

## SYNCRETIZATION OF CHINESE RELIGION IN SINGKAWANG WEST KALIMANTAN

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### **Abstract**

*This paper attempts to shed light on the context of religiosity which is very pluralistic and dynamic in Indonesia. It is based on the field research conducted in Singkawang focusing on the Chinese religion. Some important conclusions could be drawn here such as the syncretization of the Chinese religion concerning the understanding of the existence of God and the gods which often has overlapping hierarchy including syncretic perspectives on understanding cosmology, mythology, symbols associated with mystical tales and supernatural beings. In the process, many Chinese Indonesians in Singkawang who are demographically Buddhists, Christians, or Muslims, still perform a pattern of worship of Confucianism or Taoism in their daily lives. The procedure of worship has also been modified so that its format differs from that found outside Indonesia. Meanwhile, during the celebration of the Chinese lunar new year and Cap Go Meh (the fifteenth night), Chinese Indonesians in Singkawang perform a ritual to get rid of bad luck. It is a unique, syncretic 'collaboration' between Chinese traditions and local culture.*

**Keywords:** Syncretization, Religion, Chinese, Singkawang.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the life of Chinese Indonesians, culture and religious traditions are inseparable, and thus the traditions of Chinese culture are also called 'religious traditions'. The form of Chinese religion is also unique as it is different from other religious traditions that develop in isolation without any influence from outside and that it is likely to be monotheistic. The Chinese religion appears as an evolution of Chinese traditions and belief that run for thousands of years and concern the human interaction with nature's secret, mystical forces that connect humans with the power of the heaven (including the spirit world), and how to control and exploit the relationship.

The presence of Chinese religion in Singkawang West Kalimantan is part of the history of Indonesia that cannot be separated from the arrival of the Austronesian people as one of the *Homo sapiens* races with Mongoloid characteristics that lived in Southern China. Austronesian people who were

thought as the ancestors of the Indonesian people entered the territory of West Kalimantan approximately 2000 BC, (Soekmono, 1973: 50) using boats belonging exclusively to the rectangle axe culture. In that period, the Chinese religion was also present along with the growing spread of people of Chinese descent in Indonesia. According to the Encyclopedia of Indonesia (1984: 356) the religious culture of the Chinese began from Fu Xi era in 2953-2838 BC, and continued to the era of the following successors namely: Shen Nong (2838-2698 BC) and the Yellow Emperor of Huang Di (2698-2596 BC).

One of the major religions the Chinese in Singkawang, West Kalimantan embrace is Confucianism which is part of a series of history of Ru Jiao which continued to flourish until recently, along with other religions such as Taoism and Buddhism. In Indonesia, the three religions were made as a new categorization for Chinese religion called "Tri Dharma" or "Sam Kauw" (Nio Joe Lan, 1961: 23). Until recently, the Chinese in Singkawang still largely practice the three beliefs. Although some of the other Chinese societies, due to certain factors, especially politics, have embraced the religions that were 'authorized' by the Government such as Christianity and Islam.

In further development, it is not uncommon to find religious syncretism among the Chinese community because they feel that they belong to same ethnic group and tradition. In a religious event, the community members who embrace Confucianism often ask for advice from the Buddhist leader to determine the position of the grave in funeral rituals, while the Tao leader would determine the exact day and time. It also includes a variety of cultural and religious ceremonies such as celebrating the lunar new year in which they celebrate the festivity communally, regardless of the identity of belief, but instead consider it part of the ancestral tradition of heritage that should be respected and preserved. The Chinese who have converted to Islam or Christianity, are also unable to let go of their ancestral tradition because the bonds of ethnocentricity and tradition are so strong.

The orientation of the socio-cultural life of the Chinese society was strongly influenced and shaped by several elements, such as religion or belief, conviction in symbols such as the calculation of the year, the changing seasons, the nature of the Chinese characters and so on as an earthly life process, *feng shui*, language and Chinese characters containing the philosophy of social ethics, the value system that was formed from the profession such as farmers, laborers, fishermen and so on, history and experiences as immigrants, and Chinese life cycle which is difficult to penetrate. (Umberan, 1994: 54)

The pattern of Chinese religions in Singkawang is a result of the syncretization of beliefs among Chinese religions as well as local culture or religions.

Through a process of acculturation between Chinese community culture and other ethnic groups and religions in West Kalimantan, the Chinese religion experienced a kind of de-territorialization due to the boundaries and cultural rites that have undergone reconstruction continuously (Appadurai, 1996: 12). Although the Chinese religious and cultural traditions have been practiced by Chinese communities since thousands of years ago, when it is found in the environment of a different culture like that of Singkawang, finally it experienced a re-formation for cultural adaptation.

Syncretisation of Chinese religion in Singkawang appears to be a unique phenomenon because the plural beliefs of the Chinese people apparently have not destroyed the legacy of their ancestral traditions. In some aspects we will find numerous cultural treasures that are still kept by the Chinese people even though they embrace different religions such as homage to ancestral spirits; the supernatural beings; rituals both devoted to God, gods, spirits, and ancestors' spirits and Sin beng; upholding the family ethics such as a child's respect toward parents; morale and a high work ethics, as well as ethnic or clan solidarity.

Therefore, a study of the Chinese religion in Singkawang is interesting to include in academic discussion. The issues that are important and require attention include the belief system and religious practices as an identity of the Chinese that have gone through syncretization and development of cultural adaptation that have significance in giving birth to the simultaneous compromise combining the spirit of cultural reproduction with pluralism and multiculturalism in a society that is constantly changing.

All religions basically reflect human experience, although each demands authenticity and superiority such as the emphasis on the occult or supernatural powers, the basic teachings that originate from revelation, and superiority in ideas and mental faculty. Religion in its pluralism should need a description rather than a definition since in some aspects the definition is related to traditions and social conditions of the host society. Instead of knowing and specifying the elements of religion, Emile Durkheim in his phenomenal works, *the Elementary Forms of the Agamaous Life* (1992: 22) further stressed the importance of observing the religion as a whole. Thus the permanent definition of religion is best avoided because each belief system fundamentally does not have the slightest error. Durkheim considered every religion has its respective ways in showing the characteristics of its existence, and certainly any belief systems and behavior patterns always have the same objective meaning and function, regardless of the skin or shape that wrapped it.

As a conscious subject, something spiritual can be influenced and used

according to our needs, using words (spell, prayer) as a means of psychological offerings or sacrifices. The typical features of this religion are the most obvious distinguishing feature that something can be called religious or not. However, not all religions have ideas about spirit or even God. Buddhism for example emphasizes more on morality rather than the recognition of the existence of God. They are not interested in knowing whether the gods actually exist, because by understanding the truth of the reality (the four Noble Truths) basically a person has found the essence of religion. While in Confucianism, although Prophet Khongcu (a term coined by MATAKIN) initially did not declare directly as a prophetic successor or receive a mandate from heaven, but the Chinese religious background or *Ru Jiao*, became a moral force for successor generations to regard Prophet Khongcu as a bearer of divine teachings.

Culture is the knowledge gained and used to interpret human experience and to promote behavior (Spradley, Bogdan and Biklen, in 1980: 35). As a unit of interpretation, memory and meaning in human (Liliweri, 2003; 26), culture includes beliefs, norms, values which serve as the first step where we feel different in a discourse. Culture influences human behavior because everyone will show his heritage when he acts, so Geertz (1973: 52) maintains that as a symbol animal, humans analyze culture through their knowledge experience, then match it with the laws in force, and subsequently interpret culture through a search for meaning.

Religion and culture have become human nature. Religion gives a view of the world at large, such as a vision of the world, moral views and behavior, rituals etc. Religion gives a strong influence towards the reality of society, so that in various aspects, religion is a part of a culture and is closely related to all other parts of culture (young, 1992: 76). Geertz saw religion as religious beliefs that live inside of its followers and are manifested in the complexity of their everyday lives (1973: 90)

### **SOCIAL TYPE OF THE CHINESE IN SINGKAWANG**

The social type of the Chinese in Singkawang can be divided into several large groups: village groups (farmers, laborers, fishermen), groups of merchants and entrepreneurs, as well as the city groups (teachers and Government officials). The villagers are those who work as farmers, fishermen, laborers, service industry and ordinary employees who on average live in almost all parts of Singkawang. In general, the peripheral Chinese groups are classified as poor Chinese. While the groups of traders and businessmen inhabit almost every part of the territory of Singkawang, both in the area of the suburb and

the city center.

Since the reform era, the Chinese community in Singkawang are also an important part in the political map of the city, through the contributions and roles in general elections and the election of parliament members. Although they belong to the minority group, with the inclusion of some Chinese people as members of the parliament, it is very possible to become a trigger for them to enter into the structure of Government, even some Chinese circles (politicians) have seen a great opportunity to become the Mayor of Singkawang.

### SYNCRETIZATION PROCESS

The term syncretism is traditionally attributed to Plutarch who reveals that the word *synkretismos* is used if the blend and the encounter come from outside parties or “enemies”, and the word *synkretino* is used if the blend and the encounter come from parties within the group, i.e. groups or parties that unite to face the enemy from the outside. The word *syncretic* itself was used in debates on philosophy and religion in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, and possibly came from the Greek word *syn* and *kretidzein* or *kerannynai* (Bilal, 1994: 111), while in English the word is “mixing” or “blending”. Therefore, the limitation of the technical term ‘syncretism’ in religious studies is likely to find difficulties.

J. R. Fox (1982: 70) distinguished between synthetic religious and syncretism. “Synthetic” religion is used to indicate the presence of symptoms of a mixed religious system to form a new religion, while syncretism is used to denote mixing, blending and fusion of two or more religions. For example, in the Chinese religious syncretism of elements of various religions and beliefs (Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, myth, animism, dynamism) which are incorporated, integrated, mixed, blended, and mutually influence and affect each other. According to Bilal, the term syncretism is also used to refer to one or more items from a particular religious tradition or charged and applied to other religions, without changing the basic character of the religion absorbs other values due to the lack of elements taken.

### MEANING AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CHINESE RELIGION

For several centuries, the typical Chinese society have experienced religion as the attitude and practice of the combination of three different traditions. Two of them, Taoism and the original Confucianism are practiced as a religion of Chinese heritage, while Buddhism came later came from India. The goal for every major philosophical religion is humanity’s safety through the control of behavior (Liu, 1981: 88) Actually Confucianism and Taoism have many things in common and influence each other because Lao Tzu and Confucius lived in

the same period. Both of them shared a theoretical legacy, as a symbol of the *I Ching*, including the teachings and philosophy of morals.

Of several perspectives on religion, one of the most relevant in understanding Chinese religions came from Paul Tillich. In addition to equate understanding between religion and belief (1958: 89), for Tillich religion “deals with what we can do with it, cannot be avoided, absolute and unconditional.” “Religion is not a special function of the spiritual life of a person, but an absolute attention on the meaning of life, namely the statement of all the creative functions on the sphere of human life, the scope of morality, the scope of knowledge (and) aesthetic function (1955: 55).

The characteristics of Chinese religious community indeed seems “dry” from the divine element compared to other religions such as Christianity and Islam. However, if traced on their cosmology and cosmogony doctrine, actually it is filled with spiritual charge and metaphysics (Lasiyo, 1996: 2). With a touch (syncretization) of the teachings of Taoism, a Confucian is capable of understanding the concept of creation of nature, its balance and benefits to mankind at once. For example the doctrine of *Yin* and *Yang* in the book of *I Ching* (the book of Genesis) has become the inspiration of divinity, spirituality, mysticism, even the instructions telling part of our success. The philosophy of the balance of *Yin-Yang* which offers the concept of a single circle symbol (monism) that illustrates the breath of the universe at once and the country of ‘*Chung-Kuo*’ as its center, and is described as following a ‘dualism’ Yin (negative) and ‘Yang’ (positive). The two poles Yin-Yang is interpreted as contradictory, but complementary and balanced. The basic philosophy is considered the breath of balance on Earth especially China. When that balance is maintained, the country will be healthy and prosperous; and when the balance is disturbed, it breaks down and the country will fall. What is interesting is that the process toward that balance not only occurs naturally but humans can also do it with the strength even with violence.

From the research findings, the Chinese religion in Singkawang can be classified into three types of religiosity; the “official” religion, ancestral religion and local religion. The so-called “official” religion is the religion of the Chinese people that is recognized by the Government such as Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. This recognition is evidenced by the implementation of religious activities in a number of houses of worship such as the *vihara* (temple), and the church (mosque not included). The type of ancestral religion is the religion of the Chinese community that still follow their ancestral cultures such as Confucianism and Taoism. Although in their religious identity they are regarded as Christians or Buddhists, in the implementation of the religious

life, they actually are obedient followers of Confucianism and Taoism. The houses of worship are mostly fused with the *vihara* or temple that is jointly constructed. While is a type of local religion is the religion of the Chinese who still hold fast to the tradition of the ancestors, system of belief, however they have been mixed with local traditions. According to the identity of religiosity, they could be a Christian, Buddhist, Confucian or Tao, but in practice they are subjected to local beliefs like the syncretization concept of animism, magic, ghosts, spirits, jinn and other beliefs.

A typical Chinese community also cannot be separated from its spirit of survival in any situation and condition. The Chinese get their place as a religious community because the Chinese life is always associated with a culture of hard work and perseverance (see Weber, 1964: 136) In the spirit of capitalism, the Chinese have always been resilient in the face of the suffering of life. High work ethic is supported as a whole both in terms of culture as well as religious messages that teach the importance of thinking about life and earthly well-being rather than imaginary happiness in the next life. Interestingly, the religious character of the Chinese people has always been connected with the interests of the welfare of living, so one should not be surprised if the image of the Chinese economic success has always been linked with the teachings of Confucianism oriented toward achievement of world success. Many Chinese people who are successful in economic life are because they are able to dig in and improve some of their cultural resources which are synonymous with commercialization, and their familiarity with money (Freedman, 1959: 70), experience and accounting (Gardella, 1992: 54) and regular use of the company's management (Sangren, 1984: 33).

### **SYNCRETIZATION AS A SOCIAL PROCESS**

A social process is a part of the dynamics of social relations. According to Hari Poerwanto, the dynamics of the community can be examined from a process of contacts and communication between individuals and groups (2005: 12). It means that understanding a social process becomes a fundamental requirement in order to know the ins and outs of changes happening in the way of life of the community (Gillin and Gillin, 1954: 487: 488). One of the forms of a social process is the interaction between religion and culture in a community. In a confluence of cultures, we often find problem for both religious and cultural identity, such as the emergence of the phenomenon of mixing the two religions (and culture) or more, either in the form of adopting, picking up, complementing or influencing each other.

Results achieved from the process of alignment, merging and combining

principles or practices that differ from each other are commonly referred to as syncretism. Heddy Shri Ahimsa Putra defines syncretization as “an effort to cultivate, unite, combine and align two or more systems with different or opposite principles in such a way, so that it forms a system of new principles, which contrast with the previous principle systems” (1995: 2). As a form of acculturation, syncretisation usually occurs through a process of interpretation or symbolization of principles, teachings or specific thoughts. That is why the definition of “syncretism” is often used within unclear limitation because of empirical processes that occur at this level cannot be touched and observed, although according to Putra the process can be observed from its realization such as languages, myths, teachings, stories, and so forth that develop in a community.

As a process of alignment of the various principles of belief, the syncretization which occurs in the Chinese religion in Singkawang gives rise to a new dynamic in the map of religiosity of society. This kind of syncretization is related to the Chinese original religion, local traditions and the state religions. The Chinese original religion is a set of beliefs, values and knowledge that is shared by the Chinese people, where ancestral belief is still held despite being in a new area (Singkawang). They generally embraced Confucian and Taoist beliefs. While a local religion is customs, myths and beliefs embraced by locals such as Malay and Dayak that has undergone the process of alignment with each other so the blend of views has become a foothold to coexist without cultural and religious tensions. A state religion is a belief system or religion that is regarded as the religion “authorized” by the Government, such as Christianity, Buddhism and Islam. Although Confucianism and Taoism are currently still in the Tri Dharma overseen in the Buddhist Religion Division of the Religious Affairs Ministry, Confucian and Taoist communities, however, only admit it as political ties that tend to be enforced, while they remain steadfast with their own belief.

Politically, the Government in the past contributed to the growing climate of syncretization of the Chinese religion in Singkawang. Through the assimilation policy adopted by the Government in which the Chinese were classified as immigrants or foreigners, so harsher regulations on worship were issued which resulted in Confucianism not being recognized as a religion, and that religion practiced should be officially “authorized” by the state. Through a strong hegemony, including the pressures in the form of the discourse, repressive measures and regulations, the Government arbitrarily forced people to embrace one of the beliefs that existed in Indonesia at the time (Hidayat, 2005: 47)

The characteristics of Chinese religions in Singkawang appear to be a typical

Indonesian religion, whether in belief system or the practice of religiosity. Several aspects that may indicate the onset of the syncretization of Chinese religions in Singkawang are as follows; *First*, in understanding the existence of God and the gods, we often find overlapping hierarchy of the divinity in Chinese religion. For example, a Temple caretaker named Cong Can Mui of Tri Dharma “Hok Sian Kiong” in Roban, West Singkawang, who claim to adhere to Confucianism, although he believes that *Thian* is God, he also believes in Goddess Kuan Im (Kwan Ying) as the bearer love and salvation for them even though the goddess Kuan Im is obviously one of the gods in the belief of Buddhism.

*Second*, this syncretic viewpoint also occurs in understanding cosmology, especially in respect of nature and the concept of Yin Yang. Similarly, it is also true regarding symbols, the mythology associated with mystic tales and supernatural beings, and in understanding life after death. In terms of belief about spirits and supernatural beings, Chinese religion has its own scope and concept which are interesting to study. Ancestral worship has even been performed since a long time ago, at least during the Shang dynasty (1776-1122 BC) there were temples of worship. In the old Chinese belief, it is believed that when a person dies, his spirit is divided into three, one stays in the grave, one on a table or a prayer shrine, and one goes to heaven. On the way to heaven, it is full of challenges, and therefore sacred ceremonies should be performed where paper money, toy cars, and even food were burned to accompany the spirit traveling into heaven.

The worship of the ancestors fosters a belief in the gods which are believed to be the ancestors who have died, and during their life on Earth were either Kings or a war heroes, and they are worshipped as gods and the head of deities called ‘God of Heaven’ or ‘*Thien*’. The concept of the body and the spirit was further developed into the concept of an afterlife, spirits (either in limbo or not), ghosts, ancestors and the gods.

*Third*, in terms of the procedures of worship as in the case of Confucian followers, there have been some forms of modification so that its format is different from that of the other adherents of Confucianism outside Indonesia. Through an organization that oversees the Confucian religion, namely *Majelis Tinggi Agama Khonghucu Indonesia* (the High Assembly of Confucianism Indonesia [MATAKIN]), the worship practices are organized and created by the Spiritual Agency of the MATAKIN and further disseminated to all MAKIN (Assembly of Confucianism Indonesia) in regions throughout Indonesia under the auspices of MATAKIN. MATAKIN also published Confucian Scripture which is called the Book of Su Si and Wu Jing (Ngo King). MATAKIN intended to

separate between religious practice and tradition. The definition of the practice of religion is the model and practice of worship that was compiled by a special team appointed by MATAKIN spiritual agency, whereas tradition is defined as the rituals carried out by the Chinese people from one generation to another.

According to one of the Confucian priests in Purwokerto, WS. DS. Tikgianto, teachings of MATAKIN strive to eliminate the aspects of superstition and mystical aspects in the behavior of the Confucian followers who find it difficult to break away from the influence of the traditions of their ancestors. In the interview with one of Indonesia's senior Confucian clergies, Hs. Tjie Tjay Ing, it was revealed that the Chinese society have experienced a mixture of religious teachings with Chinese traditions and local culture. For example in the performing routine worship in a temple or monastery, it is often found that a pilgrim would worship all gods that exist in the temple even though it belongs to three different religions. The process of this syncretization cannot be separated from the term they use in respect of the other beliefs, *Han San Wi Yi*, meaning three religions which are essentially one.

*Fourth*, in the celebration of the Chinese Lunar New Year and as Cap Go Meh, the Chinese society of Singkawang perform a ritual to repel bad luck or *tacia* commonly called *tatung*. *Tatung* Ritual is a means of expulsion of evil spirits that caused havoc to a territory through a shaman who is commonly called *tatung* or *lauya*. *Tatung* ritual is a combination between Chinese traditions and fascinating local culture. This ritual is unique because it is performed by various ethnic groups such as Chinese, Malay and Dayak. Regardless of the origin of this celebration, the people of Singkawang from different religious groups participated in the celebration, mingling within their own role and function. For example, a Confucian *tatung*, Akiong who becomes a mediator for the spirit of the Dayak tribe named Datuk Sunggung, while ethnic Malay who are Muslims take a role as stretcher bearers (*Toa Khio*) and music or lion dance performers.

The syncretism of *tatung* rituals in the Chinese tradition can be seen in the context of contemporary *tatung*, where religious identity ceased to be important, in a sense, *Tatung* no longer belongs to a particular religion, such as Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Currently, the role of *Tatung* also has become a choice for people of other ethnic and religious groups, for example a Catholic majority Dayak or Malay Muslims. It can be seen during a *tatung* performance where a man called Bujang Amat is an ethnic Malay and a Muslim. He said that what he does is not contrary to his belief as a Muslim. For him, a *Tatung* is a profession to serve the community.

*Fifth*, in several places of worship for the Chinese people in Singkawang one

can easily find a *pekong* or a house of worship used for asking for help from god, spirit, supernatural beings through a *lauya*. For Chinese people, the worship on the gods and spirits is associated with the mundane needs such as business advice, healing, and improvement of welfare of the living. Teachings that acted as an intermediary with spirits such as *tatung*, seemed to increase the number of altars of worship or *pekong* besides the main temples devoted to worship. Many gods on the usual altar were often replaced with other new gods as the old ones are considered unable to grant their request.

They build a kind of altar to offer the patron spirits or spiritual beings that inhabit the small hills surrounding Singkawang. A *Sin She* or Chinese herbalist in Roban, Singkawang, decorated the *pekong* with accessories such as the Dayak distinctive red vases, *Mandau* (machete), human bones, incense, coconut leaves and heads of dogs as merchandise offerings, while the typical Chinese ritual items such as candles, incense, statues of the gods such as Kwan Kong decorated the Chinese altar filled with offerings. Visitors come to convey a lot of complaints and requests, ranging from the treatment of disease, good luck charm, to asking for lucky number for gambling.

*Sixth*, in the process, many Chinese in Singkawang who are demographically Buddhists, Christians, or Muslims, still perform a pattern of worship of Confucianism or Taoism in their daily lives. Hendra Hashim, a trader who lives on Jl. Yos Sudarso Gg. Parit Ketapang, Singkawang admitted that although on his ID card it is written he is a Buddhist, he still felt that he is a Confucian who believes in Prophet Khongcu, worships *Thien* and the kitchen god or *Tjiao Kun Kong* in every lunar new year celebrations.

It cannot be separated from the impact of the state hegemony during the period of the New Order Government which implemented a policy of assimilation for Chinese Indonesians to force them to blend in the culture of Indonesia, including giving up their Confucian or Tao beliefs because they were regarded as being affiliated with the communists and therefore should embrace religions recognized by the Government such as Buddhism, Christianity and Islam.

However the assimilation project applied by the Government was not as smooth as expected. An awful lot of Chinese Indonesians who merely pretended to convert, but in fact only did it in an attempt to avoid the pressure from both the Government and the community. Even one of the impacts brought about by the process of assimilation is the syncretization which symbolizes a strong bond their ancestral teachings and Chinese primordialism even though they have formally embraced the “official” religions of the state.

With the religious freedom introduced by the government through a

presidential decree in 2000 in wake of the reform movement, Chinese Indonesians enjoyed a fresh breeze of democracy by getting more space for them to express their religious beliefs and cultures based on a constructive assimilation process and mutual respect. Among the rights enjoyed after the presidential decree was issued was that the adherents of Confucianism could list their religion on identity cards as they once had in 1965. Yet despite the freedom, Chinese Indonesians apparently still need time to sense the freedom as a whole. In addition because the administration and bureaucracy that have yet to accommodate maximum service for followers of Confucianism as they have already listed the identity of a particular religion on their ID card. It turns out that there are still many who choose to stick with the previous religious identity since they do not want to experience the trauma of the past.

## CONCLUSION

From the explanation above it can be concluded that the syncretization of Chinese religions in Singkawang, West Kalimantan, cannot be separated from the typical Chinese people who have high spirits to survive in situations and conditions of any kind. Some historical events that occurred to the Chinese Indonesians, such as the government enforced assimilation program, have somehow accelerated the process of acculturation of the Chinese culture and religion in Singkawang. The dynamics of the political and cultural struggle they experienced seems to play a role big in forming certain motifs in Chinese religions in Singkawang.

For Chinese Indonesian in Singawang, the Syncretization that occurred to their religion is quite insignificant. Long before that, the traditions of ancient Chinese culture indeed have often experienced the process of fusion in terms of the divine concept, cosmology, religious thought and practice that has shaped the idiosyncrasies of the Chinese religion itself. In addition, the character of the Chinese religion is always linked with the interests of the welfare of living, so it is not surprising that the image of the Chinese economic success has always been associated with the religious teachings that are oriented toward worldly success achievement.

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