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### IDENTITIES CULTURES ENVIRONMENTS

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#### **Renong, An Iban Vocal Repertory**

by

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#### **Abstract**

*Renong*, is a type of Iban oral literature which is always chanted or sung whenever is being performed. The *renong* is sung by the bard, known as the *lemambang*. It is used in delivering folktales, mythologies, love story and story of courtship. In the ritual aspects, the *renong* are performed and sung during healing ritual ceremony. Furthermore, it is also been used in the new longhouse gracing/blessing ceremony in seeking for peace, stability and harmony throughout the stay in the longhouse. This paper aims to discuss the music and it's value, textual meaning, the function and the usage of the particular *renong* chosen in the study. Furthermore, the musical sound in performance will be examine in socio-cultural context of the specific music making and the musical sounds itself.

#### **Introduction**

*Renong*, is a type of Iban oral tradition, which is sung during the ritual ceremonies. It is also being used in delivering folktales, mythologies, love story and story of courtship (Matusky: 2004). In the ritual aspects, the *renong* are performed and sung during healing ritual ceremony. Furthermore, it is also been used in the new longhouse gracing/blessing ceremony in seeking for peace, stability and harmony throughout the stay in the longhouse. The Iban villages believes that by doing this so, they will be able to seek the protection from the deities and the spirit of the ancestor. This Iban oral tradition is still being practiced and performed by the Iban Saribas who lives in the Kalaka and Saribas, both were in the Betong Division (Sandin: 1974).

*Renong*, performed by the bards known as the *lemambang*. We read in the literature that the practitioner who performs the ritual poetry has a distinctive way of singing the poetical verse and that the style of singing and chanting is immediately recognizable and evident upon hearing a given practitioner to perform. In this paper, I will begin to define and distinguish the *renong* and their vocal styles.