Ditulis oleh Mathias Waldmeyer
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When it was time to plan my Christmas Holidays last year in November, I first thought about where I would like to go and what I would like to see. I opened my Lonely Planet Borneo and had a look at what they suggested. On one of the first pages there was a map with the highlights of Borneo. There were national parks, animals, beaches and mountains. What became obvious at first glance was: Most attractions, following the Lonely Planet, were in the Malaysian part of the island.

Next to the map was a brief description of the different tourist highlights. Sabah had one page, Sarawak had another one, and there was even one page, although less filled, for Brunei. But, I wondered, the whole of Kalimantan had also just one page. Ok, I thought by myself, maybe tourism is not so far developed yet in the biggest part of Borneo. All the spots mentioned in Kalimantan were far away from each other and access turned out to be difficult sometimes. For sure this would be adventurous - what I like, by the way - but I thought because of my limited time I rather choose a place where I don't lose too much time with transportation - and where I can still have adventure.

In the end, I chose Sabah. I didn't know exactly yet where I wanted to go, but there were many beautiful beaches, islands, turtles, orangutan, hornbills, elephants, rivers and Mount Kinabalu all easily accessible - again, following the travel guide in my hands. But during the next days, I mentioned my plans to a couple of German friends of mine. And what did they say? "Good choice! Except for Bali and Lombok, Indonesia doesn't have good beaches!" Obvious, that's the image of Indonesia in general and Kalimantan in particular. An image that, maybe, is transported by travel guides.

I know that the current Indonesian tourist spot shown on international TV channels tries to change this by picturing a lot of beautiful beaches. But Kalimantan generally has a different image. For example people think of adventure, remoteness, riding a boat on the River Kapuas, orangutan, culture and tradition, they think of many different ethnicities - and some people, like Christian, even joke about head-hunters.

Two weeks ago, I had the chance to spend a long weekend in Ketapang for a workshop organized by Borneo Tribune, Tribune Institute, Borneo Blogger Community, Pemkab and Disbudpar Ketapang on the role of media and information technology for the tourism industry.

For sure, I checked my Lonely Planet again and found, well... not much on Ketapang. I read that the many swift lets have replaced the people in the city centre, that the nice river is mainly invisible, and that there are good, unspoiled beaches some 80 km away in Kendawangan. And, of course, Gunung Palung National Park is not far.

I was after all very happy to go to Ketapang. Maybe, I thought, there is not much to see there, but already the journey promised to be exciting, because we took the ferry along the coastline. I loved it so much when we left Pontianak in bright sunlight to just watch the river bank, or to see other ships pass by. When you go outside, you feel the wind blowing into your face. You can feel the sun. It's a time for letting your thoughts come and go. A time for dreaming. Sometimes you see island, even very small one. You are think, how it would be like to own one of them, or to just land there and explore it. Will you find somebody there? How are the animals like? Are there exotic birds flying around and repeating every single word you say? Apart from looking outside, I also liked it very much just to sit and find the time to read a book, what always falls short in everyday life.

When we arrived in Ketapang, we were invited to have lunch together. There was a nice place called Joglo Resto where you sit in wooded huts next to some ponds. Also the food was good and it had a good atmosphere to spend some time there. Over night we stayed in the Hotel Perdana. Generally, I liked it there, maybe except for the music that plays at night in the corridors and woke me up several times in the morning. But the facilities are good and the people are friendly. What is more, it is placed next to little park where you can sit at the banks of the Pawan river. I was astonished to really find so many swift let-houses all around the hotel. Wow, they can be loud! But it was nice to hear some birds in Indonesia after all, because back in Germany I expected to hear lots of birds in Indonesia as this is my image of a tropical country!

The following afternoon, we went to the beach close to Ketapang. What can there be more: A river and beach in one city! Great! Even though we were not able to swim as it was quite muddy and the water was shallow, the view was magnificent. We waded through the water and had a great photo session there in front of the beautiful sunset. After the sun was gone, we washed our feet in a warung at the beach, where in the twilight we watched somebody cooking food at the open fire. It was a great moment. For a little while we sat outside in the wooden huts, had a chat and drank coconuts. I simply loved it.

When we drove through town at one of the evenings, I was surprised to see that there was a fairground. From the car I could see stalls, a Ferris wheel and many people enjoying themselves. There were so many people and cars around, that our second car on the way to

the restaurant was hold up in a traffic jam. But they were lucky: There was still enough food when they finally arrived at the restaurant by walking.

On our last day in Ketapang we were invited to kampung ale-ale, a village close to the sea where the people live from catching and selling mussels. I was surprised to see the village roads covered with mussel shells. Everything was white. What an astonishing view! We took great pictures as many people were interested in us, especially the kids. Obviously not many Western people come here. Everywhere you could see piles of mussel shells. Next to one house, there were two or three women sitting and opening shells. I was so impressed to see how fast they are! Dorina sat down to try her luck with opening some shells herself. I thought, she was doing fine and it was great to see - but the other women opened maybe six or seven in the same time! Really fast they were!

After this we were invited to a house in the village to eat ale-ale. But not only were we served the mussels, the family did not stop to bring all kinds of food outside to the veranda. There was hardly any space to sit down any more, so much food was there! It tasted so great that I couldn't stop eating the mussels.

At late afternoon we drove on to the seaside. We sat down on a footbridge surrounded by wooden huts and watched the sunset. It was very quiet here, everybody - the locals and we - were happy to sit peacefully and enjoy the beautiful view. A little later, we saw many fisher boats passing to reach the open see for their night's work. I could have sat there forever.

So, why is nothing of this mentioned in my travel guide? I had a great time in Ketapang, but if I had only trusted the guidebook, I would have never seen the place! I think, Ketapang should make a good campaign for more people to go there. I myself would love to go back. And, what is more, Ketapang seems to be the town where you can play futsal every evening!