

BOOK REVIEW

The Role Of Chinese Social Organization In The Community Of Singkawang City

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By Samsul Hidayat et al.

Reviewed by

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Singkawang is one of the municipalities and part of the Sambas district, second largest after the city of Pontianak in West Kalimantan. Based on the historical records presented in this book, at the end of the 18th century, 40,000 Chinese people mostly of Hakka surnames from Fujian and Guangdong areas migrated to West Kalimantan. They worked as gold miners and paid taxes to the Kingdom of Sambas, until they set up their own *kongsi* (clan association) as a confederation, where every partnership or association had its own territory, leaders, regulations and legislation as well as law enforcement and regular army. Singkawang city at the time served as a settlement or a village for Chinese immigrants, and here people conducted trading activities, such as selling daily staples, farming and working in the mines. Trading activities in Singkawang were also closely associated with the gold mining business, so Singkawang served as a port for trade.

The above history is of course inseparable from the presence of several Chinese social organizations in the community in the City of Singkawang. The book written by Samsul Hidayat, et al., about the Role of Chinese Social Organizations in the Community of Singkawang in fact reminds us of the past migration process undertaken by the Chinese diaspora in West Kalimantan, especially in the city of Singkawang which is also known as the City of Amoy and the City of a Thousand Temples. In addition, this book further explains the social roles that have been taken by the Chinese community through associations or Chinese organizations, such as paying attention and appreciation in improving the economic welfare of the community, providing services, providing direct assistance in form of basic needs, as well as mentoring and improving human resources in the field of economy through entrepreneurial training, placement and providing jobs for people in need.

Besides, there are many other social roles carried out by the Chinese social organizations for the community of Singkawang, such as in the field of

education in form of tuition assistance and school supplies for the poor, in the health sector from assistance of medical expenses and health facilities to costs of surgery, providing services for all matters of death from the funeral home to burial of the dead. While in the field of religion and culture, it includes the development of the *tatung* communities and cooperation with the government in increasing inter-religious harmony through cultural and religious festivals.

The role of the Chinese social organizations in the city of Singkawang this is certainly not intended only for the Chinese alone but also for other ethnic groups. It means assistance and services are provided not only for the interests of ethnic Chinese only, but also for the wider community. The role and social functions which are more cosmopolitan and multicultural in nature have made it possible for the Chinese organizations to be accepted by the communities of Singkawang City.

The Chinese social organizations in the city Singkawang covered in this book, among others are Tridharma Assembly, Indonesia Tao Council, Association of the Communities of Singkawang and its Surrounding Area (Permasis), Forum of Communication for Ethnic Chinese (Foket), Indonesia Confucian Religion Assembly (MAKIN), Death Foundation, Firefighters Foundation, Tsu Chi Foundation, etc., where each has its role and functions in order to contribute to the city of Singkawang and its surrounding communities.

This book, at least, provides us with an understanding that a community organization built on the basis of ethnicity and culture can also provide the role and social function not only for its own ethnic interests, but it can also promote an open and multiethnic attitude, so this sort of social organization can serve to the peoples of Indonesia, especially in the middle of a heterogeneous society.