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**THE KAPITAN CINA OF BATAVIA  
1837 - 1942**

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the *kapitan Cina* institution in Batavia, its place in the Dutch East Indies administration, and the role played by the Chinese officers in their own community. The Chinese inhabitants of Batavia and the Dutch practice of segregation are considered in chapter 1, devoted to describing the plurality of Batavia's population under the VOC. Chapter 2 traces the original concept of the kapitan system, dating back to the pre-colonial indigenous kingdoms of the archipelago. It indicates that the kapitan institution was an indigenous arrangement, later adopted by western colonists to rule the non-indigenous inhabitants of the colony. The main focus of this study is in the last five chapters. Chapter 3 examines the establishment of the *kapitan Cina*, or Chinese officers, its nature, structure and relationships with the local authority of Batavia. The Chinese officers were members of the Chinese Council through which the local Chinese administration was performed. This is considered in chapter 4, on the Chinese Council. Chapter 5 considers the role of the Chinese officers in the context of the Chinese movement from the early twentieth century, and the changing attitude of the Dutch towards the Chinese. Given that Chinese officers were wealthy members of their community, given the significant role played by the Chinese in the colonial economy, the economy aspect of the Chinese officership is discussed in chapter 6, which also examines the peculiar position of Batavia in Dutch economic policy and practice. The last chapter discusses the Dutch plan to abolish the institution of the Chinese officers in Java and Madura, except the Batavian Chinese officers.

## CONTENT

	page
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Acknowledgement</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Preface</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Notes on Transliteration</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1      The Population of Batavia under the VOC, 1619-1800</b>	<b>13</b>
The Background	13
The <i>Vreemde Oosterlingen</i> or Foreign Asiatics	17
The Natives	39
From <i>Kasteelplein</i> to <i>Waterlooplein</i>	44
<b>2      The Early History of the Kapitan System</b>	<b>48</b>
The Sources	49
The Sahbandar	54
The Early Kapitan of Batavia	66
<b>3      The Institution of Chinese Officers</b>	<b>72</b>
The Structure of the Institution	75
The Chinese Officers	85
The Chinese Administration and the Local Authority of Batavia	100
<b>4      The Chinese Council of Batavia</b>	<b>105</b>
The Establishment	106
The Management of Chinese Affairs	108
The Council and its Financial Management	116
The Council and the Officers	123
<b>5      The Officers and the Chinese Political Movement</b>	<b>131</b>
The <i>Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan</i>	134
The <i>Chung Hwa Hui</i>	151
The People's Council and the Question of Netherlands Subjects	168
The Early Chinese Turbulences of 1912-1913	186

<b>6</b>	<b>The Chinese Economy of Batavia</b>	<b>205</b>
	Batavia Revenue-Farms	206
	The Chinese Officers and Revenue Farming	221
	Batavia's Private Lands	233
	Dutch Policy of Private Land Repurchase	252
<b>7</b>	<b>The End of the Chinese Officers</b>	<b>261</b>
	The Heart of the Matter	261
	The Dutch Government's View and Plan	265
	The Chinese Response	270
	Measures for Measures	279
	Batavia: the Exception	288
	<b>Concluding Remarks</b>	<b>299</b>
	<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>301</b>

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Finally, it goes without saying that no one can bear any responsibility for the arguments put forward in this thesis except myself.

January 1994

Mona Lohanda

## PREFACE

The term *kapitan Cina* is familiar in the history of the Chinese in Southeast Asia. Yet the institution has been little studied.

In the Dutch East Indies, in Batavia in particular, the *kapitan Cina* institution lasted until the last days of Dutch rule. And whereas in other parts of Southeast Asia, such as the Straits Settlements, the *kapitan Cina* was an unofficial position, in the Dutch East Indies it was an integral part of the colonial administration.

Despite the long history of their settlement in the region, studies of the Chinese of Batavia are very few: I J Moerman, *In en Om de Chineesche Kamp*,<sup>1</sup> J Th Vermeulen, *De Chineezzen te Batavia en de Troebelen van 1740*,<sup>2</sup> C Salmon & D Lombard, *Les Chinois des Jakarta; Temples et Vie Collective*,<sup>3</sup> G J van Reenen, *De Chineezzen van Jakarta; Beschrijving van een Minderheidsgroep*,<sup>4</sup> and L Blussé, *Strange Company; Chinese Settlers, Mestizo Women and the Dutch in VOC Batavia*.<sup>5</sup>

Moerman gives a detailed account of Chinese socio-cultural life, customs and belief; almost the day-to-day life in the former Chinese quarter in Batavia. His work is a classic introduction to the study of the Chinese of Batavia. However, as the first edition was published in 1929, his views on the institution of the Chinese officers were formed when they were still the subject of lengthy debate.

Vermeulen's writing, which was originally a dissertation, was the first academic work on the Chinese riots in Batavia in 1740. Although there were earlier

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<sup>1</sup> (1932. Second edition. Batavia: G Kolff & Co).

<sup>2</sup> (1938. Leiden: E J Brill).

<sup>3</sup> (1980. Paris: Etudes Insulindiennes-Archipel, vol. I).

<sup>4</sup> (1981. Leiden: Leiden University, Institute of Cultural and Social Studies).

<sup>5</sup> (1986. Dordrecht: Foris Publications).

articles written on the subject,<sup>6</sup> Vermeulen explained their background, noting that the massacre was a consequence of the Chinese riots inside and outside the city, and of the feuds within the Dutch VOC. It is interesting to note that Moerman had already raised the question as to how far the peranakan were involved in the riots, and were they also among the victims of the 1740 massacre in the city?<sup>7</sup> Blussé put the same subject into a wider context. He observed that the deteriorating situation, preceding the massacre, was due more to the declining socio-economic condition of the Chinese and to the failure of the Chinese officers to maintain their authority over their community. However, Blussé's work on Batavia is not purely on the Chinese. The book is a compilation of previously published articles. Nevertheless it gives a comprehensive view of the Chinese economic networks and their relationships with the VOC authorities in Batavia. Blussé's work is more a social history of the Batavian non-indigenous communities under the VOC, with the Chinese playing a significant role.

C Salmon & D Lombard survey the existing Chinese temples in Jakarta, to provide an overall view of Chinese community life. Salmon & Lombard's analysis of the role of the Chinese Council is limited to this aspect only. This is understandable as the research was undertaken in the 1970s, although the writers give a historical description of the Batavian Chinese community back to VOC times. As membership of the Chinese Council was open only to Chinese officers, considerations of the Council's role was also limited to its place in public ceremonies and religious duties. Salmon & Lombard's work leaves out other essential aspects of the Chinese in Batavia, particularly their management of their community.

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<sup>6</sup> W R van Hoevell, "Batavia in 1740", *Tijdschrift voor Nederlands-Indie*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1840, pp. 447-557; B Hoetink, "Ni Hoe Kong; Kapitein der Chineezen te Batavia in 1740", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-Land-en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indie*, vol. 74, 1918, pp. 447-518.

<sup>7</sup> I J Moerman, *De Chineezen in Nederlandsch Oost Indie* (1933. Batavia: P Noordhoff), p. 19.

Van Reenen's socio-anthropological work on the Chinese community in Jakarta is a brief study of the contemporary Chinese in Jakarta, particularly changes within the community under the New Order.

There are four articles on the *kapitan Cina* under the VOC, all by B Hoetink.<sup>8</sup> Hoetink's work limits itself to the Dutch administration's point of view, and does not pay attention to the inner workings of the Chinese officers institution. Apart from the work of Hoetink, limited to the VOC period, the Chinese officers under the Dutch are very little studied. Other works of the Indonesian Chinese, particularly by Lea E Williams, *Overseas Chinese Nationalism; the Genesis of the Pan-Chinese Movement in Indonesia, 1900-1916*,<sup>9</sup> and James R Rush, *Opium to Java; Revenue-Farming and Chinese Enterprise in Colonial Indonesia, 1860-1910*,<sup>10</sup> although involve discussion on the role of the Chinese officers, do not pay specific attention to Batavia.

Williams examines the involvement of the Chinese officers in the early years of the Pan-Chinese movement and limits his observation to the non-peranakan Chinese or singkeh-totok's point of view. Rush studies the involvement of the Chinese officers in opium-farming but does not extend to the practice of the opium farm in the Batavia region. In other words, although partly discussing the Chinese officers, both studies exclude the Batavian officers or do not describe the officers in Batavia in detail.

My study is therefore distinctive in terms of subject, period and the area covered. It examines the Chinese officers in Batavia from 1837 until 1942.

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<sup>8</sup> B Hoetink, "So Bing Kong; het Eerste Hoofd der Chineezzen te Batavia, 1619-1636", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-Land-en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indie*, vol. 73, 1917, pp. 344-414; "Ni Hoe Kong; Kapitein der Chineezzen te Batavia in 1740", *op.cit.*; "Chineesche Officieren te Batavia onder de Compagnie", *Bijdragen*, vol. 78, 1922, pp. 1-136; "So Bing Kong; het Eerste Hoofd der Chineezzen te Batavia: eene Nalezing", *ibid.*, vol. 79, 1923, pp. 1-44.

<sup>9</sup> (1960. Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press).

<sup>10</sup> (1990. Ithaca: Cornell University Press).

Despite the generic term *kapitan Cina*, the thesis focuses on the highest position in the institution; the Chinese major, which was first granted in Batavia in 1837 and lasted until 1942 when the colony was taken over by the Japanese. Focussing on the role of the officers exposes the political and economic dimensions of their position, not limited to their administrative function as the chiefs of the Chinese community.

The main discussion emphasizes the relationships between the Chinese officers and the Dutch, and between the officers and the Chinese community in Batavia. Examination of the relationships between the Chinese officers and the Dutch authorities shows the workings of the organization itself, and explains the position of the Chinese local administration within the Dutch East Indies administration. Examination of the relationships between the officers and the Chinese community in Batavia demonstrates the peculiarities of the Chinese in the region, mostly peranakan, and the Dutch policy of favouring them.

As the Chinese local administration was an integral part of Dutch local government in Batavia, my study greatly relies upon Dutch archives and records. I used the correspondence between the Batavia local authorities and the Dutch East Indies central government offices, particularly the office of the Governor-General, the Department of Home Affairs and the Advisor for Chinese Affairs.

Chinese matters were taken seriously by the Dutch East Indies government: Dutch records and archives on the Chinese are fairly extensive. This is shown in the richness of the *Algemeen Secretarie* collection, which preserves papers of the office of Dutch governor-generals. The *Binnenlands-Bestuur* collection holds papers of the Department of Home Affairs and the office of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs. The archives of *Batavia* and *Tangerang* holds papers, reports on local matters, even letters from the members of the community.

Materials in the Dutch archives in The Hague, particularly the *Mailrapporten*, classified as *gewone* or *geheime*, make it possible to trace the main lines of Dutch policy regarding the Chinese.

To seek a comparatively fair point of view, my reliance on Dutch sources is balanced by excerpts from the peranakan Chinese-Malay press, published in *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, and Dutch reviews on them in *De Indische Gids* and *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indie*.

## NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION

For Chinese peranakan names, as they are of Hokkien origin, I have used the Hokkien spelling, as written in the Dutch archives, in order not to confuse the reader with modern Mandarin spellings.

Names of districts, especially in Batavia, are as employed by contemporaries; thus Weltevreden, Molenvliet, Meester-Cornelis, Buitenzorg.

I have used the local terms 'peranakan', 'singkeh-totok', 'sahbandar', 'kapitan Cina' in their original forms.

## 1 THE POPULATION OF BATAVIA UNDER THE VOC, 1619-1800

### The Background

By May 1619 the settlement which is nowadays known as the city of Jakarta had been taken by the VOC and subsequently inaugurated as Batavia. This was the initial step towards setting up a strong foothold of Dutch power in Java which then expanded to other parts of the archipelago.

Over time Batavia became the centre of Dutch power, and the city administration was placed directly under the VOC bureaucracy. And in common with many other Western colonies in the East, the colonial administration adopted a policy of segregation, which created social stratification based on race and religion. The city's population was divided into western and non-western and on a religious basis, Christian and non-Christian. These divisions were reflected in the laws. In terms of civil status, members of Batavian society were either Company officials, free men or slaves. As well as in Batavia, this practice of segregation was also very apparent in other main cities, like Semarang,<sup>1</sup> Surabaya and Makassar<sup>2</sup> owing to their demographic configurations. The Batavia city population was divided into three main groups as follows: (1) European, including German, Swedish, French, Danish, British, Portuguese and others; (2) *Vreemde Oosterlingen* or Foreign Asiatics, i.e. Chinese, Arabs, Armenians, Indians, Persians and others; (3) Natives, namely Javanese, Balinese, Ambonese, Buginese, Timorese, Malays and many others.

Each group also had its own internal classification such as the Indies-born European for those of European origins,

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<sup>1</sup> See D. Lombard, "Une Description de la ville de Semarang vers 1812 (d'après un manuscrit de l'India Office)", *Villes d'Insulindes II, Archipel*, no. 37, 1989, pp. 263 - 277.

<sup>2</sup> See A. Reid, "The Rise of Makassar", *Review of Indonesian and Malayan Affairs*, double number, 1983, pp. 117-160.

the Indies-born Chinese or Arab for those of Chinese or Arab origins, while the Natives were categorized as either free man or slave. It should be noted here that during the VOC regime the term of *Vreemde Oosterlingen* also applied to natives from the eastern parts of the Archipelago. As these Ambonese, Balinese, Buginese, Malays, Timorese and others were not actually indigenous to Batavian, they were categorized as '*vreemde*' or foreign, and the term '*oosterlingen*' or easterners came from their origins in the eastern islands.<sup>3</sup> However, after the return of the colony to the Dutch, the legal term *Vreemde Oosterlingen* as stated in the Regulation of 1818 was rigidly applied to foreign Asians, particularly Chinese, Arabs and Moors.

The civil status of a person living in the Dutch-East-Indies applied to his status as a civil servant of the VOC, *vrijburghers* (freeburghers), or *vreemdelingen* (foreigners). To be considered a freeburgher, a person should fit into one of the following categories:<sup>4</sup>

(a) those Portuguese who had been given permission to stay in the colony, being married and having given the oath in obedience to Dutch authority; (b) descendants of Portuguese from marriage with native women or liberated female slaves; (c) the Papangers (for further description see page 37); (d) the Mardijkers (a further description on pages 36-37); (e) those civil servants of the VOC who, after their resignation, were unable to return to their country of origin due to their marriage to a non-European woman; (f) descendants of those in category (e); (g) colonists coming from other parts of the country; (h) the so-called *smalle vrijlieden* (lower class of free folk), or liberated Macassarese, Balinese and Ambonese slaves; (i) those natives who had received the *vrijbrief*, or letter granting them the status of free man. In reality the status of freeburgher afforded no privileges, although most of them

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<sup>3</sup> W.E. van Mastenbroek, *De Historische Ontwikkeling van de Staatsrechtelijke Indeling der Bevolking van Nederlandsch-Indies* (1934. Wageningen: H. Veenman & Zonen), pp. 22-23.

<sup>4</sup> *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indies*, vol. III, pp. 422-423.

were engaged in trade, especially those who made their living in Batavia.

The Dutch government did not discourage marriage between people of different ethnic origins. Consequently in subsequent years the various categories of freeburgher became mixed. As a result there were only two categories of freeburgher after 1832, namely the *Europeesche burgers* (European burghers) and the *Inlandsche burgers* (Native burghers). The latter were no more than a *tusschenklasse* (intermediate class), not European, yet considered as being above the common natives. The *Inlandsche burger* in Amboin and Menado was called in the local language *Orang Borgor* or *Orang Bebas*, meaning free man, whereas such a name was not found in Batavia.

Depending on their length of stay in the Indies, Europeans might be called *blijvers* or *trekkers*. *Blijver* refers to a person who chose to spend his life in the Indies, while a *trekker* is someone who came to the Indies to work and later returned to their own country. Sometimes the term *trekker* was applied to those Chinese going back and forth to trade in the Indies.

During the first decade of the VOC's establishment in Batavia, the main feature dividing the settlements within the city walls (Intramuros) was the Ciliwung river; called the *Groote Rivier* (Great River) by the Dutch and the *Kali Besar* by the natives. Along the east bank of the Great River were located the large mansions of European residents, while the west bank was mostly occupied by Foreign Asiatics. However, prior to 1740 the Chinese might live anywhere in the city.

Those natives who were suspected by the VOC of having an attachment to Bantam and Mataram (as the war with both kingdoms continued) were not permitted to dwell within the city walls. They lived in kampongs on the outskirts of the city, in an area called the *Ommelanden*. As these natives did not originate from areas near to Batavia they established their own compounds administered by their own chieftains, who were later officially included within the colonial

administrative bureaucracy. A similar system of ruling members of ethnic groups through their own chieftains was also applied by the VOC to Foreign Asiatics in Batavia and in other important cities like Semarang and Makassar. The origins of this policy date back to the Hindu and Muslim kingdoms in the archipelago, and will be further discussed in chapter 2.

For present day Jakartanese, remnants of those native settlements are known only through the names of their kampongs, such as kampong Jawa, kampong Bali, kampong Melayu (Malay kampong), kampong Manggarai (people from the western part of Flores island), kampong Ambon, kampong Sasak (people from Lombok island), kampong Bugis and kampong Makassar. Previously these kampongs were situated in the area known as the *Ommelanden* but in the current Jakarta city map they are included in the city itself - either in East Jakarta (kampong Ambon, kampong Bali, kampong Melayu, kampong Manggarai, kampong Makassar) Central Jakarta (kampong Bugis, kampong Bali), West Jakarta (kampong Jawa, kampong Bandan/people from Banda island), and South Jakarta (kampong Sasak).

Other ethnic legacies may be found in traditional Betawi cookery such as the cakes and sweets that bear the name of ethnic groups, like *kue bugis*, *bika ambon*, *pacar cina* and *gula jawa*.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, it is interesting to note that among the *Orang Betawi*<sup>6</sup> themselves, the existence of non-natives in former Batavia is marked by nicknames such as Arab-Pekojan, Blanda-Depok and Cina-Benteng, which are sometimes used derogatorily to refer to certain habits and characteristics. Pekojan in present West Jakarta was the former concentration of the Arabs; Depok, twenty miles from South Jakarta, was the former concentration of

<sup>5</sup> Kue bugis, made of glutinous rice and coconut milk with coconut jam inside. The paste is steamed and wrapped in banana leaves. Bika ambon is made of sago flour, aren palm, sugar and coconut milk. The cake is baked and yellowish. Pacar cina are small colourful cubes made of glutinous rice, boiled and eaten with sweetened coconut milk and ice. Gula jawa is round shaped made of pure dark brown palm sugar.

<sup>6</sup> For further description of *Orang Betawi*, see pages 38-40.

liberated slaves who later were granted equal status to the Dutch; Benteng<sup>7</sup> refers to Tangerang, thirty miles from West Jakarta, the large settlement of the Indies-born *peranakan* Chinese.

Given that this thesis is concerned with the non-Western groups, the following description will focus on the *Vreemde Oosterlingen* and the native communities, and will not extend to the Dutch or other Europeans. Moreover, as the specific focus is the Chinese, it is justified to give a rather lengthy sketch of those members of Batavian society.

### **The *Vreemde Oosterlingen* or Foreign Asiatics**

The Foreign Asiatics in Batavia were comprised of the Chinese, Arabs, Japanese, Persians, Armenians, Moors, Bengalese, and a few others. Some of them had been coming to the Indies long before the Dutch founded the city. Indian influences had been very much absorbed by the time of the Hindu-Javanese kingdoms, as had Arab and Islamic influences during the pre-colonial Muslim sultanates in Sumatra, Java, Celebes (Sulawesi) and the eastern islands of the archipelago.

**The Chinese.** When the first Dutch fleet under the commander of Cornelis de Houtman landed on 13 November 1596 at the small harbour of Jakarta, it found a kampong located on the east bank of the Ciliwung river which was inhabited by Chinese who cultivated rice and distilled arak. These Chinese had long been granted this piece of land by Pangeran Wijaya Krama, or the "Coninck van Jakarta" as the

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<sup>7</sup> Benteng was the earliest Dutch fort on the east bank of the Ciliwung river, located next to the oldest Chinese settlement. The natives of Batavia called these Chinese, *Cina-Benteng*, which when used by the present-day Orang Betawi refer to the old established peranakan Chinese on the outskirts of Jakarta, or Tangerang in particular. For the establishment of this Dutch fort, see J.A. van der Chijs, *De Nederlanders te Jakatra* (1860. Amsterdam: Frederick Muller), p. 10, and for the Chinese settlement, see "Chronologisch Geschiedenis van Batavia, geschreven door een Chinees", *Tijdschrift voor Neerlands Indie*, vol. I, 1842, p. 62.

Dutch called him, who ruled over a principality of the Bantam sultanate.

Close contact between the Chinese and the Indonesian kingdoms dated back to the mid-ninth century. The Chinese had settled in Java, establishing several important port-cities along the northern coast such as Gresik, Tuban and Surabaya.<sup>8</sup> These pioneers belonged to the first generation of Chinese emigrants to the South Seas but as generation succeeded generation, inter-marriage led to new mixed-race Chinese generations born of native women. Many of those who had converted to Islam intermarried with the daughters of important princely families. The ruling elites of seaport towns in Java consisted of families with mixed blood, mostly Sino-Javanese and Indo-Javanese.<sup>9</sup> The Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon note that the ancestors of Muslim rulers in Demak and Cheribon appear to be of Chinese origin.<sup>10</sup>

Much of the literature concerning the Chinese in Indonesia refers to the Indonesian-born Chinese as *peranakan*, yet it should be borne in mind that until the nineteenth century the term *peranakan* meant those Chinese who had converted to Islam, in other words, a *peranakan* was a Chinese Muslim. Until 1828 this group was administered by their own chieftain, called *kommandant der Parnakkan Chineezen*. The position appears to have been occupied by a certain family of Tamien Dossol.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> W.P. Groeneveldt, "Notes on the Malay Archipelago and Malacca, compiled from the Chinese Sources", *Verhandelingen van Bataviaansch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, vol. XXXIX, part I, 1880. pp. 41, 47-50.

<sup>9</sup> H.J. de Graaf, *Islamic States in Java 1500 - 1700* (1976. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff), p. 23.

<sup>10</sup> M.C. Ricklefs, *Chinese Muslims in Java in the 15th and 16th Centuries; the Malay Annals of Semarang and Cérbon* (1984. Melbourne: Monash University), pp. 82, 125.

<sup>11</sup> See *Regeerings Almanak voor Nederlandsch-Indie 1817 -1830*, and F. de Haan, *Oud Batavia*, vol. II, Platen Album (1935. Bandoeng: A.Nix & Co). Other writings on this *peranakan* Chinese Muslim, are D. Lombards, "Une Description de la ville de Semarang", p.264; H. Chambert-Loir, "Muhammad Bakir; a Batavian Scribe and Author in the Nineteenth Century", *Review of Indonesian and Malayan Affairs*, vol. 18, Summer 1984, pp. 49-50, 64; E.U. Kratz, "Hikayat Raja Pasai; a Second Manuscript", *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, part I, 1989, pp. 1-2.

The Chinese settlement in the principality of Jakarta was located on the east bank of the Ciliwung river, and apparently it was administered by its own chieftain, Watting.<sup>12</sup> In January 1611, a contract was made between Jacques l'Hermite and Pangeran Ariwijaya Krama to purchase an area of land of 50 square 'vadem' (fathom) which was located near the Chinese settlement in Jakarta. The price agreed was 1,200 reals (about 3,000 guilders), after which the Dutch began to build a small factory at the mouth of the Ciliwung river. From this time onwards, Dutch penetration and domination was to become an undeniable part of the modern history of Indonesia and in the city of Batavia.

Before the first landing of the Dutch fleet in Bantam in June 1596, the Chinese had held a dominant position in the pepper trade and played a large role in the flourishing Asian market network in this region. While Jakarta at that time was small compared to Bantam, it still provided vegetables, pepper, sugar and rice. Jakarta was actually no more than a small port where the Dutch could stop for refreshment, in particular where ships' crews could buy the arak which was manufactured by the Chinese. In due course, especially after the VOC conquered the city in May 1619, Batavia grew to be a huge entrepot for VOC trading activities in the eastern hemisphere.

Having been in the Company's service since he was twenty-years old, the Governor-General, Jan Pieterszoon Coen (born in Hoorn in 1587) planned to establish a powerful Dutch colonial city in the East, as the Portuguese had done in Goa, Malacca and Macao. Coen, a man of insight and keen foresight, looked at the flourishing neighbouring port of Bantam: his wide experience of the East convinced him that the city's prosperity was partly due to the commerce and industry of the Chinese. However, Coen's idea of creating a colonial realm in the East was not encouraged by the *Heeren*

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<sup>12</sup> J.A. van der Chijs, *op. cit.*, p. 10; B. Hoetink, "So Bing Kong; Het Eerste Hoofd der Chinnezen te Batavia, 1619 - 1636", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-Land-en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* (hereafter BKI), vol 73, 1917, p. 348; F. de Haan, *Oud Batavia*, vol. I, p. 10.

*Seventien* [Gentlemen Seventeen], for his letters of request were left unanswered. He admitted that "*daer is geen volck die ons beter dan Chineesen dienen*" [there is no other people who serves us better than the Chinese].<sup>13</sup>

Driven by his intention to establish Batavia, which many years later was gloriously known as the *Koningin van het Oosten* [Queen of the East], Coen persuaded the Chinese from Bantam and other neighbouring coastal areas such as Cheribon and Japara to move to the city. It has even been remarked that he ordered his army to kidnap Chinese.

As the city grew, the Chinese flowed into Batavia and were immediately engaged in commerce, market-gardening, rice-planting, fisheries, and also such as artisans, plumbers, carpenters, timbermen, woodcutters, shopowners. They were employed in the construction of houses and VOC offices, digging canals (*grachten*) and building ships. Some of them investigated the surrounding hinterland, the *Ommelanden*, and cultivated land for sugar plantations and arak-distilleries.

There were about three to four hundred Chinese in Batavia in October 1619. In July 1620 the number had grown to eight hundred. By 1621 there were 2,100 and in 1627, 3,500; but in 1629 the number was reduced to 2,000. Numbers fluctuated due to the coming and going of junks.<sup>14</sup>

According to statistics in the *Daghregister gehouden van 't Casteel Batavia* [Daily Records kept at the Castle of Batavia] which kept a record of the movement of vessels at Batavia, there was a notable increase in the number of Chinese in the period of 1719 to 1739. Hoetink noted that in 1719 there were 4,068 Chinese in the inner city and 7,550 Chinese living in the outskirts. By 1739 there were 4,368 Chinese in the inner city, while 10,574 were settled in the *Ommelanden*.<sup>15</sup> Another scholar, L Blussé suggested a lower

<sup>13</sup> Cited in J. Moerman, *De Chineezzen in Nederlandsch-Oost-Indie* (1933. Groningen: P. Nordhoff), p. 7, and F. de Haan, *Oud Batavia*, vol. I, p. 10.

<sup>14</sup> B. Hoetink, "So Bing Kong; Het Eerste Hoofd der Chineezzen", p. 350.

<sup>15</sup> B. Hoetink, "Ni Hoe Kong; Kapitein der Chineezzen te Batavia in 1740", *BKI*, vol. 74, 1918, p. 454.

number, 4,199 Chinese in the inner city by 1739<sup>16</sup>, a year before the notorious Chinese massacre of 1740.

As has been mentioned earlier, Chinese had been involved with the Indonesian archipelago for a long period of time, and from these first generation Chinese migrants there emerged the Indonesian-born Chinese, nowadays called *peranakan*. Because Chinese females did not migrate many Chinese male migrants married native women, preferably Balinese. This preference can probably be explained by the Balinese adherence to Hinduism, in which, unlike the Muslims, they are not hindered by restrictions on diet.

The first migration of Chinese was originally from Hokkien in the province of Fukien in South China, and landed in Java from the harbour-city of Amoy. The migrants spoke Hokkien dialect, and their language, customs and cultural traditions have over time become mixed with native local traditions. Hokkien influence on Betawi culture may be identified in 'Bahasa Betawi' (mother language of the Jakartanese) especially the words concerned with food and local dishes.<sup>17</sup> Aspects of Hokkien culture can, to some extent, still be recognized in peranakan culture in Java.

Other emigrants came from the Kwantung province (called Hakka), from Canton (called Punti), the Hoklo from Swatow, the Haifoeng from Hainan island (called Hai-lam) and from Formosa. The Hokkien of Fukien province came originally from either the western part (they were called Tjiang-tsjoe) or from the northern part (called Tsoen-tsjoe) of the region. The Hakka, who came from Kwantung, landed and settled on the west coast of Borneo (Kalimantan) and in Sumatra. The Punti, who were a minority, settled in the Kwitang area of Batavia (now Central Jakarta) and became known as timbermen and furniture makers. The Hoklo, who came from Swatow, went to West Borneo, Riau and Deli on the east coast of Sumatra, as did the Haifoeng and the Hai-

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<sup>16</sup> L. Blussé, *Strange Company. Chinese Settlers, Mestizo Women and the Dutch in VOC Batavia* (1986. Dordrecht: Foris Publications), p. 83.

<sup>17</sup> Phillip Leo, *Chinese Loanwords spoken by the Inhabitants of the City of Jakarta* (1973. Jakarta: LRKN-LIPI).

Iam. The Chinese from Formosa migrated via Hoenan and worked in the Indies as teachers in Chinese schools.

The fact that the Chinese migrants came from the southern provinces of China and that they originated from different areas and spoke different dialects was reflected in the diverse effects of their cultures within Indonesian-Chinese society.

Subsequent generations of Chinese migrants were mostly concentrated in the Outer Islands, such as Sumatra and Borneo. As they came in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these Chinese were fittingly called *singkeh* which means new visitor or guest in the Hokkien dialect. In contrast with the early generations of Chinese emigrants who independently found occupations in the Indies, these later generations (who were coming up until the 1930's) were mostly bound by contract to large-scale agricultural enterprises in Sumatra and mining in Borneo. They provided abundant manpower for tobacco and rubber plantations in Deli and Riau, mining in Bangka-Bililon and on the west coast of Borneo. Those areas saw a big concentration of *singkeh*, especially in West-Borneo (Pontianak, Singkawang, Sambas, Landak, Mapawa and Montrado).

The Chinese population in Indonesia therefore comprised two groups - the *singkeh* and the *peranakan*. The *singkeh* or the *totok* represented the larger group, and settled in the Outer Islands, whereas the majority of the smaller *peranakan* group lived in Java.

Both groups are easily distinguished. The *peranakan* no longer speaks Chinese and has been absorbed into the Indonesian way of living. The *peranakan* in the Dutch East Indies in the early twentieth century tended to be Western instead of Chinese-oriented. Many of them had been educated in Dutch schools.

The Chinese of Batavia played a very significant role in the development of the city as they were closely involved in the VOC's economic activities, both in internal and external trade. They performed a service for the city as skilled labourers, artisans and as market-gardeners to supply the

needs of the VOC; indeed all agriculture around Batavia depended upon the Chinese.<sup>18</sup>

Even though they were the only group in the population at that time who had to pay poll tax (*hoofdgeld*) for their residence in Batavia, the position of the Chinese in trade and commerce was still rather privileged. There were complaints from 270 burghers in 1647 and in 1652 saying that the Batavian government favoured the Chinese over them. With the monopolistic practices of the VOC, the freeburghers' trade became increasingly restricted, by contrast the Chinese were free to trade through their intra-archipelago and overseas networks which reached as far as China and Japan.<sup>19</sup>

As early as October 1620, the Chinese of Batavia were liable for the poll tax, the administration of which was under their own captain. Such arrangements had been in place since the initial assignment of the first Chinese captain of Batavia, Souw Beng Kong (Bencon to the Dutch) in October 1619. The poll tax was to be paid monthly to the Chinese captain at his house. The last day of payment, usually the first day of every month of the Roman calendar, was marked by hoisting a flag at the front of the Chinese captain's residence.<sup>20</sup> After the post of Chinese wardmaster [*Chineesche wijkmeester*] was set up in 1685, the Chinese inhabitants paid their poll tax to the wardmaster. As they were no longer required to pay the poll tax directly to the captain, the Chinese were obliged to appear for an audience at his house once a year.

Not only did the Chinese dominate trade and commerce but they also proved economically beneficial to the VOC through taxes and leases, revenue-farming or *pachten*. Details on the practice of *pachten* will be given in Chapter 6. It is fair to say that Batavia from 1619 to 1740 was,

<sup>18</sup>J.L. Cobban, "The City in Java; an Essay in Historical Geography" (1975. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. University of California, Berkeley), p. 93.

<sup>19</sup>L. Blussé, *Strange Company*, p. 83.

<sup>20</sup>The natives of Batavia called the neighbourhood of the Chinese captain's residence *Kampong Tiang Bendera* (Hoisting Flag compound), presumably referring to such custom.

economically speaking, a Chinese colonial town under the Dutch protection.<sup>21</sup>

After a rather glow description of life in the city of Batavia, Francois Valentijn in his famous traveller account, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indie*, concluded that "...if there were no Chinese here, Batavia would be very dead and deprived of many necessities ...".<sup>22</sup>

The growth of the city attracted still more Chinese; not only were there vast numbers of them within the city walls (*binnen stad*, Intramuros), but they also grew overwhelmingly in the outskirts (*Ommelanden*). The peace treaty with Bantam in 1683, the opening of the *Ommelanden* and the rapid development of sugar cultivation in the area meant that more manpower was needed and this increased the number of Chinese migrants even further. Although the VOC government tried to check these migrants by setting quotas for passenger transport, this just led the skippers to bribe the port officials. In order to avoid registration at the captain's house, they landed at the Thousand Islands - located in the bay of Batavia - or in other places beyond government control along the northern coast.

These unregistered migrants were undoubtedly illegal workers, and because of this situation often found themselves at the mercy of the Chinese *potchias* (owners of sugar mills by lease). By 1710 there were 130 sugar mills belonging to 84 entrepreneurs, 79 owned by the Chinese. The *potchias* or lease-holders of sugar mills were obliged to pay the poll tax to the Chinese captain on the personnel they employed; but as the captain's domicile was a great distance from the *Ommelanden* areas, it is not hard to see why many did not properly fulfil this obligation. In addition, even though in 1715 the *Ommelanden* was administered through a commissioner for Native Affairs [*De Commissaris tot en onder de Zaken van Inlanders*], whose

<sup>21</sup> L. Blussé, *Strange Company*, particularly chapter V.

<sup>22</sup> Cited by J.L. Cobban, "The City of Java; an Essay", p. 93; and S. Abeyasekere, *Jakarta; a History* (1989. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press), p. 24.

function was to keep in touch with the headmen who lived in the kampongs or villages, this commissioner was not responsible for the Chinese dwelling in the same areas.

In many ways, neither the VOC nor the Chinese captain was able to provide a reasonable degree of supervision over those Chinese living in the *Ommelanden*. The Dutch sheriff, who did not exert sufficient control in the distant regions, could easily fall into corrupt ways, with *potchias* offering bribes that would be to the satisfaction of both parties.

The situation grew worse as the collapse of sugar on the European market meant that it was no longer a profit-making commodity. The closure of many sugar mills resulted in many jobless, uncontrolled, Chinese in the *Ommelanden*, soon fell into banditry, vagabondism and other illegal activities. In order to overcome the worst of this, Gustaaf Willem Baron van Imhoff, a member of the Council of the Indies [*Raad van Indie*], who had previously been Governor of Ceylon, issued an edict on 25 July 1740 requiring all Chinese to hold a resident's permit (*permissiebriefje*). Any Chinese found not to be in possession of such a permit would be deported to Ceylon. Rumours spread that, while en route to Ceylon, these deportees were being thrown overboard; this so alarmed the Chinese that they began to arm themselves. When some Chinese outlaws from surrounding areas forced an entry into the inner city, Governor-General Adriaan Valckenier (1739-1741) issued orders to arrest suspicious Chinese, and the growing tension then led to riots, followed by massacres on 8-10 October 1740. Afraid of any intrigue or conspiracy against their authority, as had happened in December 1721 when a plot led by Pieter Erberveldt<sup>23</sup> had been discovered, the VOC took severe action against any disturbance.

The outbreak of the Chinese riots in 1740 put paid to the prestige of the Chinese captainship. Ni Hoe Kong, the captain

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<sup>23</sup> P. Erberveldt was a mestizo, whose father was a German shoemaker. He was alleged to have plotted with the Chinese and natives of Bantam, Cirebon, Bali and Kartasura to overthrow the VOC in Batavia. He was severely punished before being beheaded and his skull hung at the city gate.

who had held the office since September 1736, had to pay for the actions of his people. He was arrested on 9 October 1740 and imprisoned in the castle. It proved rather difficult to discover his part in the Chinese riots - though he might take responsibility - for the original documents from his trial have never been discovered.<sup>24</sup> Ni Hoe Kong was later exiled to Amboina in the Mollucas, where he died.

Thus for three years the post of Chinese captain was vacant, and the VOC set up a Committee for the incoming Chinese [*Gecommitteerde over de aankomende Chinezen*], consisting of a Chinese captain of Cheribon, a Chinese merchant from Semarang and a European, probably of mestizo blood, Henry Abbit. After the position of Chinese captain of Batavia was reinstated, Lim Beengko was appointed on 25 June 1743.

The Chinese riots of 1740 were caused by various factors, such as unemployment, closure of sugar mills, excessive numbers of Chinese, crime and the impotency of the Chinese captainship. Ni Hoe Kong was not the only person to blame. It was said that there was a personal feud between the two key persons in this case, Gustaaf Willem Baron van Imhoff, a powerful member of the Council of the Indies, and Adriaan Valckenier, the Governor-General. In the Indies colonial administration, the key decisions lay in the hands of the High Government [*Hooge Regeering*], which comprised members of the Council of the Indies and the Governor-General, who was also a member of the Council. However, members of the Council of the Indies divided into groups which sometimes involved the Governor-General. The feud between Van Imhoff and Valckenier can be said to have started on the election of Abraham Patras (1735-1737), Valckenier's predecessor as governor-general. Patras was old for such a high position - he first came to the East as a soldier in 1690 - yet it was due to Van Imhoff's strong opposition that Valckenier lost the nomination at this

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<sup>24</sup> B. Hoetink, "Ni Hoe Kong, Kapitein der Chinezen", p. 463.

time.<sup>25</sup> The fact that Valckenier subsequently achieved the office did not erase the tension between these two Dutch officials. The feud continued when Van Imhoff was sent to Batavia - he was a former governor of Ceylon - to restore VOC fortunes in the Indies. The books for 1683 to 1710 show that the company faced serious financial problems, for out of 23 offices in Asia, only three showed profits. Ambon, Banda, Ternate, Makassar, Bantam, Cirebon and the northern coastal posts of Java were not included in the profitable offices.<sup>26</sup> Van Imhoff's arrival in Batavia would surely not have been welcomed by Valckenier. Van Imhoff placed the entire blame for the 1740 Chinese massacre on Valckenier, saying that his policy against the Chinese had not prevented the plunder in Batavia. But as the man occupying the highest position in the Indies, Valckenier was able to arrest Van Imhoff and send him back to Holland under military escort. In their ignorance of these events, the Gentlemen Seventeen, in the meantime, appointed Van Imhoff as the next governor-general. So as soon as he arrived in Holland, Van Imhoff was promptly sent back to Batavia. Learning of Van Imhoff's appointment in 1741, Valckenier gave in his resignation and sailed home. Johannes Thedens took over, *ad interim*, the office of Governor-General in Batavia.

In May 1741, Van Imhoff arrived back in Batavia, and after receiving the office from J. Thedens he immediately sent an order to the Cape of Good Hope to arrest Valckenier. Valckenier was brought back to Batavia and in November 1742 he was put in jail until his last days. A trial, which was manipulated by the vindictive Van Imhoff,<sup>27</sup> sentenced

<sup>25</sup> E.S. de Klerck, *History of the Netherlands East Indies* (1938. Rotterdam: W.L. & J. Brusse), vol. I, p. 363.

<sup>26</sup> M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia* (1981. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd.), p.83.

<sup>27</sup> He was called ".... *de drijver, die haar tot de goede opwerkte en aanvuurde .....*" [the driver, who worked out and stimulated it to his own advantage]; see W. van Hoevell, "Batavia in 1740", *Tijdschrift voor Neerlands Indie* (hereafter, TNI) vol. I, 1840, p. 532. In "Chronologische Geschiedenis van Batavia geschreven door een Chinees" he was indeed the immoral hero of these disturbed times ["... *hij was inderdaad de onzedelijkste held van deze onrustige tijden ...*"], TNI, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

Valckenier to death, but he managed to avoid such a severe punishment by appealing to Holland.

The Chinese riots of 1740 also had repercussions for internal feud which was taking place within the royal court of Mataram. Indeed this dispute lasted until the division of the Mataram kingdom in 1755. The king of Mataram, who took the title Sunan Paku Buwana II (1726-1749) was a rather meek personality dominated by his mother. He was much upset that the Dutch failed to inform him of the activities of the Batavian Chinese. In fact, being driven out of the city, the Batavian Chinese fled to Bantam and Central Java, seeking assistance. In Bantam they were refused. Indeed the Sultan of Bantam sent 3,000 of his men to prevent the Chinese entering his kingdom. But in Central Java they attacked Japara and occupied Semarang. In the meantime, no consensus had been achieved among the royal administrators. The *patih* [chief administrator], Natakusumah, who very much disliked the Dutch, proposed to help the Chinese. Other *adipatis* [lords of coastal Java] wanted to be rid of Mataram's domination. Because of the various treaties between Mataram and the VOC, which allowed the Company trading rights, the lords of coastal Java preferred to be directly under Dutch rule. As no clear decision was forthcoming whether to assist the Dutch or side with the Chinese rioters, some of the princes, who fished in troubled waters, informed the Dutch about Natakusumah's secret mission to assist the Chinese in Semarang. By doing so they hoped to win the Company's favour. The Dutch seized the Chinese in Semarang, and Paku Buwana II sent for his *patih* Natakusumah, to be arrested. He was then sent into exile in Ceylon by the Dutch.

Nevertheless, the weakness of Paku Buwana II earned him great contempt from his regional lords. Their strong wish to be released from Mataram's authority drove them into rebellion. In the meantime, Raden Mas Garengi, grandson of Amangkurat III (1703-1708), claimed the throne, and with the Chinese as allies, attacked the court, putting Paku Buwana II to flight. With the help of the Dutch, Paku Buwana

II was able to gain his throne, and Mas Garendi was arrested in 1743; the Sino-Javanese rebellion collapsed. Yet this did not mean the end of internal disputes in the Mataram kingdom. Dissatisfied parties continued their opposition, leading to a series of rebellions which ended with the division of the kingdom into the Yogyakarta and Solo courts in 1755.<sup>28</sup>

To prevent any further Chinese insurrections, the VOC regime issued a regulation that after October 1740 Chinese were no longer permitted to live within the city walls, and that they should be settled in an outside area, called *Diestpoort*. This was in the area of Jakarta now known as Glodok. They were confined to this Chinese quarter until 1911. One reminder of the black days of 1740 for the present day Chinese of Jakarta is in the name *Ang-kee* (red river), which refers to the blood that flowed along this river during the massacre.<sup>29</sup>

After the 1740 riot the population of Chinese in Batavia fell: there were only 3,431 person, of whom 1,442 were traders or merchants, 935 were agriculturists, market-gardeners or ran arak-distilleries, another 728 were sugar-millers and wood-cutters, whilst 326 worked as artisans. However, the loss of Chinese labour meant a setback for the VOC's economic activities, particularly in the city. By 1741 the VOC was no longer discouraging the arrival of fresh Chinese immigrants, an abundance of whom immediately restored the economic success of the city and its outlying areas.

Due to its rapid physical growth, the city, in the course of time, deteriorated. With an unpleasant climate and lack of fresh water, diseases spread frighteningly. The canals were no longer able to accommodate transport and sewage brought pollution to the surrounding areas. The city walls could not prevent a growing population which needed ever more living

<sup>28</sup> For an extensive study of the division of Mataram, see M.C. Ricklefs, *Jogjakarta under Sultan Mangkubumi, 1749-1792. A History of the Division of Java* (1974. London: Oxford University Press).

<sup>29</sup> J. Moerman, *De Chinezen in Nederlandsch-Oost-Indie*, p.8.

space and shelter. The effort to dig the *Mookervaart* canal to better regulate the water-supply to the city in fact brought illness and death to the *modder-Javanen* (the Javanese navvies employed here) and to the population of the kampongs in the neighbourhood. The sudden increase in mortality transformed the 'Queen of the East' into the 'Graveyard of the East'.

The decay of Intramuros had been taking place since the 1730's, yet the decision to move to *Weltevreden* was not put into effect until 1800, by Governor-General Pieter Gerardus van Overstraten. It seemed that seventy years were needed to calculate the feasibility of moving the centre of power to Semarang or Surabaya. Or the delay could have been due to the miserable condition of the bankrupt Company.

In fact, the outside areas, *Molenvliet* and *Weltevreden*, which were located near the city walls, had been developing into more agreeable living districts for VOC officials, where they built huge mansions and country-houses. Therefore when the colonial government left Intramuros in the early nineteenth century, a new era of Dutch administration began. This was the epoch of Netherlands Indies' rule, in which the colony was administered by a true government, and not by a commercial trading enterprise as was the VOC, which was liquidated on 1 January 1800.

The Chinese, in common with many other inhabitants of Batavia, quickly adapted themselves to the growing city. Some continued to live in and develop the rural surroundings of Batavia, Tangerang in the west, and Cibinong to the south. While many remained concentrated around the Chinese quarter, others moved to Molenvliet, Tanah Abang, Senen, Pasar Baru and Meester Cornelis. They became more urban-oriented and carried on their occupations in commerce and the retail trade. They opened shops along the main road, *Groote Zuider Weg* (great southern way) from Senen to Meester Cornelis and also at Pasar Baru, which was later called *de nieuwe Chineesche winkelbuurt* (the new Chinese shopping neighbourhood).

In the early twentieth century, the young generation of Chinese who had obtained a better education than their parents, or some Western schooling, emerged as a new elite, together with the new Indonesian elites. They entered new fields of occupation, being more interested in professions.<sup>30</sup> Many of them became politicians, others doctors, lawyers, journalists, teachers, nurses, or clerks, cashiers, bank-employees, secretaries and the like.

**The Moors and the Arabs.** These groups actually had different origins; they are placed together here merely because they were Muslim.

The Moors were originally Indian Muslims from Kalinga, a region of northern Paliacate, situated on the Coromonadel coast. They settled in Batavia in the area of Pekojan (*koja* or *choja* means black Muslim) which was later inhabited by the Arabs. The Moors had a very strong Islamic identity, wearing long robes and having their own mosque, known as Mesjid Pekojan in the downtown area of present day Jakarta. They were engaged in the coastal trade together with the Arabs. In contrast with other non-Christian inhabitants of Batavia, the VOC allowed the Moors to form their own *schutterij* (civic guard) of freeburghers in 1751, their request having been originally forwarded in 1704. The first Moorish captain was appointed in 1753. This is said to be of great economic advantage to the Moors.<sup>31</sup>

Although by the early twentieth century, the Arabs formed the second largest group of Foreign Asiatics in Indonesia, sources concerning their origins and life are rather scarce, compared to those on the Chinese. For whatever reason, Arab communities are under-represented in the study of Indonesian society.

The growth of the Arab community in Indonesia was largely due to natural increase rather than immigration. It is said that ninety percent of the present Indonesian-Arab

<sup>30</sup> This will be discussed in Chapter 5.

<sup>31</sup> F. de Haan, *Oud Batavia*, p. 378.

or Indo-Arab or peranakan Arab population, have been either born and/or raised in the archipelago.<sup>32</sup>

The Arabs emerged as a group living in Batavia mainly in the mid-nineteenth century, yet their influence is strongly expressed in the culture of *Kaum Betawi* nowadays.<sup>33</sup> They became concentrated in the areas of Krukut, Pekojan, Tanah Abang, Kwitang, Cawang and Meester Cornelis or Jatinegara. Most of those who came to Indonesia came from the Hadramaut part of southern Arabia, the majority of them from the *masikin* class in Hadramaut, groups of common folk which included itinerant traders. It may be noted that the word *masikin* probably found its way into the Indonesian language as *miskin*, meaning poor, small, or of no significance.<sup>34</sup> However, some claimed to be *Sayyids* (descendants of the Prophet) and others *Syech* (scholars of the religious nobility of Hadramaut), and were highly honoured by the Arabs themselves as well as by the Indonesians.<sup>35</sup>

Yet a popular differentiation was made by the natives, especially among the Orang Betawi, whose daily close encounters taught them how to distinguish 'orang Arab' (the Arab) and 'orang Hadramaut' (the Hadramaut). As a simple native of Cawang (now East-Jakarta) said: "de orang Arab, mijnheer, dienen wij te eerlen, daar zij afkomstig zijn van het land van onzen Profeet en hun ilmoe daardoor grooter is" "[the Arab, sir, served to be respected as his origin was from the land of our Prophet, and his knowledge, therefore is greater] but: "een orang Hadramaut lang niet hetzelfde als een orang Arab en zeker niet als een Sayyid" [a Hadramaut, not nearly as an Arab was and certainly not as a Sayyid

<sup>32</sup> J.M. van der Kroef, "The Arab Minority", in *Indonesian in the Modern World* (1954. Bandung: Masa Baru), part I, p. 250.

<sup>33</sup> Pauline D. Milone, "Queen City of the East; the Metamorphosis of a Colonial Capital" (1966. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. University of California, Berkeley), pp. 211-212, gives no further explanation of the origins of the name *Kaum Betawi*. Actually it derived from a political association called *Sarekat Kaum Betawi*, founded by M.H. Thamrin in May 1923.

<sup>34</sup> J.M. van der Kroef, "The Arab Minority", p. 255.

<sup>35</sup> Pauline D. Milone, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

was].<sup>36</sup> This distinction probably derived from a gradually developing pattern of social discrimination, which differentiated between those Arabs whose predatory trading methods and rapacious money lending activities had led to their unpopularity in many an Indonesian village, and those who did not engage in such sharp practices but were revered as Muslim teachers and scholars, and were thus more truly representative of the traditionally respected 'orang Arab'.<sup>37</sup>

Apart from money lending, many Arabs were involved in batik trading and house rental. Although there were two obstacles to their money lending activities, the prohibition on '*riba*' (interest) defined in the Quran, and Dutch government rulings against usury, the Arabs usually managed to find suitable ways to evade both.<sup>38</sup>

**The Japanese.** The Japanese involvement with the Dutch probably started in 1612, with their being employed as soldiers, serving in the VOC army or working on board ship. It was not uncommon for Japanese soldiers to be in service with British, Portuguese or Spanish companies as well, armed with bows and arrows.<sup>39</sup> After resigning from the VOC service, many Japanese found other occupations and settled in Batavia. They formed a group of Japanese burghers in 1620. F. de Haan noted a *kapitein der Japanners* [captain of the Japanese] already in position in 1616.<sup>40</sup> There were 130 Japanese burghers living in Batavia in 1623, although nine years later their number had fallen to 83.<sup>41</sup> A large number converted to Christianity and took Dutch-Christian first names,<sup>42</sup> such as Michiel, Abraham,

<sup>36</sup> See B.Th. Brongeest, "Een Zonderlinge Appreciatie de Hadramieten bij een Deel de Bataviaasche Bevolking", *Djawa*, vol. II, 1927, p. 117.

<sup>37</sup> J.M. van der Kroef, "The Arab Minority", pp. 255-256.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> F. de Haan, *Oud Batavia*, vol. I, p. 376.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Seiichi Iwao, "Japanese Emigrants in Batavia during the 17th Century", *Acta Asiatica*, no. 16, March 1970, p. 6.

<sup>42</sup> Several examples on these Japanese-Christians were recorded in the Daimia archives in Japan. Those were encouraged to convert Christianity in

Jeronimo, Jan, Simon and the like. Some of them held contract-leases on taxes, others engaged in sea trading or were involved in house-leasing for profit. In many cases they bought and rented houses for their own residence.

Most of the Japanese migrants in Batavia resided along the *Tijgersgracht* and *Heerengracht*, on the eastern bank of the Great River, Ciliwung. Others had houses at the *Malaccastraat* and *Jonkerstraat*, situated on the west bank of the river. Although the Batavia Government operated a segregation policy, dividing the areas of residence for its inhabitants, this did not completely apply to the foreigners, the Japanese and the Chinese. The Japanese, being freeburghers, probably found no hindrance in this case. It was said that before 1740 the Chinese resided anywhere: "*zij bewoonden overal in de stad de beste plaatzen*" [they occupy the best places in the town].<sup>43</sup> Very little material exists regarding the residential segregation of the Moors and Arabs, except that they preferred to live on the west bank of the Ciliwung, closer to the natives kampongs.

As a freeburgher, a Christian Japanese could ascend the social scale much as a European would. A notable example was Simon Simonsz van der Heijden from Hirado, a full blood Japanese, who strangely adopted a Dutch name. This name was probably derived from his personal achievements during his service to the Company, in which he worked his way up from licensed master, *shahbandar* [harbour-master] to *opperkoopman* [upper-merchant], or in the highest position in the VOC social strata in the Indies. He was also involved as *Diaconie* [Deacon], *Ouderling* [Eldership], *Boedelen Weesmeester* [Board of Property and Orphanage]. He died in 1673 as *burgerkoopman* [civil merchant].

A typical phenomenon in the social order of colonial Batavia, especially among the rich burghers (European,

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order to have the knowledge or secrets of firearms manufacture from the Western, see C.R. Boxer, "Note on Early European Military Influence in Japan, 1543-1813" in *Dutch Merchants and Mariners in Asia, 1602-1795* (1988. London: Vartorium Reprints), p. 70. For those who settled in Batavia, becoming a Christian would legally receive better status than the non-Christians.

<sup>43</sup> F. Valentijn, cited by F. de Haan, *Oud Batavia*, p. 382.

Foreign Asiatics) or even the native chiefs, was to have a number of slaves in the household. The number of slaves held by the Japanese, compared with Europeans or native chiefs, was by no means slight. Michiel Murakami Buzayemen from Nagasaki had thirty-three slaves, Jeronimo Marino Haru kept seventeen, while twelve were in the possession of Isabella from Nagasaki.<sup>44</sup>

As with many of the other inhabitants of Batavia, inter-racial marriage with natives, foreigners and Europeans, mostly Dutch, was not unusual for the Japanese. The Batavia civil registry of 1618-1659 shows that 106 marriages were entered into by Japanese - 73 male and 33 female. Eighty-four of these were mixed marriages, the remaining 22 being among the Japanese migrants themselves. Thirty-two of the people who registered their marriages were born in Nagasaki, fifteen were from Hirado, while the others were from various parts of Japan.<sup>45</sup>

The Japanese presence in Batavia during the VOC period was rather a short one, probably due to the Shogunate policy of exclusion in 1635, which closed Japan from contact with foreigners. In June 1636 the Shogun decreed that all Japanese residing overseas were barred from re-entering Japan, and, three years later, in June 1639, another decree banished all those Japanese women who had borne children of Dutch or Englishmen to Batavia with their offspring.<sup>46</sup> Although the policy of exclusion resulted in a rapid decline of Japanese towns and settlements in many parts of Asia, a different situation was experienced in Batavia. Since most of the Japanese were freeburghers and, economically speaking, not dependent on their native country, the policy of exclusion served to stabilize and promote their social activities overseas. Indeed the years 1625-1697 were the most successful period for Japanese migrant society in Batavia.<sup>47</sup> Records of the burial in 1735 of Abraham

<sup>44</sup> Seiichi Iwao, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 20.

<sup>46</sup> L. Blüssé, *Strange Company*, p. 185.

<sup>47</sup> Seiichi Iwao, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

Schermon, a descendant of a Christian-Japanese captain, Itsemon or Michiel Eijtemono, should be noted, for they reveal the last traces of Japanese settlement in Batavia. Dutch records after the eighteenth century scarcely mention them.

**The Mardijkers.** G.E. Rumphius, the seventeenth century German naturalist who laid the foundations of Dutch knowledge of the East Indies, noted that the Mardijkers were foreign inhabitants of Batavia. The name originated from the Sanskrit, *mahardhika*,<sup>48</sup> which later became *mardika*, expressing that they were free men (*mardika* means free) not slaves.

There is an area in present day North Jakarta called *Tanah Merdeka* which in the Indonesian language means land of the free; this is the area that was formerly granted by the Company exclusively for the use of the Mardijkers. When Coen brought additional forces from the Moluccas to break the joint attack by the English and Pangeran Wijaya Krama's troops in 1619, there were among them the so-called '*swarten Christenen*'<sup>49</sup> (black Christians). These people were the product of previous Portuguese contacts in the eastern islands of the archipelago; the term Mardijkers was often mentioned in Amboin and Ternate after 1616. Thus the Batavia Mardijkers spoke neither a native language nor the Dutch, but Portuguese. They also distinguished themselves, particularly from the indigenous inhabitants, as they were Christians, not slaves, and through their European style of dress - wearing hats, shoes and socks. It is interesting to note how the Mardijkers adopted either Portuguese or Dutch names, as they were previously freed slaves from Bengal, Arakan, Malabar or the Coromandel coast. Portuguese names were usually adopted in remembrance of a godfather when they were baptized, from which the names of Pareira, da Costa and others came. Dutch names were taken from a sponsor of christening: for instance, a certain Pieter from

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<sup>48</sup> F. de Haan, *Oud Batavia*, p. 392.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 404.

Malabar converted to Christianity and having been freed with a Jan Willems as his sponsor, was therefore called 'Pieter Willems', receiving the status of burgher. His wife, Maria van de Cust, meaning she was from Malabar, changed her name to Maria Pieters.<sup>50</sup> Therefore it was not surprising to find many Dutch names in the marriage registers of the Portuguese Reformed Church in Batavia, even though their owners had not a drop of Dutch blood or spoke Dutch. For example, the above-mentioned Pieter Willems signed his notarial papers in Tamil characters.<sup>51</sup>

As Christians, the Mardijker had more privileges than non-Christians. As an example of such discrimination, a regulation of 1642 said that payment for a non-Christian who was to be sold as a slave due to debt should be less than the amount of the debt. Although this ridiculous law was abolished in 1766, it was re-issued in 1778. And after 1770 Christians who were in debt were no longer put in handcuffs, or subjected to chained punishment at all after 1773. Even in prison Christians received better food than non-Christians.<sup>52</sup> Owing to his privileged status, a Mardijker burgher could achieve a social prestige which surpassed the European. This was the story of Augustijn Michiels who was known as '*de laatste der Mardijkers*' [the last of the Mardijkers] and as the richest landowner in Java.<sup>53</sup> From a father who was a Portuguese hawker, Augustijn Michiels managed to build a fortune as a landowner in many areas of Batavia and Buitenzorg where his famous Indies mansion, Tjitrap,<sup>54</sup> was located. He owned 117 slaves, 48 free servants, 24 stable boys, 28 grass-cutters, 20 persons working in the bakery, one smith and

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 405.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 413.

<sup>53</sup> F. de Haan, "De Laatste der Mardijkers", *BKI*, vol. 73, 1917, p. 225; for his exuberant life-style, see also Mona Lohanda, "Majoor Jantje and the Indisch Element of the Betawi Folkmusic", *The Dutch-Indonesian Historical Conference*, June 1980 (1982. Leiden-Jakarta: Indonesian Studies Programme), pp. 378-392.

<sup>54</sup> V.I. van der Wall, *Indische Landhuizen en Hun Geschiedenis* (1932. Batavia: G. Kolff & Co).

one saddle-maker, four *ronggeng* dancers, two *topeng* dancers and two *gamelan* orchestra players. Augustijn Michiels was also 'kapitein der Papangers' [captain of the Papangers company] in the VOC army, and after 20 years in service he asked for retirement in September 1807. He was granted the honorary rank of major in the Papangers company. No one was appointed after him to the position, and he died in January 1833.

The Papangers probably came from the Papango region, one of the richest provinces in the island of Luzon in the Philippines, located close to the bay of Manila.<sup>55</sup> They were renowned as brave soldiers, serving in the Spanish army after the conquest of Pampango in 1752, and their presence in the Moluccas dated back to 1613. From the outset, all Asian soldiers of the Spanish and Portuguese armies were taken as prisoners of war by the Dutch company, when the European powers were rivals in the region. It is said that in 1633 there was the first Papanger in Batavia.<sup>56</sup> After being in military service for many years in the VOC, they were freed and received civil status as burghers.

**The Mestizo.** There was a clear distinction between the Mestizo and the Mardijkers, based on their origins. The Mestizo, more or less, had European blood, while the Mardijkers were purely Asian born, though both were Christian.

In the final quarter of the eighteenth century, the name Mardijkers was no longer commonly encountered in the daily life of Batavia, it was now the Mestizo, whose culture displayed a mixture of life-styles in the Asian colonial city, a mixture in which the European was combined with many indigenous elements. This was the 'Indisch culture'<sup>57</sup> -

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<sup>55</sup> John Crawfurd, *A Descriptive Dictionary of the Indian Archipelago & Adjacent Countries* (1971. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press. First published in 1856. London), p. 324.

<sup>56</sup> F. de Haan, *Oud Batavia*, vol. I, p. 399.

<sup>57</sup> See J.G. Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia; European and Eurasian in Dutch Asia* (1983. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press) and Pauline D. Milone, "Indisch Culture and Its Relationship to Urban Life", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, no. IX, July 1967, pp.407-426.

neither pure European nor pure Indonesian - which continued throughout the next two centuries until independence.

As far as civil rights were concerned, it is important to note that the Mestizo suffered a certain amount of social discrimination. If the widow of a Dutch civil servant applied for a pension, she was questioned on the colour of her skin: fair, light or black complexion. The more pigment she had, the less payment she would receive.<sup>58</sup> In charity-houses, it is said that the European obtained better treatment than the Mestizo, while the Mardijkers got even less.

However, there were some notable Mestizos in the history of Batavia, such as the notorious Pieter Erberveldt for his conspiracy in December 1721, and Andries Teissiere, a leading member of the Batavia Association for Art and Science [*Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*] who wrote several articles on the *Ommelanden* of Batavia when he became a land surveyor and opened sugar farms there. Another famous Mestizo of Batavia was Frederick Ribald, who died in 1695, formerly a chief surgeon in the Company service, who then became a rich burgher. The land on which he lived in the old part of the city, now in West Jakarta, was known as *gang Ribal* (Ribald passage) by the indigenous Batavian. Among the governor-generals of the Dutch-East-Indies, there were individuals with mestizo blood such as Willem van Outhoorn (1691-1704) and Dirk van Cloon (1732-1735) who were born and bred in the Indies.

### The Natives

It is generally agreed that the present *Orang Betawi*, the original Batavia/Jakarta people, were descended from a mixed blend of elements: Balinese slaves, Dutch or European soldiers, Chinese or Arab traders, Buginese or Amboinese soldiers, Malay captains, Javanese *prajurits* (soldiers) of Mataram, Sundanese free men or Mestizo freeburghers. The

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<sup>58</sup> F. de Haan, *Oud Batavia*, vol. I, p. 422.

formation of this ethnic group took place after the arrival of the Western powers and also Asian visitors involved in the coastal trade of Java, leading to the emergence of the *Orang Betawi* by the mid-nineteenth century. The vocabulary of their mother tongue consists of words from Javanese and Sundanese, Balinese, Dutch, Portuguese, Chinese and Arabic. Its grammatical structure, thought to be based on low or bazaar-Malay, has the affix *in*, deriving from Balinese.<sup>59</sup> The present Bahasa Indonesia is regarded as *bahasa Melayu-Tinggi* (high Malay) by the common *Orang Betawi*, despite sharing a related linguistic root, Malay.

For the Betawi Muslim, religion constitutes a strong identity, as it represents the contrast between them and non-Muslims such as the Dutch and the Chinese. It was very rare to find *Orang Betawi* in the early twentieth century who had received a Dutch education, as most of their schooling consisted of religious teaching, such as the art of reciting the Quran, Islamic law and customs. In correspondence with this strong religious identity, Arab and Malay influences have given particular Islamic characteristics to many Betawi traditional customs.

On the other hand, the Chinese also asserted their cultural influence on Betawi culture. Among the peranakan Chinese living in Java are the so-called *Cina-Betawi* who, due to their long establishment in this region, have contributed Chinese elements to Betawi traditional arts, and whose influence is also encountered, in theatre, dance, language and cookery. European influences, such as those of the Dutch and Portuguese, have been absorbed by the *Indos*.<sup>60</sup>

To discuss the main elements in shaping the *Orang Betawi*, one has to consider the social structure of the VOC period, namely slaves, soldiers, free men and traders. The first two, being mainly natives of other islands in the

<sup>59</sup> C. Lekkerkerker, "De Baliers van Batavia", *De Indische Gids*, vol. I, 1918, p. 412.

<sup>60</sup> For further information see Paul W. van der Veur, "Cultural Aspects of the Eurasian Community in Indonesian Colonial Society", *Indonesia*, no. 6, October 1968, pp. 38-53.

archipelago, played the largest role in shaping the *Orang Betawi*.

Before the Muslim kingdoms of the early fifteenth century, slaves were unknown in both the Javanese and Sundanese traditions. Kings and royal court families kept *abdi dalem* [*abdi* =loyal attendant, *dalem* =court, palace], a service which was based on devotion and traditional beliefs. Later, slavery became known through Dutch trading activities. On the other hand, slaves and slavery were common in the traditional customs of the peoples of Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Bali and the eastern islands. A person could become a slave for his debt, or as a punishment for customary law offences, or as a prisoner of tribal wars or because of marriage; (someone who married a slave was regarded as a slave), or because of his/her birth.<sup>61</sup>

During the siege of Jakarta, all the native Sundanese inhabitants of this small harbour fled, leaving the city with no manpower; thus the VOC had to repopulate the city. Apart from Coen's effort to persuade the Chinese to move to Batavia, the VOC transferred slaves from Malacca and the Malabar coast to the city, and later from Bali and Sulawesi too.<sup>62</sup> In the following years VOC raids to various parts of the archipelago made it possible to transport slaves from the eastern islands such as Timor, Flores, Sumbawa and from South Kalimantan. Balinese female slaves were in great demand for European households and for the Chinese. Many Chinese male migrants preferred to marry Balinese, mostly slaves, who afterwards received the status of a free person. European households kept Balinese female slaves for domestic work or even as part of a dowry.<sup>63</sup> According to the census of 1673, of the total population of 27,068 in Batavia and its vicinity, there were 13,278 slaves; and in the year 1788, 30,620 of a total population of 134,328

<sup>61</sup> *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indie*, vol. III, p. 803.

<sup>62</sup> M.L. van Deventer, *Geschiedenis der Nederlander op Java* (n.d. Haarlem: H.D. Tjeenk Willink), p. 242.

<sup>63</sup> C. Lekkerkerker, "De Baliers van Batavia", pp. 415-416.

were slaves. The number of slaves decreased during the governorship of Thomas Stamford Raffles, from 18,972 in 1814 to 14,239 in 1815.<sup>64</sup> Female slaves had a higher financial value, especially if they were young and had a good figure. But male slaves of a strong posture were also at an advantage, becoming soldiers in the VOC army. A notorious example of the story 'from slave to soldier' can be found in the person of Surapati, a Balinese slave in Batavia who subsequently joined the VOC army; he was given the name 'Untung' which means luck. He was involved in murder, so he took refuge in Bantam. His courage brought him to Mataram, where he was welcomed by the Court. He established his authority in Pasuruan, East Java, and for about twenty years (1686-1706) he was regarded as a tough, undefeatable enemy of the VOC.<sup>65</sup>

Recruitment of native soldiers into the VOC army was common, in which each native soldier became a member of their ethnic company. There were Amboinese, Balinese, Menadonese, Madurese, Bandanese, Sumbawanese, Malay and Buginese companies in the VOC forces. As there were both Christian (Amboinese, Menadonese, Timorese) and non-Christian (Malays, Madurese, Balinese, Sumbawanese and Buginese) they were often sent to quell uprisings, riots, any kind of native disturbance in many parts of the archipelago.

A captain of the Amboinese company in Batavia, Jonker from Manipa island, who had fought for the VOC in Timor, the north coast of Sumatra, Celebes, the north coast of Java, Palembang, Bantam and even in Ceylon, was granted the land of Marunda (in present North Jakarta). The name of the canal street, *Jonkersgracht*, was probably taken from his former residence, located on the west bank of the Ciliwung river. However, the last few years of his life were spent in conflict with the VOC, and he was killed in 1669.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 417 - 418.

<sup>65</sup> For a comprehensive study of Surapati, see Ann Kumar, *Surapati, Man and Legend; a Study of Three Babad Traditions* (1976. Leiden: E.J. Brill).

<sup>66</sup> F. de Haan, *Oud Batavia*, vol. I, p. 372.

Other notable persons in this category of native soldier were Aru Patuju from Bone and Arung Palakka from Soppeng. Both were members of royal families in Celebes who joined the VOC army to fight against Sultan Hasanuddin of Makassar. Aru Patuju and his followers settled in *kampong Petojo* (now in Central Jakarta) which was named after him. Arung Palakka, after being restored to his throne in Soppeng, later turned to fight against the Dutch.

The only Sumbawanese noted in the Dutch records was the captain of the ethnic company, Abdullah Saban. He had a gold medal and honorary sword bestowed on him for his courage in breaking the British blockade at Batavia in October 1800.<sup>67</sup> In 1807 he recaptured a Dutch brig from the British, which resulted in his being made a first lieutenant in the Royal Dutch Marine.<sup>68</sup> He died in 1813.

As the Sundanese, Javanese and Malays were the earliest Indonesians to have close contacts with Jakarta and later Batavia, the background needs to be examined.

Given the geographical position of old Jakarta, formerly a harbour-city of the inland kingdom of Pajajaran in West-Java (known as *Tanah Sunda* - land of the Sundanese) it is quite clear that the roots of the *Orang Betawi* are Sundanese.<sup>69</sup> This may explain why there is no kampong Sunda in Batavia, though kampong Jawa and kampong Melayu still exist in the modern city.

The obvious Javanese and Sundanese influences, especially in the Betawi language, probably owe their origins to Mataram soldiers sent by Sultan Agung (1613-1645) to attack Batavia in 1628 and 1629. One of his commanders-in-chief was Dipati Ukur<sup>70</sup> from West Java. There is no doubt that Sundanese *prajurits* were also numerous among the Mataram troops. Although the Mataram attacks were unsuccessful, a great number of Javanese

<sup>67</sup> P.A. Leupe, "Dapper Gedrag van den Commandant der Sumbawareezen, Abdullah te Batavia 1800", *BKI*, vol. 3, 1879, pp. 337-338.

<sup>68</sup> F. de Haan, *Oud Batavia*, vol. I, p. 375.

<sup>69</sup> *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indie*, vol. I, p. 186.

<sup>70</sup> See E.S. Ekadjati, *Ceritera Dipati Ukur: Karya Sastra Sejarah Sunda* (1982. Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya).

soldiers did not return to their homeland but settled in Batavia instead. Some of them made their dwellings in the areas to the east of the Ciliwung river, leading to the Great Southern way. The Dutch called them *de ooster-Javanen*, meaning the Javanese of the eastern kampongs, while those who settled in the western areas of the river were called *de wester-Javanen*, or the Javanese of the western kampongs.<sup>71</sup>

It is rather difficult to trace the origins of the Malays in Batavia, whether they came from Riau, Sumatra, the Malay peninsula or Patani. There is a need for further study of local Malay writings. However, as the Betawi people have no tradition of written documentation, despite the fact that the older generation of *Orang Betawi* were familiar with *Jawi* (Arabic-Malay), sources on the Malay elements may not easily be discovered.

### **From *Kasteelplein* to *Waterlooplein***

*Kasteelplein* (Batavia castle square) and *Waterlooplein* (or Waterloo square)<sup>72</sup> in *Weltevreden*, now Central Jakarta, were the two places that symbolized the movement of the Dutch centre of power. *Kasteelplein* represented the period of Company rule, 1612-1800, concentrated in the old city, or Intramuros; it was in the *Waterlooplein* compound that most of the government offices of the Netherlands Indies were concentrated.

In the history of the city of Batavia, the movement of the Dutch administration from the northern part, the Castle of Batavia, to the southern area of Weltevreden may be explained in terms of the city's hinterland relations, which were operated by the VOC.

A port city such as Batavia could achieve growth only if the surrounding countryside was pacified and then exploited, to sustain the needs of the city. But in the case

<sup>71</sup> F. de Haan, *Oud Batavia*, vol. I, p. 369.

<sup>72</sup> This square was named by Governor-General H.W. Daendels (1803-1811) in memory of the battle of Waterloo.

of Batavia the exploitation of the *Ommelanden* was mainly to support the trade policies of the VOC and not the city itself. Particularly as there was no separate administration of the city of Batavia from the central authority of the VOC. Therefore in terms of self-maintenance, Batavia was never an independent city. The Batavia freeburghers desired a city which was not be manipulated by VOC officials. This idea was also held strongly by the founder, Jan Pieterszoon Coen, who was impressed by the endurance of Portuguese colonies in Asia, which despite being cut off from the mother country were still able to maintain economic independence. Yet to the Gentlemen Seventeen in Holland an independent city government was considered a threat to their own interests. The idea was brushed aside. The decision was made that all administrative organs in Batavia were to be directed by VOC officials, mostly members of the Council of the Indies, thereby binding the city's functions to the business of the Company.<sup>73</sup>

Since its establishment, the VOC had to cover its running costs in the Indies. This turned out to be a severe undertaking for the Company, and its enormous expenses drove it to demand more and more from the Javanese authorities. These demands, which were stated in various treaties, led to further resistance and rebellion which incurred even more expense.<sup>74</sup> And although the VOC was in the red, its officials were not really concerned since the Company was to them a great source of wealth. They took advantage of their position as VOC officials to engage in private trade and smuggling, or make investments with embezzled funds.<sup>75</sup>

The Company also suffered from pirate attacks in Indonesian waters, which damaged the monopolistic policy of the VOC as the so-called 'zeerovers' were often engaged in trade with local authorities. In addition, wars with the

<sup>73</sup> L. Blussé, *Strange Company*, p. 25.

<sup>74</sup> M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 83.

<sup>75</sup> E.S. de Klerck, *History of the Netherlands East Indies*, vol. I, p.429; L. Blussé, *op. cit.*, p.20.

English caused the loss of valuable cargos, and for almost three years before 1800 no vessels, troops or funds arrived<sup>76</sup>, the Company could hardly continue trading without the support of the home country.<sup>77</sup>

As a trading company which later came to rule the country, the VOC came to derive its income more from taxes, tolls, leases or contracts than from commercial activities as in the past. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the Company's trade had practically ceased in Java.<sup>78</sup> Threats from outside were not the only cause of the downfall of the Company. Internally the administration was rotten, and it was mismanagement and corruption that finally sunk the wreck. In its financial management, the Company kept double books which were accounted separately, vessels were overloaded with the goods of VOC officials to be sold at good prices, its dividends bore no relation to the profits, and the income was divided among the Directors and their friends<sup>79</sup>; administration was executed at luxurious expense. VOC then no longer stood for the *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* [United East Indies Company] but '*Vergaan onder Corruptie*' (ruined by corruption). On 1 January 1800 the famous Dutch trading enterprise in Asia came to an end, with debts of about 134,000,000 guilders. As for its territories in the Indies, these were to be temporarily ruled by the Council of Asiatic Possessions [*Committee voor Aziatische Bezittingen*].

It is interesting to note that the end of VOC rule in Batavia was also marked by a decline in the use of Portuguese in the city. Until the second half of the eighteenth century, Portuguese was still the means of communication between the various ethnic groups in Batavia, both Western and non-Western. It is said that its use was more common than that of Malay: it came to be

<sup>76</sup> E.S. de Klerck, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 429.

<sup>77</sup> Clive Day, *The Policy and Administration of the Dutch in Java* (1966. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press. First published in 1904. London: The MacMillan & Co.Ltd.), p.75.

<sup>78</sup> E.S. de Klerck, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 429.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 433.

identified with the middle-class, those between the sovereign ruler and the ruled.<sup>80</sup>

The importance of Portuguese in Batavia for almost the entire period of VOC rule is demonstrated by the fact that a public order, *Ordonnantie voor de Wijkmeesters in de Stad en Zuijder-Voorstad* which was issued on 19 December 1747 in Dutch had to be translated into Portuguese in order to make it publicly known<sup>81</sup> and better understood. However, to James Cook, who visited Batavia in 1767, the language sounded like a Portuguese Creole; it was more Malay than genuine Portuguese.<sup>82</sup> By the end of the eighteenth century, this 'corrupted' Portuguese was taught only in orphanage schools as these children did not understand Dutch. By 1807 the Notary Public no longer filed Portuguese texts with their transactions, although prior to 1815 the catechism of the Portuguese Reformed Church of Batavia might still be used. The last appearance of Portuguese in Batavia was a farewell announcement in a newspaper on 28 June 1823.<sup>83</sup> Together with the fading of Portuguese, the Mardijkers also disappeared. The leading roles now came to be played by the Dutch and the Mestizo, increasingly known as *Indos*, the Indies-born Dutch of native mothers.

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<sup>80</sup> Ronald Daus, *Portuguese Eurasian Communities in Southeast Asia* (1989). Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), p. 32.

<sup>81</sup> F. de Haan, *Oud Batavia*, vol. I, p. 407.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*; see also his "De Laatste der Mardijkers", p. 236.

<sup>83</sup> Ronald Daus, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

## 2 THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE KAPITAN SYSTEM

This chapter aims to trace the origins of the system by which the non-indigenous communities were ruled in the various port cities of the archipelago. The long established institution of *sahbandar* was already in place long before the arrival of westerners. It is my argument that the Dutch adapted the idea of the *sahbandar* to their *kapitan* institution. The *sahbandar* was an official dealing with mercantile and foreign relations; the form was taken over by the western colonists (Portuguese, Dutch and later British) and utilized to rule the non-indigenous inhabitants in their colonies. This will be discussed in the last part of this chapter.

Much writing on trade in the Eastern seas mention the existence of the *sabandar*, *shahbandar* or *syahbandar* without any further explanation or description other than a definition of port officer<sup>1</sup>, or *havenmeester*.<sup>2</sup> Accounts of journeys undertaken by western travellers also mention the same official, written in their own spelling, such as *Xabandar*,<sup>3</sup> *shahbandar*,<sup>4</sup> or *sabandar*,<sup>5</sup> as John Davis noted during his visit to Aceh in 1599.

Although the initial establishment of the *sahbandar* will never be precisely known, as no one can clearly indicate exactly when trading in the archipelago first commenced, to trace its early existence it is necessary to go back to the

<sup>1</sup> R. Winstedt, *Malaya and Its History* (1966. London: Hutchinson Library), p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> H. Djajadiningrat, *Critische Beschouwingen van de Sadjarah Banten* (1913. Haarlem: John Enschede & Zoon), pp. 23, 42.

<sup>3</sup> A. Cortesao, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires and the Book of Francisco Rodrigues* (1944. London: The Hakluyt Society), vol. II, pp. 265, 270, 273.

<sup>4</sup> John Anderson, *Missions to the East Coast of Sumatra in 1823* (1971. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press. First published in 1826. Edinburgh: William Blackwood), p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> A.H. Markham (ed), *The Voyages and Works of John Davis, The Navigator* (1880. London: The Hakluyt Society), pp. 142, 143, 150.

years of the coastal kingdoms or port cities of the archipelago. This involves examining either local traditional writings or the accounts of journeys made by the first western travellers, supplemented by the documents of Dutch and Portuguese officers during their first contacts in the Eastern seas.

### The Sources

The archipelago at that time is understood to cover the states along the Malacca Straits, through to the eastern parts of contemporary Indonesia. The sources originating from those coastal kingdoms, consist of Malay traditional writings, particularly those with a historical emphasis such as *sejarah*, *syair*,<sup>6</sup> *salasilah*, *tarikh* and *hikayat*. Unfortunately, these traditional writings cannot be counted as sources for the establishment of the sahbandar. *Sejarah*, *salasilah*, *tarikh*, *hikayat* are literary forms mainly devoted to the Rajas and Sultans and their families. For the greatest part, they describe the royal surroundings, royal disputes, court life or war with other kingdoms. This is quite understandable, as such writings were executed under the Sultan's orders. Although there are sometimes a few lines relating to the trading activities of the kingdom, they do not say much about how trade was conducted or how the person in charge of foreign commerce performed his duties. I discovered this by examining the *Sejarah Melayu* (*Sulalatus Salatina*),<sup>7</sup> *Kronika Pasai*<sup>8</sup> and *Adat Raja-Raja Melayu*.<sup>9</sup> *Syair* dealing with Dutch attacks on Makassar and Siak mentioned the involvement of the sahbandar, yet there was almost nothing on how his authority functioned.

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<sup>6</sup> Descriptions of specific events or with a historical background, such as *Sya'ir Perang Mengkasar*, *Sya'ir Perang Siak*, *Sya'ir Welanda Berperang Melawan Cina*, *Sya'ir Singapura Dimakan Api*, and many others.

<sup>7</sup> A. Samad Ahmad, *Sulalatus Salatina* (1979. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka).

<sup>8</sup> T. Ibrahim Alfian, *Kronika Pasai, Sebuah Tinjauan Sejarah* (1973. Yogyakarta: Gajah Mada University Press).

<sup>9</sup> T. Hadidjaja, *Adat Raja-Raja Melayu* (1964. Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Antara).

Another form of Malay traditional literature was the *undang-undang*, or law. Again, this was not very enlightening; there are various references to sahbandar but without further explanation. The most outstanding is the *Undang-Undang Melaka*, which consists of two parts: the *undang-undang darat* (land law) and the *undang-undang laut* (maritime law).<sup>10</sup> The *Undang-Undang Melaka* was established and completed during the golden years of the Malacca Sultanate under Sultan Mahmud Syah (1424-1444) and Sultan Muzaffar Syah (1445-1458). However, problems in consulting the *Undang-Undang Melaka*, particularly its *undang-undang laut*, relate to the fact that it has never been established which of the various versions is the complete text, and also that very few *fasal* or chapters are devoted to the institution of sahbandar. Nevertheless, comparison of one version with the others, might yield slightly more information about the sahbandar. In terms of nature and content, a similar form to the Malay *hikayat* or *sejarah* is the *babad*, a form of Javanese traditional writing.

Whereas the roots of the Malay tradition lie in the Malacca Sultanate, the genesis of the Javanese tradition lay in the kingdom of Majapahit, and the later Sultanate of Mataram. Both Javanese kingdoms, Majapahit and Mataram, were hinterlands, concentrating on agrarian production, especially of rice, salt and other foodstuffs, commodities which led the Javanese to trade in the Eastern seas. Yet this involvement was not attached to the royal court, as was the case with the coastal *adipati* of Eastern Java and parts of Central Java, which actively took part in commerce and sea trading. The *adipatis* might be independent rulers,<sup>11</sup> but they still paid an annual tribute to the Sultan of Mataram. On the

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<sup>10</sup> Liauw Yock Fang, *Undang-Undang Melaka; A Critical Edition* (1976. The Hague: H.L. Smits), p. 1. The *Undang-Undang Melaka* was adopted in many parts of the Malay Archipelago, which had their own versions, such as *Undang-Undang Melayu*, *Undang-Undang Negeri*, *Undang-Undang Johor*, *Undang-Undang Pahang*, *Undang-Undang Kedah*, with striking resemblances to the original.

<sup>11</sup> B.J.O. Schrieke, "Shifts in Political and Economic Power in the Indonesian Archipelago in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century", in *Indonesian Sociological Studies*, (1955. The Hague: W. van Hoeve), vol. I, pp. 3-82.

other hand, the inland Javanese courts paid little regard to money-making, which may explain why the sahbandar is hardly mentioned in their *babad keraton*.

The famous *Nagarakertagama* written by Prapanca in 1362 mentions various high ranks in the Majapahit kingdom, yet no title involved in trading activities. Although the text includes an incomplete "Ferry Chapter of 1358", there are only a few lines touching on sea trade: "...further if while a ferryman has put on board the cart of an *akalang* (trader), whatsoever the merchandise, then that merchandise falls into the water, then that ferryman shall not be charged, but then he shall not be given ferriage if that merchandise is lost.....".<sup>12</sup> Other lines of this "Ferry Chapter" deal with customs and taxes. Yet in his commentary and recapitulation, Pigeaud offers enlightening notes on the socio-economic activities of Majapahit.<sup>13</sup>

As has been mentioned earlier, Javanese sea trading was undertaken by the coastal chiefs, some of whom might be *bupati pasisiran* whilst others were from the noble ranks. Coastal areas under Mataram were known as *pasisiran*; therefore it is probable that the *babads* written in the residences of *bupati pasisir* [coastal regents] should contain accounts of trading activities and Javanese port-cities. In fact there are some *babads* concerning the *pasisiran* areas, such as *Babad Demak Pasisiran*, *Babad Gresik*, *Babad Pasuruan* and others. However, in the field of Javanese philology more attention has been paid to the *babad keraton*; studies of the *babad pasisiran* are still in their infancy.<sup>14</sup> Lack of skill in old Javanese, especially in written texts, discouraged me to go beyond this.

The coastal kingdoms of West Java, Bantam and Cirebon do not disclose much information on the sahbandar either. Bantam was known as the harbour-kingdom of the (Indonesian) archipelago together with Aceh and Makassar.

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<sup>12</sup> Th.G.Th. Pigeaud, *Java in the 14th century; A Study in Cultural History* (1960. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff), vol. III, Translation, pp. 160-161.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. IV, 'Commentaries and Recapitulation' (1962. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff), pp.38-39, 290-292, 494-504, 500-504.

<sup>14</sup> Personal communication with Ben Arps, 7 May 1991.

Cirebon was less well known but was one of the oldest port cities in Java along with Demak, Japara, Tuban and Gresik, according to Chinese sources.<sup>15</sup> Both the *Babad Cirebon* and the *Tjarita Purwaka Tjaruban Nagari* are mainly concerned with the *silsilah* or *asal-usul* of the royal families, especially Fatahillah, Falatehan and Sunan Gunung Jati, as is the *Sejarah Banten*, though the latter also consider the first encounter with the Dutch and the peace treaty made between Bantam and the VOC in 1659.<sup>16</sup>

The Buginese, who are renowned seafarers, codified their maritime law in the seventeenth century, although their sea trading activities had been flourishing since the early sixteenth century. The Buginese code of maritime law was compiled by Amanna Gappa in 1676 and was still in force in the Indonesian Archipelago until 1937.<sup>17</sup> The code is, to some extent, still used in an adapted form by Buginese *nakhoda* or sea-captains within the South Celebes Sea. Amanna Gappa was the third *Matoa* or chieftain of the Wajo people who lived in Makassar in the seventeenth century; he compiled the maritime law in conjunction with other Buginese *Matoa*. As was the customary practice in those days, this maritime law was repeatedly copied, with the result that many versions have subsequently been found.

According to Ph.L.Tobing there are eighteen *Iontaras* (Buginese manuscripts which were originally written on palm leaves) of the Buginese maritime code, which are kept in the custody of the Yayasan Kebudayaan Sulawesi Selatan (South Sulawesi Cultural Association)<sup>18</sup> in Ujungpandang. Most of the codes are covered in 31 *fasal* or chapters

<sup>15</sup> P. Groeneveldt, *Notes on the Malay and Indonesian Archipelago from the Chinese Sources* (1974. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff).

<sup>16</sup> *Babad Cirebon*, translated by S.Z. Hadisutjipto (1982. Jakarta: Balai Pustaka); Atja, *Tjarita Purwaka Tjaruban Nagari* (1972. Jakarta: Ikatan Karyawan Museum) stenciled text; for *Sejarah Banten*, see H. Djajadiningrat, *op. cit.*

<sup>17</sup> For the maritime law of Amanna Gappa, see J.L.J. Caron, *Het Handels-en Zeerecht in de Adatrechtsregelen van den Rechtskring Zuid-Celebes* (1953. Bussum: C.A.J. van Dishoeck).

<sup>18</sup> Ph.L.Tobing, *Hukum Pelayaran dan Perdagangan Amanna Gappa* (1977. Ujungpandang: Yayasan Kebudayaan Sulawesi Selatan), p. 25.

relating to sea trading, navigation, ship's crews, sea-captain, shiploads, ship equipment, debt and disputes among traders, but only three of the eighteen *lontaras* mention the code for sahbandar.<sup>19</sup>

The sahbandar's office in the twin kingdom of Makassar (Gowa and Tello) was formerly chaired by a *tumarilalang* [a position similar to *Bendahara* in the Malay sultanate]; by the mid-sixteenth century the office of sahbandar was, for the first time, filled by an officer called *I Daeng ri Mangalekana*.<sup>20</sup>

My examination of other Buginese traditional writings such as chronicles, diaries<sup>21</sup> and *syair* (written by the Malays) did not supply much further detail on the sahbandar. The general lack of data on the sahbandar in the sources from the local harbour kingdoms led me to a more extensive examination of non-local sources - namely the accounts of the Dutch and Portuguese.

The earliest non-local sources on the Malay archipelago include accounts of the first contacts made when western travellers visited the region. Although these travellers' accounts do not specify the sahbandar's function, there are some indications as to how the sahbandar went about his work. Other sources are written documents or archives of the early Dutch period in the archipelago, such as the *Daghregisters gehouden in het Casteel Batavia* [Daily Records kept in the Castle of Batavia] of the 17th-18th century, the *Generale Missiven van Gouverneur-Generaal en*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 31, 34; R. Winstedt & J.P.B. de Josselin de Jong, in "The Maritime Law of Malacca", *JMBRAS*, vol. 29, no. 3, 1956, pp. 22-59 say nothing about sahbandar, neither does P.A. Leupe in "Wetboek voor Zeevarenden van het Koninkrijk Makassar en Boegies op het Eiland Celebes", *TNI*, vol. I, 1849, pp. 305-317.

<sup>20</sup> The title Daeng ri Mangalekana shows that the sahbandar had his seat in Mangalekana, where mostly Malay inhabitants settled in Makassar. Sahbandar in Buginese is *sabannara*; see Mattulada, *Menyusuri Jejak Kehadiran Makassar dalam Sejarah, 1500-1700* (1982. Makassar: Bhakti Baru-Berita Utama), pp. 13, 28-29.

<sup>21</sup> For example, the diary of the Kings of Gowa and Tello; see A. Ligtvoet, "Transcriptie van het Dagboek der Vorsten van Gowa en Tello", *BKI*, 1880, pp. 1-259.

*Raden aan Heeren XVII der Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* [General Official Letters of the Governor-General and the Council of the Indies to the Gentlemen Seventeen of the Dutch East Indies Company], and also a compilation of treaties and agreements concluded with local authorities, in the *Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlando-Indicum*.<sup>22</sup>

The only scholarly writings that directly focus on the sahbandar are by W.H. Moreland<sup>23</sup> and P. Purbatjaraka,<sup>24</sup> which discuss how the office was carried out or the meaning of the title. G.J. Resink in his notes emphasizes the position of sahbandar within its legal context and international relationships.<sup>25</sup> However, an effort should be made to obtain a clearer picture of how the office became established. Although it seems probable that in its early days the office of sahbandar might not have been as complicated as it later became, its importance was beyond doubt. John Anderson notes: "We moved our baggage into the house of a respectable inhabitant, Che Abang, close to shabundar Samper's house. The latter had gone two days before to Delli. Naqueda Amal was acting during his absence, but nothing could be done, without the shabundar, who is the principal man there".<sup>26</sup>

### The Sahbandar

The word was originally derived from the Persian *shah-bandar* which literally means 'King of the Haven', or harbour

<sup>22</sup> J.E. Heeres, *Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlando-Indicum*, vol. I, 1596-1650, in *BKI*, no. 57, 1907, pp. 1-551; vol. II, 1650-1675, in *BKI*, no. 87, 1931, pp. 1-582.

<sup>23</sup> W.H. Moreland, "The Shahbandar in the Eastern Seas", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1920, pp. 517-553; for a comment on Moreland's article, see C.O. Blagden, "Shahbandar and Bendahara", *ibid.*, 1921, pp. 246-248.

<sup>24</sup> P. Purbatjaraka, "Shahbandar in the Archipelago", *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, vol. 2, no. 2, July 1961, pp. 1-9.

<sup>25</sup> G.J. Resink, *Indonesia's History Between the Myths; Essays in Legal History and Historical Theory* (1986. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff) especially, "The Law of Nations in Early Makassar", pp. 39-58; "Independent Rulers, Realms and Lands in Indonesia, 1850-1910", pp. 107-148; "Centuries of International Law in Indonesia", pp. 189-224.

<sup>26</sup> John Anderson, *Mission to the East Coast of Sumatra in 1823*, p. 47.

master, the title of an officer found at native ports all over the Indian seas. The sahbandar was the chief authority for any transactions with foreign traders and ship-masters, and was often also the head of Customs.<sup>27</sup> Marsden gives the additional information that the sahbandar was "in some places to manage the trade for the King".<sup>28</sup> This function of dealing with foreign trade and foreign merchants is illustrated in *Tuhfat-al-Nafis* (Precious Gift); " ..... *Adapun Yang Dipertuan Muda selalu lah ia menyuruh pulang-pergi ke Melaka karena waktu itu sudah berdamai dan bersahabat antara Yang Dipertuan Muda dengan Holanda, dan di dalam Riau pun beraturlah orang besar-besarnya daripada Syahbandar dan mata-mata melayani segala dagang-dagang itu serta memeliharkan orang-orang dagang, dan penjabab beratus-ratus buah yang sedia dan ubat bedilpun membuat sendiri berkoyan-koyan demikian juga pelurunya .....*". [The Viceroy always gives orders to go and visit Malacca, for peace and friendly agreement had been concluded between the Viceroy and the Dutch; therefore the nobles of the Riau kingdom decided to assign the sahbandar and his officials to be in charge of commerce and trade, and to take care of the merchants. Hundreds of fighting ships were to be prepared and many koyangs (one koyang is about 5,320 lbs) of gunpowder were to be made, so too the bullets ....].<sup>29</sup>

Another illuminating phrase occurs in one of the Bugis-Makasarese *lontara* versions of the Amanna Gappa maritime code: "..... *Adapun engkau syahbandar berkewajiban menyuruh mengawasi pedagang yang baru tiba di pelabuhan negerimu, agar banyak bea (diperoleh) negerimu. Oleh karena engkaulah, syahbandar diserahi tugas memasukkan hasil negeri ke dalam perpendaharaan raja. Engkau juga lah pengganti diri raja, menjaga baik-buruk nya pedagang. Maka dalam hal itu wajiblah engkau berhati-hati, bagaikan ibu-bapak pada pedagang. Ladenilah anakmu dengan kejujuran menurut hukum pelayaran dan perdagangan, menurut hukum yang telah disepakati oleh orang tua, pedagang di bawah angin, yang bernama*

<sup>27</sup> W.H. Moreland, "The Shahbandar in the Eastern Seas", p. 517.

<sup>28</sup> William Marsden, *A Dictionary and Grammar of the Malayan Language* (1984. Singapore: Oxford University Press. First published in 1812. London), vol. I, p. 200.

<sup>29</sup> Raja Haji Ahmad & Raja Ali Haji, *Tuhfat-al-Nafis*, edited by V. Matheson (1982. Kuala Lumpur: Fajar Bakti), p. 164. Translation is mine.

*Amanna Gappa, Matoa orang Wajo beserta dengan Matoa Passer yang bersepakat di Makassar menetapkan undang-undang pelayaran, duduk bersepakat di kampung Wajo.....*" [It is you, the sahbandar, whose duties are to inspect the newly coming trader arrived in your land, so that a great sum of money will be gained by your country. For that reason, you, the sahbandar, is assigned to collect revenues into the King's Treasury. You are also the representative of the King to guard the status of the traders. Take care of them as you do your own children, with honesty, according to the maritime law, according to the law agreed by all honourable men; the traders from the land below the wind, whose names are Amanna Gappa, chief of the Wajo and Matoa Passer, who met in Makassar to establish this maritime law, and concluded in the kampong of the Wajo ...].<sup>30</sup>

Having a valuable encounter with the sahbandar of Banjarmasin, Captain Daniel Beeckman recalls: "...The shahbandar is likewise a Man of a fair character and one whom you ought to keep in with. His Business is to collect, and look after the Sultan's Customs; you will find him a serviceable Man.....".<sup>31</sup>

The land law or *undang-undang darat* of the *Undang-Undang Melaka* provides three *fasal* or chapters regarding the sahbandar's duties: chapter 9.1., concerning the four categories of persons who are allowed to kill; the Chief Minister, the Police Chief, the Harbour Master, when he is in the estuary (is allowed) to kill anyone who does not obey his orders while sailing a *perahu* or a vessel; at that time he does not require a royal order but any order of his has to be obeyed. "... *Dan ketiga syahbandar tatkala di kuala, barangsiapa tiada menurut katanya pada waktu membawa perahu dan kapal itu pun tiada lah lagi dengan titah melainkan mana perintahnya juga ....*"; the fourth category is the Sea captain. Chapter 29 concerning weights and measures; " .....*pada menyatakan hukum segala gantang dan cupak, kati*

<sup>30</sup> Ph.L.Tobing, *Hukum Pelayaran dan Perdagangan Amanna Gappa*, p. 30. Translation is mine.

<sup>31</sup> D. Beeckman , *A Voyage to and from the Island of Borneo* (1973. London: Dawsons of Pall Mall. First published in 1718. Folkstone), p. 137.

*dan tahil dan segala hukum pasar sekaliannya itu pada syahbandar juga, dan hukum nakhoda kapal dan jung dan baluk atau barang sebagainya yang bernama perahu, mau yang besar, mau yang kecil. Apabila datang sesuatu perkataan atasnya atau daripada berkelahi dan berbantah atau luka dan melukai daripada samanya dagang, karena utang piutang atau sebab yang lain, itu pun berserah atas syahbandar yang menghukumkan dia ...." [rules regarding weights and measures such as *gantang*, *cupak*, *kati*, *tahil* and market regulations, these are all exclusively vested in the Harbour Master; and also the regulations pertaining to the masters of sea-going ships, junks and boats and all those vessels which are known as *perahu*, be they big or small. Whenever any law-suit arises which involves these rules, be it a fight, a quarrel or stabbing of fellow traders because of debt or for any other reason, all are delegated to the Harbour Master who will adjudicate upon them].*

Chapter 44.5 concerned his engagement in trade: ".....Jikalau syahbandar itu bermiagakan timah sebesar-besar seratus tengah tiga belas rial harganya. Jikalau s-k-t (sekati?) seratus ribu selaksa sekalipun tiada lah lebih daripada itu lagi bilangan itu. Barang siapa tiada menurut dia durhaka lah ia ke bawah duli yaitu hukumnya mati dan rumah tangganya masuk bendahari....." [If a Harbour Master engages in trading in tin, the value shall be at its highest one hundred and twelve and a half rial. Even if the s-k-t (sekati?) is one hundred, one thousand, or ten thousand, it should not exceed that amount. Whosoever does not obey this regulation, he is guilty of high treason against His Majesty, that is, he shall be sentenced to death and his household shall become the property of the Treasury].<sup>32</sup>

The *Adat Aceh*,<sup>33</sup> especially that part of the *Adat Majlis Raja-Raja* written by Orangkaya Seri Maharaja Lela, comprises nine *majlis* of which the last deals with harbour regulations, the *Majlis Bandar Darussalam*. Apart from a list of all functionaries who were entitled to a share of the

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<sup>32</sup> Liauw Yock Fang, *Undang-Undang Melaka; A Critical Edition*, for chapter 9.1., see pp. 76-79; chapter 29, pp. 134-135, and chapter 44.5., pp. 170-171.

<sup>33</sup> G.W.J. Drewes & P. Voorhoeve, *Adat Atjeh* (1958. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff).

harbour and clearance dues and of the import duties levied at the port, the *majlis* stated that any foreign ship arriving for the first time at Banda Aceh should obtain a stamped permit to stay at the port, for which it had to pay various sums for the stamps (*adat tjap*) and for the granting of the stamps (*adat lapik tjap*). Together with the *adat lapik tjap*, all Indian and European vessels had to pay a tax in cloth, i.e. *adat kain*.<sup>34</sup>

There was also a regulation that European ships calling at the port of Aceh should present the Sultan, ".....*ketika dia baru datang ada menghantarkan persembahan kepada raja supaya boleh kenal dengan raja .....*",<sup>35</sup> with a roll of cloth and a keg of gunpowder, while the sahbandar should offer them meat, oil and rice if they came to reside in their factories.<sup>36</sup> Instead of paying dues, traders from the East gave presents which obviously fostered corruption among port officials, and provided for the vast patronage and wealth which enhanced the sahbandar's position and power.<sup>37</sup>

In settling quarrels or disputes among a ship's crew during a voyage, the sea-captain or *nakhoda* had the authority to make the final decision; but whenever this situation arose in a port, the sahbandar would also be involved. "Be it known, that at sea the captain of the vessel [*nakhoda*] has for the time sovereign authority. The steersman and his mate [*jurumudi* and *jurubatu*] are his ministers. After arrival in port, the case is different. The *nakhoda* must share his authority with the port-captain, shahbandar, in settling disputes. Should any of the sailors while in the vessel have any quarrel, they must report it to the two *pegaweys* [the *jurumudi* and *jurubatu*], in order that it may be decided expeditiously by the *nakhoda* ...".<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>35</sup> K.F.H.Langen,"De Inrichting van het Atjehsche Staatsbestuur onder het Sultanaat", *BKI*, no. 37, 1888, p. 439.

<sup>36</sup> G.W.J. Drewes & P. Voorhoeve, *Adat Atjeh*, p. 23.

<sup>37</sup> R.Winstedt, *Malaya and Its History*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>38</sup> Chapter 47 on Voyages of the Code of Malacca, see T.J. Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca* (1971. Singapore: Oxford University Press. First Published in 1839. London: John Murray), vol. II, p. 284.

Another example of the sahbandar's authority refers to the case of vessels found adrift: "*Pasal yang keenam puluh satu pada menyatakan orang mendapat perahu hanyut. Barang yang ada di dalam perahu itu, maka hendak-lah dibawa ka jambatan sampai tiga hari. Maka tiada juga tuan-nya datang, maka tiada-lah perkataan-nya lagi. Demikian sabda Dato' Bendahara. Maka adat ini bersamaan dengan adat yang diberi oleh gurnadur kapada Dato' Kapitan Shamsuddin. Apabila mendapat perahu dengan segala barang yang ada di dalam-nya semua-nya, bawa kepada kapitan dan pada Shahbandar; dia-lah memberi adat orang yang mendapat. Dan jika yang demikian itu saperti penchuri bagaimana kehendak yang punya boleh dida'awa-nya.....*".<sup>39</sup> Newbold's translation of this chapter is as follows: "Whatever may be found in the vessel shall be brought and publicly exposed at the bridge for three days. Should be owner not make his appearance, there is nothing farther to be said. Both the vessel and cargo shall be then brought to the landing place to the shahbandar who shall decide according to the Regulations what the finder shall get. Persons not acting conformably to this regulation shall be treated as thieves".<sup>40</sup>

Much later the Malacca Code, particularly the *undang-undang laut* or maritime code was developed in Kedah. It is called the port law of 1650 - as the first part of the Kedah Law, which elaborated the rules and protocol for sea trade, including the duties and function of the sahbandar.<sup>41</sup>

As the first contact between the foreign visitor and the region was through the sahbandar, the latter developed relationships with a variety of nationalities, including visitors from other areas within the Malay archipelago. The sahbandar had to welcome any foreign visitor with customs such as those described in the following:

"..... *Maka segala tuan-tuan itu pun datang mendapatkan syahbandar. Maka ditanya oleh syahbandar, 'Apa pekerjaan tuan sekalian ini ? Utusan dari mana dan siapa nama rajanya?' Maka kata segala orang besar-besaran itu, 'Adapun kita sekalian datang ini sahaja hendak mengadap duli syah alam hendak*

<sup>39</sup> T. Hadidjaja, *Adat Raja-Raja Melayu*, pp. 85-86.

<sup>40</sup> T.J. Newbold, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 310.

<sup>41</sup> See the Malay text of the Kedah port law in R.O. Winstedt, "Kedah Law", *JMBRAS*, vol. VI, part II, June 1928, pp. 15-26. I am grateful to Annabel T. Gallop for this information.

*menjadi hamba ke bawah duli syah alam'. Setelah syahbandar mendengar kata tuan-tuan itu, maka syahbandar pun mengadap berdatang sembah, 'Ya, Tuanku Syah Alam, orang Bentan dan orang Singapura, tuanku, datang hendak mengadap ke bawah duli tuanku, maksudnya hendak menjadi hamba ke bawah duli syah alam.' Maka titah baginda, 'bawa lah ia kemari.' Maka syahbandar pun segera keluar. Maka segala orang Singapura itu pun hadir lah dengan segala persembahannya menantikan syahbandar datang juga. Setelah syahbandar datang, maka katanya, "Hai tuan-tuan sekalian, masuklah segera karena baginda itu suruh masuk; baginda pun sudah keluar di pengadapan diadap oleh segala menteri dan pegawai....." [Then these gentlemen came to the sahbandar who asked them, 'What is your occupation? What is your mission and who is your King?' They answered, 'We have come here to have an audience with the King of this country and we want to be in the service of the King'. After listening to these gentlemen, the sahbandar approached the King and reported; 'Your Highness, they are gentlemen from Bintan and Singapore, Sir, coming over here to have an audience with You; they want to be in the service of Your Highness'. The King said, 'Bring them in'. Then the sahbandar went out and the Singaporeans were ready with all their presents, waiting for the sahbandar. The sahbandar approached them and said, 'Gentlemen, please come in, for the King has ordered you to enter'. The King entered the audience hall, where all his ministers and officers were already present....].<sup>42</sup>*

An almost identical protocol was performed in the Malay tradition when welcoming foreign visitors who would have an audience with the King. This is described in the *Hikayat Hang Tuah* when the hero is sent by the Sultan of Malacca to '*benua Keling*' [Vijayanagar], China, Siam and Turkey, where he was always received with good hospitality. The sahbandar would always make the first official contact, performing the same procedures, inquiring who the visitors were and the purpose of their visit. "*Dari mana perahu ini datang? Apa pekerjaan tuan-tuan sekalian ini?*" [Where have these ships

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<sup>42</sup> Kassim Ahmad, *Hikayat Hang Tuah* (1975. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka), pp.14-15. Translation is mine.

come from? What is your business in coming here?].<sup>43</sup> ".....Dari mana datang ini dan siapa nama panglimanya? Apa kehendaknya datang ini?" [Where have you come from, and who is your captain? What is the purpose of your visit here?].<sup>44</sup>

The sahbandar also had the duty of entertaining foreign visitors before they had an audience with the King; the sahbandar would also arrange hospitality: "...Maka syahbandar pun bermohonlah kembali menyuruh bermasak-masak nasi dan makanan hendak berjamu Laksamana dan menyuruh menyambut Laksamana dan Maharaja Setia. Maka pergi lah orang itu menyambut Laksamana. Setelah sampai, maka kata orang itu, ' Ya, orangkaya kedua, dipersilahkan oleh syahbandar...." [Then the sahbandar asked leave to withdraw and he ordered his people to cook rice and meals to entertain the *Laksamana* (Hang Tuah) and *Maharaja Setia*. Someone then welcomed the *Laksamana*. On arrival he said, 'Both of you, Noble Men, are invited by the sahbandar....].<sup>45</sup> ".....Setelah sampai ke balai Syahbandar, maka syahbandar pun berdiri memberi hormat akan Laksamana dan Maharaja Setia, seraya katanya, 'Silahkan orangkaya sekalian'. Maka Laksamana dan Maharaja Setia pun naik duduk dan berjabat tangan dengan syahbandar. Seketika maka hidanganpun diangkat orang lah. Maka Laksamana dan Maharaja Setia sekaliannya pun makanlah jamunya syahbandar itu. Setelah sudah makan, maka kata syahbandar, 'Hai anakku kedua, mari lah kita pergi mengadap Perdana Menteri. 'Maka kata Laksamana, 'Silahkan lah bapa hamba, hamba iringkan'; lalu turun berjalan sama-sama..... " [When they arrived at the residence of the sahbandar, he stood up saluting the *Laksamana* and *Maharaja Setia*, and said, 'Please come in'. The *Laksamana* and *Maharaja Setia* approached him and shook hands with the sahbandar. Then dinner was served immediately. The *Laksamana* and *Maharaja Setia* and their crew ate the meals offered by the sahbandar. After finishing their dinner, the sahbandar said, 'My sons, both of you, let us go and have audience with the Prime Minister'; then they went walking together ...].<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 369, when Hang Tuah landed in '*benua Keling*'; p. 473 in Jeddah; p. 450 in Mesir (Egypt); p. 485 in Turkey. Translation is mine.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 391, when Hang Tuah landed in China. Translation is mine.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 394-395, 473-474, 486. Translation is mine.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 480 - 481. Translation is mine.

The presentation of a cordial letter was also included in the audience given to foreign visitors, for which in some cases, the sahbandar could act as the King's interpreter. Or he might also perform the role of 'master of ceremony', as was the case when an audience was given to the Sultan of Aceh in June 1599: " ....The sabandar tooke off my Hat, and put a roll of white linen about my head; then he put about my middle a white linen cloth that came twice about me, hanging downe halfe my legge, imbroydered with Gold ; then againe he tooke the Roll from my Head, laying it before the King, and put on a white garment upon me, and upon that againe one of red. Then putting on the Roll upon my Head, I sate downe in the Kings presence, who dranke me in Aquavitae, and made me eate of many strange meates....".<sup>47</sup>

It is not surprising that this familiarity with foreigners contributed to the sahbandar's mastery of foreign languages. As Malay was becoming the *lingua franca* of sea trading and commerce, a sahbandar in a non-Malay speaking region like Makassar would most probably be a Malay.<sup>48</sup> It was Nakhoda Bonang<sup>49</sup> who asked permission for a Malay community to settle in Makassar with various guarantees of freedom, and the first sahbandar's seat was at Mangalekana, known as the Malay kampong in Makassar.<sup>50</sup> Schrieke also thinks that the sahbandar was usually a foreigner - presumably because of the need for a knowledge of foreign languages.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> A.H. Markham, *The Voyage and Works of John Davis, The Navigator*, pp. 142-143.

<sup>48</sup> Daeng ri-Boko, who went into battle against the VOC was thought to be a Malay rather than a Macasarese. See Enci' Amin, *Sja'ir Perang Mengkasar; The Ryhmed Chronicle of the Macassar War*, edited by C. Skinner (1963. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff), p.10. Most sahbandar of Makassar had the title *daeng*, a noble title given to a non-royal descendant; a few were *karaeng*, which is the title of a Makassar royal descendant.

<sup>49</sup> A. Reid argues he might be a sea-captain from Java, who took the name of Sunan Bonang, one of the Javanese nine *wali's* (saints); see A. Reid, "The Rise of Makassar", *Review of Indonesian and Malayan Affairs*, vol. 17, 1983, p.137. Mattulada also assumes that he was a Malay, *Menyusuri Jejak Kehadiran Makassar Dalam Sejarah*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>50</sup> See footnote 20.

<sup>51</sup> B.J.O. Schrieke, "Ruler and Realm in Early Java", *Indonesia Sociological Studies*, (1957. The Hague: W. van Hoeve), vol. II, p. 238.

Other sahbandar with a non-indigenous background, apart from the Malays in Makassar, were either Chinese or Indian Muslims. Chinese sahbandars were found in most of the coastal ports of Java and in Balambangan;<sup>52</sup> Indian Muslims or Gujaratis<sup>53</sup> were in charge in Banjarmasin<sup>54</sup> and in Aceh; indeed the position could be held by any foreigner: "...under various titles, apparently dependent on their knowledge of languages, and so forth - as intermediaries between the authorities of the emporia and the foreign traders. In Bantam it was for a long time a *keling* or Gujarati, later a Chinese, in Tuban it was a Portuguese gone over to Islam; in Banjarmasin a Gujarati, in Malay Malacca a Javanese and a *keling*, as well as a Gujarati shahbandar .....".<sup>55</sup>

Due to the combination of his ability to communicate with foreigners and his trading and commercial activities, which were of course the main concern of westerners in the Eastern seas, it is hardly surprising that the negotiation of early treaties between the western powers and local authorities required the involvement of the sahbandar. It was with the sahbandar from Banda that Jacob van Heemskerck concluded the earliest treaty of the VOC on 18 March 1599.<sup>56</sup> On 4 September 1635, Retna Dij Ratja [Ratnadiraja], alias Codia Babouw, represented the King of Banjarmasin in signing a treaty with the VOC in Martapura.<sup>57</sup> The Dutch noted that the sahbandar was a Gujarati by birth. A Malay, Daeng Mapulle,<sup>58</sup> who was the sahbandar in Makassar, was involved in negotiating a treaty on 27 July 1669, before the Bongaya contract was agreed. In Sumbawa, as it was under the dominion of Makassar, a treaty was negotiated on 12 August 1671 between the VOC

<sup>52</sup> D. Beeckman, *A Voyage to and from the Island of Borneo*, pp. 169 - 170.

<sup>53</sup> G.J. Resink prefers to note 'Gujarati by birth' instead of using the term '*keling*', *Indonesia's History Between the Myths*, pp. 215, 419.

<sup>54</sup> *Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlando-Indicum*, vol. I, pp. 270-271.

<sup>55</sup> B.J.O. Schrieke, "Shifts in Political and Economic Power in the Indonesian Archipelago in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century", p. 28.

<sup>56</sup> *Corpus Diplomaticum*, vol. I, pp. 11-12.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 270.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 417-418. A Reid assumes he was a Makassar Mopiah/Mopley; *op. cit.*, p. 140.

and Makassar, in which one of the representatives from the kingdom of Dompo was sahbandar Codjarobo,<sup>59</sup> who could possibly have been an Indian Muslim.

These treaties demonstrate that the sahbandar represented the authority of the kingdom - either the Sultan or the highest official. A rather distinctive situation existed for the sahbandar in the port of Jakarta, for his duties were noted in several treaties with the VOC.<sup>60</sup>

Treaties made with the VOC were seldom concluded in a friendly atmosphere, as most were signed after the local rulers had been defeated in battle. The sahbandar was not only involved in the signing of treaties but also took part in the wars with foreign powers. I have been able to examine two *syair* composed to mark wars against the Dutch/VOC. I am certain that there are others. In these two *syairs*, some stanzas portray how the sahbandar as a man at war. The *Sya'ir Perang Mengkasar* was written by Enci' Amin, a Malay living in Makassar, and describes the long war leading to the conclusion of the Bongaya contract in November 1669.<sup>61</sup> The *Sya'ir Perang Siak* was composed in 1764, three years after the kingdom of Siak was conquered by the Dutch.<sup>62</sup>

Daeng ri-Boko, '*sahbandar jang tua*'<sup>63</sup> fought bravely in the battle; "Daeng ri-Boko sahbandar jang tua/sikapnya seperti panah jang dua/ Ampun karaeng tidaklah dua/baginda pun termashjur berani djua" [Daeng ri-Boko, the senior sahbandar/was like a double-headed arrow/Begging your worship's pardon, he had no equal/a prince renowned for his bravery].<sup>64</sup> Lamentation of his death

<sup>59</sup> *Corpus Diplomaticum*, vol. II, p. 501.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, treaty of January 1611, see pp. 85-91; of 21 December 1614, see pp. 117-119; of 11 March 1619 with Bantam, see pp. 152-153.

<sup>61</sup> Enci' Amin, *Sya'ir Perang Mengkasar; The Ryhmed Chronicle of the Makassar War*.

<sup>62</sup> Donald J. Goudie, *Sya'ir Perang Siak; A Court Poem Presenting the State Policy of a Minangkabau Malay Royal Family in Exile* (1989). Kuala Lumpur: The Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society . Monograph no. 17).

<sup>63</sup> There were two sahbandar in Makassar at that time: *sahbandar jang tua* (Chief Sahbandar) and *sahbandar jang muda* (Deputy Sahbandar), see Enci' Amin, *Sya'ir Perang Mengkasar*, p. 88. For Daeng ri-Boko, see also footnote 48.

<sup>64</sup> Enci' Amin, *op.cit.*, pp. 170-171 (canto 272).

was expressed in six cantos (370-375), which show that he was well-respected: "*Di dengar oleh Sultan di Goa/Daeng ri-Boko sabillah djua/titah kodrat itu ia bawa/dikuburkan di dalam kota Goa*" [When the Sultan of Goa heard/that Daeng ri-Boko had died a martyr's death/he gave orders that he should be borne/to the cemetery inside the castle of Goa].<sup>65</sup>

In the *Sya'ir Perang Siak*, it was the sahbandar Muin, who had a fighting ship, who was also noted for his bravery: "*Syahbandar Muin sebuah penjajab/berapilan di haluan berdinding jab/jikalau do'akan dengan mustajab/sabillilah barang sekejap*" [Sahbandar Muin had a fighting ship/with gun shields at the bow and a wall around/if one prays efficaciously/the path to God takes but a moment];<sup>66</sup> "*Syahbandar Muin panglima payu/kapit timbalan mengikut payu/lawan laksana Garuda Bayu/jika menyambar sahajakan layu*" [Sahbandar Muin, a prized captain/also of the second rank and equally valued/in contest like the Garuda Bayu/if he swoops the prey must fall].<sup>67</sup>

Clearly sahbandar Muin was one of the Siak war commanders, as he was also involved in the war preparations: "*Setelah lengkap sekalian ditentang/menantikan Wilanda jikalau datang/Syahbandar Muin tidak berpantang/baik pagi baik pun petang*" [When they had completely covered all approaches/they awaited the Dutch if they should come/Syahbandar Muin let nothing constrain his preparedness/whether morning or afternoon].<sup>68</sup>

Whereas the *Sya'ir Perang Mengkasar* informs the reader of the end of Daeng ri-Boko's life, the *Sya'ir Perang Siak* says nothing further about Syahbandar Muin. As Siak lost the battle, lamentation in the *syair* focussed on the King and his royal families. This might be related to the circumstances under which the *syair* was written in 1764, that is for Raja Mahmud's children in exile.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 172 - 173 (canto 369).

<sup>66</sup> Donald J. Goudie, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-149 (canto 272).

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 176-177 (canto 388).

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 196-197 (canto 466).

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71. Raja Mahmud reigned the kingdom of Siak in 1746-1760.

## The Early Kapitan of Batavia

In their early contacts with the archipelago, the first Portuguese and Dutch sea captains can have been in little doubt as to the importance of the sahbandar. His duties involved dealing with foreigners, trade, diplomatic relations and in war.

If a sahbandar was of non-indigenous origin (such as those who were Chinese or Gujarati by birth) their duties embraced domestic matters, as they were likely to be given authority over the civilian affairs of their countrymen. In this way, the sahbandar became the representative of a group of foreign merchants settled in a sea-port or town, the appointed head to settle internal disputes, and the channel of communication with the local government. It is this position that W.H. Moreland defines as a 'consul'.<sup>70</sup> He might be elected by his fellow countrymen; this would then be sanctioned by the local authority and later formalized by official appointment.

Therefore when the Portuguese came face to face with the Malacca authorities, they saw an administrative system that was better developed than their own.<sup>71</sup> There were five high ranks in the native authority of Malacca, of which the fifth was the *Sahbandar*.<sup>72</sup> The highest rank was the *Padukaraja* [Viceroy]; then the *Bendara* or *Bendahara*, who was the Chief Justice for civil and criminal affairs, controlling the King's revenue and, in practice, governing the kingdom. The third rank was *Laksamana* [Admiral of the Sea], and the fourth was *Temenggung*, or Chief-magistrate.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>70</sup> W.H. Moreland, "The Shahbandar in the Eastern Seas", p. 520.

<sup>71</sup> D.R. Sar Desai, "The Portuguese Administration in Malacca, 1511-1641", *JSEAH*, vol. 10, no. 3, December 1969, p. 504.

<sup>72</sup> *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso d'Albuquerque*, notes and introduction by Walter de Gray Birch (1880. London; The Hakluyt Society), vol. III, pp. 87-88.

<sup>73</sup> *The Suma Oriental*, vol. II, pp. 264-265; *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso d'Albuquerque*, vol. III, p.87.

The position of sahbandar in Malacca was filled by four persons - one for the Gujarati community, one for the '*benua keling*' or Bengalis, one for the Javanese and traders from the eastern part of the archipelago and one for the Chinese.<sup>74</sup> Such a position would surely have been held by a person who was familiar with the languages of the nationalities concerned as well as with the local language. This person could be a foreigner by origin or by birth, as in the case of the sahbandars in Aceh, Bantam, northern parts of Java, Balambangan, Banjarmasin and Makassar, or he could be a local person, although this was rare.

Lack of experience and administrative resources led the Portuguese to accept and adapt existing practices in their newly conquered territories.<sup>75</sup> The positions of *Bendahara* and *Sahbandar* remained almost intact during the early years of Portuguese occupation, together with the practice of administering the various communities in the quarters of the city in which they resided.<sup>76</sup> The Malaccans and other dark-skinned groups were under a Moorish captain and several captains of their own race.<sup>77</sup>

Parallel to the Portuguese lack of interest in regulating the affairs of the indigenous peoples, the Dutch VOC had a similar attitude towards the non-indigenous Batavian communities, both the Foreign Asiatics (*Vreemde Oosterlingen*) and the 'foreign Indonesians',<sup>78</sup> those whose origins lay outside Batavia. When the VOC vessels arrived at Jakarta, there was already a Chinese settlement located at

<sup>74</sup> *The Suma Oriental*, vol. II, p. 265.

<sup>75</sup> D.R. Sar Desai, "The Portuguese Administration in Malacca, 1511-1641", pp. 504-505. R. Winstedt, "A History of Malaya", *JMBRAS*, vol. 13, part I, March 1935, p. 89.

<sup>76</sup> D.R. Sar Desai, *op. cit.*, p. 505.

<sup>77</sup> R. Winstedt, "A History of Malaya", p. 89; see also Francisco de Sa de Meneses, *The Conquest of Malacca*, translated by Edgar C. Knowlton Jr. (1970. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press).

<sup>78</sup> For the term 'foreign Indonesians' see J.C. van Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society; Essays in Asian Social and Economic History* (1955. The Hague: W. van Hoeve), p.139. The VOC also regarded the Javanese and Malays in Batavia as '*vreemdelingen*' (foreigners), see for example Proclamations of 30 December 1628 and of 27 April 1629, in *Plakaatboek van Nederlandsch-Indie* (1885. Batavia: Landsdrukkerij), vol. I, pp. 241, 245.

the mouth of the Ciliwung river, headed by its own chieftain called Nakhoda Watting. The authority of Jakarta, Pangeran Wijaya Krama, granted the VOC permission to build its first factory<sup>79</sup> near the Chinese settlement. In this first treaty, signed in January 1611, there are instructions regarding the duties of Jakarta's sahbandar: if someone owed a debt to a Hollander, he should inform the sahbandar who would report to the King of Jakarta, i.e. Pangeran Wijaya Krama, and in addition order the person to repay the debt.<sup>80</sup> To deal with the payment of port tolls, and transactions involving arak, rice and beans, the VOC signed another treaty on 21 December 1614, at which the Chinese captain, Nakhoda Watting and the native sahbandar were also present.<sup>81</sup>

In contrast to Malacca, which had a strong independent government, Jakarta was only a vassal of the Bantam sultanate. It was a fierce battle against the brave Malaccans that the Portuguese faced in 1511; in the case of Jakarta, despite some indecisive help from the British East India Company, the Dutch VOC successfully excluded non-Dutch elements in Jakarta when they besieged the port in 1619.

As has been mentioned earlier, the Portuguese, with their lack of a well-developed system to rule Malacca and their reluctance to involve themselves in native affairs, left the positions of *Bendahara*, *Sahbandar* and the chiefs of the various ethnic communities to the Malaccans themselves. Having no manpower to build the city of Batavia, yet driven by an obsession to create a Dutch empire in the East, the Dutch governor-general for the Indies, Jan Pieterszoon Coen, invited the non-native elements, sometimes by force, to make a living in this newly conquered port city. Part of the non-Batavian elements had already been brought in by Coen when he attacked Jakarta with the help of native soldiers from the eastern islands of Indonesia. On the other

<sup>79</sup> Actually it was 'steen en huijsen' (stone houses), see *Corpus Diplomaticum*, vol. I, p. 86 and J.A. van der Chijs, *De Nederlanders te Jakatra* (1860. Amsterdam: Frederick Muller), p.197.

<sup>80</sup> *Corpus Diplomaticum*, vol. I, p. 91.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 117-119.

hand, the Javanese and Sundanese, who might claim to be the indigenous peoples, were not trustworthy in the eyes of the Dutch VOC. Peace with the two important sultanates in Java was attained after their leaders, Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa of Bantam and Sultan Agung of Mataram, were no longer in power. In these circumstances, the builder of Batavia tried to find an administration suitable for a city inhabited by non-Batavians. The administrative systems adopted by the former harbour kingdoms in the archipelago to rule their foreign communities matched Coen's knowledge of how the Portuguese had built their colonial empire in the East. Coen could find no better model to follow than that of the pioneer European power in the region.

As the Chinese were the first foreign community in Jakarta, it is not surprising that the first appointment of a chief of an ethnic settlement in Batavia was the Chinese *kapitein*, Bencon or Souw Beng Kong, on 11 October 1619. This was later followed by the appointment of captains of the 'foreign Indonesians', the Bandanese, the Amboinese, the Balinese, the Buginese and the Malays.

Seeing that those first 'foreign Indonesians' were soldiers, making their headmen captains was likely to be perfectly acceptable. In fact, those native captains were generally known as *Inlandsche kommandant*, rather than by their military rank. For example, the well-known Balinese captain, Babandam, was frequently referred to in VOC letters as the *kommandant der Balijers*, as was the *kommandant der Boegineezen* for the Buginese. However, this practice of appointing headmen on military rank had died out by 1828,<sup>82</sup> while the office of *kapitan Cina* survived much longer. In Batavia it lasted until the Japanese arrived in 1942.

Souw Beng Kong's appointment as the first Chinese captain under the VOC in October 1619, just four months after the city was captured, marked his official admittance

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<sup>82</sup> See "Rapport over de Inlandsche Kompagnie en Inlandsche Kommandanten, 21 October 1823", in *Batavia*, no. 16, and *Tangerang*, no. 206/D. Arsip Nasional, Jakarta; see also *Regeerings Almanak voor Nederlandsch-Indië, 1817-1832* (1833. Batavia: Landsdrukkerij).

into the ruling authority of Batavia. Souw Beng Kong was already the headman of the Chinese community in Bantam before he and his people moved to Batavia.<sup>83</sup> As the Dutch referred to Nakhoda Watting, the Chinese headman they first encountered on their arrival in old Jakarta, as the Chinese captain, it was convenient for the VOC to give Bencon the same title.

However, it is interesting to note that although he bore a quasi-military title, the *kapitan Cina*'s responsibility focussed on mercantile matters, while the *Inlandsche kommandant* were mainly responsible for maintaining peace and order in the districts surrounding Batavia. The fact that the war with Bantam was still in progress also explains why the VOC kept the native settlements outside the city walls. Furthermore, placing natives under their own chieftain or *kommandant*, was meant to develop agriculture, the chiefs being granted land as their private domains.

In wartime the native commanders were also responsible for supplying manpower to the VOC forces. As Coen described it, they "could diminish the garrison and be used as soldiers against the enemies".<sup>84</sup> In this respect, therefore, the Dutch adopted the *kapitan* system as it had been used be in sixteenth century Malacca. On the other hand, the *kapitan Cina* had almost no involvement in military matters, for members of the Chinese community in Batavia were exempt from such services. The Chinese appeared to have been satisfied with the arrangement that excused them from being civic guards *orschutterij*. To compensate for this, they paid a capitation tax, the so-called *Chineesche hoofdgeld*, imposed in October 1620;<sup>85</sup> collection was administered by the Chinese captain.

Thus unlike the *Inlandsche kommandants*, the military nature of title *kapitan Cina* did not reflect the

<sup>83</sup> Phoa Kian Sioe, *Sedjarahnja Souw Beng Kong, Phoa Beng Gan, Oey Tamba Sia* (1956. Djakarta: Penerbit Reporter), pp. 12-15.

<sup>84</sup> J.P.Coen, *Bescheiden omtrent zijn Bedrijf in Indie*, edited by H.T. Colenbrander (1922. 's Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff), vol. IV, p. 596.

<sup>85</sup> See *Plakaatboek van Nederlandsch-Indie* (1885. Batavia: Landsdrukkerij), vol.I, pp. 76-77.

responsibilities of the office. Whereas the native commanders were to supply native labour for agriculture and for the military, the Chinese captains' responsibilities were directed towards commercial activities, revenue-farms in particular, on which the government's financial base was established.

It is not my intention here to offer further comparisons between the office of the *Inlandsche kommandant* and that of *kapitan Cina*, for the simple reason that the native captainship was short-lived, subsequently absorbed into the local administration of Batavia. The following chapters will concentrate on the *kapitan Cina* in Batavia.

### 3 THE INSTITUTION OF CHINESE OFFICERS

Most of the literature in English<sup>1</sup> concerning the Indonesian Chinese refers to the Chinese officers, generally known as *kapitan Cina*, although little detailed explanation is then given. This is due either to lack of information, as admitted by Leo Suryadinata,<sup>2</sup> or to a failure to consult Dutch colonial records. The only exception is Lea E Williams,<sup>3</sup> who certainly used colonial sources, although he limited himself to the period 1900-1916. In order to provide a thorough evaluation of the role of the Chinese officers, the entire period of this institution needs to be addressed, not just the few years 1900-1916. Among indigenous writers, the most distinguished is the peranakan Chinese historian, Liem Thian Joe,<sup>4</sup> who, in his work on the Chinese of Semarang made extensive use of the Chinese Council records. This is an indispensable source for anyone interested in the Chinese of Java.

The institution of the Chinese officers, dating from October 1619 and later known as the *Chineesch Bestuur*

<sup>1</sup>Donald E Willmott, *The Chinese of Semarang. A Changing Minority Community in Indonesia* (1960. Ithaca: Cornell University Press); Tan Giok-lan, *The Chinese Community of Sukabumi. A Study in Social and Cultural Accommodation* (1963. Ithaca: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project. Monograph Series); Mary F Somers, "Peranakan Chinese Politics in Indonesia" (1965. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Ithaca, Cornell University); Leo Suryadinata, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Java, 1917-1942* (1976. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies); J A C Mackie (ed), *The Chinese in Indonesia; Five Essays* (1976. London: Thomas Nelson in association with the Australian Institute of International Affairs); Charles Coppel, *The Indonesian Chinese in Crisis* (1983. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press); James R Rush, *Opium to Java. Revenue Farming and Chinese Enterprise in Colonial Indonesia 1860-1910* (1990. Ithaca: Cornell University Press)

<sup>2</sup> L. Suryadinata, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Java*, p. 13, footnote no. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Lea E Williams, *Overseas Chinese Nationalism. The Genesis of the Pan-Chinese Movement in Indonesia 1900-1916* (1960. Glencoe: The Free Press)

<sup>4</sup> Liem Thian Joe, *Riwajat Orang Orang Tjina di Semarang* (1933. Semarang: n.p.)

[Chinese Administration], was obviously a part of the Dutch colonial administration. It is therefore necessary to examine Dutch administration as a whole in order to gain a proper contextual understanding. The failure to use Dutch colonial sources often leads to errors and misunderstanding. Thus many writers argue that the Chinese officers came to an end in the 1930s.<sup>5</sup> In fact, on 31 March 1934, Chinese officers in Java and Madura, were disbanded, but with the extremely important exception of Batavia. Other misconceptions concerning the nature of the Chinese officership have resulted from misunderstandings with respect to its place in the history of the Chinese in Indonesia. Most writings concentrate on the political experience of the Indonesian Chinese, placing the leadership of the Chinese officers within the context of early Chinese nationalism. This gives a false view. With his lack of colonial sources, Donald Willmott provides a poor historical perspective.<sup>6</sup> By primarily relying on Ong Tae He's account of the Chinese in mid-eighteenth century in Java,<sup>7</sup> Willmott's writing on the Chinese of Semarang leaves a serious gap concerning the Chinese officers, particularly so as Ong Tae He gives an outsider's view. Willmott's use of nineteenth century sources taken from Liem Thian Joe's chronicle<sup>8</sup> does not help, as Liem does not discuss the nature of the Chinese officership.

For these reasons my study will rely greatly upon Dutch colonial government records. However, some words of warning are in order. First, Batavia was home for the largest Chinese peranakan community in Java. The Batavian

<sup>5</sup> Donald Willmott, *The Chinese of Semarang*, p.152; G W Skinner, "Overseas Chinese Leadership: Paradigm for a Paradox", in G Wijewardene (ed) *Leadership and Authority: A Symposium* (1968. Singapore: University of Singapore) p. 200 also gives the same incorrect dates; L Suryadinata, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Java*, p. 28; he also argued that the *Chineesche Offcieren* was abolished in the 1920s in his *Political Thinking of the Indonesian Chinese 1900-1977. A Sourcebook* (1979. Singapore: Singapore University Press) p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Donald Willmott, *The Chinese of Semarang*, particularly pp. 147-152.

<sup>7</sup> Ong Tae He, *The Chinaman Abroad, or a Desultory Account of The Malayan Archipelago particularly of Java* (1849. Shanghai: The Mission Press)

<sup>8</sup> Liem Thian Joe, *Riwajat Orang Orang Tjina di Semarang*.

Chinese had the earliest contacts with colonial authority, as it was in Java that the Dutch first established their administration. This fact was important in the Dutch decision to keep the Chinese officers until the last days of colonial rule. Second, Batavia did not belong to the *gouvernementsdomeinen*, or government properties, except some areas in the inner city where government buildings were located. Rather it enjoyed the status of *particuliere landerijen*, i.e. private land estates. As such Batavia was barely touched by (direct) government control, and was practically exempt from the imposition of such colonial policies as forced delivery (*verplichte contingenten*), the Cultivation System and compulsory public labour (*heerendiensten*). Thirdly, in terms of the historical evolution of Batavia society,<sup>9</sup> the Chinese community there comprised both rural and urban peoples. In contrast to the Chinese of Semarang and Surabaya, who were mostly urban, enclaves within the dominant culture of the Javanese,<sup>10</sup> the Chinese of Batavia greatly contributed to the shaping of the present Betawi culture.

Later we can see how the formidable group of Batavian Chinese managed to resist pressure from the non-peranakan Chinese, or singkeh-totoks, as well as from indigenous movements during the first two decades of the twentieth century, a period which witnessed the awakening of Indonesian nationalism and Pan-Chinese revivalism. Details on peranakan resistance to the singkeh-totok movement and to anti-Chinese feeling among the natives, their response to Sarekat Islam, will be discussed in chapter 5 concerned with the Chinese officers and Chinese political movements.

In this chapter, of the Chinese officership, emphasis will be placed on the structure, its establishment from candidacy to retirement, and its relationship within the

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter I.

<sup>10</sup> For discussion on the acculturation of the Chinese in Java into Javanese culture, either being absorbed or rejected for the prestige of their Chinese traditions, see G W Skinner, "Change and Persistence in Chinese Culture Overseas: a Comparison of Thailand and Java", *Journal of the South Seas Society*, no. 16, parts 1 & 2, 1960, pp. 86-100.

local administration of Batavia. The starting point is the promotion of the first major in 1837. For the whole period of this study, the Chinese of Batavia had only five majors: Tan Eng Goan (1837-1865), Tan Tjoen Tiat (1865-1879), Lie Tjoe Hong (1879-1896), Tio Tek Ho (1896-1908) and Khouw Kim An (1910-1918, re-appointed 1927-1942). The first and last majors are particularly worthy of study. This work will cover the whole of the Batavia residency, from the northern part called the *Stad en Voorsteden* (inner city and downtown), the western part of the Tangerang region, to the south and eastern parts of Meester-Cornelis. There is some reference to Buitenzorg (now Bogor), as this southern region was adjoined to Batavia in 1866. However, most of the description will focus on the central part of the residency, that is the inner city [*Stad en Voorsteden*] which was the physical core of the Chinese establishment.

### The Structure of The Institution

The *kapitan Cina* was a common historical phenomenon among Nanyang Chinese communities settled in Thailand, the Philippines and the Malay Archipelago, including the Dutch East Indies. As an institution of separate administrative rule over the Chinese in these colonies, there are some common features. Yet the *kapitan Cina* in the Dutch East Indies stands out, for maintaining the longest and most intense relationship with foreign sovereignty.

As the Chinese communities in Singapore and Malaya were subdivided by dialect group (*pang*) and place of origin, each of the larger groups, such as the Hokkien, the Hakka and the Teochew had their own *kapitan*.<sup>11</sup> In contrast, division into sub-groups was almost unknown among the Chinese of

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<sup>11</sup> Yong Ching Fatt, "Chinese Leadership in Nineteenth Singapore", *Journal of the Island Society*, vol. I, December 1967, pp. 6, 8; Chan Gaik Ghoh, "The Kapitan Cina System in the Straits Settlements", *Malaya in History*, vol. 25, 1982, p. 76; Yen Ching-Hwang, *A Social History of the Chinese in Singapore and Malaya, 1800-1911* (1986. Singapore: Oxford University Press), p. 125.

Batavia, as the earliest Hokkien settlers had been established long before the Europeans, and the first Hakka immigrants settled in Batavia much later, in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Different periods of migration for these different groups of Chinese settlers, meant that Indies-born Hokkien, or peranakan Chinese, held the officership until 1878. Only through the interference of the Dutch would a non-Hokkien be admitted into the Chinese officership of Batavia.<sup>12</sup>

As for the origins of their leadership, the *kapitan Cina* in Singapore and Malaya built their power at community level among members of their own group. When they were given official appointments as *kapitan Cina* by the Malay Sultans and later by the British, it was a formal acknowledgment and confirmation of that supremacy. This practice ceased in 1826 when the *kapitan Cina* in the British territories became an unofficial position.

By contrast, the establishment of the Chinese officership in Batavia was, from its inception, a creation of the Dutch, as part of the colonial administration. Under the VOC regime, the Chinese captain of Batavia was directly subordinate to the Governor-General. Following the establishment of the Netherlands-Indies administrative system in 1820, the Chinese officers were placed under the local authority of Batavia, with the Chinese captain/major directly responsible to the Dutch resident.

In the framework of administration of the Dutch East Indies colony, the Chinese officers were a counterpart to the system of indirect rule of the native population. This indirect rule of the Dutch, which was executed through the mechanism of the *Binnelandsch Bestuur* [Interior Administration], established lines of hierarchy for both the native and non-native, non-European inhabitants [called the *Vreemde Oosterlingen*]. Within the structure of local administration in Java and Madura, the institution of

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<sup>12</sup> See *Besluit van Gouverneur-Generaal van Nederlandsch-Indie* (hereafter, *Gouvernementsbesluit*), 22 December 1878, no. 19, requiring the Chinese Council to admit 3 Hakkas or Cantonese among its 10 officers.

Chinese officers, as part of the *Vreemde Oosterlingen* administration, was parallel to the native administration, both of which were placed under the European administration headed by the resident. The Native Administration was called the *Inlandsch Bestuur*, and the local administration over the Chinese, the *Chineesch Bestuur*. In fact, the *Chineesch Bestuur* belonged to the *Bestuur voor Vreemde Oosterlingen* [administration system for the non-natives, non-European communities in the colony]. Other elements in this *Vreemde Oosterlingen* were the Arabs, the Moors and the Bengalis, who were also administered by their own headmen. Given that the Chinese played the most significant role in the colonial economy, the Dutch government gave considerably more attention to the *Chineesch Bestuur*.

When discussing the structure of the Chinese officers, one cannot avoid making reference to the Chinese Council, or *Kong Koan*, as this body represented the daily work of the *Chineesch Bestuur* for the Chinese community. The Chinese Council will be discussed in the following chapter.

All officers who were charged with administrative duties in the Chinese community had a seat on the Chinese Council. Their position was prestigious, as they were involved in daily communications regarding Chinese affairs. Their status was as effective officers, in contrast to other Chinese officers who did not hold membership of the Chinese Council.<sup>13</sup> These officers, whom the Dutch government classified as non-effective or non-active Chinese officers, were given only titular rank. They were Chinese officials employed in various Dutch government offices, such as the *Collegie van Boedelmeesteren* [College for Masters of Heritage] or later the *Wees-en Boedelkamer* [Orphan's Court and Chamber of Heritage] and the *Landraad* [Native Court of Justice], including those who worked as translators of Chinese in the Dutch resident's office. Since they did not work with the Chinese Administration, or

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<sup>13</sup> See letter of General Secretary to Resident of Batavia, 8 May 1844, no. 381, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 2 July 1844, no. 13.

*Chineesch Bestuur*, their officership was more of an honorary title, usually lieutenant, for which they paid the so-called '*recognitie geld*' or recognition money.

The active Chinese officers, whose authority was exercised in the daily Chinese Administration, used the hierarchy of military rank as determined by the VOC; lieutenant, captain or major. The lowest rank, i.e. lieutenant, were the people who had the most intense contact with members of the Chinese community, for they supervised the Chinese *wijkmeesters*, or wardmasters, in their neighbourhood. Any matter regarding Chinese affairs, from complaints and reports to rewards, were brought to these lieutenants through the wardmasters. In turn, the lieutenants forwarded their reports on daily matters to the Chinese Council's regular meetings. Most letters of complaint from Chinese community members, now kept in the local archives of Batavia, concerned the lieutenants and the Chinese wardmasters,<sup>14</sup> as it was with these officials that the Chinese were most familiar.

The middle-level officers, i.e. captains, appear to have been more suited to protocol. They might chair the Council in the absence of the major, sign official letters on his behalf, or sit beside the native district commandant to deal with problems occur between Chinese and the natives.<sup>15</sup> It is likely that the captains were mostly charged with external duties, such as attending the regular meetings at the Resident's office to discuss matters regarding local government, and representing the Chinese community on committees set up by various government offices.<sup>16</sup> Such

<sup>14</sup> For example, a letter dated 28 December 1897, on behalf of the Chinese in Kebayoran, in *Agenda*, 13 June 1898, no. 12921, and other letters sent to the Resident of Batavia concerning the bad performance of Chinese lieutenants and wardmasters, see confidential report of Resident of Batavia, 21 November 1891, no. La. G5, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 12 December 1891, no. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 18 October 1912, no. 319/C, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 4 January 1913, no. 27.

<sup>16</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 13 August 1872, no. 5650, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 31 October 1872, no. 11.

duties must have been frustrating for some captains, for this contributed little to the benefit of their own people.<sup>17</sup>

The most prestigious position was obviously that of Chinese major, not only because it was the highest rank but also because the position offered maximum responsibility for the community. It is interesting to note that despite the title, the Dutch authorities' original reason for promoting Chinese captains to major was rather suspect. Among the three main Chinese communities in Java, i.e. Batavia, Semarang and Surabaya, promotion to major was first granted to the Chinese captain of Semarang, Tan Hong Gan in 1829, as a sign of official gratitude for his help in raising revenue for the government.<sup>18</sup> The second promotion to major was given to the Chinese captain of Surabaya, The Goan Tjiang in 1834,<sup>19</sup> presumably for a similar reason. Batavia obtained its first Chinese major in 1837, when Tan Eng Goan was promoted for the simple reason that as Semarang and Surabaya both had a major, the Batavian Chinese officers should follow suit. In addition, Batavia had the largest Chinese community in Java.<sup>20</sup>

The importance of the Chinese major is demonstrated by his official assignment - both head of the Chinese district known as the sixth district in the city of Batavia, and chairman of the Chinese Council, "*hoofd van het zesde district en voorzitter van den Chineeschen Raad*".<sup>21</sup>

In 1917 the Dutch government became aware of the extent to which such functions and positions (particularly

<sup>17</sup> As admitted by a captain in Batavia, mentioned in letter of Advisor for Chinese Affairs to Director of Home Affairs, 3 June 1929, and also quoted in letter of Resident of Central Preanger to Governor of West Java, 29 June 1929, in *Mailrapport*, no. 3366/1929, ARA, The Hague.

<sup>18</sup> Liem Thian Joe, *Riwajat Orang Orang Tjina di Semarang*, p. 96.

<sup>19</sup> Mentioned in advice of Resident of Batavia, 8 September 1837, no. 2019, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 21 September 1837, no. 14.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 8 October 1870, no. 7709/11, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 19 November 1870, no. 16; see also *Regeerings Almanak voor Nederlandsch-Indie van het jaar 1858*, p. 66.

the chairmanship of the Chinese Council) were an integral part of the Chinese majorship. This was the year in which the government launched a plan for administrative reform, which raised questions concerning the *Chineesch Bestuur*. In this plan, the Chinese administration was related to the native administration in Batavia, Semarang and Surabaya, where the largest Chinese communities also lived. Under this government scheme, from 1918 all Chinese officers in Java and Madura were temporarily relieved of their official functions until the results of a study were known, from which further steps might be taken either to reorganize or abolish the Chinese officership.<sup>22</sup> In this scheme, the local authority of Batavia faced a problem regarding the Chinese Council, which to some extent actually ran the Chinese Administration. The Chinese officers might be temporarily relieved of their administrative functions without relinquishing their duties as members of the Chinese Council. But for the Chinese major, who was officially identified as the chairman of the Council, being temporarily relieved of his official functions could mean release from his chairmanship, which in turn meant that the Chinese Council could select a new chairman without considering any affiliated officership. In other words, the Chinese Council might have a chairman, not necessarily the ex-major, selected from among other officers. It was unacceptable to the Dutch authorities that a Chinese officer of lower rank become chairman of the Chinese Council, for this would not only affect the prestige of the ex-major but might also embarrass the Dutch government in front of the Chinese community, because he had been selected by the government.

The question concerning the organization of the Chinese Council was, in fact, not a simple matter. Since the Council was responsible for the daily Chinese administration, it was the main concern of the Chinese community, particularly in Batavia. Having been left independent, the Chinese were very cautious about government interference

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<sup>22</sup> Detailed discussion is held over until Chapter VII.

in their internal affairs. This was shown in the 1920s when the Dutch government launched a plan to abolish the Chinese officers, which was related to the continued existence of the Chinese Council. The preliminary government scheme planned to place the Chinese directly under the European Administration [*Europeesch Bestuur*] and European administrators would be included in the Chinese Council. The Chinese expressed such strong opposition that the Dutch government withdrew the plan. Later, in March 1934, the institution of Chinese officers was ended in Java and Madura; yet in Batavia they continued until the last days of Dutch rule.

Returning to the question of the chairman of the Chinese Council, the Resident of Batavia was relieved from this troublesome matter by the fact that the Council agreed to retain ex-major Khouw Kim An as its chairman.<sup>23</sup> The Chinese major was placed at the same level as the native regent or *patih*,<sup>24</sup> later *bupati*, and both were subordinate to the Resident of Batavia.

In 1906 the Batavia residency was reorganized into four divisions called *afdeeling*, namely *Stad en Voorsteden* in the central part; Tangerang as the western division; Meester-Cornelis in the east; and Buitenzorg as the southern division. Each of these divisions was headed by a native regent, given the title of *patih*; by 1924 they were under a *bupati*. Should the structure of the *Chineesch Bestuur* have followed this administrative reorganization, in each *afdeeling* or division a Chinese major would have sat in parallel to the native regent. In fact, the Dutch permitted only the rank of Chinese captain to be on duty in each *afdeeling*.

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<sup>23</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 12 November 1926, no. 9 which confirmed compensation for major Khouw Kim An for executing his duties from August 1919 to October 1926, despite being removed from his officership; see also letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 27 June 1932, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 704x/1932, ARA, The Hague.

<sup>24</sup> A *patih* replaced the district commandant from 1907 as head of each *afdeeling* or division of the Batavia residency. The first regent or *bupati* of Weltevreden in the inner city, appointed in 1924, was R A A Achmad Djaja diningrat, previously regent of Bantam.

A Chinese captain in the western division of Tangerang supervised three lieutenants;<sup>25</sup> another captaincy was established in Meester-Cornelis with five lieutenants under him; Buitenzorg had one captain and four lieutenants.<sup>26</sup> Despite the fact that more Chinese lived in the Tangerang area than in Meester-Cornelis, five lieutenants were on duty in Meester-Cornelis, because one was posted to Kebayoran, in the remote southern part of that division.<sup>27</sup>

The Dutch government apparently did not take demographic considerations into account in the establishment of officers for the Chinese Administration in Batavia. That there were about 21,500 Chinese settled in and around Tangerang did not mean that there would be more officers, although which had roughly the same number, the *Stad en Voorsteden*, had thirteen officers.<sup>28</sup> It is clear that the Dutch government considered the Chinese officers near Batavia of minor importance compared to those in the inner city, or *Stad en Voorsteden*. This can be explained by the land status of these outside regions, where *particuliere landerijen*, direct government control, was almost excluded. On the other hand, it was in the inner city that the activities of the Chinese community were concentrated. This was the area designated for the Chinese quarter, where the office of the Chinese Council and the *Chineesch Bestuur*, the main temple, schools, the Chinese hospital, commercial houses, Chinese associations and political movements, were all found. For practical reasons, all were within reach of the government. As the Chinese community in the inner city became increasingly important to the Dutch government, any administrative reorganization of the Batavian local authority would also affect the composition of the *Chineesch Bestuur*.

<sup>25</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 5 June 1871, no. 4.

<sup>26</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 22 April 1883, no. 1.

<sup>27</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 5 March 1883, no. 1444, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 22 April 1883, no. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Letter of Assistant-Resident of Tangerang to Resident of Batavia, 29 November 1867, no. Litt.Ba, and letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 25 June 1868, no. 2920/1, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 5 June 1871, no. 4.

From 1833 the *Stad en Voorsteden* had been divided into seven districts, of which the sixth was specifically designated as the Chinese district. However, to supervise these seven districts there were only four district commandants (later to be replaced by *wedana*) who had offices in Penjaringan, Pasar Senen, Mangga Besar and Tanah Abang. In 1906 the districts were no longer known by number - first district, second district and so on - but were called by the name of the location of the *wedana*'s office, for example, Penjaringan. Following this change, the Chinese district was no longer called the sixth district; the Chinese major, as the district head, was officially called *hoofd der Chineezen*,<sup>29</sup> head of the Chinese.

As a major occupied the office of head of the Chinese district, a Chinese captain was placed in each of the four districts outside the Chinese quarter, in parallel with the four native commandants [or later *wedana*'s]. Within these four districts there were also six important Chinese neighbourhoods, or *Chineesche wijken*: Kota/old Jakarta, Penjaringan, Mangga Besar, Tanah Abang, Pasar Baru and Pasar Senen. Six Chinese lieutenants were in charge of supervising several Chinese wardmasters in each district, and these lieutenants became subordinates of the Chinese captains. Evidence from 1871 confirms that by the third quarter of the nineteenth century, an established *Chineesch Bestuur* had been achieved, consisting of one major, four captains and six lieutenants.<sup>30</sup>

The structure of the *Chineesch Bestuur* always depended upon the structure of the local administration of Batavia. In general both the *Inlandsch Bestuur* and *Chineesch Bestuur* were on the same level, the function of each rank being at a similar position. The Chinese major was comparable to the native regent or *bupati*; the captain to *wedana*; the lieutenant to *asisten-wedana*; and the Chinese wardmaster to the native wardmaster. However, the Chinese officers

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<sup>29</sup> See *Regeerings Almanak voor Nederlandsch-Indie van het jaar 1907*, vol. I, p.161.

<sup>30</sup> *Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indie* 1871, no. 70.

never enjoyed a salary, and received only some financial compensation called *toelage*. This was calculated in accordance with the salary of an equivalent native officials.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, such parallels were not always apparent, particularly in the case of the Chinese wardmasters in outside districts or other divisions.

In accordance with local regulations of August 1835, issued by the Resident of Batavia, the Chinese neighbourhood was attached to a native district, with each Chinese wardmaster supervised by the native district commandant.<sup>32</sup> This meant that a number of Chinese enclaves in the Batavia region were beyond the *Chineesch Bestuur*'s supervision, were instead under the *Inlandsch Bestuur*. Furthermore, the Chinese inhabitants of private land estates were likely to be beyond the reach of the Chinese officers. Although most owners of private land located in the environs of Batavia were Chinese officers, the management and cultivation of these lands was usually undertaken by other Chinese acting as tenants or caretakers.

Considering these uneven conditions with respect to the authority of the *Chineesch Bestuur*, particularly in Batavia, it is no wonder that in 1894, F Fokkens, Inspector of the Department of Interior Administration asked whether this non-native, non-European institution fitted well in the structure of the administration. The question arose when Fokkens undertook an investigation into the economic condition of the native population in Java and Madura;<sup>33</sup> his investigation of 1893 had shown that further enquiries into Chinese economic domination was essential,<sup>34</sup> particularly the Chinese role in revenue-farming. Fokkens accordingly widened the scope of his enquiries, as he sought to develop

<sup>31</sup> For example, the major received a monthly allowance of 300 guilders; see *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 11 October 1831, no. 18; and 17 July 1906, no. 2. It was later increased to 500 guilders, confirmed by *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 8 August 1911, no. 13.

<sup>32</sup> Copy letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 31 December 1842, no. 2994, in *Verbaal*, 7 June 1846, no. 1/318, ARA, The Hague.

<sup>33</sup> *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1894, p. 3, footnote no. 2, and p. 75.

<sup>34</sup> *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1893, p. 1.

a new form of taxation to replace the revenue-farms. From here, Fokkens posed his basic question: where to put the *Chineesch Bestuur* in the new decentralized local administration which would be developed in the early twentieth century? This was something of a different question: considering that they were unpaid government employees, should the Chinese officers be liable to the new taxation?<sup>35</sup> To answer this question meant a reappraisal of the position of the Chinese officers within the context of the Interior Administration.

The response from the Director of Home Affairs was that, in keeping with the idea of indirect rule, the Dutch never intended to place the *Chineesch Bestuur* directly under the European administration, although the Chinese major was responsible to a European official. On the other hand, it was impossible to place the Chinese officers either under the Native Administration or between the two main levels of Interior Administration. To place the Chinese Administration between the European and Native Administrations would be insulting to the Javanese regents and their subordinates. For whatever reason, the Dutch government would not implement such an undesirable measure, as the core of administrative rule and law in the colony was the *Inlandsch Bestuur*.<sup>36</sup>

This illustrates the precarious position of the Chinese administration and the unevenness of its structure. It also demonstrates the indecisive attitude of the Dutch towards the Chinese. And it was with similar indecision that the Dutch set up the Chinese officers in the first place.

### The Chinese Officers

It has been noted that the establishment of the *kapitan Cina* in Singapore and Malaya was copied by the British from the

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<sup>35</sup> See *Mailrapport*, no. 13/1896, ARA, The Hague.

<sup>36</sup> Copy letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 29 June 1894, no. 3722, in *Mailrapport*, no. 13/1896, ARA, The Hague.

Dutch in the East Indies,<sup>37</sup> who in turn adopted the system from the old kingdoms of the archipelago, such as Bantam, Malacca, and others.<sup>38</sup> In other words, the *kapitan* system had its origins in an indigenous arrangement.

Under Western rule the concept of ruling non-indigenous groups through their own headmen was maintained. Most of these settlers were traders, and it remained likely that the most powerful of them, in terms of financial resources, would be appointed, although by 1900 such criteria were not always relevant.

The appointment of the first Chinese captain of Batavia, Souw Beng Kong, in 1619, was simply a matter of his being granted legitimation by the Governor-General, J P Coen, as Beng Kong was already the headman of the Chinese community in Bantam before he and his people settled in Batavia.<sup>39</sup> Thereafter, the appointment of the Chinese officers was more likely to depend on the Governor-General's favour.

Souw Beng Kong, for example, was undoubtedly on good terms with J P Coen, but the unfortunate captain, Nie Hoe Kong, was a victim of the dispute between Governor-General A Valckenier and a member of the Indies Council, G W Baron van Imhoff, which culminated in the Chinese massacre of October 1740.<sup>40</sup>

Lack of interest on the part of the Governor-General Joan Maetsuycker rendered the Chinese officership defunct for about twelve years from the death of captain Gan Dji Ko in 1666 until 1678. During this period of neglect the Chinese community had its only experience of female leadership, as the widow of Gan Dji Ko boldly took his place as captain;

<sup>37</sup> Yen Ching-Hwang, *op. cit.* p. 121; Wong Lin Ken, "The Revenue Farms of Prince of Wales Island, 1805-1830", *Journal of the South Seas Society*, vol.19, 1964, part 1, & 2, p. 58.

<sup>38</sup> Details are discussed in Chapter II.

<sup>39</sup> Phoa Kian Sioe, *Sedjarahnja Souw Beng Kong, Phoa Beng Gan, Oey Tamba Sia* (1956. Djakarta: penerbit Reporter) pp. 12-15.

<sup>40</sup> For Nie Hoe Kong's bad treatment under the Dutch, see B. Hoetink, "Nie Hoe Kong, Kapitein der Chineezzen te Batavia in 1740", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indie*, vol. 74, 1918, pp. 447-518.

this elicited bitter complaints from the male members of this patrilineal-oriented people.<sup>41</sup>

However, during the whole period of VOC supremacy, the office was preserved. As noted by B Hoetink, there were 22 Chinese captains<sup>42</sup> and 73 lieutenants in those days.<sup>43</sup> Even the British in Java, during their short interregnum, followed the Dutch practice. The so-called recognition money, or *recognitie geld*, for the appointment of Chinese officers to be paid to the Chinese Hospital was maintained.<sup>44</sup>

After 1816 a new era of colonial dominion was begun by the Netherlands Indies government, which implemented a thorough system of colonial exploitation. In terms of civil administration, it laid the foundations of the *Binnenlandsch Bestuur*, Interior Administration, which included a system of rule over non-native, non-Europeans. As the dominant part in the administration of foreign asiatics, or *Bestuur over Vreemde Oosterlingen*, the Chinese administration gradually adjusted to this new system. Loose criteria for officership were set up, which gave guidance to the Chinese Council in selecting candidates. Procedural steps for appointment, promotion and performance of duty, all of which implied obligations and privileges, came to shape the Chinese officership. Indeed, a set of requirements was purposely never defined by the Dutch, but there was convention, or "sebegimana adat kebiasaan" as understood by the Chinese Council. It is hardly surprising that personal bias, even prejudice, on the part of the Dutch authorities played a great part in their dealings with the officers.

The Chinese officership began with the rank of lieutenant. To be a Chinese lieutenant, a person would be assessed by

<sup>41</sup> J Th Vermeulen, "Eenige Opmerkingen over de Rechtsbedeeling van de Compagnie in de 17de en 18de Eeuw voor de Chineesche Samenleving", *Mededeelingen van het China Instituut Batavia*, December 1939, p. 11.

<sup>42</sup> B Hoetink, "Chineesche Officieren te Batavia onder de Compagnie", *BKI*, vol. 78, 1922, pp. 8-9.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 88-95.

<sup>44</sup> According to *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 19 October 1809, issued by Daendels. Later the *recognitie geld* was paid only for titular or honorary ranks, see *Resolutie*, 11 March 1819, no. 3; effective officers were released from this payment, see the case of captain Ko Tjoen Kiat in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 11 January 1850, no. 7.

the Chinese Council in terms of: his behaviour towards the native people,<sup>45</sup> his association with the distinguished Chinese, his financial capacity or means, his services in government, his contribution to his own society, his knowledge of the customs, usage and practices of Chinese institutions. Later, non-involvement in opium was added to the list.<sup>46</sup> All applications were to be directed to the Governor-General through the Chinese Council, which would in turn forward them to the Resident of Batavia. After examining the candidates, the Council would draw up an official report, either to support or reject. The examination was conducted by the chairman of the Council, the Chinese major, and the result was discussed in the Council's meetings.

In studying the application letters, it is interesting to distinguish a candidate of non-peranakan origins from a peranakan. The non-peranakan Chinese would sign his name in Chinese characters, while the peranakan used a romanized Hokkien spelling. Very few signed their names in both Roman and Chinese characters.<sup>47</sup> This illustrates the distinctions that were already occurring between the peranakan and the singkeh-totok members of the Chinese community in Batavia. Most peranakan no longer knew the Chinese language, while the singkeh-totok scarcely understood Malay.

An applicant also had to disclose his origins, whether he was Batavian born, and if not, the length of his residence in the city became a criterion for qualification. Naturally a candidate would disclose his background if he belonged to an officer's family, for it was widely known that the Dutch preferred members of distinguished Chinese families. Yet,

<sup>45</sup> "ada bae sama orang kampoeng", the term used by the Chinese Council, indicating how important good relations between the Chinese and the natives should be in the eyes of the Batavia local authority.

<sup>46</sup> This criteria is listed in letters of the Chinese Council to the Resident of Batavia, 18 July 1849, no. 331; 14 August 1849, no. 357; letter of the Chinese major, 15 August 1849; all kept in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 5 September 1849, no. 2.

<sup>47</sup> For example, see application letters kept in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 27 October 1838, no. 13.

in some cases, a Batavian-born peranakan was the choice, despite a lack of family background. Examples include the rejection by Dutch higher officials of Liem Goan Sioe for lieutenantship and as member of the Chinese Council in 1872, and the nomination of Liem Goan Tjeng in 1883.

Liem Goan Sioe was from Gresik and had been settled in Batavia for about three years. He was the son-in-law of Be Biauw Tjoan, a rich Chinese captain of Semarang.<sup>48</sup> Liem Goan Tjeng received support from the Resident of Batavia and the Director of Finance for both the lieutenantship and membership of the Chinese Council. Presumably this was because he was an *opium pachter* or opium revenue-farmer and also belonged to an officer's family. Here we can detect a kinship tie between the two Liems, as both had brothers who were captains in Gresik and Semarang, and another brother who was lieutenant in Gresik.<sup>49</sup> As time wore on, both fell into disfavour with the Dutch, particularly Liem Goan Sioe, who was suspected of involvement in the smuggling of opium.<sup>50</sup>

I do not entirely agree with Suryadinata's assertion that the officership was a semi-hereditary position.<sup>51</sup> If he means that the officership passed from father to son, and was shared among the officers in active service, then my enquiries show this to be rare - happening only in 1866 and 1879. The appointment of Tan Soe Tjong as captain in 1866 was more to please his recently retired father, the ex-major Tan Eng Goan, as his promotion had been rejected by the Resident of Batavia in 1861 when his father was still

<sup>48</sup> Letter of the Chinese Council to Resident of Batavia, 5 March 1872, no. 26, and advice from the Translator of the Chinese Language, 22 October 1872, no. 17745, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 31 October 1872, no. 11. He was accepted as lieutenant in 1876, but two years later was suspected of involvement in opium smuggling. For further details see Chapter VI.

<sup>49</sup> Confidential letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 23 October 1883, no. La.L2, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 18 November 1883, no. 13.

<sup>50</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 27 June 1879, no. 38.

<sup>51</sup> L Suryadinata, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Java*, p. 28 footnote no.7. His comment may be true for the officership in Semarang and Surabaya; see also Liem Thian Joe, *Riwajat Orang Orang Tjina di Semarang*.

active in service.<sup>52</sup> According to the Resident, his previous entry to the officership in 1849 was a result of his father's influence, as he was the son of the Chinese major of that time. Later, in 1861, as the youngest member of the Chinese Council, the Dutch government could not grant lieutenant Tan Soe Tjong a higher rank.<sup>53</sup>

The approval of Nie Ek Tjiang and his brother Nie Hok Tjoan as lieutenants in 1879 and 1889 respectively was based on their qualifications. They were the sons of the late captain Nie Boen Tjiang, and both were good officers. Nie Ek Tjiang was very popular among the Chinese of Tangerang, who wanted him to be promoted to captain instead of Oey Giok Koen, a captain from Meester-Cornelis, posted to Tangerang.<sup>54</sup> His younger brother, Nie Hok Tjoan was sufficiently trusted by the Dutch to be appointed acting-major during a vacancy in 1908-1910.<sup>55</sup> The semi-hereditary character was present in some cases. But as the transfer of office from father to son occurred mainly among the non-active officers, who had no authority in handling daily Chinese affairs, no harm was done.

Nevertheless, the Resident of Batavia kept an eye on the situation, particularly during major Tan Eng Goan's term of office. Complaints from members of the Chinese community in Batavia point to the coincidence that the first two majors, Tan Eng Goan (1837-1865) and Tan Tjoen Tiat (1865-1879) shared the same family name.<sup>56</sup> A certain Tio Tjat Seng sent a letter dated 9 June 1853 complaining about

<sup>52</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 17 January 1866, no. 22. Tan Soe Tjong was appointed lieutenant in 1849.

<sup>53</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 29 January 1861, no. 325, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 17 January 1861, no. 9.

<sup>54</sup> See letters of the Chinese of Tangerang to Governor-General, 5 November 1897, 15 January 1899, and confidential advice from the Office for Chinese Affairs no. 363, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 2 July 1899, no. 22, and also Tangerang, no. 150/15.

<sup>55</sup> Besluit of Resident of Batavia, 10 January 1908, no. 349/6. and letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 15 November 1909, no. 5, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 29 November 1909, no. 46.

<sup>56</sup> According to major Tan Eng Goan, Tan Tjoen Tiat was not his relative, though he bore the same family name; see his letter to Resident of Batavia, 15 August 1849, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 5 September 1849, no. 2.

certain family relationship in the Chinese Council, and strongly criticizing the way in which major Tan Eng Goan handled Chinese affairs.<sup>57</sup> Some anonymous letters sent to the Resident of Batavia noted that there were many Tans serving in the Chinese Council under the chairmanship of major Tan Tjoen Tiat. One humorously suggested that since there were so many candidates for appointment to the lieutenantships coming from the Tan family, it would be better to put them into a lucky draw, "*lebie bae taro die lotterij lebie bagoes*".<sup>58</sup>

In this respect, the reader should apply caution in thinking that Chinese family names reflected family relations, such as those which the Dutch government called *familie betrekkingen*, or a kind of nepotism. Bearing the same family name did not necessarily indicate a blood relationship, although there was always the possibility of a kinship tie among people with different family names. The Chinese are well-known for being very clannish, and they regard a person bearing the same family name as a brother or sister. But this kind of kinship does not allow marriage between those bearing the same family name.

Therefore it was not easy to prevent family relations intruding into the officership, as there was a natural tendency towards marriage within the limited circle of Chinese officers. This phenomenon was not limited to the peranakan Chinese officers in Central and East Java, called by James Rush the *cabang atas*, or upper branch,<sup>59</sup> but also commonly occurred among the native regent families, as observed by Heather Sutherland.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> See his letter kept in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 17 July 1855, no. 3.

<sup>58</sup> These letters are kept in, *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 7 November 1866, no. 5.

<sup>59</sup> See James Rush, *Opium to Java. Revenue Farming and Chinese Enterprise in Colonial Indonesia, 1860-1910* (1990. Ithaca: Cornell University Press) particularly chapter V; and also J. Moerman, *In en Om de Chineesche Kamp* (1932. Batavia: G. Kolff & Co) p. 55.

<sup>60</sup> Heather Sutherland, "Note on Java's Regent Families", part I, *Indonesia*, no. 16, October 1973, pp. 113-147; and part II, *Indonesia*, no. 17, April 1974, pp. 1-42.

The Dutch government saw that certain kinds of nepotism could be weakened, if not completely eliminated, through changes in the composition of the Chinese Council. This was particularly true after the 1870s, when there was an increase in the non-Hokkien, singkeh-totok group in Batavia. This growing element, although still in a minority among the peranakan-Hokkien Chinese of Batavia,<sup>61</sup> could become crucial, as was evident during the first decade of the twentieth century. It was noted in 1912 that there were already 7,000 Hakkas, 4,000 singkeh-Hokkien and 1,200 Macaos living in the city together with 16,000 peranakan Chinese.<sup>62</sup> Seeing this growing element in the Chinese community, the Dutch, while admitting the wide differences in language, character and place of origins,<sup>63</sup> decided to accommodate non-Hokkiens on the Chinese Council. According to Government decree no. 19, on 22 December 1878, a new composition of the Chinese Council would admit five Indies-born Hokkien (meaning peranakan Chinese), two China-born Hokkien, and three Hakkas or Cantonese, preferably born in China. In the same decree, the first non-Hokkien officer, Tan A Kauw, a Cantonese, was appointed and admitted to the Chinese Council.

However, the government's decision to admit non-peranakan to the Chinese Administration did not necessarily reflect the personal prejudices of the Batavia authorities. It is interesting to note that consideration of a non-peranakan candidate was based more on the personal views of Dutch officials, rather than on the candidate's capabilities, as is demonstrated by the following objection: that "*de meesten hunner weinig beschaafd, en met de Maleische taal niet voldoende bekend zijn*", the majority of them were rather ill-mannered and their knowledge of the

<sup>61</sup> See letter Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 4 September 1878, no. 5448, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 22 December 1878, no. 19.

<sup>62</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 11 October 1912, no. 199, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 4 January 1913, no. 27.

<sup>63</sup> Confidential letter of W P Groeneveldt, Advisor for the Chinese Affairs, to Governor-General, 16 November 1878, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 22 December 1878, no. 19.

Malay language was insufficient;<sup>64</sup> that a Khe or Hakka candidate was "*ruw en onbeschaaafd*",<sup>65</sup> rude and ill-mannered, or a Cantonese could be "*niet gegoed genoeg*",<sup>66</sup> not sufficiently well-off. For the China-born Hokkien members, the choice was very limited, for most Hokkien in the city were born in the colony.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, a pattern was set, particularly in facing the Pan-Chinese movement during the first two decades of the twentieth century, in which the non-peranakan Chinese or singkeh-totoks openly expressed their anti-Western feeling.<sup>68</sup>

The procedure for becoming an officer was related to promotion to a higher rank. Vacancies for lieutenantship were filled by candidates promoted from among the Council's members. This was because after 1871, seats for active officers were limited to only ten. Only once, in 1860, had the Dutch government allowed twelve officers in the Chinese Council; this was due to the increasing number of Chinese migrants arriving in the city, and the growing activities of Chinese in revenue-farms and interior trade.<sup>69</sup>

The pattern of promotion was so organised that candidates for captainship were selected from the ranks of lieutenants, and only captains were qualified to become a major. As active members within the circle of officers in the Chinese Administration were very few, promotion relied on a vacancy due to retirement or resignation.

The retirement or resignation of a captain meant that a lieutenant would be promoted to fill the vacancy. The promotion of a lieutenant in turn left a vacancy for a new member on the Council. Since there was no limited period of

<sup>64</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 4 September 1878, no. 5448, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 22 December 1878, no. 19.

<sup>65</sup> Confidential letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 24 July 1883, no. La. X1, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 18 August 1883, no. 9.

<sup>66</sup> Confidential letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 6 August 1884, no. La. C3, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 31 August 1884, no. 20.

<sup>67</sup> Confidential letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 6 January 1890, no. La. E, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 12 January 1890, no. 12.

<sup>68</sup> This will be discussed in Chapter V.

<sup>69</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia, quoted in letter of the Indies Council to Governor-General, 15 March 1860, no. 2462, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 3 May 1860, no. 47.

office for any Chinese officer of any rank, promotion from lieutenant to captain caused by retirement or resignation implied debate within government circles, particularly if the Dutch had their own candidate. For example, in the candidacy for captainship of Tan Boen Peng and Gouw Eng Hoei, the Director of Finance supported Tan Boen Peng while the Resident of Batavia and the Director of Home Affairs favoured Gouw Eng Hoei. Although Tan Boen Peng was considered a respectable lieutenant, being a revenue farmer who paid tax of 13,100 guilders annually and married to the daughter of a former captain, Lie Pek Tat, he was considered too young and inexperienced to be promoted to captain. This was the reason why the Resident of Batavia preferred Gouw Eng Hoei as captain. Gouw Eng Hoei was the oldest lieutenant among the Chinese Council members, and he was also endorsed by the Director of Home Affairs. The Director of Finance's objection to Gouw Eng Hoei was based on his fragile financial status. Previously, particularly in 1873, Gouw had been heavily in debt, unable to pay the security on his opium farm business in Batavia and Krawang. The Director of Home Affairs claimed that Gouw's financial condition had recently improved, as he had managed to keep his rice trade firm, but the Director of Finance argued that Gouw still had to pay a fine of 27,700 guilders to the *Collegie van Boedelmeesteren*. Moreover, the Director of Finance observed that Gouw Eng Hoei was likely to be less respected by his people due to his inability to settle his financial problems. However, in the eyes of the Resident of Batavia, Gouw Eng Hoei, despite his debts, was not impoverished. But the Director of Finance then proved that Gouw's debts and securities were paid by his business partners. That Gouw Eng Hoei could not even make restitution for his opium-leasing indicated that he was no longer a man of means. The debate among these Dutch higher officials concerning the two candidates was ended by the confirmation of Tan Boen Peng as captain in December 1877.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> See letter of Director of Finance to Governor-General, 22 September

The debate above demonstrates how wealth was the primary consideration of the Dutch in their attitude to the Chinese officership. That the criterion should be such material considerations later became the focus of a lengthy, yet unresolved, debate between the Officers/Advisor for Chinese Affairs and the Resident of Batavia, this will be discussed later.

Retirement or resignation arose from various considerations. Usually retirement was approved for natural reasons such as sickness or old age. Resignations were due to personal reasons, such as feelings of embarrassment and being ill-at-ease, "*maloe en trada enak*",<sup>71</sup> or because of entanglement in cases of indebtedness, bankruptcy or even illicit trade.<sup>72</sup> Embarrassment could also arise when a Chinese lieutenant who was senior in terms of age and service was passed over for promotion by his junior.<sup>73</sup>

All discussions concerning the *Chineesch Bestuur*, particularly at the end of the nineteenth century revolved around a very basic question:<sup>74</sup> the fact that the active Chinese officers who represented the Chinese Administration did not receive a government salary. This led to another issue, namely the position of the Chinese Administration in the colonial administrative system, its

1877, in support of Tan Boen Peng; letters of Resident of Batavia, 8 September 1877, no. 5724, 20 October 1877; and of Director of Home Affairs, 14 September 1877, to Governor-General, both in favour of Gouw Eng Hoei. All letters kept in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 12 December 1877, no. 21.

<sup>71</sup> According to the Chinese Council, quoted by Resident of Batavia in his letter to Governor-General, 28 September 1871, no. 5940, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 3 February 1872, no. 26.

<sup>72</sup> According to *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 3 February 1872, no. 26, any Chinese officer who was involved in a legal case involving bankruptcy should be relieved from his post until rehabilitation. Details will be discussed in Chapter VI.

<sup>73</sup> Gouw Eng Hoei asked to retire after 12 years in the lieutenantship, and had been twice passed over, see confidential letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 14 February 1878, no. 2047, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 13 March 1878, no. 39; see also footnote 70. Nie Ek Tjiang resigned from the lieutenantship after 30 years, and had also been twice passed over for captainship, in 1880 and in 1899. His brother, Nie Hok Tjoan was promoted to captain in 1896, see *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 29 September 1896, no. 4.

<sup>74</sup> Letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 29 June 1894, no. 3722, in *Mailrapport*, no. 13/1896, ARA, The Hague.

criteria for membership, its hierarchy, and its relations with other government offices.<sup>75</sup>

Had Chinese officers been given a government salary like officials in the Native and European Administrations and not merely an allowance,<sup>76</sup> many questions could have been resolved more simply. For example, it would not have been necessary to select candidates only on the basis of wealth, thus opening up the posts to professional persons, rather than restricting them to merchants, traders and landowners.<sup>77</sup> Had the question of material wealth not been an issue, the discussion over the original concept of the Chinese officership, particularly between the local authority, represented by the Resident of Batavia, and the Officers for Chinese Affairs, could have been firmly concluded.

For the Officers for Chinese Affairs there appeared to be no real guidelines for selecting Chinese candidates for officership. The fact that only rich Chinese were eligible was clearly a '*vicious beginsel*', a vicious circle, seeing that wealth did not entirely guarantee the financial status of an officer, particularly as their financial resources came mainly from revenue-farming, which relied to a great extent on Dutch government policy. Should future changes in policy adversely affect the economic position of an officer, how could wealth as a criterion of officership be sustained? For how long could the Chinese officership exist if the Dutch government continued to determine the officers' wealth? Furthermore, the Officers for Chinese

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Captains in the environs of Batavia and majors in the three main cities of Java also received a *bezoldiging* or stipend, meant for the administrative expenses of their offices and lower staff; see report of Director of Home Affairs, 22 April 1914, no. 3, in *Agenda*, 24 April 1914, no. 12877; see also letter of Resident of Batavia to Director of Home Affairs, 6 December 1911, no. 20707/6, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 27 January 1912, no. 80.

<sup>77</sup> This question had already been raised in the case of Tan Boen Sok, a lieutenant of Batavia, who was in debt and was asked to resign by the Resident of Batavia. The Translator of the Chinese Language, 15 December 1871, asked why only a rich Chinese was qualified for officership; see *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 3 February 1872, no. 26. For Tan Boen Sok's case, see Chapter VI.

Affairs argued that even in China, wealthy Chinese still had to pass state examinations in order to obtain an officership.<sup>78</sup> Such a requirement was non-existent in the Dutch East Indies. The Resident of Batavia admitted that the Chinese officership in the colony was not based on European concepts or rules.<sup>79</sup> Criteria such as '*bekwaamheid*', capability, and '*geschiktheid*', suitability, which were considered desirable qualities in European officials, were not necessarily taken into account when appointing native officials or Chinese officers. The two sets of requirements for European and non-European officials were plainly incompatible.<sup>80</sup> And in addition, the Chinese view of society was rather worldly; although they openly expressed respect and were very sensitive to feelings of disgrace, they put material possessions above everything. In their way of thinking, honorary titles and positions were attainable only for those with wealth.<sup>81</sup> The debate between the Officers for Chinese Affairs and the Resident of Batavia failed to reach a conclusion, and the criteria for Chinese officership<sup>82</sup> continued to be based upon conventions which emphasized wealth, as well as the personal views of Dutch higher officials.

Moreover, because the Chinese officers were unpaid, the Dutch government offered them compensation in the form of tax exemptions and access to revenue-farming. One privilege was the release of officers and their families from the passport system from 1894.<sup>83</sup> With regard to the

<sup>78</sup> See his note of 15 December 1871, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 3 February 1872, no. 26.

<sup>79</sup> Quoted in disposition of Division C of the Office for Chinese Affairs, 22 October 1872, no. 17745, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 31 October 1872, no. 11.

<sup>80</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 13 August 1872, no. 5650, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 31 October 1872, no. 11.

<sup>81</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 28 September 1871, no. 5940, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 3 February 1872, no. 26.

<sup>82</sup> See pages 87-88.

<sup>83</sup> Letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 29 June 1894, no. 3722, in *Mailrapport*, no. 13/1896, ARA, The Hague. The passport system for the Chinese was relaxed in 1905 and abolished in 1916.

Chinese officers' entry in revenue-farming, this later raised problems for the Director of Finance, particularly when it came to the implementation of a new taxation system. Fokkens argued that income from revenue-farming, mainly run by the Chinese, was not liable for *bedrijfsbelasting* or corporate tax for it was part of government financial policy. On the other hand, the abolition of revenue-farming in the early years of the twentieth century meant that the Chinese officers lost their main source of income. In addition, their uncertain position as unpaid government employees made their status for tax liability questionable. Many viewed tax exemptions for Chinese officers as a reward or financial compensation, and the Director of Finance strongly recommended that they be given a government salary;<sup>84</sup> in his view, tax exemptions for Chinese officers should not be seen as a privilege. It would be preferable to acknowledge the position of the officials of the Chinese Administration in the same way as the members of the other '*bestuur*', for, in his opinion, should they had been government employees, their status would not have been viewed from financial reasons. In this respect, the Director of Finance did not see that it should affect public funds.<sup>85</sup>

The Advisor for Chinese Affairs, on the other hand, did not think it necessary to give them an official government income. He argued strongly that the government, in establishing the Chinese officership to run the Chinese Administration, saw it as a '*kosteloos*', free of charge. This was the rationale behind selecting only wealthy Chinese for officership and compensating them with the above-mentioned privileges.<sup>86</sup>

Yet after the abolition of the revenue-farming system and the implementation of the new taxation structure, the question of salaries for Chinese officers remained. The

<sup>84</sup> See consideration of Director of Finance to Governor-General, 29 March 1895, no. 5177, in *Mailrapport*, no. 13/1896, ARA, The Hague.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Quoted in letter of Resident of Manado to Director of Home Affairs, 25 May 1917, no. 100a, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 2193.

Resident of Batavia reminded the government that under the changed financial conditions, most Chinese officers would be endeavouring to earn an income, and to expect their services to be free was no longer reasonable. The Resident suggested that giving the Chinese officers a fixed official salary would generate feelings of loyalty.<sup>87</sup> And indeed, their loyalty to the Dutch government, which became critical during the turbulent period of the Pan-Chinese movement, would be better assured if their position was affirmed as government paid officials.<sup>88</sup> Thus by the turn of the century the Chinese officership had the status of an unpaid government post which no longer benefitted from privileges such as entry to revenue-farming; clearly therefore it was no longer an attractive proposition for rich members of the Chinese community.<sup>89</sup>

Despite the lengthy discussion which took place within the Dutch government, a decision to give salaries to the officers of the *Chineesch Bestuur* was never made. And if one looks further, this was purely due to financial restrictions. In all probability the Dutch government was simply unable to allocate funds to this instrument of the Interior Administration. It was financial restraints, too, that discouraged the Dutch from unifying of the *wijkbestuur*, district administration, managed by wardmasters for the whole of Java, to replace the *Chineesch Bestuur*.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Director of Home Affairs, 6 December 1911, no. 20707/6, in defending his proposal to give an allowance for the office expenses of Chinese officers in the environs of Batavia; see *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 27 January 1912, no. 80.

<sup>88</sup> "Chineesche Officieren", *De Indische Gids*, vol. I, 1914, p. 886.

<sup>89</sup> "Chineesche Officieren en Wijkmeesters", *De Indische Gids*, vol. II, 1913, p.1373.

<sup>90</sup> See correspondence between the Resident of Batavia and Director of Home Affairs with Governor-General, 9 September 1912, no. 10118/3, 14 January 1914, no. 636/10, 27 February 1914, no. 1616, in *Missive Gouvernements Secretarie*, 13 May 1914, no 1197, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta; letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 13 November 1922, in *geheim Mailrapport*, no. 1249x/1922, letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 25 April 1933, in *geheim Mailrapport*, no. 603 x/1932, ARA, The Hague. Further details on the *wijkbestuur* see Chapter VII.

On 31 March 1934 the institution of Chinese officers in Java and Madura, with the exception of Batavia, was ended. For the last time, the officers received their allowance together, with an official expression of gratitude for their service.<sup>91</sup>

### **The Chinese Administration and the Local Authority of Batavia**

It is not my intention here to go into details on the daily activities of the Chinese officers and their duties in the Chinese Administration. As this would focus on their functions and duties on behalf of the Chinese community, carried out through the Chinese Council or *Kong Koan*, an account of the Council would more appropriately describe the relationship between the Chinese people and their officers. Instead, I intend to concentrate on the administrative mechanisms, between the Chinese Administration, headed by the major, and the offices of Batavia's local authority.

As noted earlier, the Dutch government's principal aim in establishing separate administrative rule over the non-native, non-European inhabitants, was to guard against possible or unnecessary entanglement with these foreign inhabitants. By appointing their own headmen, the Dutch would not become preoccupied with the internal affairs of others. Although these headmen were considered "*handlangers van ons bestuur*",<sup>92</sup> henchmen of our government, their establishment should not represent any extra cost to the government. In practice, this meant that the *Bestuur voor Vreemde Oosterlingen*, Administration for the Foreign Asiatics, had to be self-sufficient. This may explain why the requirements for aspiring officers stressed the wealth of the applicant.

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<sup>91</sup> *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 30 March 1934, no. 2; see also *Mailrapport*, no. 444/1943, ARA, The Hague.

<sup>92</sup> Confidential letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 10 December 1915, no. 685 G/B, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4406.

For the Chinese community itself, such a requirement fitted in with their way of life; as a migrant community, their reasons for being in the colony were purely financial. Nevertheless, the material requirements for would-be officers came to be irrelevant as times changed, and as attitudes towards officers within the growing Chinese community altered. The changing spirit of the Chinese community in the twentieth century brought about by Pan-Chinese revivalism led to a different, not to say difficult, era in the relationship with Dutch authority. But I will go no further on this matter here, which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Being left self-sufficient, members of the Chinese community were able to accumulate property and maintain financial security. These properties were administered by the Chinese Council which regularly reported to the head of the local authority, i.e. the Resident of Batavia.<sup>93</sup> In the case of financial administration, the local authority would not interfere except in cases of mismanagement. Very few cases of financial mismanagement by the Chinese Council occurred and these were settled by the Resident of Batavia<sup>94</sup> without harm to the Chinese community.

The Chinese, as the Resident of Batavia noted, were well disposed towards the government. They were easy to rule and showed respect to the authorities in areas in which they settled.<sup>95</sup> It is likely that the Resident of Batavia was referring to the Indies-born peranakan Chinese, for this description hardly fitted the new elements that emerged in the Chinese community in the early twentieth century. The main responsibilities of the Chinese Administration were to keep peace and order by showing obedience to Dutch authority, to respect the law of the country, to uphold public order, peace and security, and finally to maintain all

<sup>93</sup> Letter of the Chinese Council to Resident of Batavia, 9 March 1855, no. 33; and letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 9 January 1856, no. 73, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 17 February 1856, no. 23.

<sup>94</sup> Further discussion on this subject, see Chapter IV.

<sup>95</sup> "Politiek Verslag van de Residentie Batavia van het jaar 1872,1873", Batavia, no. 18, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

general and local regulations, inspections and orders.<sup>96</sup> It should be noted that in keeping peace and order in their community, the Chinese officers had no police authority, and were not competent to handle crimes,<sup>97</sup> a situation which does not correspond to James Rush's description of powerful Chinese officers in other parts of Java. According to Rush, the Chinese Council maintained a separate police force to investigate crimes involving Chinese, and to pursue those who sought to avoid government taxes and monopolies. Furthermore, he observed that the Chinese officers were authorized to inspect the warehouses, shops, depots, homes and other property of Chinese and other non-European suspects.<sup>98</sup> As Rush does not refer in his account to any sources, either Dutch archives or printed indigenous materials, I contend that he exaggerates the power of the Chinese officers. My sources, particularly those derived from the local level, give a different impression.

The Chinese major of Batavia was very cautious in his relations with the Resident when dealing with the family affairs of his people, let alone using the police powers described by Rush to deal with crimes and tax violators. This is evident from the cases of two Chinese wives who forwarded complaints to the Chinese major about their husbands. These wives were sent back to their parents' homes, but the husbands did not mention divorces. To the peranakan Chinese family tradition, the case demonstrates that the husbands neglected their duties, which meant they were disrespectful towards the wives' families. The complaints were brought separately to the Chinese major who, in order to settle the dispute, wrote to the Resident of

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<sup>96</sup> See "Instructie voor de Hoofden van Vreemde Oosterlingen", quoted in letter of Resident of Batavia to Director of Home Affairs, 31 January 1913, no. 2014/6, in *Agenda*, 11 February 1913, no. 6146.

<sup>97</sup> Letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 29 June 1894, no. 3722, in *Mailrapport*, no. 13/1896, ARA, The Hague.

<sup>98</sup> James Rush, *Opium to Java*, p. 87.

Batavia requesting that the two husbands be sent to him. In turn the Resident ordered the local sheriff to fetch them.<sup>99</sup>

Looking into the lower echelons staff employed by the Chinese Council, there were certain '*oppas*', attendants, '*tjenteng djage malem*', nightguards, and '*spion*', spy.<sup>100</sup> The '*spion*' or '*mata-mata*', as they were popularly known, were very common in local authority offices, those of both Chinese officers and native officials; they acted chiefly as informants rather than being involved in enforcement. It is likely that what James Rush saw as a police force was in fact the group of *centeng*, or bodyguards.

Liem Thian Joe refers to the fact that in order to safeguard opium deliveries, most opium farmers kept '*jago silat*' or martial fighters.<sup>101</sup> But as James Rush goes further in suggesting the enforcement of police authority, an exaggerated picture is painted of the Chinese officers' powers. Would the Dutch really have tolerated the Chinese officers maintaining a separate police force? It seems most unlikely that the Dutch government would have consented, for that would have had serious consequences for law enforcement, peace and order in the colony.

My aim here has been to correct accepted, but misleading, descriptions of the institution of Chinese officers, by focussing on those in Batavia. Batavia had the largest Chinese community in Java but is clearly underrepresented in scholarly studies,<sup>102</sup> the work on the Chinese in other parts of Java cannot speak for those in Batavia. As the Chinese of Batavia had distinctive characters, both of being

<sup>99</sup> Letters of the Chinese major to Resident of Batavia, 18 January 1845 and 28 March 1845, for each case, in *Batavia*, no. 345/1, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

<sup>100</sup> "Staat Gadjih boelan November 1927", in letter of Governor of West-Java to Governor-General, 3 August 1928, no. A5/11/2, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 5 November 1929, no. 17. On the '*mata-mata*' employed by the Chinese Council of Batavia, see also letter of the Chinese Council to Resident of Batavia, 11 May 1866, no. 77, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 13 July 1866, no. 17

<sup>101</sup> Liem Thian Joe, *Riwajat Orang Orang Tjina di Semarang*, p. 100.

<sup>102</sup> James Rush, "Placing the Chinese in Java on the Eve of the Twentieth Century", in *The Role of the Indonesian Chinese in Shaping Modern Indonesian Life* (1991. Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program), p. 13, footnote no.1.

urban and rural people, and being the largest Chinese community in Java indicates its own particulars.

#### 4 THE CHINESE COUNCIL OF BATAVIA

The term *Chineesch Bestuur*, namely local rule over the Chinese in the Dutch East Indies, frequently appears in Dutch colonial records, particularly in the 1920's when the government discussed its termination. In the eyes of the Dutch, this *Chineesch Bestuur* was represented by, or composed, of the Chinese officers and the Chinese Council. It should be noted that the term refers only to rule over the Chinese communities in Java and Madura. The institution of Chinese officers was in fact set up by the Dutch when they appointed the first Chinese captain on 11 October 1619. It existed until 1934, with the exception of the Chinese officers in Batavia.

Little has been written on the Chinese officers and the Chinese Council. Both institutions, the Chinese officers and the Chinese Council (called by the Dutch government, the *Chineesche Raad*, while for the Chinese community it was *Kong Koan*) worked together in managing and supervising the Chinese community.

There are two articles, written by P de Roo de la Faille,<sup>1</sup> former Resident of Batavia, and by Yo Heng Kam,<sup>2</sup> former Chinese captain and member of the Chinese Council, which consider the question of the termination of Batavia's Chinese Council. Myra Sidharta<sup>3</sup> showed the richness of the *Kong Koan* archives, yet there has been no serious study using these sources.<sup>4</sup> In terms of historical studies using

<sup>1</sup> P de Roo de la Faille, "De Chineesche Raad te Batavia en het door dit College Beheerde Fonds", *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land-en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indie* (hereafter BKI), vol. 80, 1924, pp. 302 - 324.

<sup>2</sup> Yo Heng Kam, "Reorganisatie van den Chineesche Raad", *De Chineesche Revue*, July 1928, pp. 77-89.

<sup>3</sup> Myra Sidharta, "On the Remnants of the *Gong Goan* Archives in Jakarta". Paper presented at the *International Conference on Local History of the Asia-Pacific Region*, Hongkong, 6-8 April 1989.

<sup>4</sup> This is admitted by J Th Vermeulen, see his "Eenige Opmerkingen over de Rechtsbedeeling van de Compagnie in de 17de en 18de Eeuw voor de Chineesche Samenleving" in *Mededeelingen van het China Instituut Batavia*,

the archives kept in the *Kong Koan* or the Chinese Council office, the Chinese of Semarang have received more attention than those of Batavia. Liem Thian Joe used the *Kong Koan* archives for his work on the Chinese community in Semarang,<sup>5</sup> which James Rush used for his description of the relationships among the Chinese officers of Java's northern coast.<sup>6</sup>

Unfortunately, I have been unable to use the *Kong Koan* archives of Batavia/Jakarta. Thus, here I am painting a rather sketchy picture of the relationships between the Chinese Council and the Chinese officers in Batavia. My evidence is gathered mostly from Dutch government archives, complemented by secondary sources. It may seem that there is little information on the Chinese response towards the management of the Council, as I am unable to use contemporary sources such as the Chinese-Malay newspapers, where Chinese public opinion was usually expressed.

### The Establishment

Although the date of the establishment of the Chinese officers in Batavia is recorded in the VOC archives,<sup>7</sup> there is no reference to when the *Chineesche Raad* was established. Most historians argue that it came into existence in 1678,<sup>8</sup> with the exception of M Sidharta who,

December 1932, p. 2. and by B. Hoetink in his "Chineesche Officieren te Batavia onder de Compagnie", *BKI*, vol. 78, 1922, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Liem Thian Joe, *Riwajat Orang Orang Tjina di Semarang* (1933. Semarang: n.p.)

<sup>6</sup> James R Rush, "Opium Farms in the Nineteenth Century Java; Institutional Continuity and Change in a Colonial Society 1860 - 1910" (1977. Unpublished PH.D. dissertation, New Haven, Yale University) especially chapter IV. See also his *Opium to Java. Revenue Farming and Chinese Enterprise in Colonial Indonesia 1860-1910* (1990. Ithaca: Cornell University Press)

<sup>7</sup> See *Resolutie*, 11 October 1619, on the appointment of Bencon, the first Chinese captain of Batavia.

<sup>8</sup> J Th Vermeulen, "Eenige Opmerkingen over de Rechtsbedeeling", p. 11; P de Roo de la Faille, "De Chineesche Raad te Batavia", p. 308; and Liem Ting Tjay "Het Instituut der Chineesche Officieren", *De Chineesche Revue*, July 1928, p. 67.

for her own reasons, maintains it was 1717.<sup>9</sup>

The argument for 1678 is based on the fact that the year saw the appointment of three Chinese officers in Batavia, Tsoa Wanjock (Tjoa Hiang Giok) as captain, Limsisaij as lieutenant and Litsoecko as sergeant. The establishment of the Chinese Council is considered to have taken place when the VOC agreed to appoint not just one officer but additional officers to work with him. From 1619 to 1666 the VOC had appointed only one Chinese captain to manage Batavia's Chinese immigrant community, as in the cases of Souw Beng Kong (Bencon), Phoa Beng Gan (Bingam), Lim Lacco and Gan Dji Ko (Siqua). By appointing several persons the Dutch laid the foundations for the Chinese officership, and led the way for the establishment of the Chinese Council, particularly as membership of the Council was open only to Chinese officers, the highest ranking being entitled to the chairmanship. Having several officers to manage Chinese affairs was beneficial to both the VOC and the Chinese themselves.

For twelve years the Chinese held a longstanding resentment against the VOC because after the death of captain Gan Dji Ko (Siqua) in 1666, it did not appoint a new captain; this was because the Governor-General, Joan Maetsuycker, had no interest in the Chinese community in Batavia.<sup>10</sup> For almost twelve years, the widow of captain Gan Dji Ko took the liberty of presiding over the management of Chinese affairs. This caused great displeasure among the Chinese: not only were they ruled by a woman but the person concerned was the late captain Gan Dji Ko's concubine, of Balinese origin.

The VOC realized the need for advice and assistance in dealing with Chinese affairs in the city, and this could be obtained only from people who were respected by their fellow countrymen. This was expressed in the official assignment of Tsoa Wanjock (Tjoa Hiang Giok); according to the Batavia Daily Records [*Daghregisters van het Casteel*

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<sup>9</sup> M Sidharta, "On the Remnants of the *Gong Goan* Archives", p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> J Th Vermeulen, *op. cit.*, p.11.

*Batavia]* of 29 June 1678, he should communicate with his two subordinates in managing and settling all petty cases among the Chinese on behalf of the Dutch, but refer to them all serious cases. Additionally, advice was given on being a good, devout and alert captain.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, all Chinese inhabitants of the city were asked to show obedience and respect to their officers.

M Sidharta propounds 1717 for the establishment of the Chinese Council, because she claims that in this year, Chinese officers received authority to give permission for marriage and divorce within the Chinese community.<sup>12</sup> The Chinese Council's main internal function was to take care of the community's civil affairs, especially regarding marriage and deaths.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, crucial functions concerning political advice tended to be carried out by the Chinese officers, either the Chinese captain or later the major, as he was the person directly responsible to the colonial authorities.

### The Management of Chinese Affairs

The Chinese Council had been in existence for nearly two and a half centuries when the Resident of Batavia issued decree no 16210/6 on 7 September 1915, article 2 of which outlined the Council's main functions. These were to serve the public interest of the Chinese community in Batavia, to do its utmost to help provide free education for Chinese children of less wealthy parents, to arrange and bear the expenses of annual public ceremonies, and to manage of the Chinese cemeteries located in the various Council-owned grounds.

A year after the siege of Batavia, on 1 July 1620, Governor-General Jan Pieterszoon Coen set up a *Collegie van Schepenen* [College of Aldermen] to administer and exercise

<sup>11</sup> B Hoetink, "Chineesche Officieren te Batavia onder de Compagnie", pp. 29-30.

<sup>12</sup> M Sidharta, "On the Remnants of the *Gong Goan* Archives", pp. 5-6.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, Tables I and II.

justice regarding the civil affairs of the city. In the case of the Chinese, whom the VOC regarded as '*onse onderstaen ende burgeren deser stede*' [our subjects and citizens of this city], Bencon, the Chinese captain of the time, was given a seat in the College on condition that he was never allowed to preside over it.<sup>14</sup>

As the number of Chinese immigrants grew rapidly, from 800 persons in 1620 to 3,500 in 1627,<sup>15</sup> their activities in the city flourished, which increasingly drew the attention of the Dutch. On 16 June 1625 the VOC appointed a second Chinese, alongside the captain, to be an extra-ordinary member of the College of Aldermen, as cases concerning the Chinese were being raised almost every day.<sup>16</sup> However, in 1666 Chinese membership of the College of Aldermen was no longer allowed as, in the opinion of the Governor-General, Joan Maetsuycker, it was no longer necessary.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless the advice of Chinese officers was still required in dealing with Chinese judicial affairs. From this time, internal Chinese disputes and disputes between Chinese and other nationals were brought to the *Raad van Justitie* or Superior Council of Justice. Criminal cases involving the Chinese were not brought before the *Raad van Justitie* but were heard in the *Landraad*, the Natives' Court. This indicates that in terms of legal status, as members of the colonial community, the Chinese were split into two categories, each having its own jurisdiction. Being '*bangsa tengah*' (middle-group) between the Dutch and the natives, the Chinese fitted into either segment, according to government interests.

<sup>14</sup> Article 5 in "Authorisatie van de Schepenen de Stadt Jacatra", *Plakaatboek van Nederlandsch-Indie* (hereafter *Plakaatboek*), vol. I, p.60.

<sup>15</sup> Numbers of Chinese immigrants in Batavia fluctuated due to the in-coming and out-going junks which brought them to the city. In 1626 five junks brought 2,000 Chinese, while in 1627 there were already 3,500 Chinese residing in Batavia. In 1629 they decreased to 2,000, and by the end of 1632 there were 2,422 Chinese living in Batavia. By the end of 1633 their numbers were only 2,300. See B Hoetink, "So Bing Kong; het Eerste Hoofd der Chinezen te Batavia", *BKI*, vol. 73, 1917, p. 350.

<sup>16</sup> See article 6 in "Instructie voor het Collegie van Schepenen", *Plakaatboek*, vol. I, p. 128.

<sup>17</sup> J Th Vermeulen, "Eenige Opmerkingen over de Rechtsbedeeling", p. 12.

The fact that trials concerning civil affairs were conducted in the *Raad van Justitie* did not in any way indicate that the Chinese were admitted to the status of European citizens. It was a means of protecting Dutch interests in Chinese business transactions. On the other hand, being prosecuted in the Natives' Court or *Landraad* as a criminal case was regarded as a humiliation by the Chinese, something they could never willingly accept.

Legal condition worsened in 1868, when the Dutch launched the system of *politie-rol* [police-roll], in which court jurisdiction was based in administrative areas, such that officials of the local administration also exercised a judicial function. In this system of *politie-rol*, the Chinese became victims of hostility from both the Dutch and native officials, as the courts were simply the tools of the administrators, rather than instruments of justice.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the system made it possible for officials to pass sentence without consulting witnesses, and discouraged the accused from appealing to a higher court.<sup>19</sup> Any grievance the Chinese might have concerning their legal status, however, could not be dealt with through their own headmen or Council. In the colonial system, Chinese officers, like the native officials, were an instrument of colonial authority, nothing more than the apparatus of an authoritarian colonial policy, by which they themselves had been created.

The first aspects of Chinese civil affairs that the VOC regime chose to administer were those dealing with inheritances, legacies, debts, estates and other related matters following the death of a Chinese. On 26 May 1640 a *Collegie van Boedelmeesteren voor Chineesche Sterfhuizen* [College of Estate-Executors for the Chinese House of Mourning] was founded. The reason for this was that "inde

<sup>18</sup> Lea E Williams, *Overseas Chinese Nationalism. The Genesis of the Pan-Chinese Movement in Indonesia 1900-1916* (1960. Glencoe: The Free Press), p. 34.

<sup>19</sup> Liem Thian Joe, *Riwajat Orang Orang Tjina di Semarang*, p. 89; F H Fromberg, "Terdjepit", *Chung Hwa Hui Tsa Chih*, no.1, December 1917, p. 113.

*Chineesche Sterfhuyzen veele ende menichvuldige frauden ende malversatiën*", [in the Chinese Houses of Mourning there were frequent frauds].<sup>20</sup> It is said that estates or inheritances were often unfairly assessed, so that the children of the deceased were left destitute. Although here the VOC appeared to be concerned with penniless Chinese families, their true intention was to protect the interests of Dutch involved in commercial transactions with the Chinese. At first the College had two Chinese officials appointed by the Dutch. After its reorganization in 1766, in which a division was set up to handle the legacies of non-Christians, there were Chinese officials and also native administrators. The Chinese officials employed in the College of Estate-Executors who dealt with the legacies of non-Christians could apply to the Dutch for Chinese officership at the rank of lieutenant or, more rarely, captain. As the title given to them was merely honorary, they had little influence in the development of the Chinese community in Batavia. On the other hand, those Chinese officers who performed an effective function, having responsibility in settling civil matters,<sup>21</sup> formed a division among themselves, which later became institutionalized through the Chinese Council.

As has been mentioned, while Chinese legacies and related matters were administered under the Dutch, other civil affairs, such as marriage and divorce, were taken care of by Chinese officers, with administration and record-keeping being handled by the Chinese Council. Before matters regarding marriage and divorce had been handed over to the Chinese officers, they had been completely in the hands of the Chinese families concerned, as according to customary Hokkien law, they were strictly a family issue, in which decisions were made by the oldest members of the

<sup>20</sup> See "Aanstelling van Boedelmeesteren voor Chineesche Sterfhuizen", *Plakaatboek*, vol. I, p. 439.

<sup>21</sup> See basic assignment given to the first captain, Bencon, in *Resolutie*, 11 October 1619; and B Hoetink, "So Bing Kong, het Eerste Hoofd der Chinezen", p. 354 and "Chineesche Offcieren te Batavia onder de Compagnie", p. 10.

family.<sup>22</sup> Due to much abuse of marriage and divorce among the Chinese in Batavia, the Chinese officers forwarded complaints to the VOC. The latter, however, had no knowledge of these family affairs, and ultimately the Chinese officers had to settle the disputes themselves.

In 1717 the Chinese officers were given the authority to perform marriages and permit divorce among the Chinese of Batavia. The instruction said that no Chinese person, man or woman, widow or daughter, or deserted widow would be allowed to enter into marriage without the knowledge and permission of the Chinese captain and lieutenant, who on a set day each week would hold a hearing for such matters.<sup>23</sup> The hearing would investigate whether the proposed marriage followed Chinese customary law, a particular stipulation being that the bride and bridegroom should not bear the same *she* or family name.<sup>24</sup> From 1717 until 1907, when the Dutch set up a civil registry office for the Chinese, marriage records were kept by the Chinese Council.

Although the Dutch might interfere in their affairs, particularly those which dealt with monetary transactions, for the greater part the Chinese were left on their own. For example, they were permitted to build their own cemeteries, which later developed into a successful business run by the Chinese Council. The first request by the Chinese to purchase a piece of land for their own cemetery, located beyond the old fort of Jacatra, was granted in 1660. Eight years later, on 20 November 1668, they gained the property rights for 400 rixdollars to enable them to dig a canal around the cemetery, to prevent plunder. After that, there were frequent land purchases by the Chinese community of Batavia for cemeteries, and later for other purposes. Chinese communal landownership was exercised

<sup>22</sup> J Th Vermeulen, "Eenige Opmerkingen van de Rechtsbedeeling", p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> See "Voorschriften nopens Huwelijken en Entscheidingen onder Chineezzen te Batavia", dated 13 March 1717, in *Plakaatboek*, vol. IV, p. 94.

<sup>24</sup> The Chinese regard persons bearing the same family name as kin, although they are not blood-brothers. Marriage between persons bearing the same family name is strictly forbidden. For a description of Indies-born Chinese family names, see Liem Thian Joe, "Nama Toeroenan dan Familiesysteem dari Orang Tionghoa", *Jade*, no.1, July 1941, pp. 38-49.

through the Chinese Council. Much later, when debates on the termination of the *Chineesch Bestuur* took place within Dutch government circles, the government realised the difficulty of abolishing the Chinese Council, due to its function regarding Chinese communal landownership.<sup>25</sup> How the Council built up handsome funds through landownership and land transactions, and the mismanagement which lead to Dutch interference, will be discussed in the following pages.

Apart from managing Chinese civil affairs, the Chinese Council's other function was to oversee the public interests of the Chinese community. As was stated in the Resident's decree of 1915, 'public interests' meant the provision of free education and the arrangement of annual religious ceremonies. In fact both activities took place near the office of the Chinese Council - Petak Sembilan, near the Great River or *Kali Besar*, in the previous Chinese quarter, presently West Jakarta. The Chinese community's main temple where public religious festivities were held was situated in Petak Sembilan. The temple was built in 1650, and in 1755 was given the name *Jin de Yuan* (presently called *Wihara Dharma Bhakti*) by captain Oey Tji Lo.<sup>26</sup>

To provide free education for children of poorer families, the Council set up a school in 1755 called *Beng Seng Sie Wan*, later known as *Gie Oh*.<sup>27</sup> The school was also located in Petak Sembilan, in the yard of the main temple. Classes were conducted in the Hokkien dialect, and teaching methods were those of the motherland, providing a classical Chinese education. The old system of teaching concentrated mostly on the recitation of classical works, pronunciation and accent and, at a later stage, knowledge of Chinese characters. A similar method was used in many other Chinese private schools in Batavia and the surrounding

<sup>25</sup> For further details, see Chapter VII.

<sup>26</sup> C Salmon & D Lombard, *Les Chinois des Jakarta; Temples et Vie Collective* (1980. Paris: Etudes Insulindiennes-Archipel, vol. I), p. 72.

<sup>27</sup> Lie Tjian Tjoen, "Kong Koan dan Sekolah Tionghoa", in *Hari Ulang Tahun ke-50 Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan Djakarta, 3 Djuni 1900-3 Djuni 1950* (1950. Djakarta: THHK), p. 14.

areas. According to G. Schlegel, an official interpreter, there were 17 private schools in the 1860's, each of which had about 15 pupils. These were run either by Chinese officers or by other wealthy Chinese, and a few had been opened by schoolmasters.<sup>28</sup> The strong concern of the Chinese officers to educate the children can be seen in their requests to the Dutch to admit Chinese teachers, clerks and cashiers for their private land estates in the Batavia area.<sup>29</sup>

For these wealthy Chinese, the need to educate their children was primarily a practical one, for after attending school for a certain length of time, children were expected to assist their parents in running the business, mostly as bookkeepers and clerks. But in reality, these practical needs could not be met by schooling based on the old system of teaching. With these traditional methods, it took a pupil some 10 to 12 years to master the Chinese classics, while most Chinese parents were urging their children to be engaged in the family business after completing only the fourth year of their education.

This situation came to be of deep concern to the Chinese in Batavia. As immigrants, the first generations might be preoccupied with money-making; but the rapid growth of business activities led to more developed commercial affairs, and thus education for their children became a necessity. Employing teachers from the homeland, who still adhered to the old methods of teaching, simply perpetuated the problem. This explains why the main objective of the first modern Chinese association in Batavia, *Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan* (hereafter THHK) set up in March 1900, was to meet the needs of the Chinese to educate their children. The first school using a modern system of education was opened in March 1901. Instruction was conducted in Mandarin, the Chinese official language, as Batavia's Chinese community

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<sup>28</sup> See Schlegel's report, 10 December 1862, in *Agenda*, 2 January 1863, no. 85, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

<sup>29</sup> See request of captain Oey Liauw Keng, approved by *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 20 May 1843, no. 34; also from lieutenant Ko Tjoen Kiat, approved by *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 29 September 1843, no. 3.

was becoming more varied, and included Hakkas and Macaos, as well as Hokkiens.

Opening the modern THHK school meant that the Chinese Council had to consider the position of the existing *Gie Oh* school. As many Chinese officers were also members of the THHK board of directors, and some were even founding fathers of the association (Oey Giok Koen, Lie Hin Liang, Khoe A Fan, Khouw Kim An, to name a few) they decided to merge the *Gie Oh* and THHK schools. However, objections were raised, particularly on the part of the teachers. Rumours spread that the quality of THHK pupils was no better than that of the old school. To convince parents, a competitive examination was organized to determine which of the two educational systems was better. The competition was witnessed by all officers of the Chinese Council and the THHK executive board.<sup>30</sup> As might be anticipated, better results were attained by the THHK pupils. Thus the decision to close the *Gie Oh* school was accomplished. Its pupils were transferred to the THHK school and the money provided to it was transferred to the THHK, a monthly contribution which lasted until a reorganization of the Chinese Council.

The Chinese community's achievement in establishing its own system of self-supporting education made the Dutch authorities wary, especially as within five years, schools had been set up by THHK branches in almost every city in Java as well as in Sumatra (Palembang, Bangka, Muntok, Pangkalpinang), Kalimantan (Banjarmasin) and North Sulawesi (Gorontalo).<sup>31</sup> Viewing these rapid developments, the Dutch became anxious, as the tendency towards political activities in the Chinese movement was becoming obvious. School were certainly a seed-bed for political ideology and national awakening. In 1908 the Dutch government established the *Hollandsch-Chineesch School* [Holland-Chinese School] where the language of instruction was

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<sup>30</sup> Nio Joe Lan, *Riwajat 40-Taon dari Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan Batavia 1900-1939* (1940. Batavia: THHK), pp. 21-22; and Kwee Tek Hoay, *The Origins of the Modern Chinese Movement in Indonesia* (1969. Ithaca: Modern Indonesia Project. Cornell University. Translation Series), p. 23.

<sup>31</sup> See Nio Joe Lan, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-74.

Dutch.<sup>32</sup> It is interesting to note that in order to encourage Chinese parents to send their children to this government school, the Dutch asked the THHK for the help.<sup>33</sup> Apprehension amongst the Chinese that the government school might distract from Chinese self-supporting education was misplaced. By 1934 there were 259 THHK schools accommodating 30,438 pupils.<sup>34</sup>

### The Council and Its Financial Management

As has been stated, the Chinese Council administered Chinese communal land, for which it was given the status of a corporate body. P de Roo de la Faille, the former resident of Batavia, noted that by 1915 the Chinese Council possessed about 14 private land estates, dispersed in the areas surrounding Batavia.<sup>35</sup> Twelve years later, according to a financial report of 1927, there were 23 properties, comprising pieces of land or plots (*perceel*) and private land estates.<sup>36</sup>

One may wonder how the Chinese Council compiled such huge resources. In the early years of the VOC, their financial resources generally came from the percentages or money incentives raised through taxes levied on the activities of the Chinese. These included taxes on in-coming and out-going Chinese junks and migrants, on burial and marriage registration, on Chinese capitation, also from fees for providing letters, passports and certificates, or from other matters which members of the Council called '*perkara*', cases which required the Council's participation.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> It should be noted that the opening of the *Hollandsch-Inlandsche School* (Holland-Native School) was not until 1914.

<sup>33</sup> Nio Joe Lan, *Riwajat 40-Taon dari Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan Batavia*, p. 116.

<sup>34</sup> See "Onderwijs Tiong Hoa di Indonesia", *Sin Po Jubileum Nummer 1910-1935* (1935. Batavia: Sin Po).

<sup>35</sup> P de Roo de la Faille, "De Chineesche Raad te Batavia", p. 304.

<sup>36</sup> "Verslag van de Commissie voor het Financieel Beheer van den Chineeschen Raad", 17 November 1927, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 5 November 1929, no. 7.

<sup>37</sup> Letter of the Chinese Council to Resident of Batavia, 11 May 1866, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 13 July 1866, no. 17.

Much later, when the Chinese were no longer engaged in revenue-farming, due to its abolition by the Dutch at the end of the nineteenth century, the Council's funds were built up by other means, through land leases, payment of rents, mortgages, bank investments, deposits and so on.<sup>38</sup>

It was the Dutch government's intention to leave the Chinese Council to manage its own funds although, being subordinate to the local authority, the Council was expected to submit an annual financial report to the Resident of Batavia.<sup>39</sup> However, during the majorship of Tan Eng Goan (1837-1866) a case arose which could not fail to invite government interference. Being chairman of the Council and the highest-ranking officer, the major was a powerful person in the decision-making process. Tan Eng Goan, promoted as first Chinese major of Batavia in 1837, was rumoured to be unfortunate in his revenue-farming business. The life style which was required by his position as major exceeded his financial security, and it was said that most of his expenses were settled by a lieutenant whom he had promoted, Oey Thay Lo.<sup>40</sup> The Resident of Batavia had long been aware of major Tan Eng Goan's declining business. In 1844 the latter requested a loan of 250,000 guilders from the government to back up his business.<sup>41</sup> In 1848 he asked for repayment of 5,462.37 guilders from revenue-leasing, as his receipts on the bazaar tax and on sales of spirits and tobacco had fallen short.<sup>42</sup> In 1850 he again asked the government for compensation, 2,106.56 guilders, but was given only 1,742.37 guilders.<sup>43</sup> Dutch records of 1851 and 1855 indicate the unpromising fortune of major Tan Eng

<sup>38</sup> See "Verslag van de Commissie voor het Financieel Beheer van den Chineeschen Raad", *op.cit.*

<sup>39</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 9 March 1855, no. 652, noted that the financial report of the Chinese Council was regularly checked by his office; see *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 17 February 1856, no. 23.

<sup>40</sup> Phoa Kian Sioe, *Sedjarahnja Souw Beng Kong, Phoa Beng Gan, Oey Tamba Sia* (1956. Djakarta: Penerbit Reporter). Note that Oey Tamba Sia was the son of lieutenant Oey Thay Lo.

<sup>41</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 22 November 1844, no. 3.

<sup>42</sup> Advice of Director of Public Funds and Domains to Governor-General, 14 March 1851, no. 668, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 22 April 1851, no. 16.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

Goan's business.<sup>44</sup> Eventually, the Dutch displeasure with Tan Eng Goan grew into distrust. It was said that many of his subordinates, notably captain Tan Tjoen Tiat and lieutenant The Kim Houw, were disappointed with Tan Eng Goan's meekness in handling the case of Oey Tamba Sia, the son of the late lieutenant, Oey Thay Lo.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the major was guilty of nepotism in promoting his sons, Tan Soe Tjong and Tan Kang Soei, to lieutenantships in 1849 and 1860. It should be noted that at that time the Dutch were not concerned over favouritism among Chinese officers, although a decade later they would refuse a candidate because of his family connections.

The growing distrust towards Tan Eng Goan drove the Dutch in 1856 to hold up its approval of the Council's request to purchase areas of Tanjung and Slipi for Chinese cemeteries. Those two pieces of land, one located in the northern and the other in the western part of Batavia, had been leased by the Council for almost 15 years. The leasing contract and payments had been handled by the major from 1829 to 1844. It is said that the major also kept certificates of the sale of land in Jati, located in the western part of Batavia.<sup>46</sup> Not wanting to act in a direct manner that would cause the major to lose face in front of other officers and the Chinese community, the Dutch proposed that the Chinese Council transfer the management of its funeral funds to the office of the *Collegie van Boedelmeesteren*. Thus purchase of burial grounds, legacies, inheritances and debts of the deceased would be handled by the College in its section for non-Christians. The Chinese Council was aware of the subtle meaning behind the

<sup>44</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 11 June 1851, no. 16; and 6 November 1855, no. 11. See also Chapter VI.

<sup>45</sup> Oey Tamba Sia was a notorious womanizer, having a bad reputation among the Chinese in Batavia. He was much disliked by most Chinese officers for his ill-manners and contempt towards them. The officers expected major Tan Eng Goan to reproach Oey Tamba Sia, which he did not dare to do, as the major had unpaid debts to his late father, Oey Thay Lo. Later, Oey Tamba Sia was sentenced to death for committing murder. See Phoa Kian Sioe, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-104.

<sup>46</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 9 January 1856, no. 73, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 17 February 1856, no. 23.

proposal, and its answer conveyed its unhappiness, repeatedly stating that its accountability was to the Resident of Batavia. It said that its financial report was annually submitted to the Resident. The fact that it had regular fortnightly meetings to check on daily matters, and that the money collected by the lieutenants was reported monthly, showed an eagerness to convince the Dutch of its ability to manage its affairs. Although saying it was '*trada pantas*', inappropriate, if the management of land purchases were to be transferred to the office of *Boedelmeesteren*, it also expressed an unwillingness to decline the government proposal.<sup>47</sup>

The question was settled when the Chinese Council and the Resident of Batavia reached an agreement, an Arrangement for Further Management of the Chinese Funeral Funds of Batavia [*Regeeling over het verder Beheer van het Chineesch Begrafenisfonds te Batavia*] on 17 February 1856.<sup>48</sup> Before this, major Tan Eng Goan promised the Council that he would no longer be involved in the management of funeral funds; all papers, debentures and certificates of land sales were handed to the secretary of the Chinese Council.<sup>49</sup> The agreement outlined the duties of two elected officers, who were to be in charge of the finances together with the secretary of the Council. Accounts would be submitted to the Council at the end of every month, and annually to the Resident of Batavia. Furthermore, the agreement gave instructions on expenses for burial ground maintenance, the salaries of the guards and persons who had access to money. By these new rules, the Dutch prevented the major from being single-handedly involved in the finances of the Chinese Council, which might easily fall into mismanagement. On the other hand, considering that many transactions involved Chinese funeral

<sup>47</sup> Letter of the Chinese Council to Resident of Batavia, 9 March 1855, no. 33, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 17 February 1856, no. 23.

<sup>48</sup> Letter of the Chinese Council to Resident of Batavia, 29 December 1855, no. 539, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 17 February 1856, no. 23.

<sup>49</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 9 January 1856, no. 73, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 17 February 1856, no. 23.

affairs (purchase of plots for burial grounds, maintenance fees, and regular contributions for the expense of funeral ceremonies) handling such funds was a complicated business, involving considerable sums of money. Moreover, the land that had been purchased, though reserved for cemeteries, could in the meantime be utilized for other purposes. In this way the Chinese Council added to its huge funds.

If the Chinese major's position as chairman of the Council could lead to an abuse of power, the next person who might be prone to ill-action was the secretary. The Council employed two secretaries, the second of which acted as treasurer and was directly supervised by the chairman of the Council. It was quite possible, if the major was not very efficient, that all the Council's paperwork and financial reports would be left to the secretaries without further checking. And this could lead to unfortunate consequences, as was the case in 1907 during the majorship of Tio Tek Ho.

If Tan Eng Goan was known for his weakness in dealing with the Council's funds, then Tio Tek Ho was simply an inefficient organizer. The case was made public, raising questions about money collected for an annual religious ceremony, called '*sembahyang rebutan*', or in Dutch records, '*ciockofeest*'.<sup>50</sup> It was the task of the Chinese Council to arrange this public ceremony in the main temple, *Jin de Yuan*, by means of a long established system of contributions, known as '*tee-yan bohong*'.<sup>51</sup> The Council gained more contributions by circulating a list of donations, accompanied by the names of the officers who had given them, although the figures were great exaggerations. This was in order to attract more money, as no one in the Chinese community would dare embarrass the officers by donating more than they. In fact, many Chinese businessmen

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<sup>50</sup> This ceremony, held in the seventh month of the Chinese lunar calendar, is intended to provide a feast for all wandering spirits, as according to Chinese belief, they might have no living relatives to take care of their altar.

<sup>51</sup> See Kwee Tek Hoay, *The Origins of the Modern Chinese Movement in Indonesia*, p. 29.

could afford to contribute more, yet Chinese values did not encourage this.

This game was revealed in 1907 by Khouw Lam Tjiang, the master of ceremonies. He was the THHK chief treasurer who, after completing his ceremonial duties, insisted on consulting the Council's books to calculate the expenditure. His insistence frightened the second secretary and in turn made the major anxious. When his requests were met by continual excuses from the Council, Khouw Lam Tjiang and Phoa Keng Hek, president of THHK, brought the question before the Resident of Batavia.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, HHKan (Kan Hok Hoei), a notable Chinese landlord who was later chosen by the Dutch government as the first Chinese representative in the People's Council, and Lie Hin Liam, a Chinese captain who was one of the founding fathers of THHK, made a move within the Council. Both accused the second secretary, Nie Liang Soey, of manipulating the expenditure of the *ciokofeest* held on 15 August 1907. Apparently he had claimed expenses of 400 guilders, but HHKan said that the ceremony could not have cost more than 200 guilders. Nie Liang Soey was fired for being untrustworthy.<sup>53</sup>

Compared with major Tan Eng Goan, Nie Liang Soey's misdemeanour was minor. But what should be noted is the government attitude towards the two cases. In the case of the land purchases at Tanjung and Slipi, which revealed major Tan Eng Goan's involvement, the Dutch immediately took decisive action to regulate the management of Council funds, and at the same time prevent the possible future involvement of any Chinese officer, particularly the major or chairman. The case of Nie Liang Soey, apart from the rather insignificant sum of money involved, appeared more as an internal problem of the Chinese community, and thus the Dutch authorities were less concerned. This case, in fact, took place in a challenging period for the Council, as

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>53</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 20 September 1907, no. 17264/36, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 23 December 1907, no. 14.

the modern element in the Chinese community was growing fast and reaching wider horizons. Known as the young Chinese group, '*de jong Chinezen partij*',<sup>54</sup> they were a product of Dutch education, and had more interest in political activities than the older generation, who had been mainly commercially-oriented. Their emergence in the early twentieth century was a new factor for the Chinese community, and led to an awakening, through the founding of the first modern Chinese association in the colony, the *Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan*. However, the established Chinese officers still remained the foremost element in the Chinese community. Therefore the first decade of the THHK saw a struggle between these two elements. One was to win the Chinese leadership, whilst the other was to hold tightly to the prestige given by the colonial authority.

It is interesting to note that the THHK, from its foundation, embraced these two elements. This is in striking contrast to the Budi Utomo (founded 1908) which excluded the old-established native leaders - the regents or *bupatis*. As noted earlier, many Chinese officers were also founding fathers in this first modern Chinese organisation, and members of its board. It was customary for the Chinese major to be appointed its patron.<sup>55</sup>

The case of Nie Liang Soey was one manifestation of this conflict within the Chinese Council, facing the newly emergent elites in the Chinese community. Major Tio Tek Ho belonged to the conservative group,<sup>56</sup> yet as patron of THHK could not openly criticize the young group. Indeed the reason why they disliked Nie Liang Soey was because he had had to reprimand them on behalf of the major.<sup>57</sup> Before the case closed with the firing of Nie Liang Soey, major Tio Tek Ho had asked for leave due to severe illness. He could not face

<sup>54</sup> J. Hofland, "Memorie van Overgave van de Residentie Batavia, 20 Mei 1906- 4 September 1907", ARA, The Hague.

<sup>55</sup> See Nio Joe Lan, *Riwajat 40-Taon dari Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan Batavia*; see also Chapter V.

<sup>56</sup> See J Hofland, "Memorie van Overgave van de Residentie Batavia", ARA, The Hague.

<sup>57</sup> Letter of Director of Home Affairs to Resident of Batavia, 8 October 1907, no. 217/A, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 23 December 1907, no. 14.

his majorship ending in such shameful circumstances. He died in January 1908, after which the majorship was vacant for two years. In August 1910 Khouw Kim An was appointed. He was to be the last major in Batavia. He was the son-in-law of Phoa Keng Hek, the president of THHK.

### The Council and The Officers

Before 1882 there was no official reference to the membership of the Chinese Council. However it was generally known that the members of the Council were primarily Chinese officers; this was often mentioned in the official correspondence on Chinese affairs between Batavia's local authority and the colonial government. Despite having existed for centuries, official acknowledgment was not given until 1882, when the *Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indie* [Netherlands Indies Government Statute Book] stated that the *Chineesche Raad*, or Chinese Council, was composed of notable Chinese, meaning the Chinese officers, who managed the internal affairs of their community and represented these to the Resident. It was further stated that the formation of the Chinese officer and the council was with government approval, and established only in the three main cities of Java, that is Batavia, Semarang and Surabaya.<sup>58</sup> From this it is clear that the Council was formed by the Chinese officers. This is confirmed by the stipulation that its chairman was to be the major. Batavia's Chinese Council lasted from 1678 to 1955, while in Semarang the Council was set up in 1825 and abolished in January 1931;<sup>59</sup> the Chinese Council of Surabaya probably existed over the same period as in Semarang.<sup>60</sup> From a different perspective, Batavia was granted the Chinese majorship in 1837, Semarang in 1829, and Surabaya sometime before 1834.

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<sup>58</sup> "Bestuur over Vreemde Oosterlingen", in *Regeeringsalmanak voor Nederlandsch-Indie van het jaar 1889*, vol. I, pp. 88-89.

<sup>59</sup> Liem Thian Joe, *Riwajat Orang Orang Tjina di Semarang*, p. 48.

<sup>60</sup> No literature on this particular subject had yet been found.

Membership of the Council during the VOC period reached six seats in 1762, comprising captains and lieutenants only. By 1849 more seats were provided; one chairman (the major) and eight members (two captains and six lieutenants) plus two extra-ordinary members (also lieutenants)<sup>61</sup> which represented the largest body in the history of the Chinese Council. A membership of ten seats was maintained until the reorganization of the *Chineesch Bestuur* in 1927; in the meantime, some changes took place without disturbing the number of seats on the Council. The first alteration, made in 1860, was to remove the distinction between ordinary (*gewone*) and extra ordinary (*buitengewone*) members.<sup>62</sup> The second modification took place in 1871, following the reorganization of local government in the Batavia residency, to match the formation of native district commandants in the *Stad en Voorsteden*, where the old Chinese Quarter and Chinese neighbourhood were located. The Batavia residency consisted of four divisions - the city and three surrounding areas called *Ommelanden*. The city division was called *Stad en Voorsteden Batavia*, while the *Ommelanden* were Meester-Cornelis (the eastern region), Tangerang (the wetsren region) and Buitenzorg (the southern region). *Stad en Voorsteden Batavia* had seven districts headed by native district commandants with seats in Penjaringan, Pasar Senen, Mangga Besar and Tanah Abang. The two smaller districts, known as the second and the fourth, were both annexed to larger districts and headed by one commandant, while the sixth district (the old Chinese Quarter) was allocated for the Chinese and headed by the major.<sup>63</sup> As there were four native district commandants, the Chinese should have four captains. The Resident's reason for this was that all communications, social contacts or disputes between the Chinese and the natives would be dealt with by

<sup>61</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 22 August 1849, no. 2256, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 5 September 1849, no. 2.

<sup>62</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 10 February 1868, no. 10.

<sup>63</sup> "Gewestelijk Bestuur, Batavia", in *Regeeringsalmanak voor Nederlandsch-Indie van het jaar 1872*, vol. I, pp. 144-149.

the Chinese captain and the related native district commandant. As several large Chinese neighbourhoods were located outside the Chinese quarter, although still within the authority of the *Stad en Voorsteden*, the Council's six Chinese lieutenants were to be in charge of these areas, which were old Jakarta, Penjaringan, Mangga Besar, Tanah Abang, Pasar Baru and Pasar Senen.<sup>64</sup>

A third change was made in 1878 to accommodate the growing non-Hokkien element in the Chinese community in Batavia. The emergence of Hakka in Batavia as early as 1865 was probably caused by the repression of the Taiping movement in China, in which they were known to have played an active part, or was a consequence of the Dutch annexation of the islands of Borneo and Bangka, that led some members of the Hakka communities there to make their living in Java.<sup>65</sup> Although the Hakkas, the Cantonese and the Macaos were minorities among the 12,602 Chinese living in Batavia in 1877,<sup>66</sup> the Dutch had long been displeased by the Hokkien-peranakan domination of the Chinese Council. Yet, to take sudden action would invite an even more undesirable situation because, for various reasons, the long-established peranakan Chinese undeniably formed a powerful element in the Chinese community of Batavia.

The Dutch also realized the big differences in language or dialects, origins and customs among the Chinese that set them apart from each other. A confidential letter from the Advisor for Chinese Affairs noted the dislike between the peranakan-Chinese and the singkeh-totok Chinese; the first regarded themselves as superior, which was not gladly admitted by the latter.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, most transactions in

<sup>64</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 18 October 1912, no. 319/c, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 4 January 1913, no. 27. The confirmation of four captains and six lieutenants in the Chinese Council was in the *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 20 May 1871, no. 37.

<sup>65</sup> C Salmon & D Lombard, *Les Chinois des Jakarta*, p. xxvi.

<sup>66</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 4 September 1878, no. 5448, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 22 December 1878, no. 19.

<sup>67</sup> See his letter to Governor-General, 16 November 1878, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 22 December 1878, no. 19.

the city were conducted in Malay, and this was a hindrance to joining the Chinese Council for the non-peranakan or Hakka Chinese, the majority of whom were unfamiliar with the language.<sup>68</sup> Needless to say the Hakkas were somewhat reluctant to apply for Chinese Council membership or officership, as they knew that they would not be welcome by the peranakan officers.<sup>69</sup> A Dutch move to modify the ethnic make-up of the Council took place when two vacancies arose. A new pattern of membership was proposed by the government. The Council should consist of five Hokkien-Chinese born in the Netherlands Indies, two Hokkien-Chinese born in China, and three Hakka or other Chinese originating from Canton and preferably not born in the Dutch East Indies.<sup>70</sup> It is surprising to learn that it was the Resident of Batavia, not the Chinese officers, who strongly objected to this proposal. He argued that it would be a problem to find a Hakka candidate, as most were less educated and not sufficiently familiar with Malay.<sup>71</sup> The same attitude was expressed by the next Resident, who refused Hakka candidates for Council membership in 1883 and 1884 as they were either 'rude and ill-bred',<sup>72</sup> or 'not well-off'.<sup>73</sup>

Nevertheless, the policy of the central authority had to be carried out regardless of the objections raised by the local authority in Batavia. Besides which, changing Council membership was the most subtle way for the Dutch to eliminate the so-called *familie betrekkingen*, or family connection, among the peranakan officers. In fact, the composition of five Hokkien-peranakan, two Hokkien-

<sup>68</sup> Correspondence between the Chinese Council and the local authority of Batavia was in Malay.

<sup>69</sup> Letter of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to Governor-General, 16 November 1878, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 22 December 1878, no. 19.

<sup>70</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 22 December 1878, no. 19.

<sup>71</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 4 September 1878, no. 5448, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 22 December 1878, no. 19.

<sup>72</sup> Confidential letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 24 July 1883, no. La. X1, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 18 August 1883, no. 9.

<sup>73</sup> Confidential letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 6 August 1884, no. La. C3, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 31 August 1884, no. 20.

singkeh and three Hakka or Cantonese was more convenient to the Dutch, and thus was maintained until new amendments were adopted in 1918.

The institution of Chinese officers was removed from 1918 to 1927, when a prolonged study was undertaken to prepare for a reorganization of the *Chineesch Bestuur* in Java and Madura. The Chinese major of Batavia and other officers were released from their positions until 1927. During this period, the daily work of the Chinese Council hardly changed, except that the chairman's seat was empty. After the institution of Chinese officers was reorganized, a number of captains and lieutenants were allowed to disappear following their retirement. Membership of the Chinese Council decreased only slightly however, as the vacant seats were filled by private persons. A total of six members was maintained until the last days of Dutch rule.

For the Chinese community which had been experiencing rapid social change since the beginning of this century, to become a member of the Chinese Council did not necessarily mean that they had to be a Chinese officer, as reorganization meant that these were gradually being reduced in number. The remaining Chinese officers on the Council were obviously insufficient for the management of Chinese public affairs in Batavia. Therefore the Chinese associations proposed to the Resident of Batavia that private persons might be considered as non-officer members of the Chinese Council. This was granted in December 1928, and the first two non-officer members, Tan Pia Teng and Nio Peng Liang, were appointed.<sup>74</sup>

By the end of 1931, the reorganization of the Chinese officers had reached its final stage, retaining only one major, Khouw Kim An, one captain, Lie Tjian Tjoen, and one lieutenant, Lie Boen Sien.<sup>75</sup> This meant a total of five council members, although the rules stated that there should be six members seated in the Council. The Dutch government then considered accepting Chinese proposals for

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<sup>74</sup> Nio Joe Lan, *Riwajat 40-Taon dari Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan Batavia*, p. 181.

<sup>75</sup> See *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 603x/1932, ARA, The Hague.

admitting a third non-officer member. After their painstaking efforts to wind down the institution of the Chinese officers, it was out of the question for the Dutch to fill the post with another officer. As it was, the three votes of officer-members, including the major as chairman of the Council, outnumbered the two votes of the non-officer members, an undesirable situation which left the authority of the Chinese Council open to abuse.<sup>76</sup> It was a great relief to the Dutch authorities when the Chinese community agreed that the extra seat should be occupied by a non-officer member. Dr. Tjiong Boen Kie was the first of the third private members of the Chinese Council, and also the only member during colonial times who was an academic. He was appointed on 9 March 1940,<sup>77</sup> and two years later the Japanese army occupied the city of Batavia.

Looking over the Council's archives it is clear that the nineteenth century was the most active period for the Chinese Council. As well as the increase in the number of members from six to ten, its duties greatly multifidied. The growing activities of Chinese immigrants in Batavia, particularly in trade and commerce, attracted even more to this city. As mentioned earlier, the mid-nineteenth century also saw the emergence of the Hakka, in addition to the long established Hokkien-peranakan majority. Figures recorded in the political report of the Batavia residency show that the 10,494 Chinese living in the area in 1871<sup>78</sup> increased to 19,471 a year later.<sup>79</sup> Records for 1893 mention 26,568 Chinese living in Batavia, out of a total population of 110,669.<sup>80</sup> As they grew in number, their activities also

<sup>76</sup> Yo Heng Kam, "Reorganisatie van den Chineesche Raad", p. 85.

<sup>77</sup> See "Gewestelijk Bestuur, Provincie West-Java", under the heading of "Residentie Batavia, de Chineesche Raad", in *Regeeringsalmanak voor Nederlandsch-Indië van het jaar 1941*, vol. II, p. 291.

<sup>78</sup> "Staat der Bevolking in de Residentie Batavia over het jaar 1871", in *Politieke Verslag van de Residentie Batavia van het jaar 1871*; see *Batavia*, no. 18, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

<sup>79</sup> "Politieke Verslag van de Residentie Batavia van het jaar 1872", in *Batavia*, no. 18.

<sup>80</sup> C. Salmon & D Lombard, *Les Chinois des Jakarta*, p. xxvi.

intensified in revenue-farming, including the opium trade, in which the revenue-farmers or *pachters* were mostly Chinese.<sup>81</sup>

How busy the members of the Chinese Council were was acknowledged by the Resident of Batavia in a letter to the Governor-General. Apart from giving advice to the Resident in cases dealing with administrative policy and revenue-farming, they had to attend all judicial and criminal trials in which Chinese were involved, both in the *Raad van Justitie* and the *Landraad*. Other members had to be present in the Chinese Council office to handle all complaints, disputes, reports and requests, regarding any matter raised by their people.<sup>82</sup>

Weekly duties had to be divided among them, as two officers had to be present at trials three times a week, whilst another two, had to attend meetings at the Resident's office to discuss matters connected with local government. Yet another two officers handled daily matters brought directly to the Chinese Council office, and a further two were expected to sit on the committees of various government offices, on matters relating to the Chinese in the colony.<sup>83</sup>

However, work had slackened by the turn of the century. This was the result of the abolition of the revenue-farming system, the passport system or *passenstelsel*, and the residence system or *wijkenstelsel*, which were initially intended to control Chinese movement into native areas. Those systems had been set up and enforced through the Chinese officers. A second reason was the establishment of *Gemeente* in 1905. This was a system of administration applied in Java's main cities, in which any matter concerned with city government was brought up in the *Gemeente Raad*

<sup>81</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 22 August 1849, no. 2256, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 5 September 1849, no. 2; and "Politieke Verslag van de Residentie Batavia van het jaar 1856", in *Batavia*, no. 18.

<sup>82</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 22 August 1849, no. 2256, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 5 September 1849, no. 2.

<sup>83</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 13 August 1872, no. 5650, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 31 October 1872, no. 11.

or City Council. Consequently, part of the Chinese Council's tasks relating to Chinese inhabitants in the city were removed, as these public matters became the responsibility of the Batavia City Council. This changing situation is also reflected in the Council archives, which from 1910 contains records only of Chinese public interests, such as cemeteries, religious festivities and charity work.

According to M Sidharta, the functions of the Chinese Council in the independent Republic of Indonesia were limited to that of a charity foundation, a body to give loans to members of the community, and to supervise Chinese culture, mainly through temples and their activities.<sup>84</sup> As the Republic government did not allow for separate systems of administration for particular groups, it was not possible to restore the Council to the significance it had held in colonial days. The last major, Khouw Kim An, had died in a Japanese prison camp in 1945; the post-war Chinese Council was chaired by ex-captain Lie Tjian Tjoen. In 1953 the Chinese Council's land had to be sold to the city government of Jakarta, following Law no. 9 of 1953, on the Necessity to Return some Private Landed Properties to the Government [*Undang Undang Tentang Pernjataan Perlunja Beberapa Tanah Partikulir Dikembalikan Mendjadi Tanah Negeri*].<sup>85</sup> After the death of its last chairman, ex-lieutenant Tan In Hok, in 1955, the *Kong Koan* or Chinese Council faded away.

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<sup>84</sup> M Sidharta, "On the Remnants of the *Gong Goan* Archives", p. 26.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

## 5 THE OFFICERS AND THE CHINESE POLITICAL MOVEMENT

I will devote this chapter to describing the extent to which the Chinese officers responded to and involved themselves in Chinese political activity from the early twentieth century. In particular I will discuss their political loyalties and participation in political movements.

The Dutch observed that there were three main political streams among the Chinese in the colony,<sup>1</sup> namely the China-oriented *Sin Po* group, the *Chung Hwa Hui*, the Dutch East Indies-oriented party, and the *Partai Tionghoa Indonesia*, which was Indonesian-oriented. These perceptions are supported by the many Indonesianists whose area of study is the Chinese, particularly Lea E Williams,<sup>2</sup> Mary F Somers,<sup>3</sup> and also the Indonesian-Chinese scholar, L. Suryadinata.<sup>4</sup>

I presume that the Dutch perception was derived from the writings of Kwee Tek Hoay who, in 1932, presented a thorough analysis of the strengths and shortcomings of the Chinese political movement. Kwee's article was first published in a peranakan newspaper, the *Djawa Tengah*, on 1-4 October 1932.<sup>5</sup> It is clear that the above scholars follow Kwee's analysis in their studies on the Chinese movement. It is not my intention here to repeat these analyses. I will concentrate on the Chinese officers'

<sup>1</sup> See *Geheim Verbaal*, 11 February 1933, no. R.2; *Geheim Mailrapporten*, nos. 211x/1935 and 255x/1936; *Geheim Verbaal*, 17 February 1937, no. L.3, ARA, The Hague.

<sup>2</sup> Lea E Williams, *Overseas Chinese Nationalism. The Genesis of the Pan-Chinese Movement in Indonesia 1900-1916* (1960. Glencoe: The Free Press).

<sup>3</sup> Mary F Somers, "Peranakan Chinese Politics in Indonesia", (1965. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Ithaca, Cornell University)

<sup>4</sup> L Suryadinata, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Java 1917-1942* (1976. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies).

<sup>5</sup> The English translation of Kwee's article is in L Suryadinata (ed), *Political Thinking of the Indonesian Chinese 1900-1977. A Sourcebook* (1979. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), pp. 55-61.

response towards the movement, to which none of these scholars have paid particular attention.

Measuring their political response by their involvement as leading members in or founding fathers of a particular organization, I perceive that the Chinese officers were involved in only two of the main Chinese organizations, the *Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan* and the *Chung Hwa Hui*. Although the *Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan*, founded in 1900, was not a political organization, it was the first modern Chinese association attached to the officers from the beginning. The peranakan Chinese majority became unhappy with the *Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan*, in particular because it was heavily dominated by singkeh-totok Chinese. This was also felt by the peranakan officers of Batavia. Later, they joined the *Chung Hwa Hui*.

It is obvious that the Chinese officers were unlikely to join either the *Sin Po* group or the *Partai Tionghoa Indonesia*, since both were blatant in their anti-Chinese officer feelings. It was from the *Chung Hwa Hui* that the Chinese officers gained support during the lengthy debates of 1915-1917 over the Dutch government plans to reorganize the officers.

In this chapter I will devote myself to the *Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan*, the *Chung Hwa Hui*, the People's Council, and to the question of the Netherlands subject law and the early anti-Chinese turbulence of 1912-1913. The third part will focus on Chinese participation in the People's Council, and the response of the Chinese political movement to the application of Netherlands subject legislation. For the Chinese, the establishment of the People's Council in 1918 was not simply an opportunity to participate in the parliamentary body created by the Dutch but was closely related to Chinese acceptance of the Netherlands-subject issue. These two topics touched a very basic point, the status of the Chinese in the Dutch East Indies.

Two of the Chinese representatives on the People's Council were Batavian officers - major Khouw Kim An (1921-1931) and captain Yo Heng Kam (1927-1942). Their seats on the Council reflected their political affiliation,

Khouw Kim An for the *Chung Hwa Hui* and Yo Heng Kam for the *Politieke-Economische Bond*, rather than their administrative position as Chinese officers of Batavia. Moreover, of the eight Chinese representatives during the whole period of the People's Council from 1918 to 1942, four were of Batavian origin. They were Kan Hok Hoei, Khouw Kim An, Yo Heng Kam and Loa Sek Hie. With the exception of Yo Heng Kam, all represented the *Chung Hwa Hui*.

The last part of this chapter will be devoted to the anti-Chinese riots in 1912-1913. This period was a crucial time for non-western groups in the colony, the Chinese, the indigenous-Indonesians and also the Arabs, who were all moving towards national consciousness. Indeed Chinese political revivalism and the indigenous nationalist movement crossed paths at one point, resulting in riots and disturbances in many parts of Java. For Batavia, this period, the second decade of the twentieth century, saw a change in the Chinese/Indonesian relationship, in which a brotherly relationship, '*broederschaap*', broke into enmity, '*vijandcshap*'.<sup>6</sup>

My study, shows how the peranakan Chinese in Batavia became entangled in this socio-political explosion. Unable to feel at home in pure singkeh-totok Chinese organizations, the peranakan silently resisted Chinese ultra-nationalist influences. But as the Indonesian nationalist movement never took the trouble to differentiate the peranakan from the singkeh Chinese, to admit peranakans into any Indonesian political organization was clearly out of the question. Needless to say, the peranakan were regarded as non-indigenous by the Indonesian nationalists, and consequently became victims in the anti-Chinese riots. Suspicions that the peranakan were closer to the Dutch were well-founded.

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<sup>6</sup> See "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol.II, 1912-1913, pp. 320, 886; vol. V, 1916, p. 230.

### The Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan

The *Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan* (hereafter THHK) was established on 17 March 1900 in Batavia, and cannot really be called a political association.

The emergence of this first Chinese modern organization was directed towards cultural revivalism among the peranakan Chinese of Batavia. This was expressed in its philosophical foundation, that the THHK was "...satoe perkoempoelan jang bersifat laen dari pada jang laen-laen, diatas dasar jang loeas dan dengen menjender pada kasopanan Tionghoa dan teroetama pengadjaran-pengadjaran Khong Tjoe...",<sup>7</sup> an association which relied upon Chinese ethics, in particular the teachings of Confucius.

Such cultural revivalism may be explained by the socio-cultural conditions of the Batavian Chinese community. Kwee Tek Hoay, a peranakan writer, points out the disintegration of the Chinese tradition among the peranakan, showing how distant they were becoming from the real Chinese identity. According to Kwee, the peranakan upbringing contained so many indigenous elements from their native maternal side that their Chineseness eventually became obscure.<sup>8</sup>

Another writer, Hoay Tjiong - pseudonym of Ang Jan Goan, the editor of *Sin Po* newspaper - notes the conflicts among the Chinese triads in the last decade of the nineteenth century as one of the influential factors in the awakening of Chinese cultural revivalism, through the founding of the THHK.<sup>9</sup> I have not yet come across a study of Chinese secret societies in Java,<sup>10</sup> but I assume there was little peranakan

<sup>7</sup> Nio Joe Lan, *Riwajat 40-Taon dari Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan Batavia 1900-1939* (1940. Batavia: THHK), p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Kwee Tek Hoay, *The Origins of the Modern Chinese Movement in Indonesia* (1969. Ithaca: Cornell University, Modern Indonesia Project. Translation Series), pp. 8-12.

<sup>9</sup> Hoay Tjiong, "Hoakiauw dan Perkoempoelan-Perkoempoelannja", *Sin Po Jubileum Nummer 1910-1935* (1935. Batavia: Sin Po), unpaginated.

<sup>10</sup> The monthly report from the Office for Chinese and East-Asian Affairs of February 1937, mentions the violent elements among the singkeh-Chinese that merged into the political association; see "Mededeelingen van den Dienst

involvement in such dangerous activities. However, the Chinese gang wars of the 1890's became a concern of the peranakan. This concern was strongly expressed in a letter from the founding fathers of the THHK, represented by Phoa Keng Hek, the president, sent to all Chinese in the Dutch East Indies in April 1900. It contained a long discourse on morals and values, on Chinese ethics as propounded by Confucius, appealing to the Chinese community to study the teachings of Confucius in greater depth: "If a person is exposed to good teaching, his thinking, customs, heart and behaviour will probably be good. He will remember not to do wrong but to do good deeds.....".<sup>11</sup> From this idealism came the THHK objective to improve Chinese customs in accordance with the teachings of Confucius, and to establish schools that enriched the knowledge of Chinese classical works and language.<sup>12</sup>

To see how much the THHK attracted the Chinese officers, we should look further into its leading members. The meeting to set up the THHK took place on 17 March 1900 at Phoa Keng Hek's residence. All twenty persons present became members of its executive board. Among these executive board members were Chinese officers in Batavia, while others were from officers' families. Phoa Keng Hek, who became the first president of the THHK, from 1900 to 1923, was the son of the Chinese lieutenant in Meester-Cornelis, the eastern division of the Batavia Residency. One of the two vice-presidents was Khoe A Fan, a Chinese lieutenant of Hakka-Cantonese origin. Among the twelve members of the various committees of the THHK were four Chinese officers, namely captain Oey Giok Koen, captain Lie Hin Liam, lieutenant (later captain) Nie Hoey Oen and lieutenant Khouw Kim An. The latter was the son-in-law of Phoa Keng Hek, and was appointed the last Chinese major of Batavia in 1910.

der Oost-Aziatische Zaken van Februari 1937", in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 2122, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

<sup>11</sup> An English translation of this letter is in L Suryadinata (ed), *Political Thinking of the Indonesian Chinese 1900-1977*, p. 4.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

These founding fathers realized that any initiative in the Chinese community should not exclude the man at the top, the Chinese major. Thus the major was seated as the patron of the THHK, an ex-officio position. Major Tio Tek Ho was in post at the time the THHK was founded, and consequently became its first patron. It was under his patronage that the first contest for Chinese leadership occurred, a subject that will be discussed later.

As the establishment of the THHK was initiated by notable, well-off Chinese community members, or '*babah-babah bangsawan dan hartawan*', as pointed out by a Chinese journalist, Tan Tjhan Hie,<sup>13</sup> we can assume that Phoa Keng Hek, Oey Giok Koen, Khoe A Fan and Lie Hin Liam were successful Batavian businessmen.

Phoa Keng Hek owned rice-mills and a tea factory located in Parung, Buitenzorg, as did his two brothers, Phoa Keng Hoey and Phoa Keng Hong.<sup>14</sup> Captain Oey Giok Koen belonged to a rich Chinese family and owned various private lands and plantations in Tangerang, the western division of the Batavia Residency. Although he was a peranakan, he kept an interest in the welfare of his ancestral land, being a large shareholder in the Fukien Railway Company in Amoy.<sup>15</sup> Lieutenant Khoe A Fan, a Hakka-Cantonese of long residence in Batavia, was engaged in the import and export trade, dealing mainly with Chinese and Japanese products. He and his Cantonese partner, Lieuw-A Yoeng, were directors of the Chop Hin Liong rice-mill.<sup>16</sup> Captain Lie Hin Liam and his brother Lie Hin Liang were noted for their huge financial contribution to the THHK. One of their houses in downtown Batavia was given to accommodate THHK activities.<sup>17</sup> In

<sup>13</sup> See his article, "Pakoempoelan Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan", in *Li Po, Nomor Perkenalan 1901*, as quoted by Charles Coppel, "The Origins of Confucianism as an Organized Religion in Java, 1900-1923", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. XII, no. 1, March 1981, p. 190.

<sup>14</sup> "Staat der in de Afdeeling Buitenzorg, Residentie Batavia Aanwezige Fabrieken en Trafieken", *Batavia*, no. 352/2, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

<sup>15</sup> Arnold Wright (ed), *Twentieth Century Impressions of Netherlands-India* (1909. London: Lloyd's Greater Britain Publishing Co.), p. 479.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Nio Joe Lan, *Riwajat 40-Taon dari Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan*, p. 177.

addition there were two more brothers, Lie Hin Pang and Lie Hin Sian, and these four sons of the Lie family were remarkable Chinese businessmen. It is known that they owned the largest rice-mill in Batavia, the Hoat Hin.<sup>18</sup> And there were others who were not quite so conspicuously wealthy, but for reasons of financial status and educational background still belonged to the cream of Batavia's Chinese society. They enthusiastically devoted themselves to develop the THHK into an educational institution for the colony's Chinese.

As the Dutch government paid no attention to education for the Chinese, the THHK could not expect to receive a financial subsidy from the colonial authority. Thus for its first two decades the THHK was supported by these leading members of the rich Batavian Chinese.

Another interesting point about the establishment of the THHK was the fraternal association between the peranakan of Hokkien descent and those from the Hakka-Cantonese group of Chinese in Batavia. Obviously the majority of members of the THHK executive board were peranakan, but the important seats given to Khoe A Fan and Lie Hin Liam represented the Hakka-Cantonese strength. Khoe A Fan and Lie Hin Liam formed a link between the non-Hokkien and the peranakan elements of Chinese society in Batavia. Both were Chinese officers. Within the peranakan element, the most notable member was Phoa Keng Hek.

He was so well respected by the Dutch authorities that in 1906 he received the medal of the Orange-Nassau Order. This honour reflected not only the respect in which he was held among Batavia's Chinese community, for his contribution in establishing schools and providing free medical care, but also his action in closing the gambling business in his area of Bekasi and Meester-Cornelis.<sup>19</sup> Having been educated in a Dutch missionary school, Phoa

<sup>18</sup> Arnold Wright, *Twentieth Century Impressions of Netherlands-India*, p. 476.

<sup>19</sup> "Een Woord ten Gunste van Chinezen", *De Indische Gids*, vol. I, 1904, pp. 908-909.

Keng Hek, unlike most of his fellow Chinese, had a strong dislike of this dishonourable, though profitable, business. The Dutch government was very pleased with his attitude, which was an exemplary response to the government plans to abolish gambling revenue-farms in 1904.<sup>20</sup>

After the death of major Tio Tek Ho in 1908, Phoa was offered the Chinese majorship which he declined, because he was unable to reside in the Chinese quarter.<sup>21</sup> Apparently one of the conditions attached to accepting the Chinese majorship was to take residence up in the old Chinese quarter, located in downtown Batavia.

Although Phoa had declined the offer of the majorship, the Advisor for Chinese Affairs still approached him for his views on a suitable candidate. From their talks it was agreed that the occupant of such an important position should be "a person belonging to the progressive element of the Chinese community, who could give a clear idea for the development of his people, and one who understood their expectations and accordingly could give appropriate guidance to their goals".<sup>22</sup> From further discussions between the Resident of Batavia and the Advisor for Chinese Affairs, Khouw Kim An, a Chinese lieutenant and member of the Chinese Council, was nominated as the only qualified candidate. Yet Khouw could not proceed directly from his lieutenantship to the position of Chinese major. It was then agreed among the Dutch higher officials to appoint captain Nie Hok Tjoan as acting-major while waiting for Khouw's promotion from his present position to captain, and then to major.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> See C R Bakhuizen van den Brink, "Memorie van Overgave van de Residentie van Batavia, van 16 September 1901 tot 9 Mei 1906", ARA, The Hague.

<sup>21</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 9 June 1908, no. 109, in *Besluit van Gouverneur-Generaal van Nederlandsch-Indie* (hereafter *Gouvernementsbesluit*), 29 June 1908, no. 41, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

<sup>22</sup> Confidential letter of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to the Resident of Batavia, 6 April 1908, no. 27, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 29 June 1908, no. 41.

<sup>23</sup> See *Besluit van de Resident van Batavia*, 10 January 1908, no. 349/6.

The above description will make little sense if we do not examine Lea E Williams' argument about the leadership of the Chinese officers during the early period of the Chinese movement. Lea E Williams, and also L Suryadinata, assess the leadership of the Chinese officers only from the political aspect. Neither scholar sees that the Chinese officers played a remarkable role in the early years of the Pan-Chinese movement. According to Williams and Suryadinata, Chinese leadership in the early twentieth century was seized from the old established, Dutch-created, Chinese officership by political figures in the THHK, obviously Phoa Keng Hek, and the chairman of the *Siang Hwee*, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.<sup>24</sup> My argument will involve an examination of how the THHK might have developed if Phoa Keng Hek had accepted the majorship.

Phoa was the first president of the THHK, from 1900, and held the post for about 23 years. Under his leadership, there was an extensive growth of THHK schools all over Java within the first decade. Despite being unable to clarify Phoa's tactful refusal of the Chinese majorship offered by the Dutch government, I would argue that had Phoa been the Chinese major, he would have experienced constraints in developing the THHK. As a major, he could not hold the position of THHK president and would have been honorary patron instead. On the other hand, to the other Chinese officers, he would possibly have been unwelcome as chairman of the Chinese Council, for he was the father-in-law of lieutenant Khouw Kim An. Undoubtedly, had Phoa Keng Hek accepted the Chinese majorship, it would not have been advantageous to either the THHK or the Chinese Council. He would have become a target for strong resentment both within the officers' circle and the Chinese movement, because of the charge of nepotism. Such criticism from Chinese public opinion would not only damage his personal reputation but also obstruct his social mission on behalf of his people.

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<sup>24</sup> Lea E Williams, *Overseas Chinese Nationalism*, pp. 171-172; L Suryadinata, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Java*, p. 15.

When Khouw Kim An was eventually appointed Chinese major in 1910, he changed from committee member to patron of the THHK. At this time, his father-in-law, Phoa Keng Hek, was still president of the THHK. In contrast to the period of the former major, Tio Tek Ho, the period in which Khouw Kim An held the positions of Chinese major and THHK patron produced a different relationship between the Chinese leadership, the Chinese officers, and Chinese public figures, represented by the THHK leaders. Whilst Khouw Kim An undoubtedly kept this relationship harmonious, the period of the former major, Tio Tek Ho, had seen competition, provoked by the THHK group.

Tio Tek Ho and his brother, lieutenant Tio Tek Soen, who was also a member of the Chinese Council, were believed to be closer to the conservative Chinese. However, there was a group of young officer members of the Chinese Council, led by captain Nie Hoey Oen, who preferred to join the modern association, the THHK. The Resident of Batavia, J. Hofland, called this group, 'the young Chinese party', or the '*jong Chineesche partij*'.<sup>25</sup> Despite being the patron of the THHK, major Tio Tek Ho was unlikely to play an active role in the organization, and the absence of any record of his participation in its committee meetings seems to confirm this reluctance.<sup>26</sup> The uncomfortable relationship between the THHK executive and major Tio Tek Ho was hidden until 1907, when a petty case of financial mishandling brought these cold relations to open conflict.

This case involved the secretary of the Chinese Council and the chief treasurer of the THHK, and concerned expenditure on an annual religious festival called the *ciokofeest* in the Dutch records. The *ciokofeest* was held in the seventh month of the Chinese calendar, and the Chinese Council was responsible for the arrangement and financing of the event. Following the ceremony, Khouw Lam Tjiang,

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<sup>25</sup> See J.Hofland, "Memorie van Overgave van de Residentie van Batavia, van 28 Mei 1906 tot 4 September 1907"; and also letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 19 February 1904, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 4 March 1907, no. 18.

<sup>26</sup> See Nio Joe Lan, *Riwajat 40-Taon dari Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan*.

the treasurer of the THHK who had acted as master of ceremonies, discovered some chicanery in the fund-raising process.<sup>27</sup> The money involved was only 400 guilders, but it was good reason for the THHK leading members to move against the Chinese major. Phoa Keng Hek and Khouw Lam Tjiang reported this financial trickery to the Resident of Batavia, while Kan Hok Hoei and captain Lie Hin Liam accused Nie Liang Soey, the secretary of the Chinese Council, of manipulation of the Council's accounts.

In the eyes of the Dutch, this case demonstrated the struggle between the old conservatives and the new emerging elites within Batavia's Chinese society. It was said that Nie Liang Soey, acting on behalf of the major, had often reprimanded those young members, which led them to dislike him.<sup>28</sup> The case was settled with Nie Liang Soey being fired from his position for being untrustworthy.<sup>29</sup> But a few months prior to that, major Tio Tek Ho asked for a temporary leave due to severe illness; he could not face his majorship ending in such shameful circumstances. Major Tio Tek Ho died in January 1908.

As Phoa Keng Hek subsequently declined the Chinese majorship, the position was left vacant for about two years, during which time the daily duties of the office were performed by the acting-major, captain Nie Hok Tjoan.

The appointment of Khouw Kim An as Chinese major in 1910 not only marks the advance of the young progressive element within the Chinese, but also facilitated the further development of the THHK. However, the years following brought considerable changes to the THHK.

The changing policy of the Dutch, moving from centralization of power to decentralization, affected the development of the Chinese community in the Dutch East Indies. In addition, political events in mainland China had their own particular influences, and for the first time the

<sup>27</sup> For further details, see Chapter IV.

<sup>28</sup> Letter of Director of Home Affairs to the Resident of Batavia, 8 October 1907, no. 217/4, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 23 December 1907, no. 14.

<sup>29</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 20 September 1907, no. 17264/36, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 23 December 1907, no. 14.

Chinese of the Dutch East Indies were drawn into wider affairs. For the Dutch, any matter concerning the Chinese was no longer merely a domestic problem, but unavoidably involved the Chinese government. On the other hand, for the Chinese of Batavia, the main change was the emerging new element during the first decade of this century.

In the early years of the twentieth century, a new wave of Chinese migrants flooded into the colony as a result of the Chinese government's new policy of allowing free migration. Unlike the previous migrants, who were mostly labourers, among these newcomers were professionals such as teachers, nurses and clerks. In addition the new migrants included females, which meant that these new Chinese could arrange marriages within their own group, and thus form a new element within Batavia's Chinese community, keeping its distance from the long established peranakan society and the indigenous population. Moreover, these latest Chinese newcomers maintained their political interests in and relations with their home country.

In 1908, within a few years of arriving in numbers in Batavia, they set up two mainly singkeh-totok organizations, the *Siang Hwee* or Chinese Chamber of Commerce, and the *Soe Po Sia*, Chinese Reading Clubs. Although there were peranakan members of the *Siang Hwee*, indeed on its executive board,<sup>30</sup> it were the singkeh who played the main active role. As the establishment of the *Siang Hwee* had been initiated by the Chinese government through its Ministry of Trade, the organization imitated the one in China. Communication was conducted in Chinese and the Chinese system of accounts was used.

The *Soe Po Sia*, or Chinese Reading Clubs, were suspected by the Dutch of being a cover for Kuo Min Tang activities in the Netherlands Indies,<sup>31</sup> for spreading Pan-Chinese

<sup>30</sup> In the first years of its establishment there were eight peranakan committee members in the *Siang Hwee*, notably Kan Hok Hoei; see *Peringatan Tiong Hoa Siang Hwee Batavia, Berdiri 40-Taon, 1908-1948* (1948. Batavia: THSH).

<sup>31</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 13 July 1925, in *Geheim Verbaal*, 3 November 1925, no. U.15, ARA, The Hague.

ideology and the revolutionary ideas of Sun Yat Sen.<sup>32</sup> Although there is no record of the number of peranakan who joined these reading clubs, it can be assumed that they were an obvious target for Kuo Min Tang propaganda.

Also in 1908 the Dutch government opened the Dutch-Chinese School, or *Hollandsch-Chineesche School* (HCS) for the Chinese. The opening of the HCS showed a new attitude on the part of the Dutch government towards the Indies-born Chinese. This attitude was maintained throughout the last decades of Dutch rule. The application of the 1910 Law regarding Netherlands subjects, or *Nederlandsch-onderdaanschap*, for Indies-born Chinese, and the appointment of Chinese members to the People's Council, or *Volksraad*, in 1918 also reflected this new attitude.

The changing view of the Dutch towards the Indies-born Chinese was primarily a response to the Chinese government's shift in policy towards their overseas subjects, which saw the Manchu government abandoning its prohibition on overseas migration. Even the new republic under Yuan Shih Kai and the 1911 nationalist Republic of China could not ignore the importance of overseas Chinese financial support.<sup>33</sup>

It was the Indies-born Chinese who became the main concern of Dutch government policy during this period. For the Dutch, despite the changing conditions of colonial society, the Indies-born Chinese steadfastly occupied their important roles in intermediary trade, education and the press.

The opening of the HCS by the Dutch government sought to keep Indies-born Chinese away from the influence of the Chinese government and KMT propaganda. By providing Western/European education, the Dutch led the Indies-born Chinese to the side of the Netherlands Indies government, resisting the interference of the Chinese government. In a

<sup>32</sup> H Mouw, *De Chineesche Kwestie* (1913. Batavia: Papyrus), p. 22.

<sup>33</sup> For a study of Chinese migrants and the Chinese Republic, see Yen Chin Hwang, *Coolies and Mandarins. China's Protection of Overseas Chinese During the Late Ch'ing Period 1851-1911* (1985. Singapore: Singapore University Press).

direct sense, however, the opening of the HCS was a counter-measure against the THHK English school, which was set up in September 1901. The Dutch could not accept that the Chinese preferred to learn English rather than master Dutch. The Chinese, for practical reasons, saw that English was more useful worldwide, particularly in conducting business with their fellow Chinese in the Straits Settlements and elsewhere. In short, for the Chinese, English was a commercial language;<sup>34</sup> there was no reason for them to learn Dutch, as in domestic trade they dealt more with the indigenous population.

It is interesting to note that the admittance of Chinese pupils to the first HCS opened in Batavia was aided by the THHK. Phoa Keng Hek, as the president of the THHK, circulated a letter to all Chinese parents, asking if they wished to transfer their children to the new Dutch schools.<sup>35</sup> The response was strong: for a long time Chinese parents had desired a Dutch education for their children. How Phoa Keng Hek was the decisive actor in this matter because he had pressed the Director of Education to admit Chinese into Dutch education.<sup>36</sup> It was then obvious that the person to be approached by the Resident of Batavia in seeking Chinese pupils for the first HCS must be Phoa Keng Hek.

Furthermore, Phoa, as the central figure in the THHK, managed to meet the education needs for the peranakan. As a peranakan Chinese, he realized the necessity to further knowledge of the teachings of Confucius in maintaining Chinese culture. However, while retaining this ideal, the THHK schools did not follow the old methods of Chinese education but adopted a modern system and used Mandarin. By seeking advice from Dr Liem Boen Keng, an intellectual and Chinese leader in the Straits Settlements, and by employing the first THHK teachers from that colony, Phoa

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<sup>34</sup> S L van der Wal, *Het Onderwijsbeleid in Nederlands-Indië 1900-1940* (1963. Groningen: J B Wolters), p. 42.

<sup>35</sup> Nio Joe Lan, *Riwajat 40-Taon dari Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan*, p. 116.

<sup>36</sup> Kwee Tek Hoay, *The Origins of the Chinese Movement in Indonesia*, p. 42.

made the Chinese school movement in Java widely known. Yet, as a consequence of this approach, the Chinese movement in Batavia was put in line with the diplomatic ambitions of the Chinese government, drawing the THHK into China's influence. The THHK schools were placed under the supervision of the Chinese Ministry of Education,<sup>37</sup> and various Chinese educational missions were sent to the Dutch East Indies.

Important missions sent in 1906 and 1907 resulted in THHK pupils being sent to the University of Overseas Chinese, or *Kay Lam Hak Tong*, in Nanking for further study.<sup>38</sup> This took place before 1908, the year in which the Dutch government began to pay serious attention to Chinese education. Therefore, the Chinese could hardly be blamed if they looked to the Chinese government for assistance.

The year 1908 appears to mark the second phase of the Chinese education movement, particularly in Batavia. The establishment of the HCS gave the Indies-born Chinese a more appropriate education. The peranakan preference for Dutch schools had been expressed from the very beginning,<sup>39</sup> and was well represented by the leading THHK members.

Phoa Keng Hek himself was Dutch-educated, while the Chinese officers and wealthy Chinese were either Dutch-educated or elected to send their children to Dutch schools. This became the target for vehement criticism from the China-oriented opposition, as expressed in the *Sin Po* newspaper. This same group later launched an attack against the Chinese officers, stirring up Chinese public opinion for their abolition.

In line with its policy of leading the Indies-born Chinese into the Dutch sphere of influence, the government encouraged private institutions, mostly Christian missionaries, to provide a form of HCS education. As the HCS not only provided a Dutch curriculum but also employed

<sup>37</sup> H Mouw, *De Chineesche Kwestie*, p. 16.

<sup>38</sup> Nio Joe Lan, *Riwayat 40-Taon dari Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan*, pp. 101-107.

<sup>39</sup> For example, see letter of Ta Ba lk, pseudonym of a peranakan Chinese of Java, published in *Bintang Hindia*, and quoted in "Een Chinees over de Indische Regeering", *De Indische Gids*, vol. II, 1905, pp. 1409-1410.

mostly European teachers, these Chinese children were strongly exposed to European influence.<sup>40</sup> That the peranakan became more and more inclined towards European education is shown by their demands for wider admittance to Dutch schools. They complained that the high tuition fees of the HCS could be met only by the rich Chinese.<sup>41</sup> The aspirations for European education was not without reason, for the peranakan realized that a THHK education could not meet their practical needs.<sup>42</sup> The Chinese curriculum was more-or-less redundant, and Chinese could not be used to communicate with indigenous clients and neighbours.<sup>43</sup>

For the China-oriented element who dominated the THHK after the first decade of the twentieth century, the peranakan commitment to Dutch education was plainly contemptuous. This opinion, which was expressed mainly in the Chinese-Malay press, *Sin Po* being the leading publication, showed the anxiety of the Chinese community in general. They feared that the Chinese were becoming more Hollandized, or '*verhollandcsh*',<sup>44</sup> and that their children might lose their Chineseness. There was the example of a Chinese grandfather who visited his son in town. One day, a friend of his son paid a visit, and was greeted at the door by the grandson who was a pupil at the HCS. What a shocking insult for this Chinese grandfather when his grandson informed his father by that "there was a Chinese outside!" ["daar buiten staat een *Tjina!*!"].<sup>45</sup>

The peranakan themselves were caught between two worlds, always trying to fit into whichever culture felt most comfortable.

<sup>40</sup> Mary F Somers, "Peranakan Chinese Politics in Indonesia", pp. 53-54.

<sup>41</sup> See "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Oktober 1915", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. V, 1916, p. 102.

<sup>42</sup> "De Positie der Chung Hwa Hui ten Overzicht van de Peranakan-en Singkeh-Chineesche Bevolkingsgroep Hier te Lande, October 1935", in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 255x/1936.

<sup>43</sup> "Jaarverslag over 1937 Betreffende de Werkzaamheden van het Kantoor voor Chineesche Zaken", in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 129.

<sup>44</sup> See letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 23 January 1917, no. 74/B, in *Verbaal*, 31 March 1919, no. 52.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in the same letter.

From the outset, the THHK schools did not intend to provide other than a Chinese education, employing Chinese teachers and seeking assistance from the Chinese government. Political reforms taking place in China spread their influence to the overseas Chinese, influences which in the Dutch East Indies were channelled through the THHK curriculum. Domination by the China-oriented group of the THHK increased, particularly when the teachings of Confucius were replaced by the thoughts of Sun Yat Sen,<sup>46</sup> and all the reading materials came from China.<sup>47</sup> This made the peranakan even more unhappy with the THHK education, with the result that they easily fell into the Dutch sphere.

In fact, the peranakan should have been comfortable with both types of schooling, the THHK education providing the cultural materials of Chineseness, and the HCS providing for their practical needs as inhabitants of the Dutch East Indies.<sup>48</sup> Yet instead of teaching Chinese ethics to meet this peranakan cultural necessity, to maintain their Chineseness, the pupils were exposed to political ideology, aggressively launched by the KMT through THHK education. It is no wonder that the peranakan were so eager to accept the Dutch-created HCS, although they could not entirely abandon the THHK.

Although the peranakan were reluctant to enter THHK schools, the fact that there were only 29 HCS in the entire Netherlands Indies<sup>49</sup> forced them to educate many of their children in the THHK or later in the Dutch-Native schools [*Hollandsch-Inlandsche School*] which were opened in 1913. Much to the dismay of the peranakan inhabitants, Batavia provided only three HCS,<sup>50</sup> while only the children of

<sup>46</sup> Thio Boen Hiok, "Het Onderwijs aan het Chineesche Kind in Indoneise", *De Chineesche Revue*, April 1929, p. 7.

<sup>47</sup> H Borel in *De Locomotief*, 27 March 1907, and quoted in "De Chineesche-quaestie in Indie", *De Indische Gids*, vol. I, 1907, p. 918.

<sup>48</sup> "Beschouwingen over de Chineesche-Maleisch Persoverzicht, Maart-April 1918", in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4390.

<sup>49</sup> Mary F Somers, "Peranakan Chinese Politics in Indonesia", p. 51 and Table II/1.

<sup>50</sup> Thio Boen Hiok, "Het Onderwijs aan het Chineesche Kind in Indonesie", p. 8.

wealthy Chinese could enter European primary schools such as the *Europeesch-Lagere School*.

Phoa Keng Hek, as the president of the THHK, and major Khouw Kim An, as its patron, plus other leading members might endorse Dutch education for Chinese children, but they were unable to prevent the aggressive stream of Pan-Chinese ideology flowing through their own community via THHK schools.<sup>51</sup> This was particularly so as Dutch government involvement in Chinese education came so belatedly: by 1908, when the first HCS school was opened, the THHK had mushroomed to 54 branches<sup>52</sup> and 75 schools all over the country.<sup>53</sup>

During the forty years of its existence the THHK engaged nineteen Chinese officers of Batavia on its executive board,<sup>54</sup> but I am unable to go into further detail regarding the divisions between peranakan and singkeh over their choice of education. There are not the sources to distinguish whether officers were peranakan or singkeh-totok in origin; in any case, political orientation did not necessarily relate to origins. In other words, there may be peranakans who opted for a Chinese education, while I can be certain that the majority of singkeh refused a Dutch school for their children.

Nevertheless, the above highlights the vulnerability of the peranakan. It was as if they were sitting on a pendulum, whose point of direction was dictated by the hand putting it in motion. For them it was not a question of being Dutch-oriented or being inclined towards China, but of the fluctuations in Dutch government policy. How the peranakan responded and adjusted to these changing conditions placed them at a crucial point in their existence in the colony. In particular, the Dutch government's belated response to their

<sup>51</sup> See *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 617x/1920.

<sup>52</sup> "Onderwijs Tionghoa di Indonesia", *Sin Po Jubileum Nummer 1910 - 1935*.

<sup>53</sup> Mary F Somers, "Peranakan Chinese Politics in Indonesia", p. 49.

<sup>54</sup> My compilation was primarily taken from Nio Joe Lan, *Riwayat 40-Taon dari Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan*, pp. 235-300.

movement left them vulnerable to political penetration by the Pan-Chinese forces.

After Phoa Keng Hek retired from the THHK in 1923, the presidency was held by Tan Pia Teng, a singkeh of Hokkien origin, and after that the THHK chairmanship was dominated by the singkeh-totok element. Major Khouw Kim An remained patron of the THHK until the Japanese arrived in 1942, although he concentrated his interests in political organization by helping to found the *Chung Hwa Hui*.

I should note here Lea E Williams' comment on the role of major Khouw Kim An in the THHK. Although Williams did not specify his name, it is quite obvious that the Chinese major of Batavia he referred to Khouw Kim An; "as a THHK patron [he] was not only inactive but tended to be hostile to the association".<sup>55</sup> Williams was clearly unable to avoid bias against the Chinese officers, particularly those of Batavia.

Williams' comment on major Khouw Kim An discredits him by pointing out how the major supplied the Dutch with information on *Soe Po Sia*, the Chinese reading clubs, and how, after the Ch'ing dynasty was overthrown, he was suspicious of the Chinese republicans and denied their request for authorization to hoist the new Chinese flag.<sup>56</sup> Williams' words, "...the Batavia *majoer* obviously did not march with the times..."<sup>57</sup>, convince me that he had little understanding of the background and origins of the individuals who became Chinese officers, particularly in Batavia. Williams disregarded the fact that Khouw Kim An was a peranakan officer who had obtained a Dutch education at the *Europeesch-Lagere School*. That Khouw Kim An later joined the *Chung Hwa Hui* rather than another Chinese party shows where his political orientation lay. Williams also fails to take into account the family relations between Khouw Kim An and Phoa Keng Hek, the president of the THHK, whom he praises highly. My data indicates that these family relations also extended to a shared political orientation. A

<sup>55</sup> Lea E Williams, *Overseas Chinese Nationalism*, p. 133.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 131-132.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

nephew of Phoa Keng Hek, Phoa Kian Kie, who was also active in the Chinese movement, had a daughter who was married to the son of major Khouw Kim An.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, as I have already mentioned, Phoa Keng Hek's tactful refusal of the Chinese majorship left the position clear for Khouw Kim An, which surely discloses the weakness of Williams' analysis. And when Phoa visited the Netherlands for medical care, he was accompanied by major Khouw Kim An and his wife, Phoa's daughter.<sup>59</sup> With this in mind, Williams' criticism of the Chinese officers in general and major Khouw Kim An in particular is unfounded. It is most unlikely that Khouw Kim An would be hostile to the THHK as his father-in-law, Phoa Keng Hek, was the president of that organization. That both shared political ideas for the progress of the Batavian Chinese community is quite obvious. As Williams did not specify the names of the last two majors of Batavia, Tio Tek Ho and Khouw Kim An, he might have confused these two persons.

The other weakness in Williams' analysis of the Pan-Chinese movement in the Dutch East Indies during the period 1900-1916 is his ignorance of the nature of the peranakan Chinese of Java. The peranakan reluctance to join the singkeh-totok in various Pan-Chinese organizations was due to a wide, seemingly unbridgeable, gap between the two. For various reasons the peranakan could not be comfortable in the singkeh environment, and even regarded the singkeh as '*semi-vreemdelingen*',<sup>60</sup> semi-foreign, an attitude which was shared by most Chinese officers in Java.

Therefore it is not surprising that Khouw Kim An, his peranakan fellow officers and other Dutch-educated groups set up the *Chung Hwa Hui* in 1926, the only Chinese political organization in tune with their way of thinking. The THHK,

<sup>58</sup> "Politieke Actie onder de Chinezen in Nederlandsch-Indie", in *Verbaal*, 8 April 1919, no.69.

<sup>59</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor of West Java, 15 June 1927, no. 12169/2, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 28 July 1927, no. 37.

<sup>60</sup> Note of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to Governor-General, 9 January 1924, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 43x/1924.

the first association they had founded, no longer fulfilled their aspirations.

### The *Chung Hwa Hui*

Before I go into detail on this Dutch East Indies-oriented peranakan organization, there are three points which I need to establish.

Firstly, the *Chung Hwa Hui* (hereafter CHH) was not set up until August 1926, in Semarang. Its establishment reflected the peranakan need for a political party which would manifest their aspirations as members of Dutch East Indies society, and appears to demonstrate that they were unhappy with the China-oriented political idealism of the *Sin Po* group. Secondly, looking into the nature of peranakan society in the Dutch East Indies, Java in particular, in my view there were only two main peranakan organizations, the *Chung Hwa Hui* and the *Partai Tionghoa Indonesia* (hereafter PTI). Thirdly, on a point of definition, I do not consider the *Sin Po* group to be a political party, whereas L Suryadinata,<sup>61</sup> Lea E Williams,<sup>62</sup> and other students of the Chinese political movement do. My reasons are that *Sin Po* had never been an organized political party, unlike the CHH and the PTI which had official acknowledgment from the Dutch government. The CHH received that acknowledgment by a decree on 6 June 1928. *Sin Po*'s China-oriented idealism was mainly expressed in the *Sin Po* newspaper, from which the group derived its name, where it stirred up Chinese public opinion. Stirring up public opinion does not mean that *Sin Po* represented all Chinese public aspirations in the colony, particularly those of the peranakan majority.<sup>63</sup> Secondly, *Sin Po*'s political campaign mainly concentrated on Chinese participation in the *Volksraad*, in connection with the implementation of the Netherlands-

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<sup>61</sup> L Suryadinata, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Java*.

<sup>62</sup> Lea E Williams, *Overseas Chinese Nationalism*.

<sup>63</sup> See *Koloniaal Verslag van 1917* (1918. 's Gravenhage: Landsdrukkerij), p. iii.

subject Law. Supported by various singkeh organizations and obtaining moral support from the Chinese government, the *Sin Po* group vigorously urged the Chinese of the Dutch East Indies to reject participation in the People's Council. Its political efforts to lure the peranakan majority into an acceptance of Pan-Chinese ideology were not successful, and by the 1920's the *Sin Po* lost its popularity. An issue of *Sin Po*'s Chinese edition in about 1925 was a turning point in its efforts to rely more on the singkeh public, for they could not rely on peranakan support for their China-oriented political campaigns.<sup>64</sup>

For those not fully familiar with the Indonesian Chinese movement, the fact that an organization called *Chung Hwa Hui* was set up in August 1926 may be surprising as there already existed another *Chung Hwa Hui*, founded in April 1911. The latter was an Indies-Chinese student association in the Netherlands, which kept regular contact with many notable Chinese and officers in the Dutch East Indies, mainly seeking financial and moral support.<sup>65</sup>

The founding of the CHH in the colony in 1926 was initiated by ex-CHH Holland activists, among them Yap Hong Tjoen, Han Tiauw Tjong and Phoa Liang Gie. On returning to their home country, they encountered the unhappy political circumstances of the peranakan in Java. The need to set up a political party had long been discussed among the peranakan, since the Dutch authorities offered the Chinese participation in the colonial government and it was obvious that the majority of the peranakan welcomed this.<sup>66</sup>

The peranakan majority realized that the *Sin Po* group could not satisfy their aspirations as members of Dutch East Indies society, due to its China-oriented goal and its campaign against Chinese participation in the Dutch-

<sup>64</sup> "Jaarverslag over 1922 Betreffende de Werkzaamheden van het Kantoor voor Chineesche Zaken", in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 2065.

<sup>65</sup> *Vijfjarig Bestaan van Chung Hwa Hui. Algemeen Vergadering, 15 April 1916 in Amsterdam* (1916. Leiden: CHH), p. 18.

<sup>66</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, September 1917", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. VII, 1918, p. 368.

created *Volksraad*. The desire for a political party had long been cherished, since 1917 when the Dutch authorities proposed that the Chinese nominate their candidates for the first sitting of the People's Council in October 1918. This will be discussed later. The establishment of the CHH as a political party thus showed peranakan acceptance of involvement in colonial government, despite *Sin Po*'s vehement campaign. Even the PTI would not reject this participation.

It did not take long for the peranakan majority to accept the CHH as a constituency association, or '*kiesvereeniging*'.<sup>67</sup> As it turned out, during the entire period of Chinese participation in the Peple's Council, the Chinese were represented in the main by members of the CHH. This made the CHH the target of much criticism although for the Dutch the CHH was the only Chinese political party that could propose candidates.<sup>68</sup> Why the establishment of this Dutch East Indies-oriented peranakan party came so late was due to the aggressive campaign of the ultra-nationalist *Sin Po* group launched in 1917, but also because of the low-profile of the CHH itself, particularly in the first years of its existence.<sup>69</sup>

The goals of the CHH were directed at various activities of the Chinese community in the Dutch East Indies. It concerned itself with political and socio-economic issues on which cooperation with the Dutch was sought. On the other hand, cultural consciousness as Chinese did not lead it to reject relationships with China.<sup>70</sup> As the main concern of the CHH was the Indies-born peranakan, it did not admit singkeh-totok members, except as donors. However, most active members were wealthy Chinese who, because of their economic interests, could not avoid commercial contact with China. Many of them certainly recognized the CHH's

<sup>67</sup> See *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 120x/1930.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*; see also "Jaarverslag over 1929 Betreffende de Werkzaamheden van het Kantoor voor Chineesche Zaken", in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 129.

<sup>70</sup> "De Chinezen-Bond", *De Indische Gids*, vol. I, 1928, p. 363; and see also *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 211x/1935.

potential in furthering their business interests, either in the Dutch East Indies or in China. The CHH could not exclude China. Observing this, many people thought the CHH might accommodate the singkeh-totok; such was the case in the Semarang branch.

Semarang was the base of the most famous Chinese enterprise, the Oei Tiong Ham Concern, whose owner required his employees to be members of the CHH. The strong influence of Semarang's Chinese major, Oei Tiong Ham, particularly his huge financial support, may explain why Semarang was frequently chosen as the venue for CHH congresses. I presume that it was this fact, among others, that led Suryadinata to the conclusion that Semarang was the centre of power of the CHH.<sup>71</sup>

My sources do not support Suryadinata. But I will not proceed further with this argument until I have focused on the question of singkeh admittance to the CHH. That will reveal where the CHH's centre of power was located.

A reorganization plan, in early 1935 to solve the problem of admitting singkeh Chinese into the CHH, suggested turning the CHH into two parties. One party would deal primarily with the socio-economic development of the Chinese, and would disregard whether a member was Indies-born peranakan or singkeh. The other party would be occupied with political ideas, and membership would be open only to Indies-born Chinese, since they were considered Netherlands subjects. Members of the CHH first party, the socio-economic organization, would automatically become members of the CHH political party. In this way, the CHH was expected to embrace both elements in Chinese society. However, the reorganization plan proposed by the Semarang branch did not materialize. During discussions in the CHH congress on 25-26 December 1935 in Semarang, the proposal was supported by only four branches, Semarang itself, Cirebon, Bandung and Cilacap. Batavia strongly opposed the plan, for to divide the CHH organization would, it felt, give rise to serious problems.

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<sup>71</sup>L Suryadinata, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Java*, pp. 82-84.

The Batavia CHH preferred to retain the policy of admitting singkeh members, only as donors.<sup>72</sup> It should be noted that most wealthy peranakan Chinese and officers of Batavia were active CHH members. The Surabaya branch said that wider admittance of singkeh would merely enlarge the number of CHH members.

The vote of 28 to 10 against admitting singkeh members shows that most Indies-born Chinese would not associate easily with the China-oriented singkeh.<sup>73</sup> The president of the CHH, the notable Kan Hok Hoei, better known as HHKan, tried to smooth over peranakan-singkeh antagonism by stating that, despite the decision of the CHH congress in Semarang, cooperation between both elements of Chinese society could be carried out through the *Siang Hwee*, or other Chinese trade associations.<sup>74</sup>

The CHH congress of 1935 to some extent demonstrated peranakan anxiety over HHKan's attitude, and he was later suspected of growing closer to China, particularly after a visit to the mainland in 1933. HHKan's visit to China, although purely for business, raised such suspicion because he accepted the chairmanship of the *Siang Hwee*, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, in January 1934.<sup>75</sup> One of his sons married the daughter of F T Sung, the Chinese Consul in Batavia.<sup>76</sup>

I am unable to give details of the reaction of Batavia's peranakan community to HHKan. Dutch sources suggest that HHKan convinced the Dutch authorities that any inclining of CHH leaders towards China was only in an economic sense,

<sup>72</sup> "De Positie der Chung Hwa Hui ten Overzicht van de Peranakan- en Singkeh", in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 255x/1936.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> Note of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to the Government Commission for General Affairs of the People's Council, 19 February 1935, no. 521/35, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 211x/1935.

<sup>76</sup> S L van der Wal, *De Volksraad en de Staatkundige Ontwikkeling van Nederlands-Indie* (1965. Groningen: J B Wolters), vol. II, p. 187, footnote 1; also quoted by L Suryadinata, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Java*, p. 157.

and intended purely for the benefit of the Netherlands Indies.<sup>77</sup> HHKan said that the fear that ultra nationalist political aspirations would lead the peranakan to become estranged from their birthplace, the Dutch East Indies, was simply unfounded. Nevertheless, the Dutch authorities were still unhappy that HHKan was chairman of the *Siang Hwee*. Although this singkeh trade organization had been officially recognized by the Dutch government, it was suspected of having foreign political bases. As the *Siang Hwee*'s activities were carried out under the auspices of the Chinese Ministry of Trade, many Dutch officials regarded it as a state within a state, '*staatjes in den staat*'.<sup>78</sup> In this context the Advisor for Chinese Affairs reminded HHKan that his dual position as chairman of the *Siang Hwee* and president of the CHH would give rise to unease among many peranakan.<sup>79</sup> Without pursuing the possibility that HHKan's position as chairman of the singkeh trade organization would cause him serious problems with the Dutch government, the Advisor for Chinese Affairs subtly touched on the most crucial point regarding HHKan's reputation as a peranakan leader. During their talk on 14 February 1935, HHKan confessed that he doubted whether he could maintain his leadership of the peranakan, could withstand the strong influence and political penetration of the Chinese nationalist movement. He was aware that those foreign elements had already created an uneasy situation.<sup>80</sup> A few days after his talk with the Advisor for Chinese Affairs, HHKan informed the chairman of the People's Council that he had resigned as chairman of the *Siang Hwee*.<sup>81</sup> This was a great relief for the Dutch government.

HHKan's political attitude, which often brought him trouble, was the typical of most peranakan leaders and

<sup>77</sup> Letter of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to Governor-General, 23 February 1935, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 219x/1935.

<sup>78</sup> H Mouw, *De Chineesche Kwestie*, p. 16.

<sup>79</sup> Letter of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to Governor-General, 23 February 1935, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 219x/1935.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

Chinese officers, HHKan was close to notable members of the Chinese community in Batavia, for he was well-known as the *landheer*, or landlord, of Batavia. When Chinese public opinion expressed a vehement dislike of the institution of Chinese officers, in response to Dutch government plans to reorganize the *Chineesche Bestuur*, HHKan, as the Chinese representative on the People's Council, argued in its support.

Because of their financial status, HHKan, major Khouw Kim An and other leading members of the CHH were an easy target for criticism. Chinese public opinion, stirred up by the Chinese-Malay press led by the *Sin Po*, labelled them the 'Packard-group',<sup>82</sup> referring to the fact that most of them owned that expensive make of American car. The PTI reproved them for making the CHH into a 'capitalist' organization.<sup>83</sup>

Considering the incessant criticism against the CHH, one might imagine that the position of this Indies-born Chinese party would be weakened. In fact the CHH managed to survive until the last days of Dutch rule, although this does not mean that it was free from internal friction. Such a situation arose in the early 1930s, when a group of young executive members, led by Phoa Liong Gie of the Bandung branch, was unhappy with HHKan's leadership. Phoa accused HHKan of being an autocratic leader and attacked his nepotism.<sup>84</sup> In August 1933, Phoa Liong Gie left the CHH and joined the PTI, following two other leading members, Kwa Tjoan Sioe and Ko Kwat Tiong.

The PTI or *Partai Tionghoa Indonesia* (Indonesian Chinese Party) was founded by Liem Koen Hian in Surabaya in September 1932. The Dutch government suspected the PTI of

<sup>82</sup> Letter of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to the Government Commission for General Affairs of the People's Council, 19 February 1935, no. 521/35, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 211x/1935; "De Positie der Chung Hwa Hui", in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 255x/1936; see also R C Kwantes, *De Ontwikkeling van de Nationalistische Beweging in Nederlands-Indië* (1982. Groningen: Wolters-Nordhoff), vol. IV, p. 375.

<sup>83</sup> R C Kwantes, *op.cit.*

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*; see also "De Positie der Chung Hwa Hui", in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 255x/1936, and *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 1124x/1936.

having an anti-Netherlands stance,<sup>85</sup> particularly as it embraced the majority of lower class, Indies-born peranakan, or the '*lagere klasse der in deze gewesten geboren Chinezen*', who regarded the colony as their home.<sup>86</sup> It is obvious that the PTI was founded as a political reaction against the CHH. The PTI claimed that the CHH was merely a means by which its founders could achieve their personal aspirations, and that the organization had little concern for the poor peranakan Chinese.<sup>87</sup> The political attitude of the PTI was later shown in its leftist tendencies, particularly after Indonesian independence.

As a peranakan party with an Indonesian-oriented character, the PTI strongly disagreed with the CHH's aloofness from the Indonesian nationalist movement.<sup>88</sup> Starting from political extremes, debates between the CHH and the PTI later dominated the history of the Chinese movement until the arrival of the Japanese. The main focus of their disagreement lay in the question of the future of the Indies-born peranakan Chinese in an independent Indonesia.

The PTI, known as the party of the less wealthy strata of peranakan society, was sympathetic to the Indonesian nationalist movement. This was quite understandable, as the living standards of its members brought them into closer contact with the indigenous population. However, in the eyes of the Dutch, in times of economic pressure, the PTI attitude reflected the necessity for the less wealthy Chinese to determine their position towards the indigenous population.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Letter of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to the Government Commission for General Affairs of the People's Council, 19 February 1935, no. 521/35, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 211x/1935.

<sup>86</sup> "Onderlinge Verhouding der Peranakan-Chineesche in Inheemsche Bevolkingsgroep in Nederlands-Indie in Verband met hare Relaties met Japan", in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 1124x/1936, kept in *Geheim Verbaal*, 17 February 1937, no. L.3. See also "Mededeelingen van Dienst der Oost-Aziatische Zaken, September 1934", in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 2120.

<sup>87</sup> See *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 211x/1935.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> "Onderlinge Verhouding der Peranakan-Chineesche in Inheemsche Bevolkingsgroep", in *Geheim Verbaal*, 17 February 1937, no. L.3.

The CHH, in defence of its political attitude, stated that although it sympathized with the Indonesian nationalist movement, it did not wish to involve itself with indigenous political goals.<sup>90</sup> Consequently, the CHH was severely condemned by the Indonesian nationalists, and their dislike became even stronger when the two Chinese representatives of the CHH voted against the proposal for an indigenous majority on the People's Council.<sup>91</sup> As the question of the indigenous majority on the Council was increasingly discussed, Indonesian public opinion indignantly rebuked the CHH as 'the enemy of the Indonesian'.<sup>92</sup> The PTI took the opportunity of the CHH's vulnerable situation to appeal to all Indies-born Chinese not to support CHH members in the People's Council. It urged the peranakan not to play with fire, as the CHH might provoke Indonesian anger, and it would be the small, poor Chinese who would pay for the actions of the rich Chinese members of the Council.<sup>93</sup>

Yet, despite the PTI's efforts to discredit the CHH, the political conditions of the Dutch East Indies in that period did not favour such an attack. Firstly, in line with its changing policy towards the Indies-born Chinese, the Dutch government obviously encouraged the CHH. From the outset, the CHH had cooperated with the Dutch, accepting the Netherlands-subject Law, participating in parliament, and clearly showing its Dutch-oriented political attitude. It is hardly surprising that the CHH movement was tolerated by the Dutch. Not only did the Dutch consider the CHH to be tame, but they also used it to combat the ultra-nationalist KMT and diplomatic interference of the Chinese government in the Chinese affairs of the colony. It is no wonder that the Dutch government could always accommodate CHH

<sup>90</sup> "De Positie der Chung Hwa Hui", in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 255x/1936.

<sup>91</sup> See *Verbaal*, 22 February 1928, no. 11; and S L van der Wal, *De Volksraad en de Staatskundige Ontwikkeling van Nederlands-Indië* (1965. Groningen: J B Wolters), vol. II, p.45.

<sup>92</sup> Letter of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to the Government Commission for General Affairs of the People's Council, 19 February 1935, no. 521/1935, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 211x/1935.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

candidates on the People's Council.<sup>94</sup> Indeed, among the eight Chinese members seated during the whole period of this Dutch-created body, four were CHH members, HHKan, Khouw Kim An, Han Tiauw Tjong and Loa Sek Hie.

Secondly, although the PTI was suspected of having an anti-Netherlands attitude, the Dutch did not see the dangers of its encouragement of the peranakan majority. Even the strong anti-Japanese feelings of Liem Koen Hian during the period 1937-1939 brought him and the PTI into conflict with the Indonesian nationalists rather than the Dutch.

It is well known that the establishment of Japanese military power, and its victory over Russia in 1905, awakened strong national consciousness in many colonized Asian countries, resulting in the establishment of indigenous political movements. Working from the point that Asia is for Asians, in later years Indonesian nationalists never lost their pro-Japanese views. During the Sino-Japanese conflict, unlike the Chinese in the Dutch East Indies, Indonesians sided with the Japanese.

The anti-Japanese campaign of 1937-1939, launched by the Chinese in the Indies, saw a fierce argument between Liem Koen Hian and Dr Sutomo, one of the Indonesian nationalist leaders in Surabaya, and this invited further attacks by the Indonesian press on the PTI. Indonesians found it appalling that Liem Koen Hian, as a Chinese, openly criticized a respected Indonesian leader because of his pro-Japanese feelings. Liem argued that Dr Sutomo's writings, expressing his high opinion of Japan after his visit to that country, was nonetheless propaganda for Japanese imperialism. Furthermore, Liem warned that in view of Japan's rapid expansion and military advances in Asia, Indonesians should be extremely watchful, instead of having great expectations that the Japanese would assist in releasing Indonesia from Dutch rule.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> "Onderlinge Verhouding der Peranakan-Chineesche en Inheemsche Bevolkingsgroep in Nederlands-Indie in Verband met hare Relaties met Japan", in *Geheim Verbaal*, 17 February 1937, no. L.3.

Indonesians could not accept the political views of Liem Koen Hian and the PTI on this matter. It was difficult to erase indigenous distrust of the Chinese. The Indonesian nationalist parties did not fully accept the PTI's Indonesian-orientation. An article by an Indonesian journalist R M Soedarjo Tjokrosisworo, using the pseudonym Soebadra Poetra, in the *Djawa Tengah* newspaper (interestingly a Chinese peranakan paper) on 15 October 1932 expresses the general feeling of Indonesians towards Liem Koen Hian and his party. He wrote: "We appreciate your exertion, but you will remain Chinese".<sup>96</sup> The PTI believed that the peranakan should be considered 'Indonesian', and be recognized as sons of Indonesia because they had been born in the country; but Indonesian public opinion condemned them as opportunist, saying that the Chinese "*van twee borden wilden eten*",<sup>97</sup> or will eat from two plates.

The foregoing demonstrates the difficulties experienced by the peranakan Chinese political parties in deciding which side to take. Being a practical people, Chinese concerns lay more with education than with politics, as was shown by the founding of the THHK. That the THHK fell under the Chinese government's influence was due to the negligence of the Dutch East Indies government in taking care of Chinese educational needs. The peranakan preference for the HCS shows how they could not deal with either the genuine singkeh-totok or with the political ideology of the Chinese government.

Even the Dutch East Indies-orientation of the CHH cannot be attributed to the changing Dutch policy towards the Indies-born peranakan Chinese. The Dutch simply took the opportunity to deflect the influence of the Chinese government over the colony's Chinese. Without diplomatic interference from the Chinese government, the Dutch authorities would have left the Chinese to settle their own affairs. To a great extent, then, Dutch policy regarding the Chinese remained the same, to use this intermediary group,

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96 *Ibid.*

97 *Ibid.*

or '*bangsa tengah*' , in the process of colonial exploitation. The changing attitude of the Dutch towards the Indies-born Chinese must be seen as an effort to protect Dutch interests.

For the peranakan majority, cooperation with the Dutch government appeared to be the most reasonable course. Under the colonial regime, the peranakan could never be comfortable with either extreme, whether it was China-oriented or Indonesia-oriented. Within the colonial framework, the CHH's political attitude was far more reasonable than that of the PTI, particularly as the Indonesian nationalist movement offered no opening to the Chinese in their idealism.

Being Chinese, whether peranakan or singkeh, was to be considered as non-indigenous by the Indonesian nationalists, and thus it was difficult for Chinese to enter any Indonesian political association. There is the example of Kwee Tjing Hong, a peranakan Chinese of Palembang, who took the initiative in setting up a local branch of the PNI, the Indonesian Nationalist Party. Yet, as a peranakan Chinese, Kwee could not be a full member of the PNI, let alone be elected as an executive member of the branch that he himself had formed.<sup>98</sup>

In addition to such prejudice, the rapid growth of *Sarekat Islam* in the second decade of the twentieth century reflected the segregation policy of the Dutch government. This period was noted for the anti-Chinese feelings among the indigenous majority, which reached its peak with a series of riots throughout Java. As the indigenous population did not attempt to differentiate between the singkeh and peranakan elements, the anti-Chinese disturbances placed the peranakan in a very delicate position.

An examination of the nature of the peranakan Chinese in the colony, particularly in Java, shows that the CHH closely represented their political stand. Dutch policy itself

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<sup>98</sup> L Suryadinata, "Pre-war Indonesian Nationalism and Peranakan Chinese", *Indonesia*, no. 11, April 1971, p. 87.

contributed to the emergence of a self-sufficient peranakan community. Despite the various inconsistencies and ambivalence in Dutch policy regarding the Chinese, it was the Dutch who provided the Chinese with the opportunity to make a living. No matter how much the Dutch authorities were prejudiced against and fearful of the Chinese, both managed to work together in the exploitation of the country. Secondly, the socio-cultural characteristics of the peranakan meant that it was unlikely that they would side either with China or with Indonesia. In common with marginal groups in most societies, the peranakan, who originated from two racial elements, were distinctive. They were too Chinese to be Indonesian, too Indonesian to be Chinese,<sup>99</sup> they could never fully integrate with either. Therefore, the most likely political path for the peranakan was to lean towards the Dutch East Indies, or at least to have a Dutch-orientation.

Kwee Tek Hoay, a peranakan writer, in his piece on the three streams of the Chinese political movement, the China-oriented *Sin Po* group, the Dutch East Indies-oriented *Chung Hwa Hui*, and the Indonesian-oriented *Partai Tionghoa Indonesia*, properly placed the CHH as the middle stream. According to Kwee, the CHH lay between the two extremes of *Sin Po* and PTI.<sup>100</sup>

I can now develop my argument with L Suryadinata, regarding the centre of power of the three political streams of the Chinese movement. Suryadinata concludes that the *Sin Po* group had its main base in Batavia, the CHH in Semarang and the PTI in Surabaya.<sup>101</sup> He is quite correct in identifying these three cities as bases for the Chinese political movement, but he has misplaced them. Suryadinata's argument, using demographic data on Batavia, may support his view that the capital was the centre of the *Sin Po* group, but as my interest lies with the non-China-

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<sup>99</sup> Kwee Kek Beng, *25 Tahun Djamblang Kotjok, 1929-1954* (1954. Djakarta: Penerbit Gula), p. 30.

<sup>100</sup> L Suryadinata (ed), *Political Thinking of the Indonesian Chinese 1900-1977*, p. 55.

<sup>101</sup> L Suryadinata, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Java*, pp. 82-84.

oriented peranakan, I will not discuss the China-oriented *Sin Po* group further. In any event, Suryadinata may well be right about the *Sin Po*'s strength in Batavia. However, Suryadinata appears to have underestimated the strength of the singkeh in Semarang and Surabaya, in terms of their influence on the peranakan in those two cities.

According to Suryadinata, Batavia was a port-city with close links to Singapore, the centre of Chinese nationalist activity in Southeast Asia, and the *Soe Po Sia* and the *Siang Hwee* of Batavia were very active.<sup>102</sup> But in my view, these conditions did not guarantee the singkeh a dominating influence over the peranakan community in Batavia. From the Dutch sources it is known that, after its reorganization in 1929, the KMT made Batavia its main branch, or '*hoofdafdeeling*',<sup>103</sup> although the KMT's popularity remained weak. This was shown in July 1925, when the Chinese Consul-General in Batavia organized a memorial ceremony on the death of Sun Yat Sen. This event was not the great success expected by the Chinese Consul and the KMT leaders owing to the reluctance of Chinese officers, particularly major Khouw Kim An, to summon their people to join the ceremony. Major Khouw Kim An was concerned about aggressive KMT activities, a subject on which he often complained to the Resident of Batavia. He stressed that if the Dutch authorities did not take preventive measures, the Chinese leaders of the KMT would present a dangerous threat to peace and order in the region.<sup>104</sup> The major's anxiety was shared by Batavia's peranakan majority, as many of the riots and disturbances which had occurred during the 1910s were initiated by the singkeh element. In an open letter published in *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, a peranakan complained that "... those members of the *Soe Po*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>103</sup> "Jaarverslag over 1928 Betreffende de Werkzaamheden van het Kantoor voor Chineesche Zaken", in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 129. See also "Overzicht van de Chineesche Beweging in Nederlandsch-Indie", in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 813x/1932.

<sup>104</sup> Letter of the Resident of Batavia, 13 July 1925, no. 1241/E, quoted in the letter of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to Governor-General, 17 July 1925, no. 363/25, in *Geheim Verbaal*, 3 November 1925, no. U.15.

*Sia* could not go along with us, the peranakan. As we know better about the law in this country, we know what we may and may not do, yet those members of the *Soe Po Sia* did not understand us. They accused us of being afraid of the Dutch government, that we have sold ourselves to the Dutch, and therefore, they offensively harassed us even more ...".<sup>105</sup>

Many higher Dutch officials also observed that it was very unlikely that the peranakan would join the singkeh in one organization, for each would stand in the way of the other.<sup>106</sup> As a result, the peranakan responded enthusiastically to the establishment of the CHH. I am certain that the CHH had more solid support among the Batavian peranakan.

Despite the many criticisms of HHKan, particularly with regard to nepotism, it indicates that the CHH leadership was dominated by the Batavian peranakan. As HHKan himself was very close to the Chinese officers, particularly major Khouw Kim An and captain Lie Tjian Tjoen, the CHH leadership was in effect shared among them. In addition, among the CHH members who became Chinese representatives on the People's Council, HHKan, Khouw Kim An, Loa Sek Hie and Han Tiauw Tjong, only the latter did not originate from Batavia. If Yo Heng Kam, a Chinese captain of Batavia, had not left the CHH in 1927 because of a political dispute with HHKan, the overwhelming domination of CHH members of Batavian origin on the People's Council would be even clearer. Yo Heng Kam's subsequent membership of the People's Council, from 1927 to 1942, was due to his affiliation with the *Politieke-Economische Bond*, an association of European businessmen.

Later, in 1935, when the Semarang branch of the CHH proposed a reorganization of the party to admit singkeh members, the CHH of Batavia strongly opposed.<sup>107</sup> That

<sup>105</sup> "Een Chinees over de Chineesche Beweging", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. I, 1911-1912, pp.669-670.

<sup>106</sup> "Overzicht over de Chineesche Beweging in Nederlandsch-Indie", in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 120x/1930.

<sup>107</sup> "De Positie der Chung Hwa Hui", in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 219x/1935; see also pages 154-155.

Batavia was the main office of the CHH, and maintained a strong influence, is shown by the fact that it was followed by 27 other branches. Semarang was supported by Cirebon, Bandung and Cilacap, showing that singkeh influence was visible in the CHH only in these four cities.

Suryadinata also suggests that as well as the old entrenched peranakan of Semarang, the peranakan city's businessmen were not enthusiastic about taking part in Chinese nationalist activities. Furthermore, he suggests that Semarang was the base of the Oei Tiong Ham concern, which was important to the strength of the CHH,<sup>108</sup> although his argument fails to convince me.

I shall disregard Suryadinata's point that Semarang had a smaller Chinese community than Batavia and Surabaya; if one goes further, and compares the economic conditions of the Chinese in these three cities, Semarang cannot be considered a stronghold of the CHH. From Dutch sources it is clear that the Chinese of Semarang paid a greater amount of '*personeele belasting*', or property tax, than their contemporaries in Batavia. This tax, which was assessed on houses, furniture, horses and vehicles was indeed higher, on average, in Semarang, 51.75 guilders compared to 37.54 guilders in Batavia. But in terms of tax-payment in general, [tax payment per capita], the Chinese of Batavia contributed more than their fellows in Semarang and Surabaya.

The economic strength of the Batavian Chinese lay in their vast landownership, for which in 1932 they paid a total ground-tax of 459,000 guilders, compared to 211,000 guilders in Semarang, and 311,000 guilders in Surabaya.<sup>109</sup> In this period the strength of Chinese landownership in the Batavia residency enabled them to endure harsh economic pressures<sup>110</sup> and strong competition from both the singkeh and the emerging indigenous middle-class.

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<sup>108</sup> L Suryadinata, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Java*, p. 84.

<sup>109</sup> See *Indisch Verslag van 1932* (1933. 's Gravenhage: Landsdrukkerij), vol.II, p. 138, Table no. 113.

<sup>110</sup> Djie Ting Ham, "Enkele Opmerkingen over den Economischen Toestand van den Chineeschen op Java", *De Chineesche Revue*, October 1928, p. 49.

The fact that Semarang was frequently chosen as the venue for the CHH congress was obviously due to the financial backing of the Oei Tiong Ham concern.

The failure to overthrow the domination of the CHH's Batavian element is indicated by the fact that two young executive members who later joined the PTI, Ko Kwat Tiong and Phoa Liong Gie, were not from Batavia. Ko was born in Parakan, Central Java and was from the CHH's Semarang branch, while Phoa was from the CHH's Bandung branch in West Java. Ko Kwat Tiong served as a member of the People's Council from 1935 to 1939, representing the PTI. But Phoa Liong Gie never succeeded in securing a seat on the People's Council since he left the CHH over the question of Chinese candidacy, a subject on which he disagreed with HHKan.<sup>111</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the favour in which the Dutch held the CHH contributed to the stability of HHKan's leadership and that of his fellow Batavians. But if one looks more deeply into the silent majority of the peranakan in the three main cities of Batavia, Semarang and Surabaya, one wonders about the real power of the CHH and the PTI within peranakan society. In terms of elite leadership, it is clear that the CHH was dominated by the Batavian peranakan. But as for its common followers, why should the PTI, as the Indonesian-oriented peranakan party, have emerged strongly in Surabaya and not in Batavia?

If we observe the history of the peranakan community of Batavia, the oldest, largest and most solid community, then it might be anticipated that the PTI would have flourished there. However, during the turbulent periods when anti-Chinese riots raged occurred in Java, from 1911 to 1913 and 1916 to 1918, the main riots were in Central and East Java. Batavia had smaller troubles which were easily overcome. This seems to provide evidence for what the Dutch government called the 'brotherhood' between the

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<sup>111</sup> "De Positie der Chung Hwa Hui", in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 219x/1935.

peranakan Chinese and their indigenous neighbours in that region.

I would like to emphasize that it is inaccurate to describe the strength of the CHH and PTI as peranakan political organizations simply by looking where they were first established, as Suryadinata has done. The writer needs to observe deeply and thoroughly the nature of the peranakan community, the history of its establishment, the attitude of the Dutch local government in the handling of Chinese affairs in the region, the quality of peranakan/indigenous relations. Each is an indispensable factor contributing to the distinctive character of each peranakan organization. The peranakan community in Java was not of a single character.

### **The People's Council and the Question of the Netherlands Subjects**

The Dutch plan of 1917 to set up a semi-parliamentary body in the Netherlands Indies aroused various political responses among the inhabitants of the colony.

The Indonesians saw the People's Council, or *Volksraad*, as a political opportunity to participate in the colonial government. The Chinese response was somewhat different. For them, the government's offer to join the new institution by nominating their representatives forced them into a difficult position, due to their ambiguous civil status in the colony. I should first consider the Chinese legal position in the Dutch East Indies.

The Dutch applied a policy of segregation in ruling their colony in the East. For the Dutch East Indies, this segregation was operated mainly on lines of legal status, by dividing the population on grounds of race and religion. On a racial basis, colonial society was divided into three main categories - European, Natives and Foreign Asiatics or the *Vreemde Oosterlingen*. On a religious basis, categorization was simply between Christian and non-Christian.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> For a detailed discussion, see Chapter I.

The Chinese belonged to the *Vreemde Oosterlingen* group, and became primary members of this non-native, non-European element in colonial society. Because of their considerable numbers and the indispensable role they played in the colonial economy, it is not surprising that the Dutch took the Chinese into consideration when formulating government policies. For the three centuries to 1900, Dutch government concerns revolved around economic matters, but to this were added political concerns in the first half of the twentieth century.

As members of the *Vreemde Oosterlingen* group, the Chinese position was extremely '*onvaste en zwevende*',<sup>113</sup> unsteady and floating, which reflected the dualist policy of the Dutch government. There is an example in the legal sphere: in legal cases, the Chinese were liable to European law, and thus their judicial processes took place in the Council of Justice, or *Raad van Justitie*. However, if a Chinese was involved in a criminal case, he was prosecuted by the *Landraad*, or Native Court of Justice. When, in 1868, the Dutch introduced the *politierol*, or police roll, by which rights were given to administrative officials to exercise judicial power over the natives and the Chinese, Chinese grievances increased.<sup>114</sup>

Another example of dualist practice applied to the Chinese was in taxation. The *bedrijfsbelasting*, or corporate tax, was levied on both the natives and the Chinese; Europeans were not included, as they paid on a different basis. That the Chinese were liable to this corporate tax was due to their civil status as '*gelijkgesteld met de Inlanders*',<sup>115</sup> or being equal with the natives. However, in terms of the *personeele belasting*, or property tax, which was assessed on material possessions such as houses, vehicles, furniture, horses, the Chinese were linked with

<sup>113</sup> Han Tiauw Tjong, "De Chinezen op Java en het Nederlandsch Onderdaanschap", *De Indische Gids*, vol. II, 1919, p. 938.

<sup>114</sup> F H Fromberg, "Terdjepit", *Chung Hwa Hui Tsa Chih*, 6 October 1917, p. 111.

<sup>115</sup> *Verslag van de Commissie tot Bestudeering van Staatrechtelijk Hervormingen* (1941. Batavia: Landsdrukkerij), vol. II, p. 45.

the Europeans. Even the imposition of the hated *passenstelsel*, or passport system, which was intended to prevent Chinese penetration into the native village economy, was an example of the Dutch government's ambiguous attitude towards the Chinese. As the passport system did not apply to those who owned the rights to revenue-farming, the majority Chinese, it did not operate well in practice. Indeed it was more of an annoyance to the Chinese than an effective measure to hinder their movement in the hinterland. There are many other examples of the ambiguous nature of Dutch policy towards the Chinese, although it is not my intention to dwell on them here.

On 10 February 1910 the Dutch administration issued a law regarding Netherlands subjects. It was based on the principle of *jus soli*, by which all Indies-born Chinese became Netherlands subjects. This was a remarkable step by the Dutch to improve the status of the Chinese, although it subsequently created an even more complicated problem. The issue of this law was a political reaction to the Chinese government's policy regarding her overseas subjects.

A year earlier, on 28 March 1909, the Chinese government had issued an edict stating that all Chinese born of a Chinese father or mother would be considered subjects of China.<sup>116</sup> As the government of China applied the principle of *jus sanguinis* in this matter and its regulation had been issued first, the *jus soli* principle adopted by the Netherlands Indies government was intended to 'protect' the Indies-born Chinese or peranakan. It goes without saying that these opposing principles turned the question of the status of the Chinese in the Dutch East Indies into a political issue.

The *jus soli* principle applied in the Netherlands-subject Law revealed how much the Dutch depended upon the Chinese residents, particularly in economic matters, although this dependency was never openly admitted. But the application

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<sup>116</sup> F H Fromberg, "De Chinezen en het Nationaliteitsbeginsel", in his *Verspreide Geschriften* (1926. Leiden: CHH), p. 653.

of the Netherlands-subject Law brought a number of political consequences. Firstly, despite the Dutch government's intention to 'protect' the Indies-born peranakan from the Chinese government's influence, the *jus soli* principle also covered the Indies-born singkeh. Consequently diplomatic friction occurred between the Dutch government and the Chinese Consulates in the Netherlands Indies when the latter launched a registration drive for Chinese residents in the colony. I will discuss on this later. Secondly, as the Netherlands subject status was intended to smooth external relations, and had no legal impact on the status of citizenship, it did not change the civil status of the Chinese within the colony. That ambiguous position encouraged Chinese movement into the political arena. This was first shown in the Chinese reaction to the People's Council, as the Chinese movement was then deeply occupied with political issues concerning Chinese status and Chinese participation in colonial government.

That the Netherlands-subject Law was more relevant in the diplomatic and territorial context can be observed from its attendant legal terms. A Chinese, according to the 1910 law, was '*Nederlandsch-onderdaan*', although being a Netherlands subject did not change his civil status as a *Vreemde Oosterlingen*.<sup>117</sup> Although the term *Vreemde Oosterlingen* was not to be used as a legal categorization of Dutch East Indies inhabitants after 1 January 1920,<sup>118</sup> this ridiculous title continued to appear in Dutch government correspondence.<sup>119</sup> Moreover, despite the Dutch plans for administrative reform of the *Chineesche Bestuur*,

<sup>117</sup> Sim Kim Ay, *De Chineesche Nederzetting in Nederlandsch-Indie* (n.d. Leiden: CHH), p. 39.

<sup>118</sup> See *Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indie* 1919, no. 622, in which the inhabitants of the colony were divided into: (a) European, and those having equal status with the European; (b) Natives, and those having equal status with the Natives, to whom the Chinese were linked.

<sup>119</sup> For example, in *Mailrapport*, no. 3426/1922, regarding "Het Vraagstuk der Hervorming van het Bestuur in de Groote Hoofdplaatsen op Java", particularly chapter II, "De Regeling van het Bestuur over *Chinezen en Andere Vreemde Oosterlingen* na het Verdwijnen van Wijken voor Ingezeten van die Landraaden". (Italics are mine).

or Chinese Administration, in 1918, the heading *Bestuur over Vreemde Oosterlingen*, or Administration over the Foreign Asiatics, was used in official reports, until 1938!<sup>120</sup>

As I noted earlier, the establishment of the People's Council raised for the Chinese the question how their legal status would be considered when a parliamentary body came into existence. It is interesting to note that it was within this political initiative that the Chinese raised their civil status as a problem; many wondered why they should have waited around seven years to raise this issue. Suryadinata suggested that it was due to *Sin Po* stirring up Chinese public reaction against the implementation of the Netherlands-subject Law, after a mass Chinese meeting held in Semarang on 11 November 1917.<sup>121</sup> This occasion marked the emergence of the *Sin Po* group as the earliest political stream in the Chinese movement and as the champion of the anti-Netherlands-subject law forces.

The Semarang gathering had been preceded by a meeting held in Bandung on 7 October 1917, to discuss the nomination of Chinese representatives for the People's Council. Among the 36 Chinese members of various local councils who had been invited, only eleven managed to be present, most being Chinese officers. The main question under discussion concerned Chinese participation in the *Volksraad*, and whether the Chinese community should be represented by Chinese who bore equal status to Europeans, that is the '*Europeanen gelijkgestelde Chineez*', or by European members of the People's Council.<sup>122</sup> The meeting settled on nominating five Chinese as their representatives, namely Kan Hok Hoei (better known as HHKan) from Batavia; Tjoa Liang Djien, a Chinese lieutenant from Surabaya; Tjoeng Tay Hoen, the Chinese major of Muntok, Bangka

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<sup>120</sup> See *Indisch Verslag van 1939*, vol. I, p. 446.

<sup>121</sup> L Suryadinata, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Java*, p. 33.

<sup>122</sup> S L van der Wal, *De Volksraad en de Staatskundige Ontwikkeling*, vol. I, p. 209.

Island; Khouw Kim An, the Chinese major of Batavia; and Lie Tjien Tjoen, the Chinese captain of Batavia.<sup>123</sup>

However, the decisions of the Bandung meeting met with strong opposition from the Chinese public, and thus it was necessary to hold another meeting with a larger audience, and one that was not limited to the Chinese leaders. The audience of 700 people was, according to Suryadinata, the largest gathering of the Chinese in Java since the emergence of the Pan-Chinese movement.<sup>124</sup> It aimed to reject the People's Council, as it was represented at the Semarang meeting. To understand this, we need to explain the political situation in Semarang at that time.

The choice of Semarang as the venue indicates the political influences at work during the meeting, as the city was known as the base of the Indonesian socialist groups at that time. The ISDV, *Indisch-Socialistisch-Democratische Vereeniging*, or Indies Socialist Democrat Association, had been founded by H Sneevliet and A Baars, two leading members of the Dutch socialist party, who had arrived in Java in 1914 and settled in Semarang. The ISDV was later transformed into the *Perserikatan Komunis Hindia* (Indies Communist Association), which in 1918 was named the PKI or Indonesian Communist Party.

Therefore, did these 700 represent the 360,000 Chinese residents in Java? It seems certain that the 700 spoke only for their own interests, those of the approximately 27 Chinese associations from East Java (mostly from Surabaya), five from Central Java (Semarang); while West Java (Bandung, Batavia and Indramayu) were represented by only one organization.<sup>125</sup> But what was the position of about the silent majority, especially as the non-China oriented peranakan political parties, the *Chung Hwa Hui* and the *Partai Tionghoa Indonesia*, were founded later? I can only assume that political opinion at the Semarang meeting was

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 210.

<sup>124</sup> L Suryadinata, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Java*, p. 21.

<sup>125</sup> Liem Thian Joe, *Riwajat Orang Orang Tjina di Semarang* (1930. Semarang: n.p.), p. 235.

dominated by China-oriented and socialist Chinese groups. In other words, the Semarang meeting did not represent the feelings of the peranakan majority.

It is very likely that the Semarang meeting was a war of words between those who favoured Chinese participation in the *Volksraad* (represented by HHKan from Batavia) and those who opposed (represented by The Kian Sing from Surabaya). HHKan argued that it was futile to attempt to discuss or launch plans for the improvement of education, taxation, legal status, without joining the People's Council, as the only place to put forward Chinese demands was in that body. He emphasized that in order to gain political and social emancipation, the Chinese had no other way, '*verzet of medewerking*',<sup>126</sup> either opposition or cooperation. The majority opinion of the meeting, on the other hand, was that the *Volksraad* was a fake, or '*palsoe*',<sup>127</sup> and saw no benefit to the Chinese in this institution.

The Kian Sing, whom the Dutch suspected of having close contact with Sneevliet and Baars, condemned as capitalists those who willingly agreed to be members of the *Volksraad*.<sup>128</sup> He argued that the Bandung meeting of October 1917, initiated by Chinese officers and Chinese members of government-created local councils, did not truly represent the Chinese community. Indeed he suspected that those Chinese candidates for the People's Council were simply seeking their own advantage. HHKan continued to insist that the Chinese should join the People's Council, otherwise they would be more and more deprived.

In the meantime, the Dutch observed that The Kian Sing's opposition was not solely to Chinese participation in the *Volksraad* but was more directed at HHKan himself.<sup>129</sup> There was personal rivalry for leadership of the Chinese.

<sup>126</sup> Quoted in Confidential Note of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to the Director of Home Affairs, 22 November 1917, no. 427/17, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 301x/1917. See also S L van der Wal, *De Volksraad en de Staatskundige Ontwikkeling*, p. 216.

<sup>127</sup> See *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 301x/1917.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.* See also S L van der Wal, *De Volksraad en de Staatskundige Ontwikkeling*, p. 217.

Although they rejected the People's Council, the Chinese community understood that the Dutch would still nominate HHKan as the first Chinese representative in the *Volksraad*.<sup>130</sup> The fact that HHKan was opposed by those Chinese present at the Semarang meeting created disagreement among the Dutch officials, some of whom thought HHKan's position in the eyes of his Chinese fellows was rather insecure. Others suspected that as a *Volksraad* member, HHKan might speak more as a Chinese than as a Netherlands subject, or that he was likely to be sought out by either Chinese or Dutch extreme groups.

There was also some uncertainty with regard to The Kian Sing's criticism, his socialist politics and his potential influence over the Chinese majority. However, the Advisor for Chinese Affairs was of the opinion that of the two, HHKan might be more dangerous than The Kian Sing, who possessed no original political ideas and was greatly under the influence of the other socialist leaders. HHKan, on the other hand, was a very forward Chinese, cool and politically experienced: to draw this Chinese leader to the Dutch side would be more advantageous.<sup>131</sup>

The Dutch choice of HHKan was also due to his personal status. Despite the fact that the Semarang meeting did not support him, HHKan was unquestionably a strong public figure, whose high status and intelligence would serve well those whom he represented. As a member of the People's Council, on whatever subject or question, he would not make a bad impression on his fellow members or on the public, a capacity not matched by others in the Chinese community.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> "Beschouwingen over de Chineesch-Maleische Pers van February-Maart 1918", in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4390; and see also note of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 8 March 1918, no. 165/B, in *Verbaal*, 2 July 1919, no. 15.

<sup>131</sup> All these arguments were elaborated in the letter of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to the Director of Home Affairs, 22 December 1917, no. 476/17, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 13x/1918.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

Although Chinese public opinion was initially unhappy with HHKan, condemning him for being more or less Westernized, or '*vereuropeescht is*',<sup>133</sup> and likely to forget his 'Chinese nationality',<sup>134</sup> his Chineseness, it later managed to accept his appointment by the Dutch.<sup>135</sup>

However, before this decision was made, the Advisor for Chinese Affairs proposed that the government consider other *Vreemde Oosterlingen* besides the Chinese, for example Arabs.<sup>136</sup> He pointed out that there was a split among the Chinese on this matter. But the Chinese were too numerous and too important to be neglected. The Dutch government carried out its plan by appointing two Chinese representatives to the People's Council for its first period, 1918-1921.

The two Chinese members were HHKan from Batavia and Lim A Pat, the Chinese captain of Muntok, Bangka Island.<sup>137</sup> Chinese public opinion assumed that HHKan had been chosen for his political standing, while Lim A Pat's nomination was due to his activities in trade and industry.<sup>138</sup> As they were categorized as appointed or non-elected members of the People's Council, neither represented a political party, or '*partijloos*'.<sup>139</sup> It should be reiterated that the two main peranakan political parties, the *Chung Hwa Hui* and the *Partai Tionghoa Indonesia*, had not yet been founded. It is remarkable that despite there being no Chinese political party in existence at the time, the people still managed to establish their attitudes political participation, indicating

<sup>133</sup> Note of the Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 8 March 1918, no. 165/B, in *Verbaal*, 2 July 1919, no. 15.

<sup>134</sup> "Beschouwingen over de Chineesche-Maleisch Persoverzicht, December 1917", in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4390.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> Letter of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to the Director of Home Affairs, 22 November 1917, no. 427/17, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 301x/1917.

<sup>137</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 23 February 1918, no. 2; and also S L van der Wal, *De Volksraad en de Staatskundige Ontwikkeling*, vol. I, p. 224.

<sup>138</sup> See *Perniagaan*, 2 February 1918, quoted in the letter of the Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 8 March 1918, no. 165/B, in *Verbaal*, 2 July 1919, no. 15.

<sup>139</sup> *Verslag van de Bestudeering van de Staatrechtelijke Hervormingen*, vol. I, p. 82.

that from this point the Chinese movement was being transformed from the socio-cultural base of the *Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan* into the political arena.

As I noted earlier, the meeting in Semarang on 11 November 1917 confirmed the influence of the *Sin Po* group in directing Chinese opinion against the People's Council, by focusing on the Netherlands-subject Law. This China-oriented group kept reminding the Chinese of the Dutch East Indies that they were 'guests' in the colony, and they could not be considered Netherlands subjects. There was therefore no benefit in joining the People's Council. According to this group, the Netherlands-subject law and the Dutch offer of Chinese participation in colonial government was a plot to isolate the Chinese of the Dutch East Indies from China, their country of origin.<sup>140</sup> It further argued that Dutch laws were distorted in such a way that the Chinese position in the Netherlands Indies was degraded.<sup>141</sup> In addition, the Chinese were unfairly treated by the Dutch government, having to pay double taxation, being placed under the Native Court of Justice, deprived of Dutch education, and much else. Therefore it urged that the Chinese fight the Netherlands-subject Law, that they should remain Chinese.<sup>142</sup>

After the Semarang meeting of November 1917, the *Sin Po* group launched the '*anti-Nederlandsch-onderdaanschap*' campaign. In early April 1919, in a space of less than three months, they had collected 28,789 signatures from Chinese supporters.<sup>143</sup> This success was due to the way in which *Sin Po* stirred up Chinese sentiment. The Chinese had long desired to gain equal status to the Europeans, especially as the Japanese had already achieved this in 1896. In their

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<sup>140</sup> L Suryadinata, *Political Thinking of the Indonesian Chinese 1900-1977*, p. 30; W J L van Es, "Het Chung Hwa Hui Congres", *De Indische Gids*, vol. II, 1927, p. 599; "Jaarverslag over 1929 Betreffende de Werkzaamheden van het Kantoor voor Chineesche Zaken", in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 129.

<sup>141</sup> L Suryadinata, *Political Thinking of the Indonesian Chinese 1900-1977*, p. 21.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>143</sup> According to *Sin Po*, 15 April 1919, quoted in L Suryadinata, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Java*, p. 34.

view it was clearly ridiculous that respectable Chinese merchants and shopkeepers were granted a lower status than Japanese prostitutes!<sup>144</sup> Had the Chinese been granted equal status with the Europeans they would have been relieved of the many anomalies stemming from their dual position, and would no longer be mere '*belastingsobject*',<sup>145</sup> objects of taxation.

At this time the Chinese government was in a state of political turmoil with the South China Kuo Min Tang and North China fighting for supremacy. The Dutch felt that this unfavourable situation would not help the Chinese in the Dutch East Indies to gain their demands.<sup>146</sup> The fact that in the international community, the Chinese government was striving for equal status with the Western powers did not help the Chinese either. Unlike China, Japan had concluded a treaty with the Netherlands on 8 September 1896 regarding the status of their subjects.

The Chinese desire for equal status with Europeans was not simply a question of prestige. Being categorized as *Vreemde Oosterlingen*, and put on a parallel footing with the natives caused them much deprivation. That the Chinese would prefer to be equal with the European rather than with the natives did not mean that they looked down upon their 'brown brothers'; their status as '*vreemdelingen*' meant that they were denied the rights granted to other foreigners.<sup>147</sup> In other words, the Chinese objected not to their equal status with the natives but to their unequal status with Europeans.<sup>148</sup> Moreover, being accepted as Netherlands subjects yet still being considered '*Vreemde Oosterlingen*', left the Chinese with no rights to landownership and

<sup>144</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Februari 1912", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. I, 1911-1912, p. 358; J Moerman, *In en Om de Chineesche Kamp* (1932. Batavia: G.Kolff & Co), p. 17.

<sup>145</sup> "De Chineezekwestie", *De Indische Gids*, vol. I, 1927, p. 543.

<sup>146</sup> "De Chineezen in Nederlandsch-Indie", *De Indische Gids*, vol. II, 1910, p. 1381; see also "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, October 1916", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. VI, 1917, p.112.

<sup>147</sup> Han Tiauw Tjong, "De Chineezzen op Java en het Nederlandsch Onderdaanschap", p. 956.

<sup>148</sup> F H Fromberg, "De Chineezzen en het Nationaliteitsbeginsel", p. 647.

cultivation. Their legal position, being categorized with the natives, did not help them in this matter.

The question of Chinese acceptance of the Netherlands-subject law remained until the 1930's, as the Dutch continued to disregard Chinese demands for equal status. The Dutch preferred to offer Chinese personal equal status, '*persoonlijke gelijkstelling*',<sup>149</sup> by lowering the requirement for applicants of financial standing and ability to speak the Dutch language, particularly after 1930.<sup>150</sup> But the Dutch would not meet demands for equal status for all Chinese in the Dutch East Indies.

Dutch rejection of Chinese demands was for political reasons, for that concession would have had a great impact on the growing nationalist forces.<sup>151</sup> Considering the turbulent political circumstances of the colony, particularly from the first decade of the twentieth century, the Dutch were very cautious in their handling of Chinese affairs. Yielding to the Chinese request for equal status would provoke anti-Chinese feeling among the Indonesians, which in turn might endanger the Dutch themselves.

On the other hand, the Chinese were reluctant to apply for '*persoonlijke gelijkstelling*', for equality with Europeans would mean that they would be subject to '*schutterij*', civic guard and militia service, particularly as in early 1916 the Dutch government had launched a *Indie-Weerbaar*, or Indies Defence. The Chinese immediately rejected the *Indie-Weerbaar*, stating that, "whatever the Dutch have done for us, we do not want to sacrifice our lives for their interests".<sup>152</sup> They mockingly indicated that as there was a serious shortage of Dutch soldiers, the colonial government

<sup>149</sup> "Beschouwingen over de Chineesch-Maleische Pers, April 1918", in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4390.

<sup>150</sup> "Jaarverslag over 1929 Betreffende de Werkzaamheden van het Kantoor voor Chineesche Zaken", in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 129.

<sup>151</sup> S L van der Wal, *De Opkomst van der Nationalistische Beweging in Nederlands-Indies* (1967. Groningen: J B Wolters ), p. 51, footnote 2.

<sup>152</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, December 1916", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. VI, 1917, p. 685.

planned to make Chinese '*kanonnenvleesch*', cannonfodder!<sup>153</sup> At a general meeting concerning the *Indie-Weerbaar* held in Batavia on 31 August 1916, the Chinese delegates stated their refusal to join the militia, if the tax assessment on the Chinese continued to increase.<sup>154</sup> Why the Chinese were so agitated by the prospect of military service can be explained by the history of the early years of the VOC in Batavia. A declaration made by the VOC on 9 October 1620 relieved all Batavian Chinese from civic guard service in order that they could concentrate on economic activites, which of course was very much to the benefit of the VOC. For this dispensation, the Chinese of Batavia would pay a capitation tax, the '*hoofdgeld der Chinezen*'.<sup>155</sup> From the 1830's a similar tax was applied to the Chinese in Madura and in Semarang, Central Java.

Despite *Sin Po*'s aggressive campaign against the Netherlands-subject law, from the 1920's they almost totally failed to draw support from the majority of the peranakan Chinese. This was primarily due to their failure to understand the nature of the peranakan, who never felt comfortable with the China-orientation of the *Sin Po* group. The peranakan might cherish their sentimental ties with China as their ancestral land. But they were cautious in their response to the China-oriented propaganda and activities of most singkeh groups. This was understandable, since they had been established for centuries in the Dutch East Indies. The colony was the country of their birth and where their economic interests lay.

Second was the policy of the colonial government to draw the peranakan Chinese to the Dutch side, particularly in favouring the *Chung Hwa Hui* over the *Sin Po* efforts to win peranakan support. By accommodating the establishment of

<sup>153</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, October 1916", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. VI, 1917, p. 112.

<sup>154</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, September 1916", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. V, 1916, p. 1655.

<sup>155</sup> See *Plakaatboek van Nederlandsch-Indie* (1885. Batavia: Landsdrukkerij), vol. I, 1602-1642, pp. 76, 547.

the peranakan political party founded in August 1926, the *Chung Hwa Hui*, the Dutch made certain that Chinese rejection of the Netherlands-subject law would be removed. It was the *Chung Hwa Hui* plan to encourage the acceptance of Indies-born peranakan Chinese as Netherlands subjects. *Chung Hwa Hui* membership was specifically open to "all Netherlands subjects of Chinese origin who are over 18 years",<sup>156</sup> a condition that helped the organization to resist the entry of singkeh into the party.<sup>157</sup>

The *jus soli* principle adopted in the 1910 law on Netherlands subjects brought its own problems, for it embraced all Indies-born Chinese as Netherlands subjects, whether they were singkeh or peranakan. Thus it was clear that the adoption of contradictory principles by the Netherlands Indies and China would lead to diplomatic friction.

This matter was eventually solved by means of a diplomatic understanding, concluded in a consular treaty of 8 May 1911, to be reviewed every five years.<sup>158</sup> To avoid complications in the enforcement of the Netherlands subject legislation, the Dutch government informed all local authorities in the colony, that is the residents and assistant-residents, of the 1911 consular treaty. An official letter was issued by the Government Secretary on 28 August 1911, explaining that there would be no further doubt in distinguishing Chinese subjects from Netherlands subjects of Chinese blood.<sup>159</sup> All local authorities were instructed to register the Chinese residents in their areas: this was carried out by the Chinese major or captain, and the Chinese wardmasters.<sup>160</sup>

<sup>156</sup> Quoted in the letter of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to the Government Commission for General Affairs of the People's Council, 19 February 1935, no. 521/35, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 211x/1935.

<sup>157</sup> See pp. 154-155.

<sup>158</sup> Han Tiauw Tjong, "De Chineezzen op Java en het Nederlandsch Onderdaanschap", p. 952.

<sup>159</sup> Circular of the Government Secretary, 28 August 1911, no. 629, in *Tangerang*, no. 186/3, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

The struggle for power within the Kuo Min Tang, between the leftist and ultra-nationalist groups, dragged in the overseas Chinese subjects. Each faction tried to draw them into their camp. More and more political initiatives were launched towards the overseas Chinese, which in turn influenced the Chinese movement in the Dutch East Indies.

In order to protect their overseas subjects, the Chinese government more than once accused the Netherlands Indies government of unfairly treating the Chinese in the colony. This interference should be seen not only as the Chinese government's response to the Chinese grievances reported by the singkeh via their Chamber of Commerce and the trade associations,<sup>161</sup> but also as an indication of need for support, particularly financial support, from their overseas subjects.

Most Kuo Min Tang activity in this respect took the form of fund raising campaigns, either to assist casualties in mainland China or to secure party funds and the Chinese government. It was reported, for example, that the Chinese Consul-General of Batavia made a tour of the main cities of Java to collect about \$40,000,000 although he managed only \$550,000.<sup>162</sup> I suspect that the fund raising campaigns of the Kuo Min Tang and Chinese Consulates in Outer Java were more successful, owing to the preponderance of singkeh residents there.

For the peranakan of Java, the constant fund-raising activities, as well as the aggressiveness of most singkeh Kuo Min Tang members, became a real nuisance. These feelings are well represented by a peranakan wardmaster in Kutoarjo, Central Java, who complained that: ".....perkoempoelan Kuo Min Tang di Batavia, Soerabaja dan Bandoeng sering sering tariek oewang sadja.....",<sup>163</sup> the Kuo Min Tang organizations

<sup>161</sup> See letter of the Dutch Ambassador to China to Governor-General of the Netherlands Indies, 18 September 1922, in *Geheim Verbaal*, 24 July 1923, no. Y.9; and *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 617x/1930. All correspondence is kept in *Verbaal*, 29 October 1920, no. 52.

<sup>162</sup> "Jaarverslag over 1928 Betreffende de Werkzaamheden van het Kantoor voor Chineesche Zaken", in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 129.

<sup>163</sup> Quoted in "Jaarverslag over 1929 Betreffende de Werkzaamheden van het Kantoor voor Chineesche Zaken", in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 129.

in Batavia, Surabaya and Bandung constantly appeal for money.

Even the registration of Chinese residents in the colony, launched by the Chinese consulates in mid-1929, was not free of money-raising activity. As the Chinese Consulates did not have an adequate budget for the project, a payment was requested, in addition to the registration fee, to cover staff costs.<sup>164</sup> It was said that 20% of the registration fee was allocated to Kuo Min Tang funds.<sup>165</sup> What was to become a serious problem for the Dutch government was that the Chinese registration included Indies-born peranakan. This brought additional diplomatic difficulties.

From the outset it was clear that the Dutch government would not consent to the registration of the Chinese residents of the colony. Yet the Chinese Consul strongly argued for it, saying that there was important data to be recorded, such as the date of arrival of Chinese migrants<sup>166</sup> who later came to reside in the colony. He insisted that registration would not apply to the Indies-born peranakan.

Despite the interpretation of the legal enforcement of *jus soli* having been settled by the diplomatic understanding of May 1911, the flaw in proclaiming all Indies-born Chinese as Netherlands subjects was open to manipulation by the Chinese government. This led to interference on the part of the Chinese government in order to protect their overseas subjects. On the other hand, the Indies-born peranakan could be mixed in with Indies-born singkeh and consequently be registered as subjects of the Chinese government. Such problems gave the Dutch government and local authorities a great deal of work.

This commonly occurred in areas where the singkeh were numerous, and indeed outnumbered the peranakan, for

<sup>164</sup> It states: "...maka soeka boeat bantoe sedikit oeang onkost, goena oepah orang speciaal jang kerdjakan...."; in circular notices of the Chinese Consulate in Palembang, 20 December 1932; see *A dossiers*, no. 7794, Ministry of Colonies Archives, ARA, The Hague.

<sup>165</sup> "Jaarverslag over 1929 Betreffende de Werkzaamheden van het Kantoor voor Chineesche Zaken", in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 129.

<sup>166</sup> See letter of the Chinese Consul in Palembang to the Resident of Palembang, 12 January 1932, in *A Dossiers*, no. 7794.

example in Palembang, Padang and the East Coast of Sumatra.<sup>167</sup> Here the Indies-born peranakan might be mis-registered as Chinese rather than Netherlands subjects. In some areas of Java, such as Preanger and Semarang, similar cases of mis-registration occurred, since the registration forms were circulated through trade associations and the *Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan* schools.<sup>168</sup> The peranakan became increasingly confused as the Chinese Consuls took advantage of the situation. On one occasion the Consuls said that the Indies-born peranakan Chinese would temporarily be exempt from registration; in other places they admitted that they were not to be included in the registration.<sup>169</sup> An old rumour that peranakan Chinese who travelled to China and returned to Java would be considered singkeh or Chinese subjects, not Netherlands-subjects,<sup>170</sup> spread again. It then became the duty of the Chinese major and other officers in Batavia and Semarang to calm the confused peranakan, explaining that according to the consular treaty of May 1911 between the Netherlands and China they were Netherlands subjects.<sup>171</sup>

Apart from demanding that the Chinese Consulates exclude all peranakan from its registration, the Dutch instructed all local authorities to locate the peranakan residents in their areas and have their names removed from the registration list.<sup>172</sup>

<sup>167</sup> See various reports in *A Dossiers*, no. 7794; also mentioned in the letter of the Chinese lieutenant of Fort de Kock (Bukittinggi, West Sumatra), 16 July 1929, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 740x/1929, and *Geheim Verbaal*, 16 October 1929, no. O.20.

<sup>168</sup> Noted in confidential letter of the Government Secretary, 11 September 1929, no. 295x in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 857x/1929; see also *Geheim Verbaal*, 16 October 1929, no. O.20.

<sup>169</sup> "Jaarverslag over 1929 Betreffende de Werkzaamheden van het Kantoor voor Chineesche Zaken", in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 129.

<sup>170</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, July-August 1912", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. I, 1911-1912, p. 1132.

<sup>171</sup> See "Jaarverslag over 1929 Betreffende de Werkzaamheden van het Kantoor voor Chineesche Zaken", in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 129.

<sup>172</sup> Letter of the Government Secretary, 13 September 1929, no. 299x, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 857x/1929; see also *Geheim Verbaal*, 16 October 1929, no. O.20.

It was fortunate for the Dutch government that the majority of peranakan Chinese wished to bring order to this confusion. This was particularly true of the inhabitants of Batavia, and as early as 1911 the Chinese officers and wardmasters, under the instruction of the local authority, had registered their own people.<sup>173</sup> By gaining information on the origins of the Chinese residents of the Batavia residency, distinctions between singkeh and peranakan could be made. In this task, there were no officials who knew the members of the Chinese community better than the Chinese officers. No matter what criticism was made of the Chinese officers, the Dutch wisely acknowledged their expertise in handling the Chinese.

The first part of this chapter was concerned with the two main peranakan organizations in which the Chinese officers were involved. I have indicated the changing attitude of the Dutch policy towards the Chinese, in favouring the Indies-born peranakan. This can be seen initially in education, with the opening of the Dutch-Chinese School in 1908, and in the establishment of the *Chung Hwa Hui*. The Dutch further favoured the peranakan by the appointment of Chinese members to the People's Council. Meanwhile, the Netherlands-subject law was intended to protect the peranakan Chinese not only from Chinese government influence but also from the singkeh-totok. For the Indonesian nationalists, this *divide et impera* policy was vehemently condemned. But for the Indies-born peranakan, despite its hypocrisy, the Dutch attitude helped them review their position as members of Dutch East Indies society, although later it would bring them into conflict with the growing Indonesian nationalist movement.

The peranakan found themselves unavoidably sandwiched between the ruler and the majority ruled. The name '*bangsa tengah*' given to the peranakan, spoke for itself. Not only were they '*terjepit*', or squeezed, between the oppressor and the oppressed but they were also the scapegoat when disputes arose. This occurred in the period 1912-1913,

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<sup>173</sup> See *Tangerang*, no. 186/3.

when the peranakan became victims in the anti-Chinese riots. Since the indigenous population, strongly influenced by fanatical religious elements, disregarded the differences between singkeh and peranakan, the peranakan were equally vulnerable.

### The Early Chinese Turbulences of 1912-1913

The turn of this century witnessed great changes within Asia, a revival among indigenous peoples, expressed in the emerging national movements. In its initial stages this revival manifested itself in cultural idealism: in the Dutch East Indies, *Budi Utomo* in May 1908 and, in the case of the Chinese, the *Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan* in April 1900.

It did not take long for cultural revival to extend to politics, in which ideas of nationalism, solidarity, class-struggle nurtured action against the colonial government. This, then, was the spirit of the time, which deeply touched the various elements of Dutch East Indies society, Indonesians, Chinese and Arab.

When a series of disturbances occurred in 1912 and 1913, it was clear that political events outside the Dutch East Indies were stimulating the nationalist sentiments of the Chinese and the Arabs. The triumph of the October 1911 revolution in China led by Sun Yat Sen undoubtedly excited the Chinese in the Indies. This was most striking seen in the arrogance towards non-Chinese. This unpleasant attitude was abhorred by the peranakan Chinese,<sup>174</sup> who were later to be deeply affected by anti-Chinese feeling within the indigenous peoples.

In the same way that the Chinese looked to China, the Arab residents of the Dutch East Indies owed their political orientation and idealism to the Middle East. Many sent their children to Turkey to pursue advanced study.<sup>175</sup> They held a

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<sup>174</sup> See "Een Chinees over de Chineesche Beweging", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. I, 1911-1912, pp. 667-672; see also "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Februari 1912", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, pp. 363, 731.

<sup>175</sup> Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia 1900-1942* (1973. Singapore: Oxford University Press), p. 59.

long-standing resentment against the Dutch government which was inclined to favour the Chinese over the Arab or Muslim community.<sup>176</sup> Moreover, economic rivalries between these two elements in the *Vreemde Oosterlingen* had a long history, which later ignited into racial disputes. The arrogant Chinese excitement resulting from the triumph of the 1911 revolution later provoked Arab hatred.

For the Indonesians, the year 1911 saw the founding of a mass movement channelled through *Sarekat Islam* (hereafter SI). SI was the first Indonesian mass movement. Islam became an effective mechanism, directing the people against the oppressor, the colonial government.

The leaders of SI never openly expressed an anti-government attitude: indeed they showed a willingness to participate in the colonial government through the People's Council.<sup>177</sup> In their view, there was no contradiction between native progress and loyalty to the government.<sup>178</sup> Nevertheless, this unusual expression of solidarity and equality often got out of hand, leading the common people into hatred towards the alien, particularly the Chinese.

The year 1912 was the turning-point in relations between the Chinese, the Arabs and the indigenous Indonesians. The Chinese riots in Batavia and Surabaya reflected the mutual dislike between singkeh and peranakan, particularly the feelings of the singkeh against the peranakan Chinese officers. In October 1912 there were skirmishes between Chinese and Arabs in several cities in Java, which showed the bitter antagonism between the two, arising from their different backgrounds and treatment by the Dutch. The anti-Chinese incidents from late 1912 abruptly shattered the relationship between the Chinese and the indigenous

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>177</sup> Some prominent SI leaders such as HOS Tjokroaminoto, A Moeis, H A Salim joined the People's Council; see T Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion. Popular Radicalism in Java 1912-1926* (1990. Ithaca: Cornell University Press), pp. 95-96.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

population,<sup>179</sup> and most of the suffering took place on the peranakan side.<sup>180</sup>

The first incidents occurred in Batavia and Surabaya during the Chinese New Year of 18 February 1912. Since the Dutch government had not officially recognized the new Chinese Republic, the Chinese residents in the Dutch East Indies were not granted official permission to hoist the republican flag during their New Year feast. Instructions to this effect were given to Batavia's Chinese major, who passed the directives to the Chinese wardmasters so that they might inform the public. Yet there were always those who would break that restriction, leading to hostile action against the police. According to a peranakan, the riot was caused by aggressive Hakka-Macaos, who provocatively hoisted the flag. They had bought the flag from a shop owned by a Chinese lieutenant of Hakka origins, who had assured them that hoisting the flag was allowed.<sup>181</sup> Disagreement broke out when the police hauled down the flag, resulting in twenty arrests.

The Hakka-Macaos grudge against the peranakan major of Batavia was well-known, and during these times he received many death threats. They accused him of misleading them, saying that they were allowed to hoist the republican flag but then quickly issuing a ban when the resident of Batavia disagreed. It was reported that at a secret meeting, the Hakka-Macaos collected about 12,000 guilders to pay someone to murder the Chinese major.<sup>182</sup> About ten Hakka-Macaos forcibly hoisted the flag in front of the *Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan* building. When this was rejected, the outraged Hakka-Macaos broke the windows and lanterns

<sup>179</sup> Both the Dutch government and the peranakan press deeply regretted the deterioration of this relationship, which they described as '*van broederschap naar vijandschap*', from brotherhood to enmity. See "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. II, 1912-1913, pp. 320, 886 and vol. V, 1916, p. 230.

<sup>180</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Maart-April 1912", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. I, 1911-1912, p. 623.

<sup>181</sup> "Een Chinees over de Chineesche Beweging", p. 668.

<sup>182</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Februari 1912", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. I, 1911-1912, p. 354.

of the building.<sup>183</sup> Fearing that the situation might get out of hand, the Chinese major immediately sent a telegram to the Governor-General in Buitenzorg, asking for official confirmation of the ban. The answer, signed by the Government Secretary,<sup>184</sup> stated that permission would not be given to hoist the flag as the Netherlands government had not recognized the new Chinese Republic. The answer was translated into Chinese and Malay, and distributed in all Chinese neighbourhoods in Batavia. Following this, the situation in Batavia returned to normal.

Among the twenty people arrested during the two days of disturbances, 18-19 February 1912, four were detained for some time, suspected of being the ringleaders. On bail provided by the Chinese officers, and following a request from the Chinese delegates representing all Chinese groups in Batavia, the four were released after they promised not to repeat their action.<sup>185</sup>

Unlike the situation in Batavia, which was quickly suppressed due to the alert Chinese major,<sup>186</sup> the riot in Surabaya had serious consequences. It lasted for about a week, from Chinese New Year's Eve on 17 February until 26 February 1912. Whereas the trouble in Batavia arose mainly from the government ban on hoisting the republican flag, the riot in Surabaya started on New Year's Eve, when Chinese broke the local authority ban on setting off fireworks in the middle of a public road. To set off fireworks during Chinese New Year was not prohibited, as long as it did not disturb the surrounding neighbourhood. This meant that the Chinese

<sup>183</sup> "Een Chinees over de Chineesche Beweging", p. 669.

<sup>184</sup> Official consent to hoist '*vreemde natievlaggen*' or foreign national flag, was later given in the Government Secretary circular of 19 February 1914, no. 71. It stated that the hoisting of these foreign flags should not carry a political character, as a challenge to the Dutch government authority; see *Tangerang*, no. 164/4. The Chinese officers, however, as (Dutch) government officials, were not allowed to hoist any foreign (Chinese) flag; see telegram of Government Secretary, 27 April 1927, in *Agenda*, no. 13164, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

<sup>185</sup> "Officieel Relaas van de Chineesche Opstootjes te Batavia and Soerabaja", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. I, 1911-1912, pp. 601-602.

<sup>186</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Februari 1912", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, p. 356.

could have fun in their own courtyards but not in the middle of a public road. However, since many Chinese houses had no courtyard, this restriction was interpreted as a total ban on setting off fireworks.<sup>187</sup> It goes without saying that many Chinese broke the restriction during the New Year's Eve festivities. When the police arrested these violators, a riot became unavoidable, as gangs of Cantonese-Chinese showed up on every corner of the neighbourhood, attacking the police and shouting: "Kill them!" In order to control this situation, the police fired their arms, making matters worse as the gangs fled and plundered a Chinese shop. The owner was counting his earnings, and being taken by surprise, cried frantically that his money was being stolen. The police then broke into the shop, and chased the gang who escaped through the back door of the shop. The next day of the Chinese New Year passed peacefully.

By noon on 19 February, a proclamation was written on a board in front of the *Soe Po Sia* building. It announced that all Chinese should gather at 3.00 p.m. to demand permission from the Chinese major to hoist the republican flag. A Chinese wardmaster, who happened to be passing, was detained inside the building; it was reported that his pigtail was cut off. In the meantime, while the Chinese captain was reporting to the assistant-resident's office, that the situation was again calm, he was informed that about 300 Cantonese-Chinese had plundered his house. When the police arrived at the captain's residence, the culprits had already disappeared.<sup>188</sup> In fact, it was not only the Chinese captain's house that had been vandalized, but the Chinese major's residence was also damaged. It was reported that some gang members who had fled from the police were hiding inside the *Soe Po Sia* building. Twenty persons were arrested, and to prevent further disturbances, the police carried out a night patrol throughout the city.

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<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 352.

<sup>188</sup> "Officieel Relaas van de Chineesche Optootjes te Batavia en Soerabaja", pp. 603-604.

The next day, 20 February, the situation appeared to be back to normal. The Chinese opened their shops, although a small gang of Cantonese threatened them. Later it was reported that some important Chinese traders and merchants had received a threatening letter, warning them not to continue with their business. More suspects were arrested, and the police kept guard in some Chinese commercial districts on the following day. These Chinese merchants asked the Resident of Surabaya for protection, but he assured them that the situation would be easily restored, as the bad Cantonese were only a minority within the Chinese community.

However, the Resident's goodwill was not matched by the behaviour of the local police, who frequently used their rifles forcefully to force the Chinese to open their shops, driving the confused shopkeepers into a panic. They would open their shops but later close again. The Resident of Surabaya called the Presidents of the *Siang Hwee* and the *Soe Po Sia* to enlighten him on the situation. However, the answers from these Chinese leaders were somewhat unreliable, and were considered untrustworthy by the local authorities. As a result, these leaders were also placed in police custody.<sup>189</sup> For several days until 26 February, all Chinese economic activity in Surabaya was suspended, all shops were closed. It was only after the local authorities took further measures, arresting 850 suspected persons, that the situation returned to normal.

Of those arrested, 173 were quickly released. Police investigations revealed that these Hokkien and peranakan had become involved in the riot in self-defence.<sup>190</sup> The majority of the others arrested were in fact illegal migrants who did not possess entry permits. They were subsequently expelled from the colony, and only a few left willingly.<sup>191</sup> The Dutch government noted that only one Chinese was killed during the Surabaya riot but that several

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<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 605.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 606.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.* See also *Koloniaal Verslag van 1912*, p. 3.

others were wounded. Yet, the damage was done, in the sense that the riot revealed a fragile situation.

The riot of 1912 revealed economic pressures within the Chinese community, resulting from the arrival from around 1900 of increasing numbers of Chinese migrants - legal or illegal. For the long established peranakan members of the Chinese community, these new-comers clearly disturbed their peaceful lives, and consequently were disliked. It later became clear that the riots in February 1912 had not completely settled, for in October of the same year a riot broke out between the Chinese and the Arabs in Surabaya. This Chinese-Arab conflict was repeated in other cities in Java; the most destructive, apart from Surabaya, were in Tuban, Bangil and Cirebon.

Before I continue discussing the October 1912 riot in Surabaya, I must return to Batavia, to show how different that city's social conditions were from those in Surabaya. The largest Chinese community in Batavia, the majority of whom were peranakan, were found in both urban and rural areas. This was due to the land status of the Batavia residency, of which the largest part comprised '*particuliere landerijen*', or private landed estates, owned mostly by Chinese and Europeans. Looking at the demographic profile in 1900, there were 26,817 Chinese residents in the city of Batavia, compared with 62,247 living on the outskirts, or *Ommelanden*.<sup>192</sup> By 1905, when the Chinese residents in the Batavia residency were 4.5% of the total population,<sup>193</sup> the number of city-dwellers and those living on the outskirts were even bigger, 28,150 and 74,370.<sup>194</sup> This meant that more than two-thirds of the Chinese preferred to settle in the *Ommelanden*. This explains why Chinese-Arab conflicts

<sup>192</sup> See Bijlagen A, "Algemeen Overzicht van de Getalsterkte der Bevolking van Nederlandsch-Indie, met Uitzondering van het Personeel van Leger en Vloot bij het Begin van 1901" (hereafter Bijlage A), *Koloniaal Verslag van 1902*.

<sup>193</sup> H L van Sandick, *De Chineezzen Buiten China. Hunne Beteekenis voor de Ontwikkeling van Zuid-Oost-Azie Speciaal van Nederlandsch-Indie* (1909. 's Gravenhage: M van der Beek's Boekhandel), p. 184.

<sup>194</sup> Bijlage A, *Koloniaal Verslag van 1907*; and "Batavia in 1912", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. II, 1912-1913, p. 1421.

occurred only sporadically, and were limited to the city of Batavia, for the Arab community was mainly urban.

Given that the earliest settlement of the Chinese in this part of Java pre-dated the arrival of the Dutch, the peranakan community of Batavia had long developed its own characteristics that enabled it to resist the aggressive singkeh element. These characteristics and the social conditions in Batavia, backed by the strength of the Chinese officers, on whom the Dutch relied to keep the peace, secured order in the area.

The riot that occurred in October 1912, involving Arabs and Chinese, in Surabaya was due to economic rivalry. It was reported that when the Chinese closed their shops during the February riot, the city suffered a shortage of staple food. The Arab traders then sold rice to the indigenous population at a higher price, hoping to break Chinese domination of the rice market during the short period when Chinese retailing was suspended. However, these expectations were dashed, since no Chinese would allow the Arabs to stockpile rice or take control of the market. The Arabs became increasingly frustrated, as they had thought that public anger over the scarcity of rice would bring benefits to them.<sup>195</sup> Combined with a general discontent at their unfair treatment by the Dutch, who favoured the Chinese, this frustration drove the Arabs towards violence.

On 27 October 1912, an embittered group of about 200 Arabs ransacked the Chinese quarter and plundered their shops.<sup>196</sup> Many Chinese fled and hid in the city. The following days saw the destruction of Chinese shops, and fights between Arabs and Chinese. Other parties became victims of the disturbances; one European was murdered and four Japanese were wounded.<sup>197</sup> It was reported that in

<sup>195</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Oktober-November 1912", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. I, 1911-1912, p. 333.

<sup>196</sup> See "Chineezen en Arabieren", *De Indische Gids*, vol. I, 1913, p. 107; "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Oktober 1912", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. II, 1912-1913, p. 203.

<sup>197</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers", *op.cit.*, p. 205.

general the indigenous inhabitants of Surabaya were not involved in the riot,<sup>198</sup> although some were attacked by Chinese who mistook them for Arabs because they wore a fez.<sup>199</sup> Five Chinese and two Arabs were killed during this conflict. According to the official report, eight Chinese were wounded, five Arabs and one Indonesian.<sup>200</sup> The Chinese-Arab conflict appears to represent an eruption of Arabs economic discontent. The social conditions of Surabaya must also have contributed to the outbreak.

Peace between these two elements of the *Vreemde Oosterlingen* was concluded on 2 November 1912. It is interesting to note that the Arabs and Chinese of Batavia sent delegates to confirm the peace agreement.<sup>201</sup> However, it was unlikely that the agreement could settle the problem, for social discontent, particularly on the Arab side,<sup>202</sup> would not be eliminated by a paper agreement. Arab feelings against discrimination by the Dutch ran deep, and this was indicated by conflicts in cities all over Java. In cities where Arab community matched that of the Chinese, such outbreaks were often unavoidable.

Due to the unavailability of official reports on the urban population during the first decade of the twentieth century,<sup>203</sup> we must work solely from the statistical data for 1905. Although the conflicts between Chinese and Arabs took place in 1912, it is acceptable to use the data from 1905.

In the city of Tuban in East Java, there were 4,611 Chinese and 558 Arabs in 1905. It was reported in the Chinese press that on 9 May 1912, hundreds of Arabs and Indonesians gathered in a public meeting place, threatening

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>200</sup> *Koloniaal Verslag van 1913*, p. 3.

<sup>201</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Oktober-November 1912", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. II, 1912-1913, pp. 321, 322, 331.

<sup>202</sup> "Chinezen en Arabieren", p. 107.

<sup>203</sup> Prior to 1899 the *Koloniaal Verslag* regularly included annual statistical data on the Netherlands Indies population. However, after 1900 this was abandoned, except in the *Koloniaal Verslag* of 1902, 1907.

to kill the Chinese. Only the action of the police prevented those threats from being carried out.<sup>204</sup>

Bangil in East Java and Cirebon in West Java showed a similar demographic balance. In 1905 Bangil had 856 Chinese and 844 Arab residents; in Cirebon there were 3,476 Chinese and 1,104 Arabs.<sup>205</sup> Riots in Bangil occurred on 4 September 1912, and again on 24-25 October, in which two Chinese were killed. In Cirebon three Chinese were killed and twenty-three injured, during a Chinese-Arab conflict on 26 October 1912.<sup>206</sup> Only six Arabs were wounded, none were killed.<sup>207</sup>

My observation that the Chinese community in Batavia was both rural and urban suggests why no serious Chinese-Arab conflict occurred in that city. And the Chinese vastly outnumbered the Arabs, 28,150 Chinese to 2,054 Arabs living in the city, with only 147 Arabs living in the extensive outskirts, the *Ommelanden*.<sup>208</sup> In 1912 the Chinese residents of the city of Batavia numbered 29,963;<sup>209</sup> the Arabs, I presume, were no more than 4,000 in number.

In contrast, the Chinese and Arabs in Surabaya were both urban communities. In addition the economic position in this second city of Java appears to have been even more tense. Competition between the Chinese and the Arabs, and even among the Chinese - that is between peranakan and singkeh - was becoming sharper, particularly by the early 1920s. In the 1930s, a peranakan from Surabaya, who later became a notable political leader during the Sukarno era, witnessed the declining power of the peranakan in the textile trade, as it became dominated by singkeh.<sup>210</sup> European companies also

<sup>204</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Mei-Juni 1912", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. I, 1911-1912, p. 842.

<sup>205</sup> Bijlage A, *Koloniaal Verslag van 1907*.

<sup>206</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Oktober 1912", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. II, 1912-1913, p. 185.

<sup>207</sup> *Koloniaal Verslag van 1913*, p. 3.

<sup>208</sup> Bijlage A, *Koloniaal Verslag van 1907*.

<sup>209</sup> "Batavia in 1912", p. 1421.

<sup>210</sup> Siauw Giok Tjhan, *Lima Jaman. Perwujudan Integrasi Wajar* (1981. Amsterdam-Jakarta: Yayasan Teratai), pp. 49-50.

favoured peranakan intermediary traders in the distribution of their goods, and this fuelled Arab resentment towards the Dutch.

If we look again at the population data for Surabaya for 1905, it indicates a more balanced position than was found in Batavia. There were 8,066 European, 2,482 Arab and 14,847 Chinese residents, most of whom were engaged in commerce. Since the data does not distinguish peranakan from singkeh, I assume that although the former were in a majority, their economic power declined in the second decade of the twentieth century.<sup>211</sup> The increasing number of singkeh migrants made the economic situation in the city more tense. Moreover, the great majority of Europeans in Surabaya were engaged in business.<sup>212</sup> This was a somewhat different situation from that in Batavia, where most Europeans were government officials or professionals, and in 1905, the number of European merchants was only 13,085.<sup>213</sup>

The city's environment also encouraged social conflict for, unlike Batavia, Surabaya had no distinct lines of demarcation between the business and residential quarters.<sup>214</sup> Furthermore, the policy of the local authorities in handling the conflict reflected the relationship between the Resident and the Chinese and Arab officers in Surabaya. It is interesting to note that after the peace treaty to end the Chinese-Arab conflict was signed in Surabaya on 2 November 1912, the Arab captain of Batavia held a reconciliation party with the Chinese officers.<sup>215</sup>

Due to my lack of access to either Dutch government records or sources on Chinese public opinion in Surabaya, there is little to say about the relationship between the city's resident and the Chinese officers. A similar problem

<sup>211</sup> Djie Ting Ham, "Enkele Opmerkingen over de Economischen Toestand van de Chineezien op Java", p. 49.

<sup>212</sup> See Arnold Wright (ed), *Twentieth Century Impressions of Netherlands India*, pp. 520-545.

<sup>213</sup> Bijlage A, *Koloniaal Verslag van 1907*.

<sup>214</sup> Arnold Wright, *op.cit.*, p. 515.

<sup>215</sup> "Chineezien in Botsing op Java", *De Indische Gids*, vol. II, 1912, p. 1657.

also makes it difficult to throw light on the relationship between the Chinese officers and their people. It can only be noted that an article in a European newspaper, the *Soerabajaasch Handelsblad*, blamed the Chinese officers for being rude and arrogant in responding to the grievances of their people.<sup>216</sup>

Lea E Williams, examining Chinese public opinion through the mostly socialist-oriented Chinese press of Surabaya, notes that the Chinese leadership, after the first decade of the twentieth century, was no longer in the hands of the Chinese officers, but in the hands of the presidents of *Siang Hwee* and *Soe Po Sia*.<sup>217</sup> Williams' argument may be correct for Surabaya, but is not valid for Batavia.

The certain involvement of *Siang Hwee* and *Soe Po Sia* in the Chinese riots of February 1912 indicates the intention of both these China-influenced organizations to take over the leadership of the Chinese community in Surabaya. Furthermore, the riot that occurred during the Chinese New Year celebrations lasted more than a week, clearly demonstrating the weakness of the Chinese major and his inability to handle the situation. Since his residence and that of the Chinese captain were vandalized by non-peranakan Chinese gangs, there is little doubt that the peranakan Chinese officers had control over the non-peranakan Chinese community in Surabaya. This further indicates the socio-political estrangement between these two elements of Chinese society in Surabaya, which resulted in destructive clashes with the local authorities.

The weakness of the Chinese officership in Surabaya was due to the vulnerability of its structure, for the institution was totally dominated by peranakan officers, having no representative of the non-peranakan element in Surabaya. The fact that many Chinese looked to the Presidents of

<sup>216</sup> Noted in "De Chinezen-opstootjes te Soerabaja", *De Indische Gids*, vol. I, 1912, p. 658.

<sup>217</sup> Lea E Williams, *Overseas Chinese Nationalism*, p.183; see also *Pewarta Soerabaia*, 10 September 1929, quoted in the letter of the Governor of East Java to Governor-General, 9 January 1930, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 184x/1930.

*Siang Hwee* and *Soe Po Sia* for advice and guidance, both were singkeh dominated organizations, confirms the Chinese officers' lack of authority.

The relationship between the Resident of Surabaya, representing the local authority of Surabaya, and the local *Chineesche Bestuur*, performed by the Chinese officers, was probably not as close as that in Batavia. The fact that after 1924 the position of Chinese major remained vacant,<sup>218</sup> appears to confirms this. This could have been due to a lack of interest on the part of the local authorities in maintaining the city's Chinese Administration, or to a scarcity of qualified candidates. Had the local authorities considered the Chinese majorship sufficiently important, the a lack of candidates would surely have been overcome.

Complaints from the Chinese regarding the excessive police force used in quelling the riot also indicates '*rassenhaat*', racial hatred between the Europeans and the Chinese.<sup>219</sup> This could be seen as a lack of cooperation between the Resident and the Chinese officers. Had the Chinese major of Surabaya possessed influence over his own people - both peranakan and singkeh - and been on good terms with the Resident, these events may not have got out of hand. This was very different from Batavia, where the Chinese major had taken immediate action to calm the Chinese community.<sup>220</sup> It seems that the local authorities in Surabaya took the responsibility for dealing with the Chinese since both the major and the captain were helpless. However much the Chinese press, which was hardly impartial, mocked the Chinese officers, here was one of many cases which showed that the institution was of value. Particularly in Batavia, the Chinese officers could not be disregarded; there were benefits in retaining them.<sup>221</sup>

<sup>218</sup> Noted in the letter of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to Director of Home Affairs, 6 February 1930, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 184x/1930.

<sup>219</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Februari 1912", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. I, 1911-1912, pp. 363-364.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 365..

<sup>221</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Juli 1914", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. III, 1913-1914, p.1406.

The leadership of the Chinese officers was again tested during the anti-Chinese incidents, provoked by the emerging *Sarekat Islam* movement.<sup>222</sup> Although there is no reliable evidence for indigenous involvement in the conflicts discussed above, between Chinese and Arabs, harassment against the Chinese continued.

The Indonesian novelist, Pramoedya Ananta Toer, who wrote a series of historical novels on the Indonesian nationalist movement, suspected that in the early years of the *Sarekat Dagang Islamiyah*, a Muslim trade association which preceded the SI, the Arab members cunningly directed the movement into an anti-Chinese action. His debatable argument for Arab influence on this religious economic movement should be taken into consideration. He pointed out that the influence of Arabs in the *Sarekat Dagang Islamiyah* were intended to use it against the Chinese traders.<sup>223</sup>

The *Sarekat Dagang Islamiyah*, founded by H Samanhudi in 1905, had purely economic goals, and was later transformed into the *Sarekat Islam* which had a religious political basis. It is not my intention here to analyse the suspected anti-Chinese characteristics of the SI,<sup>224</sup> for this attitude, which often erupted into riots, stemmed from a complex problem, resulting from the segregation policy of the colonial regime. Nevertheless, the anti-Chinese riots, particularly those in the early years of the SI, 1912-1913, indicated a mass indigenous response to colonial suppression. The SI movement expressed a native revival of political consciousness, tied by religious brotherhood. The Chinese were outsiders, connected to colonial domination. However, if we look further into the native responses of

<sup>222</sup> *Koloniaal Verslag van 1914*, p. 3.

<sup>223</sup> P A Toer, *Jejak Langkah* (1986. Malaysia Edition. Petaling Jaya: Wira Karya), p. 350. Many Arabs joined the *Sarekat Islam* in the early twenties; see also J M van der Kroef, "The Arab Minority", in *Indonesia in the Modern World* (1954. Bandung: Masa Baru), part I, p. 257.

<sup>224</sup> See Kartono Sartodirdjo, *Protest Movements in Rural Java. A Study on the Agrarian Unrest in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (1973. Singapore: Oxford University Press), pp. 151-157, points out that one of the prominent features of the SI movement was its anti-Chinese character.

those early days of 1912-1913, they were more a spontaneous reaction than organized action. It was only later that these spontaneous reactions were transformed into organized anti-Chinese action, as in the Kudus riot of 1918.<sup>225</sup>

Native solidarity, expressed through the religious brotherhood of Islam, was unavoidably xenophobic in character. Such feelings were often heard at the mass-meetings held by the SI, called '*vergadering*', translated as political rally. During the rallies the common people were introduced to words and concepts which they had never before heard. Through the speeches of the SI leaders, the common people learnt about solidarity, brotherhood, nationalism, colonialism and much else. For them, the experience of attending a rally was entirely novel, extraordinary and exciting.<sup>226</sup> The fact that these feelings were later channelled into anti-Chinese action can probably be explained by the provocative speeches of their leaders.

Given the high level of illiteracy among its followers, the SI movement depended on the militancy of its leaders and their ability to stir up the masses. Metaphors and symbols were commonly used to transmit political aspirations. There is the example of one SI leader in Bandung who at a party meeting warned the indigenous population to be cautious and watchful in order not to allow the white and yellow mosquitoes to suck their blood.<sup>227</sup> Mosquitoes were a metaphor for colonial exploitation, the bloodsucker of the people, while white and yellow were identified with the Dutch and the Chinese respectively.

As I noted earlier, anti-Chinese feeling among the indigenous people in the early years of the SI was more likely to have been expressed in forms of unorganized response than in well-planned political action. Most

<sup>225</sup> For a study of the anti-Chinese riots in Kudus, Central Java, in 1918, see The Siauw Giap, "Group Conflict in a Plural Society", *Revue du sud-est-asiatique*, no. 1, 1966, pp. 1-31.

<sup>226</sup> T Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, p. 66.

<sup>227</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, September-Oktober 1913", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. III, 1913, p. 108.

incidents in those days were caused by a personal - and often trivial - row between a Chinese and an Indonesian. For example, a Chinese landlord in Bekasi, on the eastern outskirts of Batavia, was beaten by his Indonesian tenant who was offended by the landlord's boasting about his Christian faith.<sup>228</sup> On another occasion, a group of Indonesian buyers threatened a Chinese shopowner into selling groceries at a lower price, which resulted in looting.<sup>229</sup> Or there was the case of the Chinese wardmaster in Meester-Cornelis who was severely beaten by a group of Indonesians, because he had discovered that about 1,000 suspected SI members were secretly planning an anti-government action.<sup>230</sup>

A rather serious incident occurred in February 1913 in Tangerang, the western division of the Batavia residency, during a cockfighting party organized by a European. Both Chinese and Indonesians were enjoying this traditional folk amusement when about 2,000 suspected SI members assaulted them. The Indonesians were released without injury, but the Chinese were brutally beaten, to the extent that they were forced to kneel down, begging for mercy, and thirteen were later hospitalized.<sup>231</sup> The outskirts of Batavia, particularly the Tangerang and Meester-Cornelis areas, which mostly comprised private landed estates or the '*particuliere landerijen*', were then no longer peaceful for their Chinese residents.

The Chinese press frequently reported the misery of the peranakan Chinese, who experienced severe beatings, ransacking and assaults from their indigenous neighbours. This situation was deeply regretted by both the Dutch local authorities and the Chinese, as the hitherto warm relationship between the indigenous Indonesians and the

<sup>228</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Augustus-September 1912", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. II, 1912-1913, p. 1618.

<sup>229</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Juni-Juli 1912", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, p. 1329.

<sup>230</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, September-Oktober 1913", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. III, 1913, p. 100.

<sup>231</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, April-Mei 1913", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. II, 1912-1913, p. 1190.

Chinese deteriorated into enmity.<sup>232</sup> The Chinese trade associations demand government protection for the Chinese traders who worked in the village areas; and Dutch business groups sent a plea to the Governor-General to protect these Chinese residents. They were concerned about the possibly ruinous effect on European business.<sup>233</sup>

The Chinese argued that as Netherlands subjects they were entitled to protection from the Dutch government.<sup>234</sup> On the other hand, this situation overwhelmed the Chinese, who could not face the fact that the indigenous Indonesian hated them more than they hated the Europeans.<sup>235</sup> The Chinese press vehemently blamed the Dutch government, not only for providing no protection to Chinese inhabitants<sup>236</sup> but also for its indecisive measures, and in particular for the way it had dealt with the attitude of some indigenous officials.<sup>237</sup>

Some Chinese suspected that the Dutch government had been deliberately indecisive towards the *Sarekat Islam*, in order to channel the militant mass movement into an anti-Chinese action.<sup>238</sup> This opinion was later shared by Pramoedya Ananta Toer, who in his biography of R A Tirtoadisuryo, the first chairman of *Sarekat Dagang Islamiyah*, noted the role played by D A Rinkes, the Dutch Advisor for Native Affairs, in directing the SI towards an anti-Chinese goal.<sup>239</sup> This argument needs further research.

<sup>232</sup> See also footnote 179.

<sup>233</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, April-Mei 1913", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. II, 1912-1913, p.1192.

<sup>234</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Juli-Augustus 1913", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, p. 1331.

<sup>235</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Maart-April 1912", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. I, 1911-1912, p. 623.

<sup>236</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Mei-Juni 1912", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, p. 1330; "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Juli-Augustus 1912", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, pp.1475,1476.

<sup>237</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, April-Mei 1912", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, p. 1192.

<sup>238</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Januari-Februari 1912", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, p. 750,756; "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Mei-Juni 1912", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, pp. 1331, 1332. See also P A Toer, *Sang Pemula* (1985. Jakarta: Hasta Mitra), p. 155.

<sup>239</sup> P A Toer, *op.cit.*, p. 154.

Much of the writing on the anti-Chinese riots has examined the relationships between the Chinese and the indigenous Indonesians, their religious, cultural, socio-economic differences,<sup>240</sup> but none has attempted to retrace Dutch policy in handling the riots. Most aspects of the anti-Chinese actions go back to colonial regime's segregation policy.

The present common opinion that the Chinese owe their advanced economic position and social advantages to the privileges given them by the colonial regime is incorrect. My research indicates that at no time did the Chinese receive privileges from the Dutch regime and that, in terms of their economic position, they were even used as a buffer between the regime and the mass of the indigenous people. In terms of social advantages, the Chinese were even more deprived than the indigenous people.

To return to the Chinese press criticism of the Dutch authorities' handling of the disturbing situation in the *Ommelanden* of Batavia. The Chinese press also referred to the Indonesian officials' dilemma, for some also became victims of the situation. It was reported that an Indonesian police chief was brutally beaten by his own people as he performed nightwatch duty around private land belonging to the Chinese captain in Tangerang.<sup>241</sup> Here is an interesting point to explore - how the Dutch authorities responded to the dilemmas faced by its Indonesian officials and the Chinese demand for protection.

Since the Native and Chinese Administrations were separate, the link was through the local the Dutch officials. In the nineteenth century, a Chinese captain would commonly deal with the native *wedana* in handling a dispute between their people.<sup>242</sup> Yet it was impossible for such an

<sup>240</sup> See for example, The Siauw Giap, "Group Conflict in a Plural Society"; and "The Chinese in Indonesia: a Review article", *Kabar Seberang*, no. 7, July 1980, pp. 114-130; J A Mackie, *The Chinese in Indonesia; Five Essays* (1976. Melbourne: Thomas Nelson in association with the Australian Institute of International Affairs).

<sup>241</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, April-Mei 1913", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. II, 1912-1913, p. 1188.

<sup>242</sup> See Chapter III.

arrangement to continue in the twentieth century, because of the rapid development and change within these two societies. The Chinese officers' responsibilities did not go beyond their own community; similarly with the native (Indonesian) officials. Unlike disputes among the Chinese, or between Chinese and Arabs where community leaders could exercise authority and responsibility, the anti-Chinese riots provoked by the indigenous people presented a more delicate problem for the Dutch. Since the indigenous Indonesians formed the great mass of the population, it was not a question of taking sides but of managing the problem impartially.

## 6 THE CHINESE ECONOMY OF BATAVIA

Despite its title, this chapter is not concerned with the economic history of Batavia. Instead it aims to describe Chinese economic activity in the area, activity in which the Chinese officers were very much involved. As a certain level of financial standing was necessary to attain an officership, the position was clearly linked with economic competence.

In chapter 3, I pointed out that wealth became the most important criterion in selecting candidates for Chinese officership. Therefore positions were available only to those who were engaged in commercial activities. It is hardly surprising, then, that the strongest candidates were important merchants or landowners. However, for Chinese officers, financial problems sometimes endangered their position and led to resignation.

Although Batavia and its environs were exempt from the Cultivation System, the Dutch looked for other ways to profit from the region. In other words, despite being relieved from that burden, Batavia was not free from colonial pressures. As the greater part of the region consisted of private lands, the Dutch could not impose the of the cultivation system in this area. However, major financial returns were enjoyed by the colonial authority in the form of land rent paid by the Batavian landowners, and from the lease of revenue farms.

I will divide this chapters into four parts: Batavia revenue-farms; the officers and revenue farming; Batavia's private lands; and Dutch policy towards private land repurchases.

With respect to Batavia revenue-farms, my concern is primarily with the historical background, operation and financial returns, rather than with their long-condemned

excessive practices.<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that Batavia was the first region in which revenue farming was imposed.

In the sub-chapter on the revenue-farming activities of the Chinese officers, I will not deal with its practices and abuses. My discussion will focus on the correlation between the officership's dependence on such business, and their financial losses. James Rush has paid great attention to the powerful economic link between the Chinese officers and the opium farmers.<sup>2</sup> Since his extensive study excludes Batavia, presumably because opium farms in the western part of Java were less important, I intend to examine the effect of the losses rather than discuss the impressive financial returns.

Opium might not be important in Batavia revenue farming, yet this region yielded abundant revenue from its private lands. This will be discussed in the third sub-chapter, attention being given to the historical background, living conditions and agricultural production. The last sub-chapter will discuss the government's plan to repurchase private lands.

### Batavia Revenue-Farms

Soon after Batavia was nominated as the seat of the VOC, the first taxes were levied on the city's population. The first tax, widely known as the *hoofdgeld der Chinezen*, or capitation tax for the Chinese living in the city, was imposed on 9 October 1620.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Many contemporary Dutch writings identify the excessive practices of Chinese revenue-farms as the cause of the poor economic conditions of the indigenous population. See also Peter Carey, "Changing Javanese Perceptions of the Chinese Communities in Central Java, 1755-1825", *Indonesia*, no. 37, April 1984, pp. 1-47.

<sup>2</sup> James Rush, "Social Control and Influence in Nineteenth Century Indonesia: Opium Farms and the Chinese of Java", *Indonesia*, no. 35, April 1983, pp. 53-64; and also his *Opium to Java. Revenue Farming and Chinese Enterprise in Colonial Indonesia, 1860-1910*(1990). Ithaca: Cornell University Press).

<sup>3</sup> See W E van Mastenbroek, *De Historische Ontwikkeling van de Staatsrechtelijke Indeling der Bevolking van Nederlandsch-Indië* (1934. Wageningen: H Veenman & Zonen), p. 43.

The imposition of this tax accorded with the appointment of the first Chinese captain, Souw Beng Kong (or Bencon to the Dutch) on 16 October 1619. Tax collection was undertaken by Souw Beng Kong, and on the first day of every month a flag was raised in front of the captain's residence to remind his people to fulfill their obligation.<sup>4</sup> If we look into the regulations concerning the capitation tax, it appears to have been the result of an agreement between the VOC and the Chinese community. Unlike other members of the city's population, such as the freeburghers and the natives, the Chinese were released from civic guard duty, or *schutterijen*, by paying the capitation tax.<sup>5</sup> It was in the interests of the VOC to encourage the Chinese money-making activities. Additionally, to keep the Chinese away from military training and weapons would be a valuable precautionary measure.<sup>6</sup>

Each healthy Chinese between the ages of 14 and 60 was liable to pay 1.5 real a month.<sup>7</sup> A stamp, or *hoofdbriefje*, was provided when the Chinese had paid the tax.<sup>8</sup> The ever growing number of Chinese in the city meant that by the 1630s, the capitation tax yielded half of the total income of Batavia's administration.<sup>9</sup> Government revenue from the tax relied to a great extent on Chinese immigrants. The arrival of Chinese junks loaded with fresh migrants meant a higher

<sup>4</sup> See "Chronologische Geschiedenis van Batavia door Een Chinees", *Tijdschrift voor Nederlands-Indie* (hereafter TNI), vol. II, 1840, pp. 16-17.

<sup>5</sup> "Hoofdgeld der Binnen Batavia Woonachtig Chinezen", in *Plakaatboek van Nederlandsch-Indie* (1885. Batavia: Landsdrukkerij), vol. I, 1610-1624, pp. 76-77; see also "Chronologische Geschiedenis van Batavia door Een Chinees", p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> L Blussé, *Strange Company. Chinese Settlers, Mestizo Women and the Dutch in VOC Batavia* (1986. Dordrecht: Foris Publications), p. 68.

<sup>7</sup> *Plakaatboek van Nederlandsch-Indie*, vol. I, 1614-1624, p. 76; L. Blusse, *Strange Company*, p. 58.

<sup>8</sup> E de Waal, *Aanteekeningen over de Koloniale Onderwerpen* (1865. 's Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff), vol. V, De Kleine Verpachten Middelen, part II, p. 406; and also W E van Mastenbroek, *De Historische Ontwikkeling van de Staatsrechtelijke Indeeling*, p. 23.

<sup>9</sup> F de Haan, *Oud Batavia* (1930. Bandung: A C Nix & Co), vol. I, p. 61, quoted in L Blusse, *Strange Company*, p. 58.

income from the capitation tax, returning Chinese diminished this potential revenue.

I assume that in the 1800's, the '*hoofdgeld*' was also imposed on the Malays, as they were still considered at that time to be '*vreemde oosterlingen*', foreigners from the eastern part of the archipelago.<sup>10</sup> Later, in 1824, the capitation tax was applied in regions where there was a large Chinese community, such as Pamekasan, on the island of Madura, and in Semarang.

There were many Chinese who tried to escape the capitation tax, either by moving to Bantam or Mataram or by converting Islam, to becoming Muslim Chinese or *peranakan*.<sup>11</sup> It should be noted here that until the mid-nineteenth century, the term *peranakan* was widely used for the Muslim Chinese who cut off their pigtails, whom the Dutch called *geschoren Chinees*, or shaven Chinese.<sup>12</sup> By the 1830s, the term *peranakan* was no longer applied to the Muslim Chinese, as the Dutch closed the office of *kommandant der Parnakkans*.<sup>13</sup>

The introduction of *bedrijfsbelasting*, or income tax, in 1851 for non-agriculturists, or *niet-landbouwers*, meant that the Chinese of Batavia should have been released from the *hoofdgeld der Chineezen*. Yet until 1860 the Batavia population was excluded from the *bedrijfsbelasting*, as the indigenous non-agriculturists paid a retail trade tax, or *pachten der neringen*.<sup>14</sup> Following the unification of taxation across the whole Netherlands Indies in the first

<sup>10</sup> See *Batavia*, no. 322/1, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta. For changing definition of '*vreemde oosterlingen*' from VOC times, see W E van Mastenbroek, *De Historische Ontwikkeling van de Staatsrechtelijke Indeeling*, particularly pp. 22-23.

<sup>11</sup> F de Haan, *Oud Batavia*, vol. I, p. 394-396; L Blusse, *Strange Company*, p. 83; W E van Mastenbroek, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>12</sup> F de Haan, *op. cit.*, p. 394; see also Onghokham, "Chinese Capitalism in Dutch Java", in Yoshihara Kunio (ed), *Oei Tiong Ham Concern; the First Business Empire of Southeast Asia* (1989). Kyoto: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University), p. 52; W E van Mastenbroek, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>13</sup> From 1823 it was planned to replace the office of *kommandant* for each ethnic group with a district base. By 1828 the office of *kommandant der Parnakkans* had disappeared; see *Regeeringsalmanak voor Nederlandsch-Indie van het jaar 1828* (1829. Batavia: Landsdrukkerij), p. 42.

<sup>14</sup> A de Waal, *Aanteekeningen over de Koloniale Onderwerpen*, pp. 408-409.

decade of the twentieth century, the Chinese capitation tax was replaced by the *bedrijfsbelasting*, or income tax for non-agriculturists.

Another old tax imposed on the Chinese of Batavia concerned gambling, the lease later being bonded to the *wayang* or folk entertainment. According to a Chinese writing on Batavia, in 1639 captain Gan Dj Ko requested the permission of the VOC to open a gambling house.<sup>15</sup> This was not the first lease for Chinese gambling; gambling-farms were already in operation during the first years of Chinese settlement. Both L Blusse and M S de Vienne note 1620 as the year in which the first gambling-farm was leased to a Chinese captain.<sup>16</sup> The gambling lease was later extended to Semarang and Surabaya, the two other main cities of Java with large Chinese communities. The *wayangpacht* was specifically given only to Batavia.<sup>17</sup>

According to A de Waal, the government decided not to extend the wayang lease to other regions as a precaution against damaging side-effects. He notes that wherever wayang was being performed, crimes were committed and children were kidnapped,<sup>18</sup> and this was probably true. However, the British, during their short rule of 1811-1816, blamed gambling for crime and murder committed by the Chinese and indigenous peoples. Driven by Christian morality, the British abolished gambling and cockfighting soon after their arrival in November 1811.<sup>19</sup>

Within a few decades of the establishment of the VOC regime, Batavia was exploited by seven kinds of revenue, namely the Chinese capitation tax, gambling, hawking, butchery, fishing, rice-distribution, and liquor.<sup>20</sup> More taxes were later imposed, indicating the growth of the city and

<sup>15</sup> "Chronologische Geschiedenis van Batavia door Een Chinees", p. 18.

<sup>16</sup> L Blussé, *Strange Company*, p. 53; Marie-Sybille de Vienne, "La Part des Chinois dans les Fermes Fiscales de Batavia au XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle", *Archipel*, no. 22, 1981, p. 126.

<sup>17</sup> A de Waal, *Aanteekeningen over de Koloniale Onderwerpen*, vol. IV, De Kleine Verpachte Middelen, part I, p. 452.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 453.

<sup>19</sup> See *Proceedings*, 1 February 1812, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

<sup>20</sup> See "Chronologische Geschiedenis van Batavia door Een Chinees", p. 26.

its inhabitants, as the VOC expanded in terms of its territorial and political power.

By 1743 Governor-General Baron van Imhoff had managed to impose a total of 16 taxes on the city population, each leased to the Chinese. Leases were granted for three years; most were taxes on consumption (liqueur, tobacco, candles, rice, sugar), taxes on gambling, transportation (toll bridges, river passes), and on services such as weights and measures, certificates, permits for fishing and sugar-milling.<sup>21</sup> M S de Vienne has arranged the leased-taxes into several groups, namely Chinese capitation tax, bazaar activities, and commercial activities, under which were shops and liqueur sales, transportation, sugar-mills and a tax on games.<sup>22</sup>

The VOC appears not to have categorized these taxes, as the term *kleine verpachte middelen*, or small farms, was adopted later. Under the Netherlands Indies administration, the revenue from small farms was arranged separately from that of opium, particularly after the 1860s when the latter became the main source of government revenue. In fact, during the British period in Java, a separation had been made between general revenue farms and small farms.<sup>23</sup> Small farms were imposed on transportation, such as horses and carriages, river passes, toll bridges. The figures for tax collection show that the largest amounts were received from the general revenue farms. For example, in 1812, general revenue farms yielded 82,800 Spanish dollars; small farms yielded only 22,935 Spanish dollars.<sup>24</sup>

As I noted earlier, the Dutch decided not to extend the *wayangpacht* to parts of Java other than the Batavia region. In contrast to the Dutch, the British saw gambling and cockfighting as the main cause of murder among the natives and the Chinese, with arak consumption as an additional factor. Thus on 28 November 1811, in their first year in

21 *Ibid.*

22 M S de Vienne, "La Part des Chinois dans les Farmes Fiscales de Batavia au XVIIIème Siècle".

23 See *Engelse Tussenbestuur*, no. 77, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

24 *Ibid.*

Java, the British abolished gambling and cockfighting, and imposed restrictions on the sale of arak.<sup>25</sup> Christian morality must have been important in this matter, since it was admitted "that the pecuniary loss sustained by the Government in consequence of these farms not being continued amounts to 100,000 Spanish dollars annually".<sup>26</sup> Moral satisfaction was probably achieved, albeit at a financial loss. According to the Landdrost of Batavia, in the three months following the abolition of these vices, there was only one victim of violent crime.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, this did not mean that everything ran smoothly.

In November 1811, the Landdrost of Batavia was already busy with measures against illicit gambling. In one case, some Chinese wardmasters were discovered among the gamblers. It was reported that a certain Li Peng Ko, who worked with the opium *kongsi*, had given permission to these Chinese law-breakers to open gambling houses. The police investigation discovered that Li Peng Ko had illegally used the Chinese captain's authority: they extended their enquiries to establish the extent to which the captain was involved. The Chinese captain, Li Tjie Ko, was able to prove himself innocent.<sup>28</sup> As for other infringements of the law, such as the sale of arak to European soldiers, the Chinese *potia*, who had responsibility for the leases, was detained.<sup>29</sup>

In examining the repercussions of revenue-farming, for which the Chinese were vehemently blamed, I will exclude the notorious opium farm.<sup>30</sup>

Certain Dutch blamed the *Vreemde Oosterlingen*, particularly the Chinese, for their economic activities in

<sup>25</sup> See letter of the Landdrost of the Batavia region to the Lieutenant-Governor of Java, 20 December 1811, in *Engelse Tussenbestuur*, no. 79; also quoted in *Proceedings*, 1 February 1812, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

<sup>26</sup> *Proceedings*, 1 February 1812.

<sup>27</sup> See letter of the Landdrost of Batavia to Lieutenant-Governor of Java, 29 January 1812, in *Engelse Tussenbestuur*, no. 91.

<sup>28</sup> See *Engelse Tussenbestuur*, no. 96.

<sup>29</sup> See letter of the Landdrost of Batavia to Lieutenant-Governor of Java, 5 November 1811, in *Engelse Tussenbestuur*, no. 79.

<sup>30</sup> For the opium farming business, see James Rush, *Opium to Java. Revenue Farming and Chinese Enterprise in Colonial Indonesia, 1860-1910*.

the interior, which were said to damage native welfare. In the 1894 survey conducted under F Fokkens, the Inspector of Cultivation from the Home Affairs Office, it was discovered that the natives suffered most from the revenue farms leased to the Chinese. These allegations, raised in the Dutch Parliament in The Hague, referred to the Chinese as the '*'bloedzuigers der Javanen'*', bloodsuckers of the Javanese.<sup>31</sup>

A lengthy article by L. Vitalis in *Tijdschrift van Nederlandsch-Indie* in 1851 discussed the excessive and abusive practices connected with revenue farming, and with taxes on bazaars, butchery and money-lending.<sup>32</sup> Vitalis pointed out that the *bazaarspacht*, or bazaar tax, extended to money-lending, because the impecunious native had already sold his agricultural produce before harvest. Moreover, in selling their agricultural produce at the bazaars, they also paid bazaar tax.<sup>33</sup>

Taxation on butchery increased cattle stealing. Thefts occurred mainly during periods of drought, when natives in desperate need of money had already disposed of their buffalo in order to meet their meagre daily requirements. Cattle theft was also rife after the harvest, when meat consumption increased for feasts and ritual offerings. The stolen cattle were secretly taken to other villages, to be sold or exchanged. The Chinese *pachter* who levied the tax on butchery paid less for stolen cattle, using fake witnesses during transactions to divert police investigations.<sup>34</sup> The fact that the tax on butchery led to cattle stealing was due to the fact that the butchers or Chinese farmers would purchase stolen livestock because it was cheapest.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> See "Sedert Wanneer het Gouvernement zoo anti-Chineesch Geworden?", *Tijdschrift van Nederlandsch-Indie* (hereafter TNI), vol. I, 1857, pp. 169-171.

<sup>32</sup> L. Vitalis, "Over de Pachten in het Algemeen, de Onzedelijkheid van Sommige, en de Verdrukking Waaraan de Overmatige Misbruiken van Andere de Javaansche Bevolking Blotsellen", *TNI*, vol. II, 1851, pp. 365-386.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 366-367.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 376-377.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 377; see also A de Waal, *Aanteekeningen over de Koloniale Onderwerpen*, vol. IV, part I, p. 335. For this practice in Batavia, see "Hoe

Money-lending at high interest was a notorious practice by which the shrewd Chinese cunningly drew the natives into debt. Although the weak and ignorant natives were certainly the main victims, this practice also affected the European. It was said that goods stolen from Europeans could be found in the hands of Chinese money-lenders. Since most European households employed native servants, intrigue between Chinese money-lenders and poverty-stricken servants was not uncommon. Police investigations sometimes ended in failure, and the stolen goods would later go to auction.<sup>36</sup>

Vitalis also notes that native officials were not always ignorant of such abuses, and in cattle theft their involvement was even conspicuous.<sup>37</sup> He criticizes the Dutch for ignoring the many abuses of the revenue farming system. The colonial authority, hardly unaware of these matters, pursued a grab-as-much-as-you-can policy. As long as the government increased its annual income, local subordinates could do as they wished. With a fear of diminishing public revenues, the oppressive practices of revenue farms were inevitable.<sup>38</sup> No Dutch resident or assistant-resident would allow his position to be damaged by poor revenues. Furthermore, Vitalis argued that there were the dubious practices not only of the shrewd Chinese but also of the native regents, who enjoyed a tremendous incomes for their extravagant expenditures.<sup>39</sup>

It seems likely that Batavia's native population were most affected by the bazaar tax. The tax was levied on any item purchased at a government bazaar. However, as most of the Batavia region consisted of private lands belonging to

men, in de Ommelanden van Batavia, Karbouwen Steelt", *TNI*, vol. I, 1860, pp. 197-199.

<sup>36</sup> L. Vitalis, "Over de Pachten in het Algemeen, de Onzedelijkheid van Sommige, en de Verdrukking", p. 380.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 376.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 371, 373.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 365. Victor Purcell defended the Chinese revenue-farming practices, arguing that it was Dutch policy which led to abuse; see V Purcell, *The Chinese in Southeast Asia* (1966. London: Oxford University Press), p. 444.

Chinese and Europeans, the landowners were permitted to open private bazaars. To establish a *particuliere bazaar*, the landowner would supply stalls or kiosks and propose a market day, which was then approved by the government.<sup>40</sup> A bazaar tax was demanded by the landowner, who in turn paid an annual rent to the local authority. The abuse of the *bazaarpacht* led to great increases in the price of common items of native consumption.<sup>41</sup> In addition, there were many opportunities for bribery in the revenue farms leased to the Chinese. This was particularly true of the bazaar tax since it was operated at the lowest level of the local bureaucracy, where government control was often weak.

Criticism against the excessive practices of the *bazaarpacht* grew stronger in the 1850's. In December 1851 the Dutch abolished the lease of the bazaar tax in Java and Madura, with the exceptions of Batavia, Buitenzorg and Krawang.<sup>42</sup> By 1853 the *bazaarpacht* was no longer imposed in Krawang. It was proposed that Batavia and Buitenzorg would soon follow. The Governor-General of the Netherlands Indies pointed out that the tax farm for bazaars in Batavia and Buitenzorg could no longer be maintained due to the large numbers of private bazaars. To control these *particuliere bazaars*, separate regulations were needed; but the intention was to reduce or close those private bazaars. It was understood that such a proposal meant the loss of 124,000 guilders per year for the Dutch government.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>40</sup> See for example, the proposal from major Tan Eng Goan on 13 August 1860, naming Thursday as market day. The bazaar was located on his private land, and was approved by *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 18 December 1860, no. 60, in *Verbaal*, 14 February 1861, no. 41, ARA, The Hague. His earlier proposal, for an additional market day in Serpong, was refused; see *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 9 January 1855, no. 6, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta. As early as 1829, for bazaars in Batavia, Buitenzorg and Krawang, the Dutch decided the market day; see "Reglement en Tarief voor de Onderscheidene Bazaars, Gelegen in de Stad en Voorsteden en Ommelanden van de Baljuwage Batavia, Alsmede in de Afdeelingen Buitenzorg en Krawang", in *Batavia*, no. 10, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

<sup>41</sup> A de Waal, *Aanteekeningen over de Koloniale Onderwerpen*, vol. IV, part I, p. 312.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Letter of the Governor-General of the Netherlands Indies to Minister of Colonies, 26 November 1853, no. 712/14, in *Verbaal*, 11 April 1854, no. 1/260, ARA, The Hague.

Higher officials in the Ministry of the Colonies could not deny that the vulnerable native inhabitants of Batavia were the main victims of the *bazaarpacht*. However, due to financial considerations, it was decided to give more protection to the natives by increasing the local police force.<sup>44</sup> The leased-bazaar tax for Batavia and Buitenzorg was later abolished, in 1855.

Financial loss was obviously the main reason for Dutch reluctance to abolish many of the revenue-farms, mostly those on consumption, particularly before the opium boom of the 1860's. The annual income of the small farms might be modest in comparison with the opium-farm revenue; yet any measures to abolish the small farms still cut government revenue.

There were also proposals to abolish the taxes on butchering and meat-selling, which were usually held by one revenue farmer. It was suggested that they should be replaced by a meat-consumption tax. Those opposed said that abolition would lead to illegal abattoirs, which in turn would affect the availability of meat, particularly pork. Scarcity of meat would cause great annoyance to members of the European community. Moreover, abolishing the tax would affect price more than quality of meat.<sup>45</sup> As the natives consumed very little meat, the plan was abandoned.<sup>46</sup> In fact, a tax on meat consumption would be effective only in cities with large European and Chinese communities, particularly Batavia. However, regulations were adopted which put an end to the revenue farmers monopoly on meat-selling.<sup>47</sup> In Batavia, this regulation was imposed from 1864.

I have given a lengthy description of the small farms in order to consider in what ways they were subject to government legislation, particularly in Batavia. I assume

<sup>44</sup> *Verbaal*, 11 April 1854, no. 1/260.

<sup>45</sup> See "Resume der Antwoorden op de Circulair van den Directeur der Middelen en Domeinen", 11 March 1863, no. 996, in *Verbaal*, 8 February 1864, no. 13/130.

<sup>46</sup> See *Verbaal*, 3 February 1864, no. 26.

<sup>47</sup> A de Waal, *Aanteekeningen over de Koloniale Onderwerpen*, p. 331.

that Batavia was excluded from James Rush's study of opium farms simply because opium-farming was much less important there than in other parts of Java. Government restrictions did not encourage opium farming in West-Java; Preanger, in particular, was defined as the '*verboden kringen*', or forbidden ring. These regulations also stipulated that in Batavia, Bantam, Krawang and Lampung, the opium farms were to be leased as one area of operation.<sup>48</sup>

Despite smaller financial returns from opium farming, Batavia had compensation with the revenues from the small farms. In 1874 Batavia's small farms earned 578,700 guilders; its revenue from the opium farms amounted to 856,800 guilders. Semarang and Surabaya yielded 1,027,200 and 889,200 guilders from opium. Their revenue from small farms was much less than in Batavia - 67,560 and 230,448 guilders respectively.<sup>49</sup> For the year 1874, Batavia's total financial return from the two categories of farm, opium and small farms, was 1,435,500 guilders. The corresponding figure in Semarang was 1,094,760 guilders, and in Surabaya, 1,019,648 guilders. Even before 1874 Batavia received more than the other two cities from revenue farms.<sup>50</sup> For example, in 1835 Batavia received a total of 1,098,732 guilders from the opium and small farms.<sup>51</sup>

In the 1870s, the main source of Dutch revenue was opium, which was boosted despite its harmful effects on the Javanese. In the meantime, Batavia managed to maintain its revenue from the small farms. While there were twelve kinds of small farms tax imposed in Batavia, Semarang and

<sup>48</sup> See "Staat van den Uitslag der Verpachtingen van 's Lands Middelen voor het Jaar 1873", in *Mailrapport*, no. 876/1872; see also Bijlage JJ, "Statistiek der Opium-pacht op Java en Madoera van 1888", in *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1889.

<sup>49</sup> Compilation from Bijlage CC for opium farms and Bijlage EE for small farms, *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1875.

<sup>50</sup> *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1872, p. 133.

<sup>51</sup> Compilation from "Aantooning van het Bedrag der Onderstaande Middelen en Bevolking op Java per Ziel, 1835", in *Ministerie van Kolonien Archief*, no. 3040, ARA, The Hague.

Surabaya had only eight and nine respectively.<sup>52</sup> This was another reason why the Dutch would not abandon the small farms in the Batavia region. In addition, because Batavia had the largest Chinese population, consumption taxes were levied there as compensation for the opium revenue.

If we look into the various kinds of consumption tax found in Batavia, it is clear that the majority of taxpayers were Chinese. The most striking was undoubtedly the Chinese capitation tax, which in 1900 was incorporated into the *bedrijfsbelasting*, or income tax. Others were taxes on butchery and pork, liquor and *tjoe* (Chinese arak), Chinese tobacco,<sup>53</sup> and on folk entertainment. Judging by the applications sent to the local authorities in the Batavia region, most wayang groups were owned by Chinese.<sup>54</sup>

Although only 10% of Batavia's population resided in the inner city, about 30% of the Chinese lived there, with the remainder in the outskirts or *Ommelanden*.<sup>55</sup> From these figures, I assume that the Chinese also made up the large audiences found at folk entertainments such as the wayang. By April 1902 the *wayangpacht* on wayang performances was replaced by a permit,<sup>56</sup> an arrangement which also applied to Chinese gambling. However, the Chinese suspected that government regulations here were intended to favour the Europeans. In 1904 all gambling houses run under the revenue-farm were closed.<sup>57</sup> Rumour spread that after this an association, led by Europeans, would be given permits to open licensed gambling houses.<sup>58</sup>

In addition to the small farms, the Batavia region also had a ground tax, or *verponding*, paid on private lands. The

<sup>52</sup> See "Vergelijkend Overzigt der Verpachtingen op de Eilanden Java en Madoera tusschen de Jaren 1842, 1843, 1844 en 1845", in *Ministerie van Koloniën Archief*, no. 3210.

<sup>53</sup> This small farm was leased together with the Javanese tobacco farm; see "Politiek Verslag van de Residentie Batavia van het jaar 1871", in *Batavia*, no. 18, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

<sup>54</sup> See *Tangerang*, nos. 155/2, 172/b, 240/b, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

<sup>55</sup> Compilation from Bijlage A, *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1889.

<sup>56</sup> C R Bakhuizen van den Brink, "Memorie van Overgave van de Residentie Batavia, 16 September 1901 - 9 May 1906", ARA, The Hague.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> "Chineesche Dobbelspelen", *De Indische Gids*, vol. I, 1912, p. 91.

following figures show how much revenue the government gained from this source in 1887.<sup>59</sup> In total, Batavia had 322 private lands, 98 of which were owned by Europeans, 186 by Chinese; the remaining 38 were the property of either other *Vreemde Oosterlingen* or natives. The total ground tax paid by private landowners was 39,982,307 guilders.<sup>60</sup> About a decade later this figure had increased to 49,546,706 guilders.<sup>61</sup>

To show how much the Chinese of Batavia contributed to Dutch government revenue, I will focus on the year 1899. My reason for this, apart from the availability of Dutch sources, is because by the early 1900s revenue farming by the Chinese was diminishing. I will also make a sketchy comparison between Batavia, Semarang and Surabaya in order to demonstrate Batavia's contribution.

I have limited myself to the revenue farms and non-leased taxation. The revenue farms consisted of opium and small farms; the non-leased were the property tax, or *personeele belasting*, income tax, or *bedrijfsbelasting*, and the ground tax, or *verponding*.

**Table 1.**

**Income of Revenue Farms and Non-leased Taxation in the Main  
Cities of Java, in 1899**

<u>Item</u>	<u>Batavia</u>	<u>Semarang</u>	<u>Surabaya</u>
small farms	f 453,516.00	f 176,340.00	f 301,344.00
opium farm	f 1,046,375.85	f 1,772,882.90	f 1,324,455.40
income tax	f 211,943.70	f 177,431.02	f 475,379.39
property tax	f 228,305.88 <sup>5</sup>	f 87,571.58	f 147,529.10 <sup>5</sup>
ground tax	f 38,806,062.00	f 3,363,178.00	f 3,376,500.00
Total (in guilders)	f 40,746,203.43 <sup>5</sup>	f 5,577,403.50	f 5,625,207.89 <sup>5</sup>

Sources: *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1899, 1900.

<sup>59</sup> The year 1887 was taken simply because of the availability of Dutch sources.

<sup>60</sup> Compilation from *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1889.

<sup>61</sup> See *Kolonial Verslag*, 1899, 1900.

The bulk of Batavia's revenue came from the ground tax on private lands. To show that the Chinese of Batavia contributed more than the Chinese in the other cities, one has to take into consideration income, property and ground taxes. Income tax was levied only on the non-agriculturist, non-European, members of Dutch East Indies society. Europeans paid their income tax on a different basis. In Batavia, only natives living on government land paid income tax. Income tax was paid only by those natives who lived in the inner city and in the Blubur region in the eastern part of Batavia residency. This meant that the number of native taxpayers was small, although by January 1900, all natives in the residency of Batavia were in theory liable to income tax.<sup>62</sup>

In terms of the property tax, only the European and the *Vreemde Oosterlingen* were liable. The fact that Chinese considerably outnumbered other Foreign Asiatics in Batavia strongly suggests the scale of their contribution. Although most of Batavia's private lands were personal properties, some were in corporate ownership, managed by land estate companies. After 1900 there was a tendency for Chinese individual landownership to be transformed into corporate property, with the estates being managed by Chinese business partnerships. However, Chinese private landownership still made up most of the Chinese tax contribution in Batavia.

The following table shows the contribution of Batavian Chinese in 1899, from non-leased means of revenue, specifically income, property and ground taxes.

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<sup>62</sup> *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1900, p. 134.

Table 2.

## Tax Contribution of Chinese in the Main Cities of Java, in 1899

<u>Item</u>	<u>Batavia</u>	<u>Semarang</u>	<u>Surabaya</u>
income tax	f 161,274.90	f 70,306.24	f 133,486.55 <sup>5</sup>
property tax <sup>a</sup>	f 69,765.26	f 34,934.26 <sup>5</sup>	f 60,555.36
ground tax	f 9,956,676.00	f 1,950,408.00	f 2,821,874.00
Total (in guilders)	f 10,187,716.16	f 2,055,648.50 <sup>5</sup>	f 3,015,915.91 <sup>5</sup>

(a) This figure was taken from the total payment of *Vreemde Oosterlingen*, not purely the Chinese. I am assuming that the Chinese accounted for about 90% of the total, the other 10% being the Arabs share. The figures for Semarang are similar, those for Surabaya a little higher, but with the Chinese still as the major property taxpayers. Sources : *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1899, 1900.

Looking at these figures, one can hardly deny Batavia's vast contribution to the government treasury. I have chosen the 1870s for my discussion of Batavia's small farms, for it was a time when other parts of Java were experiencing a boom in the opium farms and agricultural production. The 1890's were chosen to underline Batavia's constantly high financial returns, even when revenue-farming was coming to an end.

Given that the Chinese were dominant in revenue-farming, and that by 1885 they had to pay 4% of their income<sup>63</sup> (together with ground tax in Batavia), it is hard to disregard their vast financial contribution. Considering that their share of non-leased revenues reached about 20%, it is safe to say that the Chinese of Batavia contributed roughly 40% of total tax revenues in the residency.

From the early years of colonial rule until the turn of this century, the only possible opportunities for the Chinese were in commerce, particularly in revenue farms. They were not blameless for this situation, but the figures show that they paid for what they gained in commerce.

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<sup>63</sup> Letter of Director of Finance to Governor-General, 4 September 1886, in *Mailrapport*, no. 603x/1886, ARA, The Hague.

The foregoing may explain why the exemption of Batavia from the harsh practices of the Cultivation System was not without clear reason. Because the greater part of Batavia was under private ownership, except the small area of the inner city belonging to the government, it is obvious that the Cultivation System could not be imposed. A similar situation arose in the *Vorstenlanden*, or Javanese Principalities of Yogyakarta and Solo. Had Batavia been unable to find compensation for the potential financial losses arising from exemption from the Cultivation System, would the Dutch policy have been different?

### **The Chinese Officers and Revenue Farming**

In approaching the subject of the Chinese officers and their involvement in revenue farming, I will not focus on their significant financial returns.

As wealth became the most basic criterion for officership, positions were open only to those of certain economic status, namely leading merchants and landowners. What is interesting to note is that hardly any of the candidates mentioned their status as revenue-farmer in their applications. Being a revenue farmer was an element in the network of Chinese business. Not only were candidates required to be rich prior to becoming officers, but the position often lead to additional wealth. In a few cases this did not occur.

In considering applications for Chinese officership, it is likely that the Dutch ignored, or avoided mentioning, the candidate's status as a revenue farmer. According to the official sources, the only occasion on which a candidate's status as a revenue farmer was raised was when the Resident of Batavia and the Director of Finance supported Liem Goan Tjeng. As he was not Batavia-born, his chances of gaining the lieutenantship were not high. Nevertheless, his family background undoubtedly helped him, for his two brothers were the Chinese captains of Semarang and

Gresik.<sup>64</sup> But it was his financial status rather than his family background which were taken into consideration, for by the 1870s the Dutch avoided family connections in the appointment of Chinese officers in Batavia. This is shown by the letter of the Director of Finance in support of Liem Goan Tjeng, which noted favourably that he was an opium farmer in the Batavia, Bantam and Krawang areas.<sup>65</sup> Liem Goan Tjeng gained the lieutenantship in November 1883, although in February 1889 he retired due to sickness. It was suspected that his reason for retiring was because of a hectic period in his opium business.<sup>66</sup>

Liem Goan Tjeng's appointment could be related to an earlier case involving his relative, Liem Goan Sioe. Whether these two Liems were brothers is still unclear, although they were related as both came from Gresik. Liem Goan Sioe was the son-in-law of the famous Chinese major of Semarang, Be Biauw Tjoan. Having settled in Batavia for three years, Liem Goan Sioe applied for the lieutenantship in 1872. The Chinese Council had no objections, but the Dutch rejected Liem's application, either because he was considered too young (he was eighteen at the time) or because of his lack of familiarity with Batavia.<sup>67</sup> Liem Goan Sioe gained the lieutenantship in 1876. However, he was kept under surveillance. He may have been promoted to captain in 1877, and as the son-in-law of the powerful Be Biauw Tjoan, he would have been influential.<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, he was under suspicion of being involved in the illicit opium trade. His case was raised in 1879, causing

<sup>64</sup> Confidential letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 23 October 1883, no. La.L2, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 18 November 1883, no. 13, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

<sup>65</sup> Letter of Director of Finance to Governor-General, 2 November 1883, no. 2, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 18 November 1883, no. 13.

<sup>66</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 6 December 1888, no. 6544, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 14 February 1889, no. 20.

<sup>67</sup> For the arguments, see *Agenda*, no. 17745/1872, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 31 October 1872, no. 11.

<sup>68</sup> Letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 8 September 1877, no. 5714, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 12 December 1877, no. 21.

a serious debate between the Resident of Batavia and the Director of Finance.

During the period 1876 to 1878 the Director of Finance noticed that the opium farms in Batavia, Bantam and Krawang, for which Liem Goan Sioe was the farmer, were experiencing financial difficulties. In addition the increase in the opium bid was less than usual, and suspicion grew that this might be connected with smuggling. During a trial involving the confiscation of illegal opium, held in Tangerang on 11 February 1879, Liem Goan Sioe was frequently mentioned by two witnesses.<sup>69</sup> There were allegations that Liem Goan Sioe was the ringleader of an opium smuggling operation. When the Director of Finance asked him about the case, Liem retorted that the opium trade would produce huge profits if smuggling continued, for the henchmen of the smugglers were also the henchmen of the opium revenue farmers.<sup>70</sup> Knowing that he was favoured by the Resident of Batavia, Liem Goan Sioe was certain that he would be safe. The Resident defended him over the case of the illegal opium confiscated in Tangerang, saying that it was Liem Goan Sioe who had discovered and reported it.<sup>71</sup> According to the Resident, as an opium farmer, Liem had achieved large profits. And in view of his wealth and influential family background, the Resident of Batavia proposed him for captaincy.<sup>72</sup> Of course this proposal was rejected, as the Director of Home Affairs sided with the Director of Finance.<sup>73</sup> Liem Goan Sioe never achieved the captaincy, and his name lost its significance in Batavia. He was presumably encouraged to resign soon after the case.

<sup>69</sup> Letter of Secretary of Department of Finance to General Secretary, 5 May 1879, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 27 June 1879, no. 38.

<sup>70</sup> Quoted in strictly confidential letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 2 April 1879, no. 2252, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 27 June 1879, no. 38.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 4 April 1879, no. 3379, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 27 June 1879, no. 38.

Semarang is well-known in the history of the Chinese in Java, in that two Chinese majors who were famous for their particular wealth and material possessions were from Semarang - Be Biauw Tjoan in the nineteenth century and Oei Tiong Ham in the first half of the twentieth century. Besides his legal opium trading network, Be Biauw Tjoan also played a key role in the illicit trade.<sup>74</sup> After a thorough government investigation in 1864, he was forbidden to participate in the opium farms. But although Be Biauw Tjoan was now out of business, there was still Liem Goan Sioe in Batavia. Since he was the son-in-law of Be Biauw Tjoan, it is possible that Liem Goan Sioe's application for Chinese officership was in some way connected with the opium business, either legal or illegal. It seems safe to say that Liem Goan Sioe was planning to supervise an illicit business arrangement, while at the same time controlling the local authority in Batavia. He failed. His lieutenantship was too short for him to operate illegal activities in Batavia, where Dutch control was easily exercised.

Unlike Liem Goan Sioe, Tan Eng Goan, the captain who became major in 1837, maintained his position despite his ill fortune in revenue farming. During his captaincy he gained the Chinese capitation tax in the vicinity of Batavia, the *Ommelanden*.<sup>75</sup> Later, he applied for the opium farm leases for Batavia, Bantam, Buitenzorg and Krawang. But his experience was not a lucky one. In 1833 the lease-tax, or *pachtschat*, he owed to the government came to 50,400 guilders. According to the Director of Public Means and Domains, Tan Eng Goan should have been fined 10,500 guilders, but he was exempted; instead he was required to settle his debt in monthly instalments.<sup>76</sup> His misfortunes extended to the revenue on liquor and tobacco sales in Batavia and Buitenzorg. He requested more time to settle his lease debt of 1855, offering to pay part of the money in January 1856 and the remainder in February. This was

<sup>74</sup> See James Rush, *Opium to Java*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>75</sup> See *Resolutie*, 11 October 1831, no. 18, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

<sup>76</sup> See *Resolutie*, 16 March 1833, no. 3; and 12 August 1833, no. 14.

refused because the Dutch said that a delay in payment would disturb the management of the government treasury.<sup>77</sup> Even Tan Eng Goan's bazaar revenue farm in Luar Batang, located in the inner city, was running at a loss. From 1847 to 1848 he received restitution of 5,462.37 guilders;<sup>78</sup> in 1850 he received only 1,742.37 guilders.<sup>79</sup>

As early as 1844, Tan Eng Goan required a government loan of 250,000 guilders to boost his revenue farming business. Seeing that he owned huge areas of Kramat, Tanjung Burung and Rawa Kidang, all located in the western division of the Batavia residency, this request was granted, particularly since sugar production on his land yielded 769,500 guilders per year,<sup>80</sup> and its ground tax was assessed at 479,000 guilders.<sup>81</sup>

However, despite 25 years experience in revenue farming, good fortune did not come his way. Since the 1850s the Dutch had been privately dissatisfied with major Tan Eng Goan's business.<sup>82</sup> The Director of Public Means and Domain considered ordering a public declaration of his debts, but this was refused by the Resident of Batavia.<sup>83</sup> The question whether Tan Eng Goan should maintain his position as Chinese major was raised. Again the Resident rejected the proposal; Tan Eng Goan's performance of his duty was entirely satisfactory. When the Director of Public Means and Domain suspected him of inventing a fake loss of revenue on

<sup>77</sup> Letter of Director of Public Means and Domains to Governor-General, 22 October 1855, no. 2794, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 6 November 1855, no. 11.

<sup>78</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 13 July 1849, no. 5.

<sup>79</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 22 April 1851, no. 16.

<sup>80</sup> Note of the Chief Constable of the western quarter of Tangerang to Resident of Batavia, 26 October 1844, no. 551, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 29 November 1844, no. 3.

<sup>81</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 29 November 1844, no. 3.

<sup>82</sup> Letter of Director of Public Means and Domains to Governor-General, 16 April 1851, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 10 June 1851, no. 16.

<sup>83</sup> Letter of the Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 19 May 1851, no. 2736, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 10 June 1851, no. 16.

liquor and tobacco sales, the Resident again defended him, saying that the financial loss was genuine.<sup>84</sup>

Tan Eng Goan carried on as major until April 1866, when he retired due to old age and fragile health. Not only had he fallen into poverty, but he was physically unable to earn a living.<sup>85</sup> From then he received a pension of 150 guilders per month.<sup>86</sup>

However Tan Eng Goan could be considered lucky compared to two lieutenants, Tan Boen Sok and Gouw Eng Hoey, and the retired captains, Tan Kam Long and Oey Tjeng Yan. The resignations of lieutenants Tan Boen Sok and Gouw Eng Hoey were obviously connected with their failures in business, while the cases of the two retired captains demonstrates again the prestige and respect accorded to Chinese officers.

The career of lieutenant Tan Boen Sok as a Chinese officer started in 1856, when he was second secretary to the Chinese Council. By February 1861 he was appointed lieutenant. Almost a decade later, on 5 August 1870, by order of the Council of Justice he was declared bankrupt, in debt to 3,000 guilders. To pay off his debt, Tan Boen Sok spent four months in jail. It was customary for those who were imprisoned to be temporarily relieved of their position, but Tan Boen Sok was sacked.<sup>87</sup> Not only was he not restored to his position, but to make his future even more bleak he was considered as having a '*vijandig gezindheid*', hostile inclination, towards the authorities.<sup>88</sup> A higher official of Division C, who supervised Chinese Affairs, suspected that Tan Boen Sok was merely a victim of the antagonism of the Batavia authorities. During the

<sup>84</sup> Letter of the Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 17 October 1855, no. 3179, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 6 November 1855, no. 11.

<sup>85</sup> Letter of the Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 12 March 1867 no. 900/11; and also letter of Tan Eng Goan, 4 April 1867, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 31 May 1867, no. 5.

<sup>86</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 31 May 1867, no. 5.

<sup>87</sup> Letter of Tan Boen Sok, 16 October 1871, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 3 February 1872, no. 26; and also mentioned in "Politiek Verslag van de Residentie Batavia van het Jaar 1870", in *Batavia*, no. 18.

<sup>88</sup> Mentioned in letter of Government Secretary, 19 April 1871, no. 654, quoted in letter of the Division C to Governor-General, 15 December 1871, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 3 February 1872, no. 26.

final years in which Tan Boen Sok had been a Chinese lieutenant and member of the Chinese Council, he frequently encountered difficulties in his dealings with the Assistant-Resident. As a senior lieutenant, Tan Boen Sok was entitled to captaincy, but instead the Resident proposed that he should resign.<sup>89</sup> The antagonism of the Batavia authorities could be observed right from the moment of Tan Boen Sok's appointment as lieutenant in 1861. The Resident of Batavia did not support his candidacy, for the reason that "...he does not belong to the group from which the Chinese officers were usually elected...".<sup>90</sup> In other words, the local authority in Batavia doubted his financial status.

Since Tan Boen Sok was defended by a higher official of Division C, while the decision of the Batavian local authority to sack him was supported by the Director of Home Affairs, a row between these Dutch officials was unavoidable. This row became a debate concerning over the selection of Chinese officers. The officials of Division C were mainly concerned with the question why only wealthy Chinese could become officers. I have discussed this subject in chapter 3.

Although he argued that his debt was due to family expenditures, the marriages of his two daughters, and not because of business failure, Tan Boen Sok suffered extreme embarrassment on being the focus of debate. And seeing that the Resident of Batavia kept pressing his case for either financial status or moral values in the Chinese officership, Tan Boen Sok gave up the fight, saying that he had no more interest in the position. Furthermore, he said that the debt was a private matter. To describe him as having hostile inclinations was a stain on his name to which he strongly objected.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Mentioned in letter of Division C to Governor-General, 15 December 1871, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 3 February 1872, no. 26; and in "Politiek Verslag van de Residentie Batavia van het Jaar 1871", in *Batavia*, no. 18.

<sup>90</sup> Letter of the Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 29 January 1861, no. 325, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 17 February 1861, no. 9.

<sup>91</sup> See *Agenda*, no. 21553/1870, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 3 February 1872, no. 26.

Gouw Eng Hoey achieved the lieutenantship in 1866, and in addition he was a member of the Chinese Council. His circumstances became a matter of discussion among Dutch officials when a vacancy for Chinese captaincy arose. As a senior lieutenant, Gouw Eng Hoey was entitled to the position, yet the main consideration was, again, financial status. In the previous few years, Gouw Eng Hoey had been severely in debt, particularly in his opium farming business. He was the sub-farmer for the Bantam, Batavia, Krawang and Lampung areas. He was unable to cover the loss on the opium farm lease for 1873 for Tan Kam Long, the main farmer, and his brother-in-law.<sup>92</sup> According to the Director of Finance, Gouw Eng Hoey had a debt of 27,700 guilders, owing to the *Collegie van Boedelmeesteren*, or Heritage Chamber, despite rumours that he had pawned his lands in Parungpanjang, Cinere and Citayam which were the security for the debt.<sup>93</sup>

Since the Director of Home Affairs supported Gouw Eng Hoey for the captaincy, stating that his financial condition was improving, the Resident of Batavia could hardly reject him.<sup>94</sup> However, the Director of Finance supplied a further argument, saying that although Gouw was not without means, his lease debts had been settled by his partners, Oey Ek Kiam and Khouw Tjing Kie.<sup>95</sup> It was then obvious that the Director of Finance could not accept Gouw Eng Hoey, and therefore the Resident of Batavia could no longer support him.<sup>96</sup> In March 1878, lieutenant Gouw Eng Hoey retired after being in service for some twelve years.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Confidential letter of Government Secretary to Resident of Batavia, 1 October 1877, no.68, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 12 December 1877, no. 21.

<sup>93</sup> Mentioned in a letter from Tjiong Pa Long, 10 September 1877, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 12 December 1877, no. 21.

<sup>94</sup> Letter of the Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 8 September 1877, no. 5714, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 12 December 1877, no. 21.

<sup>95</sup> Confidential letter of Director of Finance to Governor-General, 22 September 1877, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 12 December 1877, no. 21.

<sup>96</sup> Confidential letter of the Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 20 October 1877, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 12 December 1877, no. 21.

<sup>97</sup> See *Agenda*, no. 4174/1878, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 13 March 1878, no. 39.

The following two cases show some differences in terms of the status of the Chinese officership itself. Both lieutenants Tan Boen Sok and Gouw Eng Hoey were forced to resign because of their failure in business. Because they were no longer men of means, it was no longer possible for the Dutch to keep them. On the other hand, both Tan Kam Long and Oey Tjeng Yan were already retired. But their involvement in law-breaking meant that their standing, although now only honorary, was put into question by the Dutch.

Tan Kam Long retired in 1872 and was granted the honorary title of captain. His officership had begun in 1844 and he was the brother-in-law of lieutenant Gouw Eng Hoey. After his retirement, Tan Kam Long worked as a senior cashier for the opium *kongsi* in Batavia. The operational areas of this *kongsi* covered Bantam, Batavia, Krawang and Lampung. In 1873 a deficit of 160,000 guilders in the *kongsi* funds was discovered, for which Tan Kam Long should take responsibility. According to the *Landraad*, or Native Council of Justice, in Batavia, his sentence was five years unpaid forced labour for abuse of trust. However, his case was brought to the Higher Court of the Netherlands Indies where it was dismissed.

It was understood that any Chinese officer involved in a legal case, particularly if he were imprisoned, should be removed from his officership, regardless whether he was active or non-active. As his legal case had been dismissed, Tan Kam Long appealed for rehabilitation. This raised questions in Dutch circles about the titular ranks being granted to Chinese officers. Should an honorary title be maintained where its bearer was involved in disreputable conduct?

The Director of Home Affairs had no objection to restoring Tan Kam Long's titular rank, since it was only honorary and implied no real influence. In addition, his misconduct had occurred when he was cashier of the *kongsi* rather than during his officership. The Chinese, to whom such European legalities were unknown were astonished to

learn that Tan Kam Long would lose his title. Given that within the Chinese quarter, Tan Kam Long was still regarded as a rich man, there was no point in withholding this meaningless title. And as he had promised to settle the deficit,<sup>98</sup> the Dutch appear to have bothered no further with Tan Kam Long's case.

While Tan Kam Long was allowed to retrieve his titular rank, Oey Tjeng Yan's experience was a bitter one. Having been in service for about 19 years, Oey Tjeng Yan was retired in May 1879 and granted the titular rank of major. The case of his retirement was rather interesting, since it took place just after a vacancy for major had been filled by Lie Tjoe Hong. Presumably this offended Oey Tjeng Yan, as he must have felt uncomfortable at being surpassed by a younger colleague. He immediately asked for retirement due to sickness and poor financial status.<sup>99</sup> In addition, he requested that he be granted the titular rank of major in order to maintain the respect of his Chinese contemporaries, after being overtaken by Lie Tjoe Hong.<sup>100</sup> The Resident of Batavia was somewhat amazed by Oey Tjeng Yan's request, since during the election of Lie Tjoe Hong for the majorship, Oey Tjeng Yan had looked healthy and strong. Now he was suddenly appealing for retirement on grounds of sickness and old age.<sup>101</sup> Neither the Resident nor the Director of Home Affairs saw any reason to grant him a titular rank on his retirement.<sup>102</sup> Nevertheless, Oey Tjeng Yan did receive a titular majorship on his retirement. Unfortunately he lost it in 1888 after a case involving a cattle epidemic.

Oey Tjeng Yan owned land in Petojo Sawah where he ran a vast cattle-breeding operation. In August 1888 an epidemic

<sup>98</sup> Advice of the Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 21 December 1876, no. 12448, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 11 January 1877, no. 23.

<sup>99</sup> Mentioned in confidential *Agenda*, no. 313/1879, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 21 May 1879, no. 1.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> Confidential letter of the Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 15 April 1879, no. La.H, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 21 May 1879, no. 1.

<sup>102</sup> Letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 18 April 1879, no. 3871, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 21 May 1879, no. 1.

spread among his livestock, yet his manager, Lie Tek Tjoan, made no report to the local authorities. He even sold eight sick buffaloes to a native. Five buffaloes were seized and put under the surveillance of a government veterinary surgeon. Oey Tjeng Yan pleaded guilty and was sentenced to one month unpaid forced labour by the Batavia *Landraad*. To make matters worse, he still sold another twelve sick cattle to a nearby landowner of Grogol, an Indo-European, which caused the epidemic to spread even wider. The Resident of Batavia said that Oey Tjeng Yan should lose his titular majorship,<sup>103</sup> although the Director of Home Affairs preferred to let the Governor-General decide this seemingly petty case.<sup>104</sup> The final decision decreed that Oey Tjeng Yan should lose his honorary title.

So far I have focussed on cases in which Chinese officers lost their position and prestige. My purpose is, again, to underline how shaky their positions were, even down to the lowest rank of lieutenant. Moreover, we can observe that even in the establishment of the Chinese officership, the Dutch never abandoned their central principle of loss and profit.

Enforcement against fraud in revenue-farming was criticized by F Fokkens, the Inspector of Cultivation. He argued that since revenue-farming involved government policy, legal cases involving Chinese officers should be conducted in the residency council of justice, as was the case with Europeans. Being prosecuted in the native *Landraad* under the police roll system, and particularly being subjected to the physical penalty of unpaid forced labour, brought bitter degradation to their position and prestige. But the Director of Justice argued that in cases of misdemeanour and fraud in revenue-farming, Chinese

<sup>103</sup> Confidential letter of Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 1 November 1888, no. La. S5, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 14 November 1888, no. 42.

<sup>104</sup> Confidential letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 8 November 1888, no. 6224, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 14 November 1888, no. 42.

officers were not on trial in their capacity as government officials, but as *pachter* or revenue-farmers. For this judicial reason, they were entitled to be prosecuted under the *pachtreglementen*, or revenue-farming laws.<sup>105</sup>

All this demonstrates the insecurity of the Chinese officer's position owing to the uncertainty of Dutch policy. There was no accepted fundamental concept for the institution of the Chinese officers, although the Dutch could be extremely determined if a case threatened government revenues.

I suspect that worldly considerations were behind the offer of the lieutenantship to Souw Siauw Tjong, whose father and grandfather were also Chinese lieutenants in Batavia. Souw Siauw Tjong was one of the richest Chinese in Batavia, a leading figure in the rice-market,<sup>106</sup> and owner of various private lands located in Tangerang in the western division. He was highly praised for his assistance to the local authorities in Batavia and Tangerang. His philanthropic deeds included setting up schools for native children, taking care of poor tenants and contributing foodstuffs and building materials when a serious fire damaged neighbouring areas. The Resident of Batavia was extremely impressed, describing him as a virtually flawless person and a most respectable Chinese.<sup>107</sup> Naturally, the Resident then proposed that Souw Siauw Tjong be given a Chinese officership, a suggestion endorsed by the Director of Home Affairs who praised him as a fine example for other Chinese officers to follow.<sup>108</sup> Because the duties of Chinese officer would demand his full concentration and he could not neglect his business, Souw Siauw Tjong graciously declined

<sup>105</sup> For discussion on this aspect, see note of Director of Justice, 7 May 1895, no. 3353, in *Mailrapport*, no. 13/1896, ARA, The Hague.

<sup>106</sup> Arnold Wright (ed), *Twentieth Century Impressions of Netherlands-India* (1909. London: Lloyd's Greater Britain Publishing Company Ltd.), p. 482.

<sup>107</sup> Letter of the Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 10 April 1877, no. 2096, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 7 May 1877, no. 18.

<sup>108</sup> Letter of the Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 13 April 1877, no. 3796, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 7 May 1877, no. 18.

the offer. However, the Dutch then granted him the titular rank of lieutenant in May 1877.<sup>109</sup>

Similar reasons were cited when Phoa Keng Hek declined the Dutch offer of a Chinese majorship in 1908.<sup>110</sup> I suspect there were also political motives in his refusal, which I have discussed in chapter 5. Had Souw Siauw Tjong and Phoa Keng Hek not been well-off members of the Chinese community, the Dutch would not have offered them such respectable positions. In other words, it was all a matter of financial status and wealth.

In the case of Phoa Keng Hek, whose father was also a Chinese lieutenant in Meester-Cornelis in the eastern division, the Dutch offer concealed a political motive. Observing the movement of the Chinese in the early 1900s towards modern political ambitions, begun under Phoa's leadership, the offer was probably intended to direct the Chinese towards Dutch interests. As Phoa Keng Hek declined the offer, yet managed to arrange for his son-in-law Khouw Kim An to achieve this office, I suggest that the Dutch had political reasons for favouring HHKan. But, as HHKan was also a rich landowner in Batavia with a long-established family background, one wonders why he was not offered the Chinese officership?

### Batavia's Private Lands

As noted in the first part of this chapter, the *particuliere landerijen*, or private lands, were the jewel of the Batavia economy.

Chinese properties, particularly in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, counted for almost 40% of total landownership in the residency. Even after the Dutch proposal to repurchase these private domains was implemented in 1910, the Chinese still possessed 10% of all

<sup>109</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 7 May 1877, no. 18.

<sup>110</sup> Confidential letter of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs, 6 April 1908, no.27; and of the Resident of Batavia, 9 June 1908, no. 109, to Governor-General, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 29 June 1908, no. 41.

the private lands in the region in 1920. While the Chinese economy in Java decreased in power after the abolition of revenue-farming, the Chinese of Batavia managed to retain a handsome investment in land. This meant that their economic situation was better than that of Chinese in other parts of Java.<sup>111</sup>

As the Agrarian Law of 1870 forbade natives from selling their land to non-natives, how did the Chinese come to possess such huge areas of land in the Batavia region? To answer this question we have to trace the origins of Chinese landownership back to the early nineteenth century. A description of colonial practice in the sale of land may help to explain the situation.

In 1619, when the Dutch seized the settlement that was later called Batavia, the area was uninhabited. The indigenous population left the area and dispersed into remote corners of the hinterland. To populate and develop the city and its environs, the VOC regime under Governor-General J P Coen brought in various native groups and others, particularly the Chinese, to settle in Batavia and the surrounding area, known as the *Ommelanden*. To cultivate the outskirts, the VOC placed these various natives under their own chiefs, called *Inlandsche kommandant*. It was also for security reasons that these groups were given land settlements in the vicinity of the *Intramuros*, as war with Bantam and Mataram continued.

Each native commandant was granted land as fief, but had no right of landed property.<sup>112</sup> They were liable to forced delivery of the products of the land, paid at fixed prices. For example, the rates for coffee and pepper were six Spanish dollars per picol; indigo fetched between 18 and 30 *stuivers*

<sup>111</sup> Djie Ting Ham, "Enkele Opmerkingen over den Economischen Toestand van de Chineezzen op Java", *De Chineesche Revue*, October 1928, p. 49; also "Jaarverslag over 1927 Betreffende de Werkzaamheden van het Kantoor voor Chineesche Zaken", in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 129, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

<sup>112</sup> "Geschiedkundig Onderzoek naar den Oorpsrong en den Aard van het Partikulier Landbezit op Java", *TNI*, vol. I, 1849, p. 251; and "Het Partikulier Landbezit in de Bataviasche Ommelanden tot 1857", *TNI*, vol. I, 1855, p. 333.

(one *stuiver* = five cents) according to the species.<sup>113</sup> The Chinese were encouraged to cultivate the region, particularly by establishing sugar mills and arak distilleries on the land they leased.

Besides these non-Europeans, many Dutch agriculturists were sent to the colony to develop land. They came without their families and were given leases for five or eight years.<sup>114</sup> Another type of agriculturist was the retired Dutch soldier who was allowed to apply for a lease in order to cultivate the land.<sup>115</sup>

To manage this growing system of land leasing, in 1684 the VOC established the *Collegie van Heemraden*, or College of Aldermen. The college's function was later extended to caring for dikes, canals, rivers, bridges, roads and other matters related to land development.

The peace treaty concluded with Bantam in 1685 allowed the VOC to ease its policy regarding security in the *Ommelanden*, and a few years later, the VOC allowed its citizens to purchase land. It was said that the first private landowner in Batavia was Cornelis Chastelein, a member of the Indies Council, or *Raad van Indie*, who bought lands in Srengseng and Depok, in the southern part of the Batavia region in 1695 and 1696. In 1701 another member of the Indies Council, Abraham van Riebeeck, bought the land of Pondokpucung.<sup>116</sup> It should be noted that as early as April 1639, the fief status of those who cultivated land in the Batavia region was transformed into a property right, called *eigendom*.<sup>117</sup>

Although land sales had begun in the last decade of the seventeenth century, the VOC sold very few lands until 1744. One notable land purchase occurred in 1745 when

<sup>113</sup> "Geschiedkundig Onderzoek naar den Oorsprong en den Aard van het Partikulier Landbezit op Java", p. 250.

<sup>114</sup> "Het Partikulier Landbezit in de Bataviasche Ommelanden", p. 332.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> L van der Hoek, "De Particuliere Landerijen in de Residentie Batavia", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. IX, 1922, p. 40.

<sup>117</sup> *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indie* (1919. 's Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff), vol. III, p. 345.

Governor-General Baron van Imhoff bought the land of Kampung Baru in Buitenzorg. This became a property that was the seigneurial right of the Dutch Governor-General, possession being transferred following succession to this office.

In the history of the *particuliere landerijen*, the term of office of Daendels from 1809 to 1811 marked the second phase of public land sales. As Holland was dragged into the Napoleonic Wars, Daendels, assigned to protect the Eastern colony, needed extra financial support. Seeing that public funds had already been exhausted, the sale of land became one means of filling the empty purse.

According to the decree of 22 March 1808, all public land sales were authorized by the *Collegie van Heemraden*. Most buyers were Europeans, although some Chinese bought land, particularly in the western district, as from the early days, most Chinese had settled in this part of the Batavia region. Later Chinese settlers on the western bank of the Great River expanded throughout the western part of the region as far as Tangerang; the city developed westwards. This may explain why, two centuries later, private land in Tangerang was practically all in the hands of the Chinese.<sup>118</sup>

While the major part of Chinese landownership was concentrated in Batavia's western regions, Europeans preferred to possess land located in the eastern district, from Meester-Cornelis - Buitenzorg up to the Krawang region. In Buitenzorg and Krawang, in particular, public land sales occurred during Raffles' term of office. It is interesting to note that British owned land in Pamanukan and Ciasem in Krawang were, in fact, the largest private land estates in Java. They covered an area of 330,000 *bouws*,<sup>119</sup> or 485,100 acres. These extensive private lands will be discussed later.

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<sup>118</sup> See "Staat der Partikuliere Landerijen in de Afdeeling Tangerang", in *Tangerang*, nos. 150/12, 240/A, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta; and also "Partikuliere Landerijen en de Openbare Veiligheid in de Residentie Batavia", *De Indische Gids*, vol. II, 1904, p. 1074.

<sup>119</sup> *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indie*, vol. III, p. 275.

Having given the background to private landownership in Batavia, we can now look into Chinese property.

The Chinese might have been the earliest non-indigenous settlers in this area, the people who developed and cultivated the region, yet they did not own the land they tilled until the last quarter of the eighteenth century. This does not mean that there were no Chinese landowners. Indeed, some notable Chinese were privately permitted to buy land, for example the first captain, Bencon, and his successor, Bingam, who owned the lands of Mangga Dua and Tanah Abang. It was said that Bingam was instrumental in opening up the area; on his initiative the Molenvliet canal was constructed, and this was later used to transport the products of his sugar mills in Tanah Abang to the city.<sup>120</sup>

Thus Chinese landownership, which began in the last quarter of the eighteenth century when public land sales by the VOC commenced, grew slowly until the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

In 1811 only seven private lands in the western district belonged to Chinese, while fourteen were owned by Europeans.<sup>121</sup> Almost twenty-five years later, in 1836, the Resident of Batavia noted that of the 187 private lands in the region, 83 were owned by Chinese.<sup>122</sup> In 1879 Chinese landownership had grown to 150 out of the total of 286 *particuliere landerijen* in the whole region of Batavia.<sup>123</sup> Within the next decade, Chinese lands increased to 163 out of the total of 338 private lands. Chinese-owned lands covered an area of 336,060 *bouws*, or almost 40% of the total area of 849,710 *bouws*.<sup>124</sup>

The last decade of the nineteenth century witnessed a diminishing number of Chinese landowners as the Agrarian Law of 1870 closed the opportunity for non-natives to buy

<sup>120</sup> Phoa Kian Sioe, *Sedjarahnya Souw Beng Kong, Phoa Beng Gan, Oey Tamba Sia* (1956. Djakarta: Penerbit Reporter), p. 37.

<sup>121</sup> See *Schepenen*, no. 115, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

<sup>122</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 27 December 1846, no. 7.

<sup>123</sup> See "Staat der Particuliere Landerijen in 1879", in *Regeeringsalmanak voor Nederlandsch-Indie*, 1880, pp. 350-358.

<sup>124</sup> See *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1891, p. 220.

new land. In addition, Dutch government plans to repurchase private lands affected the expansion of Chinese landownership. Nevertheless, under the Dutch liberal policy, launched in 1870, the Chinese managed to transfer their private lands into enterprises operating as limited agricultural companies. In the following years there were increasing examples of private lands belonging to *naamlooze vennootschappen*, or limited companies, in agricultural production. Despite this transfer of ownership, the Chinese of Batavia still managed to own 14% of the total private land domains in 1910, and 10% in 1920.

These figures were calculated in terms of estates; in terms of actual area, Chinese ownership was much less than European. In other words, although the number of European private lands was less than Chinese, their area was far greater. For example, in 1898, Europeans owned 75 private lands, of 273,831 *bouws*; the Chinese had 137 lands, of 257,141 *bouws*. What is more interesting is that the population on Chinese private lands outnumbered that on the European domains, 410,044 to 304,937.<sup>125</sup> Chinese land properties tended to be divided into small lots, and the native population preferred to settle on private lands belonging to Chinese rather than Europeans. Moreover, this indicates that the Chinese concentrated on medium-scale activity, as they did in many other sectors of the colonial economy.

The main crop on these Chinese private lands was rice, cultivated particularly in the western district of Tangerang and in the eastern part of Meester-Cornelis. From a report of 1899, rice cultivation covered almost 31% of the total area of 229,214 *bouws*, and yielded 4,640,100 picols.<sup>126</sup> Other crops were sugar, nuts, coffee, tobacco and indigo. Sugar and indigo were produced in Tangerang for domestic consumption. On the other hand, private lands in the

<sup>125</sup> Bijlage YY, "Opgave Betreffende de Particuliere Landerijen op Java, 1898", *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1899.

<sup>126</sup> Bijlage XX, "Padi-beplantingen op de Particuliere Landerijen in Java van het Jaar 1899", *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1900.

Buitenzorg region were mostly owned by Europeans, cultivating for European markets in tea, coffee, cinchona and later rubber.

By the 1910s, sugar and indigo were no longer cultivated in Tangerang, leaving the whole area for rice. In 1913, the area given over to rice increased to 295,741 *bouws*, yielding 5,782,331 picols.<sup>127</sup> A further report of 1918-1919 notes new agricultural products on the Tangerang and Meester-Cornelis private lands belonging to Chinese, cassava, coconuts and corn.<sup>128</sup>

The fact that the crops on Chinese private lands were for domestic consumption suggests Batavia's self-sufficiency.<sup>129</sup> In addition we can see the Chinese contribution to Batavia's local economy, in the private lands located in the western district of Tangerang and in the eastern district of Meester-Cornelis, owned and managed by Chinese.

The medium-scale cultivation of these lands required more labour than the large plantations of the Europeans. This may explain the greater number of native inhabitants there compared to those living on the European private lands in the southern and further eastern areas of the residency. The Dutch local authorities observed that the natives preferred to settle on private lands belonging to the Chinese.<sup>130</sup> This situation was, of course, most unacceptable to Dutch officials, and fear of Chinese penetration into the native village economy grew.

<sup>127</sup> Bijlage NN, "Opgave Betreffende de Particuliere Landerijen op Java en de Huurlanden in Soerakarta en Djokjakarta over 1912 en 1913", *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1914.

<sup>128</sup> Bijlage CC, "Opgave Betreffende de Particuliere Landerijen op Java en de Huurlanden in Soerakarta en Djokjakarta over 1918 en 1919", *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1920.

<sup>129</sup> See "Algemeen Verslag van het Zuider en Ooster Kwartier der Ommelanden van Batavia over 1860", in *Residentie Archieven*, no. 55, Pasar Ikan Collection, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

<sup>130</sup> See "Bijdrage voor het Politiek Verslag der Residentie Batavia over 1871, Afdeeling Tangerang", in *Batavia*, no. 357/1; and also "Politiek Verslag van het Jaar 1870, Afdeeling Tangerang", in *Tangerang*, no. 133/5; and *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 27 December 1846, no. 7.

Many Dutch suspected that as the practice of revenue-farming spread, the Chinese used usury to lead the natives into ever increasing debt. Unpaid debts would later become the obvious way in which native land was disposed to the Chinese,<sup>131</sup> and this could explain why Chinese private lands mostly comprised smaller plots. In addition, their limited financial capacity would restrict them to smaller plots of land.

In the implementation of colonial policy, the Dutch probably realized that the gap between European ruler and native ruled was too wide to bridge.<sup>132</sup> The Chinese, for a variety of reasons, were therefore an indispensable element in the relationship between ruler and ruled. Yet, however much the Dutch needed the Chinese to deal with the native majority, fear and dependency meant that the Chinese could never be more than scapegoats. The Dutch argued that it was the Chinese who had ruined native welfare; it was the Chinese, as revenue-farmers, who were the bloodsuckers of the Javanese. However, the Dutch did admit that Chinese landowners were more flexible than Europeans in dealing with native tenants.

The Resident of Batavia noted differences between the two types of landlord. He observed that Europeans were strictly law-abiding when it came to the legal arrangements between landowners and native tenants, under the 1836 Government Regulations which concerned the private lands located on the western bank of the Cimanuk river. They also kept their distance from their native tenants, an attitude which gave the native majority an uncomfortable feeling of inferiority.

Unlike the Europeans, Chinese landlords were rather indulgent in dealing with their native tenants. They tended to accommodate the domestic needs of their tenants;<sup>133</sup> it was common practice for Chinese landlords to loan money

<sup>131</sup> "De Chinezen in de Ommelanden van Batavia", *TNI*, vol. II, 1855, pp. 416-417.

<sup>132</sup> See *Verbaal*, 22 March 1862, no. 15/311, ARA, The Hague.

<sup>133</sup> Mentioned in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 27 December 1846, no. 7; also in *Batavia*, no. 357/1.

to their native tenants when necessary. Unfortunately, native ignorance of, and weakness in, financial management meant that ever-increasing loans led to continual debt, and in this way Chinese landownership gradually expanded. It was also noted that Chinese landlords were less demanding<sup>134</sup> because private lands depended heavily on native labour.

We can also see a divergent attitude between landlords with respect to labour, particularly slavery which was still practiced during the first-half of the nineteenth century. For European landlords, the possession of slaves was a means of displaying their wealthy status. Amazed with the exotic life of the Eastern colony, most rich European families indulged themselves by collecting slaves for daily household services. On the other hand, slaves belonging to Chinese were put to work in sugar mills, arak distilleries and other profit-making employment. Female slaves of the Chinese were trained to be wayang dancers,<sup>135</sup> as their masters held the *wayangpacht*, or taxation for folk entertainment. European masters, on the other hand, preferred to have a domestic orchestra, comprising slave music players to entertain their guests; this *slavenmuziek*<sup>136</sup> was, again, a symbol of wealthy status.

Observing the comparatively more agreeable circumstances of the natives on private lands belonging to the Chinese, the Dutch could hardly deny that their native subjects received better treatment there.<sup>137</sup> Can it be said that the living condition of the native population on the European estates was in general bad in comparison to that

<sup>134</sup> "Algemeen Verslag over de Afdeeling Tangerang in 1876", in *Residentie Archieven*, no. 47, Pasar Ikan Collection, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

<sup>135</sup> Susan Abeysekere, "Slaves in Batavia: Insights from a Slave Register", in A J S Reid (ed), *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia* (1983. New York: St. Martin's Press), p. 299.

<sup>136</sup> F de Haan, *Oud Batavia*, p. 531; V I van de Wall, *Indische Landhuizen en Hun Geschiedenis* (1932. Batavia: G Kolff & Co), pp. 83-84.

<sup>137</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 27 December 1846, no. 7; Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Southeast Asia*, p. 408; Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Protest Movements in Rural Java. A Study of Agrarian Unrest in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (1973. Singapore: Oxford University Press), p. 47.

on the Chinese private lands?<sup>138</sup> Both the Chinese agriculturists and native labourers peacefully coexisted on the private lands belonging to the Chinese. This was later shattered as both societies changed, particularly the native,<sup>139</sup> due to the emerging nationalist movement in the second decade of the twentieth century.

The government regulation of 1836 concerning the private lands located on the western bank of the Cimanuk river formally ordered relations between landlords and their tenants, in respect of rights and obligations. This regulation codified long-established unwritten agreements.<sup>140</sup>

As a result of Daendels' policy on public land sales, as early as 1809, a regulation was issued regarding semi-feudal rights exercised on private lands. It stated that the landlord was entitled to the delivery of *tjoeke*, which should not exceed 1/5 of the rice produced; *pajeg* was paid in kind, i.e., 1/5 of non-rice produced. Labour service for the landlord, called *kerja kompenian*; all male inhabitants between the ages of 14 and 60 were liable for one day's service a week, not to exceed 52 days in a year. Although in general, the so-called *heerendiensten*, or labour service for government, was unknown on these private lands, labour service for digging canals, building roads, bridges and other public works was arranged between the local authority and the landlord.<sup>141</sup> Those who were liable for the *heerendiensten* could arrange a financial payment with the landlord. Many Chinese tenants tried to escape this forced obligation, particularly if the landlord was of a different race. This frequently gave rise to bad feelings, and to

<sup>138</sup> D W van Welderen Rangers, *The Failure of a Liberal Colonial Policy; Netherlands East Indies, 1816-1830* (1947. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff), p. 138.

<sup>139</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, November 1915", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. V, 1916, p. 230; see also Chapter V.

<sup>140</sup> E van Delde, *De Particuliere Landerijen op Java* (1911. Leiden: S C van Doesburgh), p. 93.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43; for the practices of this arrangement, see *Schepenen*, no. 115.

proceedings in the *Landraad*.<sup>142</sup> The inhabitants of private lands were excused from the land rent introduced by Raffles. Yet, the *pajeg*, which means taxation, was paid to the landowner in place of the land rent.

Because the Cultivation System was mostly unknown in the private lands, the *heerendiensten* became more common there. This was because cultivation on the private properties relied upon tenant labour, and the once-weekly service of *heerendiensten* could be used to increase cultivation for European markets.<sup>143</sup> In some cases, this abuse led to rural protest and unrest.

As native inhabitants were better treated on the private lands belonging to Chinese, while cultivation on European private lands concentrated on production for European markets, most peasant uprisings occurred in the eastern and southern regions of the Batavia Residency. In 1864 there was unrest in Pondok Gedeh as a result of abuse of the *cultuurdiensten*. A notorious case was the '*Tjiomas-zaak*' of 1886, when exploitation greatly increased under the ownership of de Sturler.<sup>144</sup>

The oppression and exploitation of the natives on the private lands had been public knowledge for some time. With the Ciomas affair, the Dutch set up a committee to investigate. The Ciomas case marked the first move by the Dutch government to repurchase private lands. This took place in 1887, a year after the uprising, when the Ciomas land was returned to the government. The second phase of private land repurchase took place in the first decade of the twentieth century. I will discuss this later.

The description above has provided the historical background to Chinese landownership and the relationship between Chinese landlords and their native inhabitants or

<sup>142</sup> See, for example, the case of eleven Chinese residents in Bazaar Tangerang who tricked an Arab landlord in avoiding the *kerdja kompenian* in July 1897; see *Tangerang*, no. 150/14.

<sup>143</sup> E van Delde, *De Particuliere Landerijen op Java*, p. 53.

<sup>144</sup> "Onlusten op het Particuliere Land Tjiomas (Buitenzorg) in 1886", *De Indische Gids*, vol. II, 1886, p. 941; see also Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Protest Movements in Rural Java*, p. 26.

tenants. Attention is now directed towards the position of various Chinese officers as landowners, and the extent to which this affected their official position. Not only was the status of landlord required for official candidacy, but the location of private lands might be taken into consideration in granting an officership. This was particularly the case for posts on the outskirts of Batavia.

One case showed how a majorship was won by a candidate who did not become involved in private land transactions. Another petty case, concerning the lease of a small plot belonging to a Chinese captain, led to his downfall. My research indicates that the private lands of most Chinese officers were located in the western district of Tangerang. Tangerang was practically a Chinese private domain.

The first to be noted here was Tan Eng Goan, the first Chinese major of Batavia, who owned the lands of Kramat, Kapuk, Tanjung Burung and Rawa Kidang. Kramat and Kapuk were later purchased by his successor, major Tan Tjoen Tiat, for by the 1860s Tan Eng Goan was almost financially ruined. Major Tan Tjoen Tiat (1865-1879) also owned an area called Pasir Putih. Kramat was later bought by Be Biauw Tjoan,<sup>145</sup> and this was presumably managed by his son-in-law, lieutenant Liem Goan Sioe.

Captain Lie Tjoe Tjiang owned the lands of Sepatan, Karang Serang Laut, Karang Serang Dalam and Rajeg.<sup>146</sup> Lieutenant Tan Boen Peng, whose candidacy for captainship in 1877 was rejected by the Director of Home Affairs and the Resident of Batavia but endorsed by the Director of Finance,<sup>147</sup> was the owner of various lands: Bojong Renget, Pangkalan, de Qual (presently known as Pesing) and Tegalangus. The well-known titular lieutenant, Souw Siauw Tjong, who graciously declined the position of active service officer, possessed the lands of Parungkuda,

<sup>145</sup> See "Staat der Partikuliere Landerijen in 1879", *Regeeringsalmanak voor Nederlandsch-Indie*, 1880, p. 356.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*; see also letter of the Assistant-Resident of Tangerang to Resident of Batavia, 14 October 1877, no. Litt. A.M.IV, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 12 December 1877, no.21.

<sup>147</sup> See Chapter III, particularly p. 94.

Kedaung-East and Ketapang, where he opened primary schools for the children of his native tenants.<sup>148</sup>

These were the landowners who experienced no problems concerning their officership. But there were cases in which the position of the Chinese officer led him into personal difficulties, as the Dutch unwisely took this into serious consideration. It is possible to see this in operation in the placement of Chinese officers in the western division in Tangerang. Of the many regions of the Batavia area, Tangerang had the largest Chinese population. In 1888 it numbered about 27,996 persons, dispersed throughout the three districts of Tangerang, Balaraja and Mauk. The division usually had one captain and one lieutenant posted in the city of Tangerang, and another two lieutenants for the districts of Balaraja and Mauk.

On one occasion, when the lieutenant of Mauk retired, it was found difficult to find a successor. This was due to a scarcity of properly qualified or acceptable candidates. The Dutch persisted in their stipulation that candidates should have a good financial standing, meaning that they were wealthy merchants or landlords. It was not easy to find leading Chinese merchants residing in a small city like Tangerang, since most of them preferred to live in Batavia. The problem was compounded by the fact that despite their huge landownings in the area, most Chinese landlords did not reside in Tangerang.<sup>149</sup> Those who did settle in the city had either been in service or were retired. To the Resident of Batavia, the only likely candidate was lieutenant Nie Ek Tjiang, who was then posted in Batavia's southern district of Kebayoran. The Resident put forward his name because Nie Ek Tjiang was familiar with the region; he was formerly the leasee of various lands there. Nie Ek Tjiang told the Assistant-Resident of Tangerang of his intention to be posted to the city, although he did not refer to the district

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<sup>148</sup> Letter of the Resident of Batavia to the Inspector of Native Education, 2 April 1877, no. 719, in *Batavia*, no. 352/3, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

<sup>149</sup> Confidential letter of the Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 15 May 1888, no. La.F.2, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 19 June 1888, no. 7.

of Mauk.<sup>150</sup> In January 1888, Nie Ek Tjiang was transferred from his post in Kebayoran to Tangerang.

During his eleven year term of office in Tangerang, Nie Ek Tjiang was very popular among the Chinese community. Indeed, various letters signed by members of the Chinese community were sent to Batavia proposing that he should be promoted to captain instead of captain Oey Giok Koen of Meester-Cornelis, who was to be transferred to Tangerang.<sup>151</sup> Due to the inaccessibility of the correspondence, I was unable to discover the objections to Nie Ek Tjiang's promotion to captain. But he was passed over, and Oey Giok Koen was installed as captain in Tangerang in July 1899. Oey Giok Koen was the owner of the land of Pasar Baru in Tangerang, which previously had been leased to Nie Ek Tjiang.<sup>152</sup>

It is quite likely that Oey Giok Koen was unhappy with his post in Tangerang. His residence and family were established in Meester-Cornelis but to commute between the two in those days was obviously unlikely. Being a landowner in Tangerang would not necessarily mean that he wished to reside in that area, yet this was required for Chinese officers. After an eight year term Oey Giok Koen sought for retirement,<sup>153</sup> which was granted in November 1907.

It is interesting to observe that his successor, Oey Djie San, began his career as a captain without having held the post of lieutenant. This was rather exceptional, since captains were generally selected from among the lower ranks, such as lieutenant. I suspect that this unusual appointment was due either to the scarcity of Chinese landlords in the Tangerang area or to the limited availability of Batavian officers in active service.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> Those letters are kept in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 2 July 1899, no. 22; see also *Tangerang*, no. 150/15.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*; see also "Staat der Partikuliere Landerijen in 1879", *Regeeringsalmanak voor Nederlandsch-Indie*, 1880, p. 355.

<sup>153</sup> Letter of the Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 16 March 1907, no. 105, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 1 November 1907, no. 7.

Despite his status as a private person with no experience of lieutenantship, Oey Djie San came from a family of Chinese officers as far back as his great-grandfather. He was director of the private estate of Karawaci-Cilongok, where he resided. He was admired for his Dutch education and fluency in the language.<sup>154</sup>

Thus we observe how Dutch principles regarding the Chinese officers kept in line with economic interests. Tangerang was unable to provide candidates who were either well-off merchants or landlords. This resulted, as we have seen, in the posting to Tangerang of a Chinese officer whose family residence was elsewhere, thereby creating extreme inconvenience. Furthermore, similar reasoning was behind the appointment of Oey Djie San, which again broke with the convention that a captain should be selected from among the available Chinese lieutenants.

Another case concerns Tio Tek Ho who gained his majorship because he disassociated himself from a dispute over land transactions between members of the Chinese Council. There was some embarrassment among the officers regarding the Chinese Council's decision to purchase lands belonging to major Lie Tjoe Hong. The major, appointed in February 1879 and the third to hold his post in Batavia, owned much land spread over the western and eastern districts: Pesimal, Jelambar, Asem, Cakung, Jengati and Pasilian. As the major was not engaged in revenue-farming or local trading, his financial resources came mainly from his landownership. During his term of office he sometimes insisted that the Chinese Council buy parts of his land. The Chinese Council already owned land and had no need to purchase more. Major Lie Tjoe Hong's insistence created a difficult situation for the lower ranking members. However, as the major was also the chairman of the Council, it was unlikely that the other officers would dare to reject his proposals. The only member of the Chinese Council who managed to disengage himself from these frequent embarrassing situations was captain Tio Tek Ho,

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<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

and this behaviour gave him credit in the eyes of the Batavia's authorities.<sup>155</sup> In August 1896 major Lie Tjoe Hong died. He and the first major, Tan Eng Goan, were noted for their poor performance in the management of Chinese affairs, and the administration of the Chinese Council. As the Dutch wanted to avoid the bad influence of the late major, the new major should be someone who was free from the spell of major Lie Tjoe Hong.<sup>156</sup> The choice thus fell on captain Tio Tek Ho, who was promoted to major on 22 September 1896.

Unfortunately, Tio Tek Ho was a rather weak organizer, and in the final days of his term of office he was plunged into an embarrassing dispute concerning mismanagement of the Chinese Council funds. He became seriously ill and died in January 1906.

However, none of the cases above can compare with that of captain Oey Ek Kiam, who became a victim of Dutch arrogance and injustice. Oey Ek Kiam, a captain in Meester-Cornelis, began his officership as a lieutenant in 1880. Before that he had been a revenue farmer for Chinese and Javanese tobacco.<sup>157</sup> He was also engaged in opium farming, and during the 1879 trial of lieutenant Liem Goan Sioe concerning illicit opium trading, allegations had been made against Oey Ek Kiam. The Dutch records on this case are unavailable, but it is safe to say that Oey Ek Kiam managed to clear his name.

Oey Ek Kiam owned the lands of Tanah Rendah and Manggarai, located in the eastern division of Meester-Cornelis.<sup>158</sup> One day he was approached by a certain Lim Kim Soey who wanted to lease a plot of his land located opposite the military school in Manggarai. Oey Ek Kiam replied that he needed that plot for his own use but offered Lim Kim

<sup>155</sup> Letter of the Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 20 August 1896, no. 106, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 22 September 1896, no. 33.

<sup>156</sup> See *Agenda*, nos. 800/1896, 805/1896, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 22 September 1896, no. 33.

<sup>157</sup> See "Politiek Verslag van de Residentie Batavia van het Jaar 1871", in *Batavia*, no. 18.

<sup>158</sup> See "Staat der Partikuliere Landerijen in 1879", *Regeeringsalmanak voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, 1880, p. 351.

Soey a piece of land in the backyard of the nearby military camp. Lim could store there the goods and supplies he needed for military use. Another option was an empty lot next to a Chinese shop in Solitude Street, which could be rented by Lim for 15 guilders a month. However, they were unable to obtain official consent for the transaction from the Assistant-Resident of Meester-Cornelis. Lim Kim Soey came back to Oey Ek Kiam, inquiring about the lot in the military camp, saying that he had already approached the Military Commissioner who had agreed to rent it if the local authorities in Meester-Cornelis had no objection. Again the Assistant-Resident would not give consent. According to a spokesman from his office, the Assistant-Resident mentioned a plot near a corn field for which consent would be given. After checking this plot, Lim Kim Soey decided to rent an empty lot near the river, next to the brick field, and this was agreed by the Assistant-Resident. But Oey Ek Kiam could not let the plot as it was used for his own storage. Moreover, his family often went to the brick field, and it would cause them inconvenience, particularly the female members, as this nearby plot would be used as a military warehouse and there would therefore be many soldiers in the area. Oey Ek Kiam did not object to letting the empty lot near the corn field; this was not accepted by the Assistant-Resident. Another plot was also rejected.

On 9 December 1892 Oey Ek Kiam was called to meet the Assistant-Resident at his office. The Dutch official reprimanded Oey by asking, "do you not want to give your plot to be rented?" Oey Ek Kiam said that he did, but that he, the Assistant-Resident, had rejected every location and would not give his official consent. As a row became inevitable, the Assistant-Resident furiously scolded Oey Ek Kiam, warning him that the Chinese captain was under his command. Oey Ek Kiam indignantly answered that he knew he was under the command of the Dutch Assistant-Resident. But since the Assistant-Resident then accused him of being uncooperative, Oey Ek Kiam answered, "*Apa saja mesti toetoept moeloet saja tida boleh menjaoet?*" [should I shut my mouth and may

not answer you?] He added that if the Assistant-Resident so disliked him, he would apply to be released from his position as Chinese captain, so that "*....tida oesa Kandjeng Toean bikin begitoe mara sama saja seperti satoe koelie....*"<sup>159</sup> [you will not need to be so furious with me as if I was a servant.]

It goes without saying that this row became a major talking point among Dutch officials. To the Advisor for Chinese Affairs, Oey Ek Kiam's attitude was quite understandable, since in an official relationship in which a Chinese officer was subordinate to a Dutch official it would be foolish for the Chinese to rebuke his superior.<sup>160</sup> Oey Ek Kiam highly valued his self-esteem, and his response would not have been so indignant had he not been provoked. On examining the one-sided report made by the Chinese captain (the Dutch Assistant-Resident did not care to elaborate) the Advisor for Chinese Affairs saw that it would be difficult to achieve an acceptable outcome.<sup>161</sup> In the meantime, the Assistant-Resident continued to defend what he had said in an earlier report to his superior, the Resident of Batavia, that the Chinese captain had answered him in a high-pitched voice, shouting and using ugly expressions.<sup>162</sup>

Although the Advisor for Chinese Affairs showed his approval of Oey Ek Kiam's dignified courage, discussion of the case among Dutch officials concentrated on the question of behaviour. Meanwhile the main point in question, granting permission to lease land and the bureaucratic arrogance of the Dutch Assistant-Resident, was put aside. It was clear that the Dutch officials saw in Oey Ek Kiam's case an offence against the prestige of Dutch officials. They agreed to sack him. Conventionally, the official retirement of a Chinese officer was expressed as an honourable discharge, or *eervol ontslag*; but Oey Ek Kiam would receive his

<sup>159</sup> Letter of Oey Ek Kiam written in Malay, 24 January 1893, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 3 March 1893, no. 36.

<sup>160</sup> Letter of the Honorary Advisor for Chinese Affairs to Governor-General, 27 January 1893, no. 1, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 3 March 1893, no. 36.

<sup>161</sup> Letter of the Honorary Advisor for Chinese Affairs, 10 May 1893, in confidential *Agenda*, no. 506/1893.

<sup>162</sup> See his letter to the Resident of Batavia, 30 April 1893, no. La.P.III, in confidential *Agenda*, no. 506/1893.

retirement as '*ontslag niet eervol*',<sup>163</sup> discharged without honour.

According to the Advisor for Chinese Affairs, it would be easier for Meester-Cornelis to find a Dutch Assistant-Resident than a good Chinese captain.<sup>164</sup> Yet the damage was done and Oey Ek Kiam was granted a discharge but with honour in March 1893. It should be noted that the Dutch Assistant-Resident was not popular among the people of Meester-Cornelis. He was notoriously rude, and his ill-behaviour matched his unfair legal rulings. It was said that he collected monkeys to harm people, and used these animals as a means of punishment. One of many complaints called him a madman who had become a figure of authority, [*satoe orang kapala miring boeat djadie kapala negeri*].<sup>165</sup>

However, Oey Ek Kiam's official career was not brought to an end by his retirement from the Chinese officership. A few months later, in August 1893, he was offered the position of advisor to the Dutch government in establishing the *opium-regie*, as opium farming was to be replaced by a state monopoly.<sup>166</sup> This explains my argument that the allegations against Oey Ek Kiam brought out during the 1879 opium trial were unfounded. This was widely seen as a rehabilitation, as some Dutch officials admitted that Oey Ek Kiam had been unfairly treated.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Letter of the Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 17 December 1892, no. 7; and *Agenda*, 22 February 1893, no. 121, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 3 March 1893, no. 36.

<sup>164</sup> Letter of the Honorary Advisor for Chinese Affairs to Governor-General, 27 January 1893, no. 1, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 3 March 1893, no. 36.

<sup>165</sup> A native letter, dated 19 March 1893, and other complaints, kept in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 24 August 1893, no. 6.

<sup>166</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 24 August 1893, no. 6.

<sup>167</sup> Letters of Chief Inspector for Opium Affairs, 3 August 1893, no. 15462; of the Vice-President of the Indies Council, 6 August 1893, to Governor-General, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 24 August 1893, no. 6.

## Dutch Policy of Private Land Repurchase

In the previous sub-chapter, I suggested that the first phase in private land repurchase took place in 1887, as a solution to the Ciomas case. This was not the first step.

As early as 1819, a few years after the colony was returned to the Dutch, Governor-General Van der Capellen set up an investigation into social conditions on the private lands. Its conclusion did not favour the landlords,<sup>168</sup> and eventually a plan to repurchase the private lands was forwarded to the Ministry of the Colonies.

Van der Capellen's plan was probably intended to address the situation of the private lands located in the Preanger and Krawang areas. Large areas in those regions had been sold during Raffles' time, large-scale cultivation being developed there. This private agriculture was managed by British shareholders and conformed with the forced cultivations of the *Preanger-cultuur* system imposed by the Dutch government. Undoubtedly it was irksome to the Dutch that these plantations were in non-Dutch ownership, especially as they constituted the largest portion, in terms of area and production, of the private lands on Java.

The largest of these were the Pamanukan and Ciasem lands located in Krawang, which covered an area of 300,000 *bouws*. British shareholders also owned the lands of Nanggung in Buitenzorg, Kandanghaur and Indramayu-West in Cirebon, while the land of Jasinga in Buitenzorg belonged to French. In the early years of the twentieth century, the Dutch government launched the idea of repurchasing these private lands in order to curb the expansion of non-Dutch interest in the colony.

Van der Capellen's initial plan, implemented in 1821, faced difficulties particularly in Sukabumi, an area located between the Buitenzorg and Preanger regions. It had been bought in 1813 by Raffles, MacQuoid, N Egelhard and A de Wilde. This matter became notorious when Colonel Gillespie

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<sup>168</sup> H T Colenbrander, *Koloniale Geschiedenis* (1926. 's Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff), vol. III, p. 160.

used the land purchase in a personal attack on Raffles during a legal dispute. The case lasted for three years, and the Dutch government offered 800,000 guilders to regain the land.<sup>169</sup>

The following years did not see any further advance in the private land repurchasing plan. The attitude of the next Governor-General was quite different, and he even sold the lands of Cikandi Udk and Cikande Ilir in Bantam in 1828 and 1829. It was said that these were the last public land sales, the Cikande area being in addition the only private domain in the Bantam residency.

J van den Bosch, the mastermind of the Cultivation System, endeavoured to bring an end to private land sales. In 1831 he set up an investigation into the *particuliere landerijen*. Its report, completed in 1835, became the basis of a government regulation issued the following year concerning the private lands located on the west bank of the Cimanuk river. The greatest area of private land in Java as in the Batavia, Buitenzorg and Krawang regions, located on the west bank of the Cimanuk river; the private domains in the Cirebon and Semarang areas, and further into east Java were far fewer. The Cimanuk river, which lies between Krawang and Cirebon, was the geographical boundary between these areas.

The regulation of 1836 concentrated on the arrangement of the private lands on the west bank of the Cimanuk. It set out the conditions to be met by landlords and tenants, and mainly dealt with the rights for cultivation. Moreover, it said that the landlords' tithe should not exceed 1/5 of the agricultural produce and 1/5 of rice, 52 days a year of labour service for the landlord and 52 days for the government. It further regulated the landlords' obligation for ground and income taxes.<sup>170</sup> Many saw this legal arrangement as simply a codification of the unwritten

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<sup>169</sup> E S de Klerck, *History of the Netherlands East Indies* (1938. Rotterdam: W L & J Brusse), vol. II, p. 126.

<sup>170</sup> E van Delde, *De Particuliere Landerijen op Java*, p. 48.

agreements that had existed between landlords and tenants since the time of Daendels.<sup>171</sup>

Public opinion generally regarded socio-economic conditions on the private lands as poor, due to the harsh burdens imposed on its inhabitants, who were mainly indigenous. Most Dutch officials blamed the excessive semi-seigneurial rights practiced by landlords, over which there was little government control. Peasant unrest in 1886 on the Ciomas private lands seemed to justify this view. It was reported that the imposition of *tjoeke* and *pajeg* by a landlord who wanted to intensify production became unbearable for the poor tenants. Despite some accounts defending the landlord,<sup>172</sup> the case convinced the Dutch that they should proceed with the repurchase of the land, and the Ciomas estate was returned to the government in 1887.

It should be noted that despite prohibiting land sales to non-natives, the Agrarian Law of 1870 permitted long lease tenure of 75 years. Consequently the expanding agricultural industry was hardly hindered; indeed, the numbers of western plantations increased.

An official report showed that in 1898 there were 75 private lands under the management of private agricultural enterprise, covering an area of 829,929 *bouws*.<sup>173</sup> The largest, conspicuously located in the Krawang region, as the lands of Pamanukan and Ciasem, owned by Anglo-Dutch Plantations of Java Ltd.<sup>174</sup> It was said that the 300,000 *bouw* plantation owned by the British consortium represented one-fourth of the total private land on Java. It produced coffee, tea, rubber, cinchona, pepper and palm sugar, mainly for European markets. The other big private

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93

<sup>172</sup> "Onlusten op het Particuliere Land Tjiomas (Buitenzorg) in 1886", *De Indische Gids*, vol. II, p. 1886, pp. 941-942.

<sup>173</sup> Bijlage YY, "Opgave Betreffende de Particuliere Landerijen op Java van het Jaar 1898", *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1899. Before 1890, those private agricultural enterprises, or *cultuur maatschappijen*, were not included in the report.

<sup>174</sup> *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indie*, vol. III, p. 275; E van Delde, *De Particuliere Landerijen op Java*, p. 15.

land, whose shareholders were also British, was Nanggung in Buitenzorg, which concentrated on tea cultivation.

By 1909, when the private land domains held by Europeans were diminishing, the number of private agricultural enterprises was, surprisingly, growing. There were 171 companies with an area of 1,208,844 *bouws*. Significantly, these companies were concentrated in the Batavia residency, which in the early part of the twentieth century included Buitenzorg and Krawang.<sup>175</sup>

During the 1910s the Dutch government implemented its policy of repurchasing these private lands, particularly those belonging to non-Dutch shareholders. However, by 1919 the numbers were still impressive. Of the total of 138 agricultural enterprises in Java, 127 were located in Batavia residency. The total number of private lands in Batavia in 1919 was still an impressive 311, compared to the 465 in 1909.<sup>176</sup>

We must assume that transactions between existing owners were not affected by the 1870 Agrarian Law. L. Suryadinata notes on the landlord status enjoyed by HHKan,<sup>177</sup> the prominent peranakan leader who kept his seat on the People's Council for the whole period 1918-1942 may be useful here. The Agrarian Law of 1870 did not affect the status of private landownership in Batavia; therefore HHKan's status as a landlord in Batavia reflected the peculiar situation found there.

In 1890 another government investigation was carried out into the private lands, within the framework of a survey into the welfare of the native population. The results were not to the Dutch government's liking, and a new regulation was issued in 1912, based on a 1902 report.

From this report, it seems that the Dutch government could find no better way to improve native welfare than to reduce private landownership. The only solution was

<sup>175</sup> Bijlage MM, *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1900.

<sup>176</sup> Bijlage CC, *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1920; Bijlage MM, *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1910.

<sup>177</sup> L Suryadinata, *Pribumi Indonesians, the Chinese Minority and China* (1986. 2nd edition. Singapore: Heinemann Asia), p. 99, footnote 37.

repurchase or expropriation. So the issue of the 1912 regulation concerning private lands meant reinforcement of the plan for *terugkoop*, repurchasing, and *onteigening*, expropriation. The argument was that although the 1870 Agrarian Law could prevent non-natives from becoming new landowners, it was powerless to deal with existing private landownership. In addition, Dutch fear of growing European agricultural industries, particularly those owned by British shareholders, encouraged repurchase and expropriation. Rivalry between European capitalists in exploiting the colony meant that the issue of private land domain became a pressing problem.<sup>178</sup> Considering the amount of capital invested - the Pamanukan and Ciasem lands had a turnover of just under 18 million guilders - the non-Dutch private estates could well be seen as a threat by the Dutch.<sup>179</sup> They were even considered a threat to public security, since the performance of local officials in dealing with the management of private lands was far from adequate.<sup>180</sup>

The initial step taken by the Dutch to repurchase private lands was directed at plantations owned by British consortia. The private land of Nanggung in Buitenzorg was repurchased in 1906; Kandanghaur and Indramayu-West in Cirebon followed in 1910. The largest, the Pamanukan and Ciasem lands, were returned to government domain in 1918. These were the main large private lands in Java, for which the Dutch government paid 260,000, 3,500,000 and 17,000,000 guilders respectively.<sup>181</sup>

The expansion of British-owned agricultural industries on private lands justified Dutch fears. Favourable reports on the welfare of the indigenous population did not accord with

<sup>178</sup> F Fokkens, "De Beteekenis van den Terugkoop der Particuliere Landen op Java", *De Nederlanders*, nos. 5272-5275, p. 2.

<sup>179</sup> H T Colenbrander, *Koloniale Geschiedenis*, vol. III, p. 162; E van Delde, *De Particuliere Landerijen op Java*, p. 15; "Partikuliere Landen in Handen van Vreemdelingen", *De Indische Gids*, vol. I, 1910, p. 228.

<sup>180</sup> "Partikuliere Landerijen en de Openbare Veiligheid in de Residentie Batavia", *De Indische Gids*, vol. II, 1904, pp. 1078-1079; "De Partikuliere Landerijen in en om Batavia", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. I, 1911-1912, p. 804.

<sup>181</sup> L van der Hoek, "De Particuliere Landerijen in de Residentie Batavia", pp. 59-60.

public opinion which suspected that there were dangers in the domination of Chinese landownership. The 1902 Committee on the Economic Condition of the Native Population in Java and Madura, chaired by Mr C Th van Deventer, did not discover sufficient evidence to support the allegations of Chinese domination and maltreatment of natives on private lands. Despite the fact that most previous investigations into the private lands on Java had indicated the poor condition of the indigenous population living there, the Van Deventer Committee claimed that in general that conclusion was incorrect.<sup>182</sup> It was said that there were many good landlords, and this was, of course, true. The report also argued that there was no evidence to support the view that native welfare on government lands was better than that on private lands.<sup>183</sup>

In Batavia itself, it was reported that in 1901 the natives had secured a loan of 13,000 guilders from the *Bataviasche Landbouwcredietbank*, on condition that it was guaranteed by their landlords. This demonstrated that many landlords assumed responsibility for their tenants' good. Another argument was that the growing number of retail-trading houses for imported goods in Batavia did not indicate that native purchasing power was declining. Another pertinent point was that Batavia residency, despite the fact that it comprised mainly private lands, never experienced a shortage of food,<sup>184</sup> let alone famine.

It therefore seemed that the Chinese would escape being the only scapegoat, despite their domination of private landownership in Batavia residency. This did not mean that the Chinese were suddenly paragons of virtue in the eyes of the Dutch. Colonial prejudice was still there. It meant that in terms of foreign landownership in the colony, the threat

<sup>182</sup> C Th van Deventer, *Overzicht van den Economischen Toestand der Inlandsche Bevolking van Java en Madoera* (1904. 's Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff), p. 128.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>184</sup> "Particuliere Landerijen en de Openbare Veiligheid in de Residentie Batavia", pp. 1074-1075.

was coming not from the Chinese but from Europeans. This reduced public criticism of the Chinese.

The government plan to repurchase private lands in the vicinity of Batavia, that is Tangerang and Meester-Cornelis, was primarily moved by the idea of progress. These lands were to be returned to the government domain in order to facilitate city development, where space was needed for transportation networks, railways, roads, bridges and an irrigation system.<sup>185</sup>

As a substantial part of the private lands in the Batavia area belonged to Chinese and comprised small lots of land, repurchasing proceeded gradually. From 1912 to 1918, an area of 78,416 *bouws* was returned to the government domain. In 1919, a significant repurchase claimed 224,389 *bouws* of Batavia's private lands.<sup>186</sup> By 1930 the Dutch government had spent 81,334,489 guilders in the repurchase of 911,140 *bouws* of private lands.<sup>187</sup> Now government land, the inhabitants were liable for taxes: land rent, income tax and capitation tax, which was paid in place of the former labour service, or *heerendiensten*.

Due to financial restrictions in the years 1931 to 1935, land repurchasing was postponed. The Dutch government set up a semi-official body in 1935, the *Javasche Particuliere Landerijen Maatscahppij*,<sup>188</sup> or the Java Private Lands Company Ltd, to take responsibility for repurchasing land.

The transfer of private lands to government ownership came to pose some administrative difficulties for the local authorities of Batavia. Under private landownership, the landlords had selected village headmen to supervise local administration. The landlord took care of the salaries of the village headmen. The Batavia local authority, whether the

<sup>185</sup> J D Hunger, "Memorie van Overgave van het Bestuur over het Gewest Batavia, 3 Maart 1922", ARA, The Hague; L van der Hoek, "De Particuliere Landerijen in de Residentie Batavia", p. 60; *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indie*, vol. III, p. 348.

<sup>186</sup> *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1920, p. 51.

<sup>187</sup> *Indisch Verslag*, 1931, vol. I, p. 403.

<sup>188</sup> *Indisch Verslag*, 1936, vol. I, p. 329.

Assistant-Resident of Tangerang or of Meester-Cornelis, simply approved the appointment of village headmen.<sup>189</sup>

After 1905, the administration of the main cities on Java became municipal in form: city administration was arranged under the *wijkenbestuur*, or administration of a particular neighbourhood. In line with these reforms, it was proposed that the landlord's privilege in selecting his own headman should be changed to avoid conflict with the *politieel macht*, or police responsibility for headman in the private lands. The Resident of Batavia suggested terminating this privilege, and this was agreed by a Decree of 21 November 1914, no. 17.

Nevertheless, there was still a problem with the practice of *wijkenbestuur* in the private lands. While the *wijkenbestuur* was in place in the main towns of the residency, the surrounding villages were administered under the *desa-bestuur*, or village administration. The difficulties faced in the *desa-bestuur* were mostly due to the authorities' poor knowledge of its organization, particularly on the part of the indigenous officials. The Resident compared the situation in his area with that in Preanger. He said that the Preanger region had been familiar with the *desa-bestuur* for 50 years, and was served by a better transportation and communication network.<sup>190</sup> For the Resident of Batavia, the return of private lands to the government meant additional work for his undermanned office, which would now have responsibility for tax inspection, agricultural surveillance, transportation maintenance, irrigation supervision and many other duties.<sup>191</sup>

A sudden political change in the colony postponed the completion of private land repurchasing. The war in Europe followed by the Japanese occupation of the East Indies left

<sup>189</sup> Letter of the Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 2 September 1913, no. 17222/10, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 21 November 1914, no. 17.

<sup>190</sup> P de Roo de la Faille, "Memorie van Overgave bij de Nederlegging van het Bestuur over het Gewest Batavia, op 3 Februari 1919", ARA, The Hague.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*

no room for that economic measure. The turbulent period of the Indonesian Revolution (1945-1949) was not conducive to reform. In 1953, the new Republic took a radical step to settle the question of private landownership. Law no. 9 of the 1953, Necessity to Return the Private Land Properties to the Government [*Undang-Undang Tentang Pernjataan Perlunja Beberapa Tanah Partikulir Dikembalikan Mendjadi Tanah Negeri*] involved the confiscation of Chinese private lands. This was a bitter end for the Chinese, considering the long history of their settlement in Batavia.

## 7 THE END OF THE CHINESE OFFICERS

While the institution of the Chinese officers was a prominent feature of Indonesian colonial life, it was in reality weak and vaguely formulated.

The *instituut de Chineesche Hoofden* [Institute of the Chinese Headmen] which formed the *Chineesche Bestuur*, or Chinese local administration, was dependent on relations between the Dutch government and the Chinese community. Any change on either side would affect the Chinese officers. As has been shown in various studies of the Chinese of Java, it is hard to deny the Chinese contribution to the development of the island during colonial times, amid the great changes within their own community. The changes that forced the Chinese to adapt to new situations were partly caused by the changing policies of the Dutch government, in economics, law and politics. Those changes also reflected the Chinese and the Dutch government's responses to influences from China.

The fact that the Chinese officers became the focus of attention in the early 1920s reflects the collision of the three parties - the peranakan, the Dutch, and the China-backed singkeh. The debate was mainly between the peranakan and the Dutch. However, singkeh interests, particularly political rivalry for Chinese leadership in the colony, inevitably invited Chinese government interference.

For almost twenty years, the Chinese officers institution was the subject of debate within Dutch government circles, the press and the Chinese public. It focused on the question of whether it should be allowed to continue.

### **The Heart of the Matter**

The emergence of the modern Chinese movement in the early twentieth century raised many questions regarding Chinese

in the colony. The movement accommodated Chinese notions of progress, self-consciousness, nationalism, through which they reviewed their relationship with the Dutch. The modern movement did not accept that the Chinese officers would fit into its plans. As one Chinese writer explained the institution was out of date, and did not reflect the spirit of the times, for "....ia ada satoe boentoet jang katinggalan dari Oost Indische Compagnie dan dari despotisme Tionghoa koeno...."<sup>1</sup> [it was like a tail left from the VOC times and the despotism of ancient China.]

This comment should be viewed in the context of the changing economic policy of the Dutch. The early twentieth century saw the dependence of the Dutch colonial state on revenue-farming decrease. A further aspect of economic dependence came to an abrupt end in 1916, with the abolition of the passport and residence system imposed on the Chinese.

With regard to the legal systems, government plans for unification by 1918, in which the European judicial process would be applied to Chinese, made the Chinese officers even less relevant. The Chinese civil registry, or *Chineesche Burgerlijke Stand*, based on the European model was introduced in 1917. These were the circumstances in which a Dutch Jesuit said that the glorious days of the Chinese officers were almost over.<sup>2</sup>

It is not my intention to linger on the many criticisms of the Chinese officers, as these come up again and again in this chapter. It is undeniable that by the turn of the century the institution was more-or-less out of date, and could never have continued without sweeping reform. It would be valuable to examine first the position of the Chinese officers within the framework of Dutch administration of the colony.

At the end of the nineteenth century, discussions were held on administrative reform for the whole of the

<sup>1</sup> Kwee Hing Tjiat, *Doea Kapala Batoe* (1921. Berlin: n.p.), p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> J Moerman Jz., *In en Om de Chineesche Kamp* (1932. Batavia: G Kolff & Co), p. 55.

Netherlands Indies: this favoured decentralization. The core of colonial administration was carried out by the *Inlandsch Bestuur*, or Native Administration, under the supervision of the European Administration, on which the decentralization plan was mainly focussed. Yet the third substantial element that could not be ignored was the *Bestuur over Vreemde Oosterlingen* [Administration over Foreign Asiatics], in which the Chinese played the most significant role. This might be comparatively small, but was important.

As the *Chineesch Bestuur*, exercised by the Chinese officers, ran on parallel lines to the *Inlandsch Bestuur*, any reform of the latter should extend to the former. Thus during discussions on the administrative reform of the Native Administration, the question came up: where to place the Chinese Administration within this reform? Such a question had never been put before, as the Dutch had been quite content not to bother with the Chinese local administration. For centuries the Dutch had practiced segregation, which had saved them the trouble of unnecessary involvement in the ruled majority. This practice was no longer workable.

Within the framework of decentralization, by 1905 city administration had been developed into municipal government, exercised by the *wijkbestuur*, or administration of the individual neighbourhood. Given that the largest Chinese communities were in the three main cities of Batavia, Semarang and Surabaya, the issue of Chinese local administration became unavoidable. Yet the Dutch authorities could reach no decisions on the position of this administration and its officers. To place the Chinese officers under European administration might offend the Native Administration corps;<sup>3</sup> but to put them under the

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<sup>3</sup> Letter of the Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 29 June 1894, no 3722, in *Mailrapport*, no. 13/1896, ARA, The Hague; see also confidential letter of the same office, 10 December 1915, no. 685G/B, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4406, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

Native Administration was equally unthinkable, although there were those who felt this might work.<sup>4</sup>

The inability to resolve this problem lay in the origins of the Chinese officers institution. Having been created by the Dutch-VOC, the institution lacked a basic fundamental principle, or *stelselloos*,<sup>5</sup> and was always open to dispute among Dutch higher officials.

For centuries the Dutch authorities tried to keep the institution of the Chinese officers intact, which posed serious problems when the colonial administration later faced reform. Despite the changing policies of the Dutch regarding the Chinese, the main body of the *Chineesch Bestuur* was left unchanged. This may have been deliberate or simply an omission. It is quite likely that the Dutch authorities did not want to bother with an institution that took care of a people who, in terms of their numbers and political ambitions, were not as challenging as the native majority under the *Inlandsch Bestuur*. Indeed, the only active reason to retain the institution was the economic dependence of the Dutch on the Chinese. However, as the introduction of a new taxation system lessened this economic dependency, the fact that the institution remained unchanged may not have been deliberate on the part of the Dutch. The only notable change, which took place in 1878, was a modification in Chinese Council membership, to accommodate an emerging new element in the Chinese community in Batavia, namely the non-Hokkien.

As mentioned earlier, the Chinese themselves regarded the officers institution as out of date, and felt that it did not facilitate the progress of the Chinese community, although the criticism was partly untrue.<sup>6</sup> Within the Dutch government framework, the issue of the officers institution focused on its administrative complexity; but for the Chinese it was primarily an issue of political meaning,

<sup>4</sup> Confidential letter of the Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 10 December 1915, no. 685G/B, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4406.

<sup>5</sup> See "Het Bestuur over Vreemde Oosterlingen", *Indisch Verslag*, 1931, vol. I, p. 447.

<sup>6</sup> See chapter V.

especially the problem of Chinese leadership. This political aspect, in fact, gave the issue an even wider scope, in which the rivalries between Indies-born peranakan and singkeh-totok Chinese invited the interference of the Chinese government.

### **The Dutch Government's View and Plan**

Within the framework of administrative reform, a newly developed municipal government, called *Gemeente*, was introduced in the main cities of the Netherlands Indies. This reform strongly affected the Chinese Administration, for it was introduced in the main cities where most Chinese resided in their own separate neighbourhoods, known as *Chineesche wijken*.

On the other hand, those Chinese residing outside the *wijken*, or those living on the outskirts, were already attached to the Native Administration.<sup>7</sup> The issue was thus concentrated on the city-dwelling Chinese rather than those living in the surrounding areas.

However, it was admitted that in order to complete the administrative reform of the Netherlands Indies government, a review of the *Chineesch Bestuur* and the Chinese officers was inevitable. What should be the place of the Chinese officers? Should they be put on a level with European officials? This was extremely unlikely, as it might offend the native officials who formed the basis for colonial rule.<sup>8</sup>

Observing that the *Chineesch Bestuur* was exercised by Chinese officers mainly in the Chinese neighbourhoods, or *wijken*, a plan was developed to attach it to the *wijkbestuur* in the main cities. As the *wijkbestuur* were to be under the municipal governments supervised by European officials, the Chinese of the main cities would be directly under the European administration.

<sup>7</sup> Letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 29 June 1894, no. 3722, in *Mailrapport*, no. 13/1896.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

Given that the main Chinese communities were in Batavia, Semarang and Surabaya, the local authorities there were heavily involved in the reorganization of the Chinese Administration. From long discussions held in 1914-1915, it was concluded that the officership of these *Vreemde Oosterlingen* should be terminated. The reasons were as follows. First, the scarcity of qualified persons meant that many offices were left vacant.<sup>9</sup> Second, it was observed that the Chinese officership was no longer popular among the Chinese community.<sup>10</sup> Yet decision was taken.

The Government Secretary suggested improving the Chinese officers' position by providing fixed salaries,<sup>11</sup> although this idea did not receive unanimous support. The Resident of Manado in North Sulawesi preferred a system of unpaid Chinese headmen, so that the budget could be assigned for office expenditure.<sup>12</sup> Even the issue of government-paid Chinese officers, discussed in chapter 3, did not find a decision, for the more crucial point was their position as part of a thorough administrative reform. Nevertheless, the idea of reform was gathering momentum and, despite the complexity of the matter, the issue of reorganization of the *Chineesch Bestuur* was kept to the fore. Eventually the decision was reached that the Chinese would be placed directly under the European administration, exercised through the *wijkbestuur*.

As the system of municipal government would be the basis of the *wijkbestuur*, it was argued that the position of the Chinese *wijkmeesters* should be strengthened. In

<sup>9</sup> Confidential letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 10 December 1915, no. 685g/B, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4406; see also "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Maart-April 1914", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. III, 1913-1914, pp. 957-958.

<sup>10</sup> "Chineesche Officieren en Wijkmeesters", *De Indische Gids*, vol. II, 1913, p. 1473; "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Juli-Augustus 1913", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. I, 1912-1913, p. 1482; vol. III, 1913-1914, p. 1686.

<sup>11</sup> *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4406; also *Pertja Timoer*, February 1912, quoted in "Persoverzicht: De Inlandsche Pers", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. I, 1911-1912, p. 487.

<sup>12</sup> Letter of the Resident of Manado to Director of Home Affairs, 25 May 1917, no. 100a, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 2193.

addition an advisory body for Chinese affairs would be set up.<sup>13</sup> Pilot schemes plan would be carried out in Batavia, Semarang and Surabaya, and a budget of 50,000 guilders was allocated.

Further discussions were held. The Indies Council [*Raad van Indie*] said that the role of the *wijkmeesters* needed further clarification, and that attention should be given to the qualifications and salaries of the present *wijkmeesters*, since this would influence the quality of their work.<sup>14</sup> The Resident of Batavia stated that Batavia would require an annual budget of 16,320 guilders for the *wijkmeesters* salaries.<sup>15</sup> He said that in his dealings with the Chinese community, he had learnt that the work mainly involved the Chinese major and Chinese wardmasters, while other officers were, in practice, of minor importance. The Resident agreed that a good *wijkbestuur* could take over the work, thus leading to the abolition of the Chinese officers.<sup>16</sup>

The reorganization of the Chinese administration placed Chinese in a dual position; those living in the main cities would be under European supervision while those residing in the surrounding areas would be subject to native administration. In this context, the Resident of Batavia drew attention to the large Chinese communities that existed outside the three main cities of Java. He pointed out that under the new local administration, these large communities, such as those in Tangerang and Cirebon, would require a *wijkhoofden*, or chief wardmaster, to replace the Chinese officers.<sup>17</sup> This was noted by the Resident of Batavia in connection with the plan to set up an advisory body to handle Chinese affairs. Seeing that such a body

<sup>13</sup> See "Reorganisatie van Chineesch Bestuur", in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4406.

<sup>14</sup> Confidential letter of the Indies Council to Governor-General, 19 February 1916, no. 109a, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4406.

<sup>15</sup> Letter of the Resident of Batavia to Director of Home Affairs, 19 June 1914, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4406.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

would be established only in Batavia, Semarang and Surabaya, the authorities needed to be reminded of the large Chinese communities outside them.

In addition, the Indies Council was not even certain that such an advisory board would work, particularly if it was to be chaired by a European official, even if assisted by respected members of the Chinese community. The argument was that to limit the reorganization to the three cities might open still wider the differences in administrative institution between different parts of Java. Furthermore, to establish such a body might lead to a situation in which the existing Government Advisor for Chinese Affairs would become *machteloos*,<sup>18</sup> or powerless. Since 1905, the Advisor for Chinese Affairs had had offices in Semarang, Surabaya, Tanjung Pinang (Riau), Medan and Makassar.<sup>19</sup>

The Resident of Batavia expressed his feelings bluntly over the proposed advisory body. If it was to be chaired by a European official and placed under the European Administration, it meant modifications would need to be made to the European Administration itself. He argued that although the body might take over the duties of the Chinese officers, it would not have a real administrative function. Yet it would have to work closely with the present office of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs. In short, the Resident of Batavia considered an advisory body to be redundant.<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, after heated debate at a meeting held on 1-2 September 1917, it was decided to carry out the plan. The government's intention to place the Chinese under European administration was strengthened by the unsuitability of the Chinese officership to current conditions, and its increasing lack of influence over the Chinese community, as reflected in the strong feelings expressed in the Chinese-Malay

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<sup>18</sup> Confidential letter of the Indies Council to Governor-General, 19 February 1916, no. 109a, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4406.

<sup>19</sup> *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indie*, vol. I, p. 478.

<sup>20</sup> Letter of the Resident of Batavia to Director of Home Affairs, 19 June 1916, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4406.

press.<sup>21</sup> Another aspect was the presumption that since most Chinese desired equal status with Europeans, placing them under the European Administration might be welcomed.<sup>22</sup> This assumption was later proven wrong. The Chinese vehemently rejected the idea, and turned to support the existing institution of the Chinese officers.

As for strengthening the *wijkbestuur*, the Resident of Surabaya proposed unification, seeing that other minorities lived in each neighbourhood. He pointed out that a few Chinese and Europeans resided in native neighbourhoods and Chinese in Arab quarters, although few natives lived in European neighbourhoods. While agreeing with his colleague over unification, the Resident of Batavia anticipated practical difficulties. He questioned how these new wardmasters would fit into the local administrative hierarchy. Would they function in place of, or parallel to, the existing assistant-wedana [the native district chief], particularly those in the main cities? The Director of Home Affairs saw financial difficulties. The ideas was dropped.

Finally, the meeting agreed to draw up detailed plans for reorganization of the Chinese administration in Batavia, Semarang and Surabaya as a test case. Within the local administration, the duties of the Chinese officers would be taken over by notable Chinese, functioning as *Chineesche Commissie van Advies* [Chinese Committee for Advice], who would be regarded as intermediaries. The local police would now supervise security in Chinese neighbourhoods; the Chinese civil registry would under the wardmasters, while public ceremonies were to be organized by Chinese associations. The former Chinese officers would no longer sit on various government committees, such as those concerned with immigration and taxation, or the local

<sup>21</sup> Note of the Director of Home Affairs, 31 January 1917, no. III/B, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4406; see also "De Regeling van het Bestuur over Chinezen en Andere Vreemde Oosterlingen na het Verdwijnen van Wijken voor Ingezetenen van die Landaarden", *Mailrapport*, no. 3426/1922, in *Verbaal*, 10 March 1923, no. 5, ARA, The Hague.

<sup>22</sup> Confidential letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 10 December 1915, no. 685G/B, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4406.

council of justice. In their place, notable non-officer Chinese would be appointed.<sup>23</sup> As a guide to the working practices of the new *wijkbestuur*, new instructions would be issued on 1 January 1918.

The undoubted aim of this plan was to make the Chinese officers defunct. While the meeting agreed this, it could not decide whether officers would be permitted to continue to use honorary titles. This was because the administrative experiment might not work. The decision was that all Chinese officers in active service should be relieved of their title.

Nevertheless, a final decision on the institution of the Chinese officers took a further seventeen years. This gave the Chinese considerable opportunity to consider their opinion.

### **The Chinese Response**

The establishment of the first modern Chinese association, the *Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan* (THHK) in 1900 was soon followed by that of others. Unlike the pioneering work of the peranakan Chinese of Batavia, which was directed towards socio-cultural goals, other Chinese organizations, such as *Siang Hwee* and *Soe Po Sia*, were preoccupied with economic and political aspirations.

It is important to repeat the distinction between the two elements of the Chinese community in the Netherlands Indies, the Indies-born peranakan and the singkeh-totok Chinese. In the first quarter of the twentieth century, the Chinese political movement in the colony saw harsh rivalries between the two: the issue of the peranakan dominated officers institution entered these rivalries. It is easy to see how the Chinese officers became an easy target for attack by the singkeh-totok and the China-oriented peranakan.

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<sup>23</sup> Note of Director of Home Affairs, 31 January 1917, no. III/B, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4406.

Before the emergence of the Chinese modern movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Chinese officers, despite their ambiguous position, were at least considered the leaders of their community. In the sense of political inspiration and prestige, they might not be true leaders; but within the colonial context, the Dutch officially named them the *Chineesche Hoofden*, Chinese headmen.

When the institution lost its economic importance in the early twentieth century, some progressive Chinese officers pushed their community to thrive in terms of a modern development. Such idealism was born with the formation of the THHK, pioneered by the peranakan of Batavia. I have already shown, in chapter 5, that criticism of the Chinese officers for their lack of encouragement towards the Chinese movement was in many ways unjustified. Yet there was indifference in the part of the peranakan officers towards singkeh-totok associations such as *Soe Po Sia* and *Kuo Min Tang*.

The influence of the Pan-Chinese movement was seen as early as the 1910s, when singkeh activity became strong. The early Chinese turbulence of 1912-1913, which occurred all over Java, the changing policy of the Dutch, favouring the peranakan, Chinese representation in the People's Council, and the issue of the Netherlands-subject law, all became targets for singkeh attacks and for interference by the Chinese government in the Chinese problems of the colony. There was vehement singkeh antagonism towards the Chinese officers, who were mostly peranakan.

Fierce criticism of the Chinese officers was at its peak in the 1910s. Clearly the singkeh would never accept the officers, considering that these positions were occupied mainly by rich peranakan; yet singkeh influence managed to stir up anti-officer feeling even among the peranakan, as was demonstrated in the Chinese-Malay press.

The strongest criticism was found in the daily *Pewarta Soerabaia*, although it is not clear whether the peranakan majority in Surabaya's Chinese community shared the

hateful opinions expressed in the press. This newspaper decried the Chinese officers as 'yes-men', who were unrepresentative of their own people, merely 'comedians',<sup>24</sup> simply figureheads of formality.<sup>25</sup> They were condemned as '*de tweede pest van Java*'<sup>26</sup> [the second plague of Java]. The bitter complaint of the Surabayan Chinese was that they were severely underrepresented within the officership. It was also said that the Chinese officers should be intermediaries, rather than weapons of the Dutch government, and that their appointment should involve selection by members of all Chinese ethnic groups.<sup>27</sup> This was undoubtedly the voice of the non-peranakan element. A strong anti-Western feeling was also evident: the same newspaper accused the officers of being slaves of the whites and traitors to their own race.<sup>28</sup>

The fierce criticism of the Chinese officers seeing in the two China-oriented peranakan dailies, the *Pewarta Soerabaia* and *Sin Po* of Batavia, the Dutch took it for granted that the Chinese majority no longer wanted the institution.<sup>29</sup> If *Pewarta Soerabaia* and *Sin Po* both bore the influence of the Pan-Chinese nationalist element, the other extreme was represented by the *Perniagaan* of Batavia. The *Perniagaan* was probably the single fighter for the officers in the battle of words with *Sin Po* and *Pewarta Soerabaia*.

The two important Semarang dailies, *Djawa Tengah* and *Warna Warta*, appear to have followed a middle course,

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Mei-Juni 1912", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. I, 1911-1912, p. 847.

<sup>25</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Juli-Augustus 1912", *ibid.*, p. 1134.

<sup>26</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Maart-April 1914", *op.cit.*, vol. III, 1913-1914, p. 957.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 958.

<sup>28</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, December 1914", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. IV, 1914-1915, p. 395.

<sup>29</sup> Note of Director of Home Affairs, 31 January 1917, no. III/B, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4406; "Bijstand van aan Gewestelijk Bestuur voor de Behandeling van Chineesche Aangelegenheden, December 1923-Januari 1924", in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 2065; this is also mentioned in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 184x/1930.

which very much reflected the sentiments of Semarang's Chinese population. Being the smallest of the three main Chinese communities in Java, Semarang sometimes let itself be drawn towards the socialist influence of Surabaya, despite being the seat of an important branch of the peranakan *Chung Hwa Hui* party. The *Djawa Tengah* and *Warna Warta* might voice the anti-officer feeling of the Semarang Chinese, but the expression was far less hostile. The main complaint was that the officers position were much too remote from their own community.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, the papers accused the officers of being untrustworthy Dutch public relations officers for Chinese affairs.<sup>31</sup> Yet, despite such criticism, Semarang was a strong voice in Chinese public opinion in Java when it swung round to support the Chinese officers at the end of 1914. That shift took place as the Dutch sought to place the Chinese under direct European administration, in order to pave the way for the end of the Chinese officers.

The *Perniagaan* persistently pointed out the value of the officers, particularly during the current political turmoil. The Dutch observed that only the *Perniagaan* of Batavia made efforts to back the Chinese officers.<sup>32</sup> In response to the criticism that the officers were foolish, the *Perniagaan* indignantly replied that it was not the officers but the Dutch government regulations which were foolish.<sup>33</sup> The *Perniagaan* was owned by several Batavia Chinese officers.<sup>34</sup>

By the time the Dutch plan to place the Chinese under European administration was publicly known, majority opinion, previously against the officers, had turned to

<sup>30</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Juni 1914", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. III, 1913-1914, p. 1265.

<sup>31</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, Januari-Februari 1914", *ibid.*, p. 527.

<sup>32</sup> See "Beschouwingen over Chineesch-Maleische Pers van Mei 1918", and "Chineesch-Maleisch Persoverzicht van Juli 1918", in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4390.

<sup>33</sup> *Perniagaan*, 22 June 1918, quoted in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4390.

<sup>34</sup> Letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 23 January 1917, no. 74/B, in *Verbaal*, 31 March 1919, no. 52.

support them. The Dutch were taken by surprise when the Chinese so vehemently rejected the plan. The Chinese never wanted to be under European officials, let alone subordinate to Native administration.<sup>35</sup> Even the *Perniagaan*, of 25 June 1918, made the provocative statement that the Chinese would have no objection towards the abolition of the Chinese officers, if that meant full equal status with Europeans.<sup>36</sup>

The Chinese-Malay press began to show moderation. But not the *Sin Po* of Batavia, which simply ignored the discussion. The majority of the Chinese-Malay press suggested allowing the Chinese to select their own officers; and it sought more understanding of the authorities' problem in finding qualified persons for these positions.<sup>37</sup>

Kan Hok Hoei (HHKan), the notable Chinese representative in the People's Council, pointed out during a meeting on 19 November 1918 that the Chinese officers in the colony were lumps in the throat of the awakening nationalist groups. They were used as scapegoats. HHKan regretted the way in which the government had taken account only of the anti-officer criticism; this was unwise, since the officers themselves had no objections to reform. The Dutch should be reminded that for centuries they had taken the officers for granted without giving financial compensation. As Chinese voting rights for local councils were not yet in place, to dismantle officer representation would be premature. He pointed out that, for the time being, the Dutch still needed Chinese representation in various offices to accommodate Chinese public interests.

During the meeting, the Director of Home Affairs raised the issue of the scarcity of qualified persons for Chinese

<sup>35</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, December 1914", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. IV, 1915, pp. 395, 1541-1542.

<sup>36</sup> Quoted in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4390; see also *Djawa Tengah*, 24 September 1918, quoted in *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. VIII, 1919, p. 117.

<sup>37</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, November 1914", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. IV, 1915, p. 250; for press review in April 1917, see *ibid.*, vol. VI, 1917, p. 1254; see also *Perniagaan*, 22 June 1918, quoted in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4390.

officership. As the policy of racial segregation was no longer workable, and yet there were large numbers of Chinese in the three main cities in Java, this scarcity posed a major problem. The Dutch government now realized that to place the Chinese under European Administration was not feasible, since Europeans could not be intermediaries between these two non-indigenous communities. This was why the government now strongly urged the adoption of the system of *wijkbestuur* in the three main cities, a cooperation between the Chinese, the native wardmasters and the Dutch local authorities.

However, HHKan argued that the Chinese were not satisfied, for voting rights were based on quotas, which would leave the Chinese with just 13 votes. This would be insufficient to influence events and, in any case, did not reflect reality. In his opinion, placing a Chinese wardmaster in a Chinese neighbourhood was nothing more than an administrative formality.

As for the core of the problem, HHKan blamed the government for emphasizing abolition rather than encouraging people to consider maintaining the institution. Apparently he had received thirty cables and twenty letters from Chinese associations urging him to maintain the officers; why had the Dutch government never thought to consult those groups? When it came to other matters, such as administrative reform or the Indies militia, why did the Dutch authorities issue official statements and explanations; but not in this case? Surely not because they thought of the Chinese as an insignificant minority.

HHKan complained that the official discussions had not involved any Chinese members of the People's Council, and that advice had been taken only from Dutch officials who could hardly comprehend Chinese expectations. His criticism underlined the crucial point - that of equal rights for every group in the colony.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> For these arguments, see *Verhandelingen van den Volksraad van 1918* (1919. 's Gravenhage: Algemeen Landsdrukkerij), pp. 274-277, 280-281, 288-289, 292-293, 296.

If HHKan was outspoken in his support of the Chinese officers of whom he had a deep knowledge and understanding, the other representative from the *Chung Hwa Hui* party, Han Tiauw Tjong, introduced a broader context. While HHKan, who believed that democracy should be adopted in the Netherlands Indies government, insisted on equal rights for every group, Han Tiauw Tjong felt that the basic problem lay with the civil status of the Chinese. Nevertheless, he could not deny that over the course of time the Chinese officers had lost prestige in their own community, and that their authority continued to decline. To many Chinese, the title '*hoofden hunner natie*', chiefs of their nationals, was mockingly interpreted as 'slavish servants of the European Administration'.<sup>39</sup>

Han Tiauw Tjong's criticism of Dutch policy was that despite Chinese being Netherlands subjects, they were not released from their *Vreemde Oosterlingen* status. In terms of their status as Netherlands subjects, the Chinese, in Rousseau's concept of a social contract between the state and the people, were *sujets* but not *citoyens*.<sup>40</sup> In other words, the Netherlands subject law as applied to the Chinese in the colony, provided only for territorial ties but did not extend to them personal rights as full members of the community.

The points made by Han Tiauw Tjong at the meeting of the People's Council on 16 June 1924 were in fact the reasons given by the Chinese government for interfering in the Chinese question in the Netherlands Indies. It was the Netherlands-subject issue that invited China's interference in Chinese political matters in the colony; its previous intervention had been on the safer ground of Chinese education. Much to the displeasure of the Dutch, the new government of China could justify its actions in terms of a foreign policy of protecting its overseas subjects, including Chinese residents in the Netherlands Indies. Chinese

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<sup>39</sup> See the fifth meeting of the People's Council, 16 June 1924, in *Verhandelingen van den Volksraad van 1924*, p. 54.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

grievances could be used as a weapon for political interference, particularly as the government of China was familiar with the unfavourable condition of the Chinese in the colony. Many Chinese members of various associations paid visits to the mainland to meet Chinese higher officials.<sup>41</sup> These delegations included peranakan members who were attached to Chinese-singkeh organizations.

The government of China viewed the question of the Chinese officers in the context of its diplomatic goals, which were directed towards international equality for the Chinese. The official opinion was that as soon as the Chinese government promulgated new civil rights, the Chinese of the Netherlands Indies would be given equal treatment with Europeans. Eventually the Chinese officers system would be abolished, to minimize impediments to the equal treatment of the Chinese.<sup>42</sup> The idea of equal status was shared by the government of China and by the Indies-born peranakan, albeit with different aims and perceptions. It would be interesting to explore the different attitudes of the peranakan and the singkeh in the Netherlands Indies, despite their shared desire to be treated on equal terms.

The Dutch were somewhat narrow-minded in keeping the issue within the limits of administrative reform. This was particularly so, since their patronizing attitude as well as their ambiguity towards the Chinese and lack of insight invited external interference.

Despite its changing policy on the Chinese, now favouring the peranakan in the hope of avoiding an uneasy confrontation with singkeh-totok, the Dutch sought to consider the Chinese question as a whole. Their behaviour was ambivalent - policy and practice fell apart. Indeed, their error in failing to differentiate between peranakan and singkeh<sup>43</sup> - due to unwillingness or ignorance - exacerbated the problem.

<sup>41</sup> See *Verbaal*, 29 October 1920, no. 52.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in the letter of Dutch Ambassador in Beijing to Minister of Foreign Affairs, 11 November 1931, in *A dossier*, no. 7797, Ministry of Colonies Archives, ARA, The Hague.

<sup>43</sup> "Onze Chineezzen-politiek", *De Indische Gids*, vol. I, 1907, p. 97.

The office of Advisor for Chinese Affairs should take part of the blame, because of its unbalanced interest in the singkeh and China-oriented peranakan groups. It assumed that the aggressive singkeh were the real threat to Dutch authority. In their obsessiveness with the singkeh Kuo Min Tang movement, their reports stated that the peranakan regarded the singkeh-totok as semi-alien<sup>44</sup> and, later, that the estrangement between the two had became still more distinctive.<sup>45</sup>

As the office of Advisor for Chinese Affairs paid such attention to the China-oriented movement, its advice to the government did not reflect the real circumstances in the Chinese community. That their information was misleading was shown when the Chinese public vehemently rejected the government's plan to abolish the Chinese officers. It is interesting to observe how this Chinese question created an embarrassing row between Home Affairs and the Advisor for Chinese Affairs. I will elaborate later. The *Djawa Tengah* daily of Semarang reported that at a Chinese meeting held in the city in 1915, attended by 7,000 representatives from various organizations, a petition in support of the Chinese officers was sent to the Governor-General. But the Advisor for Chinese Affairs, who had been present, stuck to his opinion that the majority of Chinese desired their abolition.<sup>46</sup> At another meeting, held in Bandung, the THHK declared its opposition to the government plans for the Chinese officers. But the Advisor for Chinese Affairs did not accept this, for the government plan had been its response to Chinese complaints against their officers. Why did the Chinese now reject the plan? The Chinese claimed that their dissatisfaction lay with a system in which the officers were not selected by their own community, and in which the officers frequently

<sup>44</sup> Note of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to Governor-General, 9 January 1924, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 43x/1924.

<sup>45</sup> "Overzicht over de Chineesche Beweging in Nederlandsch-Indie, Maart 1930", in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 120x/1930.

<sup>46</sup> "Persoverzicht: De Chineesche Pers, November 1916", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. VI, 1917, p. 248.

decided matters in a way that did not benefit the Chinese. The Advisor argued that his understanding of the situation had been taken from the Chinese-Malay press. He was then told that the Chinese press, despite being published and managed by Chinese, should not be seen as the voice of the Chinese in the Netherlands-Indies.<sup>47</sup> The *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, a Dutch newspaper published in Batavia, argued that the situation had been created by incomplete, confusing and misleading official information. In addition, there had been no explanation by the Dutch of their administrative reorganization.<sup>48</sup> The government belief that the Chinese majority favoured abolition of the officers was clearly wrong.<sup>49</sup>

In the face of these objections, the Dutch were obliged to reconsider the plan to place the Chinese directly under European administration.

### Measures for Measures

The office of Home Affairs observed that as the Chinese desired equal status with Europeans, to put them under European administration would certainly be accepted.<sup>50</sup> In addition, Chinese officers in certain large cities such as Semarang and Surabaya were no longer involved in the administration of their communities as such duties were now handled by the local authorities. Tax collection was carried out by the wardmasters, while religious, cultural and charitable work were taken care of by Chinese associations.<sup>51</sup> But for the Chinese the question of the

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 249.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted in "Hervorming van het Chineesch en Inlandsch Bestuur", *De Indische Gids*, vol. I, 1919, p. 495.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 496.

<sup>50</sup> Confidential letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 10 December 1915, no. 685G/B, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4406.

<sup>51</sup> Letter of the Resident of Semarang to Director of Home Affairs, 8 June 1915, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4406; see also letter of Governor of East-Java to Governor-General, 9 January 1930, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 184x/1930.

officers would not have arisen had the Chinese been given equal status with Europeans.

The Advisor for Chinese Affairs had long been discontented with the Chinese officers because of their failure to communicate. Complaints were often raised that the government received little information on Chinese political matters.<sup>52</sup> A report made during an official visit to Central Java in 1929 indicated how poor communication was. It said that most Dutch local officials received almost no information from the officers on Chinese affairs in their area.<sup>53</sup> Whether this was because the officers were ignorant of many of these problems, the visiting official from the office for Chinese Affairs was uncertain. He assumed that in delicate circumstances the Chinese officers preferred to stand aside and not favour any party.<sup>54</sup> He was referring to the competitive political struggle among the Chinese, for by 1928 Kuo Min Tang followers had launched their anti-Japanese campaign which made the peranakan even more uneasy.

The Advisor for Chinese Affairs also suggested that any Chinese political action was a reflection, however small, of Chinese government action. To the dismay of the officials of Chinese Affairs, the Dutch residents hardly thought about the political meaning of such movements. This was the starting-point for the conflicting views between the offices of Chinese Affairs and of Home Affairs.

The office of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs considered Chinese problems in the colony to reflect the Chinese government's policy regarding its overseas subjects. It was therefore not surprising that the office paid greater attention to the singkeh Kuo Min Tang movement in the colony and to non-peranakan activities in general. This

<sup>52</sup> Letter of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to Director of Home Affairs, 21 August 1923, no. 464/23, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 2065.

<sup>53</sup> "Verslag van een Dienstreis Ondernemen door den Ambtenaar voor Chineesche Zaken, AHJ Lovink naar Tjilatjap, Poerwokerto, Pekalongan en Semarang in de Maand December 1929", in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 131x/1930.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

suggests a rather Sino-phobic attitude, which was not shared by most local officials. The officials for Chinese Affairs disapproved of the attitude of Dutch local officials who were inclined to favour the peranakan.

Many Dutch local authorities, particularly those in areas with large Chinese communities, saw that the Indies-born peranakan were integrated into the local society.<sup>55</sup> To the Resident of Batavia, most Chinese inhabitants in the area had been absorbed into native life, partly because they had been agriculturists for centuries.<sup>56</sup> After the anti-Chinese incidents of 1912-1913, the Chinese appeared to become even more appeasing, so that the hostile outrage of the natives could be avoided. This helped to reduce tension.<sup>57</sup>

However, most local officials' observations were based on their understanding of the Indies-born Chinese nature which, according to the offices for Chinese Affairs, was too narrow on insight. It said that the local residents and their subordinates had a knowledge of the Chinese that belonged to the past. Later the Chinese would feel that the local authorities judged them only on external appearance, and knew nothing of the inner workings of the communities. These local authorities knew little of events in China, and that political events on the mainland had direct repercussions on the Chinese in the colony. It was difficult to achieve real understanding if the global Chinese movement was ignored.<sup>58</sup>

Unlike the office for Chinese Affairs, the Home Affairs office adopted an inward-looking attitude towards the Chinese problems. Given the long-established Chinese settlement in the colony, every Chinese movement should be the concern of Netherlands Indies domestic policy. The office of Home Affairs was convinced that the Indies-born peranakan majority were steadfast in their orientation

<sup>55</sup> "Onze Chinezen-politiek", *De Indische Gids*, vol. I, 1907, p. 98.

<sup>56</sup> H Rijfsnijder, "Memorie van Overgave van den Residentie Batavia, 28 Juli 1911- 2 Augustus 1916", ARA, The Hague.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> H J Borel, "De Chineesche Kwestie en de Ambtenaren van 't Binnenlandsch Bestuur", *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. I, 1912-1913, pp. 41-42.

towards the country of their birth rather than towards China. It believed that problems in politics, education, the economy, the issue of Netherlands subject status and voting rights should be solely the government's concern.<sup>59</sup> It said that while the office for Chinese Affairs might focus on the external influences from China, the most important element was the internal politics of the local Chinese population. Not all Chinese were captivated by the nationalist sparkle from China, particularly those born and bred in the colony. Most never thought to return to the mainland, and their desire for equal status with Europeans showed that their concern was mostly with the social and economic development of their local society.<sup>60</sup> Chinese grievances and expectations in regards to political rights, legal status, civil rights, education and separate local administration, were the most important issues.<sup>61</sup> The two offices, then, held very different views on Chinese problems: and the climate of disagreement began to affect their working performance, particularly that of the office for Chinese Affairs.

Many local officials were not happy with the frequent visits by officials from the office for Chinese Affairs to survey the Chinese situation in their area. Yet the office for Chinese Affairs rejected the idea that local authorities should take over the work, arguing that it was their duty to provide information on the local Chinese situation and its connection with global Chinese jingoism.<sup>62</sup> The office persisted in its opinion that all activities undertaken by the Chinese movement in the colony were reflections of what was taking place in China, that there was almost no genuine political action taking place at the local level, except in Batavia. If any political danger came into the colony it

<sup>59</sup> Letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 23 January 1924, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 68x/1924.

<sup>60</sup> "Bijstand van aan Gewestelijk Bestuur over de Behandeling van Chineesche Aangelegenheden, December 1923-Januari 1924", in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 2065.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Letter of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to Governor-General, 22 December 1923, no. 715/23, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 2065.

would enter through Batavia, and this could easily be detected.<sup>63</sup>

Much to the dismay of the Chinese Affairs office, the subsequent administrative reform and government proposal to reorganize the *Chineesch Bestuur*, led to questions about its status within the government. If this office should mainly be occupied with the internal affairs of the Chinese in the Netherlands Indies, the Director of Home Affairs argued that it should be under his supervision, not only in terms of administrative hierarchy but also in terms of policy.<sup>64</sup> The office of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs strongly rejected this idea on the grounds that their functions covered foreign political issues and was not concerned merely with the internal observation of the Chinese in the colony. The Advisor said that even in the near future, with growing political tension among the Chinese, it was not internal but external politics that would be of serious concern to the government. Therefore it was not appropriate for his office to be supervised by Home Affairs;<sup>65</sup> he preferred the present status in which it was responsible to the Governor-General. Although the Director of Home Affairs might admit the importance of foreign influences on the local Chinese, he believed that it had no bearing on this office's function, since it was the responsibility of Dutch embassies and consulates in China and in other parts of Asia, under the Foreign Affairs office. The Director repeated that the concern of the Chinese Affairs office was with Chinese matters in the Netherlands Indies.

Many local officials in Java faced problems in carrying out the reorganization of the Chinese Administration, particularly as the Dutch had not issued a clear plan. Since

<sup>63</sup> Letter of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to Director of Home Affairs, 21 December 1923, no. 464/23, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 2065.

<sup>64</sup> Letter of the Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 24 Janauary 1924, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 68x/1924.

<sup>65</sup> Letter of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to Governor-General, 22 December 1923, no. 715/23, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 2065.

the Chinese had rejected the idea of being administered by European officials as early as 1914, the Dutch simply abandoned the plan. The implementaion of the *wijkbestuur*, particularly in the three main cities, was no simple matter either.

The idea behind the *wijkbestuur* was to abandon the segregation practice of wardmastership, and replace the old regulation of March 1828 under which each nationality had its own wardmaster. For the Chinese, this regulation had allowed the formation of Chinese neighbourhoods consisting of 25 households.<sup>66</sup> It is likely that the Chinese had no objection to this change of administrative system, provided that those living outside the Chinese *wijken* were placed under native wardmasters. In fact, the objection came from Arab residents. They refused to be supervised by a Chinese wardmaster if this new model of *wijkbestuur* was adopted by the local authorities.<sup>67</sup> However, this objection was considered to be of minor importance; the main obstacle in reality was finance.

Under this new model, in which wardmasters would receive government salaries, the local authority of Batavia, for example, was expected to pledge about 72,141 guilders a year.<sup>68</sup> At that time, Batavia's city administration employed 74 native, 25 Chinese and 3 Arab wardmasters. Under the old system they received 8% of tax revenues and fees from the '*wacht-en rondadiensten*', a compulsory vigil service in the neighbourhood. As wardmasters were to become government staff, they would be relieved from providing this security service; this meant that it would be necessary to improve and expand the local police force. The Resident of Batavia estimated that it would be necessary to

<sup>66</sup> Noted in the letter of the Resident of Batavia to Director of Home Affairs, 9 September 1912, no. 10118/3, in *Missive Gouvernement Secretarie*, 13 May 1914, no. 1197, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

<sup>67</sup> Letter of the Resident of Batavia to Director of Home Affairs, 25 September 1918, no. 18327/1, in *Agenda*, 30 September 1918, no. 31028, Arsip Nasional, Jakarta.

<sup>68</sup> Letter of the Resident of Batavia to Director of Home Affairs, 9 September 1912, no. 10118/3, in *Missive Gouvernement Secretarie*, 13 May 1914, no. 1197.

employ 330 second class police which, at twenty guilders a month, would add 79,200 guilders to the annual budget.<sup>69</sup> Although under the reorganization scheme, the local authority of Batavia would reduce the number of wardmasters to 48 by 1915, the total number of local *wijkbestuur* was still 253, whose salaries amounted to 71,940 guilders a year.<sup>70</sup>

In addition to the financial restrictions which delayed the implementation of the *wijkbestuur*, there were complaints regarding the poor working performance of the Chinese wardmasters. It was agreed that while waiting for a further decision on the reorganization of Chinese local administration, the existing officers should be released from office to pave the way for the introduction of effective *wijkbestuur*.

To his dismay, the Resident of Central Preanger found the current two Chinese wardmasters to be of poor quality, unable to carry out their duties without guidance. This had been particularly so in the previous few years, when on so many problems, political issues, security and taxation matters, the Resident had been obliged to consult the ex-lieutenant, Tjan Djin Tjong.<sup>71</sup> His complaint was supported by the Inspector of Finance, who had discovered that the two wardmasters had lacked the ability to handle complicated duties.<sup>72</sup> The view that the Chinese officers should be retained was therefore not at all unreasonable.

Although the Chinese in Surabaya were accustomed to the absence of a Chinese major, the office had been vacant since 1924, the need for a Chinese intermediary was clearly acknowledged. The Resident also admitted the poor performance of the city's Chinese wardmasters.<sup>73</sup> As the

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 13 January 1915, no. 36.

<sup>71</sup> Letter of the Resident of Central Preanger to Governor of West Java, 2 November 1928, in *Mailrapport*, no. 3366/1929.

<sup>72</sup> Quoted in the letter of Resident of Central Preanger to Governor of West Java, 29 June 1929, in *Mailrapport*, no. 3366/1929.

<sup>73</sup> Noted in the letter of Governor of East Java to Director of Home Affairs, 13 December 1928, in *Mailrapport*, no. 2501/1929.

aim of improving the *wijkmeesters* was to enable them to take over the duties of the Chinese officers, the Governor of East Java did not see any difference if the Chinese intermediary were to be appointed.<sup>74</sup> But the Advisor for Chinese Affairs underlined the distinctive features of the wardmasters' duties, noting that while they might give information to the local authorities on Chinese affairs, this should not extend to giving political advice.<sup>75</sup> The plan to appoint Chinese intermediaries attached to local authorities, so that the Chinese officers could be terminated, was not a simple matter.

Dutch government records show how the plan was often thwarted by local circumstances. In the city of Bandung, where 13,000 Chinese resided without any representatives on the city or regency councils, the Resident urged the appointment as captain of the ex-lieutenant, Tjan Djin Tjong.<sup>76</sup> This was not granted. In Kediri in East Java, the Resident sought the appointment of the old wardmaster, Kwee Siong Khoen, to lieutenant: this was granted in 1923.<sup>77</sup> A government decree of October 1924 agreed to the appointment of Sie Biauw Gwan as Chinese lieutenant of Banyuwangi, East Java.<sup>78</sup> In the same year, Riau and its adjacent areas were allowed to appoint one captain and eight lieutenants.<sup>79</sup> It was planned to reorganize the Chinese administration in the residency of West Kalimantan, by reducing the number of officers while paying better salaries to those who remained. In Palembang, it was suggested that the current Chinese institution be maintained,<sup>80</sup> based on the Resident's adamant statement of

<sup>74</sup> Letter of Governor of East Java to Director of Home Affairs, 13 July 1932, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 704x/1932.

<sup>75</sup> Letter of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to Governor-General, 21 July 1932, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 704x/1932.

<sup>76</sup> Letters of the Resident of Central Preanger to Governor of West Java, 2 November 1928, 29 June 1929, in *Mailrapport*, no. 3366/1929.

<sup>77</sup> Letter of the Resident of Kediri to Governor-General via Director of Home Affairs, 18 October 1923, in *Mailrapport*, no. 1334/1924.

<sup>78</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 10 October 1924, no. 40.

<sup>79</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 24 May 1924, no. 44.

<sup>80</sup> See *Geheim Mailrapport*, nos. 624x/1924, 647x/1924.

his need for a separate administration for the Chinese. He argued that essential contact with the Chinese population could be maintained only through the Chinese officers.<sup>81</sup>

It is noteworthy how local authorities delayed the reorganization of the Chinese officers, and how in many cases, in Banyuwangi and Kediri in East Java and even, in 1931, in parts of Central Java (Pekalongan, Kudus, Klaten and Surakarta), new officers were still being appointed.<sup>82</sup> The Resident of Central Preanger, whose request to appoint a new Chinese officer had been declined, became frustrated with indecisive government policy, and blamed the office for Chinese Affairs for paying too much attention to the Chinese-Malay press. The fact that the Chinese did not agree among themselves made the situation even more complicated.<sup>83</sup>

The Resident of Batavia remarked on the 'double-standards' of the Dutch administration in reorganizing the Chinese administration by terminating their offices and at the same time launching another institution, the *Chineesche Commissie van Advies* [Chinese Committee for Advice] to cooperate with the local authorities. He said, "the present situation is entirely strange".<sup>84</sup> Seeing the delay of more than ten years, the Chinese, who kept questioning the reorganization plan, rebuked the government for its inertia.<sup>85</sup>

Finally, in 1929, explaining that they had given 'serious consideration' and 'scrupulous study' to the issue, the Dutch arrived at their decision. This was to restore the *Chineesch Bestuur* of Batavia to its 1913 formation, namely one

<sup>81</sup> Letter of the Resident of Palembang to Governor-General, 11 September 1924, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 775x/1924.

<sup>82</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 31 December 1932, no. 6, giving consent to the promotion of some previous wardmasters to lieutenant.

<sup>83</sup> Letter of the Resident of Central Preanger to Governor of West Java, 29 June 1929, in *Mailrapport*, no. 3366/1929.

<sup>84</sup> J D Hunger, "Memorie van Overgave van het Bestuur over het Gewest Batavia op den 3 Maart 1922", ARA, The Hague.

<sup>85</sup> See Liem Ting Tjay, "Het Instituut der Chineesche Officieren", *De Chineesche Revue*, July 1928, p. 76.

major, two captains and four lieutenants;<sup>86</sup> the Chinese officership in other parts of Java and Madura would be allowed to decay naturally,<sup>87</sup> a '*natuurlijk afstervingsproces*'.<sup>88</sup> The government pledged 265,512 guilders to hasten this process; the current Chinese officers, except for those in Batavia, would be given either a lower allowance or early retirement. Most older officers, such as the elderly captains in East Java (Purwadadi, Kediri, Tuban and Sumenep in Madura), willingly accepted retirement.<sup>89</sup> A reduced budget allocated 11,156 guilders as the annual allowance for the remaining Chinese officers, excluding those in Batavia. It was agreed that by early 1934, the institution of Chinese officers in Java and Madura would come to an end.<sup>90</sup>

### Batavia: The Exception

In the previous sub-chapter, it was noted that the Chinese nationalists saw no future for the officers. As this sentiment was stirred up by the China-oriented nationalist movement, and was behind the growing criticism in the Chinese-Malay press, it gave the impression that the Chinese community no longer favoured, possibly even disliked, their own officers. As the office for Chinese Affairs concentrated on the singkeh and the China-oriented movement, the opinion of the press guided the Dutch perceptions. This misunderstanding was the basis for the abolition of the Chinese officership.

<sup>86</sup> See *Verhandelingen van den Volksraad van 1927/1928*, p. 21; the formation was approved by *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 4 January 1913, no. 27.

<sup>87</sup> "Het Bestuur over Vreemde Oosterlingen", *Indisch Verslag*, vol. I, 1931, p. 447.

<sup>88</sup> Letter of Director of Home Affairs to all Chiefs of Local Administration in the Netherlands Indies, 8 January 1932, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 603x/1932.

<sup>89</sup> Letter of Governor of East Java to Director of Home Affairs, 9 March 1932, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 603x/1932.

<sup>90</sup> Letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 13 November 1933, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 1409x/1933; and *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 30 March 1934, no. 2.

In accordance with administrative reforms which abandoned separate local administration for the *Vreemde Oosterlingen*, it was planned to place the Chinese in the large cities under European administration. It was this plan that was the turning-point in Chinese opinion. Now the Chinese started fighting for self-determination, not wanting to be directly ruled by Europeans. The Dutch were taken by surprise when the Chinese rejected the plan. They now proposed maintaining the officers, who should be elected by their own community. And if they could not avoid being placed under European administration, they would bargain for equal status with Europeans. Here can be seen the feeling that the Chinese could never trust the Dutch, let alone be ruled by them. For centuries they had been left to be self-sufficient, with occasional interference in their affairs, which had so far been tolerated.

The Chinese distrust was particularly evident over the question of the Chinese Council, for this was the central element in Chinese self-sufficiency. In Batavia, the Chinese Council not only carried out the daily work of the *Chineesch Bestuur* but also managed Chinese properties, for which it was granted proprietary rights.<sup>91</sup> On the other hand, the Semarang Chinese Council now had virtually no involvement in Chinese affairs, except for religious matters, while in Surabaya, the Council had long been defunct, due to the lack of members.<sup>92</sup> Thus it was the Chinese Council of Batavia that needed serious consideration.

The fact that the Chinese now supported the officers (albeit with strong proposals for reform) indicates how the peranakan, again, managed to resist singkeh influence. Again the Dutch mistake was the failure to distinguish adequately between the two elements of the Chinese population in the

<sup>91</sup> Letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 31 January 1917, no. III/B, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4406; "De Regeling van het Bestuur over Chineesche en Andere Vreemde Oosterlingen na het Verdwijnen van Wijken voor Ingezetenen van die Landaarden", *Mailrapport*, no. 3426/1922, in *Verbaal*, 10 March 1923, no.5; see also P de Roo de la Faille, "De Chineesche Raad te Batavia en het door dit College Beheerde Fonds", *BKI*, vol. 80, 1924, pp. 305-323.

<sup>92</sup> See *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4406.

colony. This error can be attributed to the long rivalry between the Department of Home Affairs and the office of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs. Because each office took a different view and approach, reflecting their poor understanding of the Chinese situation, the Dutch authorities were never able to construct a coherent policy. The effect was felt by the peranakan in particular.

It is clear that for the singkeh-totok Chinese, the peranakan officers were simply unacceptable. To expect these officers to act as intermediaries between the singkeh and the European administration was a serious misjudgement. These eminent and wealthy peranakan officers, many of whom no longer spoke a Chinese dialect, had little compassion for the poor uneducated singkeh.<sup>93</sup> However, for the Chinese of Batavia, this did not apply.

The non-peranakan were represented in Batavia's Chinese Council. The ordinary Chinese favoured the officers. "*Djikaloe djabatan officier Tionghoa telah dihapoescan, begitoepeon Raad Tjienda ditiadakan, maka bagi orang orang Tionghoa jang miskin dan bodo adalah nanti mendjadi soesa boeat sampekan sagala maksoed dan hal halnya kapada Pamarenta, kerna itoe orang orang Tionghoa jang miskin dan bodo kebanjakan jang tiada berani aken sampekan maksoednya, kaloe boekan dengen ia orang poenja kapala bangsa sendiri, apalagi bagi orang Tionghoa totok jang dengen bitjaranja jang blon begitoe pande bahasa Melajoe; dengen begitoe soeda mendjadi kapiran segala hal hal jang mendjadi kapentingan bagi hamba berame, begitoepen bagi Pamarenta*"<sup>94</sup> [had the Chinese officership been abolished, and the Chinese Council as well, it would be difficult for the poor and uneducated Chinese to present their expectations and problems to the Government, because those poor and uneducated Chinese mostly did not dare to air these unless to their own headmen, let alone those singkeh-totok Chinese who were not so articulate in the

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<sup>93</sup> Liem Ting Tjay, "Het Instituut der Chineesche Officieren", p. 74; that all Chinese officers in Surabaya were peranakan, was also note in the letter of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to the Governor-General, 1 August 1912, no. 248, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 4 January 1913, no. 27.

<sup>94</sup> Letter sent by the Chinese inhabitants of Batavia and Weltevreden districts, 23 July 1918, in *Agenda*, 14 January 1919, no. 1635.

Malay language; all of which would be a waste to our interest as well as to the Government].

The Chinese of Batavia were, in many respects, an exceptional case. They had the longest contact with the Dutch, from the time of the VOC through the British interregnum to the present. They also had the longest history of Chinese officership. Being members of the largest Chinese community in Java, and being both urban and rural, their interests were too significant to ignore. This was even more so since the city, as well as being the seat of Dutch power, owed much to the Chinese for its establishment and growth.<sup>95</sup> It is quite understandable that the Dutch paid more attention to this Chinese community.

Unlike the non-peranakan in other parts of Java, particularly those in Surabaya who condemned the peranakan officers for having no interest in their problems, the Chinese of Batavia had no reason to feel resentful. The non-peranakan element had been represented on the Chinese Council since 1878. And by the first decade of the twentieth century, when the city had 16,000 peranakan, 7,000 Hakkas, 4,000 singkeh-Hokkiens and 1,200 Macaos,<sup>96</sup> there were two Hakka officers, one singkeh-Hokkien, and one Macao lieutenant; one of the Hakka officers was later promoted to captain. Later, in 1912, as a result of the reorganization of the Batavia local administration, the Chinese officership was reduced to one major, two captains and four lieutenants. The two captains represented the peranakan and the Hakka, the main elements in the city's Chinese population.<sup>97</sup>

Despite its shakiness, its unevenness and the unsystematic way in which it had been established, the Chinese officership of Batavia had proven to be steadier and longer lasting than its counterparts in other parts of Java.

<sup>95</sup> See Leonard Blussé, *Strange Company. Chinese Settlers, Mestizo Women and the Dutch in VOC Batavia* (1986. Dordrecht: Foris Publications), particularly chapter V.

<sup>96</sup> Letter of the Resident of Batavia to Governor-General, 18 October 1912, no. 319/C, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 4 January 1913, no. 27.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

Resulting from Dutch negligence towards the officership in Semarang and Surabaya, the Chinese riots of 1912 clearly demonstrated the need for a workable understanding between the Dutch local authorities and the Chinese officers. On the other hand, the turbulent years of 1912 and 1913 kept the local authorities alert to the disputes between singkeh and peranakan, and to the conflicts between singkeh Chinese and Arabs, and between the Chinese and the indigenous people. They also coloured the opinion of the Resident of Batavia towards the established peranakan community in his residency.

The Dutch local authorities of Batavia believed that the Chinese majority in the residency, in other words the peranakan, were in general quiet and peaceful citizens, with few criminals among them.<sup>98</sup> The inclination on the part of the Dutch to favour the peranakan was quite understandable, since the peranakan political party, the *Chung Hwa Hui*, focused on the Dutch East Indies rather than on China.

The longevity of the Batavia officers smoothed the way for Batavia to launch test case. By 1919 all Chinese officers in Batavia had been released from their administrative positions. At a meeting on 1-2 September 1917 between the Director of Home Affairs and the Residents of Batavia, Semarang and Surabaya, it was considered whether the temporarily annulled officers could retain their titles, even on an honorary basis. As the Dutch were uncertain about the result of the test case, it was decided to grant them honorary titles and express official appreciation for their services.<sup>99</sup>

On 24 March 1919, major Khouw Kim An was officially retired while remaining a titular major. Yet, in waiting for the final reorganization, the local authorities of Batavia

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<sup>98</sup> "Politieke Verslagen van de Residentie Batavia, 1851-1880", in *Batavia*, no. 10; see also "Overzicht van de Chineesche Beweging in Nederlandsch-Indie", in *Geheim Verbaal*, 11 February 1933, no. R.2.

<sup>99</sup> Note of the Director of Home Affairs, 31 January 1917, no. III/B, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4406.

asked him to continue to carry out his major duties.<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, the test case led the local authorities in Java's three main cities to adopt the new institution of the *Chineesch Commissie van Advies*, with positions to be given to notable Chinese. Batavia again encountered no difficulties, since the ex-major Khouw Kim An was simply the most suitable person for that position.<sup>101</sup> It might be anticipated that the end of the Chinese officers and of the major in particular would have affected the organization of the Chinese Council. As the Chinese major was identified with the chairmanship of the Council, the question was whether other members would prefer a new chairman to ex-major Khouw Kim An. To the Resident's relief, the members agreed that the ex-major should continue in his leading position on the Council.<sup>102</sup>

By September 1927, the reorganization of the *Chineesch Bestuur* in Batavia was complete, with the return to the old composition of 1912, namely one major, two captains and four lieutenants.<sup>103</sup> In the vicinity of Batavia, Tangerang had only one captain and one lieutenant,<sup>104</sup> while Buitenzorg was able to keep one captain and two lieutenants.<sup>105</sup> Four years later, a further reorganization reduced the officers to one major, one captain and one lieutenant. From the existing captains, Lie Tjian Tjoen and Yo Heng Kam, the latter was released from his position.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>100</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 24 March 1919, no. 15; and 12 November 1926, no. 9.

<sup>101</sup> J D Hunger, "Memorie van Overgave van het Bestuur over het Gewest Batavia op den 3 Maart 1922"; also noted in the letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 22 December 1923, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 66x/1924; and in the letter of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs to Governor-General, 22 December 1923, no. 715/23, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 2065.

<sup>102</sup> See letter of the Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 27 June 1923, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 704x/1923; and also noted in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 12 November 1926, no. 9.

<sup>103</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 27 September 1927, no. 2; and also PH Willemse, "Memorie van Overgave van de Residentie Batavia, 26 October 1931", ARA, The Hague.

<sup>104</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 28 September 1928, no. 19.

<sup>105</sup> See *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 30 September 1927, no. 21.

<sup>106</sup> Letter of the Resident of Batavia to Governor of West Java, 21 January 1932, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 603x/1932.

As Yo Heng Kam was then Chinese representative on the People's Council and also a member of the Provincial Council of West Java, his political influence would not be disadvantaged by his discharge. As a Chinese captain, Yo Heng Kam was also a member of the Chinese Council in Batavia: it would therefore be more appropriate if this position was held by another Chinese officer. Moreover, it was thought that to release Yo Heng Kam would not discomfort his peers.<sup>107</sup> At first Yo Heng Kam was rather reluctant to relinquish his captainship, preferring to keep the honorary title although he had no permission to do so. Eventually the Resident managed to discourage him, saying that it would be pointless to maintain the title with the introduction of the new local administration system, and Yo Heng Kam subsequently withdrew his request.<sup>108</sup>

The choice of whom, among the four lieutenants, should be retained, was Lie Boen Sien. He was already in charge of taxation matters, supervising the administration of the Chinese wardmasters, and inspecting articles published in the Chinese-Malay press. In addition, unlike the other Chinese officers, Lie Boen Sien was not a rich man. His work was very much appreciated by the Departments of Home Affairs and Finance. Releasing him from his position could well leave him in financial difficulties.<sup>109</sup>

Nobody would object to Khouw Kim An, who was restored to his majorship in February 1927. He was a man of means, from the well-known Khouw family of Meester-Cornelis. As a good Chinese officer, Khouw Kim An was well-informed about events in Batavia, particularly within the Chinese community.<sup>110</sup> The Dutch authorities of Batavia were very

<sup>107</sup> Letter of the Governor of West Java to Director of Home Affairs, 14 November 1929, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 12x/1930.

<sup>108</sup> Letter of the Resident of Batavia to Governor of West Java, 10 March 1932, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 603x/1932.

<sup>109</sup> Letter of the Resident of Batavia to Governor of West Java, 21 January 1932, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 603x/1932.

<sup>110</sup> J D Hunger, "Memorie van Overgave van het Bestuur over het Gewest Batavia op den 3 Maart 1922".

pleased with his services and trusted him.<sup>111</sup> On the other hand, the non-peranakan or singkeh-totok were very hostile towards him. Owing to his alertness, the 1912 Chinese riots, the Chinese reaction to the China-Japan conflict, and the boycott against Japanese goods in Batavia, did not culminate in serious situations. It was during these crises that the local authorities in Batavia found the Chinese officers to be a source of good advice.<sup>112</sup> It demonstrated how the local authorities could rely on the peranakan officers in facing the stormy singkeh in the colony. In addition, many Dutch officials admitted that without the Chinese officers the European civil administration would have to take on numerous extra tasks.

Thus far I have discussed the political and administrative reasons for maintaining the institution of Chinese officers in Batavia. Another factor that made the Dutch very cautious was the internal structure of the *Chineesch Bestuur* itself. As the daily work of the Chinese officership, was undertaken by the Chinese Council, change would be certain to affect the Council. All matters regarding the Chinese community, including schooling for children of the Chinese poor, orphanages, charities and mass ceremonies, were taken care of by the Council. Moreover, the Council administered Chinese properties, land, cemeteries, temples and hospitals, together with their funds.<sup>113</sup>

Knowing that the Dutch government intended to terminate the Chinese officers, the Chinese of Batavia became anxious, fearing that the Dutch might also terminate the Chinese Council and confiscate its properties. Although the government gave an assurance that this would not happen, the distrust among the Chinese could not be immediately assuaged. The reorganization plan would place Chinese properties under the Committee for Management of the

<sup>111</sup> Letter of the Resident of Batavia to Governor of West Java, 21 January 1932, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 603x/1932.

<sup>112</sup> Letter of Governor of West Java to Director of Home Affairs, 31 May 1932, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 704x/1932.

<sup>113</sup> Yo Heng Kam, "Reorganisatie van den Chineeschen Raad", *De Chineesche Revue*, July 1928, pp. 79-80; see also Chapter IV.

Properties of the Former Chinese Council, which would probably be chaired by a European official,<sup>114</sup> possibly from the office of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs. This made the Chinese even more uncomfortable, for they never felt at ease with this office. As HHKan noted, the Chinese wished that the office of the Advisor for Chinese Affairs was more a friend than a Dutch government spy.<sup>115</sup> To allow the management and disposal of their community funds to slip out of their hands and be administered by Europeans was obviously unacceptable.<sup>116</sup>

Given that particular concern of the Batavia Chinese Council, it was then proposed that the Council be reorganized in negotiation with the remaining Chinese officers. For the reasons given above, the local authorities in Batavia, supported by the Governor of West Java, resisted the idea of abolishing these Chinese institutions; yet they were opposed by the Director of Home Affairs and the Advisor for Chinese Affairs. Both officials found no reason to exclude Batavia, particularly as other cities such as Semarang and Surabaya posed no problem.<sup>117</sup>

In the end it was the status of the Batavia Chinese Council as a corporate body that led the Dutch to make it an exception. The properties managed by the Council were in bank deposits, mortgages, company shares and in 28 plots of land. Its income was derived from interest, rents, services for Chinese cemeteries and hospitals, and from land leases.<sup>118</sup> This financial position could be understood only by the local authorities, a point which officials in the offices of Home Affairs and the Advisor for Chinese Affairs

<sup>114</sup> Note of Director of Home Affairs, 31 January 1917, no. III/B, in *Binnenlands-Bestuur*, no. 4406

<sup>115</sup> See *Verhandelingen van den Volksraad van 1918*, p. 277.

<sup>116</sup> See "De Regeling van het Bestuur over Chineezzen en Andere Vreemde Oosterlingen", *Mailrapport*, no. 3426/1922, in *Verbaal*, 10 March 1923, no. 5.

<sup>117</sup> Letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 25 April 1932, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 603x/1932.

<sup>118</sup> "Verslag van de Commissie voor het Financieel Beheer van den Chineeschen Raad", 17 November 1927, in *Gouvernementsbesluit*, 5 November 1929, no. 17.

failed to see. This meant that both the Chinese officers and the Chinese Council of Batavia would be maintained, in a new form.

To match the reorganized Chinese officers in Batavia, the membership of the Chinese Council was also rearranged. After 1928 the Chinese Administration consisted of one major, two captains and four lieutenants, all of whom were members of the Council. In addition, Chinese public opinion demanded that Council membership be open to private persons representing Chinese associations. To meet this demand, the Dutch agreed to allocate two seats on the Council to private persons,<sup>119</sup> and in December 1928 the THHK nominated Tan Pia Teng and Nio Peng Liang as the first non-officer members of the Chinese Council.<sup>120</sup>

In 1931 the Chinese officership was again reformed, to comprise one major, one captain and one lieutenant. The Council was now composed of two officers and two non-officers, under the major's chairmanship. As it was agreed that there would be six seats on the Council, who would occupy the remaining seat? For the Dutch, to appoint another officer was simply out of the question, after their long efforts to reorganize the institution in Batavia. The Chinese also preferred to appoint another private person to the Council, for the present arrangement meant that the three officer members including the major as chairman, outnumbered the two non-officers. This inequality was undesirable, as it could lead to possible abuses in the working of the Council.<sup>121</sup> It was therefore agreed to give the remaining seat to a third non-officer member. The third private member was Dr Tjiong Boen Kie, the only member of the Chinese Council in pre-independent Indonesia who was

<sup>119</sup> Noted in the letter of Director of Home Affairs to Governor-General, 25 April 1932, in *Geheim Mailrapport*, no. 603x/1932; Yo Heng Kam, "Reorganisatie van den Chineeschen Raad", p. 77; Nio Joe Lan, *Riwajat 40-Taon dari Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan Batavia 1900-1939* (1940. Batavia: THHK), p. 181.

<sup>120</sup> Nio Joe Lan, *op.cit.*

<sup>121</sup> Yo Heng Kam, "Reorganisatie van den Chineeschen Raad", p. 85.

an academic. His appointment is dated 9 March 1940.<sup>122</sup> It is unclear why it took almost nine years for the Chinese to nominate him.

Two years later, the Chinese community was shattered by the Japanese occupation. The arrival of the Japanese army was welcomed by the Indonesians, who hoped that it would assist in the achievement of independence from the Dutch. Unlike their Indonesian fellows, the Chinese were plunged into anxiety; during the China-Japan conflict, the local Chinese had launched anti-Japanese campaigns and boycotts. Many Chinese were taken into concentration camps, especially prominent members of the community. Among them was major Khouw Kim An who found no escape.<sup>123</sup> He died in a prison camp in 1945.

The end of the Netherlands Indies government also meant the end of the Chinese officers. The new Indonesian Republic could not accommodate that institution.

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<sup>122</sup> See "Residentie Batavia", in *Regeeringsalmanak voor Nederlandsch-Indie van het jaar 1941*, vol. II, p. 291.

<sup>123</sup> Nio Joe Ian, "Sepuluh Tahun Terakhir dari Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan di Djakarta", in *Hari Ulang Tahun ke-50 Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan, Djakarta 3 Djuni 1900 -3 Djuni 1950* (1950. Djakarta: THHK), p. 29.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The thesis has considered the Chinese officers in Batavia in the period 1837-1942. Given that Batavia was the home of the largest Chinese community, did Batavia provide an accurate representation of Dutch policy towards the Chinese in Java? Did the Dutch attitude towards the Batavian Chinese, who were mainly peranakan, reflects its general Chinese policy.

As Batavia is still underrepresented in the study of the Indonesian Chinese, that question is still difficult to answer completely. Being favoured in practice, the peranakan of Batavia and their officers showed up Dutch ambiguity and indecisiveness; not only in the nineteenth century, when the Chinese became indispensable in the colonial economy, but also in the early twentieth century, when their political aspirations grew.

In the last decades, Chinese issues had to be viewed not only through the peranakan-singkeh-China triangle but also in the context of the growing Indonesian nationalist movement. Favouring the peranakan could be seen as the Dutch response to the threat of Chinese government interference and to rising Indonesian nationalist demands.

The characteristics of the peranakan may themselves have contributed to Dutch ambiguity and indecisiveness. Seeing that many peranakan cherished their sentimental ties with China, yet eagerly showed themselves to be children of Indonesia, the country of their birth, Dutch policy towards the Chinese was understandably often inconsistent. This was clearly shown in the application of the 1910 Netherlands-subject Law.

The ambiguity was also seen in the decision to abolish the Chinese officers yet establish a Chinese advisory committee to act as an intermediary between the Dutch authorities and the Chinese. Exempting Batavia from the

abolition of the Chinese officers further shows the lack of a comprehensive Dutch policy regarding the Chinese in the Indies.

I am acutely aware that further research would refine my argument, although it would not, I believe, overthrow my main conclusion. There is need for comparative studies of the Chinese officers in Semarang and Surabaya; study of the relationships of the Chinese officers with other public figures in the community; of the two peranakan political parties, the *Chung Hwa Hui* and the *Partai Tionghoa Indonesia*; Chinese participation in the People's Council and in colonial government; and Dutch economic policy as far as it affected the Chinese.

Comparative studies of the Chinese officers in Semarang and Surabaya would confirm the different practices of Dutch policy with respect to Chinese local administration in the different cities in Java.

A study of the relationships of the Chinese officers with other public figures in the community would further illuminate the political dimensions of Chinese officership and the struggle for Chinese leadership.

A detailed study of the *Chung Hwa Hui* and the *Partai Tionghoa Indonesia* would further demonstrate the vulnerability of the peranakan within the context of the rising Indonesian nationalist movement.

Study of Chinese participation in the People's Council and in colonial government might illustrate the peranakan view concerning their status as members of the Dutch East Indies community.

Examination of Dutch economic policy as far as it affected the Chinese might explain the roots of anti-Chinese feeling, particularly as it emerged in the early twentieth century.

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