

Concepts of Sickness and Curing Among the Selako Dayak of Sarawak

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Abstract

Many researchers have lamented the great amount of loss in indigenous knowledge, particularly in the field of traditional medicine, which has been caused by the rapid process of modernization and social change in tropical countries. This paper attempts to describe and discuss some Dayak Selako theories of sickness and traditional methods of curing before the advent and widespread use of modern medicine. The principal argument of this paper is that the traditional Dayak Selako theories of sickness and methods of curing constitute a logical consistent whole. Like the other indigenous groups that are undergoing a process of rapid modernization and change, traditional Dayak Selako methods of curing and healing are fast becoming a dying art somewhat unknown to a large number of the present younger generation. It is one of the principal aims of this paper to capture some of the interesting characteristics of these Dayak Selako traditional healing practices so that they may be remembered and appreciated by members of the present Selako generation who still take pride in the cultural traditions of their forefathers