



The Tagal Murut Wedding Celebration

The Tagal Murut are the most numerous and widespread of Sabah's Murutic people, the third largest community in Sabah. They are found in the interior of southeastern areas of Sabah, in the Sapulut to Pensiangan, Tenom region and close to the borders of Kalimantan and Sarawak. Like other ethnic groups in Sabah, the Tagal Murut community are mostly shifting cultivators and hunters.

They are renowned for their system of bridewealth payment. Upon marriage, a man pays bridewealth (known as tinauh) for up to twenty years or throughout the life of the marriage. During an expensive and elaborate five-day marriage solemnization celebration the bride's parents will name their desired bridewealth in writing; this is then placed in a basket (cavat) filled with uncooked rice. The cavat is sent to the groom's family by the negotiator (angkuanan). Although the groom's family must fulfil the requests, they can do via the angkuanan and negotiate to substitute the items to the discretion of the angkuanan.

During the wedding, the anggalang and magunatip dances are performed. The former is a graceful dance highlighting gentle hand movements, while the magunatip is a pulsating bamboo dance where skilful dancers leap in between the clapped bamboos, following the increasingly rapid rhythm. These dances are normally accompanied by music played on six large gongs, twenty-five tagunggak (bamboo idiophones) and a tambor drum.



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