

Cosmology and Heroic Values in the Takna` Lawe`.

-The Epic Literature of the Kayan Community of the Mendalam River in West Kalimantan-¹

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Abstract

Cosmology is both a philosophical concept and also the science of the origin, process, structure, and development of the universe. There are three central concepts which are, I would suggest, at the root of indigenous understandings of cosmology and cosmic inter-relations among the Kayan of Kalimantan: the immortality of the soul, fatalism, and the role of ancestors. Epic literature in indigenous Kayan cosmology mostly reflects beliefs in the soul. These are at the basis of the indigenous value system and are reflected in customary laws in daily social interactions, faith, work, and feasts.

In this paper the writer explores the figure of Lawe` in the Kayan epic poems, or *takna`*, telling about this central culture hero. He argues that central figures in epic poetry, such as Lawe`, epitomize indigenous values, expressing the heroic values of smartness, morality, togetherness, love, beauty, bravery, the importance of divine power, and loyalty. Through indigenous literary works like the Kayan *takna`*, these values are acknowledged and realized in the context of birth, death, farming, feasts, and religious services. The *takna`* expresses how Kayan culture recognizes the fundamental importance of a unified cosmos, which is achieved through the quality of the relationship between humanity, nature and the Almighty.

Keywords: cosmology, indigenous epic literature, heroic values, beliefs.

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Introduction

To maintain the cultural values of the local communities, their cosmological views and concepts should first be understood and acknowledged. Such views and concepts generated by their ancestors are the cultural beliefs and ways of life. Through these, the local people show and practice how the forms, origins, direction, roles, and interactions of cultural aspects are manifested accordingly.

This paper discusses Kayan³ people's cosmology and cultural values—heroic values—in the Kayan epic poems, specifically the values inspired in a hero Lawe' who was the main figure and character of the Takna' Lawe'⁴. Lawe' central figure in the epic epitomizes and represents the indigenous values, expressing the heroic values of smartness, morality, togetherness, love, beauty, bravery, the importance of divine power, and loyalty. Through indigenous literary works like the Kayan *takna'*, these values are acknowledged and realized in context of birth, death, farming, feasts, and religious services. The *takna'* expresses how Kayan culture recognizes the fundamental importance of a unified cosmos of which Lawe' the hero adventured and battled against bad goddesses in his long house in Long Burak in Kalimaan River. Lawe' in his power and bravery was known as the figure of his village.

Views in Indigenous Epic Literature

Indigenous epic literature is basically oral in form and maintains traditional views. It is then known as folk literature or folk epic which recounts the adventures of tribal heroes. As epics, Eugenio (2001) states that “they form a very substantial body of folk narratives, distinguished by elevation of style and subject matter and by the fact that they are transmitted only by a select group of singers and chanters.”(p. xi). For their characteristics as epics, Manuel (1963) and Demetrio (1979) have described them as the following paraphrase:

With respect to folks as the local communities who possessed and were proud of their works, then they are also called folk and ethno-epics, characterized (1) long narratives and in verses (long poems); (2) settings: lives of gods, goddesses, or souls as heroes and narrated in heaven *kayangan*; (3) performed in songs, dances with indigenous music; (4) views of cultural beliefs on heroic concepts and values.

The epic, Eugenio (2001, p. xiv) continues, is essentially a narration of the adventures of a hero. According to the predominant kind of adventure that the hero undertakes, Philippine folk epics, for example, may be classified into two groups. One group may be called epics of romance, in which the main adventures consist in the hero's courting of specific women of his choice, or in just search for beautiful ladies whom he can marry. The second group consists of epics in which the hero undertakes adventures mainly in the service of his family, his country, his people, and others who seek his help. As may be expected, these two groups are not mutually exclusive.

³ Here is the Kayan's beliefs on the universe or cosmology in Mendalam River of Kapuas Hulu Regency Indonesia

⁴ Takna' Lawe' is one form of indigenous literature, a long narrative or epic poetry (6537 stanzas) about one main character, i.e., the heroic Lawe' of Kayan people (*takna'* refers to a narrative or soul of Lawe', a hero). Published in 1984 and entitled *Syair Lawe'*, it is compiled in four volumes of which are about Lawe's marriage and his heroic battles against the goddesses in the *Kayangan* (Heaven).

Epics predominantly romantic also contain adventures of the other kind and vice versa. Bowra (1952) in his *Heroic Poetry* states that “a hero differs from other men in the degree of his powers. In most heroic poetry these are specifically human, even though they are carried beyond the ordinary limitations of humanity. Even when the hero has supernatural powers and is all the more formidable because of them, they do little more than supplement his essentially human gifts.” (p. 91). Examples of oral literature in epics are *Hang Tuah* of Malay great hero, *Ramayana and Mahabharata* of Indian heroes, *Takna’ Lawe’* of Kayan community and *Ne’ Barukng Kulup* of Kanayatn community in West Kalimantan. Old and present Indians (*Bangsa India*) are proud of these two famous epics narrating the legends and the history of wars. That is wars of Mahabharata in the *Illiad of India*, the adventures of Rama in Ramayana: the *Odyssey of India*. Mahabharata and Ramayana are impressive literary works about civilization, culture, politics, social, religion, and Indian great concepts of their great old period.

Taking the literary point of view, A. Teeuw (1983, p. 6) presents the idea that is a model in literature covers responsible factors essential for understanding a literary work, since literature is the representation of the (local) community where the works should correctly be communicated and appreciated.

What Eugenio and Bowra have stated above is in line with Jones (2010) and Moss’s (2006) ideas who give support to Lawe’ as a human, divine or soul, and warrior hero. In *Takna’ Lawe’*, Lawe’ was a powerful, supernatural, and mysterious hero⁵. Lawe’ was powerful and awake not only interest in his doings but admiration and even awe for himself. No wonder, Lawe’ was also a hero for lovers and loyalty of which he had a number of beautiful ladies whom he could marry, Karigit and Nyalo were examples of his beautiful wives he fought and adventured for. This hero was then successful in abolishing To’ Magung and Juk Apui, bad, cruel gods. Kayan people believe this epic a grandeur narrative poetry in their cosmic views.

A Note on Kayan’s Origins and Their Homes

Kayan communities, in their origins and movements, are interesting to note down in terms of today’s homes. Long dan Ngo (1984, p. xxv) wrote Kayan’s history that were originated from the southern areas in China Land. It seems that most Kayan elders could tell their people that their ancestors were from Indo China (China Land) who after a long time they arrived in Indonesia and settled in (1) Apo Kayan at Kayan River of North Kalimantan now. Later, exodus took place due to epidemic diseases and other life pressure that the Kayan communities then inhabited the river basins in (2) Mahakam of East Kalimantan, Sarawak ((3) Beram, (4) Tubau, and (5) Baluy), and in (6) Mendalam River in Kapuas Hulu Regency of West Kalimantan (Map 1). As for the Mendalam Kayan today, there are several groups of local people⁶ who are Sambus Malay, Suruk, Ariung Taman Semangkok, Kayan Mendalam, dan Bukat. It was told that the Mendalam Kayan travelled through 17 *kampungs* until they inhabited today’s places (cf. notes in Pastor Ding Ngo, 1989).

⁵ Supernatural Lawe’ was in his mother’s pregnancy for 2 years who after his birth wandered and drifted in the river, appeared and shaped a mysterious form, swallowed by a giant shrimp, *dungan* fish, but remained survived. For his supernatural power, he had a number of heroic nick names..

⁶ The census of 2010-2011 stated there were totally 3581 people in Mendalam River of which were Sambus Malay 696, Suruk 92, Ariung Taman Mendalam 513, *Kayan Mendalam* 2120, and Bukat 160.

In Mendalam River this communities identifies themselves as Umaa⁷ Aging, Umaa` Suling, dan Umaa` Pagung.

Rousseau (in King) stated that:

The Kayan are a people of central Borneo, where they occupy the middle or upper reaches of the following river basins: Kayan (pop. 1,000?), Mahakam (pop. 1,000?), Mendalam (a tributary of the Kapuas, pop. 1,530), Baram (pop. 7,234), and Baluy, or upper Rejang (pop. 2,508). They all speak the same language, with minor dialectical variations (Bart, 1910; Calyre and Cubit, 1974; Cubit, 1964; Rousseau, 1974e; Southwell, n.d.), and they call themselves Kayan. (1978, p. 78)

Takna' Lawe' (takna' = story or soul of Lawe', a hero) has been compiled in four volumes and was for the first time published in 1984. The volumes are about Lawe's marriage and his heroic battles against the goddesses to save the life on earth. It is a folk or ethno epic in the form of a long narrative poem (6537 stanzas) about one main character, the heroic Lawe', that is, an epic and a legend of Kayan indigenous people in Kalimantan (West Kalimantan, East Kalimantan), and in Sarawak Malaysia (Map 1). The four volumes of superhuman Lawe' heroic events in the long narrative poem of 6537 stanzas are (1) *Lawe' and Nyalo* (1874 stanzas). As a hero and warrior, Lawe' fought for his wife, Nyalo, and made the people peaceful. (2) *Lawe' and To' Magung; Lawe' made alive Hingaan Jaan* (1902 stanzas). Lawe' led a battle to fight against a dangerous and troubling god, To' Magung. (3) *Lawe' and Juk Apui* (796 stanzas). Again Lawe' led a terrible war against a dangerous god, Juk Apui. (4) *Lawe' and Lirung Buaa'* (1965 stanzas). Also Lawe' had a bad battle to fight against a stubborn god, Lirung Buaa'.

⁷ Umaa` denotes to village, house, and community.



In the map, Kayan people historical movement and homes are:

1. Apo Kayan, North Kalimantan
2. Kayan Mahakam, East Kalimantan
3. Kayan Beram, Sarawak
4. Kayan Tubau, Sarawak
5. Kayan Baluy, Sarawak
6. **Kayan Mendalam**, West Kalimantan Barat

Map 1: Kayan community's historical movement and homes
(Edited from Long dan Ngo,1984:257)

Heroic Values and Cosmic Views For Local Wisdoms

It is worth noting that in his wars against his enemies (gods and goddess), Lawe' experienced not only good things like praise, supports, and acceptance but also resistances, rejections, and extreme dislike. These all had made him a real main character as a hero for himself and his people in that he and his people had found courage, love, loyalty, determination, cooperation, and responsibility. Moreover, the time wars ended, all his people and his former enemies reconciled for togetherness and peace. There then happened a celebration to unite and to respect to each other within their ways of life or indigenous customs.

Lawe' is the main, major character in the epic about love and loyalty. Long and Ngo (1984) said that Lawe' was a hero for a lover. This Takna' Lawe' depicts life, enticement, and victories by a spirit or goddess whose name was Lawe' from the world of heaven, the place for the dead and the goddesses. As for the indigenous cultural views and concepts, the following quotation states:

Three main concepts are identified as central to understanding the comic views of indigenous peoples. These are beliefs in the immortality of the soul, fatalistic views and the role of ancestors. One of the central tenets of indigenous cultures is the belief in the immortality of soul. For most indigenous cultures, because the soul does not die but rather transmigrates from human to animal or plant or higher spirit forms, and because the soul is capable of living in natural entities such as rivers, mountains, the earth, etc., both the animate and the inanimate are revered . Akoto et al (2008, p. 1)

Takna' Lawe', also a myth, keeps such beliefs through the theme on love and messages on togetherness to love, respect, and tolerate the interrelated values in life: human-Almighty, human-nature, human-human.

As for the theme or central idea and messages of the heroic events in Takna' Lawe' epic literature, Rufinus (2013, p. 40) shows them in Table 1 below, i.e., the relationship between the theme of Lawe' heroic epic and the messages to show a set of values in the character.

Table 1. Theme and Messages in the Heroic Lawe'

Theme	Messages
<i>Lawe'</i> is also known as a three-in-one hero ⁸ who has fought for courage, love, loyalty, determination, cooperation, and responsibility.	Courage conveys one's strength and capability to positively think, to do, and to react.
	Love conveys correct and sincere attention and affection fairly for peace and solidarity.
	Loyalty conveys devoted deeds for beliefs and togetherness.
	Determination conveys one's strength of mind and attitude towards consistency and firmness.

⁸ The concept of epic-hero as a hero in whom three locks of divinity, humanness, and heroism are inseparably interlinked as the three, all pervasive and outstanding attributes of the epic-hero in *Lawe'* himself. (cf. Ponniah, *Thesis*, 1979).

	Cooperation conveys one's conviction for a teamwork.
	Responsibility conveys self-consciousness for good and bad results or consequences.

In the theme and messages, there are values from those three locks of divinity, humanity, and heroism from which the community gets advantages in many aspects of their ways of life, work, status, and prestige. They are values of courage, love, loyalty, determination, cooperation, and responsibility that lead the community to live in safety, solidarity, peace, and honesty. These are established by customs in the family life, land use for rice field and garden, river and forest benefit maintenance, religious procession, and educational purposes.

This great poem, Takna' Lawe', was composed with rich of valuable symbols or signs for human commitment related to natural resources and environmental meanings. For the Kayan communities, Takna' Lawe' is a literary work to speak about their customs or traditions which are based on heroism, loyalty, and compassion. Dove (in Ding, 1984) believes that Takna' Lawe' is a "Bible" for Kayan oral literature of religious and scientific work. In this long lyrical poem, Lawe' is believed to be the symbol for a hero in at least three appearances, i.e., a strong but handsome man, a brave figure, and at the same time a spirit. In other words, in Lawe' himself, there are three in one: human, warrior, and spirit. In their mythology, the communities view that Lawe' created their own world origin (cosmos: see *Figure 1 below*) in which they live with their own ways of life.

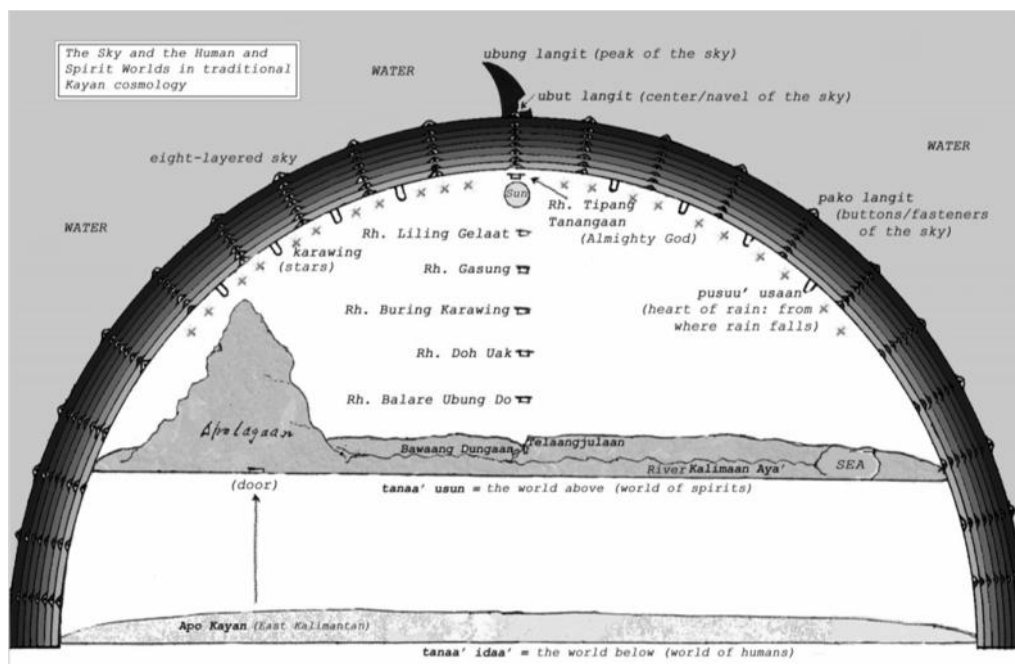


Figure 1. Kayan traditional cosmology (map by Ding Ngo, in *Sejarah Orang Dayak Kayan*, 1989/2015; Sej:022b: digital edition and map edited by S. Morgan)

This directs them in their customs/beliefs system of life and work: of birth, growing age, and death; of land use and land management (the cycles from land choosing, clearing, harvesting, and to thanksgiving); of views and systems on relationship with their environment. In cosmos, Kayan communities look into their world origin (the beginning of world creation) in that there are relations between the life of human on earth and that of spirits above (*telaangjulan* “heaven”). In Kayan’s beliefs there are two types of the living: down on earth and above in the sky for common human and the souls or spirits respectively. On these beliefs then Ding (1984) says:

The souls are anywhere: in the soil, in the water, on land, in the trees, on the mountain, high in and on top of the sky. There are good and bad souls or spirits for human, and *takna*’ is usually good. Good souls are helpful but bad ones are disturbing. The souls in the sky have their own earth. There are *tanaa’ idaa*’ (land down, our earth) and *tanaa’ usun* (land above, the souls’ earth). Kayan indigenous laws are from the above earth, i.e., from *Ine Aya*’ in *Apolagaan* (Mother or Big Leader in the Above Place).

In addition to the cosmos of the indigenous people, there is the legend of cosmos creation: shape and condition of the nature including that one above (heaven). Walter William Skeat in his book “Malay Magic” states about the shape and phenomena of the nature as follows:

Earth of the width of a tray, and Heaven of the width of an umbrella,” may be intended to represent respectively the “souls” (*semangat*) of heaven and earth, in which case they would bear the same relation to the material heaven and earth as the man-shaped human soul does to the body of a man. (1965, p. 5)

In relation to Lawe’ with his own world origin or cosmos in Kayan beliefs, Yaacob Harun (2001) verifies that cosmos in cosmology pays attention to the origin of the universe formation, the elements and their relations. This includes interpretation, pronunciation, comprehension, symbol systems, and cosmological manifestation in the society and culture. While heroic forms in heroism mean the power and authority in achieving success, security, freedom, and welfare. Besides being powerful, a hero is considered a perfect person who is kind, loyal, skilled, and moral conduct. In indigenous community literature a hero is a figure and main character of a fictional story.

In the story, an influential and supernatural hero Lawe’ was from royal family (*hipui*)⁹—whose true heroic fight against his enemies was for his lover, Karigit. For this, Lawe’ was well-known for a name “A hero for a Lover.” Here with his extraordinary power he made friends with the other characters like Awing Tanyaang Lahe, Tuva’, Avun Ului Ajo, and Hukang. There come reconciliation for peace and togetherness not hostility for hate and separation.

The illustration in Figure 1 above shows what Kayans have believed to be the manifestation of human and spirit lives according to traditional cosmology.

⁹ Kayan people (up to the early 20th century) recognized their social structures in three categories: *hipui/hipi* (similar to a king), *panyin* (common Kayan), and *dipan* (similar to a servant).

In old Kayan stories the cosmos was formerly very small, originating in worm dung (see the *Takna' Lawe'* in *Syair Lawe' Bagian Pendahuluan*, 1984.), “pada permulaan bumi kita ini kecil sekali: berasal dari tahi cacing, ia menjadi besar”(p. xxxi), and the stanza in (TLJA 366),

Sava` nah man taharii` (It was at the very beginning)

Man tanaa` beraang ban jii`, (‘‘When the land was as small as a finger)

Jaan kalunaan ne nyilavuhii`, (No one came to defeat)

Kame` alang piah tamaan,” kan (We came with our father,`` said Grandpa Alui Ajo)

Bo` Ului Ajo, Ajo Jeni Najaal.

The world of human Kayans was made of earth and the sky above covered it like a gigantic round-bottomed cooking pan.

The sky was believed to consist of eight layers (TLNY 1057, TLTM 0973). At first, the sky was very low. Then it happened that a woman fed her pigs using her long leading stick to send away the other pigs, and the end of the stick stabbed into the sky, which made the sky so angry that it lifted itself up very high as it is today. There are two layers of land, the earth below for common humans and the upper world for the good and bad souls and for noble spirits like Lawe', who live just like traditional Kayans.

Between earth and sky are the stars (*karawing*), the sun (*mataando*) and the moon (*bulaan*). There are three stars in a line called the Sword-sheath or *karawing tukar dumaan*, which measure the year, marking the dry time, when Kayan farmers burn and sow in their swidden rice farms. There are other named stars and constellations such as the *karawing maraseh* meaning East Star or Morning Star (the planet *Venus*), or the *karawing kuhung bavi* meaning pig head stars as the shape shows. Figure 2 above is rich in indigenous knowledge ordering the community's system of living according to natural mechanisms. There are more than a dozen names describing natural cosmic objects and processes and their relationship to community beliefs and actions.

Beliefs associated with indigenous astronomy are linked in the *Takna' Lawe'* with formulaic descriptions of women and their class and appearance. The position of the sun and moon in the sky formerly represented a woman's age, but now are just used for rhyme, with the general meaning that the woman's beauty and nobility make her shine like the sun or moon. In the *Takna' Lawe' mataando tubuu'* (the sun rises) or *idaang do nyinaa'* (the sun begins to rise) formerly were used for young girls who were fresh and pretty, beginning to shine. Kayan proper names often derive from astronomical and mythological and ecological references, such as *Karawing* (star), *Bulaan* (moon), *Avun* (cloud) or names taken from supernatural river dwellers like *Silo* (the crocodile lady) and *Sangiaang* (cobra dragon), and noble men may have formulaic names related to wild creatures believed to have great power and glory, such as *Kuleh* (leopard), *Lejo* (tiger) and *Tingaang* (hornbill).

The phases of the moon are associated with beliefs about values and actions. When there is a full moon (*kamat*) for example, Kayans are prohibited from starting a house or a rice field hut, because this may lead to harm or misfortune. These concepts and beliefs are expressed through works of indigenous literature: legends and myths and poems such as the *Takna' Lawe'* convey certain messages and values. Heroic Lawe', the main character in the *Takna' Lawe'*, embodies

and inspires values of cleverness, strong will, self-sacrifice, power, bravery, and love. These are stated as well as implied in the whole set of epics, showing how Lawe' struggles against his spiritually powerful opponents and successfully uses his heroism for his people and for his wives. Lawe' is also well-known as a hero for lovers.

Local Identities and Symbols in the Takna' Lawe'

Local identities are a set of signs or symbols in physical, material, or behavioural forms which specifically identify an individual or group of individuals as different from others (cf. Goodenough, 1976). Symbols here mean things or words that represent or stand for something else, especially a material object or linguistic representation for something abstract. They are part of indigenous traditions or customs that may provide a positive response towards human as well as natural resources management systems. Experiences and a number of reports note that "Indigenous perceptions and practices must be understood and taken into account" (Brokensha *et al* In Ahimsa, 2011). This statement is important for at least two reasons. First, indigenous knowledge should be learned and understood since the local people are believed to possess deep and accurate knowledge about various life and environment systems of their own whereas other people may have neglected or ignored such systems. Second, social development projects will only be successful if they are in line with the local people's perceptions and practices (cf. Brokensha *et al*, In Ahimsa, 2011: 3).

In the *Takna' Lawe'*, local identities are expressed in rich symbols showing the ways of life of the local community, namely the Kayan community in the Mendalam in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. These identities can be analyzed into their ethnological categories, i.e., the beliefs and activities of the Kayan community or ethnic group, whether associated with cosmology (Figure 1), or art, ecology, history, or communal or individual healing. The philosophical or cosmological identity is concerned with indigenous knowledge and views about their world, and the creation and origins of humanity. Artistic identities are related to indigenous knowledge and practice in the practical and fine arts (carving and architectures, music, songs, etc.). Ecological identity relates to Kayan knowledge about their environment and its management systems and conservation (land, forests, rivers, etc.).

In the following examples of stanzas from the *Takna' Lawe'* and from Kayan prayer, we can discover potential educational messages, descriptions, and meaning.

Stanza 1 (TLNY 0006)

*Aring Lawe' paknap sang te
nyebung ayur hunge,
ataa Kalimaan ade,
delo' Awing Tanyaang Lahe,
delo' Tuva' Jumaan, Avun Julaan peging Hukang Jo, kayo la'aan tavaan...*

Then Lawe' thinks of going
to splash in the flowing river,
the water of the Kalimaan,

together with [his friend] Awing Tanyaang Lahe and [with other friends] Tuva' Jumaan, Avun Julaan and Hukang Jo, once prisoner of war...

Description:

The stanza is usually sung by one main singer with at least two men as chorus at the ends of lines and the end of the stanza. The lyrical forms are full of symbols:

hunge "river" may symbolize nature (natural resources), and the river's local importance as the source of fish and road for transport, and the place for folks' informal meetings while bathing and washing, and for life protection and support by clean and fresh water or good spirits in it.

nyebung ayur hunge "splash" may refer to the courage and skill to make use of natural resources, as by bathing.

hunge Kalimaan "Kalimaan river", is the big river in the spirit world where Lawe' and his people and wives live in their longhouses, the place of his adventures and battles.

delo' Awing Tanyaang Lahe "together with Awing (and other friends) may signify cooperation or solidarity. Lawe' is almost always accompanied by his friends who help him travel and fight.

Themes: courage, loyalty, determination, etc. establish identity for solidarity.

Messages: There should be beliefs in the values of human courage, love, loyalty, determination, cooperation, and responsibility.

Stanza 2:

This is a traditional prayer by *dayungs* (shamans) when they chant while pounding the rhythm (*neguk*), recorded by the high Dayung Tipung Jawe' (In Ding Ngo, ~1970:21-22.)

Barkat Benii'

Aii' Tipang,

barkat Im benii' ani',

Im batu', Im piara n'ina',

gerii' haar di alang sayuu'.

Im naa' nah urip na' sayuu',

gerii' jalimuu' langit,

am maju ina' san tulaar kanii',

atang na' ne ngavuaa' jamaa' langaan,

sang baguna man lu'ung barua'.

Prayer for paddy seed to plant in the rice field

Oh Almighty,

bless this seed.

You will help it, take care of it,

Let a good wind blow on it,
Give it a good life,
bring down the dew from the sky,
don't let it be eaten by animals,
till it produces many fruits
valuable for our life in body and soul.

This indigenous prayer begs the Almighty for blessings, and for good and successful work through the growing grain to give a fine harvest so that people can live well both physically and spiritually. There is deep and rich educational content for classroom learning interactions in the theme and messages in these stanzas and others, showing that good will and faith produce love and welfare: as the rice grains grow, so love is kept growing in a way that may produce togetherness, responsibility, and loyalty.

As shown by these two stanzas as samples from the *Takna' Lawe'*, the community (the Kayan community) possesses powerful local traditional values that they keep and practice. Through *Lawe'*, the main character of the poem, the community presents its indigenous wisdom about the environment and traditional technology. They show these in stories, songs, dances, and carving to symbolize and express their indigenous talents and attitudes.

The *Takna' Lawe'* is rich in cosmological symbols and messages. *Lawe'* is a divine hero, a human hero, and a warrior hero who is shown to have fought for courage, love, loyalty, solidarity, determination, and responsibility. These are relevant and useful for community ways of life relating to leadership, bravery with politeness, fairness in daily activities in the family, socio-cultural interaction, teaching and learning at school, and in certain religious, economic and political matters.

For these purposes, it is true that the Kayan community still makes use of the *Takna' Lawe'* in traditional activities, for instance as displayed in Picture 1 below, the *Pesta Dange* or Thanksgiving Harvest Festival in April and May every year. They set up a committee for festival and celebration, and practice chanting or singing and dancing as is described in the *Takna' Lawe'*.



Picture 1: *Pejuu` Dange*

In the picture, *Dayungs* (the women-shamans) lead the celebration in *Pejuu` Dange* (Lift the Offering) while praying, dancing in circle around the altar. They also celebrate *Pesta Dange* in Church Mass using the language of the *Takna' Lawe'* in their prayers, have communal meals and spend time telling stories, dancing and talking about Lawe' as a human, a divine or spirit, and a warrior.

Ethno-healing is also a part of the *Takna' Lawe'*, as shown when Lawe' heals Puvan (TLJA 344+) and brings Hingaa Jaan back to life (TLTM 1761+). Traditional medicine is in large part spiritual and carried out by dayung, but also makes use of local knowledge through indigenous treatments and techniques. Natural resources such as herbal resources in certain plants and fruits are rich in medicinal substances that can help heal certain illness. These are technologies and skills that can be useful to acquire and appreciate through learning activities in local educational activities, so that appropriate understanding and awareness about their deep messages and values can be developed among the young people.

The following chart, Table 2, shows sample categories in a matrix of local identities related to subjects and symbols in the *Takna' Lawe'*. Significance and interpretation are used here to denote the basis for estimating cultural identities.

Table 2. Local Identities in the Takna' Lawe': Sample stanzas				
#	Ethno- identities	Sample Stanzas from the <i>Takna' Lawe'</i>	Translation showing symbols in the sample stanzas	Significance and Interpretation
1	Ethno-philosophy and cosmology	(TLNY 0789) Ju' pakilung nah hinang nare' bataang arung, atang liling do ngahung, ha' ubung langit napung, marhaa' tulaa' nah hibaan tipung, Nyalo ha' ubung kirung, Nyalo h'alam liling do madaang ha' ubung tesun, lulun avun luvaan.	<i>Then the gaze of the noble lord, host of harvest feasts, turns to the round sun at the summit of the sheltering sky, and there clear to be seen is the noble lady Nyalo at the summit of the sky, Nyalo inside the round sun soaring at the summit of the sky white-curved with flying cloud.</i>	Lawe' sets out to the sun in pursuit of Nyalo, the lady he loves, who has hidden herself there to escape him. The sun is very hard to reach but it is part of the human cosmos.
2	Ethno-arts	(TLLB 1922) Sayuu' mannyung nah kanhe' sape' kalung t'ujung kevahango ujung usuu' bataang arung, Lawe' naa' daak tingaang nilung man idaang do ngahung Karigit Ipui Mebaang Ubung dawa' hibaan Lalang	<i>High and clear is the sound of the patterned sape', at the touch of the noble lord's fingertips, as Lawe' plays the tune of the indwelling hornbill for the lady Karigit Ipui Mebaang Ubung with lady Llang Julaan, [as they dance] on the veranda at Lung Leno, where the low sun lies down.</i>	Lawe' and his friends and family make merry with his guests. Music from the carved and painted lute, and fine dances by men and women, show of Kayan traditional skill and art.

		Julaan t'awaa' Lung Leno, komdo aring nidaan.		
3	Ethno-healing and ecology	(TLTM 1802) "Ingaan, im tavanga' baa', " kan bataang uraang leraa' man Hingaan Jaan Buaa'; "akui mete jelaa', " kan Lawe' duaan Hingaan Jaan t'awaa' Idaa' Luno, davaan kanaan tulaar.	<i>"Hingaan, open your mouth, " says the lord bataang uraang to Hingaan Jaan; "I'll put the tongue in it, " says Lawe', speaking to Hingaan Jaan on the veranda at Idaa' Luno, under the banyan where birds and beasts find food.</i>	Lawe' has freed Hingaan Jaan from the banyan that swallowed him, and now Lawe' puts in Hingaan Jaan's mouth the tongue of a monitor lizard, so that Hingaan can speak. The lizard gave half his forked tongue out of pity for Hingaan; other animals did not want to give their tongues because they only had one, and their need was respected. Animals and birds are all part of the human cosmos.
4	Ethno-healing and ecology	(TLJA 338) Lawe' mangjah Tipang ha' ubung alah, ake perah Puvan mam ayaan nah Iting Luno, davaan kanaan tulaar.	<i>Lawe' calls upon the noble ruler at the summit of the sky, asking that Puvan's hurt be taken away: so speaks Iting Luno, crest of the banyan where birds and beasts find food.</i>	Lawe' asks the Almighty to cure the wound Puvan got defending his longhouse against the invaders; Lawe', who is like a fruitful tree to his people, prays and heals his wound.

Ethno-identities here are the local wisdoms of the Kayan community, including their customs and views of the universe and its origin. In the several parts of the *Takna' Lawe'*, events show the inspiration to humans that comes from the hero in his superhuman capabilities: he was able to reach the sun to find the spiritually powerful lady Nyalo, he destroyed the great army of the monster invader To' Magung, and he restored Hingaan Jaan to life. In the realms' of ethno-arts and ethno-healing, Lawe' also generates local wisdom, being highly skilled in the many arts of the Kayan community such as dancing, carving, painting, music, and architecture, and also

skilled in healing, as he restored Puvan's terrible spear wound with the help of the Almighty. In the stanzas above, (1) shows Kayan community beliefs in seeking love and spiritual powers within the cosmic mysteries, (2) shows Kayan community customs with their knowledge and skill in dances, playing traditional music like *sape*', and (3) and (4) show divine healing in the context of the natural world.

Kayan Carving Arts

(Source: Long and Ngo, in Takna` Lawe`, 1984; Lingo`. ``File Ukiran Dayak Kayan.`` , 1995.

The following seven Kayan carving artworks represent significant signs and symbols to the community identity for excellent works in that they describe their beliefs in cosmic views and cultural values.



Hatak (Leech)



Aso` Waang (Spirits)



Aso` Lejo (Spirits)



Aso` Lejo



Ben Gung (Fern like Carving)



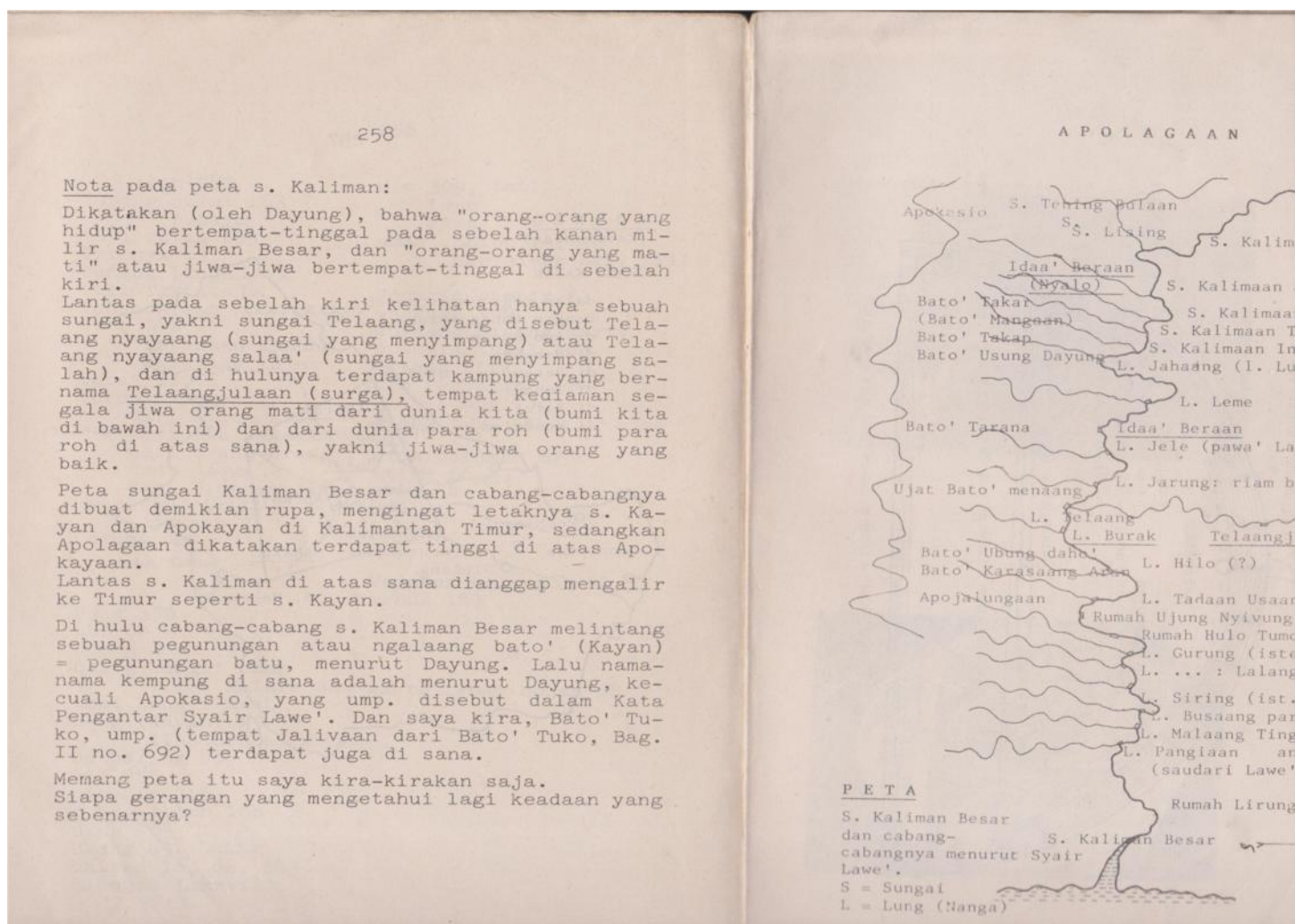
Lengunaan (Spirits: Python, Dragon)



Kung Baa (Spirits: Giant)



Hudoq (Spirits: Pig, Dragon)



Map 2: Spirit Cosmological Homes at Kaliman River in Apolagaan (Long & Ngo, 1984, p. 259)

Conclusion

1. As a heroic epic, the *Takna' Lawe'* demonstrates many rich and valuable traditional forms and symbols of local wisdoms, some of which are Kayan ethno-philosophy or cosmology, ethno-arts and architectures, ethno-healing, and ethno-agriculture.
2. The *Takna' Lawe'* contains much local wisdom in relation to the lives of spirits on humanity, animals, plants to correct and enhance perceptions and practices concerning indigenous peoples.
3. This ethno-epic shows and identifies local identity but global as in oral literature for local cultural identities in Kalimantan and all Borneo: stories, poems, etc. The epic poem *Takna' Lawe'*, for example, can provide one set of local materials to teach educational values such as honesty, leadership, cooperation, responsibility, and love.
4. This great literary work with its supplementary introduction and explanations, and many associated literary, historical and linguistic works by Pastor A. J. Ding Ngo and other Mendalam Kayans.

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