

Book Review

Yerry Wirawan, *Sejarah Masyarakat Tionghoa Makassar: Dari Abad ke-17 Hingga Ke-20*, Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia (KPG) & École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO), 2013. (Language: Bahasa Indonesia)

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This book is about the Chinese community in Makassar from the 17th century to the 20th century. Makassar is the capital of South Sulawesi (Sulawesi was formerly known as Celebes), Indonesia, and with a population of about 1.8 million, the largest city on Sulawesi Island. In this book, the author draws a historical picture of a Chinese community which evolved over four centuries based on archival data, interviews, memoirs, private papers and archaeological evidence.

There are a few studies on the Chinese in Indonesia, but they have been based mostly on Java Island. For example: *The Chinese of Semarang: A Changing Minority Community in Indonesia* (1960) by Donald Earl Willmott and *The Chinese of Sukabumi: A Study of Social and Cultural Accommodation* (1963) by Tan Giok Lan. There has also been research on Chinese economic history such as *Bangka tin and Mentok pepper: Chinese settlement on an Indonesian Island* (1992) and *Golddiggers, Farmers, and Traders in the "Chinese Districts" of West Kalimantan, Indonesia* (2003) by Mary F. Somers Heidhues; *Opium to Java: Revenue Farming and Chinese Enterprise in Colonial Indonesia, 1860-1910* (2007) by James R. Rush. By focusing on Makassar in Sulawesi Island, the author has tried to fill a gap in the history of the Chinese in Indonesia.

Chapterisation of the book is organised in chronological order. Chapter One of the book begins with discussion on the Chinese before the 17th century, and ended in 1799, when the VOC handed over Makassar to the Dutch government. Chapter Two is about the development of the Chinese community from the 16th to the early 20th century. Here, the author focuses mainly on the importance of the peranakan families of Makassar, with their involvement in local economic and social leadership. Meanwhile, Chapter Three discusses the Chinese in the early 20th century, and their involvement in many fields such as education, culture, politics etc. Chapter Four addresses post-World War II period, with the timeframe ending in 1965, when the Indonesian government started to impose forced assimilation policies on the Chinese. In the final chapter, the author concludes that the Chinese in Makassar are as significant as those in Batavia because of the long history of Chinese settlement there.

Before the 16th century traces of a Chinese presence can be found in Makassar with archaeology findings. The number of Chinese in Makassar in the 16th and 17th century was not many. According to the author, the exact number of Chinese in these period was

not certain due to the lack of data. However, there are records showing that *Kampung Cina* was already established in Makassar as early as 16th century.

From the beginning of the 16th century, when Makassar had become an important trading port for traders from Nusantara, China and Europe. It connected the East and West of Nusantara. However, after the VOC took over the port in 1669, many traders left due to restrictions imposed by the VOC, including Chinese traders. In order to protect Batavia as the main port in the trading of Chinese-Malay world, the VOC even shut down Makassar's port in 1756-1752. After Dutch Indie took over Makassar after 1799, the colonial government intended to revive the glory of Makassar. However with the establishment of Singapore in 1819, Makassar had a strong competitor. Therefore, in 1847, Makassar became an open port and allowed every trader to trade there. Despite the ups and downs of Makassar, the Chinese traders were still playing important role in this trading world. The role of the Chinese from the beginning of the 16th century was as traders and businessmen. They were the middlemen between local people and foreign traders. Eventually, like in Batavia, the Chinese married local women and formed a *Peranakan* community. Subsequently in the 19th century, with the major migration wave from China, the new migrants, or *Totok*, came to Makassar and formed a *totok* community. Since then, the Chinese population increased rapidly in Makassar.

The Chinese community in Makassar was separated by different ideologies and political stands. For example, based on the author's research, there were differences between local and foreign (16th-17th century), Peranakan and totok (18th century), Kuomintang and Communist (19th century), nationalism and colonialism (20th century). Nevertheless, the author discussed the differences generally in the book without going into great depth. However, the connections between data and research materials is not significant enough to show the influence of Chinese in Makassar, for example their relationship with local society. The author narratively listed all the data and information based on timeline, and the linkages of data is not obviously discussed in the writings.

The strength of the book lies in the various sources of information used by the author to draw the picture of Chinese community throughout the 17th -20th century. The author used Indonesian sources (Arsip Nasional Republic Indonesia), Dutch sources (National Archief Den Haag), books and journal of various languages such as English, Bahasa Indonesia, Dutch, and Chinese. The author had utilised official and private papers in his research. However, there are limitations, as the author also mentioned in the book, that many data and information about the Chinese in Makassar were lost or destroyed during the war.

The significance of this book lies in it filling a gap in the history of the Chinese of Indonesia, which is a regional study on Overseas Chinese especially of a history that covered four centuries of presence in Indonesia. As quoted from the author, Chinese in Makassar was a "rare example that its history was able to search through four centuries in Indonesia". The collection of data and information on Chinese in Makassar widen the research on Indonesian Chinese.