

REFLECTIONS OF HERITAGE IN THE TRADITIONAL COSTUMERY OF THE DUSUN TINDAL OF SABAH

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Abstract. The design and accessories of the Dusun Tindal traditional costume reveal an intricate relationship between the materials used and the community's view of life. The practice of showcasing their traditional costume during festivals and ceremonies reflect the Dusun Tindal community's commitment towards preserving their culture and heritage. This study explores the culture related to the designs of Dusun Tindal traditional costumes with specific focus on the community residing at the *id Nuluhon* (hill land area), a village located close to the foothill of Mount Kinabalu. This study, based on field work activities conducted in *id Nuluhon*, examines the structural design and presentation of the *sinuranga* (for men) and *rinagang* (for women) in the Dusun Tindal traditional costumery.

Keywords: Traditional Costume, Design, Accessories, Dusun Tindal.

Introduction. The Dusun Tindal community is concentrated mainly in the district of Kota Belud on Sabah's West Coast. Located 77kms from the capital Kota Kinabalu, Kota Belud shares borders with the Kota Marudu district at its north point, Ranau district on the east and Tuaran district to the west. Based on the population and housing census by the Malaysia Department of Statistics (2010), the Dusun Tindal forms the largest ethnic group residing in Kota Belud district with an estimated population of 38,097 followed by 31,506 from the Bajau and Iranun ethnic communities (Salbiah, Humin, & Noria, 2016). The name Kota Belud is derived from the Bajau language term for 'fort on the hill'¹. In the olden days, hostilities between the Dusun, Bajau and Iranun ethnic communities often occurred due to lack of administrative control on regulations and ethnic customary affairs in the area (Mohd. Razalee, 1982). This enmity was a main factor for the inward migration of the Dusun community to remote areas or *tindal* (foothills) in the district. The term 'Dusun Tindal' is taken from the name of the hills which is synonymous with the word *belud* in the Bajau language². According to Topin (1996), the Dusun Tindal is an ethnic subgroup from among 40 in the KadazanDusun family that had migrated from Nunuk Ragang.

Figure 1: View of Dusun Tindal village



The modern-day Dusun Tindal community still shows diversity and active practice of their cultural heritage reflected through traditional clothing, handicraft and dances. Among these, the traditional costume is often the most prominent aspect of the community that continues to be showcased today. Each sub-grouping is identified by its own traditional costume designs worn during festivals and celebrations. According to Soulin Salidap (informant), the Dusun Tindal costumery has a unique design known as *sinuranga* for men and *rinagang* specifically for their womenfolk.

Sinuranga costume. *Sinuranga* refers to the Dusun Tindal traditional costume for men. The complete *sinuranga* ensemble is comprised of various accessories that complement the tunic (*sinuranga*), trousers (*soluar*) and headdress (*sigar*). Fabric base colour or *binidang*³ is black with bead embroidery and red threading or trimmings. The bead embroidery would commonly show various geometrical motifs such as triangles and squares.