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# Traditional Knowledge on Ecosystems Management by the Dusun People in Tambunan District, Sabah, Malaysia.

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# CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
2. TAMBUNAN DISTRICT
3. TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE ON ECOSYSTEMS MANAGEMENT
  1. NATIVE CUSTOMARY LAWS
  2. BELIEFS AND PRACTICES
4. CONCLUSION
5. REFERENCES
6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- Traditional Knowledge on Ecosystems Management has long history in human civilization.
- As soon as human know how to utilized natural resources surrounding his area, they planned to conserved and preserved the resources so that it could be utilized in sustainable manner.
- The natives in Sabah such as the Dusun people in Tambunan District have no exception.
- This presentation shows how the Dusun people in Tambunan managed their natural resources by traditional knowledge.

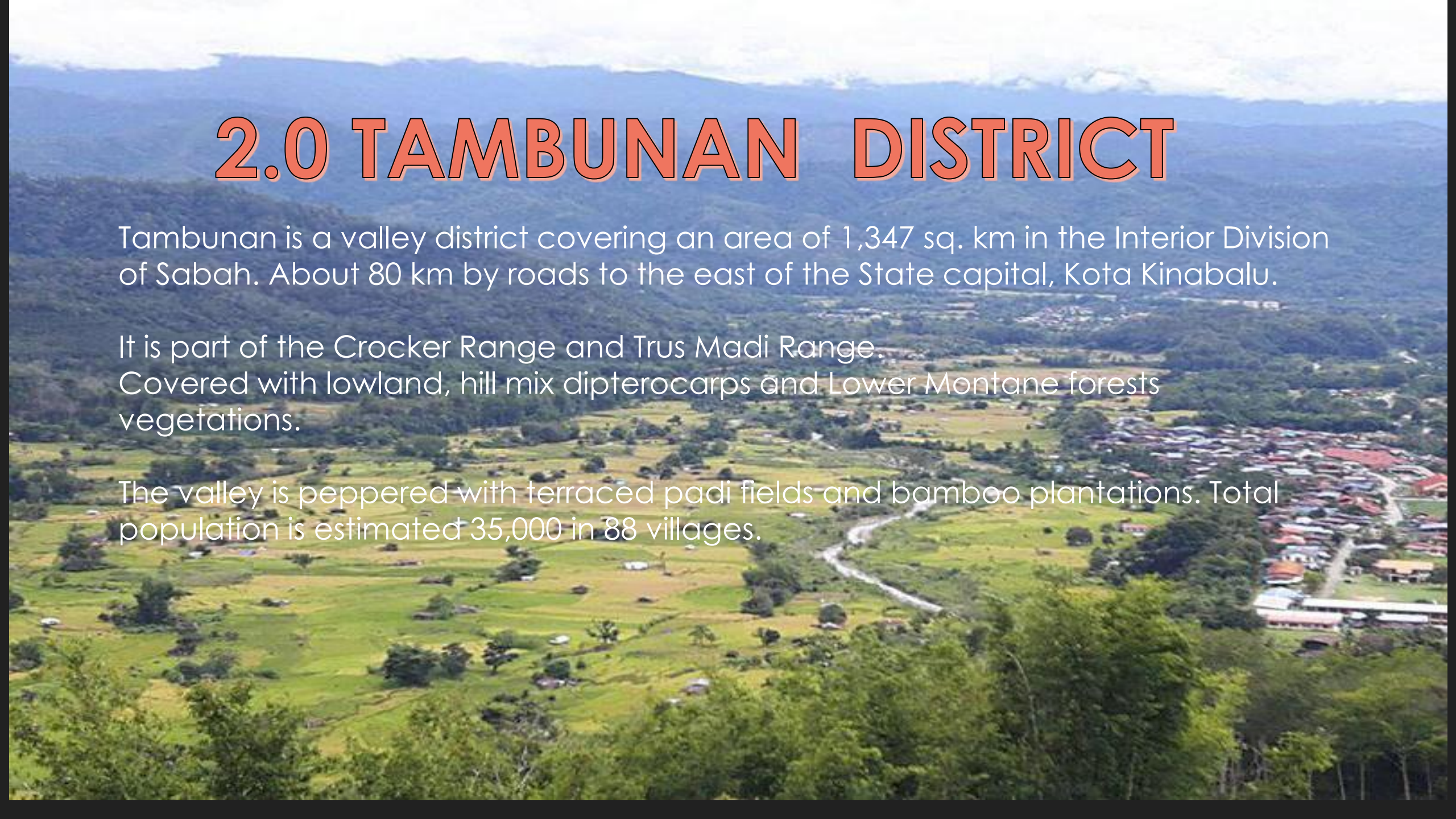


# 2.0 TAMBUNAN DISTRICT

Tambunan is a valley district covering an area of 1,347 sq. km in the Interior Division of Sabah. About 80 km by roads to the east of the State capital, Kota Kinabalu.

It is part of the Crocker Range and Trus Madi Range. Covered with lowland, hill mix dipterocarps and Lower Montane forests vegetations.

The valley is peppered with terraced padi fields and bamboo plantations. Total population is estimated 35,000 in 88 villages.



# 2.1 LOCATION OF TAMBUNAN DISTRICT.

## TAMBUNAN DISTRICT

- In the early 20th century, the social structure of the Tambunan Dusun was based on six sub-tribes, namely Tuhawon, Tagas, Tobilung, Tibabar, Gana, and Kohub (Gibon, 1986).
- Most of them are farmers and forest products gatherers.

## MAP OF SABAH.



## 3.0 Traditional Knowledge System of the Dusun Tambunan to protect & conserve environment.

- The Dusun people in Tambunan have a long traditions in keeping and utilising their natural resources in a sustainable manner to sustain their life.
- They practice wise use by following two types of system namely:
  1. 'Adat Kampung/Pantang Larang' or Native Customary Laws
  2. 'Koubasanan' or Traditional Beliefs and Practices.

# 3.1 ADAT KAMPUNG / PANTANG LARANG (NATIVE LAWS).

- In the Native Customary Laws or 'Adat Kampung' and 'Pantang-Larang' or forbidden, if someone committed an offence, he/she will be punished by pay fine a 'Sogit' by the local authorities.
- The concept of 'Sogit' is to make peace to the person he/she or environment that he/she hurt or damaged. Literally 'Sogit' in Dusun word means cool.
- This is to manage & conserve the natural resources in Tambunan.
- There are two categories of 'Punishment':
  1. The first category is with Sogit to individu (Punishable to the individual wrong-doer by village authority or 'Ketua Kampung' (Village Head)/'Ketua Masyarakat' (Native Chief)/'Ketua Daerah' (District Chief).
  2. The second category is with Sogit to the whole village/community.

# 3.1.1 PUNISHMENT TO THE INDIVIDUAL.

- In the first category is with 'Sogit' to an individu. It is gazetted in Native Customary Laws 1992 of Sabah (Warta Kerajaan, 1992). Anyone found guilty by the Native Courts must pay 'Sogit' or fine. The 'Sogit' usually in term of animal/salt/bowl. Failure, the person will be fine a sum of money or jail or both upon conviction.
- There are namely,
  - Part V. Burial Grounds and Death. Section 27. Damage to grave yard. This includes plants.
  - Part VI. Gross Misbehavior, Indecency and Mischief.
    - Section 40. Adulteration of water sources. This includes any communal spring (Toud), village reservoir or river;
    - Section 41. Trespass. Enter any house or land without permission;
    - Section 44. Injury to livestock or fowl or others;
    - Section 48. Liability for damage by animal;
    - Section 50. Felling trees;
    - Section 51. Disturbance to Dam or embankment;
    - Section 52. Disturbance to customary signification of property e.g. 'Tonduk'.
  - Part VIII. Birth & Customary Abstention.
    - Section 55. Prohibited act during 'Mobpuod'. ...'to observe upon the demise of his/her spouse'...



## 3.1.2 PUNISHMENT TO THE COMMUNITY.

- The second category is with Sogit to the villagers/community. It is called 'Paus'.
- 'Paus' in Dusun is a type of mammal or Barking Deer (*Muntiacus muntjak*). In Malay it is called 'Kijang'.
- Anyone found killed a 'Paus' during planting season, the village or the padi field which he walked through, will immediately stop working for a day. No planting activity on that day.
- It is believed that if anyone ignored and continue planting padi, the padi will die.



## 3.2 KOUBASANAN (CULTURE)

- The 2<sup>nd</sup> System without punishment by authorities with Sogit.
  - The person who ignored will be punished by 'Kinoingan' or 'Minamangun' / The Creator or God.
  - It is embedded in Traditional Beliefs and Practices.
  - They are namely:
    1. Moginupus
    2. Monoruang
    3. Bambarayon
    4. Lintugi
    6. Hokuu
    7. Gonsuri
    8. Misarawang Tulan
    9. Rusod Talun/Nulu
    10. Madsalud
- (Kulip, 2015 and Kulip et; al, 2016)

# EXAMPLES OF KOUBASANAN (TRADITION)

## 1. MOGINUPUS (LOVE CARE)

- Practice: When a member of a family / village people die, a 7-day period of no activities/works shall be observed. It is a mark of respect to the dead.
- Belief: If someone didn't followed, he/she will be punish by God. The punishments:
  - Agriculture - If he/she continue planting padi, the padi will die or grown with no rice seed.
  - Forestry – if he/she enter the forest to hunt, the will be no catch. He/she will be injured / lost.

## 2. MONORUANG (FRIENDSHIP)

- Practice: When a new baby is born, after 30days, a one day celebration will be held to welcome the new member. Every villagers will come to visit the new baby. They usually bring a chicken or rice etc... for the baby. It is like a birthday party.
- Belief: Anyone who didn't attend will be curse by God.

# 3<sup>rd</sup> CATEGORY: BAMBARAYON

## BELIEF & PRACTICE

- Bambarayon is Padi/rice spirits.
- Belief: Every seed of padi has Bambarayon spirit. The spirit is responsible for a good harvest.
- Practice: Rice cannot be thrown away even in one seed. The spirit of rice will angry, then the next season of planting, no seed will be produced or empty fruit.
- Native Customary Law:
- Also punishable by the Village/Native/District Chief if any animal eg karabau, Chicken, ducks found inside the planted padi field and eaten the padi plants, the owner of the padi plot is allowed to kill the animal instantly without informing the owner of the animal. The head of the animal must be hanged on the fence of the padi plot damaged.

Padi field in Sabah.



# 3<sup>RD</sup> CATEGORY: LINTUGI

## BELIEF & PRACTICE

- Lintugi is a Milliped.
- Belief: If encountered, It is a sign of bad omen.
- Practice: if encountered during journey to the forest, must return back
- The body represents a big tree fell onto people (the legs).

## LINTUGI (MILIPED)



# 3<sup>rd</sup>. CATEGORY; HOKIU

## BELIEF & PRACTICE

- The Hoku/Loku is a Wood Pecker Bird (*Dinopium javanense*) is an important species of bird for the Dusun people of Tambunan.
- Belief: It is a sign that one of his/her member of family will fall sick or die in a week.
- Practice: When someone hear the sound of this bird during his long hunting journey to the forest, he/she must return home at once.

## HOKIU/LOKIU (BIRD)



# 3<sup>RD</sup> CATEGORY: GONSURI

## BELIEF & PRACTICE

- Gonsuri is a small forest rat.
- Belief: When encountered the Gonsuri or forest's rat(s) in the forest during your journey in the forest.
- Practice: You must return home at once. A bad omen will faced in front.
- Tragedy: In 2015, during the Mt. Kinabalu's tremor, the tourists and guides assending, they saw many Gonsuri rats came out from the rocks and ran away decending from the mountain. The guides ignored the signal. A few minutes later, tremor occurred! Many tourists were trapped and injured. One guide died.

## GONSURI ( FOREST RAT)



# 3<sup>rd</sup> CATEGORY: MISARAWANG

## BELIEF & PRACTICE

- Misarawang means full moon in Dusun Tambunan language.
- Belief: When collect/harvest bambpps/trees for making construction or house during Misarawang, the Karabau / Water Buffalo will hit and destroy your construction!
- Practice: During Misarawang, one shouldn't collect/harvest any forest produces or trees/bamboos in the forest.
- Scientific evidence: Insects are very active during full moon. They mating and producing eggs. The eggs are laid down inside the bamboo poles and trees. The infected bamboos/trees will get rotton / decayed easy.

## MISARAWANG /TAWANG





# 3<sup>RD</sup> CATEGORY: RUSOD TALUN/NULU

## BELIEF & PRACTICE

- Rusod means spirits in Dusun Tambunan language.
- Belief: The Tambunan Dusun people believe that every mountain and forest has spirits. The spirits are looking over / taking care of the mountain / forests. If someone doesn't respect, bad things will happen to him/her.
- Practice: When inside the forests or on the mountain, one should be well-mannered and respect the forests & mountain.
- Sabah Parks: Still practicing traditional prayers by the Bobolian every year before allowing tourists to climb Mt. Kinabalu. The Bobolian slaughtered 7 white chickens as offerings to the spirits.
- In 2015, a group of foreign tourists were spotted naked and peeing on the summit of Mt. Kinabalu. A day after, a huge tremor happened in Mt. Kinabalu. The culprits were then fined RM3,000 each and jailed 3 days!

## RUSOD TALUN/NULU



# 3<sup>rd</sup>. CATEGORY: MAD SALUD

## BELIEF & PRACTICE

- Madsalud is a custom in Tambunan (Kg. Kaingaran) in collecting herbs.
- Belief: If a person wants to collect herbs in the forest, he/she is only allowed to collect in a certain number only. Failure to adhere, the spirits of the forest and herbs will be angry and a bad thing will be happened to him/her,
- Practice: A person is only allowed to collect a certain number of herbs (usually maximum 7 species) on one time in the forest.

## MAD SALUD



# 4. CONCLUSION

- The Dusun people in Tambunan have a long tradition system of wise use of their natural resources such as 'Adat Kampung' and 'Pantang-Larang' or Native Customary Laws and 'Koubasanan' or Traditional Beliefs and Practices.
- This system has been safeguarded by them to create peace, a stable way of life and also to conserve and protect the resources in order to use agriculture, forest and water resources sustainably.

# 4.1 SUMMARY



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**THANK YOU**

**TERIMA KASIH.**