

The Thatung in Cap Ngo Meh (Lantern Festival) Ritual in Hakka Society in Singkawang, West Kalimantan-Indonesia¹

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Abstract: *Cap Ngo Meh and Thatung are two things that cannot be separated from the life of Hakka people in Singkawang. In each Cap Ngo Meh festival, the performance of Thatung is a must. Cap Ngo Meh festival would not be completed if there was no performance of Thatung. Thatung can help humans and otherwise humans also have to give gifts to him. Therefore, Thatung is a special performance in Cap Ngo Meh festival in Singkawang. The main purpose of this paper is to show the relationship between Thatung performance and Cap Ngo Meh festival in Singkawang. The function of Thatung performance in Cap Ngo Meh festival in Singkawang is not only to repel evil spirits that may affect humans, but also to promote economics, improving of popularity himself and tourism in Singkawang.*

Keywords: *Thatung, Cap Ngo Meh festival, Exchange, Soul, Gods, Belief.*

Abstrak: *Cap Ngo Meh dan Thatung merupakan dua hal tak dapat dipisahkan dari kehidupan masyarakat Hakka di Singkawang. Dalam setiap perayaan Cap Ngo Meh, penampilan Thatung merupakan keharusan. Tanpa Thatung tidak ada Cap gho Meh, maka Thatung menjadi penampilan istimewa di Singkawang di setiap perayaan Cap Gho Meh. Fungsi penampilan Thatung ini ternyata bukan saja untuk mengusir ruh jahat yang akan memengaruhi manusia, tetapi juga memromosikan kepentingan ekomi, pluralitas, dan wisata di Singkawang.*

Katakunci: *Thatung, perayaan Cap Ghomeh, Pertukaran, jiwa, Dewa-dewa, Kepercayaan.*

Introduction

Marcel Mauss explains that he has never found a man so generous and hospitable that he would not receive a present, nor one so liberal with his money that he would dislike a reward if he could get one. He also said that a man ought to be a friend to his friend and repay a gift with another gift. People should meet smiles with smiles and lies with treachery. Plainly speaking, if you have a friend with whom you have confidence and whom you wish to make use of you ought to exchange ideas and gifts with him and visit him often.²

In his theory, Marcel Mauss (1967) also found the principle of exchange gift or give and counter give, particularly in the economic life of archaic society he researched. He said, the exchange would create integration in humanity interaction. He also saw that the give and counter give principle include not only between human and human but also between human and spirits, as well as ancestor spirits and gods who have a relationship with them. Although Mauss found the exchange of gifts between human and spirits in an unreal world, especially in archaic society, he always returned to the empirical level, especially in his explanation on the theory of exchange. We can find exchanges or give and counter give not only in social and economic relations, but also between the categories (group or class) of symbols in the unreal world and the real world. The real world is a world that can be seen, touched and measured, while the unreal world is a world that cannot be seen, touched or measured, but is still thought to exist.³

This paper tries to explain *Thatung* performance in the Hakka community, especially in its relationship and treatment with Cap Ngo Meh festival in Singkawang. In order to explain it, I try to use the exchange mechanism as it is found in the belief system of Hakka people in Singkawang and to employ Mauss' theory on the exchange mechanism or give and counter give. To see the *Thatung* practices in Hakka communities in Singkawang, I also use Turner's theory of ritual (Turner 1980). As Turner said in case of Ndebu people in Africa, the ritual associated with the disorder is aiming to appease the ancestor spirits who will disrupt their family members lives in the world, so they avoid of interference from evil spirits, and attacks

from disease outbreaks.⁴ In this paper, I would also like to understand the Hakka belief system on the relations between *Thatung* and gods, spirits and ancestor spirits. Suparlan argues that human belief system cannot be separated from its cosmology or someone's view on it, the surroundings universe and the unreal world or other world.⁵ I believe that every ethnic group in this world has a belief system that differs from one another.

The paper is divided into several sections: introduction, history of Hakka people in Singkawang, Hakka cosmology, definition of *Thatung*, history of *Thatung*, meanings, types and practices of *Thatung*.

A History of Singkawang Hakka People

According to Mary Somers Heidhues, the Hakkas are a southern Chinese speech group. Hakka speakers reside most commonly in Guangdong and Fujian provinces and, because they frequently migrated within China, they also live in the provinces of Guangxi and Sichuan. In the rural areas of West Borneo (West Kalimantan), people from the Hakka core areas like Meixian and Dapu, together with others from Teochiu-speaking areas, who were of Hakka origin and therefore bilingual (Hakka-Teochiu), are predominant. Heidhues also said that, among the Han Chinese, Hakka are defined by not only their language, but also by their apparent hardiness, clannishness (according to the reports of others) and willing to take on back-breaking tasks in the mining or agricultural fields. In both China and Southeast Asia, Hakkas are stereotyped as a "rural and poor" people, even though today some Hakkas may be urbanite and wealthy. The Hakka residents of West Kalimantan are (or were) significantly rural, and many remain poor, in contrast to ethnic Chinese in other areas of Indonesia, who live in the cities and tend to be relatively wealthy.⁶ Until now, Hakka in West Kalimantan, particularly in Singkawang, are still stereotyped as a "rural and poor" people because many of them live in rural areas and work as farmer and other. Their livings are even less than the indigenous people, such as Malay and Dayak.

In China, Hakka are also found in Fujian province (Dingzhou), only a few of them migrated to West Kalimantan and other Southeast Asian countries. Among the Hakka in West Kalimantan, descendants

came from rural Guangdong province. In West Kalimantan, they established *kongsis* based on common areas and ethnic origin to protect their gold business in the hinterland. Heidhues argued that one of the well-known *kongsis* in West Kalimantan in the 17th century was Lanfang.⁷ It was founded by Lo Fong Pak (Hakka language) or Luo Fangbo (in Mandarin). Lo not only successfully led his kongsi but also united other smaller and weaker *kongsis* in the area of Menterado. Contrary to Singkawang, Menterado was a gold mining area beside Mandor, which attracted Chinese migrants of various dialect groups and became the center of gold digging, while Singkawang was developed as a trading city where agricultural and forestry goods were sold. Therefore, Singkawang became a center for trading and visiting by people from different regions in West Kalimantan.

The differences between the Hakka and Teochiu are not sharp because they all belong to Han Chinese and both groups are people of southern China. In Singkawang, both of them speak Hakka or Teochiu in their daily communication, but they speak Hakka more often. In the past, Hakka usually opened new agricultural land and were sometimes assisted by the local minority groups. If they do not get a profit from this new area, they will open another new area which they consider to be more fertile and income-promising. Facing the difficulties due to internal warfare, famine and other natural or man-made disasters, many of them move out of China to seek a better livelihood. Therefore, they are called Hakka (in Mandarin, *Kejia*) which means “guests.” Every time they move, they are reputed as guests in their new area. In West Kalimantan, they are also known as pioneers in opening new territory, such as Menterado and Mandor regions.⁸ There is little difference between the Hakka and Teochiu in Singkawang. Hakka were concentrated in rural areas where they worked as miners and farmers, and became small traders in these areas. While Teochiu centered around the urban area and worked as traders; only some of them lived in rural areas and worked as farmers. But today, there is no difference between them, because many Hakka also live in cities and work as traders. Right now we seldom meet Hakka as gold miners. Instead they work in various professions, such as fishermen, traders, farmers, politics, education and more.

Hakka people in Singkawang

Singkawang cannot be separated from the Hakka life. According to information obtained by Halim (a Hakka descent and whose surname is “Lim”), around the 13th century AD there were Hakka and Teochiu Chinese residents in Singkawang. At that time, their number was too small, only consisting of two or three families. However, after a battle between the Indonesian army and rebellious Sarawak socialist movement (PGRS) in 1967, there were Indonesian Chinese who became members of the Indonesian Communist party (PKI), and murdered Indonesian commanders and people. In 1965, Chinese people who resided in rural areas of West Kalimantan, especially in Menterado, were moved to urban areas, such as Singkawang and Pontianak.⁹ Chinese people who were forced to move from their rural homes were called “*pengungsi*” (refugees). Until now, this Indonesian nomenclature is still used in Pontianak and Singkawang. After arriving in Singkawang, they made houses for shelter and stores for trading. Those who lived near the market area gradually became involved in trading activities while those who were located on the outskirts were generally farmers, carpenters and fishermen. Those who lived in Singkawang city and worked as trader gradually accumulated sufficient capital and became wealthy businessmen, while their outskirt counterparts were generally poor and some of them even poorer than Dayaks and Malays.

The Malays are generally living in coastal areas located in the western part of Singkawang, while the Dayaks reside in rural and mountainous areas located in the eastern part of Singkawang. Some of the Dayaks male and Malays intermarry with Hakka women and their children are seen as offspring with Chinese descent. As previously mentioned, some Hakka live in the coastal areas and work as fishermen, while others cooperate with the Malays in searching for fish in the sea or sometime they have Malay as their servants or in vice versa.

Looking from the population point of view, Hakka can be said as the dominant group in Singkawang. But from an economic viewpoint, they can be classified as a subordinate group. Sumin (Hakka people) is 60 years old and has worked as a *Thatung* or shaman since he

was 20 years old, but his life is still poor and his house is poorly equipped compared to a Malay's or Dayak's house.¹⁰ One of the ways to alleviate poverty is to marry his daughter to a Taiwanese male. It is well known that many Taiwanese and Hongkongese males visited Singkawang looking for Hakka girls to be their wife. Many parents of Hakka girls hope that by marrying their daughters to foreigners, their economic life will be improved.

From a social-cultural point of view, Hakka people in Singkawang still maintain Chinese traditions, such as *Ching Ming* ritual, Hungry Ghost ritual, Lantern Festivals and others. In wedding and death rituals, they also preserve strong links with the traditions that originated from China. In marriage and death ceremonies, there are differences within the Chinese dialect groups.¹¹ However, in wedding dress, they do not use the traditional Chinese clothing but modern-style clothing in which the Hakkas women wear long white dresses and men wear coats.

Hakka People Cosmology

Cosmology is a theory of, or set of beliefs concerning the nature of the universe or cosmos. These beliefs may include postulations of the structure, organization and functioning of supernatural, natural and social worlds. In some context the ethnographer finds the cosmological systems are coherent and complex, while in others they may be incoherent, contradictory or apparently incomplete.¹² Every ethnic group in the world has their own cosmology system.

In Hakka's cosmology, the universe is seen as a container (place) that consists of real and unreal beings as its' elements, which are animated by various kinds of power that they called gods and spirits. This universe has a center, known as the *Thian* (天). *Thian* is believed by them to have power over the whole universe. Therefore, if they had a problem, they would worship and ask for help from the *Thian*. They worshiped the *Thian* by facing to the universe or the sky. After worshipping the *Thian*, they may worshipped the gods and their ancestors in the temples or in their houses.¹³

In *Li Khi* (Book of rituals, 禮記), it is said that "everything that exists in the real world and unreal world comes from the sky (*Thian*)

and all human beings originated from our ancestors”. It means that all human being in the world have their own ancestors who gave birth and raised them. The sky, explained by C. K. Yang (1970), is a supreme power in the world that directly drives the real and unreal world or supernatural beings. There are divisions in the unreal world, i.e. *Thian*, gods, spirits and ancestor spirits. Each of them has the functions like human beings in the real world. At the lower level of the gods are spirits (*p'o*, 魄) and ghosts (*kuei*, 鬼) who have power over objects in the real world.¹⁴ The structures of human beings in the real world are also reflected in the structures of supernatural beings in the unreal world or spirit world.

According to Hakka in Singkawang, every element in the universe is turned on and controlled by one of the various kinds of supernatural powers. The content of the universe consists of a combination of both good and evil things or beings, in accordance with the powers which turn on the elements of life. In the form of unreal beings, Hakka people in Singkawang called them as spirits, gods, and protector gods of human life. There are protector gods that they always worship, as a protector god who of the four corners of the universe (*Shi kok Thian ti*); the kitchen gods (*tso cun*, 灶君) or the gods who controlled human life in the household; the earth gods (*tua pe kong*, 大伯公) at the Chinese temples; the fortune gods (財神), the protector gods of the families (*sun go kong*, *kwan kong*, 三國公/關公); and ancestral spirits. According to Confucius teaching, “the four corners of universes and ocean are brothers one another.”(四海之內皆兄弟也) Every corner of the universe and the ocean is believed by the Hakka to have a ruler, who they called it the gods. Therefore, they must be respected or worshiped, maintained and fed in rituals¹⁵ Spirits are worshiped by people, and in exchange, they help humans or add power to the human body.

Both the gods and the spirits are viewed by the Hakka as having power that exceeds human power, and therefore they are highly respected and feared. If one of these powers turns on one of the elements in the universe, it will increase its strength. Forces that exist in the unreal world also have good and evil properties. If one of the elements that exist in the universe, like human beings stuffed or

turned on by good power, it will be good, but if the elements are filled or turned on by the evil power, it will be the evil power.¹⁶ The evil spirits that enter into a person's body can make him/her sick, while evil spirits that enter into a *Thatung's* body can be used by the person or a group of people for good and evil purposes.

Suparlan said that in Javanese cosmology, the evil power has the ability of causing disorders or chaos in universe, which can cause sickness, misfortune, calamity and all other types of disharmony and irregular conditions of human life.¹⁷ Similar to Javanese cosmology, in Hakka cosmology, evil spirits can cause irregularity of a person's life, such as sickness, loss in business, a poor, broken home, etc. In addition to evil powers, the ancestors can also give rise to irregular life, especially if they are not taken care of by their living family or they are wandering spirits. In this case, they will become evil spirits and cause trouble to their family or others' life.

According to Hakka cosmology, which is explained in Taoism (created by Lao-tse who was born in 604 BC) and further developed by Confucius (551-479 BC), that the irregularities in human body are not solely caused by the interference of evil spirits originating from outside of human beings, but also created by the imbalance of the *Yin* (陰) or *Im* and *Yang* (陽) elements (contradicting universe elements, such as earth and sky, good and bad, light and dark, positive and negative, etc.) within a human body. Both of these elements have to be balanced to make regularity in the human body. In order to find out what causes the irregularities in human body or a person's sickness, whether it is caused by the influence of evil spirits or imbalance of *Yin* and *Yang* elements within the body, people may ask a *Thatung* or shaman or *Feng Shui* (風水) specialist or *Sinsang* (先生), who is like *Thatung*, but he treats patients by using his knowledge instead of appealing to gods and spirits for help.

The *Yin* influences not only human beings, but also homes, businesses, and others. If the imbalance of *Yin* and *Yang* is found in the grave, it may affect the ancestor spirits in the grave and cause them restlessness. In addition, it may also affect the life of living families, such as sickness, disaster, and other forms of disorder. In order to balance *Yin* and *Yang*, humans may ask *Thatung* or *sinsang* for help.

Through the mediation of gods, ancestral spirits and local spirits, a *Thatung* or shaman can help human beings. *Thatung* is an ordinary person, therefore, he may not assist others without the help of spirits and gods who could be invited from time to time. Through *Thatung* practices, the gods and spirits are invited to enter his body. After that, the *Thatung* obtains the power and uses it to help people.

According to some Hakka, humans are born in the world with two things: fate and nature or character. The fate and nature are gifts from God who brings each human being into the world since birth. Fate can be changed by a human doing good deeds during their life time, such as through education, training and hard working. Doing good deeds can also be praying in Chinese temples or helping human beings, such as the poor, sick, etc. We can also do good deeds to animals by giving them food and protecting them. If someone has been bound by God to a poor fate, then he may overcome the problem by learning and working hard. By working hard, he can change his fate and even become rich. Fate can be changed by humans, but the inherent nature or character of a person, for example, arrogance, pride, and laziness, cannot be altered. Someone's fate can also be predicted by diviners who are experts in knowing humans' fate.

In addition to being determined by God as explained above, some Hakka interpret a person who is rich, or whose business has improved and is successful after the death of his parents, as a reflection of the happy life of their dead parents or other ancestors in the other world. On the contrary, failure in business, poverty, and misfortune which usually fall on someone can be seen by Hakka as a symbol of living the suffering life of one's ancestors in the other world. Hakka usually said that the real and unreal world usually connected one another.¹⁸ In the viewpoint of Hakka in Singkawang, the living beings in the real world can still keep in touch with the spirits in unreal world even though they live in two different universes.

The Hakka in Singkawang believe that there is life after death and in the existence of heaven and hell. They also believe that heaven and hell have structures similar to the structures in the real world. Same as human existence in the real world, people believe that they need to satisfy ancestors' spirits in terms of food, clothing, money,

shelter, telephone, transportation and other necessities. They also believe that, if their needs are not satisfied, their life in the other world will be unhappy. This will in turn give bad influences to the life in the real world.

The Hakka of Singkawang also believe that when someone died, his/her soul will remain around the grave with one's descendants. Therefore, the descendants need to worship and give sacrifices to the ancestor's spirit during the Ching Ming festival. Before any worship is done, people should provide food to the ancestor's spirit. Relationship between the living and the ancestors will continue after death.

Hakka of Singkawang believe that the spirits of the dead do not directly go into heaven but to hell first to be responsible for their sins. After that, they will become god and go into heaven, or they will be re-incarnated to the world to pay for their previous mistakes. As Durkheim (1967) mentioned,¹⁹ if a human dies his soul will leave his body. After the end of the mourning, it will be dripping to human beings or other beings in the real world. Dripping souls to human beings or other beings is a kind of re-incarnation. The Hakka believe in re-incarnation as the teaching in Buddhism. Most Hakka in Singkawang registered Buddhism as their religion, while only a few of them declare themselves as Confucianist and Taoist believers. According to Tanggok, Buddhism is a minority religion in Indonesia, and most Indonesian Chinese are Buddhism,²⁰ even though very few of them are practicing Islam.²¹

The Meaning of *Thatung*

Thatung is a word in the Hakka dialect. *Tha* means play, and *Thung* means spirits and gods. *Thatung* indicates the person whose body is entered by spirits, ancestor spirits or gods for the purpose of helping patients. *Thatung* can also be defined as a person who uses supernatural powers, such as gods, spirits, and ancestor spirits to help him treat his patients, such as healing the sick, predicting someone's fate, casting out evil spirits that enter into one's body which are believed to be the cause of one's sickness, making amulets as protection for someone, residences, stores and others annoyances from evil spirits. *Thatung* may also be equated with *Tongji* (童占) or spirits medium or

“*dukun*” in Javanese society, but functions differently with *Thatung*. Yuang Bingling said that *tongji* can be interpreted as Thatung or spirit medium. This term has been known since the Hakka people first came into West Kalimantan, especially in Menterado in the 17th century.²² *Tongji* (literally means “youth diviner”) or Jitong (乩童, literally means “divining youth”) is a *Daoist* religious specialist, usually translated as a “spirit medium”, “oracle”, or “shaman”. This word compounds *tong* 童, “child; youth; boy servant”, and *ji* 乩, “to divine” (cf. *fujī* 扶乩 “divination; planchette writing”). Regional variants of the word include Hokkien dialect which describes it as *tâng-ki* (童乩) and in Cantonese dialect it becomes *gei-tung* (乩童) or *san-daa* (神打).²³ (Anderson 2008: 964-966).

A *tongji* or *jitong* is a person who is believed to have been chosen by a particular *shen* (神, a god or spirit) as the earthly medium for divine expression. The Chinese differentiate a *wu* (巫, a shaman; healer; spirit medium) who gains control of forces in the spirit world versus a *tongji* who appears to be entirely under the control of forces in the spirit world.²⁴

The terms of the spirits medium or *Tongji* first appeared in China and was continued when Chinese people migrated to West Kalimantan in the 17th century. Therefore, it is possible that the Thatung tradition in Singkawang is brought from China. Seeing the entering of spirits and gods into a person’s body, we may say that Thatung is equated to a shaman. As Eliade (1978) explains, the shaman is a person who has magic powers that are ecstatic and can cause or loss of consciousness because he is controlled by spirits outside of himself.

The term *Thatung* has a very similar meaning with another common word *sinse* or *sinsang*, which is used by the Hakka community in Singkawang because *sinsang* can also treat people’s illness or predict someone’s fate. Apart from this similarity, *Thatung* is quite different from *sinsang*. *Thatung* may treat people by the help of the spirits and gods, whereas *sinsang* may treat someone by using his own knowledge instead of gods and spirits. If the spirits and gods enter into a Thatung’s body, he will be fully controlled by the spirits and gods. In the trance condition, a Thatung speaks spirits’ and gods’ words in accordance with the latter.

A *Thatung* can also be viewed as a holy person, because he is the choice of gods and spirits to do the job. Therefore, in *Thatung* practices, he has to have a good attitude, helping other people to maintain himself as a holy person. He also has to keep himself from doing dishonorable things such as stealing, killing people, destroying other person's household or others. He is believed to be able to do bad deeds, but he has to refrain from doing it. Once a *Thatung* has done bad deeds, he will no longer be believed by the people.

***Thatung* history in Singkawang**

According to Hakka leaders in Singkawang, the story of *Thatung* can be traced to the Chinese migrants in Monterado (the area where gold mining was carried out by the Chinese people around 1774). At that time, this region was attacked by infectious diseases which people believed were caused by evil spirits. It so happened that there was one man, Ng Kang Sen, who came to this region. In order to save the people from infectious diseases and evil spirits, he conducted the ritual by inviting the good spirits and gods into his body and successfully chased away the evil spirits from Monterado. When he was in a trance state, he went around the villages and cities to chase evil spirits away. Because of this practice, he is called *Thatung* by the people in Singkawang. The main function of a *Thatung* during the festivals of Chap Ngo Meh is to clean up the whole village and town out of the influence of evil spirits.

Since that time, ritually cleaning up the village and town has been done by the *Thatung* at every Chap Ngo Meh (lantern festival), which is followed by traditional Chinese music. Some Hakka people in Singkawang believe that if *Thatung* does not clean up the village and town, the diseases and evil spirits will not go away from Singkawang. In 2011, there were 563 *Thatungs* taking part in Chap Ngo Meh festival in Singkawang and in 2012 it increased to 750 *Thatungs*. Almost all the *Thatungs* came from Hakka people and only four or five people from the Malay and Dayak people. They interested to be *Thatung*, because they wanted demonstrates his ability or power in Cap Go Meh Festivals. Each year people from outside Singkawang and other countries visit Singkawang city to see the *Thatung* attraction. This

Thatung festival has become one of the main agendas for the local government to promote Singkawang's tourism.

Margaret Chan (2009) explains that the “*Tang-ki* worship evolved from the most ancient aspects of religion of China. Elements in contemporary tang-ki-theater ritual are legacies of a history of more than 5000 years of ritual practice. The tang-ki as warrior medium developed from origins in the pre-Chinese indigenous religion, roots can be traced to the rituals of the pre-Chinese Yao people living in the region of southern China before the third millennium BC. These include the sacred rite and magical, the performance of masculinity and the convention of dancing before an altar.”²⁵

Based on the above explanation that the *tangki* or *Thatung* come from Chinese religion aspects, it continues for generations and becomes Chinese culture.

How to Become a *Thatung*

Mr. Acan Suardi, a Hakka leader who lives in Singkawang, explains the process of becoming a *Thatung* in Hakka society there. According to him, the *Thatung* profession may continue from one generation to the next. If a father was a *Thatung*, his child will also be a *Thatung* in the future. People may also become a *Thatung* by studying the profession from a senior *Thatung* or become a *Thatung* if the spirits or gods choose him to be. Many people wish to become a *Thatung*, but not all of them can achieve their wish, because *Thatung* used to be chosen by a particular deity. When a person who is chosen by a particular deity to be a *Thatung*, he is regarded as a saint or one who is always doing good deeds in the world and helping others. He must also have sincerity to help others and maintain good morality. A person who has been chosen by the gods, spirits or ancestor spirits as residences or to be a *Thatung* cannot refuse this order. *Thatung* believes that deities are always follow him wherever he goes. Whenever they are invited by *Thatung* to help him, they are ready to help.

Types of *Thatung*

A *Thatung* can be seen as a shaman or *dukun* because the latter also use spirits to treat human's illness. Clifford Geertz (1960) classifies

three kinds of dukun in Javanese culture, that is: *dukun pijet* (massage dukun), *dukun beranak* (baby dukun), and *dukun penganten* (bride dukun)²⁶ Differ from *dukun* in Javanese society, I do not find *Thatung* classification in Hakka society in Singkawang. All we can see is that a *Thatung* is for all people regardless of illness.

Viewing from the sex, we can find male and female *Thatung* in Singkawang. From 700 *Thatungs* who participated in Chap Ngo Meh festival in 2012, only 2 to 3 are women while the rest are male. Apart from Chap Ngo Meh, I have never met a female *Thatung* treating people for other purposes. This suggests that the gods, spirits and ancestor spirits will usually not choose a woman to be their medium.

Inspecting their age, the *Hakka Thatung* in Singkawang can be divided into three groups: parents, youth and children. An old *Thatung* can be named a senior *Thatung*, while youth and children *Thatung* can be called a junior one. The latter is considered to be less experienced compared to the former. The young and children *Thatung* have less knowledge, while the old *Thatung* have a better knowledge. The junior *Thatung* can assist his patients, but he cannot refrain himself from attack by evil spirits. A senior *Thatung* is indispensable to cure the younger *Thatung* who is attacked by evil spirits.

From the point of expertise, some *Thatung* can treat various diseases, predict someone's fate and drive out evil spirits. A *Thatung* who is less skilled in treating will be abandoned by his clients or patients. In contrast, the *Thatung* with expertise of treating various sickness will be loved by their increasing number of clients. In Javanese society, a woman shaman helps Javanese women give birth. The female *Thatung* of Hakka does not have this function. Rarely we hear that the female *Thatung* does this job. They are not experts in this matter and usually they give over this function to the Malays or *dukun beranak* who are experienced midwives.

In view of morality, *Thatung* in Singkawang can be divided into two groups, that is, white *Thatung* and black *Thatung*. White *Thatung* is a *Thatung* who has good morality. The purpose of the white *Thatung* is to assist people with difficulty, for instant sick, bad fate, and evil spirits. Black *Thatung* is an immoral *Thatung*. Their function is not only to assist people with difficulty, but also to help people who want

to harm or take revenge on their enemy. They do it because of the request of their clients. If his attempt is successful, he will get a reward or a large sum of money in accordance with their previous agreement.

Economically, the life of the Hakka *Thatung* is generally poor, and only some of them have a good living condition. They can help people to become rich by choosing the correct occupation and business for them, but they cannot make themselves rich. Their income is dependent on the gifts of their clients or patients. If he is a great *Thatung* in treating patients, he will need to have many patients to accumulate wealth. Otherwise, if he is not so good in treating his patients, he will not have much work and will remain poor all his life. Only some of them become famous *Thatungs* who attract not only the locals of Singkawang but also other people outside Singkawang.

If viewed from their education, Hakka *Thatungs* in Singkawang generally acquire low level of education and most of them do not complete primary school education. Even some of them cannot read and write in the Indonesian language. They only understand their mother tongue, which is Hakka dialect. Therefore, in order to understand a *Thatung's* language, a translator is needed. The translator is selected by a *Thatung* to help him in translating his language to the patients. Some patients said that sometime in *Thatung* practice he will use god's language which is very difficult for the patients to understand. After treating, a *Thatung* usually receives gifts from patients, but a translator does not get any gift from the patients but from the *Thatung* himself.

If viewed from their ethnicity, the *Thatung* in Singkawang consists of three ethnic groups: Chinese, Dayak and Malay. In the past, *Thatung* practices in Singkawang were only a matter for the Chinese, particularly the Hakka people, but today we can also find the *Thatung* practices being done by Dayak and Malay people. According to history, *Thatung* came from Hakka people and not from the Malay and Dayak in Singkawang. They do not only do medicine and treatment practices similar to those done by a Hakka *Thatung*, but also provide other services to their patients. A Hakka *Thatung* establishes an altar in his house in order to store the ritual tools, but the Malay and Dayak *Thatung* do not have altars in their houses to

keep their ritual tools. The altar of Hakka *Thatung* is different from that of the Malay and Dayak. The altar of Malay and Dayak *Thatung* combines the elements of Malay/Dayak and Hakka cultures. For example, on the altar, they put a picture of the Goddess *Kuan Im* (觀音) and Malay/Dayak cultural attributes.

Thatung practices

Thatung Practices Schedule

Thatung in Singkawang are like doctors treating their patients. As doctors have scheduled time for treating their patients, the Hakka *Thatung* also have a time schedule for treating their spiritual patients. In providing treatment, *Thatung* also have practice schedules which will be used as guidelines for themselves and also their patients who need help. The first schedule of *Thatung* practices in Singkawang starts at 10:00 to 12:00 a.m., and the second schedule going from 16:00 to 22:00 p.m. They open practices every day including public holidays. During the holidays, the *Thatung* are always visited by a lot of patients who come for treatment and consultation about their problems. If he (*Thatung*) is invited to treat patients who live outside Singkawang city, his treatment practices are closed and patients have to wait for him back home if they want to consult him.

Thatung Practices in the Treatment

In the Hakka society of Singkawang, *Thatung* is seen as an expert in controlling supernatural forces, whether it comes from evil or good spirits or deities. He is also seen as an expert in treating all illnesses, whether it is caused by natural reasons, such as colds, fever, sick body and so on, or by evil spirits. He is also regarded as ritual expert in cleaning the villages and town from the influence of evil spirits, in giving power to someone who wants to love someone else, in giving immunity to someone from evil spirits' interference, in predicting someone's fate, and in exorcist.

Unlike the Javanese *dukun* or shaman, *Thatung* in the Hakka community are not only for individual treatment, but also for showing their ability or power in front of the public, such as standing on a sword or piercing their bodies with sharp objects. In the Soeharto era (1967-

1998) and the New Order era, *Thatung* performances in Indonesia were not allowed by the government because they believed that it would inhibit the assimilation process of the Chinese Indonesian. In present time or Reformation Order era, a more democratic and liberal cultural policy allow the *Thatung* practices and other Chinese cultures to be performed publicly in Indonesian society.

There are *Thatung* conducting medical practices throughout his whole life and there are also *Thatung* who practice treatment just in *Chap Ngo Meh* festivals. Usually if a senior *Thatung* does his medical practices in his lifetime, he depends on his efforts in practicing as a *Thatung* economically. In treating patients, a *Thatung* gets fee from them, which as an income for him. If he can cure illnesses, he will become famous and his patients will increase tremendously. In turn, he can have more economic resources. The patients of a *Thatung* can move from one to the other, depending on the ability and power of the *Thatung*. Information about powerful and well-known *Thatung* is transmitted by word of mouth of previous patients.

Before starting his practice, a *Thatung* will pray in front of the *Thian* (God) altar (天公) outside his house or at the yard of his house. For example Sun Hew (56 years old), a *Thatung* living in Singkawang, starts his practice by praying to the *Thian*. After doing the practices, he enters into the house and prays to the god's altars or deities in his house. By using a few sticks of incense burned by the fire of candles placed on the altar, he prays to deities and good spirits to come down from heaven to earth.²⁷ The content of his praying is that he hopes the Buddha can open the road for deities and spirits to come down to the earth.

Praying to the deities and spirits in front of their altars is to invite them to enter his body for treatment and other purposes in accordance with the wishes of each patient. After the deities and good spirits possess his body, he goes into a trance and then spirits speak through his mouth. Because his language is often not understood by his patients, an interpreter is necessary. *Thatung's* behavior is also changed in accordance with the spirits and gods' will. Therefore, every *Thatung* is always helped by an assistant or *sin shi* in Hakka dialect. While *Thatung* is sitting in the chair in front of the altar,

his assistant is sitting beside him. Being possessed by the deities and spirits, he is supplied a glass of wine and beer which are placed on the altar. The wine is usually provided by patients for the *Thatung*. Apart from them, there are also cigarettes on the altar, because while and after treating the patients, a *Thatung* is usually smoking to calm his thought. Besides cigarettes and alcohol, there are also fruits, cakes, water, tea, coffee, candles, incense sticks or joss sticks, duplicate of paper money and more.

When a *Thatung* is ready to begin his practices, the *Thatung* assistant call the patients one by one to clarify the purpose of his/her visiting. The following dialogues between *Thatung* and patient is a typical example:

Thatung: “*Jiu mai sang se?*” (What is your purpose to come here?)

Client: “*Ngai oi tho senli Phu*” (I want develop for business)

Thatung: “*Nyi co mai senli?*” (What is your businesses?)

Client: “*Chap fo Tiam*” (Selling groceries)

Thatung: “*Nyi oi nya senli cinpu?*” (Do you want to succeed in your business)?

Client: “*He*” (Yes).²⁸

After the dialogue between *Thatung* and patient, the *Thatung* took *sin pui* or 2 (two) pieces of coin and threw them to the altar located in front of him. These two pieces are a symbol of whether the *Thatung's* words are true or not. If the words of the *Thatung* are true, the two coins thrown on the altar will show the two different faces. Otherwise, if the words of the *Thatung* are wrong, then the two coins thrown on the altar will show two of same faces. If the latter happens, it means that a decision made by the *Thatung* is still considered valid. If this condition occurs, he will throw the two coins on the altar again and again until it produces two different faces. The best two coins outcome is when *Thatung* throws the *sin pui* one time and gets two different faces. After successful in throwing the *sin pui*, *Thatung* will write amulet (*phu*) and give it to the patient. Before giving amulet to the patient, *Thatung* will first stamp it. The content of the stamp is the name of gods and spirits who possess the *Thatung's* body, which will give the patient help.

When completing amulets writing and stamping, *Thatung* will

usually ask his patient: “*Han jiu mun mai mo? Hey mo, kia sin oi con liau.*” (What can I do for you anymore? If there is nothing, the deities and spirits will go back). If there is no more to ask, the *Thatung* strikes the altar with his bare hands, and the deities and spirits go out from his body and he returns as a normal human. In my research field in Singkawang, I saw many different *Thatung* to practice differently in accordance with the deities and spirits entering their bodies. If a monkey spirit enters into a *Thatung's* body, during his trance condition, he will act like a monkey. Otherwise, if it is a human spirit, he will act as a human.

If a patient does not speak Hakka, the process of dialogues between *Thatung* and the patient can be done by his interpreter (*Sin Shi*). Sometimes a patient can speak Hakka, but he does not understand the *Thatung's* language for he is speaking a god's or spirit's language. After expressing his desire, the *Thatung's* assistant will convey the patient's desire clearly with language understood by *Thatung*. *Thatung* usually does not understand what is wanted by his patients and therefore the patient's language has to be translated by the *Thatung's* assistant. If gods or spirits who enter into *Thatung's* body are ethnic Malay or Dayak in origin, the *Thatung* will use Malay or Dayak language. Thus to be a *Thatung* assistant, one should be a polyglot person who can understand the Hakka, Malay and Dayak languages.

If *Thatung* has already known a patient's need or his diseases, he will give advice or give a medicine prescription to the patient. The *Thatung's* medicine prescription is usually written in Mandarin and read in Hakka dialect. Drugs prescribed by *Thatung* are usually not sold in a pharmacy store, but in traditional Chinese drug stores. There is also a *Thatung* who establishes a traditional Chinese drug store nearby which provides convenience for his patients. Types of drugs prescribed or given by a *Thatung* to his patients are usually derived from the barks, root wood, leaves and root wood which is dried and mixed together and boiled in water. After boiling, the patient is to drink the water to cure his/her illness. The store-keeper of Chinese traditional drugs should be able to speak, read and write Mandarin characters, because the name of the drugs sold are all written in Mandarin.

If a patient seeks refuge for himself, his family, his shop or his house from *Thatung*, the *Thatung* will not give him medicinal prescription, but instead provide him with *phu* or amulet. Amulets were usually written in Chinese characters on a thin paper usually red, yellow or green, depending on the function of the amulet. Paper amulets written by *Thatung* are then folded in smaller size and kept in the wearer's wallet. By using an amulet, a person's will remain calm. The power of an amulet will be lost if it is brought to places like prostitution or gambling houses. If someone wants to go to bad places, he must leave the amulet at home, and it can be kept in the wallet for when one comes back from those places. The Hakka believes that in bad places one can be disturbed by evil spirits for there no amulet can protect him.

The amulet is not only used to protect oneself from evil spirits or demons, but also can be used to protect one's vehicle from being stolen by thieves. In order to keep the vehicle safe, the amulets taken from *Thatung* are usually stored under the seat of the vehicle. Some Hakka people believe in but others do not the power of the amulet to keep the thieves away from the vehicle. For those who believe, they visit *Thatung* and ask for this kind of amulet.

The amulet made by *Thatung* is also used to protect the house from the interference of evil spirits. It is hang on the front door of the house and functions to prevent the evil spirits from entering into the house. Hakka people believe that evil spirits will enter the house through the front door. If these evil spirits enter into the house, then they can disturb the family members and make them sick or destroy the harmonious relationship between husband and wife. If a family member is suffering from some kind of illness, people will call the *Thatung* to cure the illness or repel the evil spirits that are believed to be responsible for the illness. The *Thatung* gets money or gifts for the service he has given to patients. The amount of gifts paid to the *Thatung* is not determined by him but based on the sincerity of the patients. If the attempt of *Thatung* is successful, he will receive more gifts from the patients. The size of the remuneration given to a *Thatung* by the patients also depends on the economic level of patients. Rich patients usually give bigger gift than the poor one. Gifts given to

the Thatung are generally in the form of money and are put in red envelopes called *ampao* (紅包).

In treating the patients, *Thatung* use gods and spirits and depend on their ability. The spirits or gods will not enter into *Thatung's* body all in one, but one by one or by alternation. If the god entering into *Thatung's* body is the Sun Go Kong god, the *Thatung* will use Him to treat the patients. If the next patient come to the *Thatung* and he is out of the ability of Sun Go Kong god, the *Thatung* will call the other gods or spirits to help. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that during the practice of *Thatung*, there is a change in *Thatung* conditions when there is a change from one to another god or spirit. When the second god has finished treating the patient, the first god can come back and continue His job. If a Muslim patient came to *Thatung* to ask for his help, the *Thatung* will invite a Muslim ancestor spirit to help him in treating a Muslim patient.

Hakka people believe that there is an external God power or *Thian* whose help can be asked for solve human's problems. Apart from *Thian*, they also believe that there are other supernatural powers, such as gods, spirits and ancestor spirits. They believe that *Thian* is very distant and difficult to communicate with unless through a mediator between *Thian* and oneself. Therefore, they seek *Thian's* representative in this world to communicate with Him. When a child is sick, and doctor unable to cure him, one will go to *Thatung* for help. As we mentioned earlier, *Thatung* cannot help someone without the assistance of the gods or spirits. In the treatment process, *Thatung* will suggest one to ask help from the gods or other spirits in order to protect one's family from evil spirits. After doing what suggested by *Thatung*, and duplicates of gods' statues, such as Sun Go Kong's statue, and other spirits' statues are brought into one's house, the sick child will get healthy and one's family will be protected by gods and good spirits.

I have found some cases among the Hakkas in Singkawang who are related to the spirits and gods. There is a store selling ceramics of a large water jar, vases, statutes and others. In the shop there is a place of worship (altar or *liu fun*) to worship the Sun Go Kong god. I asked the owner why he maintains this god, why be worshiped?

He answered that this Sun Go Kong god statue was obtained from a *Thatung* and he uses it to protect his store from annoyance by evil spirits and thief. In order to repay His assistance, he provides food and drink and worships the god twice a day when he opens and closes his store.

It is not just treating the sick, giving amulets and asking someone to keep the gods or spirits, the *Thatung* can also predict what employer has good or bad characteristics. For example, a Hakka girl came to a *Thatung* in Singkawang. She would like to go to Taiwan to work as a house helper. The girl's parents will not let her work in Taiwan if she has not got advice from the *Thatung* on her employer characteristics. Before going to Taiwan, this Hakka girl came to a *Thatung* whose name is Sun Hew (age 65 years). In order to see her Taiwanese employer's characteristics, he needed her employer's full address. After she gives it to the *Thatung*, he starts predicting her employer's characteristics and say that: "You do not go there because your employer has bad characteristics and natures. One of his bad natures is that he is often angry with others." Getting information from a *Thatung*, she will reconsider her plan to work in Taiwan.

Thatung in Singkawang can also give numbers to gamblers to play the lottery, although it rarely happens. From about 600 *Thatungs* in Singkawang, maybe only 1 or 2 *Thatung* predicts winning numbers of the lottery. When one gets numbers from a *Thatung* and he wins the lottery, there will be more people coming to visit the *Thatung*. *Thatung* can help all people achieve their longing, especially a good longing. *Thatung* cannot help one's bad longing, especially because by doing this, the people will hate him.

As his job, each *Thatung* in Singkawang helps people to fulfill their need, in his home he maintains a place for spirits to live. The dwelling spirits or gods at home are different from those who are in the temple. The altar that is home for gods and spirits is named Than (壇), and the owner is called *Thancu* (壇主) *Thatung*. Everyday *Thancu* presents a wide range of food and drink for the spirits and gods who reside in the Than. Every morning, afternoon and at the time he invites the gods or spirits to enter his body, he must first worship the spirits and gods in the Than. It is a form of respect to pay

to the spirits and gods. To indicate whether a spirit or god has entered the body of a *Thatung*, one can differentiate from his voice. Usually “*meringkih*” or groaning voice, body trembling and mouth “*berbusah*,” reflect that the spirits have entered into his body. If the body is made into phantom of *Thatung* ape, then he will behave like monkey. Every year, Thancu will celebrate the birthday of gods or spirits. Many pasen-pasen and surrounding communities are invited to witness the ceremony. At that time a *Thatung* practice is also held among the guests. Many people ask for his help. Then the spirit enters into his body and he becomes a *Thatung*. The ceremony is usually celebrated with a variety of karaoke entertainment and lion dance.

Thatungs in Chap Ngo Meh Festivals

When we visit Singkawang during the *Chap Ngo Meh* festival or lantern festival, we can see the special Chinese tradition in this city which is also known as the city of a thousand temples. The tradition is also known as the *Parade Thatung* or *Thatungs* festival. In this festival, many *Thatung* go around the streets, villages and city to demonstrate their ability. Among the capabilities of *Thatung* are standing on a sword without a wound, piercing their mouth with iron sticks without feeling pain, treating the patients and predicting one's fate.

Chap Go Meh in Singkawang has its uniqueness when compared with other countries. In Singkawang, Chap Go Meh festival is not only celebrated with a feast of lanterns and firecrackers, as in China, but there is also *Thatung* shows. *Thatung's* function in Chap Ngo Meh festival is not only to comfort the society, but also to clean villages and Singkawang city from disturbed evil spirits which are believed to have interfered with human's lives and brought epidemic diseases. Therefore, the presence of *Thatung* in Chap Ngo Meh festival is to save human beings from the annoyance of evil spirits. For the Hakka, coarse beings can be avoided if they would like to hurt humans, while spirits are difficult to avoid because they cannot be seen or touched. Therefore, based on the Hakka's belief, they have to be a good friend, given food and drink, and be respected by human beings.

Every 15th of the Lunar New Year (Chinese calendar) or at the time of the Chap Ngo Meh festival or lantern festival, there are more

than 700 *Thatungs* who do the performance and show their ability publicly in Singkawang city. Each group of *Thatung* is followed by about 20 members. Every member of *Thatung* group has different tasks. There are some members of *Thatung's* group whose task is to bring a *Thatung* by using a litter. Some of their tasks are to play music, such as drums and other musical instruments. As group leader, his task is to hold the flag of its organization. Among approximately 700 *Thatungs* who participated in Chap Ngo Meh festival, only about 30% of them work every day as *Thatung* to treat patients, while 70% of them work in other professions, such as a merchant, farmer, carpenter, blacksmith, builder, laborer, fisherman and others. They do not work in the Singkawang city, some of them also work outside the city. Some of them are local people, others are residents from outside Singkawang. During Chap Ngo Meh festival, they come to Singkawang and participate in the parade as *Thatung*, or Chap Ngo Meh festival committee invites them to come to Singkawang for participating in the parade.

Similar to his treatment of patients, at the festival time he will parade through the streets and around the villages and town in order to clear the villages and towns of the influence of evil spirits. Before the parade, a *Thatung* has to worship or give respect to the spirits which will get into his body by using a few burning incense sticks. After that, the spirits will get into his body and he is in a trance condition. At the time of trance or unconscious condition, a *Thatung* enters into a litter by the help of his assistants and is carried around the village and city. In order to attract people to the spirit of the *Thatung*, his assistants will chime musical instruments. During the trip, the musical instruments are continuously sounded. *Thatung* will stop demonstrating his power in his trip temporarily when they arrive at a Chinese temple, which is to show the respect to the gods and spirits who live in the temple. After giving respect to the gods and spirits, he carries on his trip to other places.

In Chap Ngo Meh festival, *Thatung* not only visit the Chinese temples, but also stop at the main altars made by Chap Ngo Meh committee. A big altar has been provided by the Chap Ngo Meh committee at a special field for worshipping *Thian* and gods and spirits.

On the altar, there are already decorations of food, fruits, beverages, paper prayers, candles and incense sticks to be offered to the gods, spirits and ancestral spirits. Not only the *Thatung* gives respect to the god, spirits and ancestor spirits placed in the main altar, but also fruits and foods that have been prayed by *Thatung* are sold or auctioned to the public with a price. If we buy two grapefruit at the market for Rp. 50,000, after a prayer by the *Thatung*, we can auction it for the price of Rp. 500,000 to Rp. 1,000,000, Hakka believe that buying auction goods prayed by the *Thatung* and preserving it in their houses would protect them from the annoyance of evil spirits and help one get a good fortune. The money collected from the auction may be donated to the poor or for education scholarships, especially to poor children.

Mr. Acan Suardi, a Hakka community leader, explains that among the 750 *Thatung* who participated in the Chap Ngo Meh festival in 2012 in Singkawang, not all of them have high magic power, because most of them are still learning to be a *Thatung*.²⁹ Their purpose of being the *Thatung* and participating in Chap Ngo Meh festival is to earn enough money. Most of them are younger generation who sometime do not know the history of *Thatung* in the past. Similar to these young *Thatung*, the children *Thatung* also have a similar purpose, that is to amuse the people in the Chap Ngo Meh festival and get as much money as possible. When I conducted my research in Singkawang, I saw some Hakka children who were forced by their parents to participate in Chap Ngo Meh festival. Chap Ngo Meh committee does not prohibit any people to follow the festival, including the old folks.

Every Chinese temple in Singkawang, such as *kelenteng* (廟), does not provide *Thatung* for Chap Ngo Meh festival, but the *kelenteng* will provide 3 to 4 stretchers to carry the *Thatung* around the town and villages. To participate in the Chap Ngo Meh festival in Singkawang, a *Thatung* can merge with one of the *kelentengs*. By this way, he has to carry the flag of *kelenteng* or the flag of a social foundation. Through this *kelenteng* or social foundation the *Thatung* can register as a participant for Chap Ngo Meh festival. Then they can register to the committee of Chap Ngo Meh festival established by the Singkawang Government. Each *Thatung* with his group who participates in Chap

Ngo Meh festival will receive a reward from *Chap Ngo Meh* committee of about Rp. 2,500,000.00 or about U\$ 270.00 This money reward will be shared by all *Thatung* members after the Chap Ngo Meh festival is completed. For example, if the group of *Thatung* members is composed of 20 members, the reward money will be divided to 20, and every person will receive Rp. 250,000.00 or U\$ 27.00. Viewing from an economic side, the sum of Rp. 250,000.00 is not much, but the value of togetherness and the joys it creates is worth more. More importantly the activity is believed to save people from evil spirits.

Conclusion

As described in Marcel Mauss (1967) theory above, the practice of give and counter give of one person to another is not just happening in the economic world, but it also happens between human and human relation, such as friend and friend, parents and children and so on. In *Thatung* practices of Hakka communities in Singkawang, the practice of give and counter give is also happening between *Thatung* and patients, between *Thatung* and deities or spirits and between the real world and unreal world. Give and counter give is not based on specific profits, but based on the specific goals. In this case, patients come to the *Thatung* to ask for help and *Thatung* gives help to them. In return, *Thatung* will get a gift or money from the patients. Although in *Thatung* practices they do not ask money or gift from the patients, but they have an obligation to reciprocate his help. Gods or deity and spirits can help the *Thatung* in treating, and *Thatung* is also has to give respects, food, and beverage to them. Therefore, give and counter give in Hakka society, not only occur in human relations, but also occur between humans and *Thatung* and also relationship between humans and the gods or spirits.

According to Hakka culture in Singkawang, if they have the problem, they will ask help from *Thatung*, and in return, they will pay him a certain fee. This reward or gift or fee can be named "*angpao*". Give and counter give between the patients and *Thatung* is not only in material forms, but also in respect forms, such as the patients pay respects to *Thatung* in social life and view *Thatung* as a holy man because he usually helps others without discriminating. *Thatung* in

this case is seen as a group of people with high social status because of their ability to treat and help others. Although they are economically poor, they are rich in knowledge and experience.

In the ancient times, the purpose of *Thatung* is to parade around the villages and town and show their abilities or powers during the *Chap Ngo Meh* festival to clean the villages and town from the influences of evil spirits who will affect the life of human beings. But nowadays, the purpose of participating in Chap Ngo Meh festival is not only to clean at the villages and town, but also to help the local government to promote Singkawang city to local and foreign tourists. In this case, the *Thatung* will get a gift from the local government and the Chap Ngo Meh committee in return. With many local and foreign tourists visiting Singkawang city, the Singkawang government hopes that it will create more economic opportunities for the local people in Singkawang. The government also hopes that through the performances of the *Thatung* or Chap Ngo Meh festival, Singkawang will attract foreign investors and improve the economy of the area.

Therefore, there is always a bargain price between *Thatungs* with Chap Ngo Meh committee and local government in their participation in Chap Ngo Meh festivals. If the *Thatung* are paid for their participation in Chap Ngo Meh festival, their motivation of participation will be increased, and if not, their motivation will be decreased. Therefore, in 2011, many *Thatung* in Singkawang went to the local government office to ask for an increase in their performance fee and health insurance if they took part in Chap Ngo Meh festival. Thus, in modern time, the function of *Thatung* is no longer only as to help humans in treating or chasing away evil spirits, but also as an asset for the Singkawang government in promoting the tourism of the region and also display the Chinese Cultures, especially the Hakka cultures to other ethnics group in Singkawang.

Endnotes

¹ This paper was formerly presented in International Conference on Southeast Asian Hakka Studies, 2012, from 6-9 July 2012 at Taiwan Hakka Cultural Development Center, Miaoli Park, Tongluo, Miaoli County, Taiwan.

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- ²⁷ M. Ikhsan Tanggok, *Mengenal Lebih Dekat Agama Khonghucu di Indonesia* (*Knowing Khonghucu Religion in Indonesia*, 156.
- ²⁸ See Samsul Hidayat, *Komodifikasi Ritual Thatung dalam Perayaan Chap Ngo Meh di Singkawang*. Ph.D. Thesis, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2012.
- ²⁹ Samsul Hidayat, *Komodifikasi Ritual Thatung dalam Perayaan Chap Ngo Meh di Singkawang*.

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