in the elements of nature and animism. When the ritual is conducted, there is plenty of food served that is *apit lepas*, *penyaram*, *kuih jala*, *kuih perut ayam*, *kertob* and *belen*. According to Magiman (2012), the symbol has been a sign of pure sensitivity, that was born to recall something special as the meaning of community life. According to Wijaya (2011), the usage of the symbol of food is important towards cultural experience, ritual, tradition, and customs. For the Melanau *Likow* community, foods have been a special meal for *Ipok* that shows signs of respect, gratitude, and thankfulness.





**Figure 1.** *Tama Kaul Leads the Ritual of Serarang of the Melanau Likow Community.*



**Figure 2.** *The Serarang Ritual is Attended by the Melanau Community at the Research Location.*



### Literature Review

Food refers to the symbols that are rich in various meanings to represent an ethnic group or community. Sorre (1962) views that food functions as a symbol of creation that has its own meaning in Christianity. He also discusses food and its relationship with social imbalance. According to him, diet is essential, but it is not just an analysis of the source of food, but how the food is prepared should also be studied. The perspective of Sorre is supported by Grainers (1976), that it is not only covered from the geographical view where the food is not only seen as food alone but must be viewed through its relation to the environment. This is because food is an essential component in the ritual as it is one of the non-verbal ways of communicating with the extraordinary spirit.



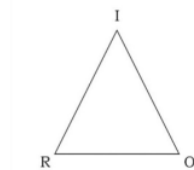
This is precisely similar to the perspective of Rozin (1982) on the attitude towards food preparation as also influenced by the economic and environmental conditions. As an example, there is an adaptation to the preparation of the food to be served. The soybean is a favourite food of the Chinese community. For the sake of saving fuel, they have accepted the consumption of bean sprouts as one of the food sources that can provide nutrients from soybeans. To cook the bean sprouts takes only a short amount of time compared to soybeans. He also stated that the characteristics of a culture are not static. Consequently, to sustain the tradition it is also capable of developing as a mechanism for changes. Furthermore, among the driving factors of the changes are the availability of materials, food innovation, and diffusion effects from the assimilation with other ethnicities. This statement is in accordance with the opinions from Shuhirdy et al., (2013) that food is rich in symbolism and plays an important role in human life as well as contributing to the customs, traditions, and culture of a community. Meanwhile, in the perspective of Whitt (2011), food is essential to identify the cultural identity of an ethnic group. This is because food not only represents one's personal identity in life, but is a reflection of a community's identity, cultural differences and boundaries. Additionally, food symbolism also exists in a custom that brings a certain message that has been stated by Foster & Anderson (1978), that food determines the relationship between individuals and groups.

Semiotics in linguistics and culture can be interpreted as a theory of communication. This statement is due to studies of signs and symbols (including the ways people talk, write, sing and smell, gestures, images, music, art, and others) through which people express their feelings, ideas, thoughts and ideologies. This research covers how meaning is interpreted through sign and symbol systems that can be understood during the perception and interpretation of the situation. The semiotic theory is focusing on the cultural and psychological forms that are the basis of language, art, and other cultural expressions used as tools that assist in presentation and also give meaning to the event. Among the well-known linguistics in this field are Ferdinand de Saussure, 1857-1913 (father of modern linguistics), Charles Sanders Peirce, 1839-1913 (founder of the pragmatism doctrine), and Roland Barthes, 1915-1980. With regard to semiotic terms, it represents knowledge that covers various disciplines such as linguistic studies, signs, symbols, architecture, and visual design (Sobur, 2009). He also added that the sign system of Peirce (1839-1913) is focused on three aspects, which are icons, indexes, and symbols. Subsequently, it also focuses on the aspect of representamen that consists of three things, which are qualisign, sinsign, and legisign.

Peirce (1839-1913) also pointed out that this sign may be read as representamen, while object refers to a concept, thing, or idea. On the other hand, the meaning is a perception, thought, or feeling and also an interpretation that is achieved from the sign given (Danesi, 2004). In addition, the signing model presented by Peirce (1839-1913) is also known as trichotomy or triadic. Peirce (1839-1913) also derived that the meaning of the sign is based on the relationship between three points, which are representation (R), object (O), and interpretation (I).



Significantly, (R) is a part of the sign that is perceived through physically referring to something that represents (O), while (I) is a part of the process that interprets the relationship between (R) and (O). The theory used in this research is Peirce's semiotic theory (1839-1913) that is seen to be directly related to the focus of the research. Therefore, this writing will provide a basic overview of this theory as it relates to the study of communication, especially in the field of non-verbal communication. Thus, the thinking that is being applied in this research is based on non-verbal communication from the approach of Matsumoto, et al., (2011) suggesting that the function of non-verbal communication is divided into three parts. The three parts are define, regulate, and be the message. The relevance of this research is related to the non-verbal communication from the statement of Hans & Hans (2015), that in daily life, people communicate by using words at seven per cent only and the remaining method of communication is through non-verbal communication (93%). Hence, based on this principle the meaning of symbol (food) is clearly a form of non-verbal communication in which the meaning can be interpreted through the theory of Charles Senders Pierce (1839-1913).



Key: I - Interpretation  
R - Representamen  
O - Object


### Methodology

This discussion was conducted at the research location in Kampung Medong, Dalat, Sarawak where the community is still practicing the ritual of *Serarang*. This research was conducted in 2019.





**Figure 3.** Map of Sarawak State

Key: Mukah 



**Figure 4.** Map of the Dalat Area and the Research Location









This study was conducted using an ethnographic approach which is based on the survey and observation of the research. The in-depth interview was held with *Tama Kaul*, who is the leader and supporter of the ritual of *Serarang*. Besides, this research also involved library research to obtain the data or information conducted by previous researchers as for reference. The findings of this study will be analysed to identify the food symbols used by the *Melanau Likow* community in the *Serarang* ritual.

### Findings and discussions

Food in the *Serarang* ritual is very synonymous with the cosmology of the *Melanau Likow* community. The foods that are served to the *Ipok* are *penyaram*, *kuih perut ayam*, *apit lepas*, *kertob*, *belen*, and *kuih jala*, and generally have hidden meanings behind the selection and the food. Durkheim & Mauss (1963) explained that the persons who present the offerings items and acts of performance to supernatural beings are those who believe that such power exists

and it exists with other creatures. This influence has good value in their perspectives because it is the spirit and also the motivation to do good deeds.

No	Type of food	Figure	Meaning of the symbol
1	<i>Penyaram</i>		The symbolism of this cake represents the love among humans, the bond of relationships and is able to get closer concerning long lost relationships.
2	<i>Kuih perut ayam</i>		This cake represents the symbol of prosperity of life and the harmonious family bond that can be seen through its forms that are overlapping between one another.
3	<i>Apit lepas</i>		The symbol of forgiveness and purity of heart by letting go all of the intentions to the river and the sea.
4	<i>Belen</i>		Symbol of loyalty and respect to <i>Ipok</i> with the elements of the creator ( <i>Ipok</i> ) as the symbol of prayer and long-lasting hope.

5	<i>Kertob</i>		Symbols of purity and fertility of life and also bringing the meaning of the pure and sacred from all the negative feelings.
6	<i>Kuih Jala</i>		A symbol of prayer and hope that all efforts will be successful.

### The Meanings of Food Symbols in the *Serarang* Ritual

In the practice of the *Serarang* ritual, there is the use of food that has its own understanding and meaning. The findings of this research explain the meaning of the food symbol that has become a priority to be accepted by *Ipok*.

#### *Penyaram*

*Penyaram* is considered as the ‘mother’ of all foods in performing the ritual of *Serarang*. To the community of Melanau *Likow*, this ritual will not be complete without *penyaram* because it is the main favourite food of *Ipok*. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Melanau *Likow* community state that it would not be possible to perform the *Serarang* ritual without *Penyaram*. *Penyaram* is a traditional dessert of Melanau *Likow* community which is produced by creating a mixture of rice flour (*tepung beras*), water, *gula apong*, and then frying in a special pan. The pan is smaller in size compared to a regular pan, weight, and the pan has a more pointed shape and deeper surface to produce a beautiful texture in the middle of *Penyaram*. The specialty of this dessert is that it is made from *gula apong*, that has significantly been known as the tie of a relationship based on the sweetness and sticky texture. According to the informant, *gula apong* has become the main ingredient in the making of *penyaram* as the symbol of love, and it is also believed that it is able to get close to the long lost relationship. Moreover, the colour is dark and the edges of the dessert are in the shape of a flower, which symbolises the bond of love



that will never be broken. *Penyaram* has become the main dish in the *Serarang* ritual because it is long-lasting and unlike some other desserts, does not easily go bad.

### ***Apit lepas***

In the traditional life of the Melanau *Likow* community, *ketupat*, also known as *apit lepas* has its own definition of the symbol. The Melanau *Likow* community believe that the ritual of *Serarang* is not complete if *apit lepas* is put on the dowry tray. *Apit lepas* is made from glutinous rice that is wrapped by using *nipah muda* leaf, also known as *medok* leaf of the Melanau *Likow* community. Based on the previous generation, before starting the journey to river and sea, *apit lepas* will be the pre-condition that must be fed to the spirit of *Ipok*. The Melanau *Likow* people believe that the practice of *apit lepas* is to release all of the intentions that are dreamed for into the river or sea. They believe that *Ipok* exists among humans and will eat the *apit lepas*, although it cannot be seen with the naked eye. As a reward, *Ipok* will assist to protect the harmony from the evil spirits and could bring more sustenance from the river or sea. Hence, *Ipok* has been known as the guardian of the river and sea to give more sustenance by helping the fisherman to get a lot of product when fishing. The Melanau *Likow* people have their own taboo while preparing this food. According to Cusak (2003), this taboo is one of the social conditions that has been shared as living in the community that has always been connected with racial and religious tolerance. According to the informant at the research location, when steaming the glutinous rice (the process of mixing the glutinous rice with coconut milk), the individuals must not speak or say something with greed because there is a concern that it can damage the the glutinous rice. Besides, during the process of stirring the coconut milk until cooked, it should be stirred with clockwise motions to avoid the starch turning bad quickly. All of these aspects need to be taken care of and followed so the quality produced does not change in terms of taste and shape. This *Apit lepas* symbolises the prosperity of life through the bond of harmonious family relationships through its folds that require careful attention. The use of coconut milk to boil the glutinous rice symbolises the purity of the individual's heart.

### ***Kuih perut ayam***

*Kuih perut ayam* is a traditional delicacy of the Melanau *Likow* people that is compulsory to be performed in almost every ceremony and celebration regardless of death and for New Year celebrations. In the traditional life of the Melanau *Likow* community, *kuih perut ayam* is made from a dough of wheat flour, coconut milk, margarine, and sugar. After mixing all the ingredients, the dough is kneaded and cut into lengths. Then, the cut of dough is rolled up and forms a shape that resembles a chicken stomach. Once the dough is ready, it will be fried until cooked and yellowed. The symbolism of this dessert is that it symbolises the prosperity and harmony of the Melanau *Likow* community. It can be seen through its shape and portions overlapping between each other. In addition, its shape is the same as the chicken's stomach and





its fragile texture symbolises the life of the Melanau *Likow* community people that need each other and tolerance for the peace in their lives.

### ***Belen***

*Belen* is a special delicacy that must be presented to *Ipok*. *Belen* or the combination of *sirih*, *rokok apong*, and *pinang* fruit must be specially provided to the river or sea guardians, spirits, ghosts, *jembalang*, and others. In the life of the Melanau *Likow* community, *belen* is believed to complete the entire dish that is presented to *Ipok*. In addition, *belen* is also used as a symbol of prayer for preventing oneself and family from being interrupted or hurt. According to the Melanau *Likow* cosmology, *belen* represents the symbol of loyalty and respect with the element of creator (*Ipok*). It is interpreted through a combination of elements within the *belen* which consists of three main elements that are *sirih*, *tobacco*, and *rokok apong*. *Rokok apong* carries the meaning of the principle of no argumentation, tolerance, and strong brotherhood. The usage of bitter tobacco also symbolises perseverance in dealing with everything. According to informants, the use of *sirih* means a promise or 'social contract' between humans and *Ipok*. According to the belief of Melanau *Likow* community, the element of *belen* is a food that is similar to the perspective of Geertz (1973). The differences are only on the type of item to produce *belen*. For the Mojukuto community, they will prepare a hair comb, thread, flower, incense (*kemenyan*), and others but for the Melanau *Likow* community, they put both of the items such as *sirih*, tobacco, and *rokok apong*. Based on the both conditions, it could be stated that the *belen* provided has its own meaning. This is because the preparation of *belen* is made for the feast to the supernatural beings who are believed to care or assist with their lives. Furthermore, for the community of Melanau *Likow*, *belen* is not only for *Ipok* but is also served as food for the elders in normal days or during death.

### **Bertih beras (Kertob)**

*Bertih beras*, known as *kertob*, is an important element of *pakar* or the dowry tray of *Serarang*. *Kertob* is made from the balance of rice that must be dried first. Then, the dried rice will be fried and mixed with *gula apong*. *Kertob* has a certain symbolism in the life of the Melanau *Likow* people. They believe that *Kertob* will purify themselves and repel the evil elements around them. Moreover, the fried *kertob* is referred to as the symbol of the fertility of life in the Melanau *Likow* community. They believe that the symbol of rice is sacred and should not be thrown away. Therefore, it has a meaning of feeling that is pure and clean for all the negative thoughts towards others. For the Melanau *Likow* community, *kertob* is a sign of gratitude and thanks for the sufficient sustenance from *Ipok*.

### ***Kuih Jala***

*Kuih jala* is a symbol of prayer and hope in the ritual tradition of the Melanau *Likow*





community. It is one of the favourite foods of the *Ipok*. It is also an important element on the top of *pakar* or the dowry tray of *Serarang*. *Kuih jala* is a form of traditional food of people in Sarawak that is made from rice flour (*tepung beras*). It is shaped like nets but is smaller in size. The taste is sweet and like crunchy noodles. It also crispy and well fried. The making is quite complicated but *kuih jala* has a certain meaning in the life for the Melanau *Likow* community. *Kuih jala* is a symbol of prayer and hope that all of the work and the catch from the sea and river are worthy. Therefore, the use of *gula apong* is very important in the Melanau *Likow* community. During the ritual, the people will take the sweet taste from the *kuih jala* and hope that the work done will produce good deeds and not a disaster.

### Discussions

The symbolism found in the *Serarang* ritual cannot only be described through physical activity but also reflects the purpose of the act. In conveying the meaning of the purpose, it includes the obvious aspect which is the aspect that leads to the symbolism and the religious form of ritual. The symbols and meanings of the Melanau *Likow* community are indeed adapted from the experiences of their community through the observation of events in their daily lives. The explanation of the meaning of the symbol reflects the traditional cosmology of the Melanau *Likow* community which is transmitted through the symbols of food in the *Serarang* ritual. The use of symbols of tradition or animism is taken from the context of the life of the Melanau *Likow* community itself. This is because they are very closely attached to nature, especially reflecting on the spirits of the river, sea, land and forest (Mohamed et al., 2010). From the reflections, the people discover their meaning of life and are represented by nature. The characteristics of nature, such as the supernatural power that is called *Ipok* has become the picture for living as a community for Melanau *Likow* people as the source of knowledge in their life.

The definition of a symbol may change from time to time according to the circumstances or will from society. The symbols are often interpreted ambiguously because they can be interpreted more than once at certain times. Therefore, symbols have specific meanings based on the will, understandings, and definitions of the people at that time. Every ceremony performed must have its rules in order for it to be accepted by these supernatural powers. For the Melanau *Likow* in Dalat, they also do not miss out on the legacy of animism inherited from their ancestors. These elements of animism are still practiced because of the daily necessity for those that still believe in the powers possessed by supernatural elements such as spirit, *penunggu*, and others. They believe that if these elements are not neutralised it will result in undesirable conditions in their lives that will affect the sustenance from the river and sea.



### **Summary**

Food in the dowry tray of *Serarang*, of the ethnic group of Melanau *Likow* in Kampung Medong, Dalat, Sarawak brings the meanings of love, togetherness, happiness, and also prayer and hope that can be seen from the perspective of physical artefacts that are related to non-verbal communication. Even though the study refers to the same ethnicity of the Melanau *Likow* tribe, the differences still exist. This proves that there are differences in the existence of the Melanau ethnicity that indirectly brings the similarities and differences in meaning between the food symbols in the *Serarang* ritual.

### **Acknowledgements**

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## Notes

1. One of the state in Malaysia.
2. Buku Tahunan Perangkaan Sarawak (2011). Jabatan Perangkaan Negeri Sarawak.
3. Melanau *Likow* ialah is a tribe of Melanau ethnic that believe on animism
4. Jeniri Amir (2000). "Kaul memujuk Ipok". Dewan Budaya. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
5. Norhuda Salleh (2017). Ritual Dan Simbol Dalam Adat Perkahwinan Masyarakat Melayu Sekinchan, Selangor.
6. Henry Corbin (1960). Avicenna and the visionary: *Mythos Series*. University Press.
7. Shuhirdy, Nurul Aisyah, Nik, Hamizad, Mohd Salehuddin & Mohd Zahari (2013). Pulut Kuning in Malay Society: The Beliefs and Practices Then and Now, 29-36
8. Knapp, M. & Hall, J. (2010). Non-Verbal Communication in Human Interaction
9. The sacred house of *Ipok*.
10. Container to keep the storage.
11. A tray that filled with food and to be served to *Ipok*.
12. The extraordinary supernatural powers worshipped by the Melanau *Likow* community.
13. Bamboo that are used to build *Serarang* pole and grows in the forest in Sarawak.
14. A small skewer that is made from dried rattan.
15. *Nipah* leaf that has been dried and used for the decoration of the head of *Serarang*.
16. *Tigoh* leaf is a young *Nipah* leaf that has been used to wrap the *ketupat*.
17. The ritual of thanksgiving and self purification and the whole village.
18. Jeniri Amir & Awang Azman Awang Pawi (2001). *Kaul: Suatu Interpretasi Sosiobudaya*. Kuching: Massa Kasturi Management.
19. Taboo of the religion and customs.
20. *Ketupat*
21. A local cake of the community in Sarawak which is made from wheat flour, rice flour, *gula apong* and it is fried by using a special pan.
22. A traditional cake of Melanau *Likow* tribe that in shape of net that is crispy and sweet.
23. A local cake of the Melanau *Likow* tribe that in shape of chicken stomach and has crispy texture.
24. Rice that has been dried and fried into yellowish texture.
25. A combination of *sirih pinang* and *rokok apong*
26. Wijaya, A. H. W (2011). The meanings of pulut kuning for Melayu Society in Hamparan Perak. Unpublished thesis, University Sumatera, Indonesia
27. Figure 1: *Tama Kaul* is leading the *Serarang* ritual at the research site.
28. Figure 2: *Serarang* ritual that been attended by the Melanau tribe, January 2019.
29. Whitt, J. B. (2011). An appetite for metaphor: Food imagery and cultural identity In Indian fiction. Proquest Digital Dissertation, (UMI Number: 1493573).
30. Foster, G. M., & Anderson, B. G. (1978). *Medical Anthropology*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
31. Sorre, M. (1962). The Geography of Diet. In P. L. Wagner & M. W. Mikesell (Eds.), *Readings in Cultural Geography* (pp. 445–456). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
32. A type of plant that is round and white or purple colour.
33. Map of Sarawak state.
34. Map of Dalat area and research location.



35. The approaches in qualitative research to explain the culture, customs, beliefs, based on the information obtained from the survey, observation and also in-depth interviews. It is a descriptive research on the culture, sub-culture and a group of community.
36. The leader of the ritual that plays the role as the mediator between human and *Ipok*.
37. A philosophy that is related to the universe and the origin of Melanau *Likow* community.
38. A type of sugar that is made from *nira nipah* and form a concentrated and sweet texture.
39. In the writing of Hj Zaini, Muhamad. (2014). Masyarakat Pribumi: Makanan Tradisional Masyarakat Melayu Sarawak.
40. A type of rice full with starch and sticky when cooked.
41. Feeling of proud and arrogant towards other people.
42. A type of plant that easy to climb and it is bitter in taste.
43. Cigarette that is made of *nipah* leaves.
44. A type of coconut plant that mostly found in Southeast Asia.
45. Geertz, C (1973). The Interpretation of Cultures. New York: Basic Book.
46. A basket that is made from *nipah* leaves and used as food container.
47. Belief to the supernatural beings and spirits that is belief to be the main basis that firstly appeared as the belief system during the ancient times.
48. Magical and supernatural power.



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