

Surviving in Veranda of Mecca: The Existence of Chinese Community in Gampong Peunayong, Kuta Alam District, Banda Aceh

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Abstract

This research is entitled *Surviving in the Veranda of Mecca: The Existence of Chinese Community in Gampong Peunayong, Kuta Alam District, Banda Aceh*. This research aims to understand the social situation of the Tinghoa ethnicity and the relationship between the Chinese ethnicity and the People of Aceh, as well as understand the life of the Chinese ethnicity while implementing Islamic law in Aceh. This study uses a descriptive qualitative research method. The data collection techniques for this research were observation, interviews, and library research. The object of this study is the people of Gampong Peunayong, both Acehnese and Chinese ethnicity. The results show that Chinese ethnicity in Gampong Peunayong provided responses generated through interactions between Chinese and Acehnese. Responses and feedback from the public varied depending on their respective perspectives in the form of positive and negative responses.

Keywords: *Chinese Ethnicity; Society Response; Implementation; Social Anthropology; Islamic Sharia.*

Introduction

Religion is something sacred and important for every human being on earth. The inevitable thing is, in this world, every group has its religion which they have believed from generation to generation or the result of a change of mind. Differences in religion can be seen in the reality that existed in the past and present (Daradjat, 1984, p. 101). Each religion also has different teachings, principles, norms, and laws in the

procedures for worship as well as its leadership structure (rituals and hierarchy) which are the characteristics and personality of the people themselves (Team for Compilation of the Monograph Manuscript for Religious Harmony, 1983, p. 11).

He explained that the founders of religions and followers and adherents of religion certainly come from various social backgrounds from various class strata. Because these groups have different functions, thereby receiving different rewards from society, they also have different attitudes and values. Different conditions and lifestyles have given rise to diverse views, needs, responses, and motivational structures. Therefore, the diversity of groups in society will reflect different religious needs (O'dea, 1995, p. 106).

Like Indonesia, religious life in the Indonesian nation, in its simplest form, has grown and been rooted since ancient times. The fact in history is that the growth and development of adherents of various religions whose spread gives different patterns from one region to another, in general, the pattern of relations and social arrangements between adherents of different religions also varies, depending on the degree of mixing between adherents of different religions developed (Team for Compilation of the Monograph of Religious Harmony, 1983, pp. 45-47).

The major religions spread across Indonesia, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, must be fostered and developed to be more orderly and managed according to their respective teachings. Because when a religious group mixes with other religious groups, it will cause the birth and spread of ideas and values that influence human actions. This influence means a religion will influence the social structure and vice versa (O'dea, 1995, p. 106).

In Aceh, inter-religious relations have long existed. However, what is unique is that Aceh is dominated by only one religion, Islam. While other religions, only a small percentage of the people of Aceh. Thus, the rules and norms that apply in people's lives are certainly more Sharia and Islamic. Those rules could lead to the government's tendency to enforce the law.

Other religions that have contributed to building the people's social life of the People of Aceh are adherents of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity. In Islam, they are called "Kafir Zimmi". Namely, people who are non-Islamic and live in areas where most Muslims are Muslim and have agreed to the provisions set by Islam. For example, they have paid tribute (tax).

For example, Peunayong Village, Kuta Alam District, Banda Aceh. In this village, inter-religious life has long been interlaced. Most non-Muslims here come from Chinese ethnicity, mostly Christians and Buddhists. They are allowed to live and mingle with society. So unconsciously, this ethnicity affects the social system of the Peunayong Village community, as well as culture, religion, economy, and education.

As a minor ethnicity, of course, the Chinese ethnicity receives positive/negative treatment and responses from the local community (Acehnese) that inhabits Peunayong Village. There is a big difference between Chinese ethnicity and the People of Aceh regarding all cultures and customs. It has become a law of nature that minorities such as the Chinese ethnicity directly or indirectly receive a negative stigma from the majority community, namely the people of Aceh. For example, in terms of clothing, the people of Aceh, who are predominantly Muslim, wear *syar'i* and Islamic clothing, while the Chinese ethnicity does not wear headscarves. Indirectly the people of Aceh frowned slightly when they saw their slightly open dress style. That way, how is the response of minor ethnicities in order to be able to survive side by side with the Muslim majority?

Even though they are different, Chinese ethnicity has become Indonesian citizens who live in the Aceh region. Of course, the Aceh government must also formulate laws and provisions for them to follow and obey. Because Aceh has certain laws based on Islamic Shari'ah, some special provisions and laws may apply to Chinese ethnicity as a minority ethnicity. Then, what kind of law is applied by the Aceh government, which may be based on Islam or other provisions?

This problem is what the author describes in this paper by looking at and describing how the People of Aceh respond to and accept Chinese ethnicity living in

their area and establishing laws and provisions imposed by the Aceh government on Chinese ethnicity in Banda Aceh. Therefore, the author wants to research *Surviving in the Veranda of Mecca: The Existence of Chinese Community in Gampong Peunayong, Kuta Alam District, Banda Aceh City*.

The author narrowed the scope to key issues to facilitate this research. With the background information provided, the research question can be formulated as follows: "What is the community's response to the presence of Chinese ethnicity in Banda Aceh according to the perceptions of the Aceh society?"

The method that the writer uses in this paper is a qualitative research method. Qualitative research intends to understand the phenomenon experienced by research subjects, such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, and actions, and through descriptions in the form of words (Moeleong, 2006, p. 6). A descriptive qualitative research method is a process of research and understanding based on a methodology that investigates a social phenomenon and human problems (Amirin, 2009, p. 77). Through this method, the author creates a complex picture, examines words and detailed reports from respondents, and produces accurate and reliable data. All of this information was obtained through interviews with informants in the field and also obtained through literature studies.

This research was conducted in Banda Aceh, especially in Kuta Alam District, Gampong Peunayong. This research was carried out in August 2018. This research chooses Gampong as a research locus because most residents living in Gampong were people with religions other than Islam.

Discussion

History of Chinese Arrival in Aceh

Aceh has been known since the beginning of the formation of the international traffic network (\pm 1st century A.D.) (Sudirman, 2009, p. 7). Aceh, located at the tip of Sumatra, has previously had splendor and fame, so it became the attention of traders and religious broadcasters from India, China, and the Middle East. Regarding

civilization or the form of the kingdom that existed on the tip of the island of Sumatra at the beginning of the arrival of Islam, there were already two kingdoms that were already established and had high civilization (Usman, 2009, p. 130).

These kingdoms played an important role in Sumatra and the Malacca Strait, especially in defending their territory from enemy attacks. The kingdoms were Lamuri and Samudra Pasai. The Kingdom of Samudra Pasai was also called Parsa, which the Chinese called Tashi. About the name Lamuri, there are lots of spellings. Marco Polo called it Lambri. Some call it Ramini, Ramni, and Arabs call it Lamberi. At the same time, the Chinese called it Lan-li, Lan-wuli, and Nanpoli (Usman, 2009, p. 131).

The name of the Lamuri Kingdom was mentioned many times in Chinese records. The oldest Chinese news was from 960 AD, which mentioned the name Lan-li, where Persian envoys who returned from China after 40 days of sailing could stop over. They waited for the cool season to sail again to their home country (Sudirman, 2009, p. 11).

Then Chau-Yu-Kwa, in his book *Chu Fan-Shi*, published in 1225 AD, stated that among the San-fo-ts'i (Sriwijaya) colonies included Lan-Wwu-li,, which was most likely Lamuri. King Lan-wu-li was said not to be a Muslim, yet his palace had two reception rooms. If a person departed from this country in the northeast monsoon, he would arrive in Ceylon within 20 days. In 1286, Lan-wu-li and Su-wen-ta-la sent envoys to China and stayed there while waiting for the return of Kublai Khan's expedition from Java (Sudirman, 2009, p. 10).

Other records at the beginning of the Mongol dynasty in China showed several Sumatra kingdoms, such as Samudera Pasai, Lamuri, Tamiang, Peureulak, and Haru. The Samudera Pasai Kingdom began to have relations with the Mongol Dynasty in 1282. That year, the ruler of Pasai established relations with China through a Chinese envoy who returned from South India and stopped at Samudera Pasai (Usman, 2009, p. 136).

Meanwhile, the Lamuri Kingdom sent envoys to China in 1286. The Ming dynasty book explains that in 1405 AD, a seal and a letter were sent to Lam-bu-li in 1411 AD. This country sent envoys to China to bring tribute. The delegation arrived when the

Klantan and Cail envoys visited, then returned with the Cheng-Ho expedition (Sudirman, 2009, p. 10).

Cheng-Ho's expedition occurred during the Ming Dynasty (1360-1643)(Yuanzi, 2007, p. 96). At that time, Samudera Pasai and China had established peace and trade relations (Usman, 2006, p. 68). These rulers sent ships and gifts to one another. In 1430, when Cheng-Ho brought gifts all over the country, Lamri also got a share. The gifts were not sent for the first time because the bell named Cakra Donya bears Chinese and Arabic inscriptions and is marked with the year 1409 AD (Sudirman, 2009, pp. 10-11).

This giant bell is made of bronze with a height of about 1.25 meters and a width of 8.75 meters (Yuanzi, 2007, p. 180). The bell was brought to Banda Aceh during the conquest of Samudera Pasai, conquered by Sultan Muhgayat Syah, the first Sultan of the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam, in 1524 (Ozay, 2007, p. 45).

It is recorded that Cheng-Ho made three visits to Samudra Pasai, namely in 1405, 1414, and 1430. During his second visit, Cheng-Ho witnessed the political conflict that occurred in Aceh. Cheng-Ho's arrival at this time was recorded in the history of the Ming Dynasty as well as the conflict with the Samudra Pasai Kingdom. When this political dispute occurred, Nahriansyah, the daughter of Sultan Zainal Abidin, was in power. A group of people who wanted to overthrow this female leader also attacked Cheng-Ho and his subordinates. However, the people of Samudra Pasai and Cheng-ho's colleagues put up a fight. They succeeded in arresting Iskandar, the leader of the Samudra Pasai rebellion, and brought it to China(Ozay, 2007, p. 45).

This goodwill trip established good trade and business relations between the Chinese ethnicity and the people of Aceh. Then, Chinese ethnicity began to arrive with more entourage to form groups or settlements in the coastal areas. However, the largest migration was recorded during the Dutch colonial period.

Description of Research Location

1. Geographical Location

Gampong Peunayong is one of 11 (eleven) Gampongs under the scope of Kuta Alam District, Banda Aceh City. This village is approximately 36.3 ha/m² in area. The average height is 0.80 M above sea level. Geographically, the location of Gampong Peunayong is bordered by:

- a. To the north, it is bordered by Gampong Mulia.
- b. To the south, it is bordered by Gampong Kuta Alam.
- c. To the east, it is bordered by Gampong Laksana.
- d. To the west, it is bordered by Krueng Aceh, Kuta Raja District (Helti, 2015, p. 23).

1.1 Table Gampong Peunayong Area.

No.	Area	Hectare
1.	Area	6,2 ha/m ²
2.	Land Area	2,9 ha/m ²
3.	Park Area	1,8 ha/m ²
4.	Office Area	3,6 ha/m ²
5.	Public and Other Infrastucture Area	21,8 ha/m ²
	Total Luas	36,3 ha/m²

2. Condition of Population

Number of the population recorded in Gampong Peunayong in 2018 in February was 2,569 people. Gampong is divided into 4 (four: Garuda Hamlet, Cendrawasih Hamlet, Merpati Hamlet, and Gajah Putih Hamlet. To see the total population of the hamlet in general, it can be seen in the table below:

1.2 Table of the population of Gampong Peunayong.

No.	Hamlet	Male	Female	M+L
1.	Garuda	286	221	507
2.	Cendrawasih	249	254	503
3.	Merpati	616	647	1.263
4.	Gajah Putih	191	123	323
	Total	1.342	1.254	2.569

Source: Coordinator of Peunayong Gampong Statistics

3. Total Population by Religion

There are 4 (four) religions embraced by the people of Gampong Peunayong, consisting of Islam, Christianity, Protestantism, and Buddhism. To describe the population by religion in Gampong Peunayong, see the table below:

1.3 Table of the population by religion in Gampong Peunayong.

No.	Religion	M	F
1.	Islam	677	503
2.	Protestant Christians	99	110
3.	Catholic Christians	21	31
4.	Hindus	-	-
5.	Buddha	580	568
Jumlah		1.342	1.254

Source: Coordinator of Peunayong Gampong Statistics

As seen from the table above, there are four religions in Gampong Peunayong. The first is of Buddhism or Chinese ethnicity descent and lives in Hamlet Merpati, Cendrawasih, Garuda, and Gajah Putih. The second largest is Islam. The third position is Protestant Christianity, and the last is Catholic Christianity.

The mixing of religions in one village has been going on for a long time. Moreover, until now, they still live contiguously. In terms of places of worship, every religion has its place of worship. In this village, there is a mosque as a place of worship for the Muslim community and a monastery as a place of worship for the Chinese Chinese community. Even so, all people can worship properly according to their respective religions.

The Response of Acehnese to the Chinese Ethnicity

As social beings, humans need other people for sure. Therefore, humans must mingle with those around them because they cannot live alone. For example, the socialization relationship between neighbors, with social interaction between neighbors, will make it easier for humans to overcome problems around them that need help from other humans.

However, what if social assimilation occurs between two different groups, different religions, races, ethnicities, customs, and languages? They have to adapt to each other. Of course, they can live comfortably and peacefully by doing good actions and creating a desirable environment.

Thus, it happens to Chinese ethnicity and Acehnese that carry out community integration in Gampong Peunayong. These two ethnic groups have lived in the same environment for a long time. Even though Chinese ethnicity has become part of Gampong Peunayong, they are still a minority group because their number is less than the Acehnese.

Nevertheless, the people of Aceh certainly have their assumptions and responses in dealing with different communities' socio-cultural and religious conditions. This response occurs when the people of Aceh are interacting with Chinese ethnicity or not because responses and assumptions can arise from the actions and activities they carry out in everyday life.

Feedback and responses that occur also vary. It depends on the perception of the community itself. Therefore, the author describes the responses obtained from field research and their observations, especially how the people of Aceh responded to the existence of ethnic Chinese, both positive and negative.

1. Positive Responses of Acehnese to the Existence of Chinese Ethnicity

The first response came from the head of the village (Geusiyik), Gampong Peunayong. His response to the Chinese ethnicity living in Aceh was quite good. He says we should not discriminate against them because of different ethnicities or religions. Islam itself comes from the word "peace". From that understanding alone, it is known how to treat Chinese ethnicity properly. Since they live in our area, we must treat them well. What is more, they are already Indonesian citizens. So they have the right to live in Aceh (T. S. Harun, personal communication, September 14, 2018).

During the times towards independence, Chinese ethnicity helped Indonesia to achieve independence. Even though at that time the Chinese ethnicity had not been

accepted with *kaffah* in Indonesian state. For their contributions, we must be kind to their descendants now. As explained in the Al-Quran surah Al-Hujarat verse 13:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا، إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ.

Meaning: "O mankind, verily We created you from a male and a female and made you nations and tribes so that you may know each other. Indeed, the most honorable among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious among you. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Knowing."

In terms of keeping harmony between the two ethnic groups, it can be seen in their daily relationships. We can see how the Chinese ethnicity and the people of Aceh interact. Their mix is quite harmonious in a way that does not interfere with each other. The Acehnese and Chinese ethnicity in Gampong Peunayong live properly like people in other areas (T. S. Harun, personal communication, September 14, 2018).

Inter-religious or ethnic life in Aceh, especially Gampong Peunayong, should be a role model for other regions to emulate so they don't discriminate against minorities. Life on Earth is very short. If we treat others badly, how will we be held accountable in the afterlife (T. S. Harun, personal communication, September 14, 2018).

The response from the Head of General Affairs and Planning for Gampong Peunayong towards Chinese ethnicity was also quite good. It was noted that there had never been a fight motivated by differences in religion and ethnicity. The problem that never happened was a fight between neighbors. Because the people of Gampong Peunayong spend more of their daily lives at the market to trade, small problems often arise (Yuspriadi, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

For example, a shop next door between Chinese and Acehnese is known. Chinese are so disciplined and firm in trading. They do not mix personal matters when trading. One day, a shop occupied by Acehnese had a customer arrive and park his four-wheeled vehicle by taking the shop's parking lot occupied by Chinese. So there was a fight, and the matter had to be brought to the Gampong apparatus. Fortunately, these

problems can be resolved by deliberation (Yuspriadi, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

Problems often arise among Chinese ethnicity themselves. However, Chinese ethnicity often solves their ethnic problems in the church and place of worship. Some were completed by the Gampong LINMAS (Community Protection) division because 18 problems can be solved in the village. However, there was once a problem with Chinese ethnicity, and they took it to the police. However, the police returned the problem to the Gampong apparatus to be resolved (Yuspriadi, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

In terms of culture, Chinese and Acehnese ethnicity can carry out their respective customs without disturbing each other. Even the Chinese ethnicity has a pastor who marries them. The pastor's name was Billy Putra Nanda. However, Yuspriadi is still comfortable socializing with Chinese ethnicity (Yuspriadi, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

Response of the Imam of Gampong Peunayong mosque, the Peunayong community's response is slightly different from other regions. This response is because Chinese ethnicity here is the majority existed. It is recorded from population data that the ratio is 70% of Chinese and 30% of Acehnese. The data is stored in the Geusyik office. The majority of Chinese ethnic are only in Gampong Peunayong.

Meanwhile, there are few other villages. Like Gampong Mulia, there are also Chinese, but only a few. That is just data, but participation is more dominant in daily life among the people of Aceh because the Chinese who live in Peunayong are mostly in shops because they are busy trading (T. Ridwan, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

He also emphasized that some of them participated in the progress and cleanliness of the Gampong, for example, through cooperation. An example of another activity is distributing groceries during the fasting month to Muslims and donating blood at the HAKKA office regularly. Women participate more in Gampong activities, such as

posyandu (Integrated Healthcare Center) (T. Ridwan, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

When asked about the problems that had occurred, he explained that problems that had arisen among the people of Aceh, between Chinese ethnicity and Acehnese and among Chinese themselves, were resolved by Gampong officials such as Geusyik and Tuha Peut according to custom. This problem is related to community life and Gampong problems, such as disputes between shops (Chinese ethnicity). Because according to him, regardless of religion and ethnicity, they are still counted as residents of Gampong Peunayong (T. Ridwan, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

If the Chinese have religious problems, they will be resolved at church or gatherings. Likewise, if we have problems regarding religion, they will be resolved by themselves at the mosque. And the Chinese ethnicity has been like that from the beginning until now. It is just that their internal problems are rarely seen outside, meaning they are rarely exposed in non-Chinese society (T. Ridwan, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

Apart from that, in Gampong Peunayong, said Imam of the Mosque, there had never been any clashes between ethnic groups except between individuals in the life of fellow neighbors. Apart from that, so far there has never been a serious problem. Namely, the problem that brought caused ethnic groups to experience a shock to live together. In fact, according to him, there has been a feeling of mutual trust between the Chinese ethnicity and the people of Aceh (T. Ridwan, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

One of the proofs is that some Chinese traders place Acehnese workers as cashiers and look after their shops when they are not there. As is known, the Chinese people rarely involve other people in finance for their trade. Usually, they place their siblings or children (T. Ridwan, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

Talking about comfort in society, he is comfortable and likes to mingle with Chinese ethnicity. There is no particular problem that disrupts the life of the Acehnese people. Regarding maintaining harmony in life, the tips used by the Gampong were to

include ethnic Chinese in various Gampong meetings. So that ethnic Chinese also participate in every Gampong agenda and activity (T. Ridwan, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

When asked whether Chinese ethnicity was allowed to enter the Gampong administration world, Tgk Ridwan's answer was no. Because according to him, Aceh is a land belonging to the Acehnese, so don't let other people lead it. Once, one of the Chinese ethnicity registered to become a Geusiyik (village head) candidate. However, the people of Gampong Peunayong did not agree. Because Aceh is the land of the Acehnese people who are famous for Seurambi of Mecca (Islamic area), there will be much debate if those who lead it are not real Muslims (T. Ridwan, personal communication, September 18, 2018). This debate is not discrimination against Chinese ethnicity. However, not allowing non-Muslims as leaders is one way to maintain Aceh's identity as a region that upholds Islamic sharia values.

The next response was from an entrepreneur who lives in Gampong Peunayong. His response was quite good regarding the existence of Chinese ethnicity. Although different, life in this village is fine. Regarding religion, the people in Gampong Peunayong apply according to surah Al-Kafirun, namely ﴿يُؤَلِّدُ بَيْنَكُمْ﴾ which means: "To you is your religion, and to me is my religion," he added. Even so, in Gampong affairs, the Chinese must join Acehnese society with an Islamic theme (Zubaili, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

Regarding religious activities, such as during Friday prayers and celebrations of Islamic holidays, the Chinese respect the Muslim agenda by closing shops during Friday prayers, etcetera. When celebrating Chinese holidays, the people of Aceh also appreciate it, but it doesn't do the same because Chinese holidays only take place in their church. So far, Mr. Zubaili has not been disturbed by the inter-ethnic life in Gampong Peunayong (Zubaili, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

Safrizal, a bookseller in Gampong Peunayong gave a good enough response for a small number of Chinese living in Gampong Peunayong, because while trading in the

Peunayong market, he had never had a problem with Chinese ethnicity. Except that sometimes Mr. Safrizal felt uncomfortable with the actions of the Chinese. The rest of the life of the Acehnese and Chinese traders went well, and got along well (Safrizal, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

In terms of keeping harmony, the way to do this is to invite each other and gather to chat at coffee shops. Of course, it is done during the spare time because most Chinese in Gampong Peunayong are busy in their respective shops (Safrizal, personal communication, September 18, 2018). When conducting research, the author often sees Chinese and Acehnese people gathering in coffee shops. Some were just talking, and some were playing rock. The men more dominantly carry out conversations in this coffee shop. Meanwhile, women are rare.

When asked whether it was permissible for Chinese to become village leaders, he replied that he strongly disagreed because, in his mind, if the ethnic Chinese became the leader, the people of Aceh would be neglected and neglected. It is because the Chinese only prioritize and care about their ethnicity. After all, this has never happened in Gampong Peunayong (Safrizal, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

The response of Mr. Joni, an employee at a car accessories shop belonging to Chinese Ethnicity: his response was quite good, and he was quite happy living with the Chinese Ethnicity. However, according to his characteristics, the Chinese ethnicity in Gampong Peunayong is divided into two specific groups. That is, some are soft, and some are hard. So, what made it uncomfortable was the Chinese, who were harsh (Joni, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

The specifics came from the Chinese ethnicity, not from their identity. This identity means that these specifications appear in the community by themselves, not brought from the ancestral characteristics of the Chinese ethnicity which came to Aceh. As we know, formerly, the Chinese came to Aceh of them for trading. Of course, traders must be gentle and polite to buyers (Joni, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

Regarding the attitude and kindness of the Chinese to the local community, they are quite friendly. Based on his experience working for 12 years as an employee of a car accessories shop owned by the Chinese, the treatment he has received so far has been good. Never once did he receive unpleasant treatment. When he is guilty, his employer only politely reprimands him (Joni, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

According to him, however, in this part of the world, ethnic minorities will not act harshly against the majority, except for each other. Because the Chinese realized he was an ethnic minority, he had to be kind and make the people of Aceh comfortable. For this reason, Joni feels safe and comfortable living with Chinese ethnicity (Joni, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

Even some of the Chinese follow Acehnese culture with a Muslim majority. For example, Chinese people perform circumcision on their sons. They also learn the Koran. Even in non-Muslim schools, there are Islamic Religious Education subjects to be taught to non-Muslim students. This involvement proves that the Chinese and the people of Aceh do not mind the religious differences that occur between the two (Joni, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

We should thank the Chinese ethnicity, because they are one of the drivers of economic growth in Gampong Peunayong. Moreover, Chinese ethnicity has lived for generations in Indonesia, especially Aceh, until they became an Indonesian citizen. We do not have to discriminate between the people of Aceh and Chinese ethnicity (Joni, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

Another response came from a fish trader at the Peunayong market, usually called Yahyek. According to him, buyers of Chinese ethnicity only bargain a little. Asking for less price is not too drastic. If they like it, they will buy it. If you do not like it, do not buy it. And so far, he is still comfortable and safe carrying out buying and selling interactions with ethnic Chinese (Yahyek, personal communication, September 23, 2018).

Jefriadi's response, as long as he lived in this environment, was never bothered by the presence of Chinese ethnicity. They in Peunayong live life as usual. Opinions on

religious differences, as long as they do not invite and do not follow their religion, everything is fine. For example, we are veiled, while they are not veiled. That is their right because they do not have to wear the veil in their religion. We also cannot force them to wear the veil (Jefriadi, personal communication, September 23, 2018).

In keeping our respective religions, we must equally defend our faith and beliefs to avoid following other people's religions because to fall into another religion. Sometimes you do not have to be invited. If their faith is lacking, later, they will fall too. However, so far, the Chinese have never invited the people of Aceh to follow their religion. We should invite them to follow Islam. However, that has yet to happen so far because no one has started to invite. If some Chinese embrace Islam (converts), it is purely from their desires (Jefriadi, personal communication, September 23, 2018).

The response of Beni, a watch seller at the Peunayong market, to the Chinese ethnicity was also good. The Chinese and the people of Aceh mingle comfortably. To strengthen friendships, they often hold cooperation activities in the alley where they sell, such as cleaning clogged sewers, cleaning up trash, etcetera. All these activities are carried out for the common good (Beni, personal communication, September 23, 2018).

In terms of culture, Chinese ethnicity never held a Barongsai culture. Some Acehnese people helped organize the Barongsai culture because it was a big event. The presence of Chinese ethnicity in Aceh gives a new color to our knowledge of foreign cultures, such as Chinese culture. If they do not live in Aceh, we will never directly participate in other people's cultures. Participating, in this case, means helping, not participating in organizing their culture (Beni, personal communication, September 23, 2018).

2. The Negative Response of the Acehnese to the Chinese Ethnicity

In addition to the positive response, the Acehnese people do not deny the negative feedbacks or responses that sometimes arise due to the relationship and interaction between the Chinese and the Acehnese. From the results of observations by the author, who saw directly the daily life of the Chinese and Acehnese, some got along well, were

kind, cared for each other, and greeted each other. However, some do not pay attention to each other.

In fact, during a week of direct observation, the writer had never encountered Chinese children playing with children from Acehese. Chinese children only play with each other, as well as Acehese children. This interaction raises its tendency for people who pay attention to these social conditions.

Not only children's groups, even adult groups, especially mothers, do not gather and talk together. The place to establish relations between the Chinese and Acehese is the market where they trade in buying and selling. However, they also mingle with each other when there are village activities, such as the activities of the *PKK* and *posyandu* women. Once again, this trend only occurs in a few Chinese and ethnic Acehese.

The Chinese ethnicity in Peunayong lives in one point or area. Moreover, the area with the most Chinese is Merpati Hamlet. In this hamlet, there are only one or two houses that Acehese inhabits. The rest are houses belonging to Chinese ethnicity. When the writer entered the alleys in Merpati hamlet, there were characteristics of Chinese people's life. In front of every house, they have red lanterns hanging. This characteristic proves that although they live in Muslim-majority areas, they can still reflect their ethnic characteristics.

In addition, the author's observations are inseparable from the interactions that occur in the market. Even though the market in Gampong Peunayong is a place for Acehese ethnicity and Chinese ethnicity to build relationships, there is still a tendency between the two to emerge. One of them is that in the Peunayong market, Chinese ethnicity traders often trade in one alley. This trade means that in the alley, there are only Chinese traders. While in another alley, there are only traders from Acehese. However, there is also a row of shophouses in this market inhabited by Chinese and Acehese traders.

Regarding observation research and research conducted by the author, several negative responses emerged from the Acehese ethnic community. One is based on an

interview with the Imam of the Mosque, Tgk Ridwan. According to him, one thing made him uncomfortable with the Chinese ethnicity. That is, the Chinese often establish illegal churches. They did not ask for and obtain official permission from Geusyik Gampong Peunayong and other officials (T. Ridwan, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

Gampong officials are investigating further the extent of their role in these illegal churches. The elders in Gampong investigated every alley and even small alleys to find traces of this illegal church because the Chinese Ethnicity could have established an illegal church wherever they gathered. Initially, they only intended to gather together. Over time the place was used as a new place of worship for them (T. Ridwan, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

This interaction should not be done because the Gampong/government has provided an official church and monastery for ethnic Chinese to worship. According to Tgk Ridwan, if the minority religions increase their places of worship, then something that is not right will happen to the majority religion. Moreover, of course, religious minorities have bad intentions. Tgk Ridwan assumes that non-Muslims will spread their beliefs, which is fatal for the younger generation in Aceh regarding faith. Behind this, there are also many Chinese who have converted to Islam. Furthermore, the Gampong apparatus will make a special agenda for converts, such as lectures, meals, and so on (T. Ridwan, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

Another negative response emerged from a book and newspaper seller at the Peunayong market named Mr. Safrizal. His response to the Chinese ethnicity was that several Chinese people in Gampong Peunayong were unfriendly and unsociable. Not even to say hello. Even though he opened the conversation several times, the response from a small number of ethnic Chinese was not very good (Safrizal, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

Regarding his comfort in living with Chinese ethnicity, it is also similar. A small number of people of Chinese ethnicity do not respect the religious activities of the Acehnese people, for example, when the time for Friday prayers has arrived. These

Chinese did not close their shop. Moreover, when the call to prayer resounds, they still hang out at the Honda in the garage. He was very annoyed with the behavior of a few Chinese. They were not deterred, even though they had been reprimanded several times (Safrizal, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

Joni responded that he deeply regretted the relationship with the Chinese. A few of them are hostile to each other and do not behave well. If with the Acehnese, the Chinese may still have a sense of reluctance, unlike the case with fellow ethnicity. According to Mr. Joni's story, there was once a dispute between Chinese ethnicity, resulting in the problem being resolved at the police station (Joni, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

Another example is that several Chinese do not buy goods from other Chinese. They prefer to buy necessities at shops owned by Acehnese. Once again, this problem only occurs in a few ethnic Chinese. This tendency means that it does not include all Chinese living in Peunayong, because Mr. Joni does not want to give a negative impression to the Chinese community (Joni, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

Jefriadi responded that he emphasized that some Chinese behaved badly and were rude to their workers. Be it laborers from Acehnese or Chinese. This poor treatment sometimes becomes a source of discomfort for the people of Aceh to work for the Chinese. Nevertheless, not all employers of Chinese ethnicity carry out such harsh treatment (Jefriadi, personal communication, September 23, 2018).

Conclusion

Acehnese society is a multicultural and pluralistic society. Even though the people of Aceh who are Muslim appear as the majority, people in minority positions continue to live a good socio-cultural life. One of the groups or ethnic groups that is a minority community is the Chinese ethnicity group. This group is different from the people of Aceh regarding religion, culture, race, language, and others. Therefore the Chinese ethnicity receives various responses from the majority community. This response is

how the majority position the Chinese ethnicity. In this case, two responses appear, that is, positive and negative responses. Even so, currently, the Chinese ethnicity has become part of the people of Aceh itself.

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