
With a title that translates as “In the Longhouse: The Life and Love of the Iban Dayaks,” this book begins with a nostalgic tale from the author. He recounts that it took about 27 years for his work to be completed. In other words, the book is a diachronic ethnography. The author conveys some of his observations he made in the late 1970s while conducting field research in the Iban region. He then compares them with the present, around 2018, when he took a trip to his first research location. As becomes clear from the first pages, *Di Rumah Panjang* is written in accessible Indonesian and has a gripping narration. It can be considered a work of popular science.

Mulyawan Karim starts his book with a nostalgic prologue recounting his early encounters with the Iban community. He then tells how rapid changes have taken place in the Iban region. According to one of his friends, all Iban people can now be reached by land. Indeed, the Indonesian government has completed the North Cross Highway Kapuas Hulu. This 180 kilometer long highway is part of the 850 kilometer long North West Kalimantan Highway.

In the second chapter, the author describes his anthropological research odyssey with the Iban community, explaining how he became interested in their life and culture. This section introduces the Iban world, beginning with their territory, language, and customs. The author also underlines how he believes anthropologists should view Iban society. He supports a statement from Edmund Leech, “Anthropologists should constantly bear in mind that Borneo and not Sarawak is the natural ethnological unity” (p. 26). In other words, today’s political-administrative boundaries belie the socio-cultural unity that exists in Borneo. He then calls attention to A.B. Hudson, who holds the opinion that the Iban language is not a child of the Malay language; it is more accurately referred to as the first-degree cousin of Malay (p. 42). All in all, this section contains a good literature review on the Iban people from anthropological and linguistic perspectives.

The author then shows us photo galleries of Iban people from cultural and social angles. These black-and-white photos depict faces, landscapes, Iban handicrafts, and traditional ceremonies performed at the longhouse. The images collected and presented in this book come from two different periods: the 1990s (when the author conducted fieldwork in the Iban region) and 2018 when he last returned and retraced his path during fieldwork.

At the end of the book, the writer presents some personal anecdotes of the Iban people. These stories are narrated in a simple but exciting way. Each indi-
individual described in this part has their own story; for example, how they met their partner and entered a relationship. There are also stories about ngayap (a kind of matchmaking activity) being used to find potential partners for the Ibans—and stories on how ngayap has begun to lose its sacredness. In addition, many stories revolve around the family and the role of husband and wife in the household. For example, the fieldwork consultant Megung is estimated to be more than 100 years old. He talked about traveling to work, often wandering from one faraway place to another. Another individual story comes from an Iban woman named Lema. She shares her life journey, love journey, and problems as an Iban woman. In addition, she recounts how she and her husband had longed to have children.

The book ends with an interesting epilogue by a different writer: Iwan Meulia Pirous. He explains how oral history and storytelling play essential roles in maintaining the collective memory of the Iban people. The ruai or berandau (a meeting place in the longhouse) has become a place for the Ibans to gather and transmit their culture and traditions across generations. On page after page, this book indeed contains stories from the longhouse (betang) documented during the 30 years leading up to its publication. Equally exciting is that half of the book recounts the personal experiences of Iban women, which are rarely discussed in other studies. According to Mulyawan Karim, Iban women are not invisible; they have a central role in life at longhouses.

Overall, the popular presentation of this Iban ethnography successfully brings the reader into a world not many people know about. The book’s diachronic perspective gives additional colors, as the reader inevitably end up comparing the life of the Iban in Indonesia with that of the Iban in Sarawak, then and now. The presence of a small dictionary for cultural terms in the Iban language greatly helps the reader to better understand this book’s contents. However, as a reader, I am still waiting for Mulyawan Karim’s conclusion of the book. Instead, it ends with an epilogue written by another author.

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