LEO SURYADINATA

PERANAKAN CHINESE IDENTITIES

IN THE GLOBALIZING MALAY ARCHIPELAGO

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Part II: Focusing on Indonesia

PREFACE

In the recent past, there were quite a few studies on the Peranakan Chinese in the Malay Archipelago, particularly in the three countries: Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore (IMS). I have conducted some bibliographical research and published one article entitled "Selected Publications on Partially Assimilated Chinese in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, 1980–2006" (see Leo Suryadinata, *Understanding the Ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2007), pp. 173–92). In this article, I have included four categories of the publications: (1) General Studies; (2) Politics, History, Education and Society; (3) Religion; and (4) Memoirs and Biographies.

As the article only covered the publications up to 2006, that means that it did not include publications in the last fourteen years (2007–21). As a matter of fact, after 2006 there were many studies on the Peranakan Chinese in IMS. The Chinese Heritage Centre (NTU) and the Baba House (NUS) had jointly conducted two international conferences on the Peranakan Chinese in the globalizing world. These conference proceedings have also been published in 2010 and 2015 respectively. Apart from the two conference proceedings, there are also many books published, including two books on the Peranakan Chinese in Indonesia during the above period (see Appendix 2).

Peranakan Chinese communities and their "hybrid" culture have fascinated many observers. Some argue that these communities and their culture are still alive while others maintain that they have demised as they have become a museum culture. Apparently, observers are using different perspectives in putting forward their arguments. Who are the Peranakan Chinese? Should they be narrowly or broadly defined? Where are they to be found? What are the Peranakan identity and culture? Do they share identical characteristics throughout the Malay Archipelago? How do the Peranakan communities evolve in the colonial, post-colonial and globalization eras? What is the current status of the Peranakan communities and their culture? How is the future of the Peranakan community being envisioned? These are some of the questions that this book attempts to answer.

In the past, I have edited at least two books on the Peranakan Chinese, published one book on Peranakan politics in Java and many papers on the subject. However, I did not have the opportunity to publish my own studies on the Peranakan Chinese in the Malay Archipelago as a book. This Covid-19 pandemic crisis during which we have to work from home has given me time to look at my past papers on the subject and eventually put them together into a book.

These papers, which were mainly written in the last two decades, addressed issues such as Peranakan identities and culture, society and politics, language and literature in the three countries in the Malay Archipelago, i.e., Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. Due to the coverage of the papers, I have divided the book into two parts. Part I is on the regional dimension, which contains nine chapters that discuss the three countries and beyond. Part II consists of five chapters which focus on one country, i.e., Indonesia. This book is far from being comprehensive as it does not include chapters on Peranakan economic activities, Peranakan porcelain, Peranakan cuisine and Peranakan attire, as these require more detailed investigation.

On the regional aspect, I have included one chapter entitled "Prospects of the Peranakan Community: Comments on Dr Tan Ta Sen's Speech", which is in fact my comments on Dr Tan Ta Sen's speech on the same topic. As this is an important issue and worth discussing, I have also included Dr Tan's speech as an appendix.

Many of the chapters were previously published in the *Asian Culture*, a journal of the Singapore Society of Asian Studies, one was specially written for this book, and the rest were derived from various book chapters. However, some have been rewritten or combined to prevent too much repetition.

I hope the publication of this book would further encourage people to look at the Peranakan Chinese phenomena from a regional and even global perspective.

Leo Suryadinata
July 2021
Kota Singa

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Chapter 5: "Peranakan Chinese in IMS: The Socio-Political Dimension". First published as "Peranakan Chinese in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore: The Socio-Political Dimension", in *Peranakan Chinese in a Globalizing Southeast Asia*, edited by Leo Suryadinata (Singapore: Chinese Heritage Centre and NUS Baba House, 2010), pp. 41–49.

Chapter 6: "Malay/Indonesian Translations of Chinese Literature: Past and Present". First published in *Asian Culture* 34 (June 2010): 24–41.

Chapter 7: "Innovation and Transformation: Peranakan Chinese Literatures/Publications in IMS". First published as "Innovation and Transformation: Peranakan Chinese Literatures/Publications in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore", *Asian Culture* 41 (December 2017): 92–99.

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Chapter 11: "Muslim Chinese in Indonesia: Between Chinese-ness and Indonesian-ness". First published in *Asian Culture* 32 (June 2008): 32–43.

Chapter 12: "State and 'Chinese Religions' in Indonesia: Confucianism, Tridharma and Buddhism During the Suharto Rule and After". First published in Tan Chee Beng, ed., *After Migration and Religious Affiliation: Religions, Chinese Identities and Transnational Networks* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2014), pp. 19–42.

Chapter 13: "Peranakan Chinese Politics and Decolonization in Indonesia". First published in Leo Suryadinata, ed., *Peranakan Communities in the Era of Decolonization and Globalization* (Singapore: Chinese Heritage Centre and NUS Baba House, 2015), pp. 3–15.

Chapter 14: "The Integration of Indonesian Chinese into Mainstream Society: A Reflection". First published in *Asian Culture* 36 (August 2012): 9–17.

Appendix 1: Tan Ta Sen, "The Prospects of the Peranakan Community at the Age of Globalization". First published in *Asian Culture* 40 (December 2016): 124–29.

PART I

Regional Dimensions: Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore (IMS)

1

PERANAKAN AND OTHER RELATED TERMS

At the beginning, it is imperative for us to explain key terms Peranakan and other related terms such as Baba, Nyonya (Nonya), Straits Chinese and Straits-born Chinese to avoid misunderstanding. In fact, the terms are not very straightforward, and the meaning of the terms tended to change from period to period.

Peranakan

Peranakan, a Malay word, is now used as a generic term to refer to the local-born Chinese who speaks Malay or a local language at home. The present meaning of the term is the descendants of the union between indigenous people (*anak negeri*) and foreigners.[1] It is not known when the term first came into existence.[2] In the nineteenth century, *The Hikayat Abdullah*, which was written by Munshi Abdullah, did not mention the term Peranakan but mentioned two Baba in British Malaya.[3]

His son, Mohamed Ibrahim, wrote a book and used the term *peranak awak* to refer to the people in Penang who were born locally to Siamese or Burmese fathers and Chinese mothers.[4] But the meaning is different from our ordinary usage. In fact, in the mid-nineteenth century, the term Peranakan was already quite popular. According to a dictionary published

in 1856, the Malays called the "mixed race" of Chinese descendants "Peranakan China" (*Peranakan Cina*, according to the current spelling) during that time.[5] Later, the term Peranakan was used as the abbreviation of *Peranakan Cina*, as if the Peranakan question was a solely Chinese phenomenon.

In fact, there were many types of Peranakan. The term was used to refer to the Indian Peranakan or "Jawi Peranakan", who were the descendants of Indian Muslims and Malay women. Nevertheless, because of the large number of Peranakan Chinese, the term Peranakan has generally been associated with the Chinese community.

The Peranakan phenomenon was not confined to Singapore and Malaysia only. It was quite common to the region as a whole, including Indonesia and the Philippines. While the term Peranakan has been used in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, a different term—"Mestizo"—has been used to refer to a similar group in the Philippines. However, unlike the mestizos in the Philippines, who became Filipino rather than Chinese, the Peranakan Chinese in Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia remained largely "Chinese" in terms of their identity. The reasons were complex and religion was definitely an important one.

The emergence of this Peranakan Chinese community is well known. This was due to the fact that earlier Chinese migrants were males who were either bachelors or married men who came to Southeast Asia without their spouses. They married local women,[6] especially those who were nominal Muslim or non-Muslim, and with their children, they formed a new kind of community, which had the sociocultural make-up of both the Chinese and the Malay.

This hybrid culture was distinct from either Chinese culture or Malay culture. The major characteristic was the use of the Malay language. A large number of Peranakan children never developed a command of the Chinese language and could only converse in the Malay language, as was the case with the Peranakans in Batavia (Java), Malacca, and Singapore. Recent studies also confirmed that in the missionary schools where the Chinese language was taught, the medium of instruction was Malay.[7] Their attire was also a mixture of Chinese and local dress. In fact, the female Peranakan wore Malay dress and had Malay hairstyle. The food was also distinct as it included Malay ingredients but pork—the

preferred Chinese meat—was retained. These Peranakan Chinese were not only found in Java but also outside Java, and in Peninsular Malaya and Singapore.

Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that during the colonial era, until the nineteenth century, the term Cina Peranakan in Indonesia was used to refer to Chinese Muslims.[8] In fact, it was also the case when the term was first used in British Malaya to refer to the mixed descendants of Indian Muslims (e.g., Jawi Peranakan). Nevertheless, when it was applied to the Chinese in the twentieth-century Dutch Indonesia and British Malaya, it did not have the religious connotation any more. The term Peranakan was used by both the foreign rulers and the Malay speaking local population to refer to the partially "assimilated" local-born Chinese. Subsequently, the Chinese themselves also accepted this term for their "identity". The term is a cultural rather than a political category.

Straits Chinese/Straits-born Chinese

When the British colonized Peninsular Malaya and Singapore, the Peranakan Chinese came to be known as the Straits Chinese. This was due to the fact that they were in the Straits Settlements, which were formed when, in 1826, Penang, Singapore, and Malacca were placed under one administration and came to be known as the British Straits Settlements.

Strictly speaking, the term refers to the birthplace rather than the culture of the Chinese. Therefore, its life is geographically limited and time-sensitive. After independence, there is no more Straits Chinese, and it is anachronistic to use the term to refer to specific Chinese groups. However, as late as the end of the twentieth century, some writers continue to use the term to refer to the Peranakan Chinese. For those who used the term for a cultural group, they often wrongly used "Straits-born Chinese" to refer to the Straits Chinese. This is incorrect. It is true that the Peranakan Chinese were local-born (Straits-born) but not all Straits-born Chinese were Peranakans. Among the Straits-born Chinese, some were still culturally non-Peranakan, or sinkeh (*xinke*, 新客). For instance, the Malacca-born Chen Shengtang (陈省堂, Tan

Seng Tong) was not only Chinese-speaking, but was also a well-known Chinese language writer.[9]

Also, unlike the term Peranakan, which was used by the Malay-speaking population as well as the foreign rulers, the term "Straits Chinese" was used by those who were English-educated, as there is no Malay equivalent for this term. Not surprisingly, in the quarterly English magazine entitled *Straits Chinese Magazine* established by Dr Lim Boon Keng and Song Ong Siang in 1897, the term Straits Chinese or Straits-born Chinese were used interchangeably.[10] During that period, when referring to themselves, they never used the term Peranakan.

The Malays themselves, when referring to these Chinese, used either *Peranakan Cina* or *Baba* (or "Babah"). The Peranakan Chinese also used the term *Baba* to refer to themselves. In fact, initially the local-born Chinese in British Malaya and the Dutch East Indies used the term Baba to refer to themselves, not the Peranakan. This point will be addressed in details when dealing with the individual country.

No one is certain about the origin of the term *Baba*. It might have emerged before the coming of the Dutch or the British, and it was not confined to the Peranakan Chinese in the Straits Settlements. In both northern Sumatra (e.g., Medan) and West Java (e.g., Jakarta and Bogor), this term was known and used by the local "Malay" population and the Peranakan Chinese themselves.[11]

Baba, Nyonya, Nonya and Nona

However, J.D. Vaughan, who wrote a classic on the Straits Chinese (1879) stated: The Chinese born in the Straits are called Baba to distinguish them from those born in China. The term "*Baba* is used by the natives of Bengal to designate the children of Europeans and it is probable that the word was applied by Indian convicts at Penang to Chinese children and so came into general use."[12] It further elaborates that "The word *Baba* is given in Douglas' Hokkien dictionary as meaning a half-caste Chinese from the straits." In the Straits Settlements, however, the term is applied to all Chinese born there, half or not.[13]

The earliest publication that mentioned Baba and Nonya was the Malay (it was called Malayan) dictionary by William Marsden first

issued in 1812. The term Baba was used to refer to "an infant son of a person of rank, particularly a European".[14] While Nonya refers to a form of address for "an elderly female who is the daughter of a European by a native woman". However, the term "Peranakan" did not appear in the above-mentioned dictionary, indicating that Peranakan was not used by the Malays during that period.

But the transformation of the terms Baba and Nonya to refer to the Straits-born Chinese only took place towards the end of the nineteenth century. J.D. Vaughan in his book published in 1879 noted that by that time Baba was used "to describe Chinese children".[15]

However, Herbert A. Giles in his Glossary published in 1900 stated clearly that Baba was "a local name for the Chinese born in the Straits Settlements, and for the children of foreigners. Used in India as a respectful form of address towards a man of the lower or middle classes. From the Turki baba father …"[16] Nevertheless, Giles noted that Nonya was used in Java to refer to a "daughter of a Malay mother and a European father" and it was "an imitation of the Spanish *nona* and the French *nonee* …"[17] In other words, the term Nonya (Nyonya and Nona in Indonesia) to refer to the female Peranakan Chinese was used even much later.

Since the late nineteenth century, the term Baba has been used to refer to male Peranakan Chinese while female Peranakan Chinese has been called either Nonya in British Malaya but Nyonya (married) and Nona (unmarried) in the Dutch East Indies.[18] In Malaysia, Baba may have emerged before the term Peranakan but in Indonesia, the term Peranakan is likely to exist before Baba.

The current meanings of Baba in Indonesian dictionary and Baba as reflected in the Malay dictionary differ. The Indonesian dictionary states that Baba is an address towards the male Chinese (not necessarily Peranakan Chinese);[19] while in the Malay dictionary, the term is used to mean the Malay-speaking male Peranakan Chinese and is also a form of address towards them.[20] Both dictionaries did not mention that it was a foreign loan word.

It seems that the terms Baba/Nyonya have a relatively wider usage and longer history in Malaysia and Singapore, but not in Indonesia. Some published books in the late twentieth century such as *The Babas*

Revisited, by Felix Chia; *A Nyonya Mosaic: My Mother's Childhood*, by Gwee Thiam Hock; and *Among the White Moonfaces: Memoirs of a Nyonya Feminist*, by Shirley Lim, show that these writers still consider themselves as members of this group.[21] In fact, in Singapore and Malaysia, the terms Baba and Nyonya have a longer lifespan than in Indonesia. I have not come across any Indonesian Peranakan descendants who wrote books and included the words Baba and Nyonya in the titles.[22]

Actually, the terms Baba and Nyonya have been loosely used in the past as well as today. In Singapore and Malaysia, the Babas and Nyonyas are not necessarily those who speak Malay or are culturally Malay. A keen observer of the Baba and Nyonya community scene noted to this author that, so long as a female member of the family dresses herself in a sarong or has a *konde*, they are considered Baba. This kind of definition may be considered too loose but if we use self-identity as the basis of an identity, if the people concerned call themselves Baba/Nyonya, it is difficult to say that they are not, especially if the local Baba community considers these people its members.

Chinese-Speaking Groups and the Peranakan

Chinese-speaking groups in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia used slightly different Chinese terms to refer to Peranakan and other related terms.

Chinese-speaking communities in Singapore and Malaysia continue to refer to the Malay-speaking or partially assimilated Chinese as 峇峇 (Baba, a direct transliteration of the term) and more recently, 土生华人 (*tusheng huaren*, local-born Chinese). They also address the Nyonya as 娘惹 (Niangre, which is a direct transliteration of the term). In Indonesia, the Chinese-speaking group more often used 侨生 (*qiaosheng*, local-born Overseas Chinese) instead of 峇峇 to refer to the Baba and Nyonya.

The term *tusheng huaren* means "local-born Chinese"; when used to refer to the Baba and Nyonya, it therefore has a cultural connotation rather than just an indication of birthplace. However, one can argue that this Mandarin term can also be used to refer to the local-born Chinese-speaking Chinese who were locally oriented in politics, although this usage is not common among the Chinese-language writers.

Conclusion

The brief account of the term Peranakan and related terms indicates the complexity of these terms. There are similarities and differences from country to country and from period to period. However, the most popular term to refer to this group of Chinese today is still the Peranakan Chinese.

Notes

1. *Kamus Dewan* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa, 1970), p. 26; *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, 3rd ed. (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 2005), p. 43.
2. *Sejarah Melayu* (Malay Annals), which was written in the sixteenth century, did not mention the word Peranakan.
3. Abdullah, the contemporary of Sir Stamford Raffles, mentioned "Baba Cheng Lan" and "Baba Hok Guan", see Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir, *The Hikayat Abdullah*, an annotated translation by A.H. Hill (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 75 and 266.
4. He explained that in the course of time, the progeny of such unions with Penang Chinese became more and more numerous. See Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir, *The Voyages of Mohamed Ibrahim Munshi*, translated with an introduction and notes by Amin Sweeney and Nigel Philips (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 90–91.
5. John Crawfurd's *Descriptive Dictionary of the Indian Islands and Adjacent Countries* (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1856), cited in Tan Chee Beng, *Chinese Peranakan Heritage in Malaysia and Singapore* (Kuala Lumpur: Fajar Bhakti, 1993), p. 21.
6. A number of studies on the Chinese in colonial Malaya and Singapore show that indeed many Chinese married non-Chinese (local women); see Chen Jinghe 陈荆和 and Chen Yusong 陈育崧, *Xinjiapo huawen beimingjilu* 新加坡华文碑铭集录 (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1972), p. 13; also Zhuang Qinyong (庄钦永, David Chng Khin Yong), *Maliujia, Xinjiapo huawen beiwen jilu* 马六甲, 新加坡华文碑文辑录 (Taipei: Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, 1998), p. 46. On the intermarriages between Chinese men and indigenous women in Indonesia (Java), see Li Minghuan, "Batavia's Chinese Society in Transition: Indications based upon the Tandjoeng Cemetery Archives 1881–1896", *Asian Culture* 24 (June 2000): 90–107.
7. See a recent paper by Zhuang Qinyong (庄钦永, David Chng Khin Yong), "1819–1844 nian Xinjiapo de huawen xuetang 1819–1844年新加坡的华文学堂", unpublished manuscript, Taipei, May 2001.
8. Many Dutch writings mentioned this fact, for instance, F. De Haan, *Oud Batavia*, vol II (Bandoeng, 1935); see also Mona Lohanda, *The Kapitan Cina of Batavia, 1837–1942* (Jakarta: Penerbit Djambatan, 1996), p. 6.

9. See Ye Zhongling (叶钟铃, Yeap Chong Leng), *Chen Shengtang wenji* 陈省堂文集 (Singapore: Singapore Society of Asian Studies, 1994).
10. In the first volume of the magazine, it is noted that the magazine served the Straits-born Chinese community, see p. 2.
11. A well-known Peranakan writer at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, Lie Kim Hok, was often called "Baba Kim Hok" by others. See Tio le Soei, *Lie Kim Hok (1853–1912)* (Bandung: Good Luck, 1958).
12. J.D. Vaughan, *The Manners and Customs of the Chinese in the Straits Settlements* (originally published in 1879; reprinted by the Oxford University Press in 1974), p. 2.
13. Ibid.
14. William Marsden, *A Dictionary of the Malayan Language* (New York: Cox and Baylis, 1973, reprinted; originally published in 1812), p. 29.
15. Vaughan, *The Manners and Customs of the Chinese in the Straits Settlements*, p. 2.
16. Herbert A. Giles, *A Glossary of Reference on Subjects Connected with the Far East* (originally published in Shanghai in 1900; reprinted in 1974), p. 10.
17. Ibid., p. 195.
18. The term Nonya cannot be found in the Malay or Indonesian dictionary. In the old edition of *Dewan Bahasa*, Nonya is the equivalent of Nyonya. In Indonesia, Nyonya is also a form of address for a married woman, regardless of ethnic group.
19. *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, 3rd ed., p. 82.
20. Ibid., p. 82; *Kamus Dewan*, p. 71.
21. Felix Chia, *The Babas Revisited* (Singapore: Heinemann Asia, 1994); Gwee Thiam Hock, *My Mother's Childhood* (Singapore: Times Book International, 1985); and Shirley Lim, *Among the White Moonfaces: Memoirs of a Nyonya Feminist* (Singapore: Times Books International, 1996).
22. The only exception is probably Queeny Chang's book, *Memories of a Nonya* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 1981). Queeny is the daughter of Tjong A Fie, a tycoon in Sumatra. Her mother is a Penang Nyonya, and the book was published in Singapore, not Indonesia. It is also worth noting that the memoirs was first serialized in *The Star*, a Malaysian newspaper. This perhaps explains why the title uses Nonya.

2

PERANAKAN CHINESE IDENTITIES IN IMS (1): INDONESIA

Part I of this book examines the historical evolution of Peranakan communities in three countries, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore (IMS), their development, decline and recent revival in the era of globalization and the rise of China. This chapter focuses on Indonesia. It will be followed by the next chapter on Malaysia and Singapore. A subsequent chapter will address recent developments of these communities provided with a general conclusion.

Introduction

There are a few books on the study of the Peranakan Chinese in Indonesia, one of them was *Peranakan Tionghoa Indonesia: Sebuah Perjalanan Budaya* (The Chinese Peranakan in Indonesia: A Cultural Journey), which was published in 2009. This is a coffee table book, written by a few Indonesian Peranakan scholars such as Mona Lohanda, Myra Sidharta, David Kwa and Handinoto etc. It covers Indonesian Peranakan literature, architecture, clothing, and food.

However, the most comprehensive coverage of the Indonesian Chinese history and culture is *Tionghoa dalam Keindonesiaan: Peran dan Kontribusi dalam Pembangunan Bangsa* (Chinese in the Indonesianess:

Roles and Contributions in Nation-Building). The book consists of three volumes, covering the role and contribution of the Indonesian Chinese in more than ten areas such as language, literature, press, culture, arts, sports, designs, food, real estate, banking, economy, health, medicine, architecture, education, military, and politics. This book is not about Peranakan Chinese per se, but the majority of the chapters are in fact related to them.

Origins of the term Peranakan and Baba

No one is certain about the first appearance of the term Peranakan in Indonesia. However, in Dutch publications, Peranakan was already used during the eighteenth century to refer to the offsprings of mixed marriages between foreign males and Indonesian females on the Java Island. However, the term was specifically used by the Dutch to refer to the locally-born Chinese who were Muslim. The Dutch even appointed the Peranakan Kapitan so that Chinese Muslims could be distinguish from the "indigenous Muslims". However, since 1832 the Peranakan Kapitan in Jakarta was abolished, as the Muslim Chinese were assimilated into the indigenous population. The meaning of Peranakan had also changed. Since then the term was more frequently used to refer to the offsprings of mixed marriages without any religious connotation.[1]

In Kalimantan, however, the Dutch used the term "Peranakan" differently. In the nineteenth century, it was used to refer to the local population who were born in Kalimantan and were considered to be Dutch subjects.[2] These Peranakans, unlike Java's Peranakans who had lost the command of the Chinese language and used a local language or Malay as their medium of communication, still spoke Chinese dialect (especially Hakka). Even the female Peranakans wore Chinese dress rather than the "nyonya dress" known as the "typical" Peranakan women dress. Only in the twentieth century, "many Chinese women in Borneo had adopted sarong kebaya, but they retained Chinese as their first language".[3]

When did the Chinese in Indonesia begin to use the term "Peranakan" to refer to their own community? It seems that it began with the formation of the *totok* community in the twentieth century, especially during the rise of Indonesian nationalism in the post-1926 Communist Uprisings.

Before this, it appears that the term Baba was more commonly used by the locally-born and partially assimilated Chinese. This is reflected in the literary works (such as novels) produced in the early 1900s. For instance, the two earliest Peranakan Chinese novels "Lo Fen Koei" (1903) and "Oeij (Oey) See" (1903) refer to the local-born Chinese as "Baba". During this period, Baba was used more as a term of address rather than as a group identity. For instance, Baba Lo Fen Koei,[4] Bah (Babah) Gede.[5] However, later in the 1930s, the term Baba was also used to refer to the Peranakan Chinese community in the Dutch East Indies,[6] but its usage had gradually ceased. On the contrary, the term Baba in Malaya (especially in Melaka and Singapore) have been used to refer to the Peranakan community until today. (See the next chapter on the Peranakans in Singapore and Malaysia).

The popular use of the term Tionghoa rather than Cina

It should be noted that in the Malay world, the term Cina was popularly used to refer to the Chinese without any derogatory meaning. However, beginning in 1900 with the establishment of the Tiong Hoa Hwe Koan (THHK 中华会馆) in Batavia (Jakarta), the term Cina became out of date and it was gradually replaced by Tionghoa. But in British Malaya/ Malaysia and Singapore, Tionghoa was seldom used as Cina was and is still widely used.

Before the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912 when referring to themselves, the local-born and Indonesian-speaking Chinese used the term *bangsa Cina* and *bangsa Tionghoa* (Chinese nation; Chinese race) interchangeably. After 1912, they mainly used the term *bangsa Tionghoa* to refer to themselves. However, they did not differentiate *totok* (*singkeh* 新客) from the peranakan as the Indies Chinese preferred the term *bangsa Tionghoa* that includes these two subgroups. Nevertheless, when they referred to a specific subgroup within the Indies Chinese community, the terms *totok* and peranakan were used. For instance, when they discussed the participation of the Indies Chinese in local politics, the Peranakan dailies—*Perniagaan*, *Sin Po* and *Djawa Tengah*—mentioned that the Dutch colonial law considered the Peranakan Tionghoa as their subjects (*rahajat*) and not the totok Tionghoa. Those Peranakan Chinese

who professed to Chinese nationalism rejected any participation in Dutch political institutions as this would split *bangsa Tionghoa* (Chinese nation), i.e. the peranakan from the *totok*.[7]

In the book *Doea Kapala Batoe* (Two Stubborn Persons, published in 1921) by Kwee Hing Tjiat, the former editor of *Sin Po*, which gives an account of Indonesian Chinese leaders and their society, he only used the term *bangsa Tionghoa* and never mentioned the word Peranakan. Throughout the whole book, he only used the term *totok* once (p. 44) to refer to a rich Chinese in Surabaya where a party was held. Even in the two classics by Peranakan Chinese writers, namely *Riwajat Semarang* (The History of Semarang, published in 1933) by Liem Thian Joe, and *Orang-Orang Tionghoa jang Terkemoeka di Java* (Prominent Chinese in Java, published in 1935) by Tan Hong Boen, the term Peranakan is almost absent. The Chinese in the Dutch East Indies continued to refer to themselves as merely Tionghoa, not Peranakan Tionghoa. This is understandable as many of them were still China-oriented and perceived themselves as a part of the Chinese nation.

In fact, in 1917 when the Dutch colonial government wanted to involve the local-born Chinese in the so-called Volksraad ("People's Assembly"), many local-born Chinese represented by the Sin Po Group organized the masses to oppose ethnic Chinese participation in Dutch colonial institutions as they belonged to the Chinese nation. In their view, the involvement in Dutch colonial institutions would only divide *bangsa Tionghoa*. Understandably, the local-born Chinese did not use the term Peranakan to refer to themselves.

The situation changed only in the 1920s, especially after the Indonesian Communist Uprisings in 1926–27, during which the Indonesian nationalism proper emerged. This was marked by the birth of the Chung Hwa Hui-Java (CHH, 1928), and the Partai Tionghoa Indonesia (PTI, 1932). The former was dominated by the Dutch educated well-to-do local born Chinese who were Dutch Indies oriented and were sympathetic to the Dutch colonial rule, while the latter dominated by both Dutch-educated and Malay-educated Chinese, but they were sympathetic to Indonesian nationalism. The latter appeared to have a lower economic status than the former.

As time passed, with the increase in the number of local-born Chinese involved in local institutions and politics, the term Peranakan began to gain traction in the local-born Chinese community. As only local-born Chinese were allowed to participate in local politics, the Chinese in the Dutch East Indies started to differentiate the Chinese community into peranakan and *totok* (*singkeh*). Some local-born Chinese felt that their economic position had been undermined by the *totok* group and began to be resentful towards the *totok*. Their different perceptions toward the position of China and Indonesia further divided the peranakan and *totok*. It is not surprising that when Liem Koen Hian founded the PTI he wanted to accept only the peranakan, and not the *totok*. While Ko Kwat Tiong, a lawyer who was also a leftist, would like to include the *totok* into the party as well.[8]

In the writings of Peranakan intellectuals and writers (such as Kwee Tek Hoay and Liem Koen Hian) published between 1927 and 1932, one can see that they made a clear distinction between the *totok* and peranakan and they identified themselves as Peranakan Chinese.[9] Even Kwee Hing Tjiat, who had abandoned his Chinese nationalist view in 1934, wrote about the "mature Baba" (*Baba Dewasa*) who considered Indonesia as their home country.[10] Apparently, both the terms Peranakan and Baba tended to be used interchangeably.

Peranakan, hence, began to be used by Peranakan Chinese themselves as their own cultural identity but did not replace the term Tionghoa as the latter has a broader meaning and not all Chinese in colonial Indonesia are Peranakan. Even when referring to the language used and literary works produced by the Peranakan Chinese, they are often branded as "Melayu-Tionghoa" (Chinese-Malay) rather than Melayu Peranakan (Peranakan Malay).

Melayu-Betawi, Melayu Rendah and Melayu-Tionghoa

The Peranakan Chinese themselves initially did not refer to the language that they used as "Melayu-Tionghoa" either, they simply called it Bahasa Melayu (Malay language) or Melayu-Betawi (Batavian Malay, 1884).[11] Please note that Betawi is the Malay equivalent of Batavia. This was precisely why Lie Kim Hok's grammar book was entitled "Melayu-

Betawi", not "Melayu-Tionghoa", as the Peranakan Chinese used the language spoken by indigenous Indonesians in urban areas.[12]

After the rise of Indonesian nationalism proper, there was a distinction between Melayu Rendah (Low Malay) and Melayu Tinggi (High Malay); and the language used by the Peranakan Chinese was often classified as Melayu Rendah while the official language was regarded as Melayu Tinggi. The Peranakan Chinese later also accepted the term "Melayu Rendah" reluctantly. In fact, this was a political move adopted by the colonial government to counter radical nationalist ideas expressed in the populist language, i.e. Melayu-Betawi.

Indigenous Indonesian writers also agreed with the decision to adopt the High Malay as the Indonesian language. Later, the Peranakan writers themselves followed the indigenous Indonesian usage and called the language as Bahasa "Melayu-Tionghoa" (Chinese-Malay) and the literature Sastra "Melayu-Tionghoa" (Chinese-Malay literature). Many contemporary scholars in the West and in Indonesia were of the view that the so-called Melayu-Tionghoa was in fact a type of Indonesian language used by both Peranakan Chinese and non-Chinese as their medium of communication, at least prior to the rise of Indonesian nationalism proper.[13]

The Peranakan community had been firmly established during the colonial period, especially between the eighteenth and early twentieth century. According to William Skinner,[14] new Chinese migrants (*totoks*) were few in number and usually were absorbed into the Peranakan community. Understandably the Peranakan Chinese, especially those from Java, were not aware of other segments of the Chinese community.

The situation started to change in the twentieth century when a large number of new Chinese migrants arrived at colonial Indonesia, particularly Java. These new Chinese migrants were no longer absorbed into the Peranakan community, but remained as *totok* who eventually formed their own community.[15] Therefore, two kinds of Chinese communities existed side by side, i.e. the Peranakan Chinese community and the *totok* Chinese community. While the former was culturally mixed, the latter continued to be "pure" and closer to Chinese culture.

The Chinese community leaders in the twentieth century, especially after the rise of Indonesian nationalism proper, began to be aware of the existence of the peranakan and *totok* Chinese communities. They also

gradually discovered that the two communities had not only different language and culture, but also different sense of belonging. Nevertheless, within the Peranakan Chinese community, the members were not united in their political views. The three political orientations continued to exist until Indonesia's early independence period in the 1950s.

The Peranakan Chinese as an Indonesian *suku*

Peranakan Chinese, not the *totok* Chinese, were involved in the Preparation Committee for Indonesian Independence during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia. These peranakans were Liem Koen Hian, Oei Tjong Hauw, Oey Tiang Tjoei, Liem Beng Hwa and Yap Tjwan Bing.[16] Soon after the Japanese surrender, Indonesians who were in the Committee declared Indonesia's independence on 17 August 1945.

The Dutch, however, wanted to continue their colonial rule which resulted in the prolonged conflict which lasted for almost five years. The newly declared Republic of Indonesia was eager to gain the support of the Peranakan Chinese for Indonesia's independence. A peranakan leader, Siauw Giok Tjhan, was appointed as the State Minister for Peranakan Affairs (Menteri Negara Urusan Peranakan) between 1947 and 1948 in the Amir Sjarifuddin Cabinet II.[17] This indicates the formal recognition of Peranakan (mainly Chinese) as part of the Indonesian population, if not part of the Indonesian nation.

In fact, the formal recognition of the Peranakan Chinese as part of the Indonesian nation was during the Sukarno's Guided Democracy period. President Sukarno delivered a speech at the Baperki Congress on 14 March 1963 during which he talked about the components of the Indonesian nation (*Bangsa Indonesia*). He said that the Indonesian nation consists of many *sukus* (ethnic groups), namely suku Jawa, suku Sunda, suku Bali, suku Minang and suku Peranakan Tionghoa.[18] However, he did not offer any explanation regarding Peranakan Chinese except that they were already Indonesianized.

Nevertheless, the successor of Sukarno, Suharto, did not recognize the Peranakan Chinese as a *suku* anymore and demanded complete assimilation of all Chinese into the *pribumi* population immediately. We

will discuss the Peranakan Chinese community during the Suharto era and post-Suharto era subsequently.

Baperki and Suku Peranakan (Tionghoa)

Baperki was the largest ethnic Chinese organization in Indonesia during 1954–65. It was a fusion of various Peranakan Chinese organizations such as Partai Demokrat Tionghoa Indonesia (PDTI), Perwit and Persatuan Tionghoa Surabaya. The purpose was to combat racial discrimination and to make locally-born Chinese Indonesian democrats. The name of the organization, Badan Permusjawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia or the Consultative Council for Indonesian Citizenship, shows that it emphasized more on citizenship (*kewarganegaraan*) than nationhood (*kebangsaan*, or *nasion*).

In the Baperki constitution, it emphasized the equality of all Indonesian citizens, regardless of their racial origins. It tended to equate citizenship with nationhood. The organization also included the non-Chinese, but they were an absolute minority. The chairman of Baperki, Siauw Giok Tjan (萧玉灿, 1914–81), was a Peranakan Chinese from Surabaya who was Dutch-educated and influenced by left-wing ideology.

As Siauw mistook the concept of citizenship for nationhood, he did not develop the position of the Chinese in the Indonesian nation. He wanted to unite the Peranakan and the *totok* Chinese. As a result, before 1965 he tended not to use the term Peranakan.

When Sukarno recognized the Peranakan Chinese as one of the Indonesian *sukus*, he was aware of the existence of the *totok* Chinese. He did not acknowledge the Tionghoa as a *suku* (suku Tionghoa) but recognize Peranakan Tionghoa as a *suku* (suku Peranakan Tionghoa). It was obvious that he did not intend to regard all Tionghoa as an Indonesian *suku*.

Siauw did not respond to Sukarno's suggestion of Peranakan Chinese as an Indonesian *suku*. In fact, Siauw continued to talk about Indonesian citizenship. Why did Siauw not respond to the proposal? There were two probable explanations: if Siauw accepted the concept of Peranakan Tionghoa, many totok Tionghoa who had become Indonesian citizens would have been excluded from the Indonesian *suku*. Perhaps Siauw

thought that all Indonesian citizens of Chinese descent are members of the Indonesian nation. If he talked about Tionghoa, not Peranakan Tionghoa as a *suku*, it would show that his view differed from that of Sukarno.

The second probable explanation is that he did not want to talk about the division between Peranakan Chinese and *totok* Chinese. He blurred the distinction between these two by using Peranakan Tionghoa and Tionghoa interchangeably.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Indonesian Chinese society was indeed divided between the peranakan and *totok*, but many *totoks*, especially those who were pro-Beijing, were supportive of Baperki, especially Baperki schools and Baperki University. Perhaps Siauw did not want to lose their support. If we look at Siauw's memoirs which was published in 1981 before he passed away, we might be able to get some insights.

There is a chapter entitled "Minoritas Peranakan Tionghoa" (Peranakan Chinese minority) in the book. Although in the title he mentioned about Peranakan Chinese, in the chapter itself he did not use this term but turunan Tionghoa (Chinese descendants) instead. He noted that Indonesia is a plural society with many *sukus*, some are large in numbers while others are small. Apart from these *sukus*, there were a lot of foreign descendants, as they continued to live in Indonesia, eventually they would form new Indonesian *sukus*. It is interesting to note that in this "memoir", Siauw did not mention Sukarno's speech on Peranakan Chinese as an Indonesian *suku*.

It should be noted that many Chinese, especially after the fall of Suharto, wanted to make Tionghoa, not Peranakan Tionghoa, as an Indonesian *suku*. However, it appears that apart from the Chinese community leaders themselves, no indigenous presidents have ever acknowledged Tionghoa as an Indonesian *suku*. President Sukarno only recognized Peranakan Tionghoa (not Tionghoa in general) as an Indonesian *suku*. It is crucial to remember this.

One important development after Suharto stepped down was the inclusion of the Indonesian Chinese Cultural Park (Taman Budaya Tionghoa) in the Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (Beautiful Miniature Park of Indonesia). This park was established by President Suharto (1921–2008)