

# **Chinese Dialect Groups and their Economic Activities in Kuching Waterfront Bazaar Sarawak (1840-1950)**

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Today, Kuching is the capital of Sarawak. In the past, Kuching was a crucial area of development of Sarawak. Kuching Waterfront Bazaar, located on the riverside of Sarawak River, as the main trade port connecting domestic and foreign business, especially represented the economic condition of Sarawak. This research aimed to study the social change of the Chinese Dialect groups in Kuching Bazaar from British Raja Brooke brought the concept of the modern country into Kuching in 1840s to Japanese colonial period in 1950s and point out that the economic activity played an important role during this period.

In this research, the discussion was divided by three different levels. First, by demonstration of historical archives, explaining how Raja Brooke policy established the economic foundation for the development of Sarawak. Chinese immigrants engaged in the plantation production of cash crops, such as Gambier, Pepper, Rubber, Sago, etc. Second, by investigating the historical document, how Chinese Dialect groups developed the society and culture of Chinese as participating in Kuching Bazaar was probed. Also, the examples of Teochew, Fukien and Hakka groups leading the society and changing power were proposed. Third, by studying the relation between Chinese Dialect groups and economy activity, the author proposed how interpersonal network of and commercial trade system formed by the process of trading the cash crop produced from rural area to international market by the trading system in Bazaar.

Based on the historical analysis of economic development in Bazaar, this study suggested that under the progress of colonial economy, the range of Kuching Waterfront Bazaar expanded with the economy development. Also, by studying the process of Chinese Dialect groups participating trades in Bazaar, it is demonstrated that the social development of Chinese Dialect groups in Kuching Bazaar was dominated by the economic activity.

**Keywords** : Kuching Waterfront Bazaar, Chinese Dialect groups, Economic Activity, Network of Commercial Trade System, Policy of Colonial Economy