

Different yet Similar: A Study on *Mongindong* Performed by Diris, Gustimin, Pariama and Tulai from Murok Village and Baba Village on the Labuk River, Sabah

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ABSTRACT

The oral traditions of the Dusun Labuk include *tangon*, *runsai*, *mongindong*, *mansuak*, and *kurilang*. *Mongindong* [cradle song] is typologically informal yet functionally important in the traditional daily life of the Dusun Labuk. Seven *mongindong* were collected from four Dusun Labuk community members in Beluran, located in the east part of Sabah, Malaysia. It is important to note that the informants were reluctant to perform more than one *mongindong* for documentation purpose because they perceive that each of them owns only one *mongindong*, and therefore, two *mongindong*, although different in musical structure, are perceived as “*sama*” [the same] when they are performed by one informant. Furthermore, under certain circumstances, the informants perceive the *mongindong* performed by one person is “*sama*” [the same] as the *mongindong* which is performed by the other person. However, by viewing the tune and text of each collected *mongindong*, the researcher perceives each *mongindong* to be different from one another. Taking this into consideration, this paper describes the *mongindong* of the Dusun Labuk and suggests a possible way to analyse them. Findings from the analysis lead to an understanding of the similarity between the *mongindong* held by the informants. Nevertheless, further study on the culture of Dusun Labuk and the community members’ knowledge of oral traditions is necessary for a deeper understanding of *mongindong*.

Keywords: Cradle song, culture, Dusun Labuk, *mongindong*, oral traditions

INTRODUCTION

Dusun Labuk, according to article 6(1) in the constitution of Kadazandusun Cultural Association [KDCA], is one of the sub-groups of Kadazandusun in Sabah, Malaysia. Joshua Project, a research initiative since 1995, has listed three sub-groups of Kadazan and 15 sub-groups of Dusun. Dusun Labuk is categorized in the sub-group of Kadazan Timur, due to the reason that Kadazan Labuk-Kinabatangan language is spoken in the community. In this paper, Dusun Labuk is considered as a sub-group of Dusun due to the reason that shifting dry

paddy cultivation is practiced traditionally by the community, according to the senior community members (Personal interaction, 2008). At present, the population of Kadazandusun in Sabah is approximately 479,944 (Yearbook of Statistic Sabah, 2005). Meanwhile, the population of Dusun Labuk in the district of Beluran is approximately 6,449 (Yearbook of Statistic Sabah, 1998). Dusun Labuk is named after Labuk River which is located in the district of Beluran, in the division of Sandakan, Sabah of Borneo Island, where the location is extended from Beluran (88 km from Sandakan

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town) to Telupid (132 km from Sandakan town). Traditionally, Dusun Labuk practiced shifting dry paddy cultivation and believed in Kinorhingan, i.e. the Dusun creator (the belief was then termed as ‘momolianism’), the Kadazandusun primal belief system (Benedict Topin, 2004).

ORAL TRADITIONS OF DUSUN LABUK

Traditionally, a majority of the Dusun Labuk’s rites were performed by *bobolian*, the priestess, as in other Dusun areas. Music of the gong ensemble, comprising of three hanging gongs and a set of *kulintangan*, is a part of the ritual of *Ka’amatan* [Harvest], that is, the celebration after *mangatam* [paddy reaping]. Apart from the instrumental tradition, the oral tradition of story telling, folksongs, and cradle song singing were carried out at home in an informal manner. The oral traditions include *tangon* [folktale], *runsai* [poem with more serious topic], *mongindong* [cradle song], *mansuak* and *kurilang* [poems with less serious topic]. In contrast to the ritual related tradition which ceased from being practiced after the conversion to Christianity and other religions, the informal oral tradition remains in practice among the Dusun Labuk community, although it has declined due to the existence and influence of mass media such as radio and television.

During the researcher’s fieldtrip to search for the oral traditions of the Dusun Labuk in several villages in the District of Beluran, in

Sandakan, Sabah, from June to September 2008, a total of 30 examples of various oral traditions were collected, including seven *mongindong* [cradle song] from Diris Sa’at (59, male), Gustimin Benjamin (50, male), Pariama Linggis (53, female) and Tulai Tuki (64, female) in Murok Village and Baba Village. Information about these *mongindong* is as follows:

Informant	Length	Identity term
Diris Sa’at	2:50	Diris
Gustimin Benjamin	0:17	Gustimin I
Gustimin Benjamin	0:26	Gustimin II
Pariama Linggis	1:03	Pariama I
Pariama Linggis	1:19	Pariama II
Tulai Tuki	0:57	Tulai I
Tulai Tuki	0:30	Tulai II

SAME VERSUS DIFFERENT: THE CASE OF MONGINDONG

In the process of collecting *mongindong*, the number of *mongindong* that the researcher collected from an informant was one, and at the most two. According to Diris (Personal interaction, 4th December 2007), he owns only one *mongindong*. Gustimin (3rd December 2007) said that he knows only one *mongindong* (Fig. 1). He said that he owned no other *mongindong*, but was willing to repeat his *mongindong* upon the researcher’s request (Fig. 2). It is evident that there are structural differences observed between the two transcriptions above.

The image shows three staves of musical notation for a cradle song. The first staff has three notes with lyrics 'Eh eh eh'. The second staff has a sequence of notes with lyrics 'O - dop no do in - dong - on'. The third staff has five notes with lyrics 'Oh oh oh oh oh'. The notes are connected by lines, indicating a melodic line.

Fig. 1: Gustimin I

Note: The notation does not indicate the actual pitch frequency of the informants. Indeed, each informant sings in different pitch frequencies each time he or she sings



Fig. 2: *Gustimin II*

Upon the researcher's request, Pariama and Tulai sang their *mongindong* for the second time. Pariama indicated that what she sang for the second time was "sama" [the same] to the first one which she had sung about one month before (Personal interaction, 13th August 2009), despite the structural differences which were observed between the two singing (compare Figs. 3 and 4).

At a later time of the day, Tulai attempted to sing the same *mogindong* that Pariama had just sung, claiming that she had no other *mongindong* to sing (Personal interaction, 13th

August 2009). Tulai's singing turned out to be yet different in musical structure as compared to Pariama's second singing [compare Figs. 4 and 5]. Interestingly, Pariama supported Tulai's statement by saying that both of their second singing of *mongindong* are "sama" [the same].

Despite their second singing of *mogindong* that displayed different musical structure from their first singing, Pariama and Tulai both said that they have no *mongindong* other than the ones that they had sang for the first time (i.e. about one month earlier). In fact, they seemed reluctant to sing for the second time for my

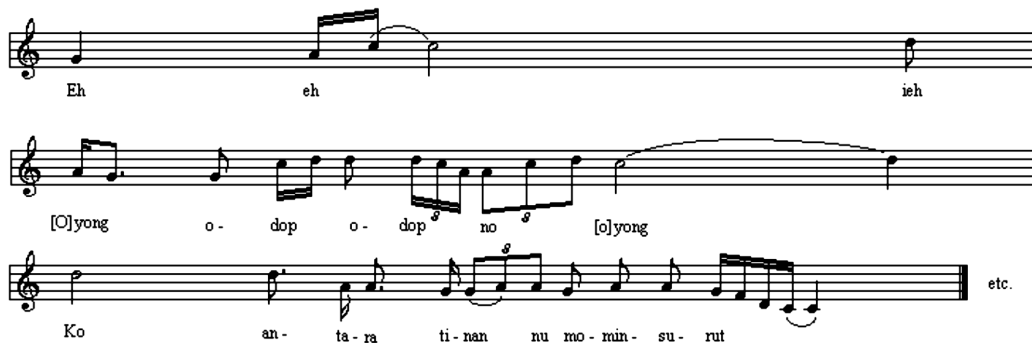


Fig. 3: *Pariama I* [from the beginning until phrase 3]

O - dop o - dop no o - yong
 O - long o - long no u - sau
 Run - duk ra - boi no [o]dop - on nu o - yong etc.

Fig. 4: *Pariama II* [from the beginning until phrase 3]

Eh eh
 O - dop o - dop no [o]yong
 [A]da i mi - ad - i - ad etc.

Fig. 5: *Tulai II*

documentation. According to them, if they were requested to perform the *mongindong* again, they would perform the “same *mongindong*”. In my documentation project, *Pariama* and *Tulai* perceived that they had performed the same *mongindong* for their second time of singing.

When they said “*sama*” [the same], they might be referring to the genre as well as the individual songs. Generally, each oral tradition has its distinctive characteristic that makes it recognisable. However, I perceive *mongindong* as a highly individualised oral tradition and each *mongindong* has its own individuality which is different from one another. Therefore, the individual songs are regarded as not entirely the same, in other words, they are different. The statements by the informants and the researcher are to be clarified when a study on texts and tunes of these *mongindong* is conducted.

Some questions are raised as this paper intends to describe the *mongindong* of Dusun Labuk and examines a possible way to analyse them in order to understand the oral tradition better. What is *mongindong*? What is essential in understanding *mongindong*? What does *mongindong* signify? On contrary to ritual performance which takes social form for musical expression, *mongindong* is an informal and intimate expression which serves a means of communication between individuals. As such, the matter of social maintenance of the text in this context refers to the musical text of *mongindong*, which is different as compared to the ritual tradition in terms of control, maintenance, and modification of the text. In this regard, the *mongindong* of *Pariama*, for example, is solely hers.

To study these *mongindong* also means to study a highly individualised oral tradition which has the least formal restriction. There is no accompanying musical instrument, no ritual, and no particular group of participants. However, there is a room for freedom and an appropriate space for the singers to express their feelings or to formalise their emotions. It cannot be denied that *mongindong*, although was traditionally sung to the children, also has an element of self-serving in its function. Although it is not different from the above description or discussion, the context of *mongindong* of Dusun Labuk can be seen in the following aspects.

THE CULTURE OF THE DUSUN LABUK

Firstly, part of the culture of the Dusun Labuk was observed, particularly their occupation and lifestyle. Traditionally, the community of Dusun Labuk were farmers who started working in the fields from break of day until the work was done, either at noontime or in the evening. Men were responsible for the work in the fields while women were responsible for the housework at home. However, the men were also trained to help at home, and the women in the fields, too. Night time was meant for rest, leisure, or sometimes hunting for nocturnal animals. Playing musical instruments, singing folksongs, and telling folktales were the activities during free time. During bedtime, *mongindong* [cradle song] was sung to cradle babies and toddlers, while *tangon* [folktale] was told to the children. The task of cradling children is not specifically for men or women; instead, each family member is responsible for this task as long as he or she is free to do so. This is probably one of the reasons for the fact that both the men and women can sing *mongindong*. Along with urbanisation and advancement in technology in the region, the traditional life style of the community has somewhat changed, at least since 1970s. Shifting dry paddy cultivation is gradually replaced by long-term oil palm plantation. Besides farmers, there are also businesspersons, government servants, professionals, and others in the community at present. The singing of

mongindong and telling of *tangon* at home have declined and even ceased in many cases. In most of the families, these have been replaced by pop songs and movies on television.

Secondly, changes could also be seen in the belief system and language use. In former times, the *bobolian* [priestess] played an important role in transmitting the ritual related traditions while other senior people in the community held the informal oral traditions. The Dusun Labuk language was and for some still is the only medium of communication. Most of the community members think, communicate, and sing in this language. Since the coming of Christianity, the role of transmitting the ritual related tradition has been transferred to the church and the ritual related tradition has been replaced by church music. Singing is carried out in church during Sunday worship service, Sunday school, various activities, and fellowships where western hymns like *Amazing Grace* and praise songs like *You Lift Me Up* are sung in either Malay or English language. Since the 1970s, the Dusun Labuk language has gradually been replaced by the use of Malay and English at home, because these two languages are the medium of communication in school and other places in the country and some parents even mistakenly think that their children will not be able to shift into these other languages if they hear their own language at home. The decline in the use of the Dusun Labuk language has also indirectly contributed to the decline in the singing of *mongindong* and the telling of *tangon*.

MESSAGES IN *MONGINDONG*

Mongindong, as one of the Dusun Labuk oral traditions, serves as a means for the poetic communication of thought and feeling. Just as messages are delivered through words in normal spoken communication, messages are also conveyed through the words sung in the context of *mongindong*. In the examples given below, it can be seen that when the *mongindong* are sung as cradle songs, their lines are usually structured around variations of the word *modop* [“to sleep”]

and they convey the message of encouraging a beloved child [*oyong* = “dear” or “darling”] to sleep soundly [*molong*].

“*mogot no oyong do modop, mogot no usau do molong*”

[*lebih baik bah sayang _tidur, lebih baik bah sayang _nyenyak* / better dear _sleep, better dear _soundly]

Phrases 6-7, *Diris*

“*odop no oyong indongon*”

[*tidur bah sayang mengayun* / sleep dear swinging]

Phrase 2, *Gustimin II*

“*poodop poolong oku dikou oyong*”

[*kasih tidur kasih nyenyak aku kau sayang* / make to sleep make to be soundly I you dear]

Phrase 4b, *Pariama II*

“*odop no pogi usau, olong no pogi odu odopno*”

[*tidur bah [dengan maksud arahan] sayang, nyenyak bah [dengan maksud arahan] sayang tidurbah* / sleep [with meaning of command] dear, soundly [with meaning of command] dear sleep]

Phrases 2-3, *Tulia I*

The example shows that the different ways of conveying the message lead to the different adoption of words, e.g. “*modop*” is adopted by *Diris*, “*odop no*” by *Gustimin* and *Tulai*, while “*poodop*” by *Pariama*. “*odop*” [*tidur* / sleep] is the root word for “*modop*” and “*poodop*”, which is also a word used to persuade the child to sleep especially when the suffix “-no” is attached to the word. “*modop*” [*tidur* / sleep] is a word to describe the act of sleeping. “*poodop*” [*kasih*

tidur / make to sleep] is a word to describe the act of adult persuading a child to sleep. This identical principle on the adoption of word is also applied to the word “*olong*” [*nyenyak* / soundly].

This is similar to the messages of “*odop no*” and “*olong no*”, i.e. other messages are also delivered in the different ways of conveying the message in different words among the informants. The messages include “*ada no mogiad*” [*jangan bah menangis/don’t cry*], “*onuon no pominsurui*” [*ambil bah tumbuh besar/take growth*], “*onuon pomutotogui*” [*ambil sihat yang kekal/take persistent health*], “*ada koborui*” [*jangan selalu sakit/don’t fall sick often*]. Just like the former example, the message “*olong no*” [*nyenyak bah/soundly*] does not appear in the *mongindong* by *Gustimin*, and there is also an exception for the message “*ada no mogiad*” [*jangan bah menangis/don’t cry*] in the *mongindong* by *Pariama*.

From the researcher’s observation, she found that the message, “*odop no*” [*tidur bah/sleep*], and then “*olong no*” [*nyenyak bah/soundly*] is delivered in two continuous phrases as in the previous example, compared to the message, “*ada no mogiad*” [*jangan bah menangis/don’t cry*] which is repeated in two continuous phrases, as follows:

“*ada no oyong mogiad, ada no usau tumangi*”

[*jangan bah sayang menangis, jangan bah sayang menangis/don’t dear cry, don’t dear cry*]

Phrases 4-5, *Diris*

“*ada i miadiad, ada kou mangitangi usau*”

[*jangan itu menangis-nangis, jangan kau menangis-nangis sayang/don’t cry continuously, don’t you cry continuously dear*]

Phrases 3-4, *Tulia II*

Different words appear in two continuous phrases that deliver identical messages – “*ada no mogiad*” and “*ada no tumangi*” in *Diris*, whereas “*ada miadiad*” and “*ada mangitangi*” in *Tulai II*. “*mogiad*” [*menangis/cry*] is a word to describe the act of crying. Meanwhile, “*tumangi*” [*menangis dengan suara yang rendah, tidak sampai teriak-teriak/cry softly, i.e. not to the extend of shouting*] is a word to further describe the state of crying. “*miadiad*” [*menangis-nangis/cry continuously*] is a word that doubles the word “*mogiad*”. “*mangitangi*” [*menangis-nangis dengan suara yang rendah, tidak sampai teriak-teriak/cry softly continuously, i.e. not to the extend of shouting*] is a word that doubles the word “*tumangi*”.

UNCOMMON PHRASES AND SYMBOLIC EXPRESSIONS

Besides the above mentioned phrases that appear in the *mongindong* by all the informants, there are some expressions which only appear in the *mongindong* by certain informants, such as follows:

“*okui oyong no kojuan, okui oyong olumkodis*”

[*aku sayang bah mengasihi, aku sayang tidak membiar/I dear love, I dear not forsake*]

Phrases 21-22, *Diris*

“*miontong okui agayokgayok po oyong, ikou no oyong monunggamit torigi i do rumundunou usau*”

[*harap aku besar-besar sudah _sayang, kau bah sayang mewarisi tiang itu _ rumah sayang/hope I have grown up already _ dear, you dear inherit the pillar [of] _ the house dear*]

Phrase 13-15, *Pariama II*

The phrase “to inherit the pillar of the house” in *Pariama II* symbolises inheriting the

family’s property [*mewarisi harta keluarga*] and to hold the authority in the family [*berkuasa dalam keluarga*]. By inheriting the pillar of the house, *Pariama* actually asks her child to inherit the family’s property and hold the authority in family or to be the leader in family.

Besides *Pariama*, *Diris* also uses symbolic words in his *mongindong*. For example,

“*kumuut oyong do gamut tavan, kumuut usau do gamut tavavo*”

[*pegang sayang _ akar langit, pegang sayang _ akar tavavo/hold dear _ root of the sky, hold dear _ root of tavavo*]

Phrases 17-18, *Diris*

“*gamut tavan*”, the root of Heaven [literally “root of the sky” or “root of the highest realm”], is a symbol of God, hope, safety and success. “*gamut tavavo*”, the root of *tavavo* [a species of plant], was traditionally for external use to “*buang angina*” [release the gas in stomach]. It was also believed to be able to chase away the evil spirits. Therefore, it is a symbol of health, healing, protection, and longevity. These two “roots” symbolise God’s blessing, and it was hoped that the child would grow healthily and quickly, without sickness and be kept away from danger, and that it might also be a person full of courage and it might have a long life.

MELODIC MATERIAL

The melodies of the *mongindong* are based on the tonal series of four or five pitches. The tonal series of the four pitches can be described in sol fa as “do, re, mi, so” which can have its range expanded to an octave as “so, do, re, mi, so”. The series based on five pitches resembles “do, re, mi, so, la” in sol fa which can also have its range expanded to an octave as “la, do, re, mi, so, la”. These can be combined and expanded over the range of a ninth as “so, la, do, re, mi, so, la” (note that the underlined tones are pitches at the octave below). This can be illustrated in the western staff notation as shown in *Figs. 6, 7, 8 and 9*.

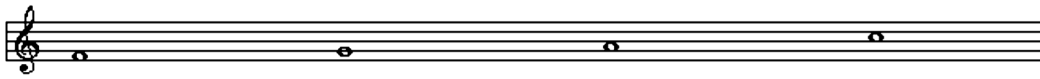


Fig. 6: Tonal series of four tones



Fig. 7: Tonal series of five tones



Fig. 8: Range of octave

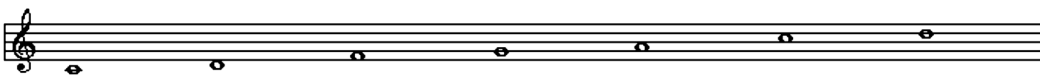


Fig. 9: Range of a ninth

The *mongindong* by Diris and Gustimin from Murok Village are based on four tones, with the range of an octave, whereas the *mongindong* by Pariama and Tulai from Baba Village are based on five tones, with the range of a ninth. The data are too limited to be able to generalise whether each village has different tonal series and tonal ranges. However, it appears that there may be slight changes in the tonal series and ranges from one village to another.

REOCCURRING MELODIC PATTERNS IN VOCABLE PHRASES

Besides the melodic phrases of the song text, part of the *mongindong* performance consists of vocable phrases. The use of vocable phrases is a distinctive characteristic of *mongindong*. A vocable phrase is a phrase that is sung with solely the vocable “eh” or “oh”, which is not found as frequently in the *mongindong* as in the other Dusun Labuk oral traditions. In the *mongindong*, a vocable phrase may be long with 13 tones to a phrase or short with two tones to a phrase. It may also progress in ascending, descending or static pattern. It may occur at various points of

a tune – in the beginning, middle or at the end, depending on the singer.

Each informant has his or her own pattern[s] of vocable phrases. The vocable phrases by Gustimin in his two times of singing are taken as the examples for observation, as shown in *Figs. 10, 11, 12, 13* and *14*. A reoccurring melodic pattern is observed among these vocable phrases. The researcher suggests that Gustimin’s reoccurring melodic pattern for his vocable phrases is “mi-so-so-re-mi-re-do” as illustrated in *Fig. 15*. This is an ascending pattern and it then becomes static followed by descending and then slightly ascending before gradual descending pattern. This basic pattern is found the most in the *mongindong* by Gustimin among all the collected *mongindong*. In addition, these phrases are consistent in terms of their reoccurring melodic patterns and their occurrence in the tune, that is, in alternation between the phrases of vocable utterances and phrases of song text.

Vocable phrase – songtext - vocable
phrase [Gustimin I]



Fig. 10: Phrase 1 [first phrase of tune], Gustimin I



Fig. 11: Phrase 3 [last phrase of tune], Gustimin I



Fig. 12: Phrase 1 [first phrase of tune], Gustimin II



Fig. 13: Phrase 3, Gustumin II



Fig. 14: Phrase 5 [last phrase of tune], Gustimin II



Fig. 15: Gustimin's reoccurring tone pattern – “mi-so-so-re-mi-re-do”

Vocable phrase – songtext – vocable phrase – songtext – vocable phrase
[Gustimin II]

Other examples of vocable phrases occur in the *mongindong* by Tulai. The vocable phrases extracted from her two times of singing are shown in Figs. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21, respectively.

The researcher suggests that Tulai's reoccurring melodic patterns for her vocable phrases are [1] “so-la” for beginning of both tunes [Fig. 22]; [2] “la-mi-re” with flexibility that the tone “la” may be substituted by the tone “so” to become “so-mi-re” in phrase 9 of *Tulai I* [Fig. 23]; [3] “re-do-la” [Fig. 24]. Pattern [1] is an ascending pattern while patterns [2] and [3] are gradual descending pattern. Tulai's patterns



Fig. 16: Phrase 1 [first phrase of tune], Tulai I



Fig. 17: Phrase 5, Tulai I



Fig. 18: Phrase 7, Tulai I

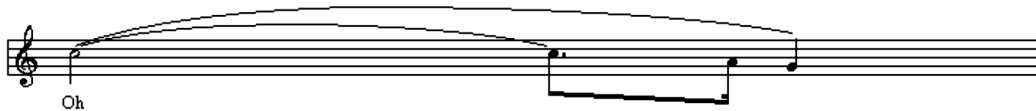


Fig. 19: Phrase 9, Tulai I



Fig. 20: Phrase 12, Tulai I



Fig. 21: Phrase 1 [the first phrase of tune], Tulai II

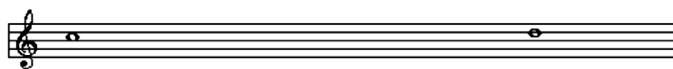


Fig. 22: Tulai's reoccurring tone pattern – "so-la"

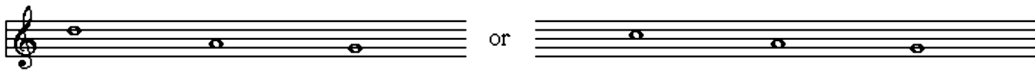


Fig. 23: Tulai's reoccurring tone pattern – "la-mi-re" or "so-mi-re"



Fig. 24: Tulai's reoccurring tone pattern – "re-do-la"

seem to vary, however, there is consistency in that an ascending pattern appears at the beginning of both melodies, while gradual descending patterns occur in the middle of melodies.

The patterns by Gustimin have a contour of ascending followed by descending, whereas the patterns by Tulai are either ascending or descending. Similarly, the patterns by Gustimin are rather long, while the patterns by Tulai are short. Vocable phrases occur at the beginning and the end of melodies by Gustimin but they rarely occur at the end of the melodies by Tulai.

DIFFERENT YET SIMILAR

The song text of the *mongindong* contains some messages that are shared among the informants, such as "odop no" [*tidur bah* / sleep], "olong no" [*nyenyak bah* / soundly] and "ada no mogiad" [*jangan bah menangis* / don't cry]. However, each informant adopts different words and means to convey the messages. Besides, some messages and symbolic expressions are found in the *mongindong* by certain informants, making the *mongindong* distinctive in terms of the song text. The melody of *mongindong* is based on the tonal series of four or five tones within a relatively narrow range of octave or a ninth. Slight differences of tonal series and range of tones between Murok Village and Baba Village were observed. The reoccurring melodic pattern[s] in the vocable phrases by each informant reveals the informant's basic melodic pattern for vocable phrase and the Dusun Labuk's concept of sound in the *mongindong*.

What is *mongindong*? What is essential in understanding *mongindong*? What does *mongindong* signify? The researcher suggests that the *mongindong* is a weave of differences and similarities. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher views the *mongindong* as a tool for self expression, besides as a tool to soothe a child to sleep. As typologically the least formal and functionally the most fundamental oral tradition, the singing voice of *mongindong* displays individuality, flexibility, and casualness. Although there are certain common messages observed in the singing of the *mongindong*, each individual singer determines the exact message, the ways of conveying the messages, and the choice of words in their singing. It is notable that the abundance of Dusun Labuk's vocabulary contributes to the manifold appearance of the song texts. *Mongindong* are further characterised by the use of uncommon phrases and symbolic expressions. In addition, each individual singer has his or her own melodic pattern[s] that reoccur[s] throughout the performance although the basic melodic material is based on four or five tone series. The *mongindong* sung by different individuals are similar due to their identifiable structural commonalties; and are yet different due to the idiosyncratic styles of individual performers.

An understanding of the Dusun Labuk culture, their thinking, language and behaviour, as well as the ethnosemantics of the Dusun Labuk music are essential in understanding the *mongindong*. The researcher has tried to understand the culture, thinking, language, and behaviour of the community, and thus hopefully

will discover the knowledge of the Dusun Labuk music. It is undeniable that the above findings may be influenced by my own language background and my prior training in the western based music education, and therefore, may not reflect the Dusun Labuk's concepts of oral traditions. An example in the aspect of language may help to make this clear. Due to the reason that the Malay language is the only shared language among the informants and the researcher, we communicated in this language. However, the Malay language is not our mother tongue since Dusun Labuk language is theirs and Mandarin is mine. Due to the reasons such as some words are found in our respective mother tongue but not in the Malay language or limited Malay vocabulary within ourselves, we attempted to adopt Malay word that has the closest meaning to the meaning we intended to make. This, sometimes, may lead to the differences in terms of understanding among the informants and the researcher. Besides, along the process of communication, our respective mother tongue and perception may also influence our speech in various aspects including the adoption of words, meaning of certain word [a word may mean differently to the informants and the researcher], the extent of emotion, means of communication, etc. When the informants mentioned that all their *mongindong* are "sama", the researcher perceived that all their *mongindong* are "the same". However, my perception toward the word "sama" may not be the same to theirs, as they may have the word "sama" with different meaning and extent of similarity. Therefore, further clarification of the word and understanding of the culture and knowledge of the Dusun Labuk oral traditions is necessary.

Perceptions of similar and different are both true concerning what is the reality of *mongindong*. The informants' perception reveals the perceptive reality of the *mongindong* that a few *mongindong* performed by one person are considered as "sama" [the same] and a few *mongindong* performed by a few persons under certain circumstance are considered as "sama" [the same], too. The researcher's perception

reveals the structural reality of the *mongindong* that song text and sound of *mongindong* performed by different persons or even the same persons are not always the same. These realities help us to have a deeper understanding of the *mongindong*, beyond the superficial notion of similarity and difference.

Besides understanding the community members' culture and knowledge of oral traditions, different methods of analysis, especially the ones proposed by ethnomusicologists in South-East Asia, are to be studied and adopted or adapted for the study on the *mongindong*, in order to have a better understanding of the *mongindong*. Collecting *mongindong* from more community members may also enhance the understanding of the *mongindong*. The initiative to interact with more community members and encourage them to sing the *mongindong* will hopefully increase the collection of *mongindong*. Through interaction with more community members and study on more *mongindong*, it is possible to have a clearer picture of the culture of the Dusun Labuk and the perception of the community members towards their oral traditions, especially the *mongindong*.

As discussed in the previous section, there are other oral traditions in the Dusun Labuk community including *tangon*, *runsai*, *mansuak* and *kurilang*, besides the *mongindong*. Collecting these oral traditions may be done for documentation and revitalisation purposes. A study on each oral tradition is to be followed by for a deeper understanding of each of them and their interrelationship.

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