

TIDUNG PEOPLE IN SEBATIK ISLAND: ETHNIC IDENTITY, CULTURE, AND RELIGIOUS LIFE

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ABSTRACT: *This article is a part of research result entitled “Tidung People at the Border Building Nation, Keeping Harmony: A Study of Interethnic Relations in Nunukan Regency of North Kalimantan. This critical ethnographic research examines the construction of ethnic identity and cultural aspect of Tidung people in Nunukan regency. The data were analyzed interactively including data reduction, data display, and verification. In the development, Tidung people in some areas such as in Tarakan are classified as developed; whereas, in other area such as Nunukan, they are classified as people with modest living. The simplicity of Tidung people in Nunukan regency is reflected in their cultural orientation for a homely life. In religious life, Tidung older generation is classified as pluralistic Islam while the young generation tries to release themselves from pluralism in their religion. In this reformation era, the awareness of strengthening political identity is appeared as indicated by the emergence of “Pan Dayak” that reflects brotherhood between the Dayak and Tidung people in PUSAKA (The Association of Kalimantan Natives) organization. The spirit of political identity renaissance should be observed, because Nunukan regency is a pluralistic area especially for the Bugis who control the area, economically and politically. Therefore, proper management of interethnic relations is necessary to make the situation in Nunukan regency remain under control.*

KEYWORDS: Tidung People, Ethnic Identity, Culture, Religious Life

INTRODUCTION

It is interesting to write about Tidung people in Sebatik Island. Sebatik Island is located in the border between Indonesia and Malaysia in Nunukan regency. Firstly, Tidung people in this island only inhabit three villages at Kecamatan West Sebatik; whereas, there are 4 *kecamatan* (namely district) in Sebatik Island. This means that Tidung people belong to minority group of the Bugis whose majority of the population is Buginese. However, Tidung people are natives of Sebatik Island who have inhabited the island since the 17th century. But Tidung people welcome migrants especially Buginese who then control the Sebatik Island.

As a consequence, Sebatik Island has four *kecamatan* and becomes an island which has multiethnic population: Buginese, Javanese, and Flores and other ethnic groups. But the migrants have made the island progress. On the other hand, Tidung people have not changed much. They become an ethnic group who has well-defined boundaries distinguishing them from other ethnic groups in the island.

Naroll (in Barth, 1988: 11) identifies ethnic group as a unitary of population with the characteristics: (1) it proliferates closely in its group; (2) it has basic values reflected in its culture; (3) it establishes communication arena and social interaction; and (4) it has members who know themselves and are recognized by other people as a part of a category that can be differentiated from other category.

The view above is very extreme. Ethnic group with well-defined boundaries exists when an ethnic group is still in small groups in relatively close environment with strong social sentiment. In reality, this type of social group is hard to find due to several factors such as the increase of population and other social networks with other ethnic groups. And marriage relationships make it possible for acculturation and assimilation phenomena.

In reality, Tidung people are not closed ethnicity because social relations have occurred with other ethnic groups. But for other community in Sebatik Island, they have their own stereotype as a community with modest life with cultural value orientation tends to respect the past and little respect about the present. Therefore, they do not pursue social status in their work, but only sufficient and this makes them underdeveloped compared to migrant ethnic group especially from the Bugis migrants.

This phenomenon is actually very alarming when it is not managed well. Local community who is felt marginalized will have internal awareness for resistance. This is the significant of this writing to be able to understand Tidung ethnic identity, culture and religious life to make it easy integrate this ethnic group in development.

Construction of Tidung People Identity

According to Amir Hamzah (1998: 21), the origin of Tidung people now is divided into 3 versions: (1) Self version of Tidung community, (2) Dutch colonial government version, and (3) Republic of Indonesia government version in this case government of Bulungan regency. The understanding of the three versions differs from one another.

First, according to Tidung community version, their ancestor came from Asia who immigrated around the V-I century B.C. At that time, human exodus was from Asia to islands in the east and south. It was assumed they landed in east coast of Kalimantan Island in the north that is around Labuk and Kinabatangan areas. Then, they spread to coastal areas and big river banks and islands in the east such as east coast of Sabah borders with Kudat area in the north up to Tanjung Mangkalihat in the south. Their expansion sometimes got resistance from the population who first occupied the area. They moved the population forcefully into the forest and to the up stream of the river. They are now known as Dayak Kayan ethnic group.

Today there are several areas known in their area: Tarakan, Bunyu (Bulungan), Nunukan, Sebatik (Nunukan regency), Malinau, Bulungan, Sembakung, Salimbatu Sumbel, Sesayap (Tana Tidung regency), Pembeliangan, Tawau-Tinagad-Kelumpang-Selungan-Timbun Mata Sandakan-Labuk (Malaysia). These areas are known later on as Tana tidung.

Second, Dutch Indies version states that the origin of Tidung people was from Dayak Kayan. This version was assumed to be politically motivated in which the original Tidung areas are Sesayap and Malinau by ignoring other settlement concentration. This Dutch nomenclature caused the Malinau and Sesayap communities claimed themselves as original Tidung and their

area is Tana Tidung, whereas Tidung community in other areas also claimed themselves as original Tidung. This makes their unity become loose and is worsened by insulting one another in the use of Tidung language.

Third, Indonesian government version in this case the governmental system of Bulungan regent's office. In the monograph book of Bulungan regency, it is stated that Tidung ethnic group is Coastal Dayak who came from mountain area in Menjelutung. Tidung people in Sebatik Island inhabit coastal area as a part of Nunukan, grown up in low profile family and modest. They call themselves *ulunpagun* (people from the village) inhabit the river bank and coastal area. Their settlement was not settled and they moved from one river bank to other river bank.

Today Tidung people spread along the northeast of Kalimantan Island and to other small islands around it such as Nunukan district and West Sebatik district. Since the establishment of the state, they have applied permanent settlement. Sebatik Island which they inhabit is one of the arenas where confrontation incident happened. This confrontation affair involved Tidung people in defending the state sovereignty and this makes them choose to settle in a location to be witness of history for their struggle, although they were separated from their families and relatives by boundary marker of two countries in this island. The relationships between Tidung people are very strong and their settlement is close together with those regarded as *pensulot* to establish a community area.

Tidung people in Sebatik Island established today was motivated by the process of reinterpretation of past affair through their memories by means of mental process and contextual understanding to form a series of historical journey from experience appears to the surface and is continuously reproduced by them. Tidung people in Sebatik is identified came from various villages in mainland Borneo. Tidung people group spread around to northeast peninsula of mainland Borneo consisting of seven groups which belong to subpart of TidungSebangkung, Sebuku, Tanah Merah, Tarakan, and Bulungan.

According to Idris (2017: 60) there are 4 versions about the origin of Tidung people: first, the origin of Tidung people according to mythology was from an egg found on a bamboo tree. At first it was told that one of the ethnic Dayak became the predecessor of Tidung people. In this version, the origin of Tidung people was not from human, although this story was not known by the Tidung people themselves. In the past there were two Dayak kingdoms tied a knot to their own children. They became husband and wife. One day the wife was pregnant and craved to eat meat of hunting game. Then the husband told several of the soldiers to hunt in the forest to fulfill his wife's request. The soldiers and their dogs went to the forest to hunt by crossing hills, bushes, and valleys. But in that day no animal even house lizard, iguana, or insect were not found; let alone birds, pigs, and gazelles. In their way home, the dogs were barking all the times to the group of bamboos. They were surprised why the dogs barked to the bamboo trees. Then they began to search the bamboo trees. Apparently behind the bamboo trees there was a very big egg. Then they took the egg home and showed it to the king's son, husband and wife who were craving to eat hunting game.

As soon as they arrived at home, they showed the egg to the king and the king wanted to wait until the egg hatched to know what kind of animal had that egg. After one week the egg hatched and surprisingly what inside the egg was human. The human who was born from the egg was named as Tidong by the king. "You are Tidong", said the king because you were found in the

mountain in the middle of the forest. The child grew up like another human being and married and proliferated to make his own village cluster and inhabited the mountain area. All the descendants of Aki Tidung who were believed to have been born from the egg found in the forest were named as Tidung people who spread now in northeast Kalimantan Island.

The history illustrated that Tidung people at present came from the egg is a unique phenomenon because in the myth Tidung people at first did not exist and was not created directly to be human but from the egg was very occult. But previously it was told that those who found the egg became the forerunners of Tidung people were Dayak people.

This first mythology version is maintained by Tidung people from Sesayap group who inhabit Tarakan, Tanah Merah, and Mandul Island areas. As for Tidung people who live in remote areas such as Sembakung and Sebuku assume that the myth about the origin of Tidung people who came from the egg was a story about the origin of ethnic Bulungan. The fact at present among the Tidung and Bulungan there is a clear separation between their ethnic groups. Tidung people deny that Bulungan is a part of them and vice versa.

Second, the myth about the origin of Tidung people according to Sebuku version. Sub-ethnic group of Tidung Sebuku is believed by the community came from the Sumbal River around Kecamatan Sebuku area of Nunukan regency. Tidung Sebuku people who came from the Sumbal River then spread to various areas in northeast part of Kalimantan Island and islands around it.

According to this version formerly Tidung people lived along the rivers in the middle of East Borneo until Batu Tinagat in the north which is close to Tawau. The evidence for their existence begins from Tawau area, a place that uses address term in Tidung language such as *Tinagat* which means cut and *Membalua* which means ghost. Batu Tinagat or Batu Payung was from folklore of Tidung Tawau (Batubara, 2014: 130).

The relationship between Tidung Tawau and Tidung people of Sebuku was folklore told historically has undergone some change. Based on Tidung Tawau, it only told an event related to the naming of Tawau and Batu Tinagat; whereas, Tidung that came from the Sumbal River told the origin of Tidung people was from the forest in Sebuku until Tawau. The similarity of the story between Tidung in Tawau and in Sebuku shows that subgroups of Tidung spread in the adjacent area belong to a family group although there is a little difference in the myth told orally from one generation to the next generation.

Third, mythology about the origin of Tidung people according to Tidung Sembakung version. This myth was developed by Tidung people came from Sembakung in Sebatik Island. The myth was based on the myth about Aki Suruga which was rumored having body height 90 inches. Information about the origin of Tidung from Sembakung which was formerly a part of real ethnic of Kalimantan still follows their ancestor's teaching. It was told that formerly in Tidung family there were two brothers. The older brother met a Muslim saint in the forest and taught him about Islam. When he arrived at home, he wanted to teach his little brother, but his little brother still would like to follow his ancestor's teaching. As each of them defended their own opinion, they divided their territory and chose to separate due to the difference of belief. Based on the river flow, the older brother's territory was up to the meeting of sea water and river water. And the little brother's territory was the river flow which was not mixed up with sea water. This means the older brother's territory was in the downstream and the little brother's

territory was in the upstream. This agreement was to divide the power between Tidung people and Dayak people. Therefore Tidung people today spread more to the river bank in coastal area and islands around Borneo mainland.

It is said that Tidung people live in Sebatik came from various ethnic groups of Tidung who came from TidungSebuku, TidungSembakung, and TidungSesayap groups. From linguistic point of view, the three ethnic groups use different dialects. TidungSebuku and Sembakung who came from the Sumbal River and the Sembakung River were categorized as hinterland Tidung group. As for TidungTarakan, they belong to more advanced group because they live in coastal area which makes them have contact with other ethnic groups due to sea trade. Although Tidung people came from different ethnic groups and from different areas, they are united in the value of *belimpun*(unity) with the slogan *belimpun taka tagas, usuwai taka tapu* which means united like ebony and spread like cane sugar. This slogan means that Tidung people must unite, no difference of opinions and inseparable because if they do not unite, they will become weak and are easily provoked. Therefore the value of this slogan was formed in the frame of strengthening identity of Tidung people to unite and tie Tidung sub-ethnic who came from different areas with different dialects. With this slogan sub-Tidung group who came from Sebuku, Sembakung, and Tarakan unite by having identity of Tidungness. Okushima (2003: 21) categorizes Tidung subgroup into four categories: Sesayap, Sebuku, Sembakung and Bulungan groups. But for Tidung people in Sebatik, they do not think that Bulungan group is a subgroup of Tidung people.

Fourth, the myth about the origin of Tidung people according to Malaysian version. It was mentioned in this version that Tidung people were an integration of two ethnic groups: ethnic Dayak Murut and ethnic Suluk. Ethnic Suluk who came to Sabah to strengthen its expansion in mainland Borneo married to a local population, namely Dayak Murut which was told in the myth married to a lady from heaven was exaggerated because hyperbolic language was used. The people from heaven meant in this story were people from mountain who live in upper area; whereas, Suluk people are a group who lives in coastal area and in islands. This interethnic marriage causes assimilation done by Suluk Kingdom to Dayak Murut group and at the end Dayak Murut who have embraced Islam change their identity to become Tidung people. Tidung is a term refers to a place in highland, so though they live in coastal area, their origin was from the mountain. This myth was based on the expansion of Suluk Kingdom over Sabah area. From the myth the origin of Tidung came from Kinabatangan area spread to Tawau, Apas, Klabakan, and also to some areas in Indonesia such as Sebuku and Sembakung.

The significant difference about the origin of Tidung according to Malaysian version and Indonesian version explained above is an opinion to claim that Tidung is an ethnic group who came from different countries and built the identity of Tidung people. Nevertheless, both Tidung in Malaysia and Tidung In Indonesia still have tie of kinship due to their spread to Sabah area and North Kalimantan were present far ahead compared to the establishment of state in this country.

The myth constructed by sub-ethnic Tidung group who came from Sebuku, Sembakung, and Sesayap groups is a kind of cultural strategy in the frame of building identity and distinguishing it from other groups. Van Peursen (1988: 61) states that myth is a story that leads to a certain direction to a group of people symbolizing their identity. This is found in myth about the origin

of something since in the myth, man can take part in affairs around him and can perceive natural power.

In this case man finds his identity. Man is surrounded by nature so that man is subject to natural power. Man is still open and therefore he can participate in natural power which makes him realize the mystical occult power. But man is still unable to look at the object of reality by his sense so that man and nature become one and produce identity from their integration.

Referring to the three myths, it can be identified that the ethnic Tidung sub-group immigrated to Sebatik Island. The trace about the journey of Tidung people who immigrated to Sebatik Island can be seen by archeological remains and also by the memory of the elders of Tidung who are still alive. The migration to Sebatik has three stages:

First, this period was believed to happen in 1700. Based on history evidence, there are old graves in Sebatik Island depicted Islam Malay spread to several villages. It was identified that the old graves were the graves of Tidung people in the past. Besides that it was assumed that the 18th century was the first stage of Tidung migration to Sebatik Island.

Archeological evidence in the form of old graves was found at Liang Bunyu' village especially at Sekapuk village of Liang Bunyu'. But an old grave was also found at Lapeo village of Setabu village. The grave was believed to be the Tidung grave because according to informant, the grave has characteristics of tomb written in Malay Arabic on the name, but the year was written in Latin. The tomb was made of ebony but the shape and carving indicated the graves of those who had a belief in Islam. At the grave only the year of the death was written that is in 1832. Although the condition of the grave was worn out of time, the tomb was made of ebony that can stand for quite a long time. The grave was the remnants of the villages at Sekapuk in the past. Today the Tidung villages at Sekapuk cannot be found anymore.

Based on the first stage, the living Tidung with movable settlement occurred in the 18th century. The first stage was known as migration of Tidung people who came from Sebu. This was strengthened by the existence of old graves in several villages such as Sekapuk at Liang Bunyu' and Lapeo. It was assumed to be the graves of Tidung people. Archeological evidence in the form of old graves in which the year was written on the tomb 1836 was found in coastal area around bamboo trees was believed to be the graves of Tidung people.

The second stage happened during the Tidung Kingdom in Tarakan entitled Tenggara Kingdom of Tidung Tarakan King, Datuk Adil, ordered to open a cluster of village in Sebatik Island. In the Kingdom of Tidung Tarakan, there were five islands under his sovereignty such as Tarakan, Bunyu, Mandul, Nunukan, and Sebatik Islands around mainland of Borneo. By the order of Tidung Tarakan king, Datuk Adil (1896—1916), Sebatik village was open at the end of 1813. The building of Tidung village at Bebatu is known today as Setabu village was the first and oldest village in Sebatik Island based on the government version. The village was open by the king of which the opening should be done by doing *fardhukifayah* (communal obligations) and by traditional midwife.

At the opening of the village by the king's envoy, there was a group of Tidung people who had lived in the area before from Tidung Sebu group in hinterland. Then Tidung people from Tarakan made Sebatik Island as an island just for stop over. Today many sailors come to Sebatik Island to collect wood, rattan, and resin and other materials. But they do not live there

such as Bajo, Moro, and Sukuk ethnic groups. Since then, sea trade in Tarakan-Nunukan-Sebatik-Tawau was under the control of Tidung people. In 1916 Tidung Kingdom was invaded by Bulungan Sultanate due to the Dutch provocation, and at the end the Kingdom of Tarakan, Tidung was collapsed and Datuk Adil King was banished to another place, so that Bulungan Sultanate had a control over Tarakan area.

The third period happened in 1911 after Bulungan Kingdom invaded the adjacent areas including Sembakung area. This was due to Tidung people in Sembakung succeeded to escape from the invasion and fled to different areas: to Tarakan, Nunukan, Sebatik, Tawau, Kinabatangan, Labuk, Kutai and even to Sulu Island.

Tidung people who came from Sembakung in Sebatik Island opened villages at Liang Bunyu village. Tidung people of Sembakung group who came to Sebatik Island at first just to collect wood and swallow nest as the sea commodities. They came to Sebatik only by building small huts near the coast as a sign for their place to stop over. The villages they built were named Beliang Bunyu' which means not peaceful or worried if they did not return. This was due to Tidung people in Sebatik still think of their family spread to several areas and village of origin. But gradually the name was changed to Liang Bunyu' which means hole of bunyu' fruit. This name was given since it was close to villages where bunyu' fruit was found and a hole was found nearby.

Tidung is a collective term for a group of village people who live in coastal area and downstream at the northeast mainland of Borneo and the small islands around it. The naming then was related to the name of the river around their settlement, such as at the Sumbal River at Sebuk, the Sembakung River, and the Sesayap River in Tanah Tidung regency area. Then the spread of ethnic Tidung was concentrated at the downstream area and coastal area and other islands around it.

Orientation of Cultural Value

Orientation of cultural value is an ideal principle believed to bring happiness. The orientation of cultural value is also called principle of life in which this principle becomes a way of life by the owner. Orientation of cultural value leads the man to the future, and this will go on as long as the owner's live and stops at the end of his awareness. Tidung people have a philosophy of life in the form of value system and norm which becomes the way of life of Tidung people. There are some philosophy of lives of Tidung people which are still done and the ones that have been abandoned due to the contact with the teaching of Islam (Sani, 2017: 67; Idris, 2017: 170).

First is *mengayau*. *Mengayau* is a value which is motivated by the ritual of decapitation using Mandau to show strength and it was only done by the leaders and the head was hung and shown to the people. Those who lost would become slaves to the winner of decapitation. Decapitation also becomes a mechanism to show the power of a man when he wanted to propose a lady. The young man went around to find a strong opponent to test knowledge and to fight until the opponent was defeated and the winner decapitated the loser. Then the head was shown as evidence of courage. But to day this kind of tradition has been abandoned by Tidung people and since they believe in Islam. *Mengayau* (decapitating) was not done anymore because it is assumed to be against the teaching of Islam. Tidung people both in Nunukan and in Sebatik Island have abandoned this *mengayau* tradition (see Coomans, 1987: 30).

Second, is the philosophy about local tradition that must be respected with the principle “*dimanae tana biyamo, denginokuanansinantuk*” which means when you are in Rome do as the Romans do. The meaning of this principle is when assimilation occurs between the newcomers and the natives, the new comers must obey the tradition of the natives because it is effective in the area where the natives live. Tidung people regard themselves as a native of Sebatik Island causing the ethnic group of new comers must obey the tradition in Sebatik Island.

Third, *tourotus*. *Tourotus* means care literally. Tidung people have deep empathy to help and care others in their group. But Tidung people also care other people outside their group if they need it. This *tourotus* motivates them to help one another and it is a value to prevent conflict. For Tidung people, they will never begin the conflict because they do not have the heart to do it. But if it is unavoidable, it can make them lose their patience and fight might happen.

Fourth, modest living. Tidung people have a very modest living. They make use of everything available just to satisfy the need for life. Their home was relatively small which is called in Tidung language “*asolsinojadinyogino*” which means take whatever it is. Another expression is “*Suangbagasbagambus*”, which means if we have rice, let's sing. If there is food to eat, that's enough. They have principle for their house that as long as they are not wet when it rains, and they are not hot when it is hot day, that will do.

Fifth, *belimpun*. The value of *belimpun* is for Tidung people, it is happy to get together. Therefore their settlement is centralized and they gather at a certain place and are inseparable. The value in *belimpun* also indicates that in a house not only the nuclear family but also extended family. But usually when the son has been able to build a house of his own, he will live with his family and the house is not far from the center of the settlement. In their daily activities, Tidung people often get together and have a talk while doing their work. The value of *belimpun* can also strengthen social solidarity among the Tidung community.

Sixth, *berinut*. This value causes Tidung people lack of high work ethos and are less motivated in doing something. They are not very ambitious in doing their work and they do the work as it is.

Seventh, *kutika*. *Kutika* is a guide for good luck to begin activities related to the system of livelihood. *Kutika* is usually used when they want to go hunting in the forest, look for wood, ebony, and swallow nest. It is also used as a guide to fishing. So, *kutika* is a guide of luck to begin a work. *Kutika* for Tidung people illustrates a figure standing having a head, hand, body, and feet. Each body member has meaning that can be taken as a guide to begin an activity. *Kutika* is also used to know times which are regarded to bring luck.

Eighth, *kepunan*. The aim of this value is to respect the landlord during a visit. Tidung people often call it as “*Ngambilkodulu, kepunankonanti*”. The hospitality of Tidung people is seen at the time we make a visit to their house. They offer food which become their tradition. As a guest we must eat the food. This is due to their tradition when we make a visit and if we do not eat the food offered, it will cause a bad luck. The expression “*Ngambilkodulu, kepunankonanti*” as advice for the guest in order not to have a bad luck. The teaching behind it is mutual respect among Tidung people.

Religious Life

In the perspective of religious revolution theory, the system of belief occurs on the base of in-depth human awareness about supernatural creatures controlling the universe including human life itself. The system of belief reflects awareness that human being as living creature has limitation in dealing with and understanding of macro cosmos dimension. In here the human beings show their inability in facing the supernatural creatures which are more powerful. These powerful creatures can do anything which human beings cannot do (Sani, 2014: 1).

The creatures can create crisis in human life and extraordinary events in human life and in their environment. Therefore according to Kuntjaraningrat (1964: 41), the form of religion in general in the ethnic groups of the world shows four basic elements: (1) religious emotion causing human beings do their religious activity, (2) system of belief or human shadows about the world, nature, world of spirits, life, death, etc, (3) system of religious ceremony which aims to find a relationship with the world of spirits based on the system of belief in religious groups or social units which conceptualized and activated religion and religious ceremonial system.

Actually the core in a religion is the system of religious ceremony aiming at finding the relations with the world of spirits based on the religious system. Theories oriented to religious belief and theory oriented to religious ceremony there is always an activity in the form of ceremony (Koentjaraningrat, 1980: 57) which is usually done through offering activity, sacrificing and praying, followed by a series of behavior such as dine together, dance procession, meditation, until doing something extreme in the form of intoxication or deed to raise or eliminate self awareness of the ceremony actor.

Keesing (1992: 28) relates a model of transitional ceremony by the tool used to interpret sacrifice ceremony. The logic is, human regards the existence of another nature having a power as supervisor.

In the past, the ancestor of Tidung people was from ethnic Dayak who still believed in the ancestor's belief called *kaharingan* which according to Kertodipaero (1963: 16), is a system of belief of dynamistic phenomena and monotheism phenomena. The dynamistic phenomena can be seen in keeping amulets: objects that have magic power to increase strength to oneself.

The demomistic phenomenon is a belief to supernatural creatures or spirits is very strong for the followers of *kaharingan*. Therefore in order to deter the anger of the supernatural creatures, there must be offering. But the followers of *kaharingan* believe in one powerful high god. He created heaven and earth and others.

In line with the acceptance of Islam by the Tidung community, *kaharingan* belief gradually disappears although not all by the way. There are several habits done by ancestors which are still maintained although the meaning inside it has changed. This type of phenomenon according to Smith (in Kuntjaraningrat, 1980: 67) happened quite a lot in many religions but the background, belief, aim, or its doctrine has changed.

Today Tidung people in general in Sebatik Island have a belief in Islam. Therefore the system of religion was based on the teaching of Islam. But there still exist tradition that they maintained which is not contrary to Islam teaching. The tradition which is contradictory with the teaching of Islam has been abandoned by Tidung people. They called it "*yakinko do tuhan kamatanu*

tenuju melainkan Allah". This is an expression of doing the teaching of Islam and system of belief to Allah (Muthohor, 2015: 14).

One interesting thing is that the Islamic characteristic of Tidung people in Sebatik Island can be classified into two: those who are called elders and those who are called youths. The elders are a group consists of *adat* (custom) leaders and their followers who still maintain the tradition in daily life although they have knowledge of the teaching of Islam. The tradition of how to cultivate land, giving birth, marriage, and death was integrated between adat and religious teaching in their ritual.

This group also believes that their Islamic identity was very inclusive since they believe that Muslim saint was sent by Allah who came from heaven for Tidung people because they are supernatural and more sacred and was maintained historically by Tidung people. Those who introduced Islam to them was believed did not come from Islam promulgators of trade line who made them believe in Islam as can be seen in many cases in Indonesia in which the spread of Islam was done by traders (Arab traders). Although the outsiders assumed that the teaching of Islam done by Tidung people contains "*syirik*" (believe in more than one god), but for them, it is a guide of truth in their life (Idris, 2017: 142). The second is the youths. This group was pioneered by the youths who have education at Islamic boarding schools.. These youths tend not to practice anymore about the syncretic teaching from the teaching of Islam and adat. They practiced their religion according to Al-Quran and Al-Hadist. In practicing religion such as Friday's pray, the youths were not given a chance by the elders to give lecture or are involved in other religious ritual. So, the system of belief professed by Tidung people has been based on Islamic teaching but it has been integrated with local culture.

Even the religious system professed by Tidung people illustrated the relationship with other regulation. The relationship between religious regulation and other regulation illustrated the system of religion has been taken as a guide to behave in all aspects of life, although Tidung people admit that the only religion they profess is Islam.

Closing

The inability of Tidung people to compete to get access to economic field including access to natural resource was not merely due to external factor of the migrants which tend to control market and management of natural resource, but also due to internal factor as a result of cultural value orientation of Tidung people who fully respect their past.

The very powerful cultural value system to respect the past causes the traditional custom maintained. Maintaining the traditional custom is not a problem, but challenges to life today and in the future are very complex. This needs adjustment and change so that Tidung people can exist, develop, and compete.

The awareness to welcome the future by a series of changes in cultural value system supporting the development especially social development is very necessary as an effort to improve their welfare. Tidung people do not need to think that they are marginalized and feel inferior from the migrants. Efforts to reconstruct identity is by establishing a forum of communication to encourage the spirit of Tidung people who was glorious in the past to make change especially in social, economic and education so that they can be more participative in constructive identity political strengthening.

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