THE STUDY OF MATERIAL CULTURE OF THE IBAN COMMUNITY IN SARAWAK: NGEPAN

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Cultural identity is a specific word that refers to individuals and communities in distinguishing themselves from others. One of the most dominant identities in a community culture is traditional clothing. In Sarawak, the traditional dress for the Iban is commonly known as Ngepan Indu. The Ngepan Indu is often worn during the Gawai Dayak celebration season as well as several other ritual ceremonies such as the Miring ceremony (Offerings) and Melah Pinang (Marriage). The Iban community believes that the Ngepan Iban is an identity and cultural icon in today’s customs. Apart from that, Ngepan Iban is one of the treasures and legacies of Petara (God) who inhabited a kingdom called Panggau Libau, Tinting Gawai Gasing Gerah Layang so that Iban always remembered Petara and the origin of Iban’s ancestors. This paper aims to analyze and understand the Ngepan Indu in the context of the custom and culture of the Iban community by using the qualitative research method based on the collective memory of the Iban cultural experts in Sarawak. Through this research, it is expected to have an effective and progressive impact to regenerate the spirit of Iban culture to continue persistently preserve the Ngepan Iban as a cultural heritage from the ancestors of the past, so that it will continue to be preserved for the future.

Keywords: Culture, costume, identity, Iban, Ngepan, heritage.