

# THE UNIQUENESS OF SAYAU KAPA MOMORUN DANCE IN DUSUN TINDAL ETNIC OF KOTA BELUD, SABAH

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**ABSTRACT:** *The Dusun Tindal ethnic group derives its name from the words 'Dusun' which refers to race or origin and 'Tindal' meaning land or hills. The Dusun Tindal is often associated with a refined ability to produce high-quality handicraft items such as the traditional kuron pottery. Kuron is an integral part of the Sayau Kapa Momorun, a well-known traditional dance performance in Kampung Malangkap Kapa, Kota Belud. The dance is unique due to its significance in the production of kuron. The Dusun Tindal community has turned the process of kuron-making into a traditional dance complete with its own set of movements, music and costumes. This study is an exploration of the uniqueness of the Sayau Kapa Momorun as a dance representation of the traditional kuron pottery of the Dusun Tindal in Kota Belud. The research utilises the fieldwork methods of observation, interview and audio visual recording.*

**Keywords:** *Kuron, Dusun Tindal, Dance Movement, Sayau Kapa Momorun*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Kadazan Dusun grouping is the largest indigenous community in Sabah. Approximately 35 subgroups fall under the umbrella of this large grouping with each renown for their strong heritage and cultural traditions. Folkdances and refined traditional pottery skills are among the skills the community is famous for. The Sayau Kapa Momorun, a traditional dance by the Dusun Tindal of Kampung Malangkap Kapa in Kota Belud, has existed since the 1960s and was inspired by the movements in momorun, a pottery-making daily activity usually pursued by the womenfolk in the community.

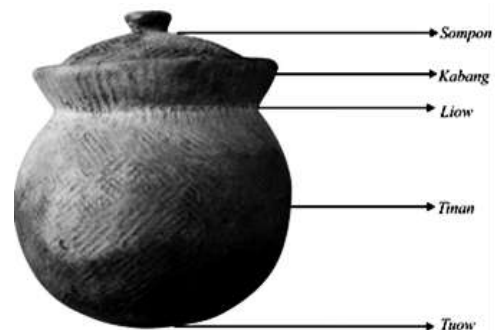
Kuron, produced from grey clay, is made in several sizes. The small kuron, popogong, is usually for kitchen use although it was also utilised for barter trading purposes in the olden days. The modern-day popogong serves a more decorative function and has been extensively commercialised. Its usage is still actively incorporated in the traditional Sayau Kapa Momorun dance which had since evolved into a full-fledged dance complete with its own music accompaniments and costumes. The dance movements reflect not only the processes in making the kuron but also the activities among the womenfolk in Dusun Tindal villages.

The community observes many traditions inherited from their ancestors. These customs and beliefs, closely inter-related to everyday human life, nature and the cosmology, are nurtured and adhered to or diligently practised. The village Headman plays a defining role in ensuring the rites and traditions are observed through ceremonies such as marriages, or in cases of cultural infringement, judgement or penalty (sogit). Although a sizeable proportion of the younger Dusun Tindal generation has embraced either Islam or Christianity, the community on the whole still adheres to the age-old beliefs and traditions of their people. From the perspective of culture and lifestyle, the Dusun Tindal has many similarities with other Kadazan Dusun ethnic groupings in terms of practice, beliefs, language, rites, and traditions.

## 2. KURON POTTERY

The Kadazan Dusun community is renowned for their skills and expertise in pottery-making. The grey clay that is central in the production of kuron is usually obtained from river banks or areas close to the mountain foothills as in the case of Kampung Malangkap Kapa and Kampung Malangkap Tiong. *Kuron* in Dusun Tindal means 'pot' used for cooking or keeping food with Kampung Melangkap in Kota Belud still actively producing this craft.

According to an informant who was also the sole *kuron* producer in her particular area, the pottery has various important functions. Its main use is in the everyday kitchen activity of the Dusun Tindal household whereby *kuron* would be used for cooking and keeping potable water cool. According to their tradition, food kept in the *kuron* would keep longer. Yet another benefit of the *kuron* is its perceived ability to cure ailments or illnesses. The *kuron* is shaped like a rice pot with five main parts: *sompon* (lid), *kabang* (mouth), *liow* (neck), *tinan* (body) and *tuow* (base).



Picture 1: *Kuron* Structure

Sources: Source: Researcher's private collection