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## The Birth of the Surabaya Chinese School during the Dutch Colonial Period

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### Abstrak

Pembahasan mengenai keberadaan etnis Tionghoa di tengah perkembangan kota Surabaya menjadi bagian awal dalam penulisan penelitian ini. Artikel ini mencoba untuk mengungkap Dinamika Pendidikan Anak-Anak Tionghoa Surabaya pada Masa Penjajahan Belanda. Relasi Tionghoa-Jawa sangat erat, bahkan keberadaan etnis Tionghoa sebagai salah satu entitas sosial di tengah masyarakat kota juga menjadi bahan pembahasan, untuk mengetahui dinamika Pendidikan dan perubahan sosial kemasyarakatan kota Surabaya. Sejarah kota tidak dapat dipisahkan dengan dinamika sosial politik masyarakat yang pasti dimulai dari pendidikan. Perkembangan kota mempengaruhi karakter dan perilaku seseorang dalam sosial masyarakat. Untuk mencapai tujuan tersebut digunakan metode sejarah, yang meliputi: heuristik, kritik, interpretasi, dan historiografi. Hasil yang dicapai yakni "masyarakat Tionghoa Surabaya melalui Pendidikan melahirkan pemikiran baru yang memiliki pengaruh pada proses dekolonisasi" yang akan dijelaskan dalam artikel ini.

**Kata Kunci:** Surabaya, Tionghoa, Sekolah.

### Abstract

*The discussion about the existence of the Chinese ethnic in the midst of the development of the city of Surabaya is the initial part of writing this research. This article tries to reveal the Education Dynamics of Chinese Children in Surabaya during the Dutch Colonial Period. Chinese-Javanese relations are very close, even the existence of ethnic Chinese as one of the social entities in the city community is also a subject of discussion, to find out the dynamics of education and social changes in the city of Surabaya. The history of the city cannot be separated from the socio-political dynamics of society, which must begin with education. The development of the city affects the character and behavior of a person in society. To achieve this goal, historical methods are used, which include: heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The result achieved is that "the Chinese community of Surabaya through education gives birth to new ideas that have an influence on the decolonization process" which will be explained in this article.*

**Keywords:** Surabaya, Chinese, School.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In recent times, the importance of historical writing about the Chinese ethnicity in Indonesia has been recognized. This is because the Chinese are an inseparable ethnic group in the frame of Indonesian history. So far, the writing of ethnic Chinese history has focused more on economic and socio-cultural themes. Writing about politics has not been done much, let alone photographing the political life of ethnic Chinese in the local dimension of the city of Surabaya. (Riyadi, 2016)

The existence of ethnic Chinese in Surabaya has existed since the 13th century. They have become an integral part of the people of the city of Surabaya, especially for the *peranakan*, because they are able to communicate in the language used by the local community. Onghokham said that the *peranakan* Chinese in Surabaya were also able to play Javanese dances, because they did not live in their original culture. They control the economic sector by becoming entrepreneurs and small traders. In addition, they also adhere to ancestral traditions by carrying out various religious activities as part of the identity of the Chinese people. In the field of education they also have private Chinese schools. One of the most famous Chinese schools in the 1950s was Min Kuang School, which was located on Jl. Argopuro 11-15 Surabaya. The school has professional teaching staff graduates from several universities of the People's Republic of China (PRC), such as Fatan University Shanghai, Yenching University Peking, Fukien Normal School, Amoy University, Southeastern University Nanking.

In fact, based on data, the total number of ethnic Chinese population in the city of Surabaya reached 109,551 people or about 12.8% of the total population of 855,891 people. This number is quite large compared to other non-indigenous ethnicities such as Europeans reaching 32,329 people, and Arabs as many as 7,811 people.<sup>12</sup> The formation of DPRDS refers to Government Regulation No: 39 of 1950, where the requirements for political organizations to be able to have representation are if they have at least five branches. This means that even though the ethnic Chinese population is large, it is not necessarily possible to nominate a candidate to be able to sit in the DPRDS. (Asfar, 2006)

In addition, private schools of the Chinese ethnic in Surabaya are also prohibited from giving lessons or political propaganda to their students. The regulation was issued by the Surabaya teaching office, which aims to prevent disturbances to public order. Surprisingly, the policy is only issued to foreign private schools. Based on the explanation above, the main problem in this research is to see the dynamics of the education of children of Chinese descent in Surabaya during the Dutch colonial period. (M. C. Ricklefs, 2005)

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses historical methods, which include: heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The sources used in writing this thesis consist of primary and secondary sources. The primary source in this paper consists of archives in the form of salary reports for DPRS members in which there are DPRS members from Chinese ethnicity. The archives are in the form of Foreign *Peranakan* Affairs (UPBA) letters, archives of lists of names and addresses of political organizations established in 1949, letters from Chinese organizations and so on. After all the sources were collected, the authors conducted a validity test with the sources that had been collected previously. In addition, the author also critiques the source by testing the authenticity, validity,

originality and relevance of the source to the research theme. Source criticism is divided into two, namely first, internal criticism as a criticism of the source content, source validity, which sees the suitability of the content described in the source. In this paper, verification is carried out by selecting the appropriate news and year with the event occurring. External criticism is done by looking for the originality of the source by looking at the year of manufacture, the paper used, and things related to the physical form of the source. The sources that have been collected are then grouped. The grouping is done by compiling the periodization of the obtained sources. This is done to make it easier to do the next step. The author then interprets the sources that have become historical facts and are in accordance with the theme. In the process of interpretation, the writer must understand every sentence written in the source, because the spelling that was written in the 1950s period was different from the current period.<sup>50</sup> After that, the last stage was to assemble the source into a writing in the form of a historical story. (M. C. Ricklefs, 2005)

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Chinatown, Chinese Ethnic Village**

The emergence of Chinatown cannot be separated from the influence of mass killings and ethnic Chinese resistance to the VOC in 1740. These events made the VOC 1901. Second, it reveals the existence of Chinese ethnicity in the city of Surabaya, starting from the history of their arrival, the development of Chinatown as a Chinese village to the struggle in the field of education. Chinese people, as one of the forces influencing his political consciousness. issued a policy to isolate the Chinese people throughout the territory. When the VOC power ended, the Dutch East Indies government continued this policy by enacting the *wijkenstelsel* regulation in 1835. The regulation regulates the division of residential areas based on ethnicity. The goal is to make it easier for the government to supervise all community activities in its territory.

The settlement area is divided into three regions, namely, European, Chinese, and Malay areas. The Malay region also includes ethnic Arabs, Kojas, and Bengalis. The three residential areas were surrounded by city walls which became known as the old city. In addition, the mobility process of Chinese people is also limited due to the *passetensel* regulation. These two policies made the Chinese people very constrained and difficult to carry out activities in various fields. (Suryadinata, 1984)

To facilitate the supervision and coordination of the Chinese people, the Dutch East Indies colonial government appointed a leader for the Chinese people with the rank of Captain. His duties were related to trade, besides that he was also in charge of collecting head taxes for the Chinese people (*hoofdgeld der Chineezzen*). Along with the increasing number of Chinese people in Surabaya, the Dutch government appointed a Major. <sup>35</sup> This appointment was motivated by two problems, namely the increasing number of Chinese people in Surabaya and the increasing importance of the economic role of the ethnic Chinese in economic activity. The first major in Surabaya was held by The Goan Tjing in 1829.

At the beginning of the 20th century there was Major Han Tjiong Khing, he was a wealthy Chinese, also known as a sugar factory entrepreneur and the owner of the land of Ketabang Lor. Major Han Tjiong Khing was once the target of anger from the Chinese people of the city of Surabaya who were considered pro-government of the Republic of China led by Dr. Sun Yat Sen. The incident was motivated by Major Han Tjiong Khing's suggestion to the Dutch East Indies government to prohibit the Chinese people of

Surabaya from flying the Chinese flag. As a result of the incident Major Han Tjong Khing's house was damaged and many of his belongings were looted. (Kartodirdjo, 1993)

Even though they received military titles by the Dutch East Indies government, they were not military. For the lowest position is the head of the neighborhood (*wijkmeester*), this position is not awarded a military title by the government. It's just that for Hockey people the neighborhood heads are referred to as *lotia* (oldest people). *Lotia*'s job was to manage the population administration of the Chinese people.

Architecturally the buildings between the three ethnic groups mentioned above have their own characteristics. The European house is a large building with a large yard. On the roof there is a small tower resembling a chimney that has a function as air ventilation, but it is also limited by a high fence. The residences of the Chinese are generally in the trading area of Surabaya. The characteristics of the building are the use of a *peloana* roof and have curved angles and are decorated with dragon snakes or fish and use red colors, while for the middle class Chinese, the roofs of their houses are decorated with dragon fins, and there are many burial places.



Picture. 3 Surabaya's Chinatown  
Source: <http://kitlv.picturadp.nl/>

In contrast to European and Chinese villages, Arab and indigenous villages almost have similarities with permanent building permanent use connected by small alleys. Meanwhile, for the lower middle class indigenous people still make bamboo or wood as the main material in making houses. The village has narrow alleys and is crammed behind European and Chinese buildings. The ethnic Chinese settlement area is facing European settlements, to be precise in the east of Kali Mas to the west of Kali Pegirian.

Chinese settlements are called Chinatowns, usually marked by a Chinese architectural style gate. During the Dutch East Indies period, there were two Chinatowns, namely the old Chinatowns whose territory included *Topekong Straat*, *Chineesche Voorstraat*, *Chineesche Breestraat*, *Suiker Straat*, *Bibis Straat* and *Handelstraat*. Meanwhile, the new Chinatowns include *Kapasan Boen Bio*, *Kapasan Gang Major*, *Kapasan Bedoro*, *Pasar Bong*, *Chineesche Buitengeweg* (now *Jalan Sambongan*) to *Bibisbrug*, and *Bunguran*.

Many Chinese also live outside the city walls, such as in *Keputran*, *Jabakota* district, *Jenggala I* (*Pepe*, *Buntitan*, *Gedangan*, *Gisik* villages), *Jenggala II* (*Panjunan*, *Lemahputra*, *Dayu*, *Daleman*, *Pucanganom*, *Kauman* villages). *Jenggala III* (*Dembangan*,

Banjarnayar, Krian), and Jenggala IV (Bebekan, Wonocolo, Karangnangka, Ketawang).<sup>39</sup> Of the Jabakota districts where most of the Chinese are inhabited are the villages of Perak, Kejawen, Sukolilo, Larangan, Ketintang, and Ngagel. Of the many Chinatown locations in Surabaya, Kapasan has been a bustling trading area since the mid-19th century, and has even survived to this day. Kapasan residents can be divided into two groups. The rich *peranakan* group lived along the Kapasan highway, while those who lived in the alleys behind buildings along the highway were the less fortunate groups. Their jobs in the alleys are as shop assistants, and craftsmen, such as watchmakers, tailors, barbers, carpenters, cigarette factory workers and others. For *totok* Chinese, they mostly live on Sambongan and Sidoadi roads, which are branches of Kapasan street. The Chinatown area has become a densely populated settlement, this is due to the increasing number of births and immigrants from China. As a result, the map of the residential areas of the Chinese shifted to the west, such as Kaliondo, Kalianyar, Ngaglik, and Keputran. At the beginning of independence until the 1950s the ethnic Chinese population in Surabaya was not only in one point in the Chinatown area, but had mingled and lived in indigenous villages. Based on the population, there is an increase in the number of Chinese people every year, as shown in the table below:

Table. 7. Number of Chinese in Surabaya 1950-1953

Year	Quantity
1950	102.363
1951	109.551
1952	112.426
1953	112.114

Source: Trumpet Society, April 1, 1953.

Even though there were many Chinese people in the city of Surabaya who had spread out, until the 1955 general election, the Chinatown area remained a village where the majority of the population was Chinese. The Chinatown center is located on Kapasan, Cantian, Kembang Jepun, and Jembatan Merah roads. Chinatown is the biggest trading place in the city of Surabaya, besides that, various facilities such as hotels, restaurants, cinemas, hospitals and schools are available.

## **2. Chinese Ethnic Education**

The awareness of the Chinese in Surabaya towards the world of education is motivated by the emergence of Chinese nationalist and nationalist ideas. The idea was spread to the Chinese merchant community through the Siang Hwee association, and religious associations such as Khong Kauw Hwee Surabaya. In its development of 6 million, currency and demand deposits also increased by 1 billion, while the stock of gold reserves decreased by billion. The Siang Hwee association became a large trading organization and facilitated various social and community activities for the Chinese people.

The birth of the Ho Tjong Hak Tong or Ho Tjong Hak Kwan association in Surabaya in 1902 became a separate force for the ethnic Chinese in increasing intellectuality.<sup>59</sup> The association was engaged in education by raising money to build schools for Chinese children. The first school opened by the Ho Tjong Hak Kwan association was a kindergarten and elementary school in Keputran.<sup>60</sup> The existence of the Ho Tjong Hak Kwan school is very helpful for Chinese children in Surabaya, because so far the number of Chinese schools has not been able to accommodate them. Seeing the

growing need for Chinese schools, on February 3, 1904, it was reopened at Topekong Straat under the name Tjong Hoa Hak Tong (THHT) or Hoo Tjong Hak Tong. Tjong Hak Tong or Ho Tjong Hak Kwan Association was inspired by Tjong Hoa Hwee Koan (THHK) which was founded in Batavia in 1900. Although Tjong Hak Tong or Ho Tjong Hak Kwan was formed in 1902, it was only recognized by the colonial government on May 12, 1904.

The classification of Chinese ethnic education is based on the use of the language of instruction in teaching. At the beginning of the 20th century there were schools that used Dutch and Chinese. Like the Ho Tjong Hak Kwan school which uses Chinese as an introduction. The Dutch East Indies government through the Governor General J.B. Van Heutsz in May 1908 approved the opening of a Dutch-language Chinese school called *Hollandsch Chineesche School* (HCS). The goal of the Dutch government for the establishment of the school was in an effort to remove the Chinese identity from the younger generation of Chinese. The HCS school in Surabaya was opened by a resident of Surabaya on July 1, 1908, which was located on Jalan Genteng.

As a result of the more incessant Dutch East Indies government in the context of campaigning for HCS, each year it has an impact on the decline in the opening of THHK schools. The number of THHK schools built from 1908 to 1920 can be seen in the following table:

Table. 9 Number of THHK Schools in the Dutch East Indies in 1908-1920

Year	Established	Number
1907	10	40
1908	14	54
1909	6	60
1910	9	69
1911	5	74
1912	15	89
1913	8	97
1914	3	100
1915	7	107
1916	10	117
1917	5	122

Source: Sin Po Jubileum number 1910-1935, in Sinta Devi, loc.cit., p. 340.

Although every year there is a decrease in the number of THHK schools established, in terms of the number of Chinese-language schools, there are still more schools in the Dutch language. Until the end of the Dutch colonial occupation, the number of Dutch-language Chinese schools reached 117 units, while those in Chinese reached 450 units. (shinta, 2010).

On August 1, 1942 the Japanese government officially issued a regulation banning Dutch-language schools. Chinese children who go to Dutch-language schools are forced to attend Chinese-language schools, this is the impact of the policy of the Japanese government which considers "China is Chinese", so education must of course be oriented to Chinese identity. For the *peranakan* group, the Japanese policy was precisely an attempt to "totokize".

After the end of Japanese rule in Indonesia, the number of Chinese schools increased. Schools which during the Japanese period were prohibited from speaking Dutch, were reused. In contrast to the previous reign, the Dutch actually encouraged the

development of Chinese-language schools, with the aim of gaining sympathy from the Chinese people.

After the transfer of power to the Indonesian government in December 1949, all Dutch schools were closed. The number of Chinese-speaking school students in the Federal area is greater than in the Republican area. In 1949 in Federal there were 816 Chinese schools, of which 45 junior high schools and 319 schools received state subsidies, the total number of Chinese school students reached 165,000. While the Chinese schools in the Republic are estimated at only 92, with a total of 55,000 enrolled students. Chinese students who study in Dutch schools continue their education in schools that speak Indonesian and Chinese languages, both government-run and private. More than 50,000 students were enrolled in Indonesian-language schools in 1950. Although the government did not provide subsidies for Chinese schools, the number of students attending Chinese schools continued to increase, with more than 250,000 students enrolled in Chinese-language schools.

Organizationally, Chinese schools in the early 1950s had progressed. In addition to school building facilities, in terms of teaching staff, it is sufficient, especially in secondary schools. In contrast to the conditions of education under the Ministry of Education, Teaching and Culture, until 1954 there was still a shortage of teaching staff.<sup>65</sup> Thus, there was a policy of involving high school graduates to teach. Many teachers of Chinese descent provide teaching assistance for public schools in Surabaya. As for the comparison of the composition of teachers and students of public schools until 1951, it is as follows:

Table 10. Comparison of the composition of teachers and students between public and private public schools in the city of Surabaya in 1951.

Number	State Schools	Particle School
Sekolah	81	69
Murid	26578	16295
Guru	455	398

Source: Soerabaja reporter, April 3, 1951.

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the public school teacher ratio is smaller, with a ratio of about 1:58, meaning that there are 58 students with 1 teacher, on the other hand, private schools have a higher teacher ratio with a ratio of 1:40.66 The shortage of public school teachers in Surabaya also occurs in schools. First Intermediate. To anticipate Because of the shortage of junior high school teachers, graduates of the Senior Teacher School (SGA) who should have taught the People's School were also made junior high school teachers.

Chinese schools in Surabaya are generally sheltered by Chinese organizations such as THHK and CHTH. So that apart from educational activities, Chinese schools also play a role in social activities. as did the schools under the auspices of CHTH Surabaya, they did fundraising to help victims of the 1954 eruption of Mount Merapi.

The commitment of the ethnic Chinese in Surabaya to education is not only in elementary to high school, but also in non-formal education, namely kindergarten. One of the prominent Chinese citizens of Surabaya who has this commitment is Mrs. Njoo Kiem Lian, the founder of a kindergarten at Jalan Tambak Sari no: 29 Surabaya. Mrs. Njoo Kiem Lian has established a kindergarten since 1946 which is housed in the H.B.S sports association, but since the Surabaya City government renovated the place to be used as a football stadium, Mrs. At the end of 1952 Njoo moved the location of his kindergarten to

Jalan Tambak Sari no: 29, which was not far from his previous place. Kho Siok Hie's letter to the Surabaya City Housing Committee regarding the Transfer of the School from Tambak Sari Stadium to the house on Jl. Tambak Sari no.29 dated December 16, 1952. The Surabaya City Government still does not have a high commitment to early childhood education, this was proven when Mrs. It was Njoo who had difficulty in obtaining land change when his kindergarten school building was demolished in order to renovate the construction of the Tambak Sari stadium.

In addition, improving the quality of education for the Chinese in Surabaya was carried out by sending high school graduates to Beijing to continue their higher education. Apart from Beijing, the goal to continue higher education is to the Netherlands, as did Kwa Joe Liang who has successfully completed the Doctoral program at Leiden University. Kwa Joe Liang managed to get a Doctorate degree in Theology with the promoter Prof. Dr. W.C. Unnik. Dr. Kwa's daily life is a pastor at the Chinese church Kie Tok Kauw Hwee

Most Chinese school graduates continue their studies at universities in Indonesia. Only a small proportion are able to continue abroad. The government through the Ministry of Education, Teaching and Culture, the department of foreign teaching affairs, allows Chinese school graduates to enroll in Indonesian universities, as long as their citizenship status is Indonesian.

Over time, the Surabaya city government implemented identity politics that discriminated against ethnic Chinese. Several Chinese schools in the city of Surabaya were forced to close on the grounds of teaching political propaganda. Some of the schools that were closed include Ming Kuang School on Jalan Argopuro no: 11-15, Kiauw Nam on Jalan Bakmi no: 48, Nam Hua on Jalan Bunguran no: 15-17, Lian Huo on Jalan Undaan Wetan no: 2-6.

## **CONCLUSION**

During the colonial government of the Dutch East Indies, the social environment that was formed showed a very clear division of the community. The government even applies distinctions between community groups in various aspects of daily life such as law, education, civil service, transportation, taxes, and so on. Basically the division of social groups in society is more on the distinction of ethnic groups. Each social group develops its own community, including in terms of education. This article produces findings about the dynamics of Chinese children's education in Surabaya during the Dutch colonial period. The results obtained are a synthesis of Chinese thought and movement against colonialism that developed in Indonesia. We need to make this study a reflection in the development of education today.

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