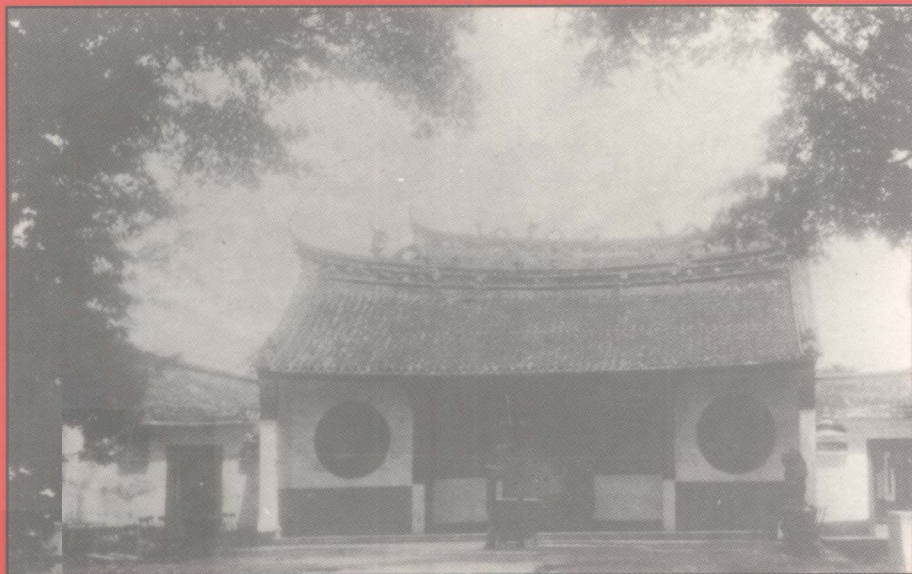
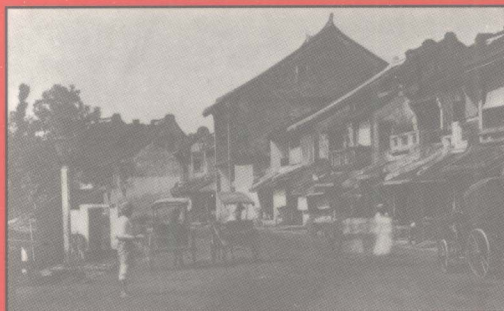


# The Kapitan Cina of Batavia

1837-1942

Mona Lohanda



# **The Kapitan Cina of Batavia 1837-1942**

**A history of Chinese Establishment  
in Colonial Society**

**Mona Lohanda**



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Front-cover clockwise:

A view of the Chineesche Kamp, Batavia.

A Chinese with his boy.

Petak Sembilan (Chinese temple in 1932).

*Percetakan Karya Unipress*

## **The Kapitan Cina of Batavia 1837-1942**

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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.

Mona Lohanda

## Preface

**T**he 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 Chineezenvan 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 Chineezenvan Jakarta; Beschrijving van een Minderheidsgroep*,<sup>4</sup>

- 
1. (1932. Second edition. Batavia: G. Kolff & Co.).
  2. (1938. Leiden: E. J. Brill)
  3. (1980. Paris: Etudes Insulindiennes-Archipel, vol. I).
  4. (1981. Leiden: Leiden University, Institute of Cultural and Social Studies).



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 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

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5. (1986. Dordrecht: Foris Publications).

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

7. I.J. Moerman. *De Chineezten in Nederlandsch Oost Indië* (1933, Batavia: P. Noordhoff), p. 19.

Chinese economic networks and their relationships with the VOC authorities in Batavia. Blussé's work is more a social history of the Batavia 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 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 essential aspects of the Chinese in Batavia, particularly their management of their community.

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 working 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. Wil-

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

liams, *Overseas Chinese Nationalism; the Genesis of the Pan-Chinese Movement in Indonesia, 1900-1916*, and James R. Eush, *Opium to Java; Revenue-Farming and Chinese Enterprise in Colonial Indonesia, 1860-1910*, 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.

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. Focusing 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 offices 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 record 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-Indië*.

## Notes on Transliteration

**F**or 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.

## Notes to Second Edition

**I**n this second edition the main text remains unaltered, except for photo's and pagination.

Index refers to photo is indicated by page number with alphabetical mark, i, e, ..... a, ..... a, and so on.

Mona Lohanda

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# I

## The Population of Batavia Under the VOC, 1619-1800

### The Background

**B**y 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>

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1. 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.



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 Asisticks, 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, 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, particular 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>

2. See A. Reid, "The Rise of Makassar", *Review of Indonesian and Malayan Affairs*, double number, 1983, pp. 117-160.
3. W.E. van Mastenbroek, *De Historische Ontwikkeling van de Staatsrechtelijke Indeeeling der Bevolking van Nederlandsch-Indies* (1934. Wageningen: H. Veenman & Zonen), pp. 22-23.
4. *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indies*, vol. III, pp. 422-423.