

The Influence of the Overseas Chinese to the Indigenous Social System in Bawomataluo - Nias.

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Abstract

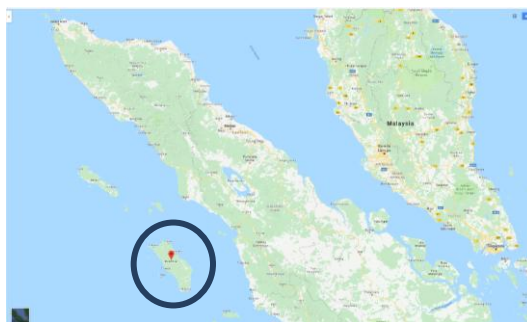
According to historical sources, most Nias people are from China. It can be seen from the physical factors of Nias people. Their characteristics are similar to those of Chinese such as tanned skin and slanted eyes. Their arrival gradually formed acculturation long time ago so that it created important social systems. One of them is the traditional system in Bawomataluo involving process of interaction among people in traditional meetings and ceremonial rituals. To facilitate meetings and rituals, Nias people build meeting room without partitions enabling them not only to create their kinship but also to solve their problems with guidance of headman. This research uses a qualitative method focusing on the factors affecting traditional system in Bawomataluo. The result of this research shows that the ancestors living in the Bawomataluo traditional village has a very close kinship structure and are able to maintain the socio-cultural systems implemented in the form of a traditional houses and their ornamental variety. Newcomers are necessary to adjust the traditional rules that are agreed together to establish kinship relationships with Nias people.

Keywords: Nias, Overseas Chinese, social system

Introduction

Nias people stayed in caves and on trees long time ago. It was because they did not knowledge to build their house. The other interesting history related to people in Nias is where they are from. Based on historical sources, most Nias people are from China (Duha, 2012). This condition is proven by their similar physical characteristics: They have tanned skin and slanted eyes. Besides that, Hammerle (2008) states the arrival of Chinese in Lahusa and Gomo, Central Nias was from Port Singkuang, South Tapanuli 500 years ago. They brought an extraordinary impact on tradition (*bono*), law (*haka*) and its enforcement (*fondrako*), pedigree (*naga'oto niba*) as well ability to make wooden statues and megalith and ability to ranch and manage cattle. These Chinese people coming to Nias were also able to build houses. Furthermore, all things that they bring will enrich the culture of Nias.

Figure 1. Nias and Sumatra Island Source: Google Map



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Geographical Condition and *Omo Hada*

Nias is an island **located on the west** Sumatera and administratively located in Province of North Sumatera and also the largest and most developed island among islands existing on the west coastline of Sumatera. Nias is formed through a series of large tectonic earthquakes (Viaro, A.M. et al. 2017). Little by little these earthquakes lift the island.

To anticipate earthquake, a traditional house named Omo Hada is made. The traditional house is designed to be easily moved like a boat that is able to float on the shaking land (Duha, 2012). As time goes by, a lot of people come to Nias. As the result, people focus on how to make not only house but also an acculturation leading to the creation of social systems, consisting of social institution.

Social Environment in Bawomataluo

Before the Gospel come to Nias, the people in Nias hold animism; they worship sculptures. After missionaries delivered Gospel to Nias, transformations happens (Puccioni, 2016). Nias people do not worship sculptures anymore. They become Christian instead (Simatupang, 2014). Although becoming Christian, the people keep preserving their cultural heritages. The successfulness of their preservation efforts get special attention from local government so that their heritages are protected by UNESCO. Now, there are 90% of Protestant Christians in Nias. The rest of them consist of Catholic Christian, Buddhist, and Muslims. Muslim can be found in the north coastline area of Nias.

People in Nias are the owner of rubber plantation and sell rubbers to buyers with low price. Most of them always complain with this problem but they cannot do anything because they have to survive. Young people in Nias earn money by being a stone jumper, one of surviving arts in Nias until now, in front of tourists. The tourists must pay the big amount of money to event coordinator for the show. Unfortunately, the jumpers do not receive significant amount of money because coordinator already take the big part amount of money.

A system of family relationship is affected by rules set by the tribe chief based on traditional laws already becoming their consensus. To facilitate the system, people build room without partition in their traditional house. The tribe chief expect the interaction among people occurs so that their problems can be solved. Figure 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 display some parts of traditional house. Figure two shows front side and figure two shows corner side of traditional house.

Figure 2: Front side of the traditional house. This traditional house functions as public room facilitating socialization and meeting with tribe chief.



Source: Documentation of researchers (2017)

Figure 3: Corner side of traditional house. Below the floor of this house, pigpen exists.



Source: Documentation of researchers (2017)

Figure four points out three seats made of stone. One of seats is the highest position (see red sign on this figure). This chair is for the most important person to sit. Figure four shows no partitions in the traditional house. Figure six displays there are other seats besides three mains seats in Figure three. These seats in figure five is for people.

Figure 4: Seat made of stone in the highest position. This seat is for the most important tribe chief. In front of this seat, there are three other seats for other three tribe chief.



Source: Documentation of researchers (2017)

Figure 5: Inside traditional house. This house does not contain partition. All people with three tribe chief use this room to take decision on faced problems



Source: Documentation of researchers (2017)

Figure 6: Inside traditional house. In the corner side, there are long chairs to sit. These chairs are designed to surround room. Three tribe chief will sit on each chair provided on the center of this room (see Figure 4).



Source: Documentation of reseachers (2017)

The room of traditional house reflects openness of tribe chief to communicate with their people to make the decision. In other perspective, the openness refers to condition of tribe chief and people to welcome tourists in Nias.

Factors Affecting Social System in Bawomataluo, Nias

Tribe of Nias uses patrilineal system to show family relationship. Everyone having the same family name assumed is a brother or sister from father descendant so that Nias people are prohibited to get married with man or woman owning the same family name. They keep holding that they still have close family relationship although their fraternity is from five generations before.

Conclusion

The result of this study shows ancestors living in traditional village in Bawomataluo have close kinships and preserve cultural and social systems. These systems are successfully implemented through form of traditional houses to form of their ornaments. Both cultural background and social status make inhabitants of this traditional house in their age deliver their social status to society through the form of open room used by local people.

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