



## Anthropology and History in Local Wisdom

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#### Book Review

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### Abstract

The book titled Anthropology and History in Local Wisdom contains 15 chapters. All titles are interconnected between history and anthropology. The titles are Almanak and Pelangkah: A Guide to Javanese Nomads and the Duano Tribe; International Barter Trade and Socioeconomic Change: A Case Study of Orang Asli Kuala in Pontian, Johor; The Stability and Persistence of Malays in Western Australia Effects of Cognitive and Psychological Influences; Local Wisdom in Traditional Beauty and its Transformation; The Dynamism and Vitality of the Proto-Malay Orang Asli Language in Malaysia; Shipping Technology and the Legacy of Malay Navigation in the Malacca Straits in the 18th and 19th Centuries; "Antu" in the Traditional Culture of the Iban Community. Other titles are Knowing Culture: The Value of Local Knowledge in Sabah; Local Knowledge of Urban Fishermen in Gaya Island, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah; Fishing and Catching Seafood: A Local Knowledge Technique in Beserah, Pahang; Honoring Traditional Food Based on Freshwater Fish in Lenggong Valley, Perak; Assimilation of Malay Culture Against Immigrant Culture in Malaysia; Origin of Minangkabau Custom; The Meugang Tradition in the Acheh Community in the City of Medan, North Sumatra and the Epistemological Reconstruction of the Islamic Malay World View. All of these writings are the result of research by academics in various fields related to local wisdom in the region. So overall no matter what the field, almost all of them are related to local wisdom. This certainly symbolizes the contribution of the knowledge of past communities in this region that have developed in almost all fields of knowledge. There are many benefits that can be gained from reading this book.

**Keywords:** Malay; Iban; Sabah; Pahang; Perak; Minangkabau

### Introduction

The 2013 Local Knowledge Regional Conference held at Sutra Beach Resort, Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu is the third conference organized by the Local Knowledge Regional Conference Committee, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). This conference was held for two days on 6-7 October 2013. Accordingly, like the previous conferences, the production of a book for this conference was also done to summarize all the ideas and observations by scholars and researchers in a manuscript with the theme "Strengthening Local Knowledge

towards Internationalization". This conference has succeeded in revealing local epistemology as a social transformation tool that indirectly succeeds in bringing experience and insight into the field of local wisdom to a higher level of value, especially for the Malays. The expertise of the Malay race in various fields has developed over time and then has become cultured among this community. However, this matter is less realized by the Malays themselves, so through the USM Local Knowledge Regional Conference Committee, a Conference to highlight the wisdom and privileges that exist in the Malay world has been organized.



Therefore, with the theme of “Strengthening Local Knowledge Towards Internationalization”, this third regional conference on local knowledge tries to highlight the same three objectives as the previous objectives, which are to identify and trace back local knowledge, introduce current local knowledge and preserve and conserve local wisdom. The knowledge of local wisdom that is pursued includes various aspects such as art, tourism, heritage, anthropology history, education, economics, traditional medicine, shipping, architecture and agriculture. Accordingly, this book is divided into two main titles, namely Anthropology and History. The contents of these two summarized topics have clearly shown the local wisdom of the people in the archipelago, especially the Malays themselves. The local wisdom that is discussed not only shows the wisdom of the Malays to take advantage of their environment but also to apply skills and relate to the existing environment which is also clearly reflected in their daily lives. The book contains 15 chapters in total and focuses on Anthropology and History in Local Knowledge. Chapter 1 titled “Almanak and Pelangkah: A Guide to Javanese Nomads and the Duano Tribe” was written by Nazarudin Zainun and Soijah Likin. Through this writing, the author tries to explain the importance of Almanak and Pelangkah for these two tribes in carrying out their daily affairs.

Next for the writing in Chapter 2 written by Soijah Likin and Nazarudin Zainun titled “International Barter System between Kuala Orang Asli Women and Singaporeans: A Case Study of Kuala Orang Asli in Pontian, Johor.” The native people in Johor have a wisdom that stems from the economic hardships they experience. The income earned from being a fisherman alone is not enough and cannot promise a comfortable life. As a result, the fishermen’s wives have made various efforts to help improve their family’s economy until the idea of exchanging goods to get more financial resources was born. Now that job has been monopolized by the nation. Mohd Arsad Johanis, Nik Haslinda Nik Hussain, Nazarudin Zainun and Tarmiji Masron are the authors of Chapter 3 entitled “The Firmness and Persistence of the Stand of the Malays in Western Australia Effects of Cognitive and Psychological Influence.” In this writing, the author tries to reveal the abilities of the Malay race that only minorities are living in Western Australia. In Chapter 4 titled “Local Wisdom in Traditional Beauty Science and its Transformation”, the author has likened women’s relationship to the diction of beauty such as song and rhythm. The writing of this chapter was produced by Nurul Zaadah Juhari and Rahimah A. Hamid. According to the author, there are various methods and practices of ancient women to obtain a beautiful and radiant face. Next, Chapter 5 is titled “The Dynamism and Vitality of the Malay-Proto-Indigenous Language in Malaysia.” This paper was written by Rohani Mohd Yusof and Nurhidayah Mohamed Suleiman. The author explains the socioeconomics of the Proto-Malay natives in Malaysia.

Ibrahim Ahmad is the author of Chapter 6 entitled “Shipping Technology and the Legacy of Malay Navigation in the Malacca Straits in the 18th and 19th Centuries.” In this paper, the author explains in depth the greatness of the Malay sailors who once existed in the archipelago. Chapter 7 was written by Anna Durin, Connie Lim Keh Nie, Noria Tugang and Hashim Awang A.R. The title of their paper is “Antu in the Traditional Culture of the Iban Community.” In the tradition of the Iban community, all supernatural beings are categorized as antu. Suraya Sintang, Khadijah Mohd. Hambali @ Khambali is the authors of Chapter 8 in this book. This paper is titled “Knowledge Culture as a Value of Local Wisdom in Sabah.” This study focuses more on the experiences of new brothers who establish relationships between religions in various spaces of interaction whether through formal or informal socialization processes. Chapter 9 titled “‘Many Catches Because of Luck?’: Local Knowledge and Indigenous Practices by Urban Fishermen in Gaya Island, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.” The authors of this paper are Jalihah Md. Shah and Nor Hafizah Hj. Selamat. Local knowledge owned by fishermen are an important asset not only to the life of fishermen but also contribute to the management aspect of fishing activities in a community. Chapter 10 is titled “Fishermen and Seafood Catching: A Local Knowledge Technique in Beserah, Pahang.” The authors of this paper are Ahmad Zulman Mohd Zain, Badaruddin Mohamed and Siti Naquiah Abdullah. This writing examines the socioeconomic living standards of fishermen based on the technique of catching seafood through the inheritance of knowledge from generations.

Chapter 11 in this book was written by Farhana Che Dah, Norsuhana Abdul Hamid, Fatimah Hassan and Nor Farizan Hanoon. The title of their writing is “Glorifying Traditional Cuisine Based on Freshwater Fish in the Community of Lenggong Village, Perak.” Traditional food is food prepared using recipes that have been passed down from generation to generation without being changed and processed in the way of cooking. Chapter 12 is titled “Assimilation of Malay Culture against Immigrant Culture in Malaysia. The authors of this paper are Najeemah Mohd Yusof and Rabiatal-Adawiyah Ahmad Rashid. In Malaysia, immigrant races such as Chinese, Indian, Indian Muslim, and Peranakan Chinese have been established in this country for a long time to show a certain pattern of cultural assimilation. As for Chapter 13, which has been written by Amri Marzali, it is titled “The Origin of Minangkabau Custom.” Writing in Chapter 14 entitled “Meugang Traditions in the Aceh Community in the City of Medan, North Sumatra Province.” The author of this paper is Tjut Syahrani. The Aceh tribe is considered an ethnic minority in Medan. The last chapter, Chapter 15, was written by five authors namely Mohd Fakaruddeen Che Omar, Mohd Asmadi Yakob, Mahfuzah Mohammed Zabidi, Asmak Husin and Rahimin Affandi Abd Rahim. This paper

is titled “Epistemological Reconstruction of Malay Islamic World View.” According to them, the arrival of the colonists to Malaya has succeeded in changing the general view of the Malays. Based on all the parts contained in this book, it clearly shows that it is important to ensure the sustainability of local wisdom for every community in the archipelago. The development of modernity must go hand in hand with the preservation of the wisdom of a society. In order to ensure

the success of this effort, each party in this country must first understand the importance of local wisdom.

### **References**

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