

PROMINENT CHINESE DURING THE RISE OF A COLONIAL CITY
MEDAN 1890-1942

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Cover photo: Chinese festive gate in Kesawan, Medan 1923, on the occasion of the 25th coronation jubilee of Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands. Photo collection D.A. Buiskool

PROMINENT CHINESE DURING THE RISE OF A COLONIAL CITY MEDAN 1890-1942

PROMINENTE CHINEZEN TIJDENS DE OPKOMST VAN EEN KOLONIALE STAD MEDAN 1890-1942

(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

Proefschrift

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geboren op 8 februari 1957
te Hoogezand Sappemeer

Promotor: Prof. Dr. G.J. Knaap

*Believe me, it is so. The beginning, and not the middle, is the right starting point. 'T is with a kopeck, and with a kopeck only, that a man must begin.'*¹

¹ Gogol, Nikol ai *Dead Souls* Translated by C. J. Hogarth, University of Adelaide: 2014: Chapter III.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	13
INTRODUCTION	15
CHAPTER 1	
EAST SUMATRA.	
THE FORMATION OF A PLANTATION ECONOMY.	29
1. East Sumatra: Historical Overview	32
1.1 East Sumatra until circa 1870	32
1.2 From Tobacco to Oil and Rubber	34
1.3 Migrant workers	38
1.4 Frontier society	43
1.5 Labour conditions on the plantations	44
1.6 Van den Brand's manifesto	47
1.7 Labour inspection	48
Summary	50
CHAPTER 2	
THE CITY OF MEDAN.	
THE EMERGENCE OF AN URBAN CENTER.	53
2.1. Colonial character, layout and urban symbols	55
2.2. Town quarters	62
2.3. Medan as a regional infrastructural center	65
2.4. Townplanning, health, housing and landrights	67
2.5. Security and Justice	73
Summary	76
CHAPTER 3	
CHINESE BUSINESS IN MEDAN 1890-1942	81
3.1. General Characteristics of Chinese business in Medan	83
3.2. Monopolies and revenue farms of the Chinese	89
3.2.1. Opium	91
3.2.2. Other tax farms: gambling, liquor and pawnhouses	97
3.2.3. Bagan Si Api Api and the salt monopoly	102
3.3. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Medan 1890-1942	105
Summary	110

CHAPTER 4

THE PROMINENT CHINESE OF MEDAN 1890-1942	115
4.1. Leadership categories	117
4.2. Prominent Chinese: The Chinese Majors	121
4.2.1. Tjong Yong Hian (1850-1911)	123
4.2.2. Tjong A Fie (1860-1921)	133
4.2.3. Khoe Tjin Tek (1876-1969)	151
4.3. Other prominent Chinese	161
4.3.1. Tjong Hau Liong (Chang Pu Ching) (1885–1963)	161
4.3.2. Tan Tang Ho (circa 1860-1918)	166
4.3.3. Tan Boen An (circa 1890-1946)	171
4.3.4. Gan Hoat Soei (circa 1890-1950)	174
4.3.5. Hiu Ngi Fen (1902-1977)	176
4.3.6. Thio Siong Soe (1889-1967)	181
Summary	181

CHAPTER 5

SOCIAL LIFE OF THE CHINESE OF MEDAN	187
5.1. Family life	189
5.1.2. The Chinese women of Medan	190
5.2. Religion	199
5.2.1. Chinese beliefs. Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism	199
5.2.2. Christian religion among the Chinese of Medan	202
5.3. Chinese non-religious organizations	204
5.3.1. Clan and professional associations	204
5.3.2. Political, cultural, and other associations	207
5.4. Chinese education in Medan	208
5.5. Public Health Care in Medan	212
5.6. Entertainment: sport, music, theatre and cinemas	218
Summary	227

CHAPTER 6

POLITICS, PRESS AND PERCEPTIONS	231
6.1. Political developments in the Netherlands Indies	233
6.1.1. Ethical policy	233
6.1.2. Chinese nationalism	235
6.2. Local Politics: Medan councils	240
6.2.1. The Town Council	240

6.2.2. Town Council meetings	243
6.2.3. Chinese in politics	245
6.2.4. Polarisation in the Netherlands Indies and in Medan	248
6.3. The press in Medan 1890–1942	254
6.3.1. Dutch newspapers in Medan	255
6.3.2. Chinese and Malay language newspapers in the Netherlands Indies and in Medan	258
6.3.3. Anti-Japanese sentiments in the press	262
6.4. Censorship and press violations	264
6.5. Europeans and Chinese in the press: Mutual Perceptions	271
6.5.1. Western perceptions about the Chinese	271
6.5.2. Chinese Perceptions of Europeans	277
Summary	278
CONCLUSION	283
APPENDICES	295

APPENDICES	
APPENDICES CHAPTER 1	295
1.1 Population district East Coast of Sumatra in 1905 and 1913	295
1.2 Population East Coast of Sumatra differentiation male/female	295
1.3 Percentage of the total import and export of Penang within the region including East Sumatra	295
APPENDICES CHAPTER 2	296
2.1. Population Medan	296
2.2. Marriages and birth Chinese population in Medan 1919–1928	296
APPENDICES CHAPTER 3	297
3. 1. Professions in East Sumatra in 1905 (exclusive plantation workers)	297
3.2. Tax results in Medan	298
3.3. Income Taxes Medan 1919	298
3.4. Income some Chinese citizens of Medan 1920	299
3.5. Opium monopoly	302
3.6. Gambling monopoly	303
3.7. Liquor monopoly	304
3.8. Pawnhouse monopoly	304
3.9. Salt monopoly	305
APPENDICES CHAPTER 4	306
4.1. Real estate Tjong A Fie	306
4.2. Plantation companies Tjong A Fie	307
4.3. Plantations resorting under rubber culture company Si Boelan in 1921	307
4.4. Plantation company Si Boelan in 1924	308
4.5. Plantation company Soekaradja in 1921	309
4.6. Algemeene Cultuur Maatschappij in 1924	309
4.7. Plantations under the plantation company Tjong A Fie Landen in 1924	310
4.8. Plantation Company China Kasih in 1925	311
4.9. Donations and social projects by Tjong Yong Hian and Tjong A Fie	311
APPENDICES CHAPTER 5	318
5.1. Temples	318
5.2. Christian religion among Medan population	319
5.3. Lineage or Clan associations 1920s–1930s	320
5.4. Professional associations	321

5.5.	Cultural associations	323
5.6.	Help associations	325
5.7.	Dutch and Japanese language schools in 1924	327
5.8.	English Language Schools in Medan	328
5.9.	Chinese Language Schools in Medan	328
5.10.	Chinese schools in East Sumatra 1914	329
5.11.	Chinese schools in the Lower Deli District on East Sumatra	329
5.12.	Numbers and percentage of Chinese students educated on East Sumatra	329
5.13.	Percentage of Chinese, Indigenous and European in the lower district of East Sumatra that followed primary education	330
5.14.	Hospitals and Health Care	330
5.15.	Football Clubs in Medan	331
APPENDICES CHAPTER 6		334
6.1.	Malay and Chinese language papers in Medan 1900–1942	334
OLD AND NEW STREETNAMES IN MEDAN		337
GLOSSARY		345
REFERENCES		351
Samenvatting in het Nederlands		371
Curriculum Vitae		375

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Dirk Aedsge Buiskool

Introduction

At the end of colonial times, in 1942, Medan was the capital of the wealthiest and economically most important part of the Netherlands Indies outside Java, whereas in 1890 it had been just a tiny village. How did this remarkable change come about?

Medan had always been one of the most 'Chinese' towns in the Indonesian archipelago. Although the city was often presented as a typical European plantation town, the role of its Chinese citizens was apparent from the beginning. This thesis, a social history of Medan, focuses on the prominent Chinese of the town during the last fifty years of Dutch colonial rule, their contribution to the development of the city and their role in Medan's Chinese community.

The cultivation of tobacco laid the foundation for the fast development of the city of Medan. It began in 1863 when Jacob Nienhuys, son of an Amsterdam tobacco trader, upon his arrival in Sumatra received permission from the Sultan of Deli, to start a tobacco plantation, just south of Laboehan at the mouth of the Deli river.¹ The tobacco plant grew so well and was such a great success that in a short time many other plantations were developed. Deli tobacco proved to be excellent as a cigar-wrapping, and became known as the best in the world. The regional plantation industry grew into a flourishing business. A huge labour force was needed for the work on the tobacco plantations, which was not available in sparsely populated Sumatra. For this reason, labourers from China, and later from Java, were recruited to work as contract labourers or so-called *coolies*. The plantation companies in Deli were fully export-oriented, initially with tobacco, subsequently expanding their production to rubber and palm oil. Everyone working in the plantation industry was a newcomer, the European investors, the planters and also the coolies. In 1870 there were no hospitals, no medicines, no police and no courts of justice. Because of this economic expansion, the Dutch colonial administration appointed an assistant resident in 1883, to represent it in Deli. This position was then elevated to a resident in 1889.² The planters dealt directly with the Sultan, but any land contracts between the Sultan and European settlers had to be approved by the Dutch resident.³ The administration was effectively a combination of local rule by the Sultan and the colonial government.

The colonial government, based on East Sumatra was indirect, as the local monarchs remained as the rulers over their different districts. They were controlled, however, by

1 Schadee 1918 I: 171.

2 In 1883 W.J.M. Michielsen was appointed as assistant resident for the Deli district of the East coast of Sumatra. Six years later, in 1889, there came a resident as head of the local government. It was Michielsen again who now became resident for the Deli district. He was replaced in 1893 by P.J. Kooreman. (*Regeerings Almanak voor Nederlandsch-Indië* 1884: 189; Hugenholtz W.R. 2015: 15; Java Bode 1-9-1898). Not before 1915 was a governor appointed, this was S. van der Plas. (SP 24-8-1915)

3 Wright 1909: 567.

the Netherlands Indies Government. This regulation was established as these small states had never been individually subdued, but had made treaties in which they recognized the overlordship of the Netherlands Indies Government and gave certain rights such as toll rights as well as others on import and export. Local self-rule only concerned the Indigenous population. All other ethnic groups (i.e., European, Japanese, Chinese and other non-Dutch Asians), were directly under the jurisdiction of the Netherlands Indies Government.⁴

By 1900 Medan was a newly laid-out town, with the head office of the Deli Maatschappij (Deli Company), at the junction of the Deli and Babura river, symbolizing Medan's centrality in the region with regard to financial and economic affairs. A beautiful city with many parks and villas, it became widely known as the "Paris of Sumatra". Colonial Medan was a bustling young town with an entirely new population composition. In this aspect it differed from cities on Java that had been established hundreds of years earlier. There were however some similarities with Javanese towns. Just like Batavia in the seventeenth century as described by Leonard Blussé, Medan was both a Chinese and a European colonial town.⁵ The commercial elite consisted of Dutch trading houses, and various Chinese businesses as well as a few Indigenous and Indian enterprises. The most important groups involved in Medan's development were the European planters, the local Malay people under the Sultan and the Chinese entrepreneurs. Furthermore, a small Indian minority had settled down in the city. The modern layout of the city of Medan took shape between 1890 and 1900. The Kesawan, the oldest street of Medan was joined with the Esplanade, the central square of town. Hereafter a further spatial development evolved with Indigenous, Chinese, Indian and Dutch residential areas.

Research questions

The story of Medan can only be told by giving due attention to its Chinese population. When in 1930 the city counted almost 75.000 inhabitants, some 30 percent of the population was Chinese.⁶ Considering the important position of the Chinese, the central question in this study is: What was the role of the Chinese elite, the local *towkays*, in the multi-ethnic city of Medan between 1890 and 1942? In addition to this: How were the tensions, inherent in colonial society, limited and controlled in the town and what part the Chinese elite played in this? What was the elite's political role, its position as community and political leaders, and what was its relationship towards the Chinese homeland? What were the businesses of the elite members, how did they generate so much money and how did they spend it? What

4 Langereis in Indië 1917–1918: 500,501.

5 Blussé, Leonard, *Strange Company: Chinese Settlers, Mestizo Women and the Dutch in VOC Batavia*, Dordrecht: Foris, 1986.

6 Volkstelling 1930.

was their position with regard to education, cultural activities and health care? In general: how did the Chinese *towkays* contribute to the society at large?

In this thesis it will be argued that the colonial town of Medan, daughter of the plantation industry, was quite different from its surroundings. Whereas in Eastern Sumatra's plantations social conditions were characterized by the dichotomy of plantation owner versus plantation worker (a classic case of a sharp class conflict), in the urban environment the situation was quite different, not the least because of the sheer absence of plantations. Consequently, the much debated miserable labour conditions, generally attributed to Sumatra's plantation belt, did not apply to the town of Medan. Class conflict in town was much more moderate than outside. At first sight therefore, Medan showed a remarkably harmonious inter-ethnic cooperation and interaction. One of the additional reasons that Medan was different also had to do with the fact that colonial cities, more than cities in general, were nodes in global networks of trade and migration. It would be impossible therefore, to consider the local situation of the Chinese in Medan as isolated from wider developments in the international sphere. Around 1900 the Chinese world in general was in turmoil. In 1912 in the home country the millennia-old Chinese imperial government was thrown over, to be replaced by a republic. One could imagine that the Chinese in Medan were affected by this change and that they had certain opinions about that. Was there any Chinese nationalism at stake here? And when the young Chinese republic clashed with Japan in the 1910s, 1920s and 1930s, what effect did this have on Medan's Chinese population?

In order to answer these questions about the Chinese elite's role in the social fabric of the city of Medan, I studied a cluster of influential and successful Chinese community leaders who were instrumental in the development of Medan during the last fifty years of colonial rule. The most prominent Chinese businessmen were the brothers Tjong Yong Hian and Tjong A Fie.⁷ Together with other leading Chinese entrepreneurs they were involved in many aspects of Medan's urban society. Their influence on the economy, housing, infrastructure, education and health care proved to be far-reaching. It is largely through their biographies that I will explain that Medan was relatively speaking a space of 'social tranquillity', in an otherwise unruly capitalist plantation environment. The timeline of this study of Medan starts from the year 1890, because from that period onwards Medan clearly took shape, and ends in the year 1942 with the Japanese invasion, which marked the end of the old order of the colonial period.

7 Chandra 2011; Chang 1981.

Studies about colonial towns

For the late colonial order studies on other Indonesian colonial cities have appeared such as Susan Abeyasekere on Jakarta, Freek Colombijn on Padang and Howard Dick on Surabaya. If we compare the story of Medan with these studies, we see both differences and similarities. They deal with such issues as population growth, the social structure, spatial development, ethnic groups, development of trade, transport and expansion of the administration. For Medan there is only the well-illustrated publication by Loderichs, Buiskool, et al, *Medan, Beeld van een stad*, but this book was not primarily intended to be part of a scholarly discourse.

In Susan Abeyasekere's *Jakarta: A History*, a social and cultural mixing of different ethnicities might be witnessed at the end of the 19th century. There was generally a harmonious relationship between the different communities.⁸ Looking for processes of continuity and change, Abeyasekere compared Batavia in 1900 with Batavia in 1940, excavating the roots of political change in Batavia, the awakening of political consciousness, Indonesian and Chinese nationalism and the resulting conflicts. It was a period of fast population growth, town-planning, new suburbs, exhibition fairs, football matches and *stamboel* or Indigenous theatre performances. Through education modern western ideas were spread, amongst others about democracy. The Municipal Council served as forum of debate for the general interest. Abeyasekere's book is in the first place a social study of the city of Batavia. This city had been founded in the 17th century so it was two hundred years older than Medan. In the 19th century a new Batavian society came into being, consisting of *orang Betawi* (people of Betawi [Jakarta]), with immigrants from Europe, China, Arabia and India resulting in an amalgam of several ethnic groups with the Indigenous, each living in their own quarters with their own cultures. Despite intensive cultural exchanges Batavia remained a stratified colonial town with the Europeans holding the dominant position, followed by the Chinese and lastly by the Indigenous population.

Freek Colombijn's *Patches of Padang. The history of an Indonesian town in the twentieth century and the use of urban space*, about the plural colonial society of Padang and the quest for urban space, was written from a different angle. The central topic of the book is the process of spatial change in Padang from 1906 (when Padang became a municipality), up until 1990. Colombijn does not focus on the use of space as such, but on the way in which people change its use, herewith reshaping the town.⁹ Via the Padang study he evaluates theories about space and human agency. Legally speaking there were only three different groups, Europeans and equals, Indigenous people and Foreign Orientals. In Padang it was the Minangkabau ethnic group, part of the Indigenous population, who dominated

8 Abeyasekere 1989: 68.

9 Colombijn 1994: 1, 2.

numerically but the Europeans and Eurasians had the power. There was no dominant culture, each ethnic and religious domain was separate. It was a plural society. Within this plural society there were both clefts and bridges: schools for different religions and ethnic groups, different clubs, cinemas and swimming pools; but at the same time some institutions bridged the clefts, such as football clubs, freemasons' lodges and churches, including more than one ethnic group.¹⁰

Howard Dick's *Surabaya City of Work. A Socioeconomic history, 1900–2000*, shows continuity and change and growth in between the 1930s and 1970s. Wondering how the story of the city should be told, Dick felt that history needs to be written across generations to get an honest picture. Only by taking a long-term perspective can we see continuity and change. The study also analyzed the socio-economic history, the role of government and of spatial development. Dick approached the story of Surabaya by looking backward and forward in politics, economy, religion and society. He looked at the city for a period of one century from different perspectives. The outcome of his approach is a loosely structured economic history, which explores several key themes, taking cross-sections of the historical experience, each subject having its own chronology.¹¹ Dick tried to look from European and Indigenous perspectives, from the European villa quarter and the Indigenous *kampung*.¹² As with other colonial cities Surabaya was a class-ruled society. First the European, secondly the Chinese and thirdly the Indigenous population. The colonial state was authoritarian although it tried to legitimise itself by the ideology of good government. However, ultimately colonialism was based on military force.¹³

Just like Batavia, Padang and Surabaya, Medan was a typical colonial city and colonial cities had certain traits in common. In the 1960s Terry McGee offered some general characteristics of Southeast Asian colonial cities. These were that all colonial towns were harbour cities and became important as economic and administrative centres. Concerning population, colonial towns were occupied by a mix of ethnic populations with the Europeans on top.¹⁴ In the 1980s Anthony King changed McGee's characteristics of a colonial town into four points: Firstly, they were developed under foreign influence; Secondly they were part of a central economic system; Thirdly they possessed substantial western elements; and last but not least, they changed considerably over time.¹⁵ As we will see in chapter 2 all four features applied to Medan. Another classification is how a colonial city can be studied.

10 Colombijn 1994: 66, 69, 75, 79.

11 Dick 2002: xx-xxiii.

12 Dick 2002: 461.

13 Dick 2002: 462, 463, 465, 467.

14 McGee 1967: 55–66.

15 King in Ross 1985: 233.

King suggests three levels: as a regional center; as part of a colonial empire; or even of the world system.¹⁶

Studies about Chinese communities and plural societies

Some of the studies about the Chinese in Indonesia and South-East Asia seem to be relevant to the Medan case. In his book *Commerce and capital in colonial Java. Trade finance and commercial relations between Europeans and Chinese, 1820s–1940*, Alexander Claver looked at the inter-ethnic relations in the colonial economy. According to him Chinese culture and Confucianist values like diligence, order, responsibility and economic mentality gave the Chinese an advantage over the Indigenous population, although these factors should be put in a social and historical context. Claver mentions three other variables: firstly, the transformation of the South-East Asian economy during the colonial era offering the Chinese the possibilities to develop trade (mostly intermediate); secondly, the insecure position for the Chinese as immigrants, causing their efforts to safeguard their economic position; thirdly, perseverance of Chinese social structures and networks.¹⁷ The above-mentioned aspects were also present in Medan. Social and family structures and networks especially were crucial.

Several studies focus on overseas Chinese societies and Chinese nationalism. These studies show both differences and similarities with the Medan case. Michael Godley's *The Mandarin Capitalists of the Nanyang*, described how the international atmosphere in the Netherlands Indies stimulated western bourgeois values which moved many overseas Chinese to adhere to modern cosmopolitan economical and political views, in the meantime remaining conservative and loyal to the old traditional system. All overseas Chinese, rich or poor, kept in one way or another in contact with the motherland, either through stories or by the saved money they sent home.¹⁸ We will see that Medan's Chinese largely fit into Godley's patterns.

One study focused on individuals is C.F. Yong's *Chinese Leadership and Power in Colonial Singapore*. In Yong's book we see many similarities with the Medan Chinese. Just like in Medan the Chinese leaders in Singapore were community leaders. Their role, influence and power went far beyond their own ethnic Chinese group. Leadership was in the first place based on wealth, even though most of these prominent Chinese came from humble origins. They were industrious, thrifty and intelligent, with a feeling for business.¹⁹ Charity was stimulated by the fact that social institutions in a migrant community, such as

¹⁶ King in Ross 1985: 14; Kooij, Pellenbarg (eds.) *Regional Capitals* 1994: 253.

¹⁷ Claver 2006: 4–6.

¹⁸ Godley 1981: 2–5

¹⁹ Yong 1992: 2–5.

hospitals and schools, were still weak, and hardly provided by the colonial government. If provided such charity was not only for the Chinese community but for the entire society. Many of the Chinese leaders took part in legislative councils, municipal commissions and Chinese advisory boards. As such they helped the colonial government to administer the island of Singapore. It was also in their interest that there was peace and stability, essential for their businesses.²⁰ We see the same in Medan, as prominent Chinese were members of the local councils and became government advisors.

Comparable to Yong's study, but placed in another period and in a broader context than just urban environment, is the remarkable thesis of Kwee Hiu Kian, *The Political Economy of Java's Northeast Coast c. 1740–1800*. It deals with the power play and the cooperation between three different elites, European, Javanese and Chinese, in 18th century Java's North-east coast. She labels the cooperation at certain times of the period under discussion a 'synergy'. Kwee uses the metaphors of 'game' and 'synergy', whereby Java's North-east coast could be seen as the 'arena' or the 'gaming-table' where the power-holders (Javanese rulers and administrators, Chinese *towkays* and Dutch VOC officials), competed for profit, status and power.²¹ Her study in a way can be compared to the situation in Medan as there were also different actors each with their own goals and objectives.

With regard to the interactions between different ethnic groups we also have to keep in mind the concept of the plural society. The Netherlands Indies has often been called a plural society, a concept introduced by the British colonial servant J.S. Furnivall (1878–1960). Each ethnic group, Indigenous, Dutch, Chinese, tended to have an independent social and cultural life and was administered by its own elite. The Indigenous group under the sultan, the Dutch under the colonial civil servant and the Chinese under their own Chinese officers, bearing titles ranking from lieutenant up to major.²² The success of the colonial policy was partly based on the application of exactly this plurality.²³

Chen Menghong's book *De Chinese Gemeenschap van Batavia, 1843–1865. Een onderzoek naar het Kong Koan-archief*. (The Chinese community of Batavia, 1843–1865. A survey of the Kong Koan archive), based on the archives of the Kong Koan or Chinese council, deals with the Chinese of Batavia in the 19th century. It shows that Batavia was not only a Dutch colonial town, but also a Chinese town.²⁴ Chen Menghong shows that the city two hundred years after its foundation still was a town with strong Chinese influences.

20 Yong 1992: 11, 13, 14, 16.

21 Kwee 2006: 21, 22.

22 Ong Hok Ham 1989: 51, 54; Mackie 1976: 22, 23; Furnivall 1939: 446.

23 Other theories about the Indonesian colonial society were presented by Boeke and Wertheim. Boeke introduced a theory of economic dualism, between modern western capitalism and the traditional Indigenous Asian economic order and Wertheim defined the Netherlands Indies as a caste society with the white society on top. (Doorn 1994: 52).

24 Chen Menghong 2011: 3, 4.

It was a model of a Sino–European co-colonization, just as Leonard Blussé pointed out in *Strange Company*.²⁵ Although her study is set in an earlier period, similarities with the Chinese community of Medan are visible. This concerns especially economic and political cooperation between the Chinese and the Dutch, as well as growing Chinese nationalism. The upsurge of Chinese nationalism and the decline of the Kong Koan Chinese Council in the 1900–1942 period is further dealt with in detail by Monique Erkelens in her study on the last *Majoor Chinees* of Batavia Kouw Kim An: *The Decline of the Chinese Council of Batavia: The Loss of Prestige and Authority of the Traditional Elites amongst Chinese Community between 1900–42*.²⁶ However, in Medan no such thing as the Kong Koan or Chinese Council existed.

The growing uneasiness between the Dutch colonial authorities and the Chinese in Java is also the subject of Mona Lohanda's *Growing Pains; The Chinese and the Dutch in Colonial Java, 1890–1942*. Lohanda points at the vulnerable position of the *peranakan* Chinese (offspring of Chinese fathers and Indigenous mother, born in the Netherlands Indies) on Java, as they had to choose between their 'Chineseness' and their *peranakan* "uniqueness". This ambiguity hardly counted for Medan and eastern Sumatra as for the Medan Chinese the choice was evident, they just focused on China and Chinese culture and less on the Netherlands Indies, the Dutch or Indigenous culture and politics. The *totok* (born in China) group in Medan was so big that they stuck to their own culture, spoke their own language and remained focused on their own cultural and political environment.

Chinese nationalism in the Netherlands Indies is dealt with by Williams' *Overseas Chinese Nationalism. The Genesis of The Pan-Chinese Movement in Indonesia, 1900–1916*. The nationalist Chinese movement in the Netherlands Indies took root in less than ten years. In that short period of time, Chinese schools were established, a Chinese press got off the ground and many pan-Chinese organisations were founded, resulting in a strong Chinese national consciousness. The term 'culturalism' came into use to describe the attitude of the Chinese and their relationship towards other ethnic groups.²⁷ This is, more or less, the idea that an individual is determined by the corresponding culture. These cultures were effectively closed, and individuals were hardly ever able to leave.

Donald Willmott published *The Chinese of Semarang: A Changing Minority Community in Indonesia*, a thorough social study about Semarang during the first half of the twentieth century. In 1930 the Chinese formed the largest minority of Semarang at around 20 percent.²⁸ Willmott asked himself why Christianity was attractive for Chinese. The

25 Chen Menghong 2011: 3, 4.

26 Erkelens, M. *The Decline of the Chinese Council of Batavia: The Loss of Prestige and Authority of the Traditional Elites amongst Chinese Community between 1900–1942*. Leiden 2013.

27 Williams 1959:14, 15.

28 Willmott 1960: vii, 7.

reason must be sought not only in the religious aspects as such, but also in cultural, social and psychological matters. Western culture in general enjoyed a position of prestige, and as Christianity was the religion of the West it was attractive.²⁹ We also see this happen in Medan as many Chinese were converted to the Christian religion. Commercial and political leadership in Semarang went mostly through the traditional public institution of the Chinese officers and then, later on, through the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, or Sianghwee.³⁰ This was more or less the same in Medan. Government schools established on Java were open for Indigenous children but not open for Chinese children, which caused great resentment among the Chinese.³¹ In Medan however, the situation was very different. Here the Chinese population was not that much interested in Dutch language education but preferred English and Chinese language schools.

East Sumatra's conflict model

Finally, a few words about the debate on labour relations in Medan's environment (i.e., East Sumatra's plantation belt), briefly referred to in the beginning of this Introduction. In the existing literature the plantation industry is presented as a conflict model. In 1978 the American geographer Karl J. Pelzer published *Planters and Peasants*, about the agrarian struggle between the planters and the Indigenous population. Pelzer describes how the local rulers via profitable land contracts rented out the lands to the European investors. Pelzer made an extensive study about the tobacco, rubber and palm oil plantations and their workforces. Pelzer also paid attention to the penal sanction and its colonial critics such as Van den Brand and Rhemrev.³²

In the 1980s the American anthropologist Ann Stoler focused in her book *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt, 1870–1979*, on labour, and in particular, on the coercion carried out on the plantations by the supervisors, and on coolie resistance on the rubber plantations. The early line of policy in the plantation belt was characterized by direct coercion, based legally on the penal sanction and indentured labour contracts.³³ The penal sanction was introduced as many coolies tended to flee the plantations before the end of their contracts. This created a heavy financial burden for the plantations as new workers had

29 Willmott 1960: 243, 245.

30 Willmott 1960:160.

31 Willmott 1960:19.

32 Pelzer 1978: 138.

33 In 1880 the so-called coolie ordinance was introduced which became a model for all plantations outside Java. In this contract the worker was bound for maximum three years and the employer had to pay monthly wages and provide proper housing and medical facilities. On paper the contract was good and as it was stated explicitly in fact workers under the coolie ordinance were better protected than those in Malaya. But in practice many abuses took place. (Reid 2005: 206, 207).

to be recruited. According to Stoler the only concern for the government and the plantation companies was profit, and such law and order to ensure the agrobusiness could continue.³⁴ Stoler wrote that the planters were their own lawyers, policemen, public prosecutors, judges and diplomats.³⁵ The planters had the hegemony and the government followed.³⁶

The sociologist Jan Breman joined this debate with his *Koelies, Planters en Koloniale Politiek* (Coolies, Planters and Colonial Politics), a study about labour relations and the abuses by plantation personnel and systematic violence against the coolies at the end of the 19th century. In 1902 the Medan lawyer Johannes van den Brand published his brochure *De millioenen uit Deli* (The millions of Deli), about the maltreatment of the coolies by the planters. Van den Brand portrayed the conditions of the contract coolies as slavery. In reaction to van den Brand's brochure, a labour inspection team was sent to East Sumatra in 1903, led by Mr. Rhemrev, who published his findings in the so-called Rhemrev report.³⁷ The basis for Breman's study was the Rhemrev report in which detailed descriptions were given of coolie maltreatment. Jan Breman stated that the Rhemrev report was kept secret by the authorities, a fact which is not substantiated as the newspaper *De Sumatra Post* explicitly referred to the Rhemrev report as well-known in an article of 1918.³⁸ Breman went as far to blame professional historians for not having paid enough attention to the Rhemrev report, a claim which was immediately contested by leading historian Cees Fasseur.³⁹

After Fasseur's intervention Vincent Houben and Thomas Lindblad joined the debate putting the matter into historical perspective, basing themselves on the archives of the labour inspection installed in 1904. Breman replied that the documents of the labour inspectorate could not be taken seriously as it had cooperated closely with the planters.⁴⁰ However, he also had to admit that in the long run some improvements did occur, a phenomenon also witnessed by Stoler.⁴¹ Whatever the case, there can be no doubt about the existence of rampant racialism on Sumatra's East coast. The plantation society as such undeniably represented a conflict model.

34 Stoler 1985: 7, 82.

35 Pelzer, 1978:61, 89; Stoler, 1985: 22.

36 Breman, 37

37 Breman 1989: 6, 317; Houben and Lindblad 1999: 18.

38 SP 28-11-1918.

39 Meijer 1995: 104.

40 Naudin 1905: 41; Houben and Lindblad 1999: 20.; Breman 1989: 210, 211, 216, 217.

41 Houben and Lindblad 1999: 21, 50; Breman 1989: 219; Stoler 1985: 37.

Outline of this study

Chapter 1 (Eastern Sumatra), of this thesis describes the development of the administrative unit of the East coast of Sumatra, part of which became the present-day province of North Sumatra. It was a frontier society with plantations, notable for the comprehensive power of the planters and their violence towards coolies as structurally characteristic, a classic example of a conflict model.

In chapter 2 (The city of Medan), the transformation of the colonial town of Medan is described from a tiny *kampung* into the financial and economic center of the region. Attention will be paid to aspects of growth, layout, infrastructure, segregation and land use rights.

Chapter 3 (An impression of Chinese business in Medan), sketches the Chinese businesses in Medan. Special attention is paid to the revenue farms or monopolies. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce or Tjong Hoa Siang Hwee is also included in this chapter.

Chapter 4 (The prominent Chinese of Medan), presents leading Chinese individuals who made a contribution to Medan. The chapter is divided into three parts, the first of which concerns aspects of leadership among the Chinese. The second part introduces the prominent Chinese community leaders with official Netherland Indies' public positions; these were the Chinese Majors Tjong Yong Hian, Tjong A Fie and Khoe Tjin Tek. The third part describes prominent persons without such functions. The persons dealt with were the ones who consistently came up in Medan's Chinese society from the 1890s till 1942.

Chapter 5 (Social life), deals with social institutions. Which of those held the Chinese of Medan together? Attention is also paid to Chinese family life, including the position of Chinese women, the religious, educational and health institutions as well as social and cultural organisations.

Chapter 6 (Politics, Press and Perceptions), focuses on political developments in the Netherlands Indies, on Chinese nationalism and local politics in Medan. Thereafter the role of the press will be examined, including the mutual perceptions of the Dutch and the Chinese.

Explanation, sources and interviews

The basis for this study comprises government reports, memorandums of transfer of office, mail reports, contemporary Dutch, Malay and Chinese newspapers, letters and interviews. I have collected material from The Nationaal Archief in Den Haag, the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde in Leiden and the Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen in Amsterdam, as well from the Arsip Nasional and the Perpustakaan Nasional in Jakarta. From the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in Den Haag I used especially *De Sumatra Post* and the *Deli Courant* from the years 1890 until 1942. In the Perpustakaan Nasional in Jakarta I

read the Malay language papers *Perwarta Deli* and *Andalas*. Chinese papers like *Sin Po* and *Sumatra Bin Pho* were made available from private collections. In Medan I conducted most of the interviews, but I also visited Medan Chinese who had moved to Jakarta, Penang, Malaysia, Singapore, the Netherlands and Belgium. Personal interviews are especially crucial to understanding the ‘spirit of the times’, to journey into the past.⁴² Over the years I had many conversations with descendants of the prominent Chinese who could give me first-hand information about the pre-war period as they were the children of the persons described. This unique information however must always be read in conjunction with other sources and existing literature to check the facts. If there are different interpretations, they will be mentioned.

The most famous person in Medan’s history was Major Tjong A Fie, he was also the first about whom I collected information. I came into contact with Tjong A Fie’s daughter, Mrs. Lemye-Tjong Sze-yin, who in the 1990s was still active in her Musik Murni music school in Medan, established in 1950. Through Mrs. Lemye I met other Tjong family members. Mrs. Lemye told me about her father and his contributions to the city, about his fortune and the monopolies, about the enormous amounts involved, the plantations and real estate business. It was also Mrs. Lemye who spoke about her uncle Major Tjong Yong Hian, his son, Chinese Consul Chang Pu Ching and Major Khoe Tjin Tek. Mrs. Lemye also pointed at the importance of Dolf Kamerlingh Onnes, her father’s right-hand man. In the same period, I met Mr. Tan Boen Djin, son of Tan Tang Ho of the well-known Seng Hap firm. Tan Boen Djin told me about his father, his brother Tan Boen An as well as Gan Hoat Soei (the latter two were local politicians). Through Tan Boen Djin I met Hiu Kian Jin, eldest son of Hiu Ngi Fen. Hiu Ngi Fen was the last chairman of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and an important community leader. Hiu Kian Jin was, just like Mrs. Lemye and Tan Boen Djin, a source of invaluable information. It was Hiu Kian Jin who in turn, mentioned Thio Siong Soe.

These are personal recollections from individual family members. Nevertheless they offered new insights on how the prominent Chinese made their money. Mrs. Lemye Tjong Sze Yin, Mr. Tjong Kwet Liong, Mr. Eddy Khoe, Mr. Tan Boen Djin and Mr. Hiu Kian Jin all spoke openly about the monopolies and about the money the revenue farms generated. Although a critical reader might get the impression the descendants tried only to present rosy pictures, at the same time they offered a wealth of information. This in combination with first hand colonial government sources and the newspapers and literature allowed me to obtain a satisfactory view on Medan’s historical reality..

The nine individuals who are the focus of this study had their economic and political networks on Sumatra, British Malaya, Java and China. We also see that most of the nine

42 Stuart Hughes 1976: 8.

cooperated with each other in terms of business through their companies, monopolies, and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. Socially they cooperated through cultural and educational institutions like the Su Tung school. In conclusion, their manifold contributions to Medan were fundamental for the development of the city from 1890 until 1942.

The role of these individuals to the development of the City of Medan proved to have a long-lasting influence as the Chung Hwa Shang Yeh bank of Khoe Tjin Tek still exists, now under the name Bank Kesawan, with branches in Medan and in Jakarta. In addition to this, Hock Lee Rubber of Thio Siong Soe is still active as a company. The Su Tung school and the school of Khoe Tjin Tek still survive. The companies of all the other families have been sold but their descendants started new businesses in later years.

Spelling

Names of geographical locations in the Netherlands Indies and the rest of Asia are written according to the spelling and names current at the time. Thus, Batavia is used for Jakarta, Soerabaja for Surabaya and Peking for Beijing. As Indonesia did not yet exist as an independent country, the term Indigenous is used instead of Indonesian. For Chinese names, the Hokkian spelling is used like the name of Tjong A Fie instead of the Mandarin spelling Chang Hung-nan. In case of Chinese organizations the same policy is followed, like the Hokkian spelling for Tiong Hoa Hwe Koan and not Zhong Hua Hui Guan. If there is an alternative spelling of a name it will be placed between brackets. English language quotes are written in *Italic*, Dutch translated quotes in *Italic* and between brackets.

1

East Sumatra. The formation of a plantation economy

The island of Sumatra is almost 1800 kilometers in length, the sixth largest island on earth.¹ From north to south a chain of mountains, the Bukit Barisan, runs over the island covered with vast jungle. Sumatra is home to the Sumatran tigers, elephants, rhinoceros and orang utans and countless other animals. The island still harbours one of the largest unspoiled primary rainforests in the world with a wide variety of flora and fauna. The landscape of the Eastern coast of Sumatra consists mainly of fertile plains, narrow in the north and wider to the south. On the coast are swamps and mangrove forests, through which many rivers descend from the Bukit Barisan mountain range. As these rivers often flood and silt up on the volcanic grounds, they create the fertile soil.² The eastern marshes and western mountains provided protection for the peoples of the interior, allowing them to develop their own civilizations which for a long time were hardly influenced by the outer world. The Sumatran population on the East coast consists of mainly Malay people, whereas in the higher regions inland live the Batak tribes.

In this chapter we present first a short historical overview of East Sumatra from the 13th till the 19th century with the arrival of Arab and Portuguese traders, followed by the Dutch and British and their relationships towards the local rulers. Second, we will describe the genesis of the plantations in the Deli region, first tobacco, later on followed by rubber and palm oil. It was an economic boom period with huge investments and profits in the plantation industry. Until around 1890 only Chinese and some Indians worked on the plantations; later on many Javanese were recruited for Deli. The planters came from Europe. The labour conditions on the plantations were harsh. How harsh it was will be described in the last sections of this chapter. Before that attention will also be paid to the recruitment of the Chinese workers and the ethnic subgroups among the Chinese coming to Sumatra.

The research question in this chapter is: what conditions led to the spectacular economic development of the district of East Sumatra? And at what cost? The profits were high but came at a heavy social cost. The social cost was and still is considered as being very high, earning East Sumatra a perfect image of a conflict society. East Sumatra was seen as an extremely harsh society with endemic social injustice. As already mentioned in the Introduction the conflict model as such has caused a serious debate amongst modern-day scholars.

1 Reid 2005: 1.

2 Loderichs, Buiskool 1997: 7.

1 East Sumatra: historical overview

1.1. East Sumatra until circa 1870

One of the first reports about Sumatra comes from the Italian Marco Polo, who visited the island in 1292. By then part of the Malay coastal population had already been converted to Islam by Arab traders. When three hundred years later the Portuguese arrived on Sumatra all important ports in Aceh were under Muslim authority.³ The Portuguese were especially interested in the lucrative spice trade. Around the Malacca Straits there existed an extensive trade network in Indian, Siamese (Thai) and Chinese textiles, metals, ceramics and artisan products using gold, silver and tin. In addition to this there were, of course, the spices, mainly pepper shipped by Malay and Javanese ships. In 1511 the Portuguese occupied the harbour principality of Melaka. From this headquarter in the archipelago, which the Portuguese called Malacca, they traded with pepper producing ports such as Pedie in Aceh and Indrapura in Siak.⁴ The Dutch succeeded in wresting Malacca from the Portuguese in 1641. In the 17th century the Dutch Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie (VOC) established trading posts in Padang, Jambi and Palembang. Around the same time the ruler of Djohor in the Malay peninsula occupied the kingdom of Aroe and established his seat at Deli Tua, south of the present city of Medan. Besides the balances of power, also Indigenous power structures in the area changed over time. From the sixteenth century onwards Acehnese, Malay and Minangkabau rulers continued to claim their rights to East Sumatra. The small regions of Deli, Asahan and Langkat were from 1619 till 1669 under the rule of the Sultanate of Aceh, but gained independence again until 1780, when they were incorporated by Siak. Finally, in 1856 they returned to the Aceh Sultanate. Before that the Sultan of Siak had promoted a *Tengku Panglima* of Deli to the rank of Sultan.

In 1822 the Dutch colonial government sent a diplomatic mission to the Sultan of Siak resulting in a friendship treaty with trade privileges and the promise that no foreign trading posts should be established in the region. The Dutch were worried about British expansion from the new trading posts of Penang and Singapore, established in 1786 and 1819 respectively. Hardly had the Dutch left when the British sent the Scotsman John Anderson as emissary to the Sultan of Siak who without any scruples offered the same trade privileges to the British.⁵ Anderson's journey resulted in the detailed report *Mission to the Eastcoast of Sumatra* in 1823. He was impressed by the richness of the natural resources of East Sumatra:

3 Reid 2005: 5, 6, 10; De Jong 2000: 232; Locher-Scholten 2004: 139.

4 Loderichs, Buischool 1997: 7.

5 Loderichs, Buischool 1997: 7, 8; Anderson 1826: XII, 271, 167.

*I do not know a country so productive as Delli, considering the number of its inhabitants; nor is there perhaps one on the face of the globe possessing so many natural advantages. The productions are numerous and valuable; and the bare mention of their names alone, would occupy a large space.*⁶

John Anderson also found traces of Chinese settlements in Deli, even going back to the twelfth century. Near Laboehan, (Deli's port settlement), the village at the mouth of the Deli river, a so-called 'Kota Cina' is said to have existed.⁷ To solve political matters in the Malacca Straits region the treaty of London of was signed in 1824. Hereafter the British possessions on Sumatra, Bencoolen in the southwest, as well as other claims on Sumatra were given up in exchange for the Dutch recognition of Singapore as a British settlement. In addition, all Dutch possessions on the Malay peninsula, including Melaka, and in India were handed over to the British.⁸

Unlike Java and the Moluccas, most of Sumatra was not under effective Dutch rule until the second half of the nineteenth century. By only occupying Lampong in the south and a number of strongholds along the coast like Padang and Palembang, the Dutch were not able to exercise control over the inland areas.⁹ Even the Toba Lake was still unknown in the early 19th century. Marsden recounted in his *History of Sumatra* (1811) that he had heard about:

*a lake, one of great extent, but unascertained, in the Batta country.*¹⁰

In those days the Batak were still rather isolated, keeping up their own culture and traditions.¹¹ The marshes on the East coast and high mountain range ensured that they were hardly influenced by the outer world, although they traded with the Malay on the coast, especially for slaves, captured in domestic wars, whom they sold in return for guns and other weaponry.¹² With the Siak treaty of 1858, confirming the indirect ruler status of the Siak Sultanate, the Dutch civil servant Eliza Netscher, succeeded in making the Indigenous states of Asahan, Batu Bara, Serdang, Deli, Langkat and Tamiang dependencies of Siak again, thus establishing a further indirect link to the Netherlands Indies government.¹³ But there was still almost no Dutch presence in the region. The Sultan of Deli did not accept the supremacy of Siak, while still acknowledging Dutch overlordship.

6 Anderson 1826: 278.

7 Anderson 1971:294; McKinnon 1994:16; Miksic 1979 : 66, 112.

8 Thee Kian Wie 1989: 30.

9 De Jong 2000: 232; Reid 1969: 30, 34, 40; van Sandick 1909: 318; Thee Kian Wie 1989:30.

10 Marsden 1811: 14.

11 Anderson 1826: 35.

12 In 1867 were several thousand Batak slaves sold (Volker 1928: 7).

13 Sandick 1909: 318; Reid 1969: 30.

Similar constructions were in place in other parts of East Sumatra, such as Jambi, where in the end the Sultan ceded import and export duties to the colonial power but kept the status of ruler. In the mid 19th century this indirect rule construct was widespread in the Indies. The Dutch policy for Sumatra was to safeguard Dutch interests against foreign claims.¹⁴ In 1857 such treaties were also made with the Sultan of Riau and in 1858 with that of Indragiri. By 1860 the entire East coast of Sumatra was under Dutch influence. Such agreements were part and parcel of a policy of ‘pre-emption’ which meant to secure colonial relationships without implications in the field of direct government.¹⁵

In 1864 the Dutch installed *controleurs* (district officers) in Deli and Batu Bara, which intensified the control of the Dutch colonial administration. In 1871 a second Sumatran treaty with Britain was made in which the British agreed to Dutch rule over all Sumatra, including Aceh.¹⁶ A year earlier, in 1870, the Dutch had decided to gradually abolish the highly profitable Cultivation System on Java. After the 1830 introduction of the system, western private enterprise in the agricultural sector had been almost impossible because of a government monopoly on strategic export crops. With the gradual abolition of the Cultivation System and the introduction of the new agrarian law of 1870 agriculture in the Netherlands Indies was opened for large scale private agricultural enterprise. Particularly in the Deli region many investors moved in and leased land from the local ruler to open plantations.¹⁷

1.2. From tobacco to oil and rubber

Jacob Nienhuys, son of an Amsterdam tobacco trader, came to Deli in 1863 after he had been informed of the high quality tobacco from the region. He was given permission by Sultan Mahmood Perkasa Alam Shah of Deli to start a tobacco plantation, just south of Laboehan at the mouth of the Deli river. The first Deli tobacco turned out to be of very promising quality especially as an excellent cigar wrapper. The tobacco plant flourished for several reasons: temperature, altitude, soil structure, rainfall, cloudiness, humidity and sunshine. There seemed to be no better place for growing tobacco in the world than the soil of Deli. Evidently between the River Wampoe and River Oelar the optimal conditions for tobacco cultivation were found.¹⁸ Large quantities were exported to Europe and the U.S.A. For work on his plantations Nienhuys hired Chinese coolies (contract labourers)

14 Locher-Scholten 2004: 130, 139, 141.

15 Locher Scholten 1994: 131, 277.

16 Thee Kian Wie 1989: 130; Reid 1969: 34, 40, 73; Volker 1928: 11; Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië (SvNI) 1865: 19.

17 Thee Kian-wie 1977: 3; Waals, *Indische Gids*, 1921, I: 320.

18 Volker 1928: 39.

from Penang and Singapore. In East Sumatra local labour was in short supply because the native Malay and Batak were not interested in plantation work. The large-scale western plantations consequently were dependent on huge numbers of imported labour. In 1869 the Deli Maatschappij was established by a triumvirate consisting of the tobacco traders G.C. Clemen and J. Nienhuys and the entrepreneur P.W. Janssen. The main shareholder was the Nederlandsche Handel Maatschappij (Netherlands Trading Company).¹⁹

The number of tobacco plantations increased from 13 in 1873, 67 in 1881, 104 in 1886 and 170 in 1891.²⁰ Such spectacular development was unprecedented. The clearing of the jungle, the building of roads, the creation of an infrastructure, the preparation of the fields, the building of housing and the feeding of tens of thousands of workers from China, Java and the coast of Coromandel in India, was an impressive organizational achievement. Soon American, British, German, Swiss, French, Polish, Czech, and Belgian investors also stepped in. A typical plantation usually covered an area of 700 to 900 hectares and employed 500 to 800 coolies.²¹ As the commemorative volume of the Deli Maatschappij proudly mentioned in 1929:

*“The Deli planters have changed East Sumatra from an unproductive, mostly swampy land, with a very small heterogenous population, consisting of different tribes who are continuously at war with each other; living under primitive circumstances, many times attacked by heavy contagious epidemics. This land has been changed into an area, wherein a population of hundreds of thousands, still growing steadily, find a good living and mostly live in prosperity”.*²²

Notwithstanding a brief crisis in 1890, caused by the rise in import taxes from the U.S.A. and two years of unusual drought, the tobacco industry was booming and thousands of hectares of jungle were cleared for new plantations in the districts of Deli, Langkat and Serdang. Practically all estates were tobacco plantations in spite of some try-outs with other agricultural products like Liberia coffee, coconut, pepper and rubber.²³

In the meantime, the first oil drillings on the Eastcoast of Sumatra were started by the Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappij (Batavian Petroleum Company) (BPM). which was established after oil was discovered in Pangkalan Brandan and Perlak (Langsa) in Aceh in 1876. Around 1880 exploitation of the first oil wells on Sumatra began. In 1907 a merger took place between the Koninklijke Olie Maatschappij (the Royal Dutch Oil Company)

19 Schadee 1918, I: 181.

20 De Jong 2000: 303.

21 Clemens Lindblad 1989: 13; Schadee 1918 II: 205.

22 Deli Maatschappij 1929: 8.

23 Wormser 1943: 213.

and the British Shell Company. From then on oil extraction, processing and transportation were combined. Their daughter company BPM obtained a near monopoly in the oil sector in the Netherlands Indies.²⁴

Around the turn of the century the new automobile industry created a high worldwide demand for two new products, the aforementioned oil and rubber, both of which also happened to be exported from East Sumatra. The rubber boom started in Malaya in the early twentieth century and then moved on to Sumatra. In due course rubber became the most important western plantation crop in the region. In East Sumatra there already existed an infrastructure for rubber plantations, because of the presence of quite a few tobacco plantations which were no longer competitive, and the fertile soil, not to mention the presence of experienced planters. The conditions for creating a rubber industry were therefore excellent. As soon as a start was made with rubber cultivation, it was immediately clear that this would be very profitable.²⁵ The rubber boom lasted from 1906 until the economic world crisis of 1929. Many nations invested in rubber plantations, including Belgian, French, German and American companies. The first big foreign enterprise was Harrisons & Crosfield, which had already opened large estates in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and British Malaya. The biggest non-Dutch investors however became the American car-tire company Goodyear. The Americans introduced the expression ‘Dollar land of Deli’. The US Rubber Company, an American trust, founded the *Hollandsch Amerikaansche Plantage Maatschappij* (Dutch American Plantation Company) (HAPM) in 1911, which was later sold to the American company Uniroyal. The French did not lag behind either, and invested with the *Société Financière des Caoutchoucs* (Socfin).²⁶ Rubber was grown especially in the periphery of the tobacco area in the Asahan district. The new center in Asahan was the small town of Kisaran. From 1910 on, boom prices were seen in rubber while at the same time the demand for cigars was on the decline, with cigarettes rather than cigars becoming popular, many tobacco plantations were turned into rubber plantations.²⁷ During World War I there was a very high demand for rubber caused by the war industry, hence from Sumatra most rubber was exported to the U.S.A.²⁸

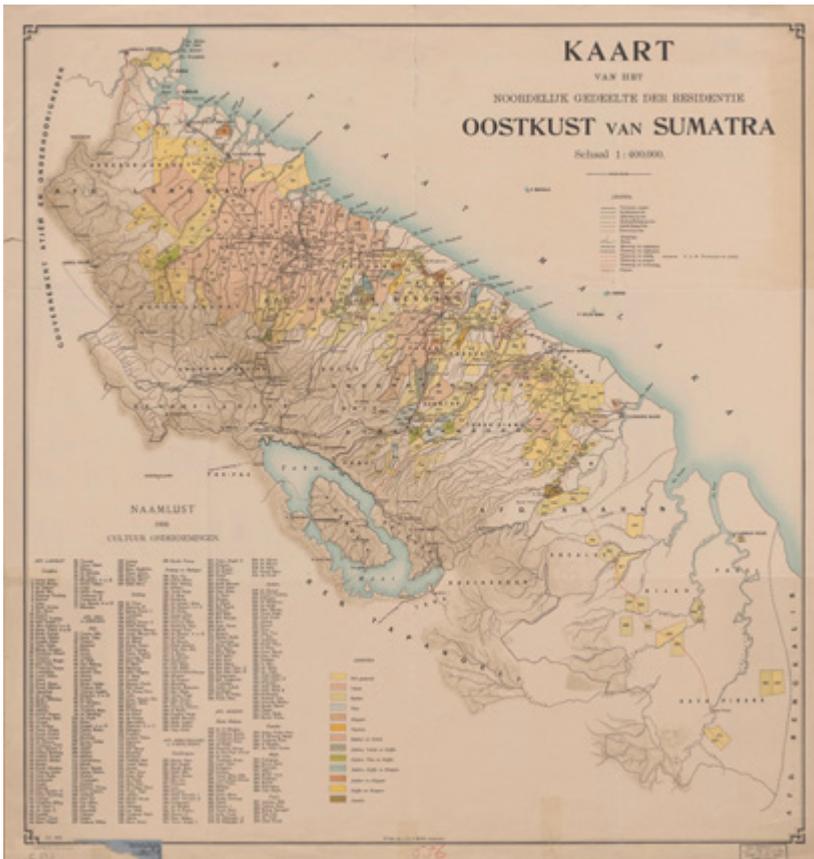
24 In 1883, a concession was granted by the Sultan of Langkat to the Dutchman A.J. Zijlker to drill for oil. In the year 1889 the *Koninklijke Maatschappij tot Exploitatie van Petroleumbronnen in Nederlandsch Indië* (Royal Company for Oil Exploitation in Netherlands Indies) was established and bought Zijlker's concession for the amount of fl.371.000 (Naudin 1905: 33; Van Kol 1903: 92). The Royal Dutch Shell cooperated in the years after with smaller companies like Moeara Enim and the *Dordtsche Petroleum Maatschappij*. (Clemens, Lindblad 1989: 11; De Jong 2000: 403; Thee Kian-wie 1977: 34).

25 Naudin 1905: 21; Clemens - Lindblad 1989: 8.

26 Stoler 1985: 18; Thee Kian-wie 1977:15.

27 In between 1910 to 1915 the area planted with rubber tripled from 29,500 hectares to 103,000 hectares. In 1932 the total hectares with rubber eventually reached 284,213 hectares. (Pelzer 1978: 54; Thee Kian-wie 1989: 145).

28 From 1910 the amount of planted rubber rose from 51,394 hectares to 173,000 hectares in 1924. However, in 1920–1921 there was a depression in the rubber industry caused by rubber trees planted just before the



Map East Sumatra from 1914 with list of plantations.
Foto KITLV

Around 1910 tea cultivation was introduced in Simeloengoen district. Tea plantations mushroomed in the region around the new city of Pematang Siantar on the slopes of the Simeloengoen highlands. British and German investors took the initiative, but later it was mainly the Dutch Handels Vereeniging Amsterdam (Amsterdam Trading Company) or HVA who established tea plantations.²⁹ In 1916 HVA purchased its first tea plantation, Balimbangan in Simeloengoen near Pematang Siantar. Other well-known tea plantations in Sumatra, opened in the 1920s, were the Kayu Aro plantations on the southwest coast in the region around Sumatra's highest mountain, Kerinci.³⁰

war that started producing in 1920; this caused over- production and low prices. Hereafter international restricting schemes were created for the rubber culture. (Thee Kian-wie 1977: 16,17; Volker 1928: 75,76).

29 De Waard 1934: 221; Pelzer 1978: 55; Tabak en Deli (anonymous) Article about Deli and Serdang. KIT 689.

30 HVA 1929: 10,12; van der Zwaag 1991: 129, 130.

The Société Financière (Socfin), entering Deli in 1909, introduced palm oil to Sumatra as it had experience with this product in West Africa. Oil palm cultivation increased rapidly from 1921 onwards.³¹

When in 1864 the first Dutch government official had arrived in Deli, there were approximately twenty Chinese shops in Laboehan, mainly goldsmiths and small shopkeepers.³² In the subsequent period increasing numbers of Chinese settlers entered Sumatra's East coast, also in Medan. By the 1920s in East Sumatra there were European, Indigenous and Chinese companies with intensive economic contacts with Penang and Singapore. Between 1870 and 1942 the three crucial developments in East Sumatra were the extension of the colonial administration and the rise of both western and Chinese entrepreneurship. The plantations were called the 'Leviathan'³³ of the region, as everything depended on them. A complete infrastructure, harbours, roads, the railway system, banking, in sum everything was built for the plantations. In 1938 Eastern Sumatra, with only 1.7% of the total territory and 2.5% of total population, was responsible for 21% of the total exports of the Netherlands Indies.³⁴ The economic structure of East Sumatra was unique but quite vulnerable to the fluctuations of world markets.³⁵ The period from 1919 to 1929 showed a consistently favorable trade balance in East Sumatra. However, the local impact of the World Crisis of 1929 was enormous and did not end before 1938, when the economy finally rose up again, mainly due to higher demand for rubber.³⁶

1.3. Migrant workers

Huge numbers of Chinese, Javanese and Indians entered East Sumatra to work as contract labourers, also called coolies. The term coolie, probably a Tamil word, which means 'hire' or 'hired person', was generally used for labourers in agricultural enterprises, plantations, mining and industry. After the arrival of European capitalist enterprises on East Sumatra a massive Chinese immigration of plantation workers started. The first Chinese coolies in Deli arrived in 1864 via the Straits Settlements. Before arrival in Deli they received a payment in advance.³⁷ Their contracts were usually for three years. On average it took a year to pay back the advance payment. On the plantations the spending of wages on or after payday on gambling and the use of opium was usual practice. The planters did not object to this as it

31 Pekelharing, *Indische Gids* 1920, I: 349, 350, 351; Stoler 1985: 19.

32 Reid 2005: 197.

33 The Dutch author R. Broersma called the plantations the Leviathan of Deli. (Broersma 1919: 141)
Leviathan is a mythical biblical creature. The term Leviathan is also used for a ruler with absolute power.

34 Boomgaard en Van Dijk 2001: 278; Clemens - Lindblad 1989: 25; Thee Kian-wie 1977: 44.

35 *Verslag Handelsvereniging Medan*, 1920: 36, 37.

36 Thee Kian-wie, 1977: 63.

37 Ong Eng Die 1943: 68-71; Naudin, 1905: 38.

was part of their policy to keep the coolies satisfied. This inevitably caused many coolies to gamble or smoke their wages away automatically forcing them in turn to sign a new contract. This was fortunate for the planters as they could continue to employ the same experienced coolies with no need to recruit new ones. The conditions in the early years under which the coolies had to work were often bad. Their wages were low, and many died of disease and exhaustion. The large influx of Chinese to Sumatra dated from after 1870. The introduction of the steamship in the second half of the nineteenth century facilitated their exodus from China. At first, Chinese workers were recruited from the Straits Settlements through brokers, but after 1880 they came directly from China. Civil wars, hunger and poverty in China, in combination with the relatively promising prospects of starting a new life in Sumatra, led to a further increase of Chinese coolies as the years passed.³⁸

Recruitment, repatriation and those who stayed

In the beginning in Singapore and Penang coolie brokers were active in recruiting coolies from China. These brokers were often quite ruthless in their recruitment. For instance, they invited Chinese to a *wajang* performance, then caught them and shipped them off to Deli against their will. Others, who did not want to go to Deli, were told there was work in Djohor, but in the end they sailed to Deli.³⁹ The brokers in Singapore and Penang avoided shipments of coolies directly from China to Deli because they could not make a profit from this type of recruiting. Against these abuses the British Straits government installed the so-called ‘Protectors of Chinese’ in 1877 in Singapore and Penang. The contracts for Deli were made up in presence of these protectors.⁴⁰ From 1880 on, however, coolies were recruited directly from China and no longer via Penang.⁴¹ A way to stimulate coolie emigration was via the system of financial remittance, the so-called money letters, “bills of exchange”. Sending remittances to the family back home in China proved to be safe and became very popular.⁴² Around 1904 altogether some 4 million Chinese from the coastal provinces of Fujian and Guangdong were living in the Netherlands Indies, the Straits Settlements, Siam (Thailand) and the Philippines. Every year they remitted some 40 million British Straits dollars home. Although these southern coastal provinces were very poor, they were relatively prosperous, however, when compared to the rest of China, thanks to the steady rate of remittances from the overseas Chinese. In 1920, A.G. De Bruin, former civil servant for Chinese

38 Sandick, 1909:324; Deli Maatschappij, 1919: 28; Reid, 2005: 204; Shozo, 1994: 119, 122; Cator, 1936: 26,27; Naudin 1905: 35, 38; Bool 1903: 31, 32.

39 (Sandick 1909: 324) A *wajang* is a Javanese puppet show.

40 Deli Maatschappij 1919: 28; Reid 2005: 204; Sandick, 1909: 324; Naudin 1905: 35.

41 Naudin 1905: 9; Shozo 1994: 119; Cator 1936: 26, 27.

42 Naudin, 1905:38.

affairs on East Sumatra, gave a speech to the Chinese Student Society *Chung Hwa Hui* in the Netherlands about East Sumatra and the Deli tobacco. De Bruin said that, in 1917, 13,394 money letters were sent to China with a total amount of fl.115,602.50 (Dutch guilders). In the same year, 3,210 persons went back to China with an amount of fl.277,538.62.⁴³

Emigration was further stimulated by the Taiping rebellion (1850–64) causing many Chinese to leave the southern provinces of China as these were left in poverty and ruin. Besides that, the Chinese Manchu empire had in 1894 revoked the ban on emigration.⁴⁴ Between 1880 and 1930 there was a yearly outflow of at least 100,000 Chinese contract workers, except in 1918–1919. Around 50% of these workers remained in East Sumatra.⁴⁵ Javanese coolies bringing their own families started to arrive after 1910. Practically all the Javanese stayed on in Sumatra, where their offspring still resides. Because of this the demographic changes in the region were enormous. In 1863, at the dawn of the tobacco plantation industry, the Deli region counted a population of around 100,000 Malay and Batak inhabitants. In 1920, caused by the huge labour recruitment from China and Java the total population on Deli had grown to around one million.⁴⁶

Zooming in on the demography appendices 1.1 to 1.3 show that in 1905 the number of Europeans were only around 2,600 rising to 8,200 in 1927. In 1905 the Foreign Orientals (mainly Chinese) were over 114,000 and in 1927 over 141,000. The Indigenous population (mostly Javanese) were in 1905 over 450,000 and in 1927 over 1 million people, the number of Javanese had more than doubled in this period. In 1927 over 40% of the Europeans were women, whereas among the Indigenous it was over 45%. The Chinese number of women increased only slowly. In 1920 around 20% of the Chinese were women, in 1927 it was about 22%. The total population in 1927 was approximately 1.5 million.

Totok, Singkeh and Peranakan

Practically all the Chinese in East Sumatra in the 1920s were *totok* (newcomers, born in China), also called *singkeh*, of the first generation. Few were *peranakan*, (Indo-Chinese, people from mixed origin, born in Sumatra). As most were born in China, this resulted in relations with China in various forms, even among *peranakan* Chinese. The number of Dutch-speaking Chinese was few. In 1930, in the outer provinces, East Sumatra, Bangka, Billiton and West Borneo, 75% of the Chinese were still *totok*, although the proportion of first generation might have been smaller. The definition of *totok* and *peranakan* varies

43 Naudin 1905:38; De Bruin, A.G. in: *Koloniaal Weekblad* 13-5-1920) This amount would be in 2015 in Euro: 7.6 x 277.538.62,- = €2,109,293.

44 Erkelens 2013: 160; Willmott 1960:18

45 Reid 2005, 389; Thee Kian-wie 1977: 38.

46 Feldwick 1917: 1185; Thee Kian-wie 1989: 137.

according to location. What is *peranakan* for Java might be different in East Sumatra. From the viewpoint of a Chinese *totok*, the main characteristic of the distinction is to what extent one keeps up with Chinese culture and language.

The largest concentrations of Chinese in the Netherlands Indies were in East Sumatra, West Java and West Borneo. In Java most Chinese lived and worked in the cities in trade and industry and as middlemen and distributors. In West Borneo the Chinese were engaged in agricultural settlements as well as in the mining industry, in the tin mines on the islands Bangka and Billiton, while in East Sumatra many Chinese were working on plantations.⁴⁷ In East Sumatra between 1890 and 1940, there was a continuous influx of *totok* Chinese with the consequence that *totok* seem to have formed the majority. The contacts of the Chinese in East Sumatra with their fatherland was much more intense than that of the Chinese in Java. Many Chinese spoke and understood little Malay and considered their stay on Deli as temporary.⁴⁸

There was a contradiction between the large masses of Chinese male emigrants who moved throughout South East Asia and the prohibition on leaving the country. This prohibition was based on the principle of ancestor worship as by emigration worshipping threatened to be disrupted. All Chinese emigration was officially forbidden before 1894 and the law was even more strict for women than for men. That was the reason why most men left China without a wife, only to work abroad, but with the intention of returning to China. On East Sumatra until 1920 there were few Chinese women. Thereafter they started coming to the area in increasing numbers and in fact it was not until 1930 that large numbers of Chinese women joined the migration to the Dutch East Indies, where they settled for good.⁴⁹

The largest group of Chinese in the Netherlands Indies in the 1930s were the Hokkian, also named Amoy (Xiamen) Chinese, after the harbour where they boarded ship. They originated from the coastal province of Foehkien (Fukien, Fujian) or Hokkian as they call it themselves. Foehkien was the name in the Peking dialect, Mandarin Chinese, in use as the official language of the empire. After the revolution Mandarin became the national language. The Cantonese or Kwong Fu originated from the southern coastal province of Kwangtung (Kwantoeng or Guangzhou) with the capital Canton. Swatow was the harbour from where the Cantonese departed. The Hakkas and Hoklos originated from northern China and had settled in Fukien and Kwantoeng. As they had entered Kwantoeng and Fukien from the north they were also called Keh (Ke-jia), which means 'guest' or 'stranger'.⁵⁰ Just like the Cantonese the Hakkas departed from Swatow.

47 Verboeket in *Koloniale Studiën* 1936. 1. 'De Geschiedenis van de Chineezzen in Nederlandsch-Indië': 9.

48 Memorie van Overgave (Memorandum of Transfer. (MvO) controleur M.J. Ruychaver, 1926 KIT.

49 Willmott 1960: 18; Creutzberg 1936: 34.

50 Jansen *Vreemde Oosterlingen* 1940: 11; Cator 1936: 26, 27; De Groot, *Het Kongsiwezen van Borneo* 1885: 66 in: Ong Eng Die 1943: 32.

The Tio Tsjoe (Tio Chus or Taotsjoe or Chaozhou or Teochew) also originated from Kwantoeng, departing from Swatow. Most Tio Tsjoe worked in agriculture, forestry, fishing and trade. They came mostly as contract labourers for the plantations. Hereafter many Tio Tjoes became vegetable and pig farmers.⁵¹ As they came from the area around Swatow, they were also called Swatow Chinese.⁵² Although the Tio Tsjoe originated from Kwantoeng province they were, concerning their language, closer to the Hokkian.⁵³ The Hoklos came, like the Hakkas, from northern China, settling in Fukien and Canton.⁵⁴ Many Hoklos were working in agriculture, forestry, fishing and trade.⁵⁵ The last ethnic group to be mentioned here were the Hainan or Hailams from the island of Hainan.⁵⁶ In appendix 5.4 a list of Chinese lineage or clan associations is presented.

In theory the planters had the obligation to repatriate the Javanese and Chinese workers, but thousands of them stayed behind voluntarily after their contract expired and settled in villages or towns. The workers who settled in the communities of the local population came under the jurisdiction of the East Sumatran local rulers just as many former Javanese coolies. They first rented land from the Malay or Karo people. The Chinese were not allowed to buy land so therefore had to rent. Many former Chinese plantation workers who settled outside the cities became so-called *Tjina kebon sajur* (Chinese vegetable farmers) growing vegetables and breeding pigs. If possible, they rented a plot of land and started farming. Another reason why they settled outside of the cities was that the prices of houses and land were cheaper than in the towns.⁵⁷

The native Malay and Batak population was soon overtaken by huge numbers of plantation workers from China and Java. Such an enormous immigration had direct demographic consequences. In 1930 in the plantation area of Deli and Serdang in East Sumatra the Javanese population was the biggest group with 43%, whereas the original Malay population was only 12%. The Chinese population in East Sumatra was 10% and the European only 1%. The other 34% were Batak, Minang, Indian and others.⁵⁸ The plantation economy also led to the formation of new towns such as Tebing Tinggi, Pematang Siantar, Kisaran and Tanjung Balai, which in turn attracted even more Chinese traders.⁵⁹

51 Jansen *Vreemde Oosterlingen* 1940: 11; Ong Eng Die 1943: 30, 32; Interview Chang Tung Yin, 26-11-1992; Jansen *Andere helft* 1941: 9; Cator 1936: 26, 27; Creutzberg, 'De Chineesche Bevolking van Nederlandsch-Indië' in *Koloniale Studiën*, 1936: 33.

52 Jansen *Vreemde Oosterlingen* 1940: 11; De Groot, *Het Kongsiwezen van Borneo*, 1885, 66 in: Ong Eng Die, 32.

53 Begraafplaatsrapport, Gemeente Medan, 1928.

54 Cator 1936: 26, 27; De Bruin 1918: 37; Ong Eng Die 1943: 30, 32.

55 Creutzberg 1936: 33; MvO controleur M.J. Ruychaver 1926; Reid 2005: 396.

56 Cator 1936: 26, 27; De Bruin 1918: 36; Interview Chang Tung Yin 26-11-1992.

57 Gemeenteblad 2 Gemeente Medan 1938, no. 163; Colombijn 2010:101.

58 Pelzer 1978: 61, 62.

59 (Pelzer 1978: 61, 62). In 1930 the entire Chinese population of the Netherlands Indies consisted of 1,25

Although initially only the western companies owned plantations, in due time Chinese entrepreneurs were also able to obtain agricultural estates. In the beginning the Chinese were not allowed to start plantations because the planters committee was afraid that the Chinese coolies would no longer want to work for the European plantation companies which applied the penal sanction, but would prefer to work as free coolies on a Chinese-owned agricultural estate. Even if their wages would be less, they still would prefer to work for a Chinese company, according to the planters committee.⁶⁰ This situation changed in 1906 when Tjong A Fie was able to purchase the rubber estate Si Boelan near Tebing Tinggi.⁶¹ In the years thereafter more Chinese entrepreneurs like Thio Siong Soe and Chang Pu Ching obtained plantations.⁶²

1.4. Frontier society

The district of East Sumatra came to harbour a new type of society, with little in common with the existing local communities and their way of life. Capital, planters and workers were all newcomers and at the beginning of the twentieth century the district still had a strong pioneering character. Relation between higher and middle personnel on the one side, and the workers, the coolies, on the other were tough, not in the least because of the aforementioned penal sanction. The penal sanction was part of the coolie ordinance of 1880, which prohibited the coolies from leaving the plantation during the term of contract and which made them in reality labour-slaves at the absolute disposition of the planters. The social and cultural contrasts were sharp. Racial discrimination was stronger than elsewhere in the Netherlands Indies. An Indo (Eurasian) middle class was almost absent. This was caused by the fact that before 1870 practically no Europeans lived on East Sumatra and there were therefore no interracial offspring. In the early years there was practically no active local administration, nor Dutch government. It was a planters' society, the planters' will was law. This resulted in a strong authoritarian and discriminating society.⁶³ The planters used to refer to the plantation as a ship whose coordinates were located in Sumatra, the course of which was decided on by head offices in Europe and America. The planter arranged the local affairs. As a result, Deli was 'a state within a state', with a planter aristocracy, a 'plantocracy' which in fact, controlled the whole region.⁶⁴

million people. In that year 134,750 Chinese were living in Deli and Serdang which was 12,2% of the total population of East Sumatra. (Volkstelling, 1930; *Deli Courant* 18-6-1935; Moerman 1932, 15).

60 Bool 1903b: 24; Breman 1987: 145.

61 Buischool, D.A. *De reis van Harm Kamerlingh Onnes*, Verloren, Hilversum 1999: 272, 273.

62 Information Thio Han Cheng, Medan, 2003; Feldwick 1917: 1195; Godley 1981:185.

63 De Jong, 2000: 405; Parker 1902: 42-44.

64 Pelzer 1978: 89, Stoler 1985: 22; Breman 1987: 150.

Hierarchy was already quite extreme in colonial society, but in the plantocracy it was even worse. It is said that in the early years of the plantation's settlement workers had to step off their bicycles (if they had one) and look down when a white person, a local nobleman or a civil servant had passed by for at least ten meters. Despite these extreme circumstances it was not difficult to get labourers from China and Java. Due to the poverty and miserable circumstances at home, many were willing to sign a contract for plantation work abroad.⁶⁵ Government officials were, more or less, obedient to the wishes of the planters. Their reward came with the *vendutie*, or auction of their movable possessions, when they left Deli. At that time their furniture and other belongings were publicly sold, often for extremely high prices, to those who stayed. In cases where there had been a good relationship, possibly the result of cordial relations with the planters, amongst others, an auction of modest furniture could yield tens of thousands of guilders. It was a sort of reward for good services. It was not direct corruption, but it was however a way to impose indirect pressure.⁶⁶ The journalist Stade ten Brink wrote about the *vendutie* in 1906:

*“But how long I have been in Deli, at how many auctions was I present, yet never could one prove corruption via this preferential financial treatment. The way whereby large offers were made on cases of little value, always happened in the utmost legal way, without any fuss or attention, in other words, it never ever gave a reason for objections or scandals.”*⁶⁷

One example was resident P.J. Kooreman's auction in April 1899 when he was succeeded by W.J. Rahder. *De Sumatra Post* wrote that at Kooreman's auction 'fancy' prices were paid. Kooreman's writing desk made fl.1,000, paid by the Sultan of Langkat, while fl.150 was paid for three *presse papiers*, by the Captain of the Chinese Tjong A Fie, fl.650 for a globe by Mr. Tweer, head administrator of the Senembah Company, and fl.3,000 for an inkstand by the Sultan of Deli.⁶⁸

1.5. Labour conditions on the plantations

On the tobacco fields the Chinese worked in groups of twenty to forty people, so-called *kongsi*, under supervision of a foreman or *tandil*. Two to four *kongsies* formed one *afdeling* (department) under supervision of a head *tandil* and a European assistant. Few assistants spoke Chinese as this language was considered too difficult to learn. In general, the assistant

65 Ong Eng Die: 1943: 71; Naudin, 1905: 38; Kam 1995: 29.

66 *Ibidem* 38.

67 Stade ten Brink *Koloniaal Weekblad* 29-11-1906.

68 SP 4-4-1899, 5-4-1899.

conversed with the head *tandil* in a kind of Malay and they somehow understood each other.⁶⁹ Usually there were two to four *afdelingen* on a tobacco plantation. The head *tandil* was the mediator between the Chinese and the European personnel and was supposed to solve problems between them. While the Chinese came alone to Sumatra, the Javanese usually brought their wives and children. The Chinese worked under contract and received their salary only after the harvest. The Javanese were hired per project and paid monthly. The Javanese worked just like the Chinese in groups of twenty to forty men under supervision of a so-called *mandor* (Malay for supervisor) and above them a head *mandor*. Female Javanese workers did light fieldwork or sorted tobacco in the fermentation barns. The Indian or Kling workers generally originated from Madras and Pondicherry. They arrived in Deli via Penang and the Straits Settlements and came at their own expense. They also worked in *kongsies* of twenty to forty people and were supervised by a Kling *tandil* and head Kling *tandil*. They were engaged in irrigation works, drying swamps, or were used to handle cattle on the plantation. Every year the administrator and his assistants visited the head *tandil* on Chinese New Year. The same official visits were paid to the head *mandor* of the Javanese workers during Islamic New Year or *Hari Raya* and to the Indian during Indian New Year *Tai Poesam*. The Chinese, Javanese and Indian in return visited the head administrator during Christian New Year. Once every two weeks the workers gained a day off, the *Hari Besar* (the big day) and then the planters left for Medan. The coolies however, remained on the plantation.⁷⁰

On paper the coolies on East Sumatra were better off than those in the British Straits Settlements because they could obtain higher wages. However, because they spent their money on gambling and opium many coolies could not work themselves out of debt within one year. Average wages in 1915 for tobacco coolies in Deli was for a male 33–38 cents per day and for a female 28 cents.⁷¹ The coolies had to sign new contracts for three years. The main difference with the British Straits Settlements was that there, there was no penal sanction in use. Plantation circles on the Malay peninsula liked to stress the problems in Deli, as this was in their interest.⁷² The protector of the Chinese in Singapore, W. A. Pickering, criticized the Deli planters, saying that that the contract conditions stimulated mismanagement. The power of the Chinese *tandil* and Chinese officers (Chinese headmen) was excessive. Chinese officers registered births, marriages and deaths, and witnessed the swearing of important oaths. The Dutch preferred to settle court cases concerning Chinese through the arbitration of a Chinese officer instead of going to court. Two articles with negative stories about Deli

69 De Bruin, A.G. in: *Koloniaal Weekblad*, 13-5-1920.

70 De Bruin, A.G. in: *Koloniaal Weekblad* 13-5-1920; Naudin 1905: 11; Wormser 1943: 214.

71 *Indische Gids* 1915 I: 827–829.

72 De Bruin 1918: 81, 82; Reid 2005: 210.

appeared in the Singapore paper *Lat Pau*. After 1899 no more coolies were recruited from the Straits Settlements, but all came directly from China.⁷³

The regulations concerning the supply and delivery of coolies, seemed not to apply to human beings, but only to products. If, for instance, a plantation company ordered a shipment of coolies, regulations regarding such orders stated that the shipment should be made in the month following the booking. The plantation company could reject an order but then couldn't book a new shipment for coolies for six months. If the coolies were contracted and medically inspected, the company had to accept the order. The newcomers were delivered to the head *tandil* and any losses (this means deaths) suffered during the trip were billed to the company.⁷⁴ The negative image remained for many years. In 1875 a British planter wrote:

Chinese coolies who were willingly shipped to Langkat or Serdang, in ignorance of the precise locale of those places, will become perfectly mad if the word 'Deli' be heard on board.

J.L.J.F. Ezerman, chief of Chinese affairs in the Netherlands Indies wrote in 1917 in the *Indische Gids* that he heard in Batavia the expression of Javanese coolies:

"Liever dood dan naar Deli" (Better death than to Deli).⁷⁵

Before 1873 the planters made contracts with Chinese workers according to agreements in use in the Straits Settlements. Because the relation between employer and employee in such contracts was still unclear, the Netherlands Indies' administration published the first coolie ordinance in 1880. At this point a contract system was introduced whereby workers were obliged to work after advance payment for a certain period of time at the plantation. This resulted in very limited freedom for the workers and their families, as they were not allowed to leave the plantation during the stipulated contract period of three years. The reason for this stringent rule was that many coolies used to leave the plantation within the contract period and not return, much to the detriment of the planters. Because of the 1880 coolie ordinance the planters obtained security of fixed labour. With the penal sanction the planters had practically absolute power over their workers, regardless of whether they were Chinese, Indian or Javanese, all were tied, via the coolie ordinance, to their employer.⁷⁶

73 Willmott 1960:148; Bool 1903: 5.

74 Bool 1903: 39.

75 *Indische Gids*, 1917, I: 822; Reid 2005: 204.

76 Kol 1903: 95; Volker 1928: 57.

No wonder that the penal sanction was said to be the cornerstone of the plantation tobacco production at Deli.

Sentences imposed by the planters were severe. In 1896 a coolie was sentenced to 3 months in prison for using someone else's pass. Other sentences were two months prison for burglary, one month for desertion, 15 days for desertion, 12 days for walking by night without light, 10 days for not following orders, 8 days for not carrying an entrance card and not paying the fine, 4 days for leaving the plantation without permission.⁷⁷ What made it even worse was that the prison in Laboehan was a dangerous place because of infectious diseases. Even with a sentence of 1 month one could perish in prison. An article from 1900 stressed that the planters should act in a rightful manner and give the just sentences as the conditions in the prison were too risky.⁷⁸ Besides imprisonment there were also physical punishments like torture and beating of coolies in public with a stirrup leather as described in the Rhemrev report.⁷⁹

The 1880 ordinance stated the rights and duties of both workers and employers. Some even called it an early form of colonial social legislature.⁸⁰ The employer was supposed to act correctly towards his employees and the employee had to work and obey orders. If the employee did not act according to the contract (i.e., not show up) he was punished based on the penal sanction. The penal sanction was the most controversial point of the ordinance, as it was adjusted to criminal law. One cannot label a breach of contract as a crime as in principle contracts belonged to the field of civil law. In spite of many debates in the Indies' *Volksraad* (Peoples Council) and in Dutch parliament, the penal sanction was not abolished until 1931.⁸¹ Directly bearing on this was the Blaine amendment of 1929 in the American congress which demanded the exclusion of the import of products produced under indentured labour conditions based on penal sanctions. As the planters were afraid to lose the American market in 1931, they stated to be in favour of abolishing the penal sanction.⁸²

1.6. Van den Brand's manifesto

In 1902 the lawyer J. Van den Brand in Medan published the manifesto *De millioenen uit Deli* (The millions from Deli) about labour excesses on East Sumatra. Colonial and Dutch society was shocked by this brochure in which a detailed report was provided about the inhuman and sadistic practices of planters and assistants on the estates in Deli. It was an

77 DC 30-5-1896.

78 SP 14-5-1900.

79 Breman 1987: 173, 368, 369.

80 Waals, *Indische Gids* 1921, I. 321; Schadee 1918: II, 219.

81 Ong Eng Die 1943:75; SP 6-12-1926, 9-12-1926, 13-12-1926, 14-12-1926, 26-2-1930, 21-3-1930, 20-9-1930, 2-10-1930, 19-11-1930.

82 Thee Kian-wie 1977: 40; SP 7-8-1930; *Algemeen Landbouwweekblad van N.I.*, 1931:1141; SP 27-2-1930.

endless list of coolie maltreatment. The brochure of Van den Brand resulted in 1903 in a governmental investigation by the public prosecutor in Batavia, J.L.T. Rhemrev, concerning physical abuses, illegal imprisonment of workers, as well the illegal administration of justice on the plantations. It became a detailed story about flogging, starvation wages, maltreatment, overwork, desertions and the collusion of civil servants with the planters. Many excesses were reported in which the planters tortured and raped female coolies. Violent excesses were also caused by the *mandors* and *tandils*. According to the author, maltreatment was the result of the lack of freedom imposed on the coolie, which was characterized by the labour contract with its penal sanction. In the British Straits Settlements the penal sanction was not in use, why then in East Sumatra?⁸³ Before Van den Brand there had already been regular criticism directed towards the existing labour conditions in the press; coolie maltreatment was regularly chronicled in the newspapers.

In 1901 Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands had announced in her annual throne speech that the Dutch government accepted responsibility for the welfare of its colonial subjects, heralding the so-called ‘ethical policy’, in which it promoted protection, support and uplifting of the Indigenous population. Labour maltreatment, of course, did not fit into this policy.⁸⁴ In 1903 therefore, van den Brand published *Nog eens de millioenen uit Deli*. (Again the millions from Deli), in which he described the defamation and obstruction he experienced in Medan after publication of his first brochure.⁸⁵ Van den Brand however in later years kept a high profile in Medan and was active in local politics.⁸⁶ Shortly before his death in 1921 Van den Brand again mentioned his opinion about the labour conditions on the plantations in Deli. According to him he could easily compose another *Millioenen uit Deli*. New scandals would appear again as long as the coolie ordinance remained.⁸⁷

1.7. Labour inspection

As a result of the report of Rhemrev the government installed a labour inspectorate in 1904 in East Sumatra, at the same time improving the police system and establishing a court of justice in Medan. However, the police force was made up of only about a few dozen police officers, while thousands of coolies worked the plantations, making implementation of the new rules quite difficult.⁸⁸ Although the general conditions on the plantation improved significantly, in the 1920s an increase in violent uprisings occurred, partly caused by socialist

83 Breman 1989: 315–408; SP 1-4-1902.

84 Furnivall, 1939: 459.

85 Breman 1987: 6.

86 SP 28-11-1918; Buiskool, D.A. ‘De Multatuli van Deli’ in *Archipel* voorjaar 2010.

87 Breman 1987: 217.

88 Naudin, 1905: 41; Indische Gids, 1915, I: 827–829; *Indische Gids*, 1921, I: 321; Sandick 1909: 321.

and nationalist movements ventilating ideas on the plantations and struggling for better working conditions and higher salaries. Working conditions as well as health conditions in the 1920s were actually much better than they had been in the 1910s. As a result, there was at the end of the 1920s less violence by overseers against coolies. But the hard, almost military atmosphere and the sharp racial divisions never disappeared.⁸⁹

How violent the plantation society actually was, is shown by statistics of maltreatment of coolies by European personnel. From 1900 on the so-called *klapzaken* (cases in which an assistant hit a coolie) were recorded. *Klapzaken* happened so often that they got special attention in the press. In the *Deli Courant* chief editor Naudin ten Cate commented that at plantations there was no other choice than hitting to keep coolies disciplined.⁹⁰ At the outset the colonial government played a questionable role in the coolie affair as it sought a balance between the economic interests of the plantation industry and the well-being of the workers. The plantation industry was seen to be of vital importance for the colony, with huge export and tax revenues. But the ethical policy and growing social awareness pushed the sector to feel responsible to the well-being of the coolies.⁹¹ Many coolie abuse cases were reported where assistants and *mandors* had maltreated coolies.⁹² Sometimes coolies died afterwards.⁹³ Even in the 1920s there were many cases of coolie maltreatment.⁹⁴ Over the years the newspapers reported attacks by coolies, sometimes resulting in murder.⁹⁵ Statistics of attacks on assistants by coolies were published categorizing the type of attack, numbers of attacks per month, the plantations on which they occurred, fines, sentences and weapons used.⁹⁶ In the 14 years from 1912 until 1926 there were 402 attacks, including 21 murders.⁹⁷ In 1929 alone there were 73 attacks. 33% of the coolie attacks followed after a blow by an assistant. Revenge attacks often happened in combination with labour questions like excessive working hours and impossible workloads.⁹⁸ In 1929 the attack by a Javanese coolie named Salim on the wife of an employee, a Mrs. Landzaat on Parnabolan estate resulted in her death. The coolie was executed with the case receiving wide publicity.⁹⁹ In the Indigenous paper *Pewarta Deli* it was written that Landzaat had taken Salim's wife as his own mistress and then had removed her from her husband. This version of *Pewarta Deli*

89 Houben and Lindblad, 1999: 72; De Jong, 2000: 405.

90 Naudin 1905: 1; DC 22-5-1895.

91 Volker, 1928: 59; Houben and Lindblad 1989: 235.

92 SP 8-2, 9-2-1912; SP 3-2-1921.

93 SP 16-1-1905.

94 Fines for hitting a coolie varied between fl.10 and fl.50. (SP 6-6-1913, 10-1-1913)

95 SP 6-10-1911, 24-12-1913, 12-7-1918; *Andalas*, 16-1-1917.

96 IG: 1914 I: 576-579; SP 17-1, 21-1-1924.

97 SP 5-1, 18-5-1926.

98 SP 25-6, 8-7, 11-8-1930; *Algemeen Landbouwweekblad van Ned. Indie, 1928-29, XIII*.

99 MvO gouverneur L.H.M. van Sandick, 1930; SP 6-1, 16-6-1930.

did not appear in the court proceedings. As a result, *Pewarta Deli* was boycotted by the white community with the allegation that it was an extremist paper.¹⁰⁰

In spite of Deli's negative image, Javanese coolies continued to emigrate to East Sumatra.¹⁰¹ In 1930 Javanese numbered almost 50% of the native population, by far the largest population group.¹⁰² The development of the plantation economy, however, was still spectacular and this was also reflected in the growth of Medan. Towns as Pematang Siantar, Tanjong Balai and Kisaran also developed rapidly. In 1920 a severe post-World War I economic crisis led to a downturn in rubber prices, which did not revive until 1924. The year 1925 was a high point, and investment levels in the 1920s were higher than ever. While in 1920 total investment in East Sumatra amounted to fl.330 million, between 1924 and 1930 the sum increased to fl.660 million. Within seven years investment in East Sumatra doubled.¹⁰³ After 1930 prices dropped worldwide as result of the 1929 Wall Street Crash. The tobacco plantations in the Sultanate of Deli were mostly Dutch companies. Most of the rubber trees and, later on, the palm oil trees were planted in the Sultanates of Langkat and Serdang by American, French, Belgian and British companies.

To conclude this paragraph, it has to be noted that on East Sumatra not all the plantations were under the penal sanction. The estates of the Medan Chinese Tjong A Fie were an exception. During the 19th century the planters did not allow Chinese to start their own plantations.¹⁰⁴ It was only in 1906 that Chinese first owned plantations. This subject will be dealt with in chapter 4.

Summary

From the 13th until the 19th century the jungle covered island of Sumatra had contact with outsiders, first from other parts of Asia and, subsequently, from Europe. The Dutch made treaties with the local rulers in the 19th century. In East Sumatra this finally resulted in a large agro-industry. It was the Dutch planter Jacob Nienhuys who started the first tobacco plantation in 1864. As the soil of the Deli district was fertile and the land ideal for plantation, the exploitation of products like tobacco, rubber, tea and palm oil, and the availability of cheap labour caused the spectacular economic development of the area. Deli's plantation

100 Stoler 1985: 82; *Gedenkboek Deli Maatschappij 1919–1929*; SP 10-3-1930.

101 In 1910 the number of coolies were 110,000 on East Sumatra, in 1913 it rose to 190,000 and in 1920 over 250,000. (Houben and Lindblad 1999: 51,52; SP 21-3-1930).

102 (Stoler 1985: 4) Between 1929 and 1932 during the depression the number of coolies was reduced with 130,000 persons, this was 45% of the total. 160,000 coolies remained until 1935. Hereafter more work had to be done with fewer persons. (Houben and Lindblad 1999: 66, 69).

103 De Waard 1934: 221; *Mededeelingen Handelsvereniging Medan* 1922; Thee Kian-wie 1977: 68.

104 *Indische Gids*, 1919, I: 648

boom was unprecedented in the world. Besides agricultural products, in the 1870s oil was also found on Sumatra.

East Sumatra's booming economy was only possible through a large-scale immigration of labourers to work the plantations. Thousands of Chinese migrants were shipped to Deli. The large number of workers willing to come to Sumatra was mainly due to the poor conditions in their homelands. They hoped for a better life on Sumatra. Despite seductions such as gambling and opium, still many were able to send money home, to such an extent that Fujian and Guangdong provinces in southern China became more prosperous than other parts of China because of the money sent from Southeast Asia, including Deli.

Deli was a frontier society, an unstable construct with newcomers from various places. Capital, planters and workers, all of them were imported. All this created a profit oriented harsh environment. By far the majority of Chinese immigrants were coolies. But many other Chinese also came to the island as craftsmen. They were all *totok*, directly coming from China. There appeared to be different Chinese ethnic sub-groups; it was often the case that a certain group specialized in specific professions. In the city of Medan, the Hokkian people were the biggest group and their dialect became dominant. On the plantations the majority were Tio Tsjoe. The coolies had to work under extreme conditions. It is no surprise that many of them did not want to continue their work and left the estates, thus causing a loss for the plantation companies. Therefore, the coolies became liable to the coolie ordinance which included the penal sanction ruling out the possibility that coolies could leave within the stated contract period. This turned them into virtual slaves. The penal sanction as such in combination with the countless labour excesses and maltreatment of coolies aroused public protest. This came in the form of a brochure written by the Medan lawyer Johannes van den Brand. The penal sanction in the ordinance became the main point of criticism. According to Van den Brand, the sanction was not necessary as was proven in the British Straits Settlements. Therefore, it was unnecessary and hence should be abolished. In the same period the Dutch government had officially introduced the 'ethical policy' aimed to improve the fate of the Indigenous population in the Indies. Labour maltreatment did not fit into this policy. Through the labour inspection, starting in 1904, the government wanted to improve the labour conditions. However, because the penal sanction was advantageous for the plantation companies, the whole debate about the penal sanction lasted until 1931 before it was finally abolished. During the economic crisis of the 1930s there were fewer coolies needed. Moreover, the Blaine amendment in the U.S.A. forbade American distributors to import products produced under a penal sanction. By the 1920s Deli nevertheless had become one of the most developed and prosperous regions of the Netherlands Indies. It was against this background that the fast development of the city of Medan, with a large influx of Chinese, took place.

2

The city of Medan: the emergence of an urban centre

Chapter 2

The city of Medan: the emergence of an urban centre

Medan city's initial layout originated around 1870 when the Malay *kampongs* Medan Poetri and Kesawan were joined together. Although Medan was the direct result of the surrounding plantation industry, it did not mean that life in town or the social relations in general bore any similarity to the conditions on the plantations. Medan was a true urban space, the economic and political centre of the district. It was a colonial European town having many western elements. At the same time, it was also a very Chinese city with links to the Straits Settlements of British Malaya and to the Chinese homeland. We will see how Medan developed from the first settlements in 1870 into a handsome town with impressive office buildings around the central square (called Esplanade) in the 1910s. The Deli Maatschappij (Deli Company), which stood at the root of Medan's development, set up its head office in this *kampong*-like place. At the same time an infrastructure was built with road, railway, telegraph and telephone connections. Soon the settlement transformed into a new city. Laboehan at the mouth of the Deli River, where the Sultan of Deli resided, and the first tobacco was planted, was a malaria-infested swamp area, less suited to function as an administrative centre. The planters and government officials therefore preferred the more inland settlement of Medan.¹

In this chapter we will give an overview and an assessment of the urban development of Medan. Several aspects are discussed in separate paragraphs: such as its character, urban layout and symbols; town quarters, population and segregation; infrastructure, planning and hygiene; housing and land use; and, finally justice and security.

2.1. Colonial character, layout and urban symbols

Medan was a typical colonial city, in the sense that there were many similarities with other towns in the world under colonial rule. According to Anthony King, as mentioned in the introduction, there are four characteristics of colonial towns: First, they were developed under foreign influence; second, they were part of a central economic system; third, they possessed substantial western elements; and fourth, just as colonialism itself, colonial cities changed considerably over time.

The change in character was shown in housing policy, city expansion and new infrastructure. Colonial towns were often port cities and were instrumental in shipping tropical export products to Europe and America. For the transport of the products to and

1 Naudin 1905: 41.

from the new harbour of Belawan, and into the surrounding area and hinterland, a well-organized infrastructure, in this case the railway of the Deli Spoorweg Maatschappij (Deli Railroad Company - DSM), was crucial. The establishment, made up of companies and governmental institutions, called for the economic activities of middlemen and brokers, to organize intermediate and wholesale trade.²

The colonial city functioned on three levels: as a regional centre; as an instrument of the colonial state empire; and finally, as a node in the world at large. Firstly, within the region Medan fulfilled its role as economic, governmental, financial and cultural centre. Secondly, Medan was important as an economic engine within the Dutch colonial empire. Thirdly, the city served the wider world as it exported its products to all continents.³

Layout

A quotation from Feldwick's *Present Day Impressions of The Far East* in 1917:

*Medan is the queen city of the island of Sumatra, and is, moreover, the chief trading centre on the east coast, which is the most important and progressive quarter of the island. Until about 48 years ago the site was wild, virgin jungle. Today there exists a charming city, brisk and bustling in its business quarters, surrounded by pretty suburbs, with a sanitary system equal to that of any English town.*⁴

The same author also mentions that the name Medan was related to the Hindustani word *Maidan*, which means an open space or park.⁵ Around 1870 it was known as *Medan Poetri* which means in the Malay tongue, the Square of the Princesses.⁶ The backbone of Medan's city structure was established in the 1880s and is still visible today.⁷

In the thematic map below at page 63 the connection between the head office of the Deli Maatschappij at the junction of the Deli and Babura river, the Esplanade, the central square or *alun alun*, the second Esplanade on the other side of the Deli river, the oldest commercial street Kesawan, and the Sultan's palace at the border of Medan, is clearly visible.

Medan Poetri was a small village established by the Malay ruler Guru Patimpus in the 1590s. Kesawan was originally a village south of Medan Poetri, west of the Deli River. According to the Scotsman John Anderson, the village of Medan consisted in 1823 of

2 Ross 1985: 1, 232, 233; Kooij, Pellenbarg (eds.) *Regional Capitals* 1994: 2–6.

3 Ross 1985: 14; Kooij, Pellenbarg (eds.) *Regional Capitals* 1994: 253.

4 Feldwick 1917: 1185.

5 Feldwick 1917: 1180.

6 Feldwick 1917: 1185.

7 Passchier 1993: 314.

about two hundred inhabitants of Batak and Malay origin.⁸ Around sixty years later, in 1880, the open space near the Deli Maatschappij head office had become a central square, surrounded by roads and named Esplanade. This was the centre of the town, from which the various city quarters emanated.⁹ The head office of the Deli Maatschappij was built in the *kampong* Medan at the junction of the Babura and the Deli River. This was the point of origin of the subsequent urban development. Already in 1879 Jacob Theodoor Cremer had initiated the Deli Planters Vereeniging (Deli Planters Association) in which the plantation companies worked together as one organization for the world market. The rise of tobacco plantations was reflected in prestigious buildings in the city centre and many trading firms were established in the town. In 1888 the Sultan of Deli also chose Medan as his residence and built his new Maimoon palace on the southern border of the city. In the same period Chinese traders started to settle in Medan. All kind of novel buildings were established like barracks for the military garrison, hospitals, a railway station, a telegraph office and newspaper bureaus. Practically all colonial towns had a military fort and so did Medan. In 1872 the fort of Medan was built as a result of the Batak war of the same year. The military barracks in the years thereafter were primarily used for the troops who fought the Aceh war from 1873 till 1903.¹⁰ The military fort at the small Esplanade, the military field (Lapangan Benteng), remained a symbol of colonial power over the years.

In these years a hospital was also built by the Deli Maatschappij nearby the Esplanade, and in 1874 the first doctor was appointed.¹¹ At this point there was still no official civil servant to represent the colonial government, the planters mostly arranging everything themselves. It was not until 1885 that *controleurs* (district officers) were installed to administer justice and oversee the general political and bureaucratic situation. In that year Medan also became the new capital of the District Eastcoast of Sumatra.¹² In 1883 W.J.M. Michielsen was appointed as assistant Resident and in 1889 he became Resident of the District of the Eastcoast of Sumatra.¹³ From 1915 a Governor of East Sumatra was appointed, this was the former assistant Resident S. Van der Plas.¹⁴

Another sign of the growing importance of the city of Medan in the Netherlands Indies' 'pecking order' of cities was the decision of the colonial government to make Medan the capital of the newly created Province of Sumatra in 1938. Thereby it surpassed the much

8 Anderson, 1971: 273.

9 Schadee 1918, I: 181.

10 DC 9-2-1898,16-2-1898; SP 2-11-1900, 3-11-1900, 8-12-1900.

11 De Deli-Spoorwegmaatschappij en haar veertigjarig jubileum, 1923: 199.

12 *Regeerings Almanak voor Nederlands-Indië* 1885: 189; Pelzer 1978: 14; Breman 1987: 36.

13 *Regeerings Almanak voor Nederlandsch-Indië*. 1884: 189; *Regeerings Almanak voor Nederlandsch-Indië* 1889: 230; Hugenholtz 2015: 17.

14 SP 24-8-1915.

older city of Palembang in the south of the island. The civil servant in charge of the province again received the rank of Governor.¹⁵

Around 1885 Medan counted around sixty shops, mostly Chinese.¹⁶ In later years the city developed further. Newspapers were established like the *Deli Courant* in 1885 and *De Sumatra Post* in 1898. An electricity company was established in 1897. Prior to 1900 the city had been very dark at night, but from the turn of the century onwards the city centre became increasingly better illuminated, first with gaslights and later with electric lamps. In the 1930s the first air-conditioning systems were introduced.¹⁷ Another very important public service was the Ajer Bersih water company, established in 1905.¹⁸

The year 1888 proved to be important as the British Chartered Bank opened offices in the town. In 1892 the *Nederlandse Handel Maatschappij* (Netherlands Trading Company) established a branch in Medan. The locally used currency was tuned to Straits society, first the Spanish rial, then the *pilaar dollars* (Spanish mat) and finally the British Straits dollar. Not before 1908 did the Dutch guilder (fl.) become the official currency in Deli. For this reason, the Java Bank opened a branch office on the Esplanade.¹⁹ In 1899 and 1900 there were big fires in the Kesawan street, resulting in the wooden houses being burnt down. After that housing development increased rapidly and many new brick-built Chinese shop-houses were constructed.²⁰

Urban symbols and demography

The most important symbolic space was the large grass field or *alun alun* in the centre, which was characteristic for cities in the Netherlands Indies, especially on Java. At the *alun alun* were the main colonial offices; adjacent to this were the different quarters, residential areas, companies and the military fort. Such symbols of colonial power were often in the heart of the city.²¹ As said before from about 1880 many new buildings were constructed, such as in 1885 the railway station on the Esplanade, in 1887 the White Club house and in subsequent years many more monumental buildings such as the Medan Hotel,²² Hotel De Boer,²³ the Town hall and the Java Bank. It was in the hotels where the planters used to celebrate the *Hari Besar*, the monthly day off.

15 SP 30-12-1938.

16 Nota tabaksbouw in Deli 1883: 202.

17 SP 31-10-1939.

18 SP 17-5-1905; Wright 1909: 570.

19 Schadee 1918: 179.

20 SP 15-3-1900; SP 24-3-1900; SP 28-4-1900; Naudin 1909: 43.

21 Ross 1985: 189.

22 DC 31-7-1895; Wright 1909: 576.

23 SP 20-2-1924.

Several buildings were characteristic for Medan. Wright mentioned in 1909 as sightseeing objects: The Sultan's palace, built by Dutch architect Th. Van Erp in 1888; the Chinese Kwan Tee Bio temple; the great Mosque; the *Tamiang* monument on the Esplanade for the commemoration of a battle in the Aceh War; and the zoological garden of the Chinese captain Tjong A Fie in Poelo Berayan. It was exactly in that year, 1909, that the new great Mosque, the most important religious symbol, was finished, on which occasion the Sultan gave a speech in which he especially thanked the Deli Spoorweg Maatschappij. The Sultan said that the new mosque would be like a mirror for the people and that it always would give salvation to the people of Medan.²⁴ The next year, 1910, the impressive new head office of the Deli Maatschappij opened its doors. In 1911 the beautiful Julianagebouw followed, named after the Dutch heiress to the throne, built for the British firm Harrisons & Crosfield. Then, in 1924 the beautiful building of the Handels Vereeniging Amsterdam (Amsterdam Trading Company - HVA). All these buildings symbolized economic power and success.

Besides bureaucratic, economic and religious symbols like offices, residences, churches, mosques and temples, there were the historical landmarks to celebrate the achievements of economic pioneers, like the Nienhuys fountain, named after the man who introduced tobacco cultivation, in front of the Medan post office, and the statue of J.Th. Cremer, founder of the Deli Planters Association, with his left hand in his pocket, in front of the building of the planters association. Urban symbols from colonial times like these grand buildings expressed both religious plurality and Dutch political dominance. Yet there was room for other groups as well, such as the Chinese. Chinese landmarks in the cityscape were the Chinese gate in front of Kebon Boenga, Tjong Yong Hian street, Tjong A Fie street and Law Ah Yok street. Bridges were built over the Baboera and Deli rivers to connect roads.²⁵ After the death of his brother Tjong Yong Hian in 1911, Chinese council member Tjong A Fie told the Town Council that he intended to donate a monumental structure to the city of Medan in commemoration of his brother.²⁶ So, a new bridge over the Baboera River in *Kampung Kling*, also called *Kampung Madras*, was completed in 1916 at the expense of the Tjong family and called the Tjong Yong Hian Bridge.²⁷ Another important symbol was Medan's Town hall. In 1912, four years after its completion, Tjong A Fie donated a clocktower to the Town hall.²⁸ The Town hall was in use by the colonial government, including the Town Council and the *Cultuurraad*.²⁹ In 1915 discussions started about a coat of arms but it was not

24 SP 25-8-1909.

25 In January 1915 a new bridge over the Baboera river was constructed in the Mahmoed Al Rashid road (Jalan Sudirman). (SP 5-1-1915; SP 4-3-1937; 10-2-1938).

26 SP 8-5-1913.

27 SP 5-9-1916.

28 SP 25-5-1912; 1-6-1912.

29 (SP 8-3-1909; SP 6-4-1909; SP 9-6-1909; Volker 1928: 65) *Cultuurraad*: Council of the Cultural Area of East Sumatra, referring to cultures or plantation products.

until 1926 that a symbol for Medan was agreed upon: a flowering tobacco tree with a crown of five leaves on top and two lions as shield holders. Under the coat of arms the Latin text *Efflorescens e panitie* which means more or less ‘flowering (growing) from the fields’.³⁰ Street names had symbolic functions as they reflected different ethnic groups and persons who had made contributions to society.³¹ In 1917 Chinese Town council member Tjong A Fie requested (unsuccessfully) that the streets and alleys in Medan be named in both the Malay and Chinese languages.³² Before 1942, many streets in Medan were named after persons who had fulfilled public functions or distinguished themselves in one way or another in the Dutch East Indies. The Kartinilaan was named after the Javanese feminist Raden Adjeng Kartini, and the Multatulilaan was named after the Dutch novelist Multatuli (Eduard Douwes Dekker), the latter having been a severe critic of the colonial regime in the nineteenth century.

That street names could be controversial was pointed out by Chinese Town council member Jap Gim Sek who requested changing the name of Macao street as many Chinese considered this an insult (Macao had long been a port for slave exports from China).³³ In 1941, when the war in Europe had already started, Town council member F.J.H. Klevant proposed changing the name of the Schüffnerlaan, as the former citizen of Medan, medical doctor W. Schüffner, had now become an active member of the Nazi regime.³⁴ Worldwide, cities often acquired nicknames like the ‘Big Apple’ (New York City), ‘The City of Lights’ (Paris), ‘The Lion City’ (Singapore) and ‘The Pearl of the Orient’ (Penang). Paris was often taken as an example for cities in Asia, such as Shanghai and Saigon both of which were named ‘Paris of the Orient’.³⁵ So, Bandoeng was called ‘The Paris of Java’, while Medan became known as the ‘Paris of Sumatra’.

Until the Great Depression of 1929, Medan was a bit like a Gold Rush town, which was apparent from its demography. If we look at the census of 1930 there were 40,096 Indigenous, 27,180 Chinese and 4,292 European citizens, altogether 74,967 people.³⁶ Urbanization progressed quickly, basically through incoming migrants, such as Minangkabau from West Sumatra, people from Aceh, Batak from Tapanoeli and many Javanese.

The number of Chinese living in Medan was also still rapidly increasing even in the 1920s. In 1920 their number had been estimated at 15,000, mainly resident in 1,585 buildings. From these, 1,228 buildings were also used for a trade or profession. On average each

30 SP 19-5-1915, 10-6-1926.

31 If the present names are compared with prewar names it is shown that Indonesian names remained, but Chinese and Dutch names are replaced by Indonesian names.

32 *Pewarta Deli*, 30-7-1917.

33 SP 26-3-1936.

34 SP 18-4-1941.

35 Ross 1985: 181.

36 *Volkstelling 1930*.

building housed 9 to 10 people.³⁷ The proportion of children in such a household is difficult to establish. Nevertheless, there seems to have been a sharp increase in marriages among the Chinese in the 1920s. In 1919 there were only 40 Chinese marriages, whereas 9 years later, in 1928 there were more than double at 102. The recorded number of Chinese children increased even more, in 1919 only 188 were born, in 1928 it had increased to 611 children. In these 9 years many a Chinese started a family. This was made possible because more Chinese women came to Medan. So far, however, exact numbers have not been found.³⁸

If we look at the other Foreign Orientals (British Indian), in 1920 there were around 2,000 Indians in 114 buildings occupied by the Indian population group. These were mainly trading shops like small grocery and *toeak* (local liquor) stores and a number of haircutters and moneylenders. Then there were 84 buildings occupied by Japanese. Among the Japanese professions were several photographers and remarkably many, namely 29, hotels.³⁹ No more detailed information about this population group, nor about European and Indigenous, was mentioned in the municipal gazette of 1920.

The growth of the city led to a bewildering variation in professions: traders, newspaper and magazine publishers, reporters, *ulamas*, small businessmen, schoolteachers and civil servants of all degrees. A great variety of religious practitioners could also be witnessed in town: Protestant Germans of the Rheinische Mission Gesellschaft who were active in the Toba highlands; the Dutch Catholic Capucin order; American Methodists; the mainly Buddhist Chinese; Hindu and Muslim Indians; pious Muslims from the Minangkabau Highlands; as well as Hindu or Muslim Javanese. In this way Medan was far more cosmopolitan than other average cities in the Netherlands Indies. None of the ethnic groups mentioned, however, formed a dominant majority.

From the start the colonial town was characterized by foreign influences. The foreign factor also produced the usual divisions in this plural society, manifesting itself in education, press and Town council membership. The structure as such was largely determined by the colonizers.⁴⁰ This was also visible in the architecture of Medan, which was strongly orientated towards the British Straits Settlements, thus receiving much influence from British colonial architecture. A good example of this was the Juliana building from 1911, set up by the British company Harrisons & Crosfield. A copy of this building was to be found in Great Tower street in London.⁴¹ Another factor showing the foreign presence were the Dutch, English and Chinese language schools and Dutch papers in Medan, dealt with in a later chapter.

37 Gemeentebld II. 1920, no. 65. Volkshuisvesting. Bijlage 1. Pag. 26–28.

38 See appendix 2.2. for an overview of births and marriages between 1919 and 1928.

39 Volkstelling 1930 (Gemeentebld II. 1920, no. 65. Volkshuisvesting. Bijlage 1. pag. 26–28)

40 Ross 1985: 234.

41 The Straits Times 19-3-1912.

2.2. Town quarters

This quotation is from Laszlo Szekely who wrote down his impression of Medan in the 1910s:

At first we drove criss-cross through the European quarter, along paradisiac gardens and well tended bungalows. Then the beautiful gardens and houses suddenly came to a stop. The picture changed. Instead of brown Malays in flowery sarongs I now saw only tall, almost black Tamuls with thin legs - pariahs originally from India - sitting on the threshold of little houses timbered from beer barrels and old planks.. Tinkling, my little carriage rolled on. Suddenly, the street became lively [...] The houses now stood close together, built in straight lines. One-storeyed, wooden houses, all alike; below, shop or workshop, upstairs, living quarters. The Chinese with their large matted bamboo hats noisily jostled and pushed one another.[...] Here everything breathed life, a feverish, hurried life.⁴²

Medan was from the beginning planned as a modern town with parks, a villa quarter for the Europeans and separate living spaces for the Indigenous, Chinese and Indian populations. This was the result of the so-called quarter system, whereby each population group had to reside in their own quarter under their own headmen or administrators. This system was abolished in 1918.⁴³ After that spatial segregation continued by virtue of tradition. Even before the colonial period, in general people from the same cultural and ethnic background were used to settling together in same areas, the Chinese with the Chinese, the Indian with the Indian, the Malays with the Malays and the Dutch with the Dutch. In the early stages of the Dutch colonial cities the quarter system had become obligatory for the different ethnic groups. Consequently, the Dutch did not invent spatial segregation, it was already in effect before their intrusion. They just formalised it into administrative and legal structures.⁴⁴ The segregation, both the spontaneous and the obligatory, gave the city an easy to read structure.

At page 63 there is a thematic map of Medan.⁴⁵

42 Szekely, *Tropic Fever*, 1984: 63–65.

43 Cator 1936: 33; Fromberg 1926: 571, 582; Ong Eng Die 1943: 45; Tjiok-Liem 2009: 552; Willmott, 1960: 296.

44 Erkelens 2013:122.

45 Foto KIT.



Looking at the thematic map the Indigenous quarter (2) was situated in the area around the Sultan's palace and was named *Kota Matsum* or *Maksum*. The Indian quarter (4) was in the so-called *Kampong Kling* or *Kampong Madras*. Besides the Indian quarter on the other side of the Babura river, Medan Baru developed, where many Eurasians lived (5). On the west side of the Esplanade most of the Europeans lived in the grounds of the former Polonia tobacco plantation. Later, the Polonia villa quarter was established here (1). A second European quarter was in the Deli Railway (DSM) area around *Jalan Serdang*. (1) On the south side of the Esplanade around the *Kesawan*, the oldest street of the city, a Chinatown (3) developed. The Chinese quarter was located on both sides of the railway. In 1905 it was decided that the Chinese quarter could be extended into *Kampong Dalam*.⁴⁶ Within the Chinese quarter different dialects were spoken. In Medan, the Hokkian dialect was the dominant one, which was the same as that spoken in Penang. In 1930, in East Sumatra, 24.3% of the Chinese were Hokkian.⁴⁷

In the different ethnic quarters, street names were given which related to their respective populations. In the European quarter there were, for instance Dutch street names, named after official persons like *Cremerweg* and *Westenenkstraat*. In the Indigenous quarter Indigenous

⁴⁶ (SP 15-3-1905). *Kampong Dalam* was the oldest part of Medan besides the central *Kesawan* street.

⁴⁷ Elsewhere in Sumatra, Hokkian was not dominant. In Aceh province for instance, the Cantonese dialect is dominant. (Jansen *Vreemde Oosterlingen* 1940: 9–11; Cator 1936: 26–27; Interview Chang Tung Yin 26-11-1992; MvO controleur M.J. Ruychaver, 1926; Reid 2005: 396).

names were given after fruits or animals, like Djalan Doekoe, or Djalan Koeda. In the Indian quarter Indian cities were used, like Bombaystraat and Calcuttastraat, and in the Chinese quarter after Chinese cities like Jalan Shanghai or after Chinese official colonial functions like Majoorstraat or Kapiteinsweg.⁴⁸

In Medan's first decades people other than Europeans, from one quarter needed a pass in order to enter another quarter.⁴⁹ Such passes could be obtained from the head of the applicant's ethnic group such as a Lieutenant, Captain or Major. A pass was in general valid for one year. There were also passes which gave the holder the right to enter certain markets without the obligation to sign the pass every time upon entering. Passes could be issued for a certain time and for a certain area depending on the occupation of the holder such as providers of certain products and the workers of specific companies.⁵⁰ This regulation survived until 1912. In 1909 new passes were still given out, with the stipulation that the text should be in both the Malay and Chinese languages, even regarding the penalty provisions.⁵¹ As mentioned before, in 1918 the obligation to reside in these quarters was abolished. After that the few Indigenous and Chinese who could afford it moved into the European quarters.

By the end of the colonial period there were many streets with mixed populations like the Sportlaan. In 1936 legal expert J.H.A. Logeman explicitly rejected the idea that Indigenous or European ownership had to be associated with Indigenous versus European (and Foreign Oriental) racial backgrounds. Logeman preferred to use the term social groups.⁵² The Sultan's kampong was a special case. In this area lived almost no Chinese or Europeans as the Sultan did not provide plots of land to non-Muslims.

Unsurprisingly, the city of Medan was surrounded by plantations, some of which had gradually been swallowed up by the ever-expanding city. The names given to such locations often show the origin of the nationality or the name of the investors who started the plantation. Such was the case in the north along the Sunggal river with Arendsburg, named after one of the first Dutch planters in the area. To the north of the city the Sempali estate was opened in 1889 by the Deli Maatschappij on the grounds of the former Petersburg estate, named by a Russian planter after the city of Saint Petersburg. Two Swiss planters established the Helvetia tobacco plantation (Helvetia is the Latin name for Switzerland).⁵³ South of the city

48 Gemeentebld 2 Gemeente Medan 1931 no. 249; Colombijn 2010: 82.

49 When in 1891 false passes circulated, an article appeared in the Deli Courant about new passes with special oval stamp and an image of the sun undersigned by then Lieutenant of the Chinese Tjong Yong Hian. (DC 14-1-1891)

50 (Tjiook Liem 2009: 326–327); In case Chinese had to go to the Batak villages, for instance like a woodsawer, for keeping up waterworks or agriculture (sawah worker), they received a license for maximal three months, which was signed on their passes. They only could get this license if they had paid their taxes to the Captain of the Chinese. (MvO controleur G.L.J.D. Kok, 1910)

51 SP 20-2-1909.

52 Colombijn 2010: 101,149; Interview Hiu Kian Jin 9-1-1996, 3-2-1996.

53 Schadee 1918, I: 179.

centre, was the Polonia plantation named by the Pole L. Michalsky. Nearby, in the southeast of Medan the Gedong Djohore plantation was opened, located next to the Padang Boelan plantation.⁵⁴ The Tandjong Morawa tobacco plantation west of Medan became the head office of the Senembah Company. It was the first tobacco plantation in Serdang.⁵⁵ Also in the early 1870s the Mariëndal plantation in Medan's western part was established, named after an estate near Arnhem, in the Netherlands.⁵⁶

2.3. Medan as a regional infrastructural centre

“The steamer has to sail up the Deli river, which is on both sides covered with mangrove trees, standing half in the water. Slowly and cautiously the steamer creeps in over the mudbank at the mouth of the river, and in half an hour reaches the wharf of Belawan. In two minutes you walk from the wharf to the railway station.[...] From Belawan to Medan it takes 45 minutes by train.”⁵⁷

This was what the port facilities of Medan looked like in 1909. In earlier days Laboehan Deli, at the mouth of the Deli river, had been a natural harbour. However, in 1888 when the railway line to Belawan was finished and in order to facilitate growing maritime traffic, Belawan was chosen instead over Laboehan.⁵⁸ Belawan was connected to the Deli river via a narrow canal. The roads in Deli were in the 1880s so bad that when the Governor General O. van Rees, visited Deli in his voyage from the Netherlands to Batavia in 1884, he had to walk in muck up to his knees because his carriage got stuck in the mud on the road from Medan to Laboehan. The government at this point had not yet carried out any road construction.⁵⁹ Before the train was introduced, oxen were used for the transportation of tobacco. The oxen and the ox drivers came from British India, while a road was built by the Deli Maatschappij connecting Laboehan with Medan. Wherever possible the Deli Maatschappij made use of ox carts. Other plantations used *sampans* on the rivers to transport their commodities. Europeans mostly travelled on horseback.

In 1890 there was a regular shipping service between Belawan and Singapore. The first direct shipping connection from Belawan to Batavia was established in 1892. Ships had to

54 Schadee 1918: 185.

55 This estate is still the head office of PTP II, one of the Indonesian national plantation companies.

56 Schadee 1918, I: 185; Schadee 1918, II: 189, 197, 199, 201, 204; *Deli - Maatschappij, Gedenkschrift* 1919, 21,22; Loderichs - Buiskool 1997: 14; Cremer. J.Th. *Jeugd en jongelingsjaren van Jacob Theodoor Cremer* (30 Juni 1847–14 Augustus 1923) : beschreven door hemzelf 1924. Koloniale Collectie (KIT) — Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden.

57 Wright 1909: 566.

58 Naudin 1905: 32; Volker 1928: 41.

59 De Deli-Spoorwegmaatschappij en haar veertigjarig jubileum, 1923: 199.

stay outside the harbour, at the roadstead near the mouth of the Deli river, and cargo was discharged via small barks or proas. Passengers were also disembarked onto small craft. After the port was moved to Belawan, Laboehan Deli became silent. Before then it had been a busy commercial centre where the ships supplied many shops, Malay, Chinese, Indian and Japanese. Many of these businesses moved from Laboehan Deli to the Kesawan in Medan.⁶⁰ Before 1890, all tobacco was shipped to Penang and Singapore with the British Ocean Steamship Company from Liverpool and the German Nord-Deutscher Lloyd Line from Bremen. From 1891 the Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij (Royal Package Navigation Company) shipped tobacco to Tanjung Priok and to Sabang, where it was transferred to Dutch steamers. Beginning in 1900 the harbour of Belawan was dredged and docks for small vessels were constructed. In 1915 more construction work was started to enlarge the harbour facilities.⁶¹ It wasn't until 1923 that large ocean-going steamers could enter Belawan; in that year a direct weekly connection of mailboats was established with both the Netherlands and Java.⁶²

Belawan harbour was originally owned by the Deli Spoorweg Maatschappij, a private company established by J.Th. Cremer, head administrator of the Deli Maatschappij, for the transportation of tobacco from the plantations to the port. In February 1888 the short railway track between Laboehan and Belawan was opened.⁶³ The construction of the railway had entailed great difficulties. Contractors, workers and material all had to be obtained from elsewhere. Twice there had been outbreaks of cholera, while there were also constant malaria cases among the workers. The railway line Medan – Laboehan - Belawan consisted of 22 kilometres of track and was travelled five times a day at one hour and ten minutes per trip. This was in 1909. During the construction it was decided to extend the lines from Medan far into Serdang and Langkat. In later years narrow gauge railways were constructed to connect the plantations in Deli, Langkat and Serdang.⁶⁴ In 1913 DSM handed over the management of Belawan to the government but continued to run the railway. In 1916 the line Tebing Tinggi - Pematang Siantar was completed so that the tea from the plantations around Pematang Siantar could be transported to Belawan.⁶⁵ The extension of the railway from Kisaran to Rantau Prapat would be completed in 1929. There was also a suggestion

60 Andalus, 31-10-1918.

61 Andalus 5-7-1917; Feldwick 1917: 1185.

62 Letter dated 1938 of the director of the S.M. Ocean (later the Holt Line) to the Director of the DSM. Kam 1995: 41; *Gedenkboek der Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland, 1870-1920*, Amsterdam, 1920; Schadee 1918, II: 239; Tabak en Deli (MvO). Article about Deli and Serdang. KIT 689??

63 SP 8-6-1913; Schadee 1918, II: 228; *Gedenkboek der Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland, 1870-1920*; De Jong 2000: 242; Wormser 1943: 216.

64 (Naudin 1905: 32; Schadee 1918, II: 228) Today you can still see the gauge railroads around Medan but no rail is in use any more. Kampong houses have even been built over the railroads.

65 Tabak en Deli (MvO), Article about Deli and Serdang. KIT 689.

to extend the railway line to Lake Toba for connection with Tapanoeli but this was never realized.⁶⁶

Parallel to the construction of the railway DSM installed telegraph lines, and as such the railway was important for the development of telegraph communications. The post office in Medan was both a post- and telegraph office. In 1887 a government telegraph line had been opened from Medan to the west coast of Sumatra. In 1891 a telegraph connection was established from Medan to Penang, thereby connecting Medan with the global telegraph networks. The telegraph lines for long distances ran straight through the jungle, where elephants occasionally pulled telegraph poles out of the ground. Consequently, the telegraph connection was often interrupted.⁶⁷

East Sumatra's first automobile appeared in 1900, a steam car belonging to the Sultan of Deli.⁶⁸ In 1907, J.T. Cremer made the first climb to Brastagi in the highlands with two Spyker cars over a road which was then still under construction.⁶⁹ The Trans Sumatra Highway from Medan to Padang had already been discussed in 1916 but was not realized before 1938.⁷⁰ In 1925 the airfield of Medan started operation, and plans were even made for an airport in Brastagi.⁷¹ Three years later, in 1928, the Koninklijke Nederlandsch Indische Luchtvaart Maatschappij (KNILM) or Royal Netherlands Indies Airline Company was established.⁷² A memorable event was the first flight from the Netherlands which landed on 11th November, 1934 in Medan.⁷³

2.4. Town planning, health, housing and land rights

A quotation from *De Sumatra Post* from January 1912:

"In the interest of traffic, of the public health, of the common welfare, of the beauty of the city, it is important to draw now for a number of years ahead general lines, general standards for the extension of the city. If one does not do that now, if one only acts according to the interests of the moment without thinking of the consequences for the future, then Medan will lose her fine reputation of an abundant set out friendly

66 Broersma, R. "De ontwikkeling van den handel in Oostkust van Sumatra" *Koloniaal Tijdschrift* II, 1922: 430.

67 Schadee 1918: II, 231–232; Tabak en Deli (MvO) Article about Deli and Serdang. KIT 689.

68 Schadee 1918: 194, 235, 239.

69 Cremer, *Eigen Haard* April 1907, no. 16.

70 Reid 2005: 17.

71 SP 11-2-1938; SP 22-11-1938.

72 The Royal Netherlands Indies Airline Company was established by the Deli company together with the Netherlands Trading company and other companies in the Netherlands Indies. (Deli Maatschappij 1929: 19)

73 Gemeente Medan, 1909–1934: 8.

*and fresh looking, comfortable town. Medan has two beautiful Esplanades, which function as its lungs. As the city expands, there will be a need for more of those lovely open areas. What a relief give such open spaces in a tropical city!"*⁷⁴

Aristotle had already written about town planning three centuries before Christ. He mentioned four important factors for the best town: health, defense, suitability for political activities and beauty.⁷⁵ The aspects of town planning for Greece two thousand years ago, also counted for Medan in the twentieth century. The four factors were partly realized when ideas about cities and urban planning in the Netherlands Indies arose, from around 1910 onwards. The most well-known city planner in the Netherlands Indies was Thomas Karsten who for a short time was also involved in Medan's town planning.⁷⁶ Karsten stated that the Netherlands Indies cities should strive to achieve a more hygienic and better organized society.⁷⁷ Market regulations in Medan were established in the 1880s, and meat and fish markets were built, followed in 1906 by a vegetable market.⁷⁸ These markets were built separate from each other to achieve maximum hygiene. According to Karsten the construction of a city or village was the task of the government, and the obligation to responsibly design it to the best of their ability rests with them; the good quality thereof is then an expression of the society as such.⁷⁹

Extensive discussions were held in the Town council about the future development of Medan.⁸⁰ What were the best sites for the new roads and bridges?⁸¹ How about a sewerage system? What should be the development of the town particularly in spatial terms?⁸² In 1912 serious discussions occurred regarding the development of a steam- or electrical tram from Kampong Baroe via Medan to Belawan.⁸³ In 1913 the building plans for the quarters of Petissah and Soengei Rengas were approved by the council.⁸⁴ In 1915 a new drainage system was constructed for the Esplanade.⁸⁵ The same year a start was made with extension

74 SP 29-1-1912.

75 Ross 1985: 69.

76 SP 12-11-1918.

77 Ravestein/Kop, van Roosmalen 2004:178; Akihary 1990: 61–64; Dick 2002: 198,192,197.

78 MvO mayor Mackay of Medan 1933: 106–109; SP 10-9-1918, SP 25-9-1918; Dick 2002: 198,192,197.

79 Ravestein/Kop, van Roosmalen 2004:186.

80 Town council discussions in 1912. (SP 30-1-1912; 14-3-1912; 1-6-1912; 3-8-1912; 5-8-1912) In 1909 *kampong* improvement started with the construction of gutters in *kampong* Soengei Kerah. (SP 18-8-1909) In 1912 over 100,000 guilders was spent for public works, and over fl.30,000 for city cleaning. (SP 27-8-1912) In 1915 approximately fl.12,000 was reserved for new roads. (SP 22-10-1915)

81 DC 8-2-1895; 23-3-1895; SP 29-3-1909; SP 9-6-1909.

82 SP 11-11-1912; SP 15-3-1913.

83 SP 14-10-1912.

84 SP 1-9-1913; SP 24-5-1913; SP 29-8-1913; SP 30-8-1913.

85 SP 22-12-1915.

of the Chinese quarter.⁸⁶ A new industrial area was established in 1915 in Gloegoer, in the northern part on the road to Belawan harbour.

The DSM created its own quarter as it built its head office and houses for its personnel along the railroad east of the Esplanade. Not far from Gloegoer in the village of Poeloe Berayan another compound with workshops emerged for the DSM.⁸⁷ From the roads and road construction we may see how far Medan had developed.⁸⁸ In 1915 a new map of Medan was designed to indicate the extension planned to accommodate the new Laboehanweg to Petissah and the Padang Boelanweg as well as the building plan for Soengei Kerah.⁸⁹ Still later, four-year plans for municipal works were presented, concerning roads, sports fields, and bicycle roads to the sports fields.⁹⁰

Hygiene and housing

Topics of drainage, sewage and garbage disposal, so important for sanitary conditions, were already on the agenda in the 1910s. The building of the city's sewer system began in 1926. In 1930 a new municipal hospital was finished in the Serdangroad. In the same year the Roman Catholic Elisabeth Hospital was completed. The Hogere Burger School (Higher Secondary School) was established in 1928 and in 1930 two public schools for boys and girls. In 1927 the Su Tung School, Medan's first secondary Chinese school, was opened.⁹¹

Before 1915 little attention was paid to public housing, but in that year the Land and Housing Authority was installed in order to develop more public housing. After the First World War social housing projects were started, like at Kerah street and the village Sido Dadi. Other housing projects were in the villages Sekip, Djatie Oeloe and Padang Loemba. In 1927 the municipality started with construction of new city areas like Medan Baru for the lower income groups. Here many *Indo* (Eurasian) and lower income European employees lived. For these activities the city received subsidies from the central government.⁹² In 1918 the *Huurcommissie Ordinantie* (Rent Tribunal Ordinance) was established to protect the rights of tenants. The ordinance fixed the rents of all houses, from cheap to expensive, starting in January 1916. The rent tribunal overruled other tenancy agreements. All

86 SP 16-11-1915; SP 30-9-1915.

87 This fine laid out compound was during the second world war from 1942 till 1944 in use as civil internee camp by the Japanese.

88 In 1912 the total length of the roads needing maintenance in Medan was 54 km; of these 46 km were hardened with gravel. (SP 9-9-1912)

89 SP 7-7-1915; 30-9-1915; SP 7-2-1916.

90 SP 11-11-1937.

91 Information Thio Han Cheng, Medan, 2001, 2002, 2003; Franke 1988: 145,146,148; *Gemeentebld* 20-6-1928; *Gemeente Medan, 1909-1934*; Loderichs - Buiskool 1997: 28.

92 *Gemeente Medan, 1909-1934*:4,17; Ravestein/Kop, van Roosmalen, 2004:191; De Waard 1934: 221; Colombijn 2010: 326,327.

agreements between owners and tenants had to be approved by the Rent Tribunal. When the Rent Tribunal was finally abolished in 1927 the landlords immediately raised the rents.⁹³

A second fast spatial development started after 1920, and the number of villas in the Polonia quarter increased rapidly. Another newly built area was the DSM housing quarter along the Serdang road for the middle- and higher-income DSM personnel. South of the Chinese quarter was the so-called *Oranje buurt*, (Orange quarter) with street names based on the Dutch royal family, with names like Julianastraat, Wilhelminastraat, Prins Hendrikstraat, Emmastraat and Amaliastraat. In the eastern part of the city several new housing quarters were also opened. In 1920 a sharp decline in rubber prices had directly affected Medan's economy, but in 1924 the prices rose again which resulted in a second boom period whereby the city expanded considerably. The high prices remained stable until 1930 when the world crisis also hit east Sumatra.⁹⁴ Although financially weak, Medan's greatest public work was started in 1930 and finished in 1933, during the height of the economic crisis. It was the construction of the new Central Market at the location of the former racecourse at the Wilhelminastraat. After many negotiations an agreement was reached between the Town council of Medan and the market exploiters, in this case the Tjong family, whereby the old markets were closed on the day the new central market (designed by architect J. H. Valk) was opened in 1933.⁹⁵

Land rights

Land rights are crucial for any study of urban development. Land is an economic factor of strategic importance. It is one basis for the achievement of wealth and ideal as an object for speculation.⁹⁶ In the Netherlands Indies the main distinction between land ownership was the one between European law and Indigenous law, so there were two systems. The European land title had a fiscal origin and in practice only existed in cities. From 1880 there was a professional kadaster (land register). Land with a European title was relatively expensive because of the administrative costs of transferring the title at the Land register and because of annual taxation. If, however, the land had an Indigenous title it could easily be sold or change boundaries without any formalities.⁹⁷ The advantage of a European title was the higher degree of security it offered, important for an owner starting construction. It was

93 Andalus, 16-7-1918; Colombijn 2010: 369.

94 De Waard 1934: 221.

95 Gemeente Medan 1909–1934.

96 Colombijn 1994: 174.

97 Jansen 1930:148; Colombijn 2010: 143, 144, 145, 147; Encyclopaedie 1934: 387.

also important in shopping streets, that the shops be built in an unbroken line aligned to the exact boundaries of the plots. There was no need for this in the villages outside the cities.⁹⁸

The lands in and around Medan were in principle under the jurisdiction of the *Zelfbestuurder*, the Sultan of Deli, who ‘granted’ the right of use in long lease concessions to European planters. It was Sultan Mahmoed Perkasa Alam Shah, who had invited Jacob Nienhuys to come to Deli to plant tobacco. The Sultan had reserved a piece of land south of Laboehan Deli, where Nienhuys started growing tobacco. In 1888 his son, Sultan Mahmoed Al Rasjid, had moved from Laboehan to Medan where he had built his impressive ‘thousand and one nights palace’, designed by Van Erp.⁹⁹ Over the years the Sultan cooperated with the plantation companies and subsequently accumulated a fortune. He received yearly large sums for the land concessions and profited in this way directly from the new plantation industry. The Sultan was close with the brothers Tjong Yong Hian and Tjong A Fie, who also needed the Sultan for licenses and projects.¹⁰⁰ All this was in line with the agrarian law of 1870, which did not allow Europeans or Foreign Orientals to purchase landed property. Only Indigenous people could buy land. The alternative for the former was lease. The right of long lease for a maximum of 75 years was created to make the establishment of the large agro-industry of western companies possible. For Foreign Orientals land was given out in long leases based according to civil law; later a special law was created, the so called *Landerijenbezitsrecht*, which was comparable to hereditary individual ownership for the Indigenous population.¹⁰¹ So the Chinese long lease holder had in this way the same hereditary individual private ownership as the Indigenous. It was still however, called long lease.

The so-called ‘grant’ system was different from the aforementioned long leases. It existed exclusively in Deli and in Jogjakarta.¹⁰² The Sultan could give a grant (right to use the land) to the government. The government in its turn could sell this ‘grant’ land to private persons, that could be Europeans or Chinese, Indian or Arab. Grants were based on *adat* (local law) as in use in the Sultanates. The grant right was a personal right.¹⁰³ The Sultan gave grants to his Indigenous subjects who already owned the land. A Sultan’s grant was in fact only the acknowledgement of an existing situation. The Sultan had no right to sell the land. Grants

98 Gemeentebblad 13-4-1921; Gemeentebblad 2 Gemeente Medan Jaar 1930 Afl. 19 No 216–240; Gemeentebblad 2 Gemeente Medan Jaar 1939 Afl. 23 Nrs. 112-118; Colombijn 2010: 147.

99 Wright 1909: 565

100 Interview T.A. Nawarin, descendant of the Sultan of Deli. 24-11-1992; Interview Mrs. Lemye in Westende at 12-6-1992; Chang 1981: 41. The Sultan Mahmoedweg (road) (Jl. Surik Menari) was named after this Sultan. (Loderichs – Buiskool 1997: 9, 101, 102)

101 Encyclopaedie 1934: 389, 1148.

102 Nota betreffende den rechtstoestand van den grond ter hoofdplaats Djokjakarta, Djokjakarta, April 1918, KIT; E.M. Stork Overgang van Inlandsche grondrechten in het gewest Jogjakarta, 10-8-1936, KIT; Colombijn 2010: 158, 159.

103 SP 2-12-1909.

were handwritten documents in Arabic language and later in printed standard forms. If a grant was sold it was written on the document and permission of the Sultan was necessary. Grant rights given out by the Sultan could not be burdened with mortgage or with pawn rights. The grant right could also not be exchanged for money, thus increasing the capital of the creditor.¹⁰⁴ It had similarities with usufruct (the right to use another's land, short of its destruction or depletion).

However, in Medan the Sultan's grants were registered in a public register held by the municipality. The plots given out by the Sultan were in the form of a contract for concessions in long lease, like fifty, seventy-five, or one hundred years.¹⁰⁵ There were other grants as well, such the so-called *controleur's* grants, given out by the *controleur* or another civil servant. These grants were also registered in the public registers, later by the Sultan or the local court of justice. *Controleurs'* grants were administrative rights exercised by the government official.

Controleurs' grants were given out by the colonial government for those who had obtained a plot of land, but without the required grant from the sultan. *Controleurs'* grants were still under the jurisdiction of the Sultan who had given permission to the government to handle these affairs.¹⁰⁶ There were also sub-grants from the Deli Maatschappij. These Deli Maatschappij sub-grants were originally given out by the Sultan and in principle could not be handed over to a third party. Much of the urban land of Medan fell under the concession of the Deli Maatschappij which had been obtained from the Sultan of Deli. In the 1880s the Deli Maatschappij had already begun to divide up its concessions into sublease and to give out parcels of land with a Deli Maatschappij grant. This grant was valid as long as the concession of the Deli Maatschappij lasted. These grants were given to employees of the Deli Maatschappij and to others. For European, Chinese, Indian and other non-Indigenous inhabitants not employed by the Deli Maatschappij it was almost impossible to obtain such titles.¹⁰⁷ Finally there were grants given by the Sultan without any written document¹⁰⁸ As it was legally impossible for Foreign Orientals or Europeans to buy grants, a conversion was made in 1916. Hereafter the grant could be obtained via a right of *opstal* (building and planting rights) or *erfpacht* (long lease) which gave more legal security. Based on these legal titles it was possible to make applications for a mortgage at a bank. In general, ground not occupied by people was seen as the property of the Sultan.¹⁰⁹

104 Gemeentebblad 1927: 297, 298; Colombijn 2010: 159.

105 SP 2-9-1915; SP 29-1-1918; Gemeentebblad 3-4-1919.

106 Gemeentebblad 3-4-1919.

107 Colombijn 2010: 159; Gemeentebblad 3-4-1919.

108 Gemeentebblad, no. 69, 1920.

109 SP 30-1-1918; Gemeentebblad 3-4-1919.

The situation with the different grants was not practical. After 13 years of negotiations between the colonial government, the Sultans of Deli and Serdang, and the municipality an agreement was made in 1918. In that year the municipality of Medan received a gift of land free of charge from the Sultans of Deli and Serdang. The Medan municipality became owners of the city grounds, hereby reducing the power of the Sultan. Excluded from the gift were the Sultan's own *kampung* Kota Matsum and the land already belonging to the DSM. A further special case was the Sultan's grants to the land on which the houses of major Tjong A Fie and the heirs of Tjong Yong Hian stood. The Sultan of Deli in the past had given everlasting usage rights of this ground to the Tjong brothers. After the gift the land on which the city was built formally ended up in the hands of the Medan municipality. From then on, all urban subjects of the self-ruling states of Deli and Serdang became subjects of the Netherlands Indies, except in the Sultan's land of Kota Matsum and the other remaining Sultan's *kampongs* Soengei Kerah and Pertjoet. From 1918 no further grants were given out by the Sultan except for grounds within his own territory.¹¹⁰ After the gift of land *kampung* improvement was started as the town now had the jurisdiction.

In 1921 the Deli Maatschappij gave out two concessions for urban expansion, the first for plots of land in the already existing town, the second for the former plantation area Polonia. All the ground on these concessions came to be based on municipal property, which itself already had a secure title. For people already living in town it became possible to exchange an old grant for a European deed of building rights (*recht van opstal*). In practice few people took advantage of this change as most preferred the ease and informal sale of grants to the complicated (and expensive) procedures of the Land register (*kadaster*). In 1919 the division of lands in Medan had been as follows: 16% Sultan's neighbourhoods (*kampongs*), including his own grounds; 7% Deli Maatschappij; 4% DSM; 3% government; 0.1% Javasche Bank. The remaining part was the land the municipality had just received from the Sultan, and also the land to which individuals could lay a claim based on a Sultan's, or a controleur's grant, or a Deli Maatschappij grant.¹¹¹ The grant system still exists today.

2.5. Security and Justice

"At the busy railroad crossing at the end of the Kerkstraat he can be admired every morning and afternoon. There he rules over the street complex. Only one

110 SP 29-1-1918; *Gemeentebblad* 30-10-1918; *Gemeentebblad* 3-4-1919; *Gemeentebblad* 1920, no. 97; MvO ass. res. S. Bouman, 1929, KIT, 678; (*Mededeelingen Handelsvereniging Medan, 1927: 228,229; van Tets 1920: 170.*

111 *Gemeentebblad Medan, 21-3-192; SP 16-10-1926; Colombijn 2010: 160,161.*

*movement of his hand is enough to stop the restless traffic: his baton has the effect of a magic stick.”*¹¹²

This was the image presented by *De Sumatra Post* of a Medan traffic policeman in 1913. The impressive Indian Sikhs with turban and long beards were especially considered as well suited for this job.¹¹³ In this case an ethnic hierarchy seems to have fallen into place, at the least for the Dutch newspaper reading audience. The police, however, had become an important item in the daily papers. With the introduction of the ethical policy in 1901 more attention was paid by the government to the policing of the community.¹¹⁴ An awareness had gradually been growing that a police force, being separate from the colonial army, was a necessary ingredient for a modern orderly society. In Medan in 1891 there had already been the complaint that a force of only 33 policemen, earning a far too low salary, was not sufficient for the community, and had led to malfunctioning and corruption. Stories appeared about Indigenous police assistants refusing to pay at local restaurants, being not professional and indifferent.¹¹⁵ A bitter story appeared about a Dutch police officer who shot an innocent Indigenous runaway boy.¹¹⁶ There were the occasional articles about police officers who asked for money from civilians, and civilians who tried to bribe the police.¹¹⁷ A wide variety of articles appeared about the police force. In 1900 an entry in *De Sumatra Post* mentions that when a local inhabitant fell into the Deli river no police officer tried to help. All looked on from the riverside while this person drowned.¹¹⁸ There were complaints about ex-contract coolies with criminal records who were recruited for the police force, and about Dutch police officers who did not speak Malay, which caused much miscommunication with the Indigenous population.¹¹⁹ Before 1912 when the Chinese still wore the queue in their hair, it was practical for the police to restrain a Chinese by holding his long braided hair. Then there were articles about the task of the police, about uniforms, about the new police encampment in Kebon Boenga at the Parkstraat, and about a special officer appointed for the protection of animals.¹²⁰

In the meantime, the number of police officers did show some modest growth. In 1912 there was a reorganization of the police force. Medan now had 8 European senior

112 (SP 19-4-1913). Kerkstraat (Jalan Haryono M.T.)

113 SP 26-8-1915, SP 28-8-1915, SP 9-9-1915.

114 Van Till 2006: 194.

115 DC 14-1-1891; Andalas, 28-8-1920; Andalas, 15-6-1920; Andalas, 24-7-1920.

116 Andalas, 2-9-1920.

117 SP 8-7-1930, SP 30-8-1915, SP 2-2-1924, SP 6-5-1915., SP 24-1-1924.

118 SP 24-3-1900,

119 SP 14-7-1915; Weekblad voor Indië, 3-11-1918; Andalas, 3-8-1920.

120 SP 2-10-1912; SP 14-2-1912, SP 21-9-1912, SP 5-5-1913, SP 12-2-1912, SP 13-2-1918, SP 6-11-1915; SP 13-7-1912; SP 12-2-1930; SP 1-12-1941.

agents, one *mantri* (Indigenous senior officer), 25 Indigenous officers and 95 Indigenous officers second class, totaling 129 men. There were also other police officers especially appointed in relation to the opium regie as well as some detectives.¹²¹ East Sumatra had in that year a total of 306 police officers.¹²² Among them were also Chinese police assistants so called *tjenteng*.¹²³ Thereafter the force showed a steady growth. In 1924 the number of police officers in Medan and Belawan was 334.¹²⁴

In the year of the police reorganization, 1912, there was another important reform regarding justice. From 1912 police cases came to the *Landraad* (Land court) and were no longer the domain of the police court.¹²⁵ The police court was infamous, with both the government and administration of justice united in one government official, namely the head of the police. Instead, the *Landraad* was appointed to provide for the Chinese and Indigenous people alike. Once in session it consisted of a professional European lawyer and two Indigenous members.¹²⁶ European civilians on the other hand went to the court of justice. Although the non-European population groups could now go through the *Landraad*, there still was much criticism. The newspaper *Andalas* said about police investigation:

*“On Sumatra’s Eastcoast the police investigate houses without permission while on Java only the Mantri police, or Wedana (Indigenous head of the district), assistant Wedana, Commissioner of Police or Police sergeants have the right to do that. Why this difference while both are under Dutch Indies law. During investigation at the police office the recherche is less human in investigation as we can hear the screaming when people are being questioned. The recherche is sadistic during investigation. The people admit because they are hit, not because they are guilty, but they plead guilty as they are afraid of more hitting. When they are sitting in court in front of the judge of the Landraad, they say they were not guilty. When the judge asks but ‘why did you plead guilty’? The victim replies I said guilty because they hit me, they tortured me. So, in the end it is all unclear.”*¹²⁷

121 (SP 14-3-1912, SP 8-7-1912, SP 14-3-1912). There were also detectives. (*Weekblad voor Indië*, 3-11-1918). For opium regie see chapter 3.

122 In 1918 the police corps of East Sumatra consisted of 200 men. From the 200 police attendants were 20 Indigenous detectives (*rechercheurs*) and 6 Chinese detectives. There were 25 Indigenous police officers first class and 257 police officers and 14 *mantri* police for the opium regie as well as 35 lower police officers (*bureau oppassers*) (SP 12-2-1912; SP 14-3-1912; Van Till 2006: 197).

123 *Andalas* 8-4-1920.

124 SP 25-1-1924, SP 8-2-1933, SP 16-6-1938.

125 SP 14-2-1912.

126 Fromberg 1926: 593, 811.

127 *Andalas* 3-8-1920.

In this context an important improvement was the introduction of the dactyloscopic institute for police investigation and identification of persons via fingerprints to trace criminals.¹²⁸ In 1900 a whole band of Chinese pickpockets from Singapore came to operate in Medan.¹²⁹ Pickpockets remained an issue for some time.¹³⁰ Over the years detailed reports were made about thefts,¹³¹ smuggling,¹³² burglary¹³³, selling of children,¹³⁴ rape¹³⁵ and murder.¹³⁶ Before modern street lighting it was pitch black at night which caused a lot of burglaries. In 1915 more and more electricity became available in town at the request of the police which improved the general safety of Medan.¹³⁷

Besides criminality the police and the law had also to deal with other breaches of societal peace. One of these was communal violence. Occasionally Medan was the scene of ethnic clashes. In 1912 there was a fight in the Chinese quarter between Chinese and Malay students urging the police to arrest the fighters, while fellow Chinamen shouted '*pah-la 'pah-la'!*' (Hit them!). In 1915 there was a clash between Chinese and Turks of a *stamboel* (theatre) company who, after an accident and not being able to speak to each other, started fighting and almost killed each other. Such occurrences clearly should be characterized as exceptional. On the whole, the different ethnic groups lived peacefully together.¹³⁸

Summary

Medan was the direct result of the plantation industry. It was a typical colonial town, set up and organized by the Dutch with an infrastructure developed for the agro industry. If we compare Medan's development with other studies about colonial towns in the Netherlands Indies, such as Susan Abeyasekere's *Jakarta A History*, we notice in Medan the same characteristics: fast population growth; modern town-planning; the presence of immigrants from all over the world, each living in their own ethnic quarters. In Medan a process of spatial change also occurred, towards a pluriform society as described by Freek Colombijn

128 SP 14-1-1909; De Locomotief, 23-1-1909; SP 19-7-1913; Van Till 2006: 192.

129 SP 17-12-1900.

130 SP 23-9-1933, SP 4-2-1935, SP 19-4-1941.

131 SP 2-6-1900, 20-5-1912, 5-5-1913, 14-7-1915; Andalas, 20-7-1918, Andalas 23-7-1918; SP 7-9-1933, SP 10-1-1933, SP 19-12-1933, SP 3-6-1941.

132 SP 12-4-1933, SP 22-11-1938.

133 SP 10-1-1933, SP 7-10-1912, SP 28-8-1913, SP 3-5-1913, SP 19-7-1913, SP 24-7-1915, SP 30-1-1915, SP 1-3-1915; Andalas, 24-7-1920.

134 SP 21-5-1915) In 1918 was the institution of Pro juvenute established to prevent children becoming criminals; Andalas, 7-9-1918; SP 9-9-1933.

135 SP 1-8-1913.

136 SP 13-3-1913, SP 10-3-1913, SP 11-3-1913, SP 27-8-1913, SP 25-8-1913, SP 23-8-1913, SP 16-1-1933; SP 2-9-1930, SP 27-12-1933, SP 16-8-1933, SP 29-6-1933, SP 12-6-1933.

137 SP 19-10-1915.

138 SP 18-6-1912; SP 22-6-1912; SP 8-5-1915.

for Padang. The characterization of Surabaya by Howard Dick as a class-ruled society under an authoritarian regime, which legitimized itself by the notion of good government, also perfectly fits Medan.

If we look at the characteristics of a colonial city in a wider geographical scope, such as described by Terry McGee it is easy to conclude that Medan showed all the specific traits of a Southeast Asian colonial city. These were: colonial towns were harbour cities, important as economic and administrative centres, occupying a mix of ethnic populations with the Europeans on top of the social, political, and economic hierarchy. Medan was not a real harbour city, Belawan fulfilled that function, but an economic and administrative centre, it certainly was.

Anthony King, in analysing at a global level, elaborated the characteristics of a colonial town into four points: firstly, they were developed under foreign influence; secondly, they were part of a central economic system; thirdly they possessed substantial western elements; and finally, the colonial cities changed considerably over time. All these four features were present in Medan.

Like the larger colonial cities of the world Medan, seen from the viewpoint of functionality in centre-periphery relations, combined centrality at three levels: a regional one, a colonial imperial one and a global one. Medan was a true regional centre, a node in an administrative, economic and military network of a vast colonial empire, and finally a global player in the exportation of plantation products. From the 1870s until around 1900 the city had developed from a tiny *kampung* into an important commercial, political and financial centre. Over the years the usual urban symbols were created like a military fort, bank buildings, company offices and, especially characteristic for the Netherlands Indies, the *alun alun* in the centre of the city. Some of the urban symbols, such as offices, houses of prayer, statues and street names only had significance for specific ethnic and religious groups.

From the 1880s a regional infrastructure was developed with a harbour and railway construction, in order to facilitate the plantation industry. From the 1870s the plantation industry had gained an international dimension, evident in the names of the plantations in the direct vicinity of Medan, with foreign names referring to the countries of origin of the plantation companies. In the 1880s European trading firms and banks were established in the city, again to facilitate the surrounding plantations.

In Medan land use was liable to the grant system, whereby in principle only the Indigenous population could own land. People from other ethnic groups could buy such grants, given out by the Sultan or by way of sub-grants given out by the *controleurs* or by the Deli Maatschappij. At the end of this chapter the level of security and justice was discussed. One could say that life in Medan was relatively safe and harmonious, although there were occasional ethnic clashes. However, these were nothing compared to the situation on the

plantations with large scale maltreatment of labourers as a result of contracts under the penal sanction. Yet, even in town injustice remained. The introduction of the *Landraad* leading to a somewhat better treatment for Indigenous and Chinese persons indicted in court, was an improvement. The same could be said for the creation of a police force.

The town was divided into ethnic quarters which brought an ethnic based spatial structure to the city. Such divisions were found all over Southeast Asia before colonial times. In modern times, however, ethnic divisions lived on through town planning, infrastructure projects, social housing and hygienic regulations. In the 1920s and 1930s the development of the city accelerated with extensive housing projects, the building of hospitals, schools, an airfield and, although at the height of the economic depression, the construction of a new Central Market. Medan was a true multi-ethnic society, with a large Chinese population, which in 1930 comprised over 33% of the total inhabitants, and who played a pivotal role, not the least because of their retail trade through shops.

3

Chinese Business in Medan 1890–1942

Chapter 3

Chinese Business in Medan 1890–1942

Like everywhere else in the Netherlands Indies, the Chinese in Medan were mostly retail traders and functioned as middlemen between European wholesalers and the Indigenous customers. This chapter explores the Chinese business in Medan with a focus on the prominent Chinese. The key research questions are: What was the structure of the Chinese business? What were the conditions in Medan which explained the prominent Chinese businessmen's success?

The first part of this chapter describes the characteristics of Chinese Medan business. The second part is more specific about the highly profitable opium, gambling, liquor, pawn houses and salt monopolies. The third and last part of the chapter provides information about the Medan Chinese Chamber of Commerce, which was not only a commercial institution, but also served certain Chinese political and even governmental goals on the part of the homeland.

3.1. General characteristics of Chinese business in Medan.

Most of the Medan Chinese came directly from China, often joining family members who had arrived earlier. There was a clear division between the traders and craftsmen in town and the plantation workers on the estates. The Chinese in Medan in a way looked down on the Chinese coolies at the plantations.¹ On the other hand many former coolies went on to start a business and became successful entrepreneurs.

As mentioned in Chapter 1 different Chinese ethnic groups came to Sumatra. In Medan all of them had to reside in the Chinese quarter. Although they lived in the same quarter, it was often the case that a certain ethnic group specialized in specific professions. As mentioned before, the majority of the Medan Chinese were Hokkian and most of these were active in trade. Besides the Hokkian many Cantonese had started shops as goldsmiths, furniture makers, tailors, shoemakers or clockmakers as well as traders in local products.² Like the Cantonese, many Hakka were skilled labourers: shoemakers, rattan binders and tinsmiths as well as traders of local products.³ In Medan there were also many Hakka who

1 Interviews Hiu Kian Jin 9-1-1996, 3-2-1996.

2 Cator 1936: 26, 27; Jansen *Andere helpt* 1941: 9; Interview Chang Tung Yin, 26-11-1992; Ong Eng Die 1943: 33.

3 Jansen *Andere helpt* 1941: 9; Jansen *Vreemde Oosterlingen*, 11; Cator 1936: 26, 27; Creutzberg, 'De Chineesche Bevolking van Nederlandsch-Indië' in *Koloniale Studiën*, 1936: 33..

had a *toko obat* (traditional Chinese medicine shop), or worked in the textile trade.⁴ Because of the unfruitful soil the Hakka in Kwantung had been very poor, their women also being obliged to work the fields and not, as in other parts of China, locked up in the houses, where their feet were bound.⁵

The majority of the Hainan Chinese specialized in selling food, such as *bami*; many of them were cooks and servants in hotels. The Hainanese did not bring their wives to Sumatra. In the 1930s, most Hainanese men lived with Cantonese or with Javanese women. The Hainanese men used to send their savings to their family in China. The reason for the lack of Hainanese women was that it was forbidden for women to leave the island of Hainan.⁶

As stated in chapter 1 it was not until 1930 that many Chinese women moved to Sumatra. In 1918 De Bruin wrote that the more progressive Chinese were the clerks and employees in the European offices and banks. These office-workers normally originated from Batavia and Soerabaja, as well as from Singapore and Penang and the latter spoke English. The Indonesia-born Chinese *peranakan* mostly worked in the bigger shops.⁷ As elsewhere in Southeast Asia, in Medan Chinese businesses were usually located in Chinese style shop-houses, which consisted of an office or a shop and a warehouse on the ground floor, with the family's living quarters above.

Most of Medan's Chinese had arrived with little more than the clothes they were wearing or were the descendants of poor immigrants. And most of them came to the city through family connections. They all started as humble workers, but they dreamt of becoming a *taukeh*. Ladislao Szekeley described the *taukeh* as follows.

*Outside the stores sat pot-bellied old taukehs, sucking repulsively smelling Chinese tobacco from squalling water-pipes. The Chinese were working with ant-like industry, like fanatics. But only the coolies, the workers. The taukeh, the lord, the master, sat in front of his workshop and smoked or played with his children. He who has the money has the power.*⁸

A classic example of a humble Chinese becoming rich was Tan Tang Ho who came to Medan as a *kelontong* (a Chinese peddler without any capital). He managed to expand his business and eventually established the company Seng Hap, the most well-known department store of Sumatra. With Seng Hap, Tan Tang Ho expanded to other places. Whenever a new shop was opened in another town, a brother or other family member would be put in charge of the

4 Interview Chang Tung Yin 26-11-1992.

5 Ong Eng Die 1943: 30, 32

6 Cator 1936: 26, 27; De Bruin 1918: 36; Interview Chang Tung Yin 26-11-1992.

7 De Bruin 1918: 109.

8 Szekeley *Tropic Fever* 1979: 292, 298, 299.

new establishment. Tan Tang Ho established branch offices of Seng Hap in Binjai, Pangkalan Brandan and Tanjung Balei.⁹ Many Medan Chinese also had economic activities in Pematang Siantar and Tebing Tinggi. One place with many Chinese settlers was unique, however, the small fishing harbour town of Bagan Si Api Api, which will be dealt with further on.

In general, there was good cooperation between the Chinese businesses and the European and Indigenous companies. This was true for the bigger firms like Seng Hap which used modern western-style bookkeeping. For the smaller firms, organized according to the traditional kongsi system using Chinese characters, it was often difficult for European firms to do business. Kongsi systems were principally used in small intermediate business and retail trading.

The economic position of the Chinese was nevertheless hindered by several factors. Many Chinese businesses lacked accurate accounts or a rational cost price calculation. They liked to speculate, gave credit too easily, and placed family members or personal contacts in the businesses, even if these persons were incompetent. All this caused a weakening of Chinese industry. Chinese kongsi traders often cheated European traders in the early years of the twentieth century. It was almost impossible to prosecute this type of fraud under Dutch civil law, since the kongsi were not recognized by Dutch law. In addition to this, the Chinese did not like to borrow money from Dutch banks. The situation changed somewhat when in 1917 Dutch commercial law was applied to Chinese firms. Thereafter the trade between the Chinese and Dutch firms became easier. European banks, however, were still not eager to lend money to Chinese companies, since these firms lacked transparency because of their bookkeeping being in Chinese characters. As a result, many Chinese preferred to borrow money from the Chinese banks in town. By 1907 the Deli Bank (also called the Hakka bank), had been founded by the Hakka Tjong brothers, and in 1913 Khoe Tjin Tek established the Chung Hwa Shang Yeh Chinese Trading Company bank (also called the Hokkian bank). After the liquidation of the Deli Bank of Tjong A Fie in February 1921, two Chinese banks remained in Medan: the Chung Hwa Shang Yeh bank and the Hwa Seng kongsi, managed by Cantonese.¹⁰

The Medan Chinese had intense contacts with the British Straits Settlements and China. The international networks that they established were connected primarily with the Chinese of Penang, Singapore and their home towns in China, and less so with the Chinese communities on Java. The importance of the connections with China was shown by China's first president Sun Yat-sen who characterized the Overseas Chinese as 'The Mother of the

9 Kosasih 1988: 43; DC 14-1-1891; Interview Tan Boen Djin 18-10-1995; SP 29-4-1933.

10 Wertheim 1948: 126; Liem Twan Djie 1952: 43, 60; Vleming 1925: 141, 230; Williams 1952: 37.

Revolution', because they contributed much money to the revolutionary cause and supported all kinds of development projects in China.¹¹

Owing to the difficult living conditions in China, many people in the home towns and villages depended on the remittances sent by their overseas family members. This shows the strength of the family ties among the Chinese even when they moved abroad. The old Chinese tradition of ancestor worship was another example of this. Family members might travel far in the pursuit of prosperity, but their feeling of kinship and obligations towards family remained. Whenever possible, those migrating overseas preferred to work with family members and within family social and business networks, for these were the persons one could trust most.¹² These family establishments mostly traded the usual products, such as textiles, sometimes diversifying their trade to other products. The Chinese also liked to take risks and to speculate. However, as far as business relationships were concerned, they preferred informal personal relations.¹³ From the point of view of property and house ownership the Chinese proved to be very important. In the year 1914 alone over 220 buildings were constructed for Chinese businesses.¹⁴ Vleming wrote in 1926:

*“As house owners the Chinese on Sumatra’s Eastcoast are important, especially in the cities. It is hard to estimate how much property is owned by the Chinese. [...] In Tandjong Balei and Pematang Siantar, large and important parts of the town, some of the main shopping streets and markets, are in the hands of Chinese. The housing construction and wood trading are almost entirely in Chinese hands.”*¹⁵

As a result, in 1923, 55% of the land in the kampongs was owned by non-Indigenous (read Chinese). In one kampong adjacent to the Chinese quarter this rose to even 76%. As will be described in chapter 4, the Tjong brothers were the largest property owners in town.¹⁶ It was not only the Chinese who excelled in property, some Indian entrepreneurs were also very successful. The best examples were the brothers Hakkam and Gurdit Singh, who started around 1900 with property projects in the Chinese quarter with the help of the Sultan of Deli. Later, they cooperated with Tjong A Fie in house-building projects.¹⁷

11 Shozo 1994: 230.

12 Claver 2006: 163; Faure 1989: 438; Cator 1936: 61.

13 Kosasih, 1988, 43; Willmott, 1960, 55.

14 SP 3-9-1915.

15 Vleming 1926: 19.

16 Volkstelling 1930, 1935, IV: 142; Colombijn 2010: 119; Levensbeschrijving; Interview with Mrs. Lemye in Brussels on 13-3-1992; appendix 4.1.

17 Hakkam and Gurdit Singh were also active in promoting Medan for their fellow Indian countrymen. They invited Indian families from Punjab to Deli to settle in Medan, gave them land and some cows and hereby stimulated the settlement of an Indian community in Medan. Later on Dalim Singh, the son of Hakkam Singh, went into the cinema business. He owned the Oranje Bioscoop (Orange Cinema) and the Medan

As said previously many Chinese firms focused on import and export trade with Singapore or worked as agents of Singapore trading firms.¹⁸ Statistics on Chinese professions in East Sumatra, show that in 1905 there were 5,990 Chinese engaged in trade as well as 980 product buyers of local agricultural produce. There were also 3,000 small shop-holders with professions such as shoemakers, furniture makers and goldsmiths.¹⁹ When in 1913 the price of plantation products decreased, the Chinese and European trading houses on East Sumatra were only indirectly affected, as main plantation products were exported by the big plantation companies themselves. The prices of these products had no direct influence on local Chinese businesses. In the Straits however, there were many Chinese private planters and they were directly affected by the low prices of plantation products.²⁰ As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Chinese population of Medan was estimated in 1920 at around 15,000 people. They were living in 1,585 buildings, of which 1,228, the great majority, were also used for trade and commerce of all sorts.²¹

The Chinese trading houses were not restricted to imports, they also exported Indigenous produce, such as rubber from the local farmers and from rubber plantations of their own, as was the case with Tjong A Fie and Thio Siong Sioe. Other local export products were fish and *trassi* from Bagan Si Api Api, copra, betel nuts, potatoes, rattan, charcoal, black pepper and *damar*. The Chinese acted as intermediaries for the sales of Indigenous products to Singapore and Penang. Trading contacts between Medan, the British Straits Settlements and China were intense as is shown by cross-Straits associations like the Theng Bie Khong Hoi sugar and rice traders and an association for rubber traders. The importance of trading contacts with the Straits was also evidenced by the fact that after the Chinese New Year, Chinese traders did not pay their Medan creditors before first paying their Chinese creditors in the Straits and Hong Kong.²² Appendix 1.3 shows percentages.

Financially speaking at least from the viewpoint of taxation, the role of the Chinese of Medan was less important when compared to the Europeans. In 1912 there were 10,997 Chinese and 1,408 European living in Medan. Appendix 3.2. shows the Chinese paid fl.32,654.89 (Dutch guilders) for taxes and the Europeans fl.88,993.98. So the Europeans paid almost three times as much although the number of Chinese was almost eight times as high. The Europeans were more highly taxed than the Chinese. Appendix 3.2. also shows

Bioscoop. (Information from Mrs. Miki Singh, Medan. October 2003; Interview Tan Boen Djin and Margaret Wee, Medan 18-10-1995).

18 Ong Eng Die 1943: 65; *Verslag Handelsvereniging Medan* 1913: 17; Information Mr. Thio Han Cheng.

19 Naudin 1909: 46; Appendix 3.1.

20 Ong Eng Die 1943: 65; *Verslag Handelsvereniging Medan* 1913: 17; Information Mr. Thio Han Cheng.

21 Gemeentebld II. 1920, no. 65. Volkshuisvesting. Bijlage 1. Pag. 26–28.

22 Vleming 1926: 230; Information from Mr. Thio Han Cheng; *Verslag Handelsvereniging Medan*, 1916; *Verslag Handelsvereniging Medan*, 1913, 17.

that in 1912 the number of tax assessments for Europeans was 2,099 and for the Chinese it was 2,931, not so far apart therefore.²³

Income tax in Medan was introduced later, in 1919. In appendix 3.3. it is shown that in 1919 there were 2,600 European and 400 Japanese (who had the same judicial status as European). From these 3,000 around 1,100 paid income tax, that is just over 30%. From the 22,000 Indigenous, only 190 paid taxes which was not even 1%. In the case of the 2,000 Chinese there were 790 taxpayers; this was almost 40%, a little exceeding the Europeans and Japanese.²⁴ Most Chinese were in business and did not have salaried jobs like the Europeans. This affected the income tax that the Chinese had to pay. Often Chinese companies presented only a small part of their income to the tax collector. For the Europeans it was harder to avoid the tax inspectors. Besides that, many Chinese kept different businesses but reported only one or two of them. In the *Gemeentebblad* (Municipal Gazette) of 1920 a list of the incomes of 66 Chinese citizens is presented. Appendix 3.4 shows that the average income of this group of Chinese businessmen was around fl.4,000 to fl.8,000 annually. Remarkable was that Tjong A Fie alone had an income almost equal to all the other 65 Chinese tax payers.²⁵ An extreme difference indeed.

Trade in the war period 1914–1918 was characterized by the opening up of direct trade relations with Japan and the U.S.A., and a temporary decline in commerce with Europe because of the dangerous transport conditions. In fact, there was hardly any connection possible between the Netherlands Indies and Europe. But alternative routes remained open. In 1918, when connections with Europe were broken, imports from Singapore and Penang comprised 67.4% of the total amount imported; in 1932 this level had dropped to 38%.²⁶

When during the postwar depression of May 1920, the economic situation became critical, the Town council suggested that businesses import sugar and distribute it through retailers, as there was a food shortage in East Sumatra, especially of rice and sugar. In the 1920s Chinese businesses in the Netherlands Indies were already shifting to a broader range of economic activities. However, Dutch capital still dominated in the modern sectors of the economy. Big international business remained basically the sphere of the large Dutch enterprises. In Semarang on Java, Oei Tjong Ham's Kian Guang concern and in Medan Tjong A Fie's business empire were well-known exceptions, as they were able to operate large enterprises in different fields, including the plantation industry. After the postwar recession, economic stability and rising investments followed which lasted until the world crisis of 1929 and the subsequent decrease in prices. In 1931 the economy was so difficult that the Dutch Medan Chamber of Commerce tried to raise retail prices as so little profit

23 Appendix 3.2. *Verslag Handelsvereniging Medan* 1912, 1913

24 Appendix 3.3. *Gemeentebblad* 10-2-1920.

25 Interview Tan Boen Djin 25-10-1993; *Gemeentebblad* II 1921: 561–566.

26 De Waard 1934: 296.

was being made in the Chinese trade sector due to fierce competition and the lack of capital. These efforts were made in conjunction with the Chinese traders.²⁷

During the First World War, when Japan tried to obtain power over Manchuria and Shantung, many Chinese firms in the Netherlands Indies started to boycott Japanese goods. The boycott ended after an agreement between China and Japan in 1915.²⁸ When Japan really occupied Manchuria in 1931, anti-Japanese sentiments rose again with new boycotts. The colonial government did not want these boycotts as the Dutch were afraid to alienate Japan by too openly supporting Chinese nationalism in the Netherlands Indies.²⁹ Despite the Chinese firms' boycotts, after some time many Dutch import products were largely replaced by cheaper Japanese alternatives. As a result, in 1933 the *Crisis invoerordonnantie* (Crisis Import Ordinance) was introduced whereby import quotas were imposed on imports by country of origin. This regulation was in fact mainly intended to curb cheap Japanese products. Hereafter total imports decreased by 40% for the entire Netherlands Indies. Official Japanese protests were followed by trade negotiations in 1934 and 1937. The Netherlands Indies government stated that a maximum of 25% of all imports could come from Japan, and only by way of Japanese living in the Netherlands Indies. Furthermore, the Japanese shipping was reduced between Japan and the Netherlands Indies. In 1936 a shipping agreement was negotiated. In 1937 and 1938, respectively, two trade agreements, the Hart–Ishizawa agreement and the Van Mook–Kotani agreement came into being. From September 1940 until June 1941, renewed negotiations took place which were not ultimately concluded by an agreement between the two countries. During the global crisis of the 1930s the Netherlands could not buy enough Netherlands Indies' export products, so attempts were made to sell these on the international market. Unfortunately, most of these attempts failed because of protectionist measures. Consequently, the production of almost every major colonial export commodity had to be reduced.³⁰

3.2. Monopolies and Revenue Farms

Revenue farming can be defined as a system by which the state leased, directly or through auction to the highest bidder, exclusive rights to conduct a particular service (for example collecting taxes), or to engage in an activity for profit in return for an agreed price paid in advance to the state. It is effectively a system of tax collection.³¹

27 Gemeentebld: 15-5-1920; Mededeelingen Handels-vereeniging Medan 1931: 10.

28 MacNair, *Modern Chinese History: Selected Readings*, Vol. 2, p. 772, 787–788; SP 18-11-1912; SP 10-1-1913; Yong 1989: 3; SP 12-4-1915; SP 21-5-1915.

29 MvO gouverneur B.C.C.M.M. van Suchtelen 1936.

30 Claver 2006; 357,358; SP 8-12-1941.

31 Wahid 2013: 9; Dick H. 1993: 4–6.

Until 1918 the colonial government sold such rights: to operate markets; collect taxes and tolls; the monopoly to sell opium and alcohol; to exploit pawn houses and gaming houses. These were sold to the highest bidder, usually a rich Chinese merchant. Most of these revenue farms in the province of the East Coast of Sumatra were abolished after the First World War. The distribution of the monopolies and revenue farms rested on agreements among different participants cooperating in a kongsi. The highest bidder, backed by two guarantors, took it all. The highest bidders were often local Chinese officers, who in their capacity as leaders of the ethnic group, were in a perfect position to obtain the monopoly or revenue farm.

Revenue farms usually concerned indirect taxes. At a time when many colonies did not yet have a fully developed bureaucratic system it was the revenue system which made collecting taxes possible. The system was convenient as the government only had to collect the money from just one person rather than from individuals.³² There were such constructs for import and export taxes, the operation of markets, slaughterhouses, pawn houses, gambling houses, to build roads and to distribute rice and *arak* (locally brewed liquor). The holder of a monopoly had the exclusive right to sell products to the customers. Opium was the most important monopoly item. In the British and French colonies in the 1860s and 1870s, the monopolies provided 30% to 50% of the colonies' incomes. In Siam (Thailand), which was not a colony but an independent state, opium provided 20% of the total government income in 1905–1906.³³ It is estimated that at least 10% of the state incomes in the colonies in South East Asia originated from opium.³⁴ In the Netherlands Indies the monopolies provided an average 22% of the total income between 1826 and 1895, with opium being the most profitable.³⁵ In East Sumatra, besides opium, other important farms were the gambling, liquor, pawn house and salt monopolies. Each district of the province of East Coast of Sumatra (Deli, Serdang, Langkat, Asahan, Bengkalis, Simeloengoen and the Karo highlands),³⁶ had its own revenue farms. However, there were also farms that covered the total province. The opium monopoly in the province of the East Coast of Sumatra was abolished in 1912 and replaced by the so-called *regie systeem* (control system) whereby the local government itself sold opium.

32 Rush 1990: 20.

33 Claver 2006: 168, 169.

34 Foster IIAS March 2005: 13.

35 Claver 2006: 169.

36 Vleming 1926: 227.

3.2.1. Opium

The use of opium in Asia was widespread and had a long history. Marsden wrote in 1811 that on Sumatra the Indigenous people liked to smoke opium, just as many other oriental people.³⁷ The opium selling via monopolies in the Netherlands Indies goes back to the VOC period.³⁸ From 1809 opium monopolies were publicly auctioned on Java. The farmer paid for the right to hold the monopoly and bought the opium from the government, which imported the raw product from abroad. The farmer in his turn processed the opium and distributed it at the specially designated opium selling places. The selling of opium in East Sumatra was farmed out per district. The conditions of the revenue farms were published in the *Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië*. (State Gazette of the Netherlands Indies).³⁹ It was obvious that a farmer tried to realize the largest possible sales. There were two sorts of opium, pure refined opium *candu* (*tjandoe*) and used opium scraped from used pipes called *djitjing*. The poor, who could not afford this smoked the *djitjing* residue, the so called *samseng*.⁴⁰

The colonial government set the retail prices of processed opium, and also controlled the quality of the product. The opium trade was therefore an officially recognized business but controlled by the colonial government.⁴¹ For the government, opium was initially not a very controversial commodity, the monopolies were legal, auctions were held in public, the monopoly holder and his kongsi publicly known, as was the amount paid. An opium monopoly never gave problems for those involved on the selling side. For them it was a safe business, which did not have any negative image. This was stressed by Tan Boen Djin, son of Tan Tang Ho, who claimed that during colonial times an opium monopoly was not considered a bad affair, but a commodity business as normal as any other.⁴²

Opium was a popular product.⁴³ It was used to relieve all sorts of pain, against fever, malaria and other tropical diseases. It was also said that, if properly used, one gained strength from opium. It was a pleasure to smoke opium, one felt relaxed and it made people feel good. It also stimulated sexual feelings, therefore there were almost always brothels

³⁷ Marsden 1811: 277.

³⁸ Baud, J.C. 'Proeve van een geschiedenis van den handel en het gebruik van opium in Nederlandsch-Indië', in: *Bijdragen Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 1, 1853: 88; Van Vugt 1985: 38.

³⁹ In the *Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië* (SvNI) a description is presented on opium selling places, opium dens, quality of opium, transport, packing, quantity and period or terms of farming out. Also fines in case of forgery and fraud are given which can be amounts up to fl.10,000. (SvNI 1885, no. 167). Adaptations about specific regions in East Sumatra outside Deli district, (SvNI 1893, no 41) (SvNI 1899, no. 67); about transport (SvNI 1899 no. 204); about fees (SvNI 1905 no. 338); about inspection (SvNI 1905 no. 494; SvNI 1909 II no. 185+ SvNI 1910 II no. 434).

⁴⁰ DC 10-9-1931.

⁴¹ Marsden 1811: 277; Vanvugt 1985: 136; Jansen *Vreemde Oosterlingen*: 58; Rush 1990: 25,30; SP 29-3-1915; Wu 1999: 47.

⁴² Interview Tan Boen Djin 22-8-2000.

⁴³ Somerset Maugham, W. *Collected Short Stories*, volume 4, Penguin Books 1978 'Mirage': 298, 299.

nearby opium dens. Opium smokers did not cause any problems, unlike the drunken alcohol users. More than anyone else, it was the Chinese who used opium. As life was so hard in China, many people were accustomed to using opium to forget daily misery. For a Chinese using opium was often a better solution to illness than western medicines.⁴⁴ Consequently, the irrefutably addictive character of the drug was denied both by consumers and the entrepreneurs selling it.

The wealthy Chinese opium farmers of South East Asia included the Tjong brothers from Medan, Tio Tiauw Siat and Loke Yew from Singapore, Tjia Tjoen Sen from Penang and Oei Tjong Ham and Be Biauw Tjoan from Semarang.⁴⁵ In appendix 3.5 an overview is presented of the main opium farmers in the East Coast of Sumatra province. We see that Tjong A Fie from 1894 till 1909 was involved in all opium monopolies. In the year 1889 he obtained an opium farm in Riau for the amount of fl.85,000 per month.⁴⁶ In 1894 he obtained the opium farm of the province of the East Coast of Sumatra for the amount of fl.110,000 per month, together with Tjong A Liang and Tio Tiauw Siat. In 1899 Tjong A Fie obtained the opium farm of East Sumatra, including Bengkalis, for an amount of fl.140,300 per month. In 1905 it was once more Tjong A Fie who got the opium monopoly for a period of three years for the entire region of Sumatra's Eastcoast for the amount of fl.161,500 per month. His guarantors were Khoe Tjauw Tiong and Tjong Jang (Yong) Hian. Four years later he obtained the farms in the sub-district Simeloengoen, Rokan and Kampar Kiri.⁴⁷ *De Sumatra Post* wrote about an opium auction in 1905:

*“In and around the district officer's office it was full. Some Europeans, many Chinese, all with seemingly indifferent faces. The game would begin.”*⁴⁸

The public auction at the resident's office was always a big event. It was announced in the papers beforehand and was afterwards described *in extenso* as to who obtained which monopoly and for what price. The fees paid for an opium monopoly were enormous. Obtaining a monopoly was seen as a prestigious achievement and as a token of personal success. After the monopoly had been sold, a contract was signed, by the farmer and two guarantors, the three together making a kongsi. This was necessary as the farmer had to have two guarantors to provide financial backing. When a monopoly holder went bankrupt, his kongsi members took over. Often there were several kongsi bidding for a monopoly, and

44 De Quincey, Thomas 1822: 7,8; Rush 1990: 34–36; Ong Eng Die 1943: 231, 233; *Koloniaal Weekblad* 22-11-1906.

45 Godley 1981: 23; Rush 1990: 94.

46 Levensbeschrijving Tjong A Fie, archief Javasche Bank. fl.85,000 in 1899 would be around €1, 172, 837.05 in 2016. <http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/calculate2-nl.php>

47 Levensbeschrijving Tjong A Fie; SP 19-9-1899; SP 19-1-1905; SP 24-2-1909.

48 SP 19-1-1905.

this was what the government preferred, as one kongsi should not always be on top.⁴⁹ If a farm made high profits it was good for the local colonial administration. The civil servant in charge might even receive approval from Batavia if his district generated much income from the opium farm. An opium farm could consist for instance of fifty opium selling places, employing a total of three hundred people. A farm might be sub-divided into several subdistricts, all of whom reported to the central farm manager. The farmer employed a manager and assistant managers, bookkeepers and salesmen at the opium dens.⁵⁰

Although the monthly payments made by the farmer were very high, still the farm could be profitable. It was important that the farmer always had sufficient stock so that he could serve his customers. If this was not the case, he could buy in extra supplies through the smuggling circuit. This was illegal but the controls on the part of the colonial authorities were not that tight, as the government was not that critical towards smuggling. It was also hard to find the smugglers owing to the many ports. Now and then a smuggled opium load was caught. In November 1896 for instance the Singapore sailing ship *Ban Tek Seng* was caught in Bantam on Java with a large amount of processed opium. The government official in charge reported that there were good reasons to suspect that the vice-consul general of China in Singapore, formerly residing in Batavia, Tio Tiau Siat, was involved in this smuggling. Tio Tiau Siat was an uncle of the Tjong brothers and their foremost business partner.⁵¹

From the end of the 19th century worldwide criticism arose against opium monopolies. Yet, in spite of this criticism, the government was still quite hesitant about changing the system. One consideration, besides loss of income, was that if opium were forbidden, people would start to drink alcohol instead which also had evil side effects. The saying was:

*Throw the opium devil out the window, and the drink devil walks in the door.*⁵²

It was thought that if the government would act correctly and regulate the use of opium and reduce smuggling, opium should be accepted as a necessary evil, rather than an appalling habit to be eradicated from society.

49 Rush 1990: 44, 46, 47; SP 13-9-1916.

50 Rush 1990: 55, 56

51 Brief van de hoofdinspecteur voor opium zaken, getekend door zijn vertegenwoordiger, inspecteur A.A. de Jongh, Batavia, dd. 21-11-1896. Nationaal Archief Den Haag, Ministerie van Koloniën 1800–1900, no.; Brief van de Nederlandse Consul in Singapore, J.J.M. Fleury, aan de Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken in Den Haag, dd. 22-12-1896 betreffende aanhaling van een partij opium. Nationaal Archief Den Haag, Ministerie van Koloniën 1800–1900, no.; Brief van Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, dd. 8-2-1897 getekend door De Secretaris Generaal L.H. Ruijgnaers aan de Minister van Koloniën betreffende aanhaling van een partij opium; Verslag van een reis naar Singapore, Penang, Sumatra's Noordkust en Westkust tot Padang. Augustus, sept. 1902. KPM Archief, nr. 260 Nationaal Archief; Rush 1990: 55, 62, 64, 67; Vanvugt 1985: 196; Wahid 2013: 192.

52 Rush 1990:141.

In the Netherlands Indies however, a radical change of thought occurred with the introduction of the so-called Ethical policy around 1900 which could no longer agree to the opium policy of the colonial administration. It was no longer deemed acceptable that the government publicly sold a product which was proven to be addictive and detrimental to the health of its subjects. It is interesting to know that the article *Een ereschuld* (Debt of honor), which can be seen as the start of the Ethical policy, was written by the Dutch Indies lawyer C.T. van Deventer, who himself was one of the most famous defenders of opium cases in the 1880s and had made a fortune from them.⁵³ On his return to the Netherlands van Deventer entered into politics and started to design alternatives for the opium monopolies.⁵⁴ During the 19th century anti-opium novels had already appeared. In 1822 Thomas de Quincy's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* was published, in which the dark side of opium addiction was described in detail. In 1886 in the Netherlands Indies, *Baboe Dalima* appeared, a social criticism comparable to Eduard Douwes Dekker's *Max Havelaar*. Another anti-opium novel was *Een Kètjoegeschiedenis* (A bandit's tale), by the medical doctor I. Groneman.⁵⁵ In these books both the Dutch government and the Chinese opium farmers who exploited the poor people were criticized. The Chinese themselves, more and more thought the habit unacceptable and old fashioned. It did not fit any more in modern Chinese society; opium use was seen as a symbol of backwardness. As a result of all this, rehabilitation clinics were established to stop the use of opium. In British Malaya (Malaysia) the Selangor Anti Opium Society was established in 1905. International attempts were made to reduce opium use and smuggling via conferences in 1909 in Shanghai, and in 1912 in Den Haag.⁵⁶

From 1894 on experiments were made with the *opium regie*. In this system the government took over the entire process, from import as raw material until the marketing of the final product. In 1904 this system was introduced in Java and later in the rest of the archipelago. The farming out of opium monopolies stopped in Java in 1904 and in East Sumatra in April 1912.⁵⁷ Thereafter the government sold its self-refined opium directly without Chinese kongsi as monopoly holders. However, opium remained available for local customers, and

53 C. Th. van Deventer (1857–1915) published in 1899 the article *Een Ereschuld* (Debt of honor) in *De Gids* (The Guide).

54 Claver 2006: 176; Rush 1990: 127.

55 Quincey De, *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* 1821; Perelaer, *Baboe Dalima*. Opium Roman 1889.; Douwes Dekker. (Multatuli) *Max Havelaar, of de Koffiveilingen van de Nederlandsche Handel Maatschappij* 1881; Groneman, *Een Kètjoegeschiedenis* 1887.

56 Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States Opium Commission. Proceedings of the commission appointed to inquire into matters relating to the use of opium in the Straits Settlements and the federated Malay States. Volume III. Government Printing Office, Singapore, 1908; Rush 1990:141, 127, 255; Claver 2006: 176; SP 26-3-1900; Information Thio Han Cheng; SP 1-3-1909, 11-3-1909, 1-3-1912; Van Vugt 1985: 357, 358.

57 Opium regie introduction at 1-4-1912 (SOK SvNI 1912 no. 235, 299, 566, 595). Preparation, transport, export. (SvNI 1912 no. 536) packing. (SvNI 1912 no. 542)

in that sense, the situation did not change much. Most opium users in the Netherlands Indies were Chinese; in East Sumatra most of the Chinese were *singkehs*.

Under the opium regie the legal fabrication and selling of the opium was in the hands of the government.⁵⁸ Opium was packed in copper tubes of the brand ‘*Leeuw, aardbol en slang*’ (Lion, globe and snake) written in Chinese characters.⁵⁹ The sales took place at official sites to holders of a special license.⁶⁰ There was even a special Malay Journal for the employees of the opium regie named *Soewara Regie*.⁶¹ That opium was such an important commodity in East Sumatra was shown by the fact that here were 300 selling points. This was due to the fact that the thousands of Chinese coolies who worked on the plantations used opium. There were also Chinese centres like the fishing village of Bagan Si Api Api where much opium was consumed. Despite the introduction of the opium regie, the income from opium continued to rise. This was in defiance of the Ethical policy which intended to do away with this social evil.⁶² The government official for Chinese affairs on East Sumatra, A.G. de Bruin, disapproved of the steep price rises of opium as the heavy addicts would continue using it, and in order to consume sold everything they had. The gradual abolition of opium and a gradual rise in price became the new device of policy. But as prices rose, the government ended up making more profit. Nevertheless, the introduction of the opium regie in 1912 was a step in the right direction, according to De Bruin.⁶³

In the beginning, the change of policy with regard to opium was not accepted everywhere in colonial circles. *De Sumatra Post* even wrote that if the opium would be abolished in East Sumatra it would be disastrous for the province, as no Chinese would be willing to work as coolies on the plantations any more. In 1912 the opium regie was introduced and in 1920 an amendment was made introducing a license system. This system attempted to reduce the use of opium by the registration of all users. The policy was that only limited amounts of opium could be given out to addicts, thereby gradually reducing their consumption. Only registered users could get hold of a permit, and then only for a certain amount of opium. Because many people did not want to be known as opium users, they used a go-between to buy the opium for them. Consequently, many poor coolies without any means were registered as users, paying over fl.200 every month, a situation that the system had been designed to avoid.⁶⁴

58 *Indische Mercur*, 20-8-1907; Boomgaard & van Dijk, 322; Van Vugt 1985: 363; Jansen *Vreemde Oosterlingen*: 58; SP 29-3-1915; 25-8-1915; *Andalas* 22-4-1920; *Pewartar Deli* 8-8-1917, 17-3-1926; Wahid 2013: 151.

59 SP 3-4-1941, 15-7-1941.

60 Jansen *Vreemde Oosterlingen*: 58.

61 SP 3-11-1915.

62 SP 8-2-1912; 28-2-1912; *Indische Gids* 1914: I 28-30.

63 De Bruin 1918: 84, 86, 87; SP 29-3-1915, 4-5-1916.

64 SP 5-5-1916; *Indische Gids* 1919: II, 1042; SP 23-7-1921; *Indische Gids* 1919 I: 655.

In its first month, January 1912, the opium regie made over fl.400,000 in profits. Over the entire year of 1912, a total fl.4 million were spent on the purchase of opium on East Sumatra. Eight years later, in 1920, it had risen to fl.12 million.⁶⁵ So the opposite of what the opium regie was meant to achieve was taking place. In 1912, there were 53,617 Chinese coolies living in East Sumatra and in 1920, there were only 23,866.⁶⁶ In spite of the fact that there were less Chinese coolies the demand for opium rose from fl.4 million to fl.12 million. The reason for this must have been that besides the Chinese also many Javanese coolies on the plantations were opium users. A fact that should not be overlooked. All this inspired the journalist J.F. Scheltema in the *Bataviaasche Nieuwsblad* to accuse the government of hypocrisy and bad governance, because it had actually been stimulating the use of opium instead of discouraging it.⁶⁷ In 1913 in Batavia an *Anti-opium bond* (association) was established. The influential *Indische Gids* also strongly criticized the opium policy.⁶⁸ Because opium was such a valuable commodity there were many reports of theft and smuggling.⁶⁹ *De Sumatra Post* frequently reported on opium seizures.⁷⁰ In 1922 an opium recherche (detective force) was established in Medan.⁷¹

According to Tjong A Fie's daughter, Mrs. Lemye – Tjong Sze-yin, her father established separate organizations to arrange the opium, sugar, salt and rice monopolies.⁷² His involvement in opium was confirmed by the government officials who thanked Tjong A Fie, the last opium farmer before the reform in 1912, for his cooperation in introducing the opium regie in East Sumatra. Governor S. van der Plas said at Tjong A Fie's jubilee in 1916:

“Together with your as well meritorious brother Tjong Yong Hian you stood at the head of the important opium farm. The times were ripe for another policy and nowadays the government exploits the opium regie. You always fulfilled your duties as tax farmer towards the government with responsibility and with the transformation of the farms into the system of the opium regie you loyally cooperated although you lost considerable income with the new setup. In the past the now abolished system

65 SP 15-4-1912; SP 15-6-1912; SP 21-9-1912; Rush 1990: 237.

66 *Mededeelingen Handelsvereniging Medan*, 1931:90.

67 (SP 15-4-1912; SP 15-6-1912; SP 21-9-1912; DC 11-1-1921) Scheltema was convicted of slanderous writing towards the government and jailed for three months. Later on Scheltema moved to the U.S.A where he became a lecturer at Yale University from where he published another critical article in the *American Journal of Sociology*. (Rush 1990: 237).

68 SP 6-8-1913; *Indische Gids* 1919 I: 655; *Indische Gids*, 1920 II: 643.

69 SP 19-1-1918.

70 SP 23-7-1921; 15-1-1924; 11-2-1924; 14-2-1924; 20-2-1924; *Pewarta Deli* 15-2-1926; SP 30-6-1926; 14-7-1926; 26-7-1926; 25-8-1926; 11-9-1926; 17-12-1926; 23-12-1926; 5-4-1930; 6-6-1930; 20-7-1933; 3-8-1933; 5-9-1933; 25-2-1935; *Andalas* 29-1-1917.

71 SP 11-9-1926, 17-12-1926, 26-7-1926, 25-8-1926.

72 Interview Mrs. Lemye in Brussels on 13 March 1992 and in Westende at 12 and 13 June 1992.

of farming out monopolies gave the farmer an aura of power, influence and status. In your case, Major, since the abolishment of the farms all this has not declined. Yes, now that you invested the capital you accumulated with the farm system into the fruitful soil of Deli, I can say that your status has even risen."⁷³

After abolition of the opium farms, many opium traders in the Netherlands Indies went bankrupt, but not Tjong A Fie, who had already established new businesses and expanded his enterprises, especially into the plantation industry. Tjong A Fie was comparable to Oei Tjong Ham from Semarang who was also able to expand his business empire after the abolition of the monopolies.⁷⁴

From the end of the 1920s opium use on East Sumatra began to decline. There was a change in mentality among the younger Chinese who consumed less opium than the older generation. Around this time the income of the opium regime decreased to almost fl.8 million. The fact that many Chinese workers were sent home to China due to the economic crisis may also have played a role in the decline. In 1924 the League of Nations held an opium convention in Geneva. At that time Switzerland was the only European country which had signed but still not ratified the opium convention of 1912. Henceforth the control on the trade in narcotic drugs was still difficult. According to *De Sumatra Post*, Switzerland had economic interests in opium owing to the strong developed chemical industry in Basel.⁷⁵ Another such opium convention was held in 1931 in Bangkok. At this conference research results were presented from the Javanese doctor Pirngadi, who had started curing addicts in 1930 in the Chinese hospital in Medan. The results were surprisingly successful because some cured patients publicly expressed their thanks in the daily papers. By March 1930 he had already treated 400 to 425 opium addicts at the Chinese hospital with good results.⁷⁶

3.2.2. Other tax farms: gambling, liquor and pawn houses

Gambling

Until 1918 the gambling monopoly in the province of the East Coast of Sumatra was sold to the highest bidder, generally a rich Chinese merchant.⁷⁷ In fact the use of opium and gambling was seen by the Dutch in the province as a means to keep morale up and upheavals

⁷³ SP 13-9-1916.

⁷⁴ Rush 1990: 239.

⁷⁵ SP 16-1-1924.

⁷⁶ SP 19-3-1930; 28-8-1930; 3-11-1930; 29-4-1933; 3-10-1933; 7-1-1933; 15-10-1930; 19-3-1930; 28-7-1930.

⁷⁷ Gaming farm conditions (SvNI 1885, no. 167). Adaptations about specific regions in East Sumatra outside Deli district, (SvNI 1893, no 41) for the region of Tamiang (SvNI 1899, no. 67)

down. If the coolies gambled their wages away, after three years they would not have money left for the journey home. Consequently, they would have to sign a new contract. This was fortunate for the planters because they did not have to recruit new workers. In 1876 J.T. Cremer, former chief administrator of the Deli Maatschappij, wrote a pamphlet with the title: *Een woord uit Deli tot de Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal* (A word from Deli towards the House of Commons of the Netherlands) in which he condemned gambling.⁷⁸ However, at the same time the plantation companies, which he himself represented, took advantage of the situation. On one hand gambling was condemned, on the other hand it was stimulated. The government also held double standards as it wished to curb games of chance, but at the same time strove to make money from it, according to the *Koloniaal Weekblad* in 1906.⁷⁹ The farming-out of the gambling monopoly was abolished around 1900 on Java, but not before 1918 on East Sumatra.

See Appendix 3.6. for more on the gaming monopoly. Apart from Tjong A Fie, his business partner Oei Soei Boe and the later Major Khoe Tjin Tek were involved. They had a competitor from Penang, however. This was Khoo Siau Eew, who was to be the last monopoly holder in East Sumatra. Tjong A Fie held the gaming concession for the province of the East Coast of Sumatra, excluding Bengkalis, for a period of one year and three months from 1899 until 1900, for an amount of fl.44,030. Tjong A Fie's partner in business Oei Soei Boe held a gambling monopoly for the districts Simeloengoen and Karolanden in 1909. This monopoly was hardly profitable, although Oei Soei Boe only paid fl.120 per year for the concession. For two years the last concession was farmed out to Khoe Tjian Tiong for an annual price of fl.720. Tjong A Fie's successor as Major of the Chinese, Khoe Tjin Tek, also held a gambling permit for a certain period, according to his grandson.⁸⁰ The last auction for East Sumatra in its entirety was in February 1917 for a period of one year. As said before, the highest subscriber was Khoo Siau Eew from Penang, paying an amount of fl.60,600 per month or fl.727,200 per year. This was fl.100,000 more than in 1916.⁸¹

Although the gambling farm had been abolished, gambling, just like the use of opium, continued, albeit under different regulations. Under the new regulations in 1918 gaming was henceforth allowed in closed clubs and societies with introduced guests. The clubs had to register their members.⁸² If Chinese people wanted to gamble, permission had to be

78 De Bruin 1918: 89.

79 *Koloniaal Weekblad* 22-11-1906.

80 The government requested Tjong A Fie's advice concerning the gamble farm in 1915. (Mailrapport no. 376/15. Letter 5-1-1915. ARA 1900-1963); Besluit Gouverneur Generaal. Buitenzorg, 16-2-1915, ARA, Min. v. Kol. 1900-1963, doosnr.); Extract uit het register der besluiten van den Gouverneur Generaal van Nederlandsch Indie. (ARA, Min. van Kol. 1900-1963, Mailrapport 415/17; SP 19-9-1899; 24-2-1909; Information Eddy Khoe Hong Kong 1991; letter Khoe Khoen Hoei 1992; SP 8-3-1915.

81 SP 15-2-1917.

82 SP 10-1-1919.

obtained from the Chinese officer, who in turn reported to the government.⁸³ One should not be surprised that illegal gambling often took place, in kongsi houses amongst others. If there were enough persons present the game started; guards were installed on the first floor; if the police arrived the gamblers would leave the house in groups of two and three and the police could not prove anything. The tandils of several plantations rented a house every month in the Chinese quarter for gambling purposes. In 1920 the Governor of the province of the East Coast of Sumatra made a new proposal about gambling restrictions: only on certain days for certain ethnic groups was gambling allowed.⁸⁴ On Chinese feast days, only the Chinese were allowed to gamble. Public gambling was allowed only in certain places. The governor said that it would be very difficult to completely abolish gambling because Chinese coolies always wanted to gamble. On the plantations gambling licenses were given out for the organizers.

The gambling problem was also discussed in the Town Council. The Chinese member Gan Hoat Soei proposed forbidding Chinese and Indigenous children below the age of sixteen from entering the billiard houses where much of the gambling took place. Even in 1926 new gambling licenses were still being given out.⁸⁵ As there was so much money involved it was no surprise that thefts of gambling money regularly occurred in the Chinese clubs. Yet these thefts were generally not reported because they were connected to illegal gambling.⁸⁶ According to A.G. De Bruin, gambling was in the veins of the South Chinese coolies.⁸⁷ After the Chinese revolution of 1912, when pigtails were no longer required for males in the home country, some coolies in Sumatra had their shorn pigtails regrown, believing this would create more luck at the gaming tables. Coolies sometimes gambled their entire annual wages away, thus compelling them to sign new contracts. For such signing they received an amount of fl.30. To protect the coolies Major Tjong A Fie had initiated a system whereby coolies had part of their wages directly sent home to China. Hereafter the planters committee and Major Tjong A Fie maintained this allotment system free of charge. To get an impression of the amounts that were spent on gambling, head tandils of the Deli Company sometimes played with cheques of three and four thousand guilders. There even was one tandil, who lost fl.12,000 in a single evening. In the 1920s and 1930s there were many reports about illegal gambling and the police became more and more effective in catching violators after gambling raids.⁸⁸

83 *Andalas* 5-9-1918.

84 (*Andalas* 3-8-1920) This was Governor H.J. Grijzen.

85 SP 6-1-1919; *Andalas*, 3-8-1920; Gemeentebled, letter 10-9-1923; SP 24-6-1926.

86 *Andalas* 24-12, 28-12 -1918; *Andalas* 7-5-1920.

87 A.G. De Bruin was government adviser for Chinese affairs from 1899 till 1918 in Medan.

88 (De Bruin 1918: 119; Langereis in Indië, April 1918–April 1919: 599; *Andalas*, 29-7-1920) In 1926 in a house in the Cantonstraat (Jl. Surabaya) twenty-five people were arrested, rounded up with a long rope, surrounded by police officers and taken to the police office for interrogation. (SP 3-11-1926) Raids occurred

Liquor

Strong spirits like Dutch gin or jenever, whiskey, cognac and liqueurs were also sold via the monopoly system.⁸⁹ This was sharply criticized by *De Sumatra Post*, which pointed out that it kept prices high, privileged the kongsi and enriched the government. In the same article the paper described the auction of the liquor monopoly in 1900 as an imposing spectacle:

“Three civil servants were sitting behind a green table surrounded by a wide circle of Chinese in formal dress, while the only thing one heard was the monotonous announcing of constantly higher and higher rising figures.”

The result of the auction was that the liquor farm in the province of the East Coast of Sumatra from 1 April 1900 until late March 1901 and from 1 April 1901 until the end of March 1903, was farmed out for respectively fl.20,020 and fl.20,120 monthly. Compared to the year before when fl.12,675 and fl.15,000 were paid, this was fl.5,000 more than the previous year. Highest bidder was the Major of the Chinese Tjong Yong Hian.⁹⁰ As this auction also meant a change of farmers, the former liquor farm kongsi now had to sell its spirits for the old prices before start of the new term. One month later the *De Sumatra Post* commented:

“It is, however, quite a ridiculous situation with this liquor farm. An unhealthy market, not just because the paitje or the cognac is so unhealthy, but the fluctuating see-saw prices of the article are even worse than the worst instability of those who use the article.”⁹¹

In appendix 3.7 concerning the liquor farm between 1900 and 1915, again familiar names appear like Tjong Yong Hian, Tan Tang Ho and Tjong A Fie. Tan Tang Ho of the Seng Hap firm obtained a contract for East Sumatra in the year 1897.⁹² In 1909 again Tjong Yong Hian obtained the small liquor farm of the district Simeloengoen and Karolanden for one year for fl.360, and for two years for fl.1,332.⁹³ His brother Tjong A Fie had the farm for the Medan

regularly in the Chinese quarter in Medan. (SP 22-1-1930; 4-2-1935) fl.12,000 in 1918 would be € 77,256 in 2013. <http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/calculate2.php>

89 The right of brewing, selling and levying tax for import of strong liquors, conditions license holders (SvNI 1885, no. 167) with reference to (SvNI 1854 no. 75); specific regions in East Sumatra (SvNI 1893, no 41); periods of the farm (SvNI 1897 no. 180); for the region of Tamiang (SvNI 1899 no. 294); (SP 24-3-1900).

90 SP 21-2-1900.

91 SP 24-3-1900.

92 (Wright 1909: 585) Tjong Yong Hian was for many years the farmer of spirits in the district and after him his brother Tjong A Fie. In these years Tjong A Fie also made a contract for the spirit farm with Tan Tang Ho. (Interview Tan Boen Djin 22-8-2000)

93 SP 24-2-1909.

municipality in 1915, when the monopoly was officially abolished. From then a new liquor ordinance was issued. To get an impression of liquor consumption at the plantations, by far the most widely sold local liquor was *arak*, consumed by Chinese coolies. In general, there was a turnover of around 500 liters a month per plantation. At one plantation there were around 1000 coolies, so each person consumed on average two bottles a month. As there were also female workers who probably did not drink *arak*, the consumption by male workers should have been a little over two bottles. The planters themselves drank imported liquor, mostly of European origin.⁹⁴ As *arak* was expensive, it was produced in many illegal distilleries.⁹⁵

Pawn houses

The right to operate pawnshops in the Netherlands Indies was rented out just as the opium, gambling, salt, and liquor monopolies.⁹⁶ Through pawn broking people could borrow money, mostly for short term in small loans, in exchange for goods. Most of the customers of a pawn shop belonged to the poor working class. In Medan, however, small and middle-class businessmen as well as European planters visited the pawnshops now and then. The system of pawnshops (in Dutch *lommerd*) in the Netherlands Indies goes back to the 18th century, when a pawnshop was opened in 1746 in Batavia. Since 1814 the pawnshops were farmed out. It wasn't until 1870 that a license system was introduced.⁹⁷ From then on only licensed pawnshop holders were allowed to operate a pawnshop. Practically all the pawnshop holders were Chinese.

From 1889 the first discussions took place to abolish the pawnshop monopolies and only operate state-run pawnshops for better control.⁹⁸ According to the State Gazette of 1891 the farmer was allowed to charge for pawns of 50 cents or less, 1 cent for 10 days, that is 73% per year. For 20 cents he could ask 102% yearly. For pawns from fl.25 to fl.50, 5% per month, that is 60% annually. For pawns of fl.50 to fl.75, 3% per month which is 48% yearly; for fl.75 to fl.100, 3% per month, which is 36% per year. The maximum amount for a pawn was fl.100. The majority of the people who came to the pawn house received less than fl.25 for their pawn, so we can say that there was an average interest of 60%.⁹⁹ The valuable pawns were bought up by the pawn kongsi just at or a little above the amount of borrowed money

94 SP 11-2-1915; 20-3-1915; 22-2-1915; 16-2-1915.

95 SP 2-2-1924; 18-2-1924; 20-2-1924; 12-11-1926; 18-11-1926; 27-2-1930; 11-1-1933; 15-6-1933; 11-12-1933; 5-1-1935; 4-2-1935; 5-12-1941; 29-1-1942.

96 Pawn houses conditions (SvNI 1880, no. 17; SvNI 1885, no. 167) specific regions in East Sumatra (SvNI 1893, no 41); for the region of Tamiang (SvNI 1899, no. 67); exploitation (SvNI 1905 no. 490).

97 Furnivall, Economic development 1934: 2.

98 Furnivall, Economic development 1934:2; Cator 1936: 20; SP 1-11-1900.

99 SvNI 1891 no. 164; DC 6-5-1896.

for the pawn so that for the pawnbroker little or nothing was left. These cheaply bought pawns were later sold again in special Chinese toko's for a good profit. *De Sumatra Post* suggested reorganizing the pawn houses and to have them operated by the government or municipality.¹⁰⁰ Pawn documents were also traded for money by Chinese kongsi's.¹⁰¹

Between 1900 and 1906 very successful experiments were made with state-run pawnshops. In the experiments the goods were better stored, loans were paid without difficulties, while it was easier to redeem the goods. The maximum interest that was charged was 18%. In case of unredeemed pledges sold, the surplus was given back to the pawnner. The government official who was in charge of the government pawnshop was not allowed to accept stolen goods. In case the property later turned out to be stolen, the official had to give proof that he had been unaware of the illegal origin. State-run pawnshops were established first on Java; by 1907 there were over 30 state-run pawnshops. In 1913 an association of pawn house employees was established. In 1916 the system of state-run pawnshops was introduced in most parts of the archipelago. In the province of the East Coast of Sumatra, however, the right to operate pawnshops continued up until 1924.¹⁰² As is shown in appendix 3.8 the last pawn house farm was in the hands of Chang Pu Ching.¹⁰³ Looking at some figures of the pawnshops before 1924 we see that during the fasting month more people went to pawn out goods. In 1913 more than a thousand pawns per day were pawned out during the *poeasa*, which came to over 30,000 pawns in a month. On normal days this was half, on average 500 per day or 15,000 per month.¹⁰⁴

3.2.3. Bagan Si Api Api and the salt monopoly

Besides the opium-, pawn house-, liquor- and gambling monopolies, there was the very profitable salt monopoly of the entire province of the East Coast of Sumatra, including Bagan Si Api Api.¹⁰⁵ The rights to import and sell salt (for industry) as well the right to collect taxes on salted fish products were farmed out to the salt farmer. Bagan Si Api Api was located at the Straits of Melaka, some 500 km south of Medan. Medan entrepreneurs were active in this business too. Tjong A Fie had salt farm interests as well as his uncle Tio Tiauw Siat and Tan Tang Ho. The salt farming for the fishing industry in Bagan Si Api Api around the year 1900 generated profits of over fl.100,000 a year. By that time Bagan Si Api Api was the

100 DC 6-5-1896; SP 7-12-1900; SP 21-6-1899; DC 5-12-1900.

101 SP 4-2-1924.

102 SvNI 1905 no 490; SvNI 1924 no. 539.

103 SP 4-4-1921.

104 SP 5-2-1913; 28-8-1913; Furnivall, *Economic development* 1934: 3.

105 The right to import and sell salt and levy taxes on dried fish. (SvNI 1885, no. 167) Adaptations the right to import and sell salt and levy taxes on *trassi* and dried shrimps at toll office Bagan Si Api Api. (SvNI 1873 no 35; SvNI 1899 no. 274; SvNI 1912 no. 4).

most important fishing harbour of the Netherlands Indies. Members of the Medan elite such as Tjong A Fie, Khoe Tjin Tek and Tan Tang Ho were involved in the fishing industry as farmers of the salt monopoly. As financiers of the fishing vessels the aforementioned held key positions in the salted fish industry of Bagan Si Api Api.¹⁰⁶ Appendix 3.9 has the overview.

The *Koloniaal verslag* of 1887 mentioned Bagan Si Api Api at the mouth of the Rokan river as just a village inhabited by a few Chinese settlers. The development of this settlement was quite astonishing as two years later, in 1889, it was recorded that 4,000 Chinese were living there. Bagan Si Api Api, in Bengkalis, one of the districts on the East Coast of Sumatra, ultimately became the most important centre for the fishing industry in the entire Netherlands Indies. It fully depended on Chinese migrants. It was a concentration of both coastal and high-seas fishing, culminating in the production of dried and salted fish as well as shrimps processed into *trasi*, mostly meant for export.¹⁰⁷ Dry salted fish or *trasi* could be kept for long periods, was cheap and nutritious and therefore a crucial element in the Indigenous cuisine.

There was no intermingling between the Chinese and Indigenous population in Bagan Si Api Api. The local Malays originally lived further upstream along the Rokan river. Transport in Bagan Si Api Api was only along waterways. An important person in the fishing industry was the *tauke banliao*, the owner of the place where the fish were dried. He provided advance payments for the fishermen and bought the fish and shrimp at a fixed price. Most *tauke banliao* were not rich and therefore had to borrow money. As there were no banks or financial institutions, they had to borrow money from the salt farmers, located in Medan. The richness of the fishing grounds of Bagan Si Api-Api was due to its natural location. Very strong currents running from Sabang to Singapore guided the fish to the mouth of the Rokan river, which was nearly twelve kilometers wide. With low tide the fish drifted again to sea, where the fishermen positioned the *djermals* to catch the fish and shrimp on a one-meter deep mudbank, ideal for fishing. Deep-sea fishing enabled larger species of fish to be caught. Salt was essential for processing and conservation: 12 to 14 percent of the weight of fish needed salt in order to prevent deterioration.¹⁰⁸ No wonder that the salt monopoly was of the utmost importance for Bagan Si Api Api. In 1895 the salt monopoly yielded a total amount of fl.8,6 million and was exploited by kongsies from Penang, Singapore and Penang.¹⁰⁹ Tan Tang Ho obtained a contract for the salt farm in Bagan Si Api Api around 1900.¹¹⁰

106 SP 30-6-1909; 13-1-1916; 15-2-1917; 4-4-1921; Wright 1909: 581, 582

107 SP 28-10-1936; Vleming 1926: 235; Phoa Liang Gie 1936: 119.

108 For 100 *picol* of fish, 1,500 kilos of salt was needed. (ARA, Min. Van Koloniën, 1900-1963, doos nr. 795, no. 1015/3. Report of the Resident of Sumatra's Eastcoast, Ballot, Medan, 23-2-1909; Cator 1936: 212; Vleming 1926: 236; SP 3-5-1905; SP 30-6-1909, SP 28-10-1936; 24-6-1941)

109 Diehl 1993: 230; Wahid 2103: 110.

110 Wright 1909: 585; *Andalas* 19-10-1918.

The Chinese fishermen worked in kongsies. They arrived poor in Bagan Si Api Api and usually started with money advanced by the tax farmer. Without him they would never have the capital to start their businesses. Once in business they were obliged to buy the salt needed for the preservation of the fish from the farmer, who was supposed to deliver cheap salt under all circumstances. In 1904, 26 million kg of salted fish was exported to the Straits Settlements and Java. A salt farmer could make up to fl.12,000 per month. Although such sums seemed quite extreme, the government did not intervene because it seemed to be the best way to keep Bagan Si Api Api's fishing industry going. The salt farmer financed both the fishermen and, after salting, took care of the transportation of the fish to Java. The salt farmer also prevented the salt being smuggled. There was even the case of a salt farmer whose daughter married the son of the biggest salt smuggler. In 1905 around 2,500 Chinese in Bagan Si Api Api lived practically completely dependent upon the salted fishing industry. The system of the salt farming looked like the best solution, for the fishermen, the Netherlands Indies government and the salt farmer. In a report from 1905 by a Dutchman, Hendrik Colijn, who later became Dutch prime minister, we read about the principles of this extremely profitable business:

“If the Government wants profitable business, then don't abolish the salt farming. If the Government does not allow the Chinese capitalist to participate in the salt farming, then it slaughters the goose with the golden eggs.”¹¹¹

In 1912 more than 40,000 *pikol* of fish were exported every month via Singapore to Java. Hundreds of Chinese junks with high bows and wide, square sails departed for Singapore. But during World War I the prices of salt, poles and nets, coolie wages and other costs were on the rise. In addition, the mouth of the Rokan river silted up, which forced the fishermen to move the djerimals to other spots. At the same time the price for trasi fell. Consequently, many tauke banliaos went bankrupt. The fishermen themselves had become financially stronger and formed small kongsies for selling their marine produce to the traders. By 1916 a people's credit bank, Bagan Madjoe (Bagan move forward), was established for the development of the fishing industry. In Batavia the traders from Bagan Si Api Api established their own agency, the Keng Lam kongsi, that had the monopoly on sales of fish and trasi from Bagan Si Api Api. All the above showed that the fishermen became less dependent on the salt farmer. The salt farms were finally abolished in 1918.¹¹²

111 Medan, 3-8-1905, Kapitein (Captain) Colijn. ARA, Ministerie van Koloniën, 1900-1963. Doosnr. 795.

A few years later the same kapitein Colijn was appointed as minister of war. (Ministerie van Kolonien, toegangsnr. 2.10.36.04. Nr. 795, 21-1-1911; Straits Times 5-4-1936); In 1909 the profit for the kongsie of the salt farm was f 60,000. (SP 30-6-1909).

112 Wahid 2013: 167; Vleming 1926: 237, 238; Cator 1936: 214; DC 10-9-1931.

In 1918 the *Zout regie* (state salt monopoly) was established in Bagan Si Api Api. Retail selling of salt to the fishermen on Bagan Si Api Api was now for a fixed price through the company Tjing Tong. This was a limited liability company with the dealers from Bagan Si Api Api as shareholders. At Bagan Si Api Api the head warehouse keeper was a government official of the *Zout regie* who also used to pay the company Tjin Tong. In Belawan the Major of the Chinese of Medan, Khoe Tjin Tek, took care of the salt distribution in the same way and under the same conditions as the Tjin Tong company in Bagan Si Api Api. In the 1920s the state salt monopoly was everywhere on Sumatra, except in Aceh, where the people produced their own salt, and in Djambi.¹¹³ Java was the main market for the Bagan Si Api Api fish where, due to the crisis of 1929, purchasing power declined. At the same time smoked Japanese fish was sold in Java at 10% lower prices than Bagan Si Api Api salted fish. Many fishermen could not make a living anymore and turned to agriculture. Shortly before the Japanese invasion the harbour silted up, which forced ships to anchor three miles from the coast.¹¹⁴

3.3. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Medan 1910–1942

From the beginning of the twentieth century Chinese Chambers of Commerce were founded throughout South East Asia. Their primary goal was to promote national trade; secondly, they were intended to tighten the links between the Chinese abroad and those Chinese still in the motherland. Between 1902 and 1911 the Imperial Manchu dynasty stimulated the establishment of these Chinese Chambers of Commerce, or *Tiong Hoa Siang Boe*. The most common name was *Tiong Hwa (Hoa) Siang Hwee*, (*Siang Hwui*), which in the Netherlands Indies was pronounced in the Hokkian way as *Siang Hwee*.¹¹⁵

The Chamber of Commerce or *Siang Hwee* was a kind of umbrella organization covering all sorts of professions and trade organizations. The initiative to establish the first Chamber outside China was that of the China's Consul General in Singapore, Tio Tiauw Siat, who founded the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce in 1906. In the same period Chambers were also founded in Hong Kong and Shanghai. Tio Tiauw Siat cooperated closely with the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce in China. The first *Siang Hwee* in the Netherlands Indies was established in 1907 in Batavia, and in Medan a *Siang Hwee* was founded in 1910. The Chambers in the Netherlands Indies were active not only in the field of commerce, but also in social community affairs like arranging the legacies for deceased Chinese and their offspring.¹¹⁶ The *Siang Hwee*'s were established to create a more structural and permanent

113 Cator 1936: 214; DC 25-3-1929; 26-3-1929; Williams 1952: 41.

114 DC 10-9-1931; Cator 1936: 214; SP 24-6-1941.

115 Ong Eng Die 1943: 223; Willmott 1960: 27.

116 (Tjiiook Liem 2009: 30) When in the 20th century Dutch law became applicable for Foreign Orientals,

cooperation between China and the Chinese firms in the Netherlands Indies. Cooperation between Chinese and Netherlands Indies trade was said to be the first concern, but in practice this proved to be less important. In fact, the Siang Hwee'-s were designed primarily as agencies of the Chinese government. After the revolution of 1912 the character of the Chambers of Commerce nevertheless remained the same. From the viewpoint of China, they were semi-official bodies, which was shown by the fact that, before Chinese consuls were officially allowed in the Netherlands Indies, namely in 1911, the Chambers gave out passports and functioned as representatives of Chinese citizens in many ways. They also had arbitration powers in cases of trade disputes.¹¹⁷

When a high-level Chinese person like Tio Tiauw Siat visited a Chinese settlement in the Netherlands Indies, he was received with much respect and honour. The more important the mission the higher the rank of the person sent to represent China and the more pomp and glamour he received. Such missions in general were conducted via the local Chinese Chamber of Commerce. The newspapers paid attention to them in advance, stating who was coming and why. Missions were written about in more detail, if they were for special projects, how much money they needed and how the finances were obtained. For the people who gave large donations, an official title of high rank was offered by the Chinese government. The minimal amount of one million *yuan* would give a title of the fifth rank while the title of the first rank, viscount, was bestowed on those who had raised 20 million yuan.¹¹⁸

Until 1912 the Siang Hwee's functioned as consulates. Every Chamber received an official seal from the Chinese government for important correspondence. Because of their semi-official status the Siang Hwee's were held in high esteem. Fundraising in case of natural disasters, for example a flooding in China, was an important activity for the chambers. The overseas Chinese were considered commercially successful and rich. The fundraising also had a political function, as many overseas Chinese helped through their donations to finance the Chinese revolution. On the other hand, through the Siang Hwee Chinese businessmen abroad could have their voices heard and communicate with the western business society and the colonial governments. As government regulations and laws in Southeast Asia became more numerous, the Chinese Chambers of Commerce became more important. Through them the overseas Chinese could act on behalf of their businesses. The Siang Hwee'-s were in close contact with the Chinese government, but it was not clear how far they were controlled by China. The Siang Hwee'-s gave economic information to their members. Locally it was their aim to support the Chinese traders in difficult circumstances, to mediate disputes between members, to support investors, and to assist poor Chinese who wanted to

courts for European and Foreign Orientals took care of the estates of orphan minors and unregistered legacies. (Gonggrijp 1934: 1523, 1524)

117 Yong 1992: 24; Ong Eng Die 1943: 223; *Andalas*, 17-3-1921; Willmott 1960: 27; Moerman 1932: 52.

118 Chang 1981: 56; Godley 1981: 133,155; Franke 1988: 149; Yen 1982: 225.

return to China. According to their statutes they had to be in connection with the Chinese government in Peking.¹¹⁹

In the year 1901 Tio Tiauw Siat of Singapore was appointed as head of the Chinese Chambers of Commerce in China and the *Nanyang*, as the countries in Southeast Asia were called. Tjong Yong Hian of Medan became honorary chairman appointed by his uncle Tio Tiauw Siat. Colonial Chinese tycoons such as Tio Tiauw Siat, Tjong Yong Hian and Tjong A Fie had overseas connections and were active internationally, although on a limited scale. The Chinese government was able through the Tjong brothers to establish a direct link with the rapidly growing Chinese population on Sumatra. Tjong Yong Hian was already influential in the board of agriculture, industry and commerce of the Peking government. It was logical that he became the first chairman of the newly established Medan Siang Hwee in 1910. After Tjong Yong Hian passed away in 1911 he was succeeded by his brother Tjong A Fie as Major of the Medan Chinese, automatically becoming the leading representative of the Chinese on East Sumatra. During the Chinese revolution in 1911 the activities of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce stopped temporarily.¹²⁰

Tjong A Fie passed away in 1921 and his successor as Major of the Chinese became the Hokkian Khoe Tjin Tek, who automatically became chairman of the Siang Hwee. Khoe Tjin Tek, however, thought it more appropriate to split these functions and he gave the position of chairman of the Siang Hwee, via a chosen procedure, to an elected member. The first elected chairman became his fellow Hokkian and business partner Oen Huat Kim, who held the post from 1925 until 1930. In 1930 it was formally decided that the term of office would last for five years. Chairman in 1930 became Thio Lam Wie (Tjong Liem Wei) who held the function until 1935, when the Hakka Hiu Ngi Fen, owner of the Hiu Ngi Fen Trading Company, was chosen. According to two sources there was one more chairman of the chamber in the 1930s, but it is unclear in what year he served, as there are no minutes left of the Medan Siang Hwee. This was Yo King Weng, son-in-law of Tan Tang Ho, and co-director of the well-known Seng Hap department store. Seng Hap was the only Chinese import firm that was a member of both the Dutch and the Chinese Chambers of Commerce. Yo King Weng rose to this prominent position because of his family relationship to Seng Hap. In 1933 a Federation of Chinese Chambers of Commerce was established in East Sumatra. In the same year the construction of the new building of the Siang Hwee in the Balistraat in Medan was begun. Two years later, in November 1935, the twenty fifth anniversary of the Chamber was celebrated. At this jubilee the good relations between Chinese business and

119 Williams 1959: 164; Shozo 1994: 230; Moerman 1932: 52; Vleming 1925: 232; *Verslag Handelsvereniging Medan* 1921, 1922.

120 *Andalas* 17-3-1921; Li Songyan 1984: 183–202; Godley 1981: 83, 127; Feldwick 1917: 1195; Interviews Mrs. Lemye on 13 March 1992 and on 12 and 13 June 1992.

the Dutch Government were stressed, as well as the importance of the Chinese retailing business on East Sumatra.¹²¹

As said before the Siang Hwee kept itself busy with a wide array of activities. In 1915 chairman Tjong A Fie sent a request to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on behalf of the Medan Siang Hwee concerning documents for Chinese who owned property in Canton.¹²² In a meeting in March 1920, the Siang Hwee discussed the physical investigation and checking of new Chinese female immigrants by female immigration officers, in Belawan harbour. According to the Chamber, this checking was rather unpleasant for the people involved. Therefore, the Chamber requested that the regulation be changed, and the checking stopped. During the same meeting there were discussions about the Deli Maatschappij which would be celebrating its 50th anniversary on May 2. The Siang Hwee would congratulate the company and offer a gift to commemorate the event. Finally, governmental taxes were discussed as many Chinese did not understand the regulations. The conclusion was that chairman Major Tjong A Fie should contact the municipality about the above issues.¹²³ This was the last time Tjong A Fie was mentioned as chairman, and one year later he passed away.¹²⁴ Shortly thereafter the statutes of the Medan Tiong Hoa Siang Hwee were changed. This was done in the *Kong Koan Besar* or Chinese Council of the Siang Hwee. This is the only time the name Kong Koan Besar was found in the sources. The new articles of the statutes stated that the president of the Siang Hwee had to be a Chinese officer of high rank. Later, every member who had paid contribution for at least ten years would be excused from paying their contributions. The contribution for one *kedei* (shop) was fl.12 and for each member fl.6 per year.¹²⁵

The activities of the Siang Hwee were published in local newspapers from the 1910s up until the end of the 1930s.¹²⁶ Peculiar was the publishing of an open letter in the Chinese paper *Tjin Po* of 7th March 1925 about the inefficiency of the Medan Siang Hwee. At that time the Chamber counted around 80 members who each paid fl.3 contribution per month.

121 Vleming 1925: 230; Wright, 581; DC 28-10-1935; 11-11-1935; SP 4-11-1935; Interviews Hiu Kian Jin; Interview Tan Boen Djin 25-10-1993.

122 Tjong A Fie asked for a special permission from the government to allow the Nanyang Chinese to submit their documents to the *Linshi* office nearby in the Dutch Indies. Further on Tjong A Fie proposed a draft for the new regulation which would benefit the Chinese from Guandong (Canton) or whoever owned properties in Guandong. (*Guandong shun an shi* forwarded a request from Chang Hung-nan, (Tjong A Fie) the *zhongli* of *Deli zhonghua shangwu zhonghuei* (Deli Sianghwee). (Institute of Modern Chinese History, Sinica Academia. Dated 1915, (History of Da Pu County Vol. 21 Biography, Number 26)

123 *Andalas*, 18-3-1920.

124 The funeral was on March 28, 1921. Concerning this funeral, the *Tiong Hoa Siang Boe Tjong Hwee* held a special meeting under chairman Khoe Tjin Tek to discuss how to pay respects to the deceased. The Chinese and European shops would be closed on the day of the funeral (*Andalas*, 8-3-1921).

125 *Andalas*, 17-3-1921.

126 Unfortunately all archives of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Medan were destroyed in the 1960s (Interviews Hiu Kian Jin).

Consequently, the total monthly income for the chamber was fl.240. The open letter stated that since its re-organization in 1921 the Chamber had carried out nothing noteworthy and was considered completely useless. In the case of Siang Hong and Tong Hin, respected Chinese firms that had gone bankrupt, the Chamber had not done anything at all. Business had suffered because of strong-headed importers. The writer ended his open letter:

*“The fact is that a bowl of rice for every Chinese merchant or retailer in Medan is insecure, even when he is a member of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.”*¹²⁷

A reaction was published in *Tjin Po* on 10th March wherein the problems concerning the Siang Hwee were further analyzed. According to *Tjin Po*, the Siang Hwee had to take the example from the European Chamber of Commerce, such as publishing weekly and monthly periodicals in the interest of business. The Siang Hwee did not publish anything at all and did not organize anything either. According to *Tjin Po*, the board should be replaced with people who really understood business. The Chinese should no longer have a mentality of *tabeat paysengkie*.¹²⁸ The criticism paid off as in later years more activities by the Chamber were witnessed. One of the many subjects was the standardization of weights. The Siang Hwee was asked to help to introduce standard measures and weights, as well as quality and price controls. With standardization, corruption would also be reduced, where it had flourished under the old *katti* (weight) system.¹²⁹ Members suggested improving the Siang Hwee by following the example of the European Chamber of Commerce and adding a secretary who spoke Malay and Dutch for dealing with the Malay and Dutch businesses.¹³⁰

In general, the cooperation of the Siang Hwee with the Netherlands Indies authorities was good. A photograph from 1913 showing a Tjong Hoa Siong Hoei (Siang Hwee) celebrating *Bangsai* festivities on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, 1813–1913.¹³¹ Ten years later Queen Wilhelmina’s twenty-fifth coronation was celebrated. In 1923 the Semarang Kok Sia Thoan (Assembly of All Associations) collected money for the festivities. Something similar happened in Medan as a Chinese festive gate was erected on the entrance of the Kesawan, the central street of Medan.¹³² For the Chinese loyalty to the Netherlands was important; they could not function optimally if they alienated themselves from the Dutch powerholders. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce

¹²⁷ *Tjin Po*, 7-3-1925; *Tjin Po*, 9-3-1925.

¹²⁸ This meant something like indifference (*Tjin Po* 10-3-1925).

¹²⁹ Visscher 2002: 6; SP 24-9-1926.

¹³⁰ *Tjin Po* 12-12-1927.

¹³¹ Boomgaard P., van Dijk, J., 2001: 243.

¹³² Willmott 1960: 141; Loderichs, Buiskool 1997: 139; DC 4-11-1935.

was consulted by the local government for all kinds of Chinese affairs like the danger of fireworks, schools, jobless Chinese and land rights.¹³³

One sensitive topic was the relation between the small Chinese traders and the Indigenous population. The area around the Maimoon Palace of the Sultan of Deli was called the Sultan's kampong. In 1932 the Sultan prohibited the Chinese from selling their products in the Sultan's kampong. However, many of its inhabitants had outstanding debts with the Chinese up to an amount of about fl.40,000. Therefore, the Siang Hwee, together with the Chinese consul, requested that the Sultan withdraw this prohibition so that at least the debts could be paid back. The matter was settled in such a manner that the Chinese vendors were allowed to enter the area with a special card signed by the Chinese consul, but without bringing their merchandise.¹³⁴ In spite of this discussion, the relationship between the Chamber and other population groups in town was harmonious, as was witnessed during the Medan Siang Hwee's 25th anniversary on 2nd November 1935, on which occasion a reception was held. An article appeared in the *Deli Courant* a few days before this date. Herein the Siang Hwee was praised for its activities and its importance for Chinese business in town. The *Deli Courant*:

*“The Chinese have an attitude of Struggle for Life and they will survive. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce proved the last years that it was very useful and important for its members. Its binding force showed to be very important.”*¹³⁵

During the reception chairman Hiu Ngi Fen gave a speech to commemorate the most important historical events of the chamber. He stressed the cooperation and support of the government, importers, exporters and the European Chamber of Commerce from the very beginning. Speakers from the government and from the European Chamber of Commerce praised the work of the Siang Hwee and the importance of the distribution sector of the economy, which for the greater part was done by the Chinese businessmen.¹³⁶

Summary

In the introduction under the paragraph of studies about Chinese communities Alexander Claver has been introduced mentioning three variables important for the success of Chinese businesses. These were: first, the transformation of the Southeast Asian economy during

133 In 1930 there were discussions concerning raising the transfer tariffs for the grant rights. The Chinese representative in the municipality council, Tan Boen An, raised the matter, where after the Siang Hwee was consulted. The municipality board decided to raise the fee in a limited way. (*Sinar Deli* 20-9-1930; SP 21-8-1930; SP 10-10-1930).

134 SP 26-5-1932.

135 DC 28-10-1935.

136 SP 4-11-1935; *Verslag Handelsvereniging Medan* 1935; DC 4-11-1935.

the colonial society that offered the Chinese the possibilities to develop trade; secondly, the insecure position for Chinese as immigrants necessitating efforts to safeguard their position; and thirdly, the strength of Chinese social structures and networks. Such variables were also operative in Medan.

The first variable, the transformation of the economy to an export-oriented plantation system, operated by big international companies, drove Chinese business in the direction of intermediaries between the European upper class, the workers on the plantations and the Indigenous population. The Chinese acted as intermediaries for the sales of Indigenous products like sugar, rice, fish, copra, and betel, amongst others to the Straits Settlements. Trading contacts between Medan, the Straits Settlements and China were intense. Between 1890 and 1915 the import and export from Penang with the region including East Sumatra was around 25%. Part of this intense trade was handled by Chinese companies from Medan. Besides this the Medan Chinese were also the city's main retailers through shops and street vendors. Looking at real estate in Medan, it shows that this was largely in Chinese hands, due to the fact that construction firms were often Chinese-owned. Moreover, in 1923, 55% of the land in Medan's kampongs was owned by Chinese. Consequently, the intermediary role coincided with the role of organizers of the internal urban economy.

The second variable, the insecure position of Chinese as immigrants, and the third, the importance of family structures were also present in Medan. Chinese business in town rested to a large extent on family ties, and on strong connections with China and the Straits Settlements. Other important ingredients worth mentioning here were Chinese nationalism and good connections with both the European colonial authorities as well as the local Indigenous ruling class. This guaranteed a stable and viable economic environment.

In the beginning of this chapter the question was put forward: What conditions in Medan allowed the prominent Chinese to run such lucrative businesses? The main reason was that the Deli and Serdang districts experienced a spectacular economic boom between 1890 and 1930. Also of importance were (at least until the 1910s) the thousands of Chinese coolies at the plantations buying monopoly products like opium, generating huge profits for some of the Chinese monopoly holders. The Chinese monopoly holders traditionally farmed such monopolies through auction from the government. The monopoly system was an important source of income for the government. The discussion about the monopoly system became an important political item in the Netherlands Indies after the introduction of the Ethical policy in 1900. In the nineteenth century, the selling of opium and the monopoly as such were not considered to be controversial. The monopolies were completely legal, the auctions were held in public, the monopoly holder and his kongsi were publicly known and so was the amount paid for the farm. Despite the criticism, the opium farm on East Sumatra was not abolished before 1912. From then on, the so-called opium regie was in use. After that, opium was still available but only via official government opium dens. After the abolition

of the opium and subsequently, the smaller monopolies, the Chinese entrepreneurs were already moving into other businesses and, hence, remained economically strong. This counted in the first place for an entrepreneur like Tjong A Fie, who acquired plantations from 1906 onwards. For most of the prominent Chinese in Medan the monopolies were not their main source of income.

The prominent Chinese were all members of the Medan Chinese Chamber of Commerce or *Tiong Hoa Siang Hwee*. Until 1912, the *Siang Hwee*'s functioned as consulates. Their aims were to support Chinese traders in difficult circumstances, and to mediate in disputes between members, support investors and to assist poor Chinese coolies who wanted to repatriate to mainland China. The Chamber was criticized by the Chinese community in 1925 as it had proven to be too passive. Afterwards, this criticism resulted in regulating activities such as the introduction of standard measures and weights, quality and price controls. One of the main objectives of the Chamber was to maintain good relationships with the colonial government and Dutch firms. During the 1920s and 1930s, business on Sumatra went up and down, a fact which could not be influenced by the Chamber. The position of the Chinese firms continued to be that of intermediaries and internal organizers of the local economy. The *Siang Hwee* played an important role in this.

4

The Prominent Chinese of Medan 1890–1942

Chapter 4

The Prominent Chinese of Medan 1890–1942

Although Medan seemed to be a European-dominated plantation city, the commercial elite consisted, besides the Dutch trading houses, of a number of prominent Chinese entrepreneurs. Together with the Indigenous population, the Netherlands Indies colonial government, the European dominated plantation industry and their own international Chinese networks, they put their mark on the city. This chapter presents nine elite Chinese residents of Medan during the period 1890–1942, all of whom were involved in the economy, housing, politics, sport, education, social organizations and health care. This chapter explains: 1) Why they were prominent; 2) What relations existed between them; and 3) What position they had relative to the colonial government and to the Chinese homeland.

The chapter consists of three parts. To place the nine Chinese community leaders in a wider historical context, Chinese leadership categories are first considered. These leadership categories were on an administrative, political, commercial and socio-cultural level. Comparisons are made with Singapore and Java to show differences and similarities. Thereafter the lives of the nine prominent Medan Chinese are described. Among them a division is made between those holding official Netherlands Indies public offices and those without. The former category comprises Tjong Yong Hian, Tjong A Fie, and Khoe Tjin Tek. As the Tjong brothers were most prominent among the prominents, they will be most extensively described. Tjong A Fie was succeeded by Khoe Tjin Tek, who was to be the senior official of the Medan Chinese until the Japanese occupation in 1942. The first person to be dealt with in the latter category, those without a colonial nominated public office, is Tjong Yong Hian's son and consul to the Chinese republic, Tjong Hau Liong, also known as Chang Pu Ching. The others are Tan Tang Ho of the Seng Hap company, Tan Tang Ho's son Tan Boen An, the first officially chosen Chinese member to the Town Council, his colleague Gan Hoat Soei, and lastly Hiu Ngi Fen and Thio Siong Soe.

4.1. Leadership categories

For the convenience of this study Chinese leadership is divided into four categories. Firstly, administrative leadership, the permanent governing and representing of the Chinese community by the so-called Chinese officers. Secondly, political leadership, exercised through the Town Council to influence local politics in favour of Chinese interests. For both the administrative and the political leaders the position they took regarding China and Chinese nationalism was important. The local Chinese consul played a pivotal role in this. Thirdly, commercial leadership amongst others through the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.

Fourthly, socio-cultural leadership by way of community and religious organizations, schools and charitable works.¹

In Medan these leadership categories were concentrated in the hands of a few influential persons, in particular the Chinese officers, nominated by the colonial government.² The Chinese officers functioned as middlemen between the government and the Chinese population, settling all kinds of Chinese affairs, such as taxes, problems between the coolies and the Dutch planters, Chinese who wanted to return to China and Chinese couples who had matrimonial problems.³ The officers also had advisory functions. The *Majoor* Chinese was a member of the *Landraad*, and he also had to attend sessions at the local police court or *politie rol*, in case Chinese were involved.⁴ Matrimonial problems often occurred because Chinese men liked to take a second or third wife as concubine, thereby creating tensions at home.⁵ Chinese businesses often called in the assistance of the *Majoor*.⁶ The colonial authorities reported all police, criminal and immigration cases involving Chinese to the *Majoor*.⁷ Because the officers were supposed to represent their community they also attended social, educational and other ceremonies.⁸ As mentioned in Chapter 2, Medan used to be divided spatially into different living quarters in order to facilitate the local administration on the basis of ethnicity. Consequently, the Chinese were not allowed to settle outside the Chinese quarter. Until this system was abolished in 1918 a Chinese who intended to travel outside his own quarter had to request a travel pass from the Chinese officer.⁹ Prior to this in 1908 Chinese officers themselves had already given special rights of travel and residence. Also, in 1908 the government granted Chinese officers a *forum privilegium* which meant that in case of problems with the law, they would stand for European courts and not for the police court. Children of Chinese officers were permitted to attend European primary schools. Another way to raise the status and prestige of the officers was through their official uniform.¹⁰

1 Willmott 1960: 159,163,164.

2 In 1896 the Netherlands Indies government in Medan installed a Major, a Captain and two Lieutenants. The Major would receive an annual stipend of fl.1,800; the Captain, fl.1,200 guilders; and the two Lieutenants, each fl.900 (Nationaal Archief. Mailrapporten) (f. 784. Vreemde Oosterlingen, Juni 1894 t/m juni 1896. Nota van de lt. III A1).

3 Jansen 1940: 86.

4 Moerman 1932: 55-57; Ong Hok Ham 1989: 51; De Bruin 1918:111.

5 Interview Mrs. Lemye in Westende 12-6-1992.

6 (*Andalas*, 9-10-1917) When a Chinese company was dismantled or went broke or in case of change of names of shareholders this was reported to the Major of the Chinese. (SP 2-2-1905; *Andalas* 3-9-1918)

7 SP 1-3-1915; SP 17-12-1900; SP 14-5-1915; SP 26-1-1918.

8 *Andalas* 29-5-1917; DC 1-6-1895; *Andalas* 5-7-1917; SP 2-10-1912; SP 25-8-1913.

9 Ong Hok Ham 1989: 54; Cator 1936: 33,34; Jansen 1940:16; MvO controleur G.L.J.D. Kok, 1910.

10 In 1908 the Chinese officers got a grand and small costume. For a major the grand costume consisted of a closed jacket with a stand-up collar of black cloth, to wear with a white linen collar and wristband, decorated with gold embroideries of orange oakbranches and with six big gold buttons with a crowned W. Further a pair of trousers of black cloth with gold galloon and a cap of black cloth, also with gold galloon.

Comparisons with Chinese leadership in Singapore and Java

Singapore was a much larger city than Medan and already an important harbour town about 80 years before Medan, making comparison between the two cities somewhat problematic. Medan developed much later, and the city was very small compared to Singapore. However, as there is literature about the Chinese of Singapore available, there is an excellent opportunity for comparison. Looking at the differences between the Chinese leadership of Medan and Singapore we see that in the latter, a British crown colony, there existed a Chinese Advisory Board while Medan had to make do with Chinese officers.¹¹ Another difference was that Medan in the 1910s and 1920s lacked practically any university educated Chinese of the stature of a Lim Boon Keng in Singapore. All leading prominent Chinese in Medan were self-made businessmen without higher education. Many Chinese in the Netherlands Indies felt they would have been better off under British rule than under Dutch rule. An important reason for the difference between the Dutch and the British was that from the 1860s everybody in the British crown colonies was equal before the law, which was not the case in the Netherlands Indies.¹² In Singapore there were no travel passes required for the Chinese and no zoning system or special quarters where the Chinese were forced to live.¹³

The Singapore Chinese basically developed divided into two groups: China-oriented Chinese and the British-oriented Chinese.¹⁴ From the 1890s more Straits Chinese went to England and Scotland for higher education and from then on became closer to Great Britain. In 1900 the Straits Chinese British Association (SCBA) was founded, striving for the welfare of all British subjects in the Straits Settlements. The organization was founded by the already mentioned Straits-born Chinese Lim Boon-keng, a medical doctor from Edinburgh University and Song Ong-siang, a lawyer from Cambridge University. Lim Boon Keng and other westernized Chinese were critical towards traditional Chinese leaders who did not want to give girls education, opposed themselves to European civilization, and kept up Chinese traditional costumes and queues. Modernists like Lim Boon Keng on the other hand advocated western ways of thinking and schooling for everybody. At the same time, they were loyal to the British government. In the period from 1900 to 1941 the SCBA brought forward many educated Straits Chinese who became leading community leaders in Singapore.¹⁵

The small costume consisted of white drill with braids of white cord on the jacket and with seven gold big buttons. (De Bruin 1918: 111,112; Erkelens 2013: 164,165)

11 The Chinese Advisory Board for Chinese Affairs in Singapore consisted of an uneven number of members from the Hokkian, Cantonese, Hakka, Teochew and Hainanese (Yong 1992: 115).

12 Williams 1959: 31-33; Yong 1992: 87,88.

13 Williams 1959: 43,45.

14 Yong 1992: 51.

15 Yong 1992: 52,53, 56,88; Antons 2001: 35; Ong Eng Die 1943: 187,259; Somers 1964: 5,6.

In the Netherlands Indies there was also a distinction between Dutch-oriented and China-oriented Chinese. On Java there were higher educated Chinese and members of the Chung Hwa Hui, the moderate Dutch-oriented Chinese political party comparable to the SCBA, who had studied in the Netherlands. In Medan such a group was almost absent. Another important factor on Java was the rising criticism towards the institution of the Chinese officers, especially in the big cities like Batavia, Soerabaja and Semarang. There were even violent outbreaks against Chinese officers in Batavia in February 1912.¹⁶ Criticism towards Chinese officers was extra strong, when officers were deemed incompetent, basically not well versed in Chinese language and customs, while at the same time they were supposed to take care of the interests of the Chinese as members of the Landraad and advising members of the *Raad van Justitie*.¹⁷ The institution of Chinese officers was seen as a feature of the old order. They were regarded as the tools of the colonial Dutch. The critical Chinese wanted headmen who took care of Chinese aspirations, exemplified ethnic values and symbolized ethnic identity. Unfortunately, twentieth century Chinese officers increasingly adhered to the non-Chinese values of the dominant colonial power. In the eyes of the critics this made them unsuitable to act as community leaders.¹⁸

A major difference between Java and Medan, however, was that in the latter the officers were all China-born and still spoke Chinese. During the formation of the late colonial state in the Netherlands Indies, from about 1900, many functions of the officers were taken over by government appointed professionals. This made the Chinese officers a less important category. After the abolition of the tax farms, discussed in Chapter 3, the position of the officers was severely weakened.¹⁹ In 1917 there even were serious discussions about the abolition of the institution of the Chinese officers in Batavia, but finally everything remained the same. This was mainly the result of the Chinese community itself not wanting to abolish the institution and because of a colonial government needing people who knew what was going at ground level in the Chinese community. This was still best guaranteed through the institution of the Chinese officers. A Dutch official could never be as well-informed as a Chinese officer.²⁰ In Batavia the well-known high-profile Major of the Chinese Khouw Kim An contributed to the survival of the institution.²¹ In Medan also voices were heard to abolish the institution of Chinese officers after the death of Tjong A Fie, but to no avail.²²

16 Erkelens 2013: 220.

17 Erkelens 2013: 241; *Indische Gids* 1914, I: 886,887.

18 Erkelens 2013: 170.

19 Erkelens 2013: 175.

20 Erkelens 2013: 272,378.

21 Khouw Kim An was more or less comparable to Tjong A Fie in Medan and Oei Tjong Ham in Semarang. Khouw Kim An and Tjong A Fie also cooperated in business in the in 1918 established Batavia Bank. Khouw Kim An was in 1942 interrogated by the Japanese and died in a Japanese internee camp. (Erkelens 2013: 44)

22 MvO ass.res. H.E.K. Ezerman, 1921

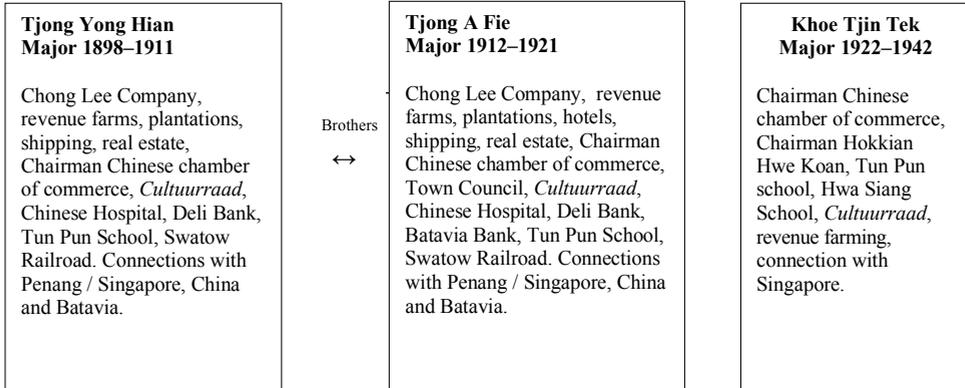
As we will see below Khoe Tjin Tek became the last Major of the Chinese of Medan and continued Tjong A Fie's good reputation.

4.2. Prominent Chinese: The Chinese Majors

From 1898 the Chinese Majors of Medan were Tjong Yong Hian (1898–1911), Tjong A Fie (1912–1921) and Khoe Tjin Tek (1922–1942). Tjong Yong Hian and Tjong A Fie were successful businessmen and skillful diplomats who were able to cooperate with the Indigenous, and with both the Dutch and Chinese elites of Medan. The brothers worked together in their economic endeavours as well as in local politics. Both served as Chinese officers for the Netherlands Indies government, representing the Chinese community in the East Sumatra district. Their philanthropy was well-known in many parts of Sumatra. They also made important contributions to the wellbeing of their homeland China. After they had made a fortune in the tax farms, they expanded their activities into real estate, building half of Medan and invested heavily in the plantation industry. Tjong A Fie became famous throughout the Netherlands Indies, while his elder brother Tjong Yong Hian had had the honour of being received by the Dowager Empress in Peking. The last Major was Khoe Tjin Tek, who also had a wide range of business activities in trading, revenue farming and banking, while he was also well-known for his social activities. Khoe Tjin Tek was able to continue the positive image the outside world had of the Chinese officers in Medan.

The figure below presents the prominent Chinese persons of Medan, their interdependent relations, business and social endeavours, in two divisions. Above are the Chinese with official Netherlands Indies governmental offices. Below the persons without such functions.

**Prominent Chinese with official Netherlands Indies functions.
The Chinese Majors.**



↑ Father and Son

Prominent Chinese without official Netherlands Indies functions.



4.2.1. Tjong Yong Hian (1850-1911)

*Tjong Yong Hian was a very handsome man, tall and fair with slender hands and fingers, a veritable aristocrat. He was soft spoken and full of dignity.*²³

Tjong Yong Hian (Chang Yu-nan in Mandarin), was a Hakka born in the small town of Mei Hsien in Kwantoeng province.²⁴ At a young age Tjong Yong Hian arrived in Batavia on Java, where he undertook various occupations, including that of a licensed pawnbroker.²⁵ In 1877, at the age of only 22 years, the colonial government appointed him as head of the Chinese population on the island of Onrust located in the Bay of Batavia. In 1880 Tjong Yong Hian left Onrust for Laboehan, Deli. He became Lieutenant of the Chinese in Medan in 1884; Captain in 1893; and Major in 1898. Well-informed about all city matters he was always consulted on these, as he proved to be an excellent adviser with valuable information.²⁶

In the *Koloniaal Weekblad* of 1906 he was described as follows:

*“He started as vice Lieutenant of the Chinese, while the real official, the salaried Lieutenant Ban The, choose to retire to start a life without official function. But our Tjong Ah Yong, as was his name in those days, had no problems to work without salary. Among the Europeans he was very popular and always remained so, as witnessed at the yearly New Year receptions at his house. In later years he did not need to interfere so much in all affairs, but remained an adviser, intermediate, peacemaker and problem solver. Nobody ever spoke in negative terms about him, everybody, government officials as well as private persons, liked him so much and appreciated this very helpful and reliable Chinese official.”*²⁷

23 Chang 1981: 39.

24 Franke mentions the year of his birth as 1859 (Franke 1988: 148). However, According to *De Sumatra Post* Tjong Yong Hian was born in 1855 in Kainchew in Canton. (SP 12-9-1911) This is also stated by Wright (Wright 1909: 580,581), Rebecca Chandra’s book on Tjong Yong Hian mentions 1850 as his year of birth (Chandra 2011:4), while Leo Suryadinata mentions 1851 (Suryadinata 1995: 211,212). As the year 1850 is mentioned at his gravestone, this year looks like the most probable. Tjong Yong Hian alias Chang Yu-nan alias Tjong Jok Nam alias Tsjjong Yong Hian alias Zhang Yunan alias Zi Rongxuan. (DC 3-9-1898; Godley 1981: 15).

25 There are anecdotal reports of his participation in a tender for a gambling monopoly. One of his competitors in the tender was Oen Yek Keng. Tjong Yong Hian sent a prostitute to Oen Yek Keng, who seduced him the night before the tender. The lady poured a sleeping pill in his drink and Oen Yek Keng overslept and lost the tender. (Li Songyan, The Chang brothers; Wright 1909: 580, 581; SP 12-9-1911).

26 Tjong Ah Yong benoemd tot Luitenant- Titulair der Chineezen in 1884 (*Regeerings Almanak voor Nederlands-Indië* 1884: 84; *Regeerings Almanak voor Nederlands-Indië* 1885: 189; SP 12-9-1911; Van den Brand, letter 29-3-1904)

27 Stade ten Brink *Koloniaal Weekblad* 29-11-1906.



Tjong Yong Hian.
Foto collection D.A. Buiskool

Tjong Yong Hian was also involved in several other official bodies. As Major of the Chinese he was member of the Landraad of Medan as well as the *Negorijraad* (area council), the predecessor of Medan's Town Council, and the Cultuurraad.²⁸ In 1904 Tjong Yong Hian received a gold medal from the Dutch government.²⁹ Tjong Yong Hian, remained less well known in Medan than his younger brother Tjong A Fie because he had already passed away in 1911. In China, though, Tjong Yong Hian's star rose higher than that of his his younger brother, as he was received by the Dowager Empress in 1903.³⁰

Family

Tjong Yong Hian married several times. His own marriages, but also those of his children were strategic marriages, advantageous for his business endeavors. His first wife Tjie On Yong (Xu/Liu) was a traditional Chinese lady.³¹ Tjong Yong Hian's eldest daughter Sun-jin married a Chinese from Penang with an interest in the tin mines. This was Hsieh Yung-kuang (Tjia Tjoen Sen), Captain of the Chinese in Atjeh. Hsieh moved to Penang in 1896 where he joined Tio Tiauw Siat in opium farming. Later he joined Tio Tiauw Siat in starting a mining company, together with Loke Yew in Bentong. Tjong Yong Hian also arranged the marriage of Tjong A Fie's eldest daughter A Foek (Queeny Chang).³²

Business career

Business-wise Tjong Yong Hian and Tjong A Fie cooperated in enterprises. In Laboehan the brothers started their enterprises such as in providing food supplies to the coolies who worked in the ports.³³ Herewith they made their start capital. In the same period they were able to purchase monopolies which generated much more income. In the 1880s they were appointed as Chinese officers, which gave them first-hand information about future planning of the city of Medan. In Medan the brothers started with markets followed by housing development, and a department store, called Chong Lee.³⁴ Consequently the Tjong brothers became the largest property owners in town. In Medan's early days, during its 'boom

28 Negorijraad or area council with appointed members among them Tjong Yong Hian. (SP 15-6-1909; 18-8-1909; 12-9-1911).

29 Wright 1909: 580, 581; SP 12-9-1911.

30 Chang 1981: 56; Godley 1981: 129,155.

31 In the words of Queeny Chang: *Aunt Liu never accompanied uncle Tjong Yong Hian to any function. She disliked the idea of showing intimacy in public as foreign ladies did. Her centuries old customs considered all the foreign barbaric and below her dignity.* (Chang 1981:40) (See also Chandra 2011: 50,56,72)

32 Chang 1981: 38, 104; Buiskool 1999: 275; Interview Chang Tung Yin 26-11-1992; Godley 1981: 23.

33 Levensbeschrijving.

34 The Department store Chong Lee will be dealt with in paragraph 4.3, under the business career of Tjong Hau Liong (Chang Pu Ching).

period', from 1900 till around 1915, when there was a shortage of homes, the Tjong brothers bought cheap parcels of land in the developing city. As Chinese officers and members of the local councils in the town they had advance knowledge of the plans for the development of Medan, including where streets, markets and squares were to be established. They made strategic purchases of land adjacent to planned streets and markets, and built rows of houses, Chinese-European style, in these areas. These so-called *kedehs* were very popular and sold immediately.³⁵ From 1900 on, especially after the great fire in Kesawan, hundreds of *kedehs* were built by the Tjong brothers.

The first official building project, however, was not a home but a temple. In 1886 the Tjong brothers oversaw the construction of two *tepehkong* or Chinese temples, one in the Klingestraat and one in Poeloe Brayan. Then Tjong Yong Hian built a graveyard for his family in Kebon Boenga (flower garden). Tjong A Fie did the same in Poeloe Brayan.³⁶ Along the Electriciteitsweg and the Parkstraat one passed the so-called Chinese Gate, usually called *Pintu Tjina*, (Chinese gate), entrance to Kebon Boenga. This gate was established by Tjong Yong Hian; through this gate he went to his country house at the Babura river.³⁷ The markets in Medan had been in the hands of the Tjong family since 1886.³⁸ In 1886, they built a meat market, one year later in 1887, a fish market and in 1906, a vegetable market. The market sheds were located between Pekingstraat, Majoorstraat, Tjong Yong Hian straat and Kapiteinsweg. Conditions concerning hygiene had to be followed and were controlled by the government. The fish market later became a vegetable market.³⁹

In 1907 the Tjong brothers opened the first Chinese bank in town.⁴⁰ The Chinese in general had not much capital of their own but depended on loans. European banks, however, were not eager to give credit to Chinese merchants, whose language, bookkeeping methods,

35 Li Songyan 1984: 183-202; Soerabaiasch Handelsblad, 19-4-1921.

36 Levensbeschrijving; Interview with Mrs. Lemye in Brussels at 13-3-1992.

37 The house was torn down in the 1920s by his son Tjong Hian Liong. At some distance from this country house Tjong Yong Hian was buried. After settlement of the grounds of Kebon Boenga the Chinese Gate stood on the grounds of the municipality and no more on grounds of the Tjong family. Therefore, Tjong Yong Hian's son Chang Pu Ching requested Mayor Mackay when he resigned in 1931 that the gate could be maintained and not be torn down. Mackay promised this and handed the request over to his successor. (MvO Mackay 1931: 77). The gate was torn down in the 1960s.

38 On January 18, 1886 H.C. van den Honert, administrator of the Deli Company entered into a contract with Tjong Yong Hian, then Lieutenant of the Chinese, for the lease of a parcel of land of around 3,600 square metres, for the purpose of building a partly covered market. The rent was only 1 guilder per year. Another condition mentioned that brothels were not allowed on the market grounds. (*Gemeentebld* 1921: 58,59,60).

39 *Gemeentebld* 1920: 24, 25, 26; *Gemeentebld* 1921: 79; *Gemeentebld* Medan: 7-2-1921 - 16-8-1921; *Gemeentebld* 1927: 7; MvO mayor Mackay of Medan 1933: 106-109; SP 10-9-1918, 25-9-1918.

40 *De Indische Mercur* wrote: 'The new Deli Bank started with its activities, mainly the provision of inexpensive money on solid security. In the office of this Chinese remittance bank shows already a fair golden tablet where up in black letters in Dutch and in Chinese characters is written "Deli Bank". Outside is with big black characters on red paper made advertisement for the institution. The Chinese trade can receive much profit from this new foundation.' (*De Indische Mercur*; 29-10-1907, no.44).

obscure kongsies, and business methods they could not understand. It was for this reason that the Tjong brothers, together with their uncle Tio Tiauw Siat, probably their most important business partner, established the Deli Bank for the Medan Chinese in 1907. In fact, it was money from several revenue farmers on both sides of the Straits of Malacca, Medan and Penang.⁴¹ A Chinese merchant bank in the Straits region was also in the interests of homeland China, to finance modernization. The Java Bank, the central bank of the Netherlands Indies, also opened a branch office in Medan in 1907.⁴² The Java Bank then supported the Deli Bank, as they saw the Deli Bank as a development bank for East Sumatra and a tool to keep small traders out of the hands of the *Chetties*. In later years the Medan municipality also requested loans from the Deli Bank.⁴³ In general only people who owned real estate used this bank, as they could use their property as security.⁴⁴ The Deli Bank's initial capital was fl.650,000. In 1916 the capital had grown to fl.4 million and by 1918, to fl.5 million.⁴⁵ The Deli Bank was a savings bank⁴⁶ and also provided advance payments to Chinese trade.⁴⁷ There had been intentions to open a branch office in Peking but in the end this had not happened because of corruption cases during the Ching dynasty.⁴⁸ Chinese local trade, intermediate trade and money flows from Medan to China were channeled almost completely via the Deli Bank. At this point the Deli Bank was able to compete with foreign banks.⁴⁹

As said Tio Tiauw Siat (Chang Pi shih) (1840–1916) was a key figure in the Tjong brothers' business empire. With him, the brothers cooperated in many fields. Together they

41 Godley 1993: 265; Handboek 1911, 620; *De Indische Mercuur* 8 october 1907.

42 Godley 1981: 129; Claver 2006: 286.

43 The loan concerned a road construction project from the Chinese N.V. Deli Bank and Chunghwa Shangyeh Maatschappij (Company), for a minimum of fl.100,000 and a maximum of fl.500,000 (*Gemeentebld* 12-4-1920; SP 5-5-1916; SP 2-8-1918; SP 11-9-1918)

44 The Chinese kedehs (shopholders) used the Deli Bank. The Deli Bank did not always require a pledge of security. For amounts less than fl.1,000 at time a personal guarantee was sufficient. The Bank Director decided whether to accept such a guarantee or not. In addition to property, gold or jewellery was also accepted as collateral. Loans from the Deli Bank had to be a minimum fl.100, interest 1% monthly. (*Gemeentebld* Medan 24-8-1921)

45 Claver 2006: 366.

46 The bank was to offer comprehensive banking services: loans, cash accounts; consignment contracts; and the selling of products for third persons. The main investors were, Thio Tiauw Siat, with fl.200,000, Tjong Yong Hian, Major of the Chinese in Medan with fl.150,000, Tsiong Tsiok Fie (Tjong A Fie) Captain of the Chinese in Medan, for fl.100,000, Khoe Tjaw Tiong (Khoo Cheow Tiong), trader in Tanjung Balai, for fl.100,000, Hsieh Jung kuang, (Tjia Tjoen Sen or Cheah Choon Seng, former Lieutenant of the Chinese in Koetaradja, trader in Penang) also for fl.100,000, (*De Indische Mercuur* 8-10-1907; Godley 1993: 265). In 1911 the capitalization was fl.3 million divided into 300 shares of fl.1,000 to bearer. (Deli Bank, Handboek 1911: 620; Handboek 1916: 905; Handboek 1919: 1704)

47 The Bank provided advance payments to Chinese trade. In the beginning the advance payments were based on the pawning of goods, shops, houses, and gold and silver objects. Later on it expanded to include currency exchanges, shares, and grants on names assigned by the Deli Bank as well as concessions. (*Levensbeschrijving*; Handboek, 1916; SP 27-4-1915)

48 Li Songyan 1984: 183-202.

49 Claver 2006: 366.

also invested in a shipping company with a line, Medan-Penang-Singapore-HongKong-Shanghai, and later also Batavia-Hong Kong-Japan.⁵⁰

Their greatest project, however, was the railway line between Swatow (Shantou) and Chaochow (Chaozhou) in Kwantoeng province in South China.⁵¹ China wanted to modernize its economy but was lacking the knowledge and money. The successful overseas Nanyang Chinese could be of great benefit by funding railway construction. After China had lost the 1894–95 war with Japan, the Manchu government realized the importance of a railway system for defense purposes. Aiming to promote China's economic independence, it sought investment capital from the overseas Chinese.⁵² The Swatow railway (Tjau San Tekloo) was the first privately owned commercial railway in China, 42 km in length. Construction was begun in 1904 and the work was finished in 1906. Tjong Yong Hian was the first director.⁵³ The railway was actually a Chinese-Japanese project. It was partly financed with Japanese capital and built under Japanese management. The railway was not subsidized by the government of China.⁵⁴ The initial capitalization was 180,000 Ta yang (tael). Thereafter Tjong Yong Hian invested 1 million tael, Tjong A Fie also 1 million, Lin Li Sheng from Taiwan, 500,000 and two Chinese investors Xie Mengchi and Zhang 500,000, bringing the total amount to 3 million tael. A later investor from Formosa (Taiwan), one Lin Li Sheng, urged the original Chinese investors to engage a Japanese contractor and a Japanese supervisor. As a result, the technical management and the equipment were all Japanese.⁵⁵ Tjong Yong Hian even took the position of insisting on having Japanese capital on board out of fears that the Chinese government would nationalize the railway, as it had done with a private telegraph office in 1902. In 1909 Tjong Yong Hian's son Chang Pu Ching was appointed acting director.⁵⁶ In 1931, the Japanese invaded Manchuria and started the

50 De Bruin 1918: 45, 109; Godley 1993, 264; Li, 1984: section 4.

51 Buischool 1999: 25; Chang 1981: 150.

52 The years 1897 to 1900 was a period of 'scrambling for concessions', a scramble which focused on obtaining mining and railway rights. Foreign powers tried to control the country via spheres of influences which gave the country a semi-colonial character. One of the reactions to this was the Boxer Rebellion of 1900. Directly related to this was the railway question: if China could stop the ceding of railway concession to foreign investors, its sovereignty would be protected. Therefore the government searched for overseas Chinese investors. (Wright 1909: 580; Yen 1984: 119-121)

53 Yen 1984: 125; Chang 1981: 56; Godley 1981:155; Rhea 1919, Far Eastern Markets for Railway Materials, Equipment and Supplies.

54 Lee En-Han 1977: 29, 137.

55 (Li Songyan 1984: 183-202) When the initial capital proved to be insufficient, the Tjong brothers approached the Hong Kong millionaire Wu, who invested \$500,000. Later, Lin Li-sheng, a merchant from Formosa, invested \$300,000 while a Chinese from Thailand, also named Chang, added \$200,000 (Godley 1981: 150,151)

56 (Li Songyan 1984: 183-202; The history of the city Shantou, 79, 425; Wright 1909: 580). There is a report from 1935 about the railway from the KPM. In that year Mr. van Riet of the KPM travelled from Hong Kong to the Mui Yuen district. For the Chaochowfu-Swatow part of his journey he took the train. Mr. Van Riet: *"The firstclass compartments were leather furnished, at least this was our impression we got from the remnants. The seats were very narrow. This was probably caused by the fact that these wagons were built*

Sino-Japanese war. Eight years later, in 1939, at the height of the war, the railroad was destroyed, in order to obstruct the Japanese advance.⁵⁷ Tjong A Fie's eldest daughter Tjong A Foek (Queeny Chang) was the last director of the Swatow railway.⁵⁸

Public office

As Chinese officer Tjong Yong Hian was in charge of the immigration procedures of the coolies. According to one source he was also active in the recruitment of Chinese workers for Deli in Swatow. Other sources state that he did not hire coolies but that he supplied food stuffs, rice and sugar for the plantations.⁵⁹ When in 1891 false travel passes were circulating in East Sumatra, Tjong Yong Hian, then Lieutenant of the Chinese, announced in the local newspaper that from 15 January 1891 onwards, all new passes given out by him would be authenticated by an oval stamp, encircled by the words: '*Luitenant der Chineezen Medan Deli*.'⁶⁰

Promotions of Tjong Yong Hian to a higher rank were always celebrated with public receptions. These were festive and popular occasions. In August 1898 Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands was crowned. At this occasion both Tjong Yong Hian and Tjong A Fie were again promoted, now to Major and Captain of the Chinese, respectively. After their promotion the Tjong brothers invited the citizens of Medan to Tjong A Fie's country house in Poeloe Brajan to celebrate the festivities. The newspapers describe such festivities in detail. The *Deli Courant*:

"At 3 September an extra train left at 6.40 p.m. for station Poeloe Brayan, returning at midnight to Medan. At 10.30 p.m. the Major of the Chinese took the floor and gave a toast to Her Majesty the new Queen of the Netherlands. In the meantime

in Osaka (1905). The locomotive dated from 1906 and was American made. All wagons were connected by bridges (overflows) so that one could step easy from one wagon into the other [...] I forgot to inform, that the Chaochowfu - Swatow railway has been established by a Belawan Deli Chinese, who nowadays however has only a part of the shares." (Extract from letter, pa. no. 1021 d.d. 28.5.'35. No. 142. ARA tweede afdeling, archief KPM, 387; KPM or Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij (Royal Dutch Package Company) for the sea transport within the Indigenous archipelago).

57 The history of the city of Shantou, 79, 425; Li Songyan 1984: 183-202; Lee En-Han 1977: 96; Rhea 1919: 120, 121.

58 Queeny Chang wrote in her autobiographical *Memories of a Nonya* how important she felt to be managing director of the railway the more as she was a woman. She also mentioned how difficult it was for her to break up the railway, but she had no choice as the Sino-Japanese war had erupted and the Guomintang government had ordered that the railway had to be demolished. (Chang 1981: 179) Till 1957 her younger sister Mrs. Lemye – Tjong still saw shares of the Swatow railway, after that no more. (Interview Mrs. Lemye in Brussels at 13-3-1992).

59 (Wright 1909: 580, 581; SP 12-9-1911; Franke 1988: 148) According to Godley he was involved in the recruitment, (Godley 1981: 130) according to Chang Tung Yin he was not. (Interview Chang Tung Yin 26-11-1992).

60 DC 14-1-1891.

*there were Chinese processions in front of the house. There were Chinese fireworks. Champagne was served. At a quarter to twelve p.m. everybody went back to the train in the rain. Many civil and military authorities were present, the Sultan of Langkat, the Tengkoë Besar of Deli (successor to the throne), the king of Kwaloe and many Chinese officers.”*⁶¹

A recurrent annual festivity was Chinese New Year when the brothers provided open house.⁶² Besides the country houses in Poeloe Brajan and Kebon Boenga as mentioned above, in the 1890s the Tjong brothers had built adjacent traditional Chinese mansions in Kesawan street.⁶³

Tjong Yong Hian had briefly worked in Penang as vice consul when Tio Tiauw Siat was in China in 1894. Tjong Yong Hian returned to Medan in June 1895. The Chinese government appointed him first to the position of vice-consul (1891–1895) and later to that of consul (1895–1900) in Penang. In 1893 both Tjong brothers had been raised to the rank of Mandarin after donations for flooding in China, in their home province Kwantoeng.⁶⁴

In February 1898, under great public attention, Tjong Yong Hian left Medan for China as he, once more, was to get a high-ranking appointment.⁶⁵ The Chinese imperial government raised him to the rank of Mandarin in the third degree and honorary vice chairman of the Chinese Department of Agriculture, Trade and Industry in Peking. Tjong Yong Hian was also asked to cooperate in collecting money from the Nanyang where many Chinese had settled, to facilitate development of the areas and villages of the Yang Tse Kiang River.⁶⁶

Why did Tjong Yong Hian invest so much in China? It was probably a combination of ambition and nationalism and the request of Tio Tiauw Siat to join in his projects.⁶⁷ Tjong Yong Hian was a nationalist who endeavored to contribute to his fatherland's development by modernizing the country but at the same time also preserving the Manchu dynasty

61 DC 24-8-1898; DC 3-9-1898; DC 24-9-1898; DC 28-9-1898.

62 On Chinese New Year that occasion the citizens of Medan could admire the beautiful and expensive decorations in the Tjong houses in Kesawan street: the original Chinese embroidered wall papers, the splendid Chinese wooden tablets with gilded letters and the fine lacquered furniture. During those receptions the Manila Band played in the front yard; everything was electrically illuminated, and on the street fireworks were lighted. (Stade ten Brink *Koloniaal Weekblad* 29-11-1906; DC 19-1-1898, 26-1-1898.

63 (Levensbeschrijving; Interview with Mrs. Lemye in Brussels at 13-3-1992). Tjong Yong Hian's mansion was entirely on one floor. The *Koloniaal Weekblad* reported: 'It is a treasure of real Chinese architecture, of a sense of well-being, rest and domestic comfort.' (Stade ten Brink *Koloniaal Weekblad*, 29-11-1906).

64 In addition, he received the Bottom of the First Rank in 1903 and the brevet rank of a Third Rank (Kühr 1921: 3-5; Franke 1988: 148; Godley 1981: 81).

65 The *Deli Courant*: 'Tjong Yong Hian was bid farewell by many of his fellow countrymen as well by the Sultan of Deli and the *Tongkoë Pangeran* Bandahara. The Manila band played music at the railway station; Chinese music was also played.' (DC 9-2-1898).

66 SP 12-9-1911; Yen 1982: 218, 220; Godley 1981: 81,83; Wright 1909: 580-581; Franke 1988: 148; Kühr *Nederlandsch-Indië Oud & Nieuw* 1921: 3-5; Interviews Mrs. Lemye in Brussels at 13-3-1992 and in Westende at 12-6-1992.

67 Yen 1984: 125.

and the Confucian order. Not a Confucian scholar by training, he nonetheless published several books. In 1898 he wrote *Hai-kuo kung-yu chi-lu* (My Leisure Collection of Works in Overseas Countries), in which he commented on climate, geography, taxes, economic possibilities and trade with Penang.⁶⁸ In 1901 his uncle Tio Tiauw Siat was appointed head of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in China and the Nanyang. In this function Tio Tiauw Siat appointed Tjong Yong Hian honorary chairman. Through such channels the Chinese imperial government was able to directly maintain connections with the rapidly growing Chinese population of Sumatra.⁶⁹

In September 1903 Tjong Yong Hian went to China again. This journey was to be the highlight of his career. As he had made donations to the Chinese Navy, to educational projects in his hometown Mei Hsien, to buildings for the Ling Nan University in Guangzhou City and, probably most important, had established the Swatow railway, he was received by the Dowager Empress Zi Xi. She expressed considerable interest in Tjong Yong Hian's Nanyang career.⁷⁰ Queeny Chang wrote about his audience with the empress:

He had the distinction of the red coral button on his mandarin hat and his mandarin robes were embroidered with the dragon as worn by the Ching aristocracy. My uncle's pride was great. It was said that when he visited his village, forerunners beating gongs were to announce his arrival: villagers had to kneel by the roadside, as they would do for a special emissary of the son of Heaven, as he passed in his red-topped sedan-chair carried by eight uniformed men.⁷¹

When on 16 April 1905 he returned in Medan many Chinese houses hoisted flags to celebrate his homecoming.⁷²

Philanthropy

Tjong Yong Hian and Tjong A Fie supported many philanthropic projects; after Tjong Yong Hian's death Tjong A Fie continued to do so on his own. From 1884 until 1911 Tjong Yong Hian and Tjong A Fie together donated to Chinese temples in Medan and Penang, a hospital in Medan, Hindu temples, Muslim mosques and Catholic churches in Medan, schools in Medan and China, relief actions for natural disasters in China and to Hong Kong University.

68 Yen 1984: 127,128; Franke 1988: 148; Khoe Tsjin 1994: 360.

69 Li Songyan 1984; Godley 1981: 183.

70 Tjong Yong Hian received in 1903 the Bottom of the First Rank and the brevet rank of a Third Rank. (*Tjong Hung-nan and Tjong Jung-nan*; Franke 1988: 149; Godley 1981: 129, 181).

71 Chang 1981: 56.

72 SP 17-4-1905.

The brothers explicitly stated that they wanted to support peoples from all backgrounds and religions. This is also stated in Tjong A Fie's will.⁷³

Appendix 4.9 provides an overview of the brother's social projects. These were the projects which were registered or written down. It might well be that there were many more social projects they supported but these were not registered. The majority of the donations were made to projects in Medan. This was in line with the principle 'taken from the society and giving back to the people' as most of the money originated from Deli.⁷⁴ How much of their fortune was spend for philanthropy is not known as there are no statistics available.

As mentioned above markets were operated by the Tjong brothers. Directly related to the markets was the Chinese hospital and asylum Tjie On Jie Jan, founded in 1894 by the brothers. This hospital was located at the Hospitaalweg, between the Kwanteebiostraat and the Wilhelminastraat and financed by the foundation Tjie On Jie Jan established by them.⁷⁵ The hospital took care of the poor, the sick and the handicapped from the Chinese community, often suffering from starvation and malnutrition.⁷⁶ The hospital accepted patients and gave free medical service.⁷⁷ From 1906 the hospital was financed from profits of the markets.⁷⁸

73 Testament Tjong A Fie. At october 20, 1920 Tjong A Fie signed a testament before notary D.J. Focquin de Grave. In the testament was stated that all his properties on Sumatra were put in the institution (yayasan) *Toen Moek Tong*. The goals of the yayasan were: Preservation of the ancestral temple/shrine and religious activities due the ancestral admiration. Living and education costs for male descendants in unlimited degree. The testament stressed out that he wished his wealth would be used to provide financial support for the education of talented young generation and financial aid for the disabled persons and the victims of natural disasters, regardless differences of their races, ethnic groups or religions. The foundation *Toen Moek Tong* was to be chaired by Mrs. Tjong A Fie, Lim Koei Yap. In China, Canton Moyan Moykew, Tjong A Fie also established a foundation named *Toen Moek Tong* which was part of the Medan foundation for the ancestral temple and religious activities. The Tjong A Fie testament proved to be an exact copy, with the only difference in names, of his uncles' testament, Tio Tiauw Siat (Notary Graafland, Medan, date 17-12-1914).

74 Yong 1992: 110.

75 Interview with Mrs. Lemye in Westende at 12-6-1992.

76 On September 5, 1890, the Deli Maatschappij (Company) provided land grants for the building of an asylum and at April 4, 1895 the Deli Maatschappij gave an additional grant for the building of a hospital. (*Gemeentebld* 30-1-1923)

77 The Foundation had three aims: to provide free hospital and medical care and medicines for poor Chinese; care for the poor and for orphans from both Chinese and Indigenous communities and third, to offer free burial services, in accordance with Chinese tradition, for the Chinese who passed away in the Chinese hospital. If Chinese housed in the asylum preferred to return to China they were given a free ticket from the government, plus one set of clothes and 10 dollar from Major Tjong A Fie. The money and clothes were sent to the place of birth of the poor person in China. (Letter of Mr. Schneider dated 12-2-1923, *Gemeentebld* 1923) For example in April 1920 186 Chinese were repatriated to China with the ship Van Waerwijk. (*Andalas* 24-4-1920)

78 *Gemeentebld* 30-1-1923; *Gemeentebld* 1920: 428.

The passing away of Tjong Yong Hian

On 10th September 1911, Tjong Yong Hian passed away. His final resting place was at the private graveyard in Kebon Boenga.⁷⁹ After his death Tjong Yong Hian was commemorated in Medan in different ways. A street was named after him, the Jalan Tjong Yong Hian. But the best-known memorial is the bridge over the Babura River, known even today as Tjong Yong Hian bridge, also called the Virtuous Bridge. In 1913 Tjong A Fie and the family of his deceased elder brother offered to build a bridge over the Babura River in commemoration of Tjong Yong Hian. The location of the bridge was decided by the Town Council to be at the junction of Calcuttastreet with the Babura River. The construction work was finished in 1916.⁸⁰ Tjong Yong Hian's estate had a value of fl.40 million, comparable to other Chinese business tycoons like Oei Tjong Ham in Semarang and Loke Yew in Singapore.⁸¹ His businesses and functions were left to Tjong A Fie.⁸² There was also a Tjong Yong Hian foundation. The grounds of Kebon Boenga near Tjong Yong Hian's graveyard were for years a point of discussion in the Town Council, as the municipality was pressing to expand the housing and sporting grounds on these lands. Finally a settlement was reached concerning destination and land rights.⁸³

4.2.2. Tjong A Fie (1860–1921)

“When one drives through Medan and asks, “To whom belongs this or that house?” the answer is: ‘to our Chinese Marquise of Carabas.’”⁸⁴

79 SP 12-9-1911; SP 19-9-1911; DC 11-9-1911; MvO Mackay 1931: 79.

80 In 1913 the bridge was mentioned for the first time when *De Sumatra Post* wrote that a ‘wealthy Chinese headman intended to offer something monumental to the city of Medan in commemoration of his deceased brother’. (SP 8-5-1913; MvO mayor Mackay 1931: 79; *Andalas*, 1-2-1917; SP 4-10-1918; Interview Mrs. Dusson – Tjong, Medan, 16-2-1995) The bridge was finished in 1916. *De Sumatra Post* wrote about the bridge: ‘Almost finished! The last hand is done to the heightened troittoir left and right. In the lanternfeet is chiselled (in translation): In commemoration to our father Tjong Yong Hian, Major of the Chinese in Medan, passed away at September 11, 1911, this bridge is build and offered to the Medan municipality, by his children, Tjong Han Lung, Tjong Huan Lung, Tjong Seng Lung’. (SP 5-9-1916)

81 His estate applied for immediate judgment. Mr. P.H. Schneider was the lawyer and representative of all the Tjong family members. The question was whether it was necessary to seal the estate of Tjong Yong Hian. (*Tjong Hung-nan and Tjong Jun*; SP 14-9-1911) (In 2015, fl.40 million would be around €440 million: <http://www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/themas/prijzen/cijfers/extra/prijzen-toen-nu.htm>)

82 Tjong Yong Hian owned real estate in Pekingstraat, in the street named after him - namely the Tjong Yong Hianstraat, the Foetsjangstraat, the Hainanstraat, the Amoystraat and the Kapiteinsweg. (*Gemeentebld* 1927: 315).

83 This foundation, established in 1933 at the site of the old meat market at Spoorstraat included 36 new kedehs. (SP 13-4-1933; *Gemeentebld*, mei 1922; *Gemeentebld* 2 Medan 1933 Afl. 28 Nrs. 176-181; *Gemeentebld* 2 Gemeente Medan 1934 Afl. 24 Nrs. 177-178; SP 1-3-1934).

84 *Koloniaal Weekblad*, 29-11-1906) Referring to the fairy tale of the booted cat and the marquis who owns everything.

Early life

Tjong A Fie (Chang Hung Nan) was, just like his brother Tjong Yong Hian, born in the town of Mei Hsien in Kwantoeng province, China. Tjong A Fie was born on 12th August 1860.⁸⁵ According to his daughter Mrs. Lemye, her grandfather Tjong did not work, he owned some land where people worked for him. He was a so-called “literator” and discussed matters concerning Chinese culture with his friends. The Tjong family was Hakka. Hakka were often culturally-orientated and many Hakka were artists. Tjong A Fie left China as the prospects for him in his father’s properties were not enough. He sailed to Sumatra in a *tongkang*, a rather small sailing vessel for forty to fifty passengers. On the boat he wore a blue cotton belt with a few silver coins as his capital. He arrived on Sumatra in 1875.⁸⁶ There are different stories about Tjong A Fie’s activities in Laboehan. Feldwick mentioned that upon his arrival in Laboehan Tjong A Fie opened a shop under the name Ban Joen Tjong.⁸⁷ However Tjong A Fie’s daughter Mrs. Lemye contradicts this, saying that her father had different jobs, and only later started his own business. For one thing, Tjong A Fie was only fifteen years of age when he arrived in Laboehan. According to Mrs. Lemye, her father upon his arrival met an Arab trader, who had a boat in Laboehan from where he sold atap and other products. Tjong A Fie had a talent for calculating, which he had learned from his mother. For some time, he also worked for a Chinese rice trader with a shop in Laboehan, who gave him his first real job, in the sense of generating a more-or-less stable income. From this job Tjong A Fie managed to save some money and started his own medicine shop in Laboehan. In that capacity he got acquainted to J.Th. Cremer, head administrator of the Deli Company, Sultan Mahmood Perkasa Alam Shah of Deli and Sultan Abdoel Aziz Abdoeldjalil Rachmat Sjah of Langkat.⁸⁸ According to Tjong A Fie’s son Tjong Kwet Liong, his father also worked for some time in an *opiumkit*, cleaning opium pipes and reselling used opium. Next Tjong A Fie entered into a cooperation with the brother of the Sultan of Deli.⁸⁹ In the biography of Tjong A Fie it is stated that shortly after his arrival in Laboehan, he along with two friends purchased a *kedeh*, and also made an agreement with the Dutch government to provide food supplies to the coolies who worked in Laboehan and Belawan. In 1882 Tjong A Fie acquired seven new houses in Laboehan.⁹⁰ We should keep in mind that because his older brother Tjong Yong Hian was already in Deli, Tjong A Fie gained access to a wide network of contacts.

85 Tjong A Fie alias Chang Hung Nan (Mandarin) alias Tsiong Tsiok Fie (Hokkian) (Godley 1981: 15; *De Indische Mercur* 8-10-1907)

86 Interviews Mrs. Lemye in Brussels at 13 March 1992 and in Westende on 12 and 13 June 1992.

87 Feldwick 1917: 1195.

88 J.Th. Cremer was from 1871 until 1883 head administrator of the Deli Company; later he became Minister of Colonies. (Pewartu Deli, 25-2-1926; Loderichs, Buiskool 1997:9)

89 Interview Tjong Kwet Liong 12-9-1992.

90 *Levensbeschrijving*

Family

On various occasions personal information appeared in the papers about marriages in the Tjong family and their social activities.⁹¹ Tjong A Fie married three times. His first wife, family name unknown, came from his home-town in China. She stayed behind in China. His second wife Mrs. Hiu (Zhou or Chew) of Penang, originally from Pontianak, passed away in 1894 at the age of thirty-two. She had given birth to one son and two daughters. In 1896 Tjong A Fie married for the third time, Lim Koei Jap (1879–1972) who came to play an important role in his career. She was a remarkable lady and strong personality.⁹² When she was betrothed, she was only fourteen, and had not received any schooling. After her marriage she took Dutch lessons.⁹³ Many people said that she was the driving force behind the career of her husband.⁹⁴ Together they had seven children, two daughters and five boys.⁹⁵ Tjong A Fie himself did not speak Dutch and spoke only broken Malay. For some years he had a private teacher for English lessons.⁹⁶

Business career

Around 1890 Tjong A Fie had moved to Medan where his business increased rapidly due to the acquired monopolies and his real estate business. These were the main source of his fortune. A few years later, around 1895, Tjong A Fie met the Dutchman Dolf Kamerlingh Onnes who would become his right-hand man and trusted employee and advisor.⁹⁷ Kamerlingh Onnes had come to Sumatra in the 1880's. He was the offspring of a prominent Groningen family,

91 SP 17-12-1900, 11-11-1912, 2-9-1918, 14-1-1915.

92 On January 10, 1923 Harm Kamerlingh Onnes met Mrs. Tjong A Fie and wrote: 'Left from the hall is a room and there is Mrs. Tjong A Fie in a black silk dress. She is a dark type and must have been beautiful in her youth.[...] with rings with big rubies, in the ears, a huge diamante.' (Buiskool 1999: 66).

93 She took Dutch lessons from the wife of the director of the MULO, one Mrs. van der Bee (Interview with Tjong Kwet Liong 12-9-1992). Mrs. Dusson said about her grandmother: 'She was a self made woman, she could read nor write. She was autodidact. When she returned from Switzerland she also spoke French. Dutch she spoke well, she read the Deli Courant, every day. Yes, she was a personality, she appeared everywhere. She was also always beautifully dressed. Her cloths were made at the firm of my late husband, the fashion house Maison Dusson.' (Interview Mrs. Dusson, 16-2-1995).

94 Mrs. Margaret Wee, granddaughter of Wee Swee Bee, close friend and business partner of Tjong A Fie, told about Mrs. Tjong A Fie: 'She was a common woman who spoke no foreign language, but she took English lessons, Dutch lessons, she dressed herself well before a meeting with the Governor. Because of his wife Tjong A Fie climbed up the social ladder and got all those privileges. In Malay they call this *dorong dari belakang* (push him from behind). She could entertain people. It were always the top people who came there. The governor, the mayor, the resident, etcetera. She was a stately, dignified woman. And very powerful.' (Interview with Mr. Tan Boen Djin and Mrs. Margaret Wee on 25 October 1995 in Medan).

95 Chang 1981: 19, 182; Franke 1988:137; Tjong Hung-nan and Tjong Jung-nan; Interview Mrs. Lemye in Brussels on 13-3-1992; Interview Mrs. Lemye in Westende on 12-6-1992.

96 Interviews Mrs. Lemye 13-3-1992, 12-6-1992.

97 Chang 1981: 46, 172.

from the north of the Netherlands. His brother Menso became a well-known painter. His brother Heike was very famous as he won the Nobel prize for physics in 1913 because of the discovery of the liquefying process for helium. When in 1906 Tjong A Fie, as the first Chinese to own a plantation in Sumatra, bought the rubber plantation Sie Boelan near Tebing Tinggi, he asked Dolf Kamerlingh Onnes to manage first Si Boelan, and later several other businesses. Tjong A Fie was the first Chinese on East Sumatra to employ Europeans for his businesses.⁹⁸ In 1910 Dolf started his own administration office in the Hüttenbachstraat, and managed most of Tjong A Fie's businesses such as the Medan hotel and the Si Boelan plantation, as well as another plantation company, China Kasih. In 1912 Kamerlingh Onnes became shareholder of China Kasih, owned by Tjong A Fie.⁹⁹

Under Si Boelan were different companies like Bandar Taloe and Bengabing.¹⁰⁰ Other plantation companies owned by Tjong A Fie were Soekaradja Cultuur Maatschappij,¹⁰¹ Algemeene Cultuur Maatschappij, Tjong A Fie Landen¹⁰² and the aforementioned China Kasih.¹⁰³ An overview of Tjong A Fie's plantations is presented in the appendixes 4.2. to 4.8.

Under the umbrella of these companies were other plantations or estates. By 1919, Tjong A Fie owned over twenty estates or was at least a major shareholder in them. In 1920 his annual income was estimated at fl.750,000.¹⁰⁴ He employed over 15,000 people.¹⁰⁵ Through his position as Chinese officer Tjong A Fie automatically became member of the Cultuurraad and the Town Council.¹⁰⁶ With Tjong A Fie we saw a combination of economic and political power, a phenomenon later labelled by Chinese communists as 'bureaucratic capitalism'.¹⁰⁷ In this context he was active in lobbying for abolition of the penal sanction, even if this was against the interests of the planters in general. At the plantations of Tjong A Fie the penal sanction was not in use. His coolies signed a contract but not under the penal code; in principle they could leave the plantation if they pleased. This was the reason why Tjong A Fie was not invited to participate in the committee established concerning the

98 Handboek 1924; Buischool 1999: 19-33, 253; Chang 1981:150; Buischool 1999: 272, 273; Interview Mrs. Lemye-Tjong, 15-9-1994; Verslag Handelsvereniging Medan, 1915,1916,1917.

99 Handboek, 1916, 1919; Buischool 1999: 19-33.

100 Handboek voor Cultuur - en Handels-ondernemingen in Nederlandsch Indië 1924; Buischool1999: 272,273.

101 Minutes Javasche Bank 13-10-1921.

102 Handboek 1924,1925; Buischool, 1999: 272,273.

103 Handboek 1925: 105.

104 (Indische Gids I 1919: 648). Those fl.750,000 (*Gemeentebld* II 1921: 563-566) would in 2013 have a value of €4,032,060. (<http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/calculate2-nl.php>)

105 Chang 1981:150; Buischool 1999: 272, 273; Interview Mrs. Lemye-Tjong, 15-9-1994; Verslag Handelsvereniging Medan, 1915,1916,1917.

106 SP 8-3-1909; 27-3; 29-3-1909; 6-4-1909.

107 The term bureaucratic capitalism was introduced by the Chinese Communist Party during the 1940s to depict the kind of capitalism that the Kuo Min Tang had created under its rule. (Conway, Terry, interviews Au Loong Yu, author of *China's Rise: Strength and Fragility* (November 7, 2012 - *Socialist Resistance* Resistance Books, IIRE, Merlin Press).

penal sanction, which was quite remarkable as he owned (or was the largest shareholder in) 23 plantations and herewith the largest private plantation owner in East Sumatra. To the *Indische Gids* this was puzzling:

*“Was the cause that his superintendent, Mr. Kamerlingh Onnes, took a try at one of his plantations to give all the coolies together five percent of the profit, which was the same as the assistants together, or the manager alone, received?” Kamerlingh Onnes also tried Ambonese assistants, who did not get the same as the Europeans but still shared with tantiemes. As a result Kamerlingh Onnes and Tjong A Fie were not popular with the planters.*¹⁰⁸

In spite of this criticism, Tjong A Fie was highly appreciated by the Dutch Government.¹⁰⁹ This was mainly because of his philanthropic activities, which will be dealt with later on.

As stated above Tio Tiauw Siat was a key figure in the Tjong brothers' business empire.¹¹⁰ Another important business partner for Tjong A Fie was the Hokkian Wee Swee Bee (Oei Soei Boe or Oei Soey Boe, 1860–1917). Wee Swee Bee had rubber estates in Malacca and real estate as well as an ice and sugar factory in Penang. In Medan he owned the Soey Tek Bie Department Store and Trading Company Limited as well as houses and plots of land and plantations.¹¹¹ Khoo Sean Kwe (Khoo Sian Ewe) from Penang was another close friend of Tjong A Fie. Tjong A Fie represented Khoo Sean Kwe in 1917 in the gambling farm in Sumatra.¹¹² Other contacts in Medan were Khoe Tjin Tek, Tan Tang Ho, Chang Pu Ching and the young Hiu Ngi Fen. In January 1917, Tjong A Fie initiated the establishment of the Batavia Bank in Batavia with as fellow shareholders the Major of the Chinese in Batavia, Khouw Kim An, and two other Chinese officers from Batavia. Tjong A Fie, Khouw Kim An and Lie Tjien-tjoen each owned two hundred shares. The starting capital would be fl.1 million financed by Tjong A Fie. In January 1918 Major Khouw Kim An and his fellow officers arrived in Medan to confirm the establishment of the bank.¹¹³ Upon the death of Tio Tiauw Siat in October 1917 Tjong A Fie became the major shareholder of the Deli Bank.¹¹⁴

108 *Indische Gids*, 1919, I: 648; Interview Tjong Kwet Liong Medan, 1992.

109 Mailrapport 93/17, 6-12-1916, Min. v. Kol. 1900-1963, Alg. Verbalen, 1719, ARA.

110 Tjong A Fie was also financial partner in Tio Tiauw Siat's Li Wang company. (De Bruin 1918: 45, 109; Godley 1993: 264; Li, 1984: section 4).

111 Wee Swee Bee's company Soey Tek Bie exploited the plantation Soengai Radja Kiri (Handboek 1911: 552; Handboek 1916: 1042; SP 31-12-1915).

112 SP 15-2-1917.

113 The other officers were: Captain Lie Tjian Tjoen, Captain Khoe A Fan, Lieutenant Laij Soen Hie and Lieutenant Oeij Kim Goen with their ladies. The bank started operation in June 1918. (*Andalus*, 16-1-1918, 24-1-1918, 15-6-1918; *Pewarta Deli*, 17-10-1917; Suryadinata, *Prominent Indonesian Chinese* 1995: 59,60; Chang 1981:143; Information granddaughter Khouw Kim An Mrs. L. Goei-Khouw)

114 (Levensbeschrijving) According to Li Songyan, Tjong A Fie purchased the Deli Bank obligations from Tio Tiauw Siat's fourth concubine for fl.400,000, becoming the major shareholder of Deli Bank. (Li Songyan

Also with the Sultans of Deli, Langkat and Serdang, the rulers of the three tobacco districts as well as Dutch leading personalities Tjong A Fie had very good relationships.¹¹⁵ The Sultan of Deli, Machmud Al Rasjid, even appointed Tjong A Fie as foster parent for several of his children.¹¹⁶ Tjong A Fie had excellent relations with J.Th. Cremer,¹¹⁷ as well as Dutch government officials, such as A.C.D. de Graeff, the later Governor General of the Netherlands Indies from 1926 until 1931, E.A. Zeilinga, president of the Java Bank, and W.J.M. Michielsen, former resident of the East Coast of Sumatra.¹¹⁸ In the Town Council Tjong A Fie cooperated with member Van den Brand in proposing the abolishment of the *rickshaws* in Medan.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, in 1918 the Sultan of Deli executed a deed of gift to the Medan municipality, transferring the right of ownership of the grounds of Medan to the municipality. As a consequence, the Medan municipality also became owner of the grounds of the markets and herewith had to deal with the grant holder, *in casu* the Tjong family.¹¹⁹ In 1919 the Town Council intended to pass new regulations concerning the control, management and use of the most important private markets. This was the result of its ultimate wish to abolish the private markets and replace them with municipal markets.¹²⁰ The old markets, however, were in operation till 1933 when a new central market was opened.¹²¹ The new market was located at the former race course at the Wilhelminastraat.

Tjong A Fie was the largest landowner in Medan.¹²² Around the turn of the century, Tjong A Fie owned about 75% of the real estate of the fast-growing city. He also practically owned the whole newly-built city of Tebing Tinggi as Harm Kamerlingh Onnes wrote in his letters in 1923. The information he received from his uncle Dolf about Medan ran as follows:

*"Almost all villa's here are property of the major and on the whole the major owned around ¾ of the city. We drive through quarters of Medan, that all belong to the Tjong family, this is a giant property, really a Marquise of Carabas."*¹²³

1984: 183-202)

115 *Pewarta Deli* 25-2-1926.

116 Interview Tengku Lukman Sinar 29-11-1995; Tjong A Fie needed the Sultan's help for the licence of markets, gambling houses, housing construction and bridges and other projects. For many years there was close cooperation between the two. (Interviews Mr. T.A. Nawarin 24-11-1992; Mrs. Lemye 12-6-1992)

117 Zandvliet 2002: 402; Interview Mrs. Lemye 13-3-1992.

118 *Deli Courant*, 4-2-1921; *Soerabaiasch Handelsblad* 19-4-1921.

119 *Gemeentebld* 20-7-1921; *Gemeentebld* Medan, 24-5-1922; *Gemeentebld* 1927: 7,9,10.

120 *Gemeentebld* 1920: 24, 25, 26; *Gemeentebld* Medan, 18-9-1919, nr. 1933; *Gemeentebld* 21-9-1920, no. 1967.

121 *Gemeentebld* 12-3-1928: 36; *Loderichs, Buiskool* 1997: 41; SP 23-1-1930.

122 MvO mayor Mackay of Medan 1933: 106-109; SP 10-9-1918, 25-9-1918.

123 *Buiskool* 1999: 32, 68, 74, 76.

Tjong A Fie had interests in the Parapat and Medan hotels. These distinctive businesses were combined in the Chong Lee Company.¹²⁴ His residential properties extended throughout the town of Medan.¹²⁵ Appendix 4.1 testifies that in 1920 Tjong A Fie owned houses in at least 16 streets all over Medan, which included villas and Chinese shop houses. These streets were located in the European, Chinese and Indian quarters, but not in the Indigenous area. This was due to the fact that the Sultan only gave out grants to Muslims, not to people of other religions.

The accounts on Tjong A Fie's dealings were not always positive as there were complaints about an insufficient cleaning service in the Indian kampong Kling (Madras) where he owned most of the houses.¹²⁶ In 1918 the Medan Town Council established a housing/rental commission, in which Tjong A Fie was nominated to be representative of the property owners, but in view of the perceived conflict of interest as the largest property owner in Medan, he resigned from the commission.¹²⁷ According to *Andalas* he could be quite lenient towards his tenants: When a tenant was not able to pay his rent he directly approached Tjong A Fie, who set him free of all his debts, at least according to *Andalas*.¹²⁸

Public office

His officership for the Chinese went quickly. Tjong A Fie was appointed in 1886 as head of the Chinese in Laboehan, followed in 1893 by an appointment as Lieutenant. In 1898 he was appointed as Captain *titulair*, which meant in title only, and in 1905 as Captain with full authority. After Tjong Yong Hian died in 1911, Tjong A Fie succeeded his brother as Major and thus became the leading representative of the Chinese in East Sumatra.¹²⁹ In that same year the Chinese revolution occurred leading to speculations as to who would succeed Tjong A Fie as Captain: would it be a young modern Chinese or an adherent of the old regime of which Tjong A Fie himself was seen a representative. However, Tjong A Fie himself cut his hair tail two days after his appointment as Major, herewith showing he choose the side of the

124 Wright 1909: 576; Handboek 1916: 1414; Handboek 1919: 1699; SP 28-4-1900; SP 30-11-1900.

125 MvO burgemeester Mackay 1931: 77,80; SP 23-5-1913; SP 6-6-1913; SP 24-7-1913; SP 20-10-1915; SP 3-1-1918; SP 26-2-1918; SP 27-2-1918; ; SP 10-9-1918; SP 25-9-1918; *Gemeentebblad* 1920: nr. 235; *Gemeentebblad* 10-1-1920; *Gemeentebblad* Medan 3-6-1920, nr. 295; *Gemeentebblad* Medan 28-6-1920; Nr. 315; *Gemeentebblad* 29-6-1920, nr. 1411; *Gemeentebblad* 16-8-1920: 137; *Gemeentebblad* 14-2-1922; *Pelita Andalas* 13-8-1927; *Gemeentebblad* 2, 1931: Afl. 14 Nrs 132-135; *Gemeentebblad* 2 1931: Afl. 13 Nrs 125-131; *Gemeentebblad* 2 1930: Afl. 10 Nrs 118-136; SP 13-8-1930; SP 21-8-1930; SP 3-11-1930; SP 28-9-1935.

126 SP 12-4-1915, 7-2-1916.

127 SP 12-7-1918; SP 15-7-1918; *Andalas*, 16-7-1918; Van Roosmalen in: Ravestein 2004: 182; Tillema 1922: 464; SP 10-9-1918; SP 25-9-1918; *Gemeentebblad* 16-8-1920: 137.

128 *Andalas* 6-4-1918.

129 DC 3-9-1898; 24-9-1898; Feldwick 1917: 1195; Kühr 1921: 3-5; SP 12-9-1911; *De Reflector Geïllustreerd Weekblad voor Ned.-Indië* Batavia February 1921: 149; De Bruin 1918: 111; SP 13-9-1916; DC 4-2-1921.

modern Chinese.¹³⁰ In the end two young modern Chinese were appointed: Lioe En Kon as new Captain (former Lieutenant), and Liong Soei Tin as Lieutenant (former Lieutenant in Belawan).¹³¹ Shortly after the Chinese revolution Tjong A Fie received the influential leader of the Straits Chinese British Association (SCBA) from Singapore, Lim Boen Keng. Lim came to Medan to promote cooperation with China, especially for infrastructural projects such as railroads like the Tjong brothers already did.¹³²

It was said that Tjong A Fie owed his great influence to his fabulous wealth. The Chinese looked up to and respected those countrymen who were successful in business and society. *De Sumatra Post* compared him in 1912 to the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph, who through his remarkable knowledge of persons and conditions as well as his diplomatic skills was able to keep the heterogeneous situation of his country together.¹³³ The Advisor for Chinese affairs, A.G. de Bruin, mentioned explicitly that the support of Tjong A Fie was important in managing to keep the Chinese population quiet, especially during the revolution of 1911, which caused much unrest in Medan in 1912.¹³⁴ Still many looked at him with respect and authority which he had acquired during the previous 20 years. Many remembered the intervention of Captain Tjong A Fie, when in December 1899, over one hundred Chinese coolies came to his house to complain about maltreatment and abuses of an assistant at the plantation Goenoeng Rintis.¹³⁵

In his function as officer Tjong A Fie was also a *de facto* judge over the Chinese community. At the end of the 1880s the districts of both Upper and Lower Deli were still united, and the entire small armed police force was under the *controleur* as the magistrate. Because it was impossible for the *controleur* to investigate all the police and criminal cases personally, he needed to delegate part of his authority. The Lieutenant for the Chinese, at that time Tjong A Fie, was put in charge of preliminary investigations concerning all police matters involving the Chinese. He was also four times per week present at the *politie rol* and, in case the preliminary investigation was done by himself, he of course was very well informed. The Lieutenant, in fact, was seen as imposing the verdicts. This greatly elevated his authority within the Chinese community. As a result, he was both hated and respected.¹³⁶ Whenever uprisings took place at the plantations, Tjong A Fie himself, accompanied by a small police force, went to the scene of unrest. It happened often that only by his showing up the coolies became calm. For example, in 1895 there was a coolie incident at the Patoembah estate of

130 SP 13-1-1912, 5-2-1912, 7-2-1912, 3-3-1912.

131 SP 5-2-1912.

132 SP 6-5-1912.

133 SP 20-11-1912.

134 De Bruin 1918: 110.

135 SP 21-12-1899.

136 SP 4-2-1921.

the Senembah Maatschappij. The controleur and Tjong A Fie went there, accompanied by some Indigenous police assistants. It came out that the agent of the gambling revenue farm was accused of false play, which had resulted in a fight. The representative of the farm and some other Chinese were afterwards imprisoned.¹³⁷

The consequence of all this was that over time Tjong A Fie became to be seen as an important character in the governmental operations dealing with the Chinese. Of course, this also meant that he could not always be objective, since in many cases he had background information. The government realized this, yet it had no choice but to rely on him, as this was often the only way to settle matters. In 1909, after a reorganization in the police force, the powers of Tjong A Fie were somehow restricted. The police were put under a separate head who conducted the preliminary investigation himself, making it no longer necessary to rely for this on a Chinese officer.¹³⁸ As said before as Major of the Chinese, Tjong A Fie was an appointed member of the Town Council. In 1918, however, he was replaced by Tan Boen An, who became the elected member for the group of Foreign Orientals in the Council. But in 1920 Tjong A Fie reappeared again in the Council, this time also as an elected member. In January 1920 Tjong A Fie was appointed a member of the food shortage commission. Consequently, he financially supported rice importation and in November of that year he was chosen a member of the financial commission.¹³⁹

Philanthropy

In 1920 Mr. G.F. van Tets, a Dutch author writing for Dutch newspapers, visited Tjong A Fie and wrote:

*“Tjong A Fie is known not only as one of the richest men of the Netherlands Indies, but also as a person, who practically always helps in case of need and in the field of philanthropy.”*¹⁴⁰

For the traditional Chinese, wealth was a symbol of status. Wealth could be used for upward movement in society and was seen as a token of success. After a Chinese businessman had accumulated considerable wealth he felt obliged to engage in charitable endeavors. This reflected the traditional Chinese concept of ‘getting from society and giving it back to society’.¹⁴¹ Appendix 4.9 shows the philanthropic projects of Tjong A Fie after 1911 in

137 Interview Mrs. Lemye 13-3-1992; DC 18-12-1895.

138 SP 4-2-1921.

139 Gemeentebld 2/1/1920; Gemeentebld 18-11-1920, no. 20.

140 Van Tets 1920:170.

141 Interview Mrs. Dusson – Tjong; Medan, 16-2-1995. Yong 1992: 110.

Medan and surroundings. These projects were: donations to or financing the building of three mosques, a Methodist school, an Indigenous teachers school, a technical school, a kindergarten, an orphanage, a school for midwives and the establishment of a leper colony. Furthermore, financing of roads and the clock tower for the townhall, the yearly donation of alms to poor Chinese at Chinese New Year and to the Muslims at the *Hari Raya*, the end of the fasting month, a foundation for old and poor Chinese, food and rice distribution, financing a museum, initiating the construction of the Baboera bridge. In China Tjong A Fie made donations to Hong Kong University, a school in Hainan, two hospitals, yearly donations to poor people in his hometown Mei Hsien, donations to the Red Cross and to three bridges. By far the most projects were in Medan, but a considerable number of them were in China.

Everywhere in Southeast Asia one could see successful Chinese businessmen who used their wealth for charitable purposes. Their bequests brought the wealthy businessmen high social esteem and prestige. In Medan the Tjong brothers were the best example of wealth begetting philanthropy. For Chinese in a strange country, philanthropy created goodwill and a good name. Also, according to the Confucianist philosophy a good person has a high morale and will also be successful. Success and morale are connected. After business success you are supposed to have to start social activities. Although monopolies like opium, gambling and arak were legal business, people spoke of *uang panas* (hot money) or even of “a curse on the money”.¹⁴² But if you engaged in social activities, “hot” money could “cool off” and get “clean”, for instance through being “given back to the people”.¹⁴³

Before 1911, when Tjong Yong Hian was still alive, Tjong A Fie had donated to most social projects together with his brother. At Chinese New Year all poor Chinese persons in Medan received a gift of a set of new clothes.¹⁴⁴ In Medan in 1905, 6,397 Chinese lived, and in 1912 it had increased to 10,997.¹⁴⁵ If half of the Chinese population was poor in 1912 this was still over five thousand people getting these gifts of clothes and money. As mentioned above, to the poor Muslim population Tjong A Fie gave money during the end of the fasting month. *Pewartar Deli* wrote in 1917 that this was an amount of at least fl.5,000. Tjong A Fie was beloved by the Muslim people as he was the only non-Muslim in Medan who gave money to the poor at the end of the fasting month.¹⁴⁶ In their hometown Mei

142 Interview Mrs. Seah Peng Ee, granddaughter Tjong A Fie, Singapore 19-10-1993.

143 Yong 1992: 110.

144 Kühr 1921: 3-5; Interviews Mrs. Lemye in Brussels on 13-3-1992 and in Westende on 12-6-1992.

145 *Verslag Handelsvereniging Medan* 1912: 9.

146 (*Pewartar Deli* 27-7-1917) The Malay journalist Mohammad Said, founder in 1945 of the Daily Paper *Waspada* remembered this gift on *Hari Raya*. Hundreds, thousands of Malayu, Javanese and other Indigenous queued up in a long row in front of the Tjong A Fie mansion to receive their money. (Mohammad Said, interview 19-11-1994). From around 1916 Tjong A Fie started with this distribution. (Andalas, 15-6-1920)

Hsien in China, Tjong Yong Hian and Tjong A Fie together, and after 1911, Tjong A Fie alone, donated yearly clothes plus five yuan to everybody of over sixty years at Chinese New Year.¹⁴⁷ With his philanthropy Tjong A Fie also distinguished himself from many other capitalists, who did not.¹⁴⁸ On various occasions the Dutch government conferred royal distinctions on Tjong A Fie, and he also received decorations from his homeland China. When there was a big flood in the home province Kwantoeng in 1893, Tjong A Fie donated to the victims. For the philanthropic activities in Kwantoeng both brothers were raised to the rank of *Mandarin*.¹⁴⁹

Tjong A Fie's daughter Mrs. Lemye told that her father was a social person and paid reasonable wages to his employees. She also told that one of the most difficult things for her father to do was cut his hair tail, when in 1912 the government of the new Republic of China ordered all Chinese worldwide to do so.¹⁵⁰ He had an expression about the differences between rich and poor:

“we have ten fingers but they are not all of the same length”.

With this he meant that equality does not exist, it might be an ideal, but it is not reality. According to Mrs. Lemye the twenty-six commandments of Confucius were important for him, this was the basis for his moral attitude. He donated not only to Buddhist organizations but also to other religions, as well as to related schools.¹⁵¹ As mentioned before this philanthropy to all religions was also explicitly stated in his will.¹⁵² Examples of these were land for the first English Methodist school in Medan,¹⁵³ an orphanage for the Salvation Army and the building for the Girls' school of the *Sarikat Goeroe* (Teacher organisation) in Medan.¹⁵⁴

Opinions about Tjong A Fie

Many persons expressed their opinion about Tjong A Fie. The well-known lawyer J. van den Brand, author of the brochure *De milloenen uit Deli*, praised Tjong A Fie based on his

147 Li Songyan 1984: 183-202; Tjong Hung-nan and Tjong Jung-nan; Feldwick 1917: 1195.

148 Kühr 1921: 3-5; *Andalas*, 22-5-1917; 14-8-1917.

149 Kühr E. 1921: 3-5.

150 Interviews with Mrs. Lemye on 13-3-1992, 12-6-1992; Interview Mrs. Seah Peng Ee 19-10-1993.

151 In the house of Tjong A Fie there was one statue of Kwan Tie I (Giandi, the tutelary deity of business). The family altar was very important (Interview with Mrs. Lemye 13-3-1992; Interview with Tjong Kwet Liong 12-9-1992).

152 Testament Tjong A Fie

153 Chang 1981, 62; Ward 1915 .

154 Feldwick 1917:1195; SP 25-11-1915; MvO mayor Mackay 1931:145.

experiences with him as member of the Landraad and of the *Magistraatsgerecht*.¹⁵⁵ As said before Van den Brand cooperated with Tjong A Fie in the Town Council for the abolition of the rickshaws.¹⁵⁶ In 1917 in *Andalas* an outspoken appeared article about Tjong A Fie:

*“One of the big wheels in the money factory of Deli is Tjong A Fie [...] the source of his money originates from gambling and opium [...] Because at the estates the money also comes from gambling and opium that bind the coolies to the estates. Is that not bad money? The Europeans who criticize him are hypocrites.”*¹⁵⁷

This article appeared uncensored. Obviously, it was a reaction to Tjong A Fie’s European critics. So, according to the Chinese newspaper *Andalas* the Europeans schooled in morality, in criticizing Tjong A Fie, were hypocrites. As Assistant Resident and later as Governor of East Sumatra S. Van der Plas often met with Tjong A Fie in the local councils, the Town Council and the Cultuurraad, both presided over by Van der Plas. In 1916 Governor Van der Plas wrote to the Governor General in Buitenzorg a secret message in which he asked a Royal Distinction for Tjong A Fie:

*“As Your Excellency knows, I regard Tjong A Fie as one of the most remarkable among the prominent names in these colonies. With his great gifts of head and heart, and his special capacities, if he were a Dutchman, every position or function would be within reach for him.”*¹⁵⁸

As just hinted at by *Andalas* there also were critical sounds. After the socialist parlementarian H.H.van Kol had visited Medan in 1913 he made the following negative comments in the book *Drie maal dwars door Sumatra* about Tjong A Fie:

“Almost all the ground, where the city of Medan has been built, is owned by the Deli Maatschappij and the Captain (sic.) Chinese, without whose cooperation it is practically impossible to build or buy a house. With this powerful Mongol, once a poor coolie (sic.), I made a tour through Medan to visit several Chinese institutions. [...] I saw many times Chinese coolies gamble their hard earned wages away in the

155 Landraad 1887. Members Tjong Yong Hian, Tjong A Fie. (*Regeerings Almanak voor Nederlands-Indië* 1887: 109; Letter of J. Van den Brand to the Minister of Colonies in Den Haag. Rijswijk, 29-3-1904. *Ministerie van Koloniën, 1905-1963*, doosnr. 290, 28-1-1905).

156 The Chinese population saw this profession as humiliating, as all the rickshaw pullers were Chinese. (*Andalas* 13-8-1918)

157 *Andalas* 14-8-1917.

158 Mailrapport no. 93/17, Governor van der Plas, 6 December 1916) (Min. v. Kol. 1900-1963. Alg. Verbalen, doosnr. 1719.

*gamble houses of the Captain, who is also farmer of the gamble farm [...] After I had made some remarks about the negative effects of opium, I saw ... that my remarks were not heard by him. Those who come to the dens to smoke opium are the poor; those who respect themselves enjoy the tjandoe (opium) in their private house, or in the numerous brothels (someone told me 30?) in which the incomes of the female workers is of much interest for the millionaire.”*¹⁵⁹

Seven years later, in December 1920, there was a discussion in the Dutch parliament concerning a royal distinction for Tjong A Fie. The Dutch government intended to bestow on Tjong A Fie a decoration as Officer in the Order of Orange Nassau. The socialist Member of Parliament L.M. Hermans suggested in the parliament to abolish the system of royal decorations and took the case of Tjong A Fie as an example. According to Hermans it was not suited to offer a decoration to someone who had made his fortune in the opium trade. Hermans cited from Van Kol's aforementioned book, in which Tjong A Fie was described as a harsh, tough businessman, who also exploited brothels together with his opium sales.¹⁶⁰ In response there appeared in the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* of 12 december 1920 an article by A.G. de Bruin, the former Government Official for Chinese Affairs on Sumatra's Eastcoast. De Bruin gave a short but warm response in favour of Tjong A Fie.

*“Concerning certain houses as Mr. Hermans had mentioned, this was simply not true.”*¹⁶¹

Regarding the opium farm, De Bruin stated that in the legal profession of opium farmer there was nothing to be furious about. Just as he saw no reason to look down at the owner of a jenever (Dutch gin) brewery. It is not that he wanted to stimulate using the product, but this had no relation with the person, according to De Bruin.

159 Van Kol, H.H. *Driemaal dwars door Sumatra en zwerftochten door Bali* door H.H. van Kol. Rotterdam 1914: 64.

(Nb Tjong a Fie in 1913 was a Major, not Captain, and he did not arrive as coolie.)

160 Handelingen Tweede Kamer, 8-12 and 10-12-1920, stemming motie L.M. Hermans.

161 *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 12 december 1920.



Tjong A Fie and his wife Lim Koei Jap on the occasion of the jubilee in 1916.
Foto collection Maximilienne Lemye

De Bruin continued:

*“One can put persons in the framework of their time, from this point of view the value of the Major of the Chinese, Mr. Tjong A Fie, once the history of Deli as a whole is written, can hardly be overestimated. Especially as a reward for everything, for his restless labour in the district Sumatra’s Eastcoast and also his support of Dutch interests, I support the government’s intention to give Mr. Tjong A Fie the decoration criticized by Mr. Hermans.”*¹⁶²

The Dutch parliament rejected Mr. Herman’s proposal of abolishing the system of royal decorations by a vote of 27 to 12. Minister of Colonies de Graaff defended the decoration of Tjong A Fie based on his merits for the public in general and the government in particular.¹⁶³ On 22nd January 1920 Tjong A Fie received his royal decoration.¹⁶⁴ As Mr. De Bruin mentioned Tjong A Fie was not involved in the business of brothels, this was confirmed by later sources such as Tengku Lukman Sinar, grandson of the Sultan of Serdang, as well as by Mr. and Mrs. Tan Boen Djin, granddaughter and son of Tjong A Fie’s business partners.¹⁶⁵ They said that Tjong A Fie certainly did not want his name to be spoiled by the image of prostitution. The fact that brothels are mentioned is probably because there often were brothels near opium dens but these were not operated by the same owner.

On 11th September 1916, Tjong A Fie celebrated his jubilee of thirty years’ service as Chinese officer for the government of the Netherlands Indies. The date 11 September had been chosen in memory of his brother Tjong Yong Hian, who had passed away on that date in 1911. The whole town was affected by this jubilee, that lasted for three days.¹⁶⁶ Every ethnic group in the city as well as official delegates came to congratulate Tjong A Fie. On the day of the jubilee all offices and shops were closed.¹⁶⁷ *De Sumatra Post*:

“Never before was there such a mass of people at the Esplanade as this evening of the second day when the fireworks were lighted. Ten thousands of people were gathered

¹⁶² *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 12 december 1920.

¹⁶³ DC 14-12-1920, 19-12-1920, 23-12-1920, 18-1-1921.

¹⁶⁴ An official reception followed: ‘On the occasion of the decoration as Officier in de Orde van Oranje Nassau, Mr. Tjong A Fie, honorary adviser of Chinese affairs and Major of the Chinese in Medan, at Saturday, 22 January in the morning at ten o’clock at his residence (Kesawan) there will be a reception.’ (DC 19-1-1921).

¹⁶⁵ Interview Tengku Lukman Sinar 29-11-1995 in Medan; Interview with Mr. Tan Boen Djin and Mrs. Margaret Wee on 25-10-1995 in Medan.

¹⁶⁶ SP 13-9-1916; *De Reflector* 1916: 1048-1050; A memorandum for 30 year’s cultivation in *Nanyang* of Dr. Chang Yoh Shen 1921; DC 4-2-1921.

¹⁶⁷ SP 1-7-1916, 5-9-1916, 10-9-1916, 11-9-1916, 13-9-1916.

*to see the spectacle. Remarkable was the atmosphere of togetherness of all the citizens of Medan, without distinction of race or ethnic group.”*¹⁶⁸

One year later, Tjong A Fie received a honorary doctorate from Hongkong University, confirming his image as *gentleman merchant*.¹⁶⁹

The passing away of Tjong A Fie

Tjong A Fie died suddenly on 4th February 1921. At that moment the Deli Bank was overdrawn to the amount of fl.7 million, an amount paid back by the family over the next twenty years. As a consequence of the economic crisis of 1920, rubber prices were at a low, and the Deli Bank came into financial problems. This Deli Bank disaster seriously affected Tjong's business, because of rumors that Tjong A Fie was broke. One source mentions rumours of a bad check of fl.300,000 and a rush on the bank of Tjong A Fie.¹⁷⁰ This is however not verified in any contemporary source.

The *Soerabaiasch Handelsblad* was very cynical about the bankruptcy of the Deli Bank stating that it was the family bank of Tjong A Fie and his family and friends.¹⁷¹ This statement was more or less confirmed by the family. According to Tjong A Fie's daughter Mrs. Lemye, the Deli Bank failed because of poor administration.¹⁷² *De Indische Mercur* wrote that the Deli Bank was in ruin because of incompetent management; because of over fl.7 million of debts there was insufficient liquidity.¹⁷³ According to Tjong A Fie's other daughter Queeny Chang, the bank's overdrafts were the fault of Tjong Kun Tat, son of Tjong Yong Hian, the manager of the Deli Bank.¹⁷⁴ The Java Bank was the first creditor. An investigation showed that the Deli bank had used the money from the Java Bank for other businesses, plantations, real estate and the railway.¹⁷⁵ A special general meeting for the shareholders of the Deli Bank was held on 8th March 1921, in which it was decided that the company would be liquidated and the Java Bank in Medan was appointed as liquidator. From Monday 14th March 1921 the bank would reopen again from 9 o'clock in the morning till 12 o'clock noon except on Sundays and holy days.¹⁷⁶ The liquidation was carried out in cooperation

168 SP 11-9-1916, 13-9-1916 *De Reflector* 1916 1048–1050; Chang 1981: 136.

169 Interview Mrs. Lemye 13-3-1992. *Levensbeschrijving*; Mailrapport, 93/17, doosnr. 1719 ARA; MvO Mackay 1933 KITLV Leiden; Chang 1981: 75-77,182; Franke 1988:137,139; *Andalas* 13-1-1917; Feldwick 1917: 1195; Kühr 1921: 3-5; Godley 1981: 129.

170 Li Songyan 1984: 183-202.

171 *Soerabaiasch Handelsblad*, 19-4-1921.

172 Interviews with Mrs. Lemye-Tjong 28-8-1998.

173 *Indische Mercur* 8-4-1921.

174 Chang 1984: 167.

175 Claver 2006: 366.

176 *Andalas* 8-3-1921.

with Mr. Kamerlingh Onnes who, through the sale of plantations and houses of the Tjong family, was able to solve the problem. By 1926 the process of the liquidation of the Deli Bank was finished.¹⁷⁷ In 1925 Tjong A Fie's businesses were merged into the company Toen Moek Toeng in Medan and in his native village Mei Hsien in Kwantoeng province.¹⁷⁸

The funeral occurred one and a half month after Tjong A Fie's passing, on 28th March 1921. A special article about Tjong A Fie's funeral was featured in the magazine *De Aarde en haar Volken*. Herein it was described how for over one month the preparations had been made for the funeral. The date of the funeral was decided by the priests at the temple. The most fortunate date should be, according to the priests, the 17th of the second month of the Chinese annual era. In the period between death and funeral the family held prayers and mourned, with many sacrifices in order to chase away bad spirits and invite the good spirits. In this way they hoped to support the soul of the deceased in his migration to another world. To support the deceased materially, they produced a sedan chair, a house, a car, all made of bamboo and paper. Two days before the funeral all these paper products and pieces of paper-art were burned, so that, according to the counting of the priests, everything was prepared for a good arrival in the hereafter. During the mourning period it was not allowed for the family to pay attention to worldly matters. They had to dress in rough cotton clothes and were forbidden to prepare food, meaning that others had to provide it.¹⁷⁹

During that time Tjong A Fie laid in state in his home. He was buried in the private cemetery near his country house in Pulo Berayan. In Chinese traditional belief the deceased should be given as elaborate and expensive a funeral and grave as the family could afford.¹⁸⁰ Queeny Chang wrote how Dolf Kamerlingh Onnes had promised Mrs. Tjong A Fie that no

177 The remaining plantations were put in the company Tjong A Fie Lands and the China Kasih company.

The houses of the late Tjong A Fie were put into a new company with capital shares equal to the value of the houses. All shares would be handed over by the heirs of Tjong A Fie to the Java Bank as guarantee for their debts to the Java Bank. The direction of this company would be held by the Administration Office Kamerlingh Onnes. 11 plantations with a capital of fl.4 million would remain under direction of the Kamerlingh Onnes Office. The agent of the Java Bank would be commissioner (Minutes Javasche Bank 11-10-1921, 13-10-1921). At his last visit to Medan in 1923 Kamerlingh Onnes discussed with Mrs. Tjong A Fie how to solve the debts of the Tjong family. (Minutes Java Bank: 14-3-1923; Buischool 1999: 99, 259, 260). The Si Boelan Company consisting of 10 plantations, was then de facto already in hands of the Java Bank. (Interview Mrs. Lemye, 28-8-1998; Chang 1984: 174; Handboek 1925: 961). The family had decided to sell the company Si Boelan to cover the debts of the Deli Bank. The debit at the bank was around fl.8 million. According to Mrs. Lemye, Kamerlingh Onnes sold plantations for around fl.5 million to solve the credit. After that the debit stayed at around fl.6 million. (Interview Mrs. Lemye 12-6-1992). (Chang 1981: 46, 47; Buischool 1999: 272, 273; SP 8-7-1926). The debts of the bank were paid back during the next 20 years. (Interview Mrs. Lemye 15-9-1994).

178 Chang 1984: 172.

179 Andrae, G. *De Aarde en haar Volken*, jaargang 57-58, 1920-22. 'Een Chineesche Begrafenis te Medan.'

180 Willmott 1960: 199.

expense would be spared for the funeral.¹⁸¹ This showed to be the case at the day of the funeral on March 28, 1921.¹⁸² A granddaughter, Mrs. Lim, also remembered the impressive funeral:

*“We were not allowed to wear shoes or sandals. Must be barefeet. It was real traditional. I still remember; I was crying so much, not because I felt sorry for Tjong A Fie, but because I was so tired. If you realize, I was 11 years old, I was pinched by my mother; because I cried because I could not stand it. The coffin was carried on the shoulders to Pulau Berayan, 7 kilometres all the way.”*¹⁸³

The illustrated journal *De Aarde en haar Volken* reported:

*“From far it looked like ships steering a middle course with coloured sails. Among these banners were beautifully embroidered silk standards with Chinese characters on which texts about the good life of the deceased... There was a sea of banners, totally around seven hundred.”*¹⁸⁴

After the arrival of the procession at the gate of the country house in Poelau Brayan, Mr. Kamerlingh Onnes thanked everybody who had accompanied the Major to his last resting place, because only the family and Chinese inhabitants would accompany the deceased to his grave. Photographers continued taking photos until the very end. The funeral was the talk of the town.¹⁸⁵ The cortege was one kilometre in length.¹⁸⁶ A film made during the funeral was shown in the Deli Bioscoop on 6th, 7th and 9th July 1921.¹⁸⁷ After his death a new road was named after him, the Tjong A Fie road (Jalan Cakra).¹⁸⁸

In 1926 the Tjong A Fie family left for Switzerland in support of the tuberculosis cure of Lim Nee Kar, father-in-law of the eldest daughter Tjong Foek Yin. The family returned to Medan in 1932. In 1981 Tjong Foek Yin (Queeny Chang) published her autobiographical *Memories of a Nonya*, about her life as the daughter of Tjong A Fie. In the 1920s and 1930s the youngest daughter Tjong Sze Yin, went to the conservatorium in Geneva and in 1950 established the music school Sekolah Musik Murni in Medan.¹⁸⁹ After the Second

¹⁸¹ Chang 1981: 174.

¹⁸² Andraea, G. ‘Een Chineesche Begrafenis te Medan’ in: *De Aarde en haar Volken*, jaargang 57-58, 1920-22; DC 26-3-1921; SP 26-3-1921; Interview Mrs. Lemye, 15-9-1994; Chang 1981: 175.

¹⁸³ Interview Mrs. Lim Kim Jin, 27-10-1992.

¹⁸⁴ Andraea, G. ‘Een Chineesche Begrafenis te Medan’ in: *De Aarde en haar Volken*, jaargang 57-58, 1920-22; DC 29-3-1921.

¹⁸⁵ SP 28-3-1921.

¹⁸⁶ DC 29-3-1921.

¹⁸⁷ Interview Mrs. Lemye, 12-6-1992; SP 4-4-1921; SP 6-7-1921.

¹⁸⁸ MvO mayor Mackay 1931: 109.

¹⁸⁹ Buiskool, “The Grand Lady of Music uit Medan” *Azie Down Under*, autumn 2016: 36,37,38.

World War the family remained living in the Tjong A Fie mansion in Medan. The Tjong A Fie plantations and real estate were sold over the intervening years. The house in Kesawan street is nowadays open to the public as a museum.

4.2.3. Khoe Tjin Tek (1876–1969)

Tjong A Fie's successor as Major of the Chinese of Medan was Khoe Tjin Tek, appointed in 1922. Khoe was active in the timber business, housing construction, and tax monopolies and he was an importer and commission agent in Medan. He founded the Chinese bank Chung Hwa Shang He (Chung Hwa Shang Yeh), established two schools in Medan and was well known for his philanthropy. Khoe Tjin Tek's son Khoe Koen Eow was ahead of his time with one of the very first film studios on Sumatra, the Cine Art Film studio in Medan.

Early life

Khoe Tjin Tek (Qiu Qingde; Khoe Tjeng Tak) was born in 1876 to his parents, Khoe Teng Ko (1849–1893) and Kwa Siew Kie in the village of Har Yiap in the Hai-Teng district of Zhangzhou county of Fujian Province.¹⁹⁰ When he was a young boy, the family left China and went to Penang, British Malaya. From there they moved to Laboehan on the East coast of Sumatra, and then later to Medan where they started a small timber business. Their business allowed the Khoe family to travel back and forth between Penang and Medan.¹⁹¹ His father Khoe Teng Ko became Lieutenant of the Chinese in Laboehan, between 1887 and 1893.¹⁹² Khoe Tjin Tek must have learnt Mandarin in the 1880s. He did not speak Dutch.¹⁹³ Upon the death of his parents Khoe Tjin Tek decided to settle permanently in Medan, where he managed his parents' business and property.¹⁹⁴ In 1895 Khoe Tjin Tek married Lim Pek Yen. They had three sons and two daughters. There is little information available about Lim Pek Yen.¹⁹⁵ Khoe Tjin Tek's son Khoe Khoen Hoei described how his father had started his business:

190 This was written in a letter from Khoe Khoen Hoei (born in 1909), youngest son of Khoe Tjin Tek. (Khoe Khoen Hoei 1992) Other sources mention 1875 as his birth year (Suryadinata 1995: 48; Tan Ee Leong 1970; Persoonlijkheden 1938).

191 (Khoe Khoen Hoei 1992). Grandson Eddy Khoe gives another version as he stated that his grandfather came from China at the age of six. Then he was adopted by the Khoe family and when his adopted parents died, he was left penniless. (Eddy Khoe in 1991 in his film compilation about the Khoe family).

192 Wright 1909: 580; Persoonlijkheden 1938.

193 Tan Ee Leong 1970; Interview Tan Ai Lin 1993.

194 Khoe Khoen Hoei 1992.

195 Except in 1918 when Mrs. Khoe Tjin Tek was involved in a traffic accident in Tanjung Morawa near Medan. (Andalas 28-9-1918).



KhoeTjinTek in the 1940s.
Foto collection D.A. Buiskool

My father was a born businessman. As a young boy in Laboehan, he reared ducks and made a profit by selling duck eggs. 196

When Khoe Tjin Tek grew up, he followed his father and travelled between Penang and Medan, where he learned about commercial trading. After the death of his parents, he had to struggle alone to continue the timber business between Medan and Penang. With the prospering of the Deli tobacco industry, the housing construction expanded, as did Khoe's timber business. Khoe had close connections with Chinese businessmen in Malaya and Singapore.¹⁹⁷ He established the Ban Seng Tek (or Ban Teng) grocery store, dealing in timber, food supplies and other necessities for the estates.¹⁹⁸ From 1900 onwards Khoe Tjin Tek advertised his timber business in *De Sumatra Post*. His company was located opposite the Hüttenbach company in the Hüttenbachstraat.¹⁹⁹ His son Khoe Khoen Hoei wrote that as the business prospered, his father started another business in Singapore, called Lian Tin & Company, where he went into partnership with a relative, Khoe Kok Tin. Lian Tin & Co. was a commission agency, supplying every item ordered by the merchants in Medan paid on a commission basis. His core business however remained housing construction and wood trading.²⁰⁰

Business career

In 1909 Khoe Tjin Tek was the owner of a flourishing firm called Kang Chan, a company of ironmongers and timber merchants. The headquarters of Kang Chan was in Medan, with branches in Belawan and Bindjei, in Deli, and at Perak in the Federated Malay States. In Arnold Wright's *Twentieth Century Impressions of Netherlands India*, Khoe Tjin Tek was described as well-known, smart, a modern man of business in the East Coast of Sumatra.²⁰¹ Grandson Eddy Khoe told in his film compilation that Khoe Tjin Tek also owned fruit plantations and a fish farm and was also the licensed importer for Graham and Studebaker cars.²⁰²

196 Khoe Khoen Hoei 1992.

197 Another source mentions that Khoe's first job was that of rent collector, while he was still a teenager (Tan Ee Leong, *Fuiian Wenxian*, no. 10, 1970 pp. 42–44).

198 Khoe Khoen Hoei San Francisco, letter of 3-1-1992.

199 SP 31-12-1900; SP 19-2-1909; SP 24-2-1909; *Handboek* 1916, 1919, 1925, 1933; Khoe Khoen Hoei San Francisco, letter of 3-1-1992.

200 Lian Tin & Co. imported goods from all over the world, including Tiger (balm?), Moon and Star trademark, wheat flour from Australia, Crisco products from the U.S.A., and served as Graham Paige's automobile agent.' (Khoe Khoen Hoei San Francisco, letter of 3-1-1992).

201 Wright 1909: 580; SP 24-2-1909; SP 7-12-1909; SP 7-3-1905.

202 (Eddy Khoe 1991) In 1920 Khoe Tjin Tek had an estimated income of fl.52,000. (*Gemeentebld* II 1921: 563–566) In 2013 this would be a value of € 279556. (<http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/calculate2-nl.php>)

In 1904 Khoe Tjin Tek established the Chong (Chung) Hwa Shang Yeh Trading Company, and in 1913 the Chung Hwa Shang Yeh Chinese Bank.²⁰³ Khoe Tjin Tek was president director and his business partner Hoen Hwat Kim (Oen Huat Kim) director.²⁰⁴ The Chung Hwa Shang Yeh bank took over the majority of the shares of the Deli Bank after the latter failed in 1921.²⁰⁵ In 1925 the Chung Hwa Shang Yeh Company build a new office in the Kesawan. The Chinese paper *Tjin Po* wrote that the bank flourished well under direction of Khoe Tjin Tek and Oen Huat Kim.²⁰⁶ In 1928 the Chung Hwa Sheng Yeh Chinese bank in Medan celebrated its fifteen years anniversary.²⁰⁷ In 1939 the company advertised as bank and insurance company with agents all over the Netherlands Indies and the British Straits Settlements.²⁰⁸

Khoe Tjin Tek's main business partner was the Hokkian Oen Huat Kim (circa 1877–1940) who originated from Nan An Area in Fujian, China. Oen Huat Kim was an eccentric character always wearing a hat and carrying an umbrella, he never drove a car and he never went abroad. He had sixteen wives (this meant one official wife and many concubines) and many children and grandchildren. For transportation he sometimes used a sedan chair carried by four coolies.²⁰⁹ Oen Huat Kim was not known as a sociable figure, but nevertheless very rich. He owned the Hok Hwa Cinema (Capitol Cinema) in the Hakkastraat and the Royal Cinema in the Kapiteinsweg. The clientele of the Royal cinema were mainly Chinese and Indigenous.²¹⁰ His company with his land and houses²¹¹ was named the Foundation Chew Way Kong (Swee Wan Tong for housing development).²¹² As a large shareholder and director

203 The Chung Hwa Shang Yeh Bank started with a capital of fl.1 million. *De Sumatra Post* of March 6, 1913, mentioned that the Bank and the Company Chung Hwa Shang Yeh would engage in banking affairs and insurance (fire and marine insurance). Their office was in the Hüttenbachstraat (Jl. A. Yani 7), at first in the office of Khoe Tjin Tek. The bank opened on April 1. (Handboek 1916: 1018; 1919: 902; Persoonlijkheden, 1938; SP 6-3-1913).

204 SP 31-3-1913; SP 25-4-1913; Handboek 1916, 1919, 1925; Interview Hiu Kian Jin 4-11-1996; Interviews with Tan Boen Djin 29-7-2000, 11-8-200, 22-8-2000.

205 Vleming, 1925: 230.

206 *Gemeentebld* 26-10-1925; 16-11-1925; *Tjin Po* 3-7-1925.

207 (*Pewartu Deli*, 2-8-1928; SP 26-2-1934) N.V. Chunghwa Shang Yeh had agents and correspondents in Amoy, Hongkong, Penang, Singapore, Malacca, Rangoon, Batavia, Semarang, Soerabaja, Palembang, Shanghai and Kuala Lumpur (Veersema 1939: n.p). The bank still exists, since 1962 under the name Bank Kesawan..

208 Veersema 1939: N.V. Chunghwa Shangyeh advertisement part (no page numbers, in part zakenindex.

209 Part of the information about Oen Huat Kim was collected via his granddaughter and via the Tan and Hiu families. Interview Hiu Kian Jin 4-11-1996; Interview Mrs. Oen Iem Mie, grand-daughter of Oen Huat Kim 19-1-2004; Interview Tan Boen Djin: 22-8-2000.

210 *Gemeentebld* 13-4-1921; *Gemeentebld* 1925: 153; Interview Hiu Kian Jin 25-10-1996, 4-11-1996; Interview Mrs. Oen Iem Mie, grand-daughter Oen Huat Kim 19-1-2004.

211 The Hokkian graveyard at the Binjaiweg (Jalan Gatot Subroto) was on the land of Oen Huat Kim. Later on he owned land (in long lease) at the Emmastraat (Jl. Yose Rizal), Frederik Hendrikstraat (Jl. Tilak) and in the Sumatrastraat (Jalan Sumatra). (Interview Hiu Kian Jin 25-10-1996, 4-11-1996; *Gemeentebld* 2 Gemeente Medan Jaar 1940 Afl. 1 Nrs 1).

212 *Gemeentebld* 9-8-1920, no. 360; *Gemeentebld* 16-11-1927.

for over twenty five years Oen Huat Kim was involved in the aforementioned trading company and bank Chung Hwa Shang Yeh from the founding in 1913.²¹³ In his position as Major of the Chinese Khoe Tjin Tek was automatically appointed as head of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, but he thought it more appropriate if there was a chosen chairman and proposed his business partner Oen Huat Kim for that function, who thus became the first elected chairman of the Chamber in 1923.²¹⁴ Oen Huat Kim was also chairman of the Hokkian Hoa Hwe Koan, the society of the Hokkian clan in Medan.²¹⁵ After his death, probably around 1940, he was succeeded by his son Oen Tsjing Hoo.²¹⁶

Like other leading Chinese entrepreneurs, Khoe Tjin Tek invested in several revenue farms like the salt monopoly for Bagan Si Api Api.²¹⁷ In 1909 he obtained the monopoly for slaughtering pigs in the sub-district Simeloengoen and Karolanden for an amount of fl.168 per annum.²¹⁸ In 1904 the lawyer Van den Brand proposed Khoe Tjin Tek as candidate for a membership in the Landraad.²¹⁹ Van den Brand's proposal was opposed by the Tjong brothers because the brothers worried that through Khoe Tjin Tek the Hokkian faction might obtain more revenue farms.²²⁰ In this context it is interesting to note that thirteen years later, in 1917, Khoe Tjin Tek obtained the salt farm of Bagan Si Api Api with Tan Tang Ho and Tjong A Fie as guarantors for fl.438.000,- a year, so Hokkian and Hakka were also capable of good cooperation.²²¹ Khoe Tjin Tek also held the rice and gambling monopolies.²²²

Public office

As mentioned before Khoe Tjin Tek, the last Major of the Chinese of Medan, was appointed in November 1922. His son remembered:

Since my father always considered himself as a philanthropist rather than a politician, he refused the position twice before accepting the job. Upon the appointment to the

213 SP 31-3-1913; SP 25-4-1913; Handboek 1916, 1919, 1925; *Tjin Po* 3-7-1925; *Pewarta Deli* 2-8-1928; SP 26-2-1934.

214 Oen remained chairman for three years and was succeeded by Tjong Song Ngoh. Oen Huat Kim again served from 1927 until 1930. (DC 28-10-1935; SP 4-11-1935, DC 11-11-1935).

215 Interview Tan Boen Djin 22-8-2000; Interview Hiu Kian Jin 25-10-1996, 4-11-1996.

216 Oen Huat Kim's eldest son Oen Tsjing Hoo, was president director of the Chung Hwa Shang Yeh, later Bank Kesawan, after the Second World War. (Interviews Tan Boen Djin, 25-10-1993, 22-8-2000).

217 *Persoonlijkheden* 1938; Wright 1909: 580; Khoe Khoen Hoei 1992; Vleming 1925: 236.

218 SP 24-2-1909.

219 Letter J. van den Brand to the Minister of Colonies in Den Haag. 'Rijswijk, 29-3-1904. *Ministerie van Koloniën, 1905-1963*, doosnr. 290, 28-1-1905. In 1909 Arnold Wright described him as the recognized leader of the Hokkian Chinese in Deli. (Wright 1909: 580.)

220 Letter Van den Brand 29-3-1904.

221 Mailrapport no. 413/1917; Feldwick 1917: 1196.

222 Interview Tan Boen Djin 21-10-1993.

*position as the Chinese Majoor of the East coast of Sumatra, my father retired from all his businesses because he wanted to concentrate his time and effort to become a good majoor to the Chinese people. During his administration, he took care of the welfare of the poor, such as to lower taxes for those who could not afford them.*²²³

After the death of Tjong A Fie proposals had been made to abolish the institution of the Chinese officers. However, no such decision was ever made.²²⁴ For many years on Java there had been discussions about abolition, leading to its elimination in Semarang in 1931 and Surabaya in 1934. In Batavia, however, the institution was not abolished before the Japanese occupation in 1942.²²⁵ Consequently, in November 1922 Khoe Tjin Tek was appointed Major. As Captain of the Chinese Lie En Kon continued to serve, following his appointment in 1912.²²⁶ So after many years a Hokkian rather than a Hakka became the leading Chinese in town. District officer M.J. Ruychaver wrote that after the powerful figure of Tjong A Fie, it should not be easy for his successor to arrange affairs.²²⁷ However, the newspapers mentioned no problems between the Hakka and Hokkian factions. With his appointment as Major of the Chinese, Khoe Tjin Tek also automatically became a member of the Cultuurraad.²²⁸ He was also asked to serve on a wide range of committees as member and adviser. Grand-daughter Tan Ai Lin remembered that once he was appointed as Major he did not make much money, spending much time on his function.²²⁹ In 1938 Khoe Tjin Tek was assisted by two Captains Oei Han Tiong (Hokkian) and Chi Hua Chang (Cantonese).²³⁰

Social life and opinions about Khoe Tjin Tek

Not surprisingly Khoe Tjin Tek, being a successful entrepreneur, had a nice home. In 1909 he possessed a distinguished mansion, named *Kingsley*, on the Medan Esplanade.²³¹ In 1926 he built a new house; the reception was described in the papers.²³²

223 Khoe Khoen Hoei 1992. Khoe Tjin Tek did not resign from all his businesses. He continued to remain president director of his bank. (SP 12-2-1923; *Pewarta Deli* 2-8-1928; SP 26-2-1934).

224 MvO ass.res. H.E.K. Ezerman, 1921.

225 The *peranakan* officers in East Java were by totok Chinese seen as opponents, who did not speak Mandarin and were westernized, hereby alienating themselves from the totok and, hence, not suited to represent the totok community. This was less the case in Batavia where totok Chinese were represented in the Chinese council. (Erkelens 2013: 324, 325, 326) In Medan the case was different again as the totok element among the Chinese was much stronger.

226 Borel 1900: 34, 35; SP 21-1-1924; *Tjin Po* 6-10-1927, SP 4-6-1934.

227 Letter van den Brand, 29-3-1904; M.v.O. controleur M.J. Ruychaver, 1926.

228 SP 18-8-1926; *Persoonlijkheden* 1938.

229 Interview Tan Ai Lin 1993.

230 Interviews Hiu Kian Jin, 1995, 1996; *Persoonlijkheden* 1938.

231 Wright 1909: 580; SP 30-4-1926; Eddy Khoe 1991.

232 SP 20-10-1926.

As said before Khoe Khoen Eow, Tjin Tek's eldest son, owned a foto and film business in Medan, the Cine Art Studio. On the occasion of the arrival of the aeroplane 'De Uiver' in Medan in November 1934, the son made a movie which his father Khoe Tjin Tek afterwards presented to the North Sumatra branch of the *Luchtvaart Vereeniging* (Association for Aviation) and to the KLM (Royal Dutch Airlines). *De Sumatra Post* described the film as an important document in the history of aviation. Khoe Khoen Eow also made many films of the family.²³³

When in 1904 the lawyer Van den Brand proposed Khoe Tjin Tek as candidate for membership in the Landraad he praised him for his education and good reputation among the Hokkian community as well among the Europeans.²³⁴

Just like the Tjong brothers Khoe Tjin Tek was well known for his philanthropy.²³⁵ He started his own Hua Shang Elementary School for the Chinese children,²³⁶ and on the occasion of his 61st birthday all the schoolchildren showed up for an aubade.²³⁷ Together with Chang Pu Ching he founded the Brotherhood of Education of Chinese immigrants and the Su Tung Chinese middle school.²³⁸ In addition to educational and philanthropic organisations, Khoe Tjin Tek was also active in a Chinese sports club and was even offered the *eerepresidium* (honorary chair) of this so-called 'Recreation and Sporting Club'.²³⁹ In 1926 and 1935, respectively, the Association 'Armenzorg' (Help of the poor) and the Chinese philanthropic association or Mutual Help Provident Fund (Hwa Chiao Tzu Shan Hsieh Hui) were established. In both associations Khoe Tjin Tek was involved. Funding came from the millionaire Aw Boon Haw (1882–1954), the 'Tiger Balm King' from Singapore.²⁴⁰ The *Sumatra Bin Pho* stated that the Chinese philanthropic association was important as there were many jobless Chinese and Chinese beggars which the paper described as 'a humiliation to us Chinese'.²⁴¹

233 (Interviews Tan Ai Lin 1992; Khoe Khoen Hoei 1992; Eddy Khoe 1991; SP 29-11-1934; SP 25-4-1935; Eddy Khoe 1991) A compilation of these films was in 1990 made by Khoe Khoen Eow's son Eddy Khoe in Hongkong. From the comments (in English) a lot can be learnt of the Khoe family. The last part of this film (which was in both black-and-white and color) was made in 1941, a few months before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour, according to grandson Eddy Khoe.

234 (Letter van den Brand, 29-3-1904). This was confirmed by Tan Boen Djin, son of Khoe Tjin Tek's business partner Tan Tang Ho who called Khoe Tjin Tek a gentleman and a completely bonafide businessman. (Interview Tan Boen Djin 25-10-1993).

235 Wright 1909: 580.

236 Khoe Khoen Hoei 1992.

237 Eddy Khoe 1991.

238 Information Thio Han Cheng, Medan, 2003; Aardweg 1938: 299; Franke 1988: 148; Wright 1909: 581; Chandra 2011: 85.

239 SP 17-7-1912.

240 SP 30-4-1926; SP 17-1-1935; *Sumatra Bin Pho* 18-1-1941.

241 Since its founding in 1935 up until 1941, 300 people had been sheltered in an asylum for poor Chinese in Belawan established by the Mutual Help Provident Fund. In January 1941 the seventh annual meeting was held in a new meeting house. Chairman was Hiu Ngi Fen. Major Khoe Tjin Tek was on the advisory board together with the Chinese consul. Aw Boon Haw, was honorary chairperson. He donated fl.500. (*Sumatra*

We notice that Khoe Tjin Tek only financed social projects concerning the Chinese in Medan and not, contrary to the Tjong brothers, for other ethnic groups. The reason was probably that Khoe Tjin Tek, although very well-to-do and successful in business, did not have the enormous financial means compared to the Tjongs. Another reason might be that Khoe Tjin Tek was at his financial height almost twenty years later than the Tjong brothers. This was important because at this time many social institutions were already established, while there was also less need for social projects such as the building of mosques or the financing of hospitals. Khoe Tjin Tek's grandchild Tan Ai Lin remembered:

My grandfather was a very strict person. He was very particular, for example if he wanted us to do things, usually he expected us to carry out his orders [...] He was very old fashioned, he didn't like the ladies to mix with the men. [...] He was Chinese educated, he didn't speak Dutch, when he had visitors, he had an interpreter. He did speak Malay. Usually he speaks Hokkian. My grandmother had seldom visitors. I know my grandfather hated gambling very much. He hated gambling. He forbid every member of the family to gamble.²⁴²

Somewhat awkward in this context is that Khoe Tjin Tek obtained a gambling monopoly in the 1910s. As his grandson Eddy Khoe told in the family film:

He must have seen many people losing all their money, that's why we at home we're not allowed to gamble at all. Not even card games or mah jong. And my grandmother, she loves mahyong and once a week she had to steal out in the daytime and then come back before my grandfather comes home from the office.²⁴³

In the Malay-language Chinese paper *Andalas* an article appeared about house owners who moved tenants out under the guise of house repairs, but when after the repairs were completed the tenant wanted to move back in again the house was already rented out to someone else willing to pay more. They called this: *Tjina makan tjina*. (Chinese eat Chinese). The paper wrote that Khoe Tjin Tek did not follow such practices.²⁴⁴

As Major of the Chinese Khoe Tjin Tek was often confronted with political issues. According to his son he tried to remain neutral and to stand above parties.²⁴⁵ In the 1920s

Bin Pho 18-1-1941).

242 Tan Ai Lin 1993.

243 Eddy Khoe 1991.

244 *Andalas*, 6-4-1918. When someone offered Khoe fl.3,000 and a monthly rent of fl.175 so that he would expell an Indian tenant who paid only fl.120 Khoe Tjin Tek refused to do so.

245 Khoe Khoen Hoi 1992.

many gatherings of the Kuo Min Tang were held in Medan, with the objective of boycotting Japanese products. This increased after Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931. As the Netherlands Indies wanted to keep a good relationship with Japan, openly anti-Japanese agitation was not allowed, and Kuo Min Tang books were forbidden and confiscated. There were also the communist activities of the 'Roode Vloed' (Red Flood) in Medan. An illustration of such a political matter is a case related to the printing office of the 'Sumatra Drukkerij' (Sumatra Printing Office). The Malay paper *Pelita Andalas* wrote:

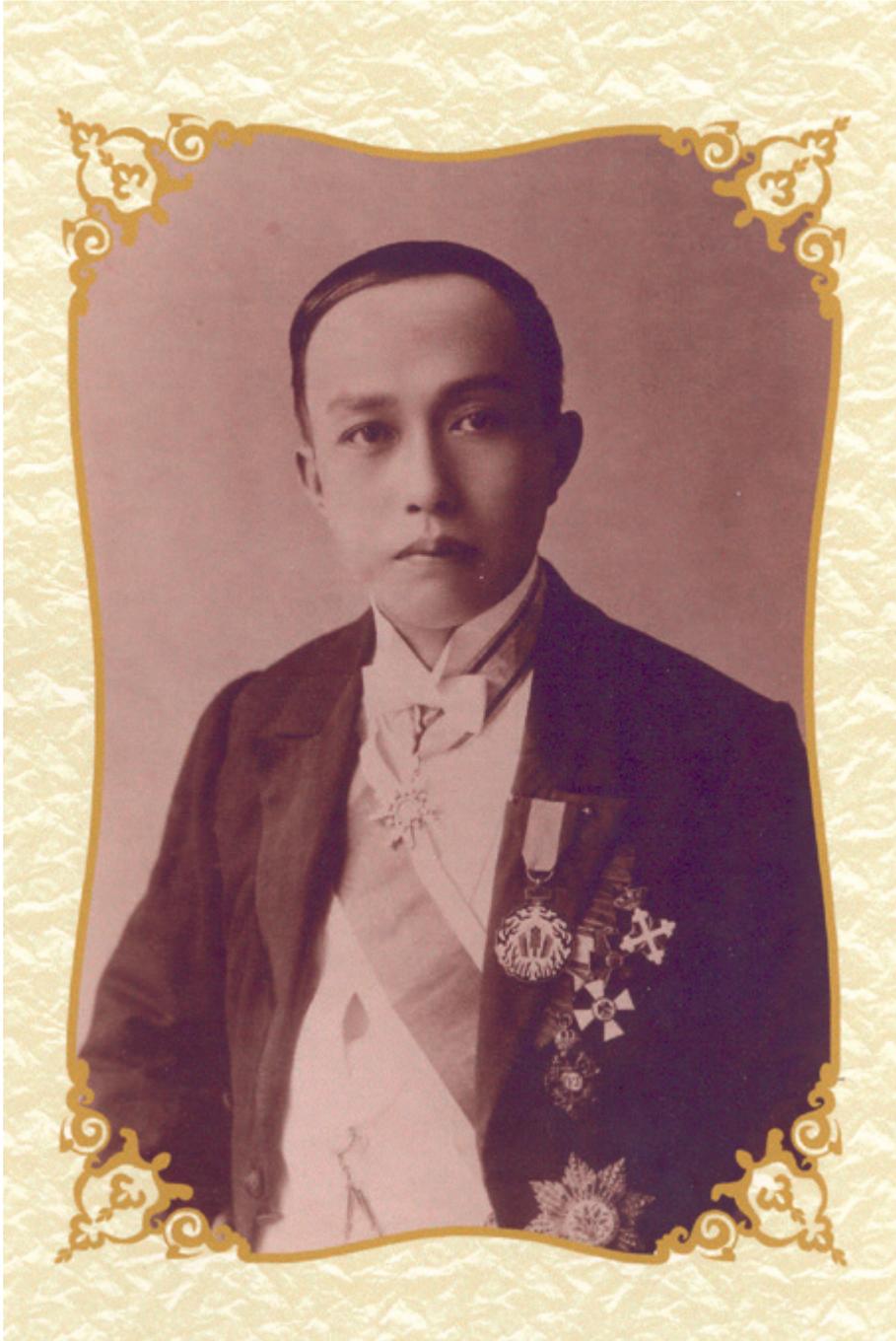
*"Today the police headed by the district officer together with the Major of the Chinese (Khoe Tjin Tek) went to the Sumatra Printing Office (Printer/publisher of Pelita Andalas). After having checked many Chinese books located in a cupboard for sale, the police confiscated around one hundred books. The confiscated books were books from Dr. Sun Yat Sen and Chiang Kai Shek, containing administrative rules of the government of Canton together with stories from both mentioned Chinese djago."*²⁴⁶

For such sensitive issues the Major, in this case Khoe Tjin Tek, was approached. The Netherlands Indies government appreciated him and decorated Khoe Tjin Tek in 1933 as Officer in the Order of Orange Nassau.²⁴⁷ One of his last official responsibilities, from the middle of the 1930s, was his service on the board of the Deli Planters Association.²⁴⁸ Khoe Tjin Tek remained Major of the Chinese until the Japanese occupation. After the Second World War the function was not restored. Khoe Tjin Tek lived a long life and died in 1969 in Medan.

²⁴⁶ Was this term *djago* seriously meant as hero or ironically intended? *Djago* is usually meant for cocks during cockfighting and, also, more often for so-called 'tough guys'. The Malay language paper *Pelita Andalas* probably used it in an ironical way thus trying to ridicule Chinese nationalism. (*Pelita Andalas* 21-4-1927). An extra reason why the colonial government was critical towards the Kuo Min Tang was that in the 1920s in China it had an alliance, a sort of marriage of convenience with Komintern, the communist international movement. (Erkelens 2013: 310-313).

²⁴⁷ SP 7-9-1933; 14-9-1933; SP 26-11-1934; SP 4-2-1935; SP 5-2-1935.

²⁴⁸ Tan Ee Leong, 'Major Khoe Tjin Tek' in *Fujian Wenxian*, no. 10, 1970 pp. 42–4.



Chang Pu Ching
Foto Chandra 2011

4.3. Other prominent Chinese

4.3.1. Tjong Hau Liong (Chang Pu Ching) (1885–1963)

Early life

Tjong Hau Liong (Chang Pu Ching), or Tjong Hau Liong (Tjong Poe Tjiong),²⁴⁹ eldest son of Tjong Yong Hian, was born in 1885, in Meixian, China.²⁵⁰ In general he was called Chang Pu Ching. He was educated in China in western as well in Mandarin studies and held the traditional licentiate, the lowest degree of classical degrees.²⁵¹ At the age of twenty he received a government position as record keeper at the Board of War in Peking. In 1909 his father Tjong Yong Hian appointed him as Managing director of the Swatow Railway Company of the Tjong family and in 1911 he was appointed by the Republican government as adviser on the Board of Admiralty and on the Board of Culture and Commerce and of Foreign Affairs. However, he declined these functions and went back to Medan in 1911.²⁵² He was married to Wun Sukjaw (Wen Suk Jau).²⁵³

One of the highlights in his career was the grand tour to Europe, Japan and the U.S.A. in the retinue of Prince Ch'un (Tsun) (Zaixun). In 1909 and 1910, being only 24, Chang Pu Ching was the secretary to Prince Ch'un's tour. This naval affairs study tour was in fact meant to buy weaponry for China.²⁵⁴ In Germany they visited amongst others the Krupp factory. After their return to China, Chang Pu Ching was decorated by the imperial government both for his participation in the tour and his managing of the Swatow railway.²⁵⁵ That the countries visited wanted good relationships with the Chinese empire was shown by the fact that after the tour Chang Pu Ching also received decorations conferred by Italy, Austria, Germany, Russia and Japan. Chang Pu Ching was also decorated by the Dutch colonial government.²⁵⁶ When

249 (Wright 1909: 581). He was also named Chong Haw Lung (Feldwick 1917: 1195), or Tjong Koen San (*Andalas* 15-10-1918).

250 Chandra 2011: 84.

251 According to Godley Chang Pu Ching was born in Medan. (Godley 1981:185) As Rebecca Chandra is married to a descendant of Chang Pu Ching, I presume Chandra is correct and that Chang was born in China.

252 Godley 1981:185; Feldwick 1917: 1195.

253 Chandra 2011: 85.

254 Chandra 2011: 91; Feldwick 1917: 1195; Franke 1988: 48; Interview Chang Tung Yin 26-11-1992.

255 Tjong Yong Hian and Chang Pu Ching both received the bestowed Bottom of the First Rank, in 1903, and in 1911 were appointed in the Third/Fourth Rank Sub-Director of the Court of Sacrificial Worship of Zhang Buqing. Chang Pu Ching had the rank of Taotai. As vice-president of the board of communications he received the title of San Si Pin King Tong. In 1916 he was decorated with a Fifth and Fourth Class Chia Ho. (Chandra 2011: 91, 98,99, 105; Franke 1988: 148; Wright 1909: 581; Feldwick 1917: 1195,1196; Godley 1981: 185; Aardweg 1938; Lim 1964: 146-152; Mededeelingen Handelsvereening Medan, 1921).

256 Chandra 2011: 91, 98,99, 105; Feldwick 1917: 1195,1196; Godley 1981: 185; Aardweg 1938; Mededeelingen Handelsvereening Medan, 1921.

his father Tjong Yong Hian passed away in September 1911, Chang Pu Ching went back to Medan. One month later in China the Revolution against imperial rule broke out.

Business career

Back in Medan he took over his father's and uncle's department store Chong Lee. Further from 1912 on he succeeded Tjong Yong Hian as adviser to the Chinese Commercial and Industry Board, as board member in the Deli Bank, and member of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.²⁵⁷ The department store Chong Lee was, like the Seng Hap company of Tan Tang Ho, which will be described later, an importer of food and beverages, and a general merchant and commission agent. The building of Chong Lee was also located in the Kesawan, only smaller than that of Seng Hap.²⁵⁸ Chong Lee advertised a wide range of food products.²⁵⁹ The firm sold wines,²⁶⁰ cigars and medicines²⁶¹ as well as many non-food products.²⁶² In August 1898, on the occasion of the crowning of queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands it adapted its advertisement and merchandise to the circumstance, using Wilhelmina's portrait on several products.²⁶³

Besides running the department store Chong Lee, Chang Pu Ching established a brickwork factory for the many construction projects in town. Moreover, he was active in the plantation industry as shareholder in rubber, tea and coconut estates in Sumatra as well as the proprietor of a tapioca estate at Semiling, in Kedah (Malaya). Not surprisingly he held, just like the other leading Chinese businessman, a revenue farm. In 1921 he bought the monopoly right for four years to run pawn shops in East Sumatra.²⁶⁴ Chang Pu Ching owned many houses in town, part of them inherited from his father Tjong Yong Hian.²⁶⁵ In 1920 there appeared a

257 Feldwick 1917:1195.

258 Chong Lee had a branch in Binjey. (Aardweg 1938: 299; Feldwick 1917: 1195; DC 12-1-1898; SP 29-3-1902; Handboek 1916, 1919, 1925, 1933; Mededeelingen Handelsvereniging Medan, 1921.

259 DC 12-1-1898; 23-2-1898; DC 23-4-1898; SP 6-12-1898; SP 24-5-1899; SP 22-4-1905.

260 SP 7-7-1899; SP 21-3-1900; SP 28-7-1915; *Gemeentebld* 14-2-1923.

261 SP 6-12-1898; SP 24-5-1899; *Pewarta Deli*, 16-7-1917; *Andalas*, 6-9-1917.

262 DC 12-1-1898; 23-2-1898; SP 6-12-1898; DC 23-4-1898; SP 6-12-1898; SP 24-5-1899; 22-4-1905; SP 20-12-1898). The Chong Lee company put each year New Years Wishes in *De Sumatra Post* together with other firms like Seng Hap and Soey Tek Bie (SP 31-12-1899; SP 31-12-1900; SP 31-12-1912; SP 2-1-1913; SP 31-12-1915; SP 2-1-1918; SP 13-1-1909).

263 The company advertised then with artificial flowers, lucky horseshoes, orange bouquets and silk handkerchiefs with portrait of queen Wilhelmina. (DC 13-8-1898).

264 (Feldwick 1917:1195; Godley 1981:185; SP 4-4-1921). Chang Pu Ching had an estimated income in 1920 of 60000 Dutch guilders. (*Gemeentebld* II 1921: 563-566). In 2016 this would be a value of € 328 738.23 (<http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/calculate2-nl.php>)

265 Tjong Yong Hian had owned houses in Pekingstraat (Jl. Palangkarya), in the street named after him - namely the Tjong Yong Hianstraat (Jl. Bogor) - the Foetsjangstraat (Jl. Jakarta), the Hainanstraat (.), the Amostraat (Jl. Natal) and the Kapiteinsweg (Jl. Pandu). There was also a Tjong Yong Hian foundation. This foundation, established in 1933 at the site of the old meat market at Spoorstraat (Jl. Kereta Api) included 36 new kedehs with low rents so that it would become a cheaper, more popular shopping area.

story about some of his houses. By way of his Dutch lawyer De Boeij, Chang Pu Ching had ordered the eviction from his houses in the Tepekongstraat the firms Soeij Hin & Co. and San Ho & Co. The tenants had to leave the houses by the latest on 1st May 1920. The Chinese paper *Andalas* stated that this action would certainly cause the bankruptcy of the two firms as there was no other place for their business as well as a general shortage of houses. The paper wrote that the Chinese consul, according to the tractate between China and the Netherlands Indies, had the obligation to defend and promote Chinese business in the Netherlands Indies. Now that it concerned his own business he forgot this obligation and acted mercilessly. Soon thereafter the tenants received another letter in which they were informed that they did not have to get out but that the rentals should be continued via new contracts.²⁶⁶

As mentioned before the markets in Medan were in the hands of the Tjong family. The profit from the markets went to the Tjie On Jie Jan foundation for maintaining a hospital and an asylum for poor Chinese. After Tjong A Fie's death the municipality had to decide how to obtain ownership of all the private markets. Discussions were then started between the municipality and the Tjong family, represented by Chang Pu Ching as spokesman for the family, and his brother Tjong Hian Liong (Chong Coon Whie). The question was settled in 1922.²⁶⁷ The markets of the Tjong family remained in operation till 1933 when a new central market was finished.²⁶⁸

Consulship and social activities

Besides Chinese officers assigned by the colonial government, there were Chinese consuls in the Netherlands Indies appointed by the government of China itself. In 1887 a Chinese official General Wong had visited Deli and suggested that the Deli planters install a Chinese consul to arrange the immigration affairs of the coolies. The problem was that there first had to be a Sino-Dutch consular treaty on the matter, and this treaty could not be concluded because Imperial China and the Netherland held different opinions about the nationality of

(Feldwick 1917: 1195; *Gemeentebld* 1927: 315; SP 13-4-1933).

²⁶⁶ *Andalas*, 3-4-1920; *Andalas*, 24-4-1920.

²⁶⁷ The complete market question was settled by the town council in the private market regulation published in the *Javasche Courant* 28-7-1922 no. 60. On December 7, 1924 the government confirmed the legality of the regulation in relation to a request of December 28, 1923, of the Tjie On Jie Jan Foundation. Hereafter a license for the establishment of the meat market was granted by the city council to Chang Pu Ching. A license for the establishment of a vegetable market was also granted. Both licenses were to be valid for 10 years. The city council in fact did not do much else than confirming an existing situation and attach a fixed period of time to it. The net profit of the vegetable market was more than 6,000 Straits dollars of the income of the meat market, to be paid to the Tjie On Jie Jan foundation for maintaining a hospital and an asylum for poor Chinese. According to the town council, the condition of the meatmarket was as such that the license could not be renewed after 1933. By then a new market was envisaged to be build. (*Gemeentebld* 1928: 94)

²⁶⁸ *Gemeentebld* II 1921: 563-566.)

the Chinese living in the colony.²⁶⁹ It was not until 1911 that Chinese consulates were opened up in the Netherlands Indies.²⁷⁰ In 1911 a compromise had been reached between China and the Netherlands about the 'nationality question'. The compromise was that Chinese born in the Netherlands Indies, were considered to be Dutch subjects. But when they were in China these people were Chinese subjects. Chinese born in China but working in the Netherlands Indies should remain Chinese subjects and, hence, were represented by Chinese consuls. China effectively gave up her claims on the Netherlands Indies-born Chinese and agreed to recognize them as Dutch subjects. The Dutch in return admitted Chinese consuls to handle affairs for the Chinese community.²⁷¹ In 1912 a consul general of China was installed in Batavia for the whole of Java.²⁷² In later years consuls were installed all over the Netherlands Indies. Of course, they were not supposed to replace the Chinese officers, nominated by the colonial government.

In 1915 Chang Pu Ching, the eldest son of Tjong Yong Hian, was installed as the first Chinese consul to Medan and held the position until 1930, covering East Sumatra, Atjeh, Djambi and the Riau Islands.²⁷³ On that occasion Chang Pu Ching made his own residence into the consular office.²⁷⁴ Passports and documents for the Chinese residents in the city were arranged by the consul. When there was a natural disaster with heavy flooding in the area of Tiantjin in China in September 1917, money was collected via the consulate in Medan for relief.²⁷⁵ As consul he celebrated political developments in China and stimulated sporting activities as well.²⁷⁶

In 1927 Chang Pu Ching, together with Khoe Tjin Tek and Oen Huat Kim, established the Hau Kiau Kau Giok Ciau Ie (Brotherhood of Education of Chinese immigrants). The

269 *Deli Courant* (DC), 30-11-1887; DC 1-6-1895; SP 29-3-1905.

270 This was because China first had changed its nationality laws, which differed from the Netherlands Indies. In 1909 China issued the law based on the *jus sanguinis* principle, which mandated that all people of Chinese blood and with a Chinese father, from then on possessed Chinese nationality, regardless of birthplace and residence, thus including those Chinese who resided already for generations in the Netherlands Indies. The colonial government now issued a law for all the Chinese in the colonies based on *jus solis*, which meant that everyone born in the Netherlands Indies, became a Dutch subject. (Van der Valk in *Koloniale Studiën* 1936:25; Fromberg 1926:737; Cator 1936:89; Mackie 1976: 25; Wertheim 1948: 129).

271 Jansen 1940:86; Vlekke 1961:344; Williams 1959: 167.

272 Jansen 1940:86; SP 27-7-1912.

273 The appointment was in December 1915, the official inauguration in February 1916. (SP 11-12-1915, Chandra 2011: 96,101).

274 *Andalas*, 16-2-1918; Queeny Chang 1981:159. The consular office was in the traditional Chinese residence built by Tjong Yong Hian next door to the Tjong A Fie mansion. The front entrance was at the Kesawan. Chang Pu Ching's residence was near the railway crossing at the Jalan Hakka (Jl. Nusantara / Letn. Hariono M.T.) with the Kerkstraat (Jl. Letn. Hariono M.T. / Jl. Palang Merah). (Buiskool 1999: 93).

275 Aardweg 1938: 299; Feldwick 1917:1195; Godley, 1981:185; *Andalas* 24-1-1918; *Andalas* 29-1-1918.

276 In October 1920 Chang Pu Ching placed an advertisement in the Chinese newspaper *The Sumatra News* to commemorate the end of the war in Wucheng. A reception would be held for this occasion on October 10, 1920 where the consul would receive guests at his residence. (*Andalas*, 7-10-1920). As consul he supported sportive activities as he gave the starting kick to the three-day Chinese football tournament in Medan. (SP 31-1-1930).

same year they also founded that the Su Tung Tiong Ok (Su Tung Middle school) open for all pupils without ethnic or religious discrimination.²⁷⁷ In fact this only counted for the Chinese pupils although in principle also non-Chinese pupils were welcome. All the different ethnic Chinese schools in Medan united and set up a new Chinese secondary school. In 1928 a fund of fl.100,000 was established to finance the building costs. The cooperating schools were known together as Su Tung Primary and Secondary school. The first stone of the school was laid by the Chinese consul.²⁷⁸

In 1930 Chang Pu Ching offered his resignation as Chinese consul on Sumatra to the Nanking government. To the Chinese paper *Sumatra Bin Po* he explained that he did not see the use of his function anymore as he could not do much for the Chinese community. His advice to the Netherlands Indies authorities was too often to no avail. As an example of this he mentioned a case in 1929 when in Djambi several Chinese men were put in jail on accusation of communist activities. They had founded an association named Tjoeng Boen Sia which did not strive for any dangerous aims, according to Chang Pu Ching. In spite of an official protest by the consul, some board and common members had been arrested. Hereafter the association was abolished. Consequently, Chang Pu Ching felt that he could not achieve enough practical results as consul with the Netherlands Indies government of the time.²⁷⁹ So, for this and for private reasons as well he wished to resign. However the Chinese community requested that Chang Pu Ching stay on. Protest meetings were even held in Medan, Djambi, Riau and Atjeh. The meeting in Medan at 7th February 1930 was organised by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and attended by around 30 to 40 Chinese, who decided to send a telegram to the government in Nanking requesting they not accept Chang Pu Ching's resignation and instruct him to remain in function. The telegram of Chinese citizens to the Nanking government and to Chang Kai Shek was published in *De Sumatra Post*. The Medan Chinese wrote that Chang Pu Ching was like a father to them.²⁸⁰ The letter must have been a pleasure to read for Chang Pu Ching, but it did not change his mind. He told *De Sumatra Post* that he always had a friendly relationship with the Dutch

277 Information Thio Han Cheng Medan, 2003; Aardweg 1938: 299; Franke 1988: 148; Wright 1909: 581; Chandra 2011: 85.

278 Information Thio Han Cheng 2003; SP 19-3-1930; SP 2-5-1930.

279 SP 4-2-1930; SP 7-2-1930.

280 The text in translation was as follows: "Mr. Chang Pu Ching is since over 10 years Chinese consul in Medan and always fulfilled his task as it should be. The Chinese in this district are very grateful for his sense of duty as this consul has done everything to protect us and to promote our progress. Where possible, he gave financial support and enjoyed the sympathy of other ethnic groups. The father of this consul also supported the Netherland Indies government in the past. This consul is like a house, where we always can go for shelter. Now that he wants to resign we much regret this, as he always was like a father to us. Although the national government has already decided, we request to withdraw this decision." (SP 11-2-1930).

authorities.²⁸¹ The Chinese government accepted Chang Pu Ching's resignation.²⁸² Chang Pu Ching continued to do his private business and social activities. After a long life he passed away in Medan in 1963.

4.3.2. Tan Tang Ho (circa 1860–1918)

Tan Tang Ho was born in Batavia. One of the earliest Chinese settlers in Medan, Tan Tang Ho spoke no Dutch, had little education, but was not an illiterate. He arrived at the age of fourteen in Medan as a *kelontong* Chinese, with two baskets over his shoulder, selling threads, needles, buttons, etc. In the beginning, after arriving in Medan, he was so frugal that he sometimes did not buy rice for himself in the evening, just to save his hard-earned money. He received a little help from a Dutchman who worked for the Deli Spoorweg Maatschappij, and regularly bought small things from him. In 1881 he started his company Seng Hap which eventually became the most luxurious shop in town.²⁸³

The Seng Hap Company

In 1900 a new department store for Seng Hap was constructed in the style of Parisian architecture: *De Sumatra Post* wrote:

“Seng Hap almost finished his building and we have to inform Baedeker that it is a construction, designed after drawings of the Madeleine in Paris, a jewel for the municipality.” ²⁸⁴ *For the grand opening of Tan Tang Ho's Tempel Toko Seng Hap on Sunday 25 March 1900 all citizens of East Sumatra were invited. “The Manilla Band played high above at the gallery and tout Medan was present.”* ²⁸⁵

Seng Hap advertised an enormous variety of products in the newspapers and on advertisement boards. We can imagine ourselves walking through this beautiful shop with a wonder-world of commodities. Products from all over the world were offered for the various ethnic Malay, Chinese, Indian and European population groups in this tropical town. Seng Hap imported

281 SP 8-2-1930.

282 (SP 26-2-1930) The Chinese consulate became later the Wayat Hotel. (Interviews Hiu Kian Jin 25-10-1996, 4-11-1996)

283 Interview Tan Boen Djin 25-10-1993.

284 The building still exists in the Kesawan - Jalan A. Yani. (SP 2-12-1899; SP 23-12-1899; SP 24-3-1900) The Madeleine Church with roman pillars in Paris was constructed from 1698-1777.

285 *Tout* Medan means All Medan. As drinks *Koude split* (whiskey soda) was served. (SP SP 2-12-1899, SP 10-3-1900; SP 21-3-1900; SP 24-3-1900, DC 17-3-1900; SP 26-3-1900; Buiskool 1999: 95).

directly from the U.S.A., the Netherlands, England, South Africa and Australia.²⁸⁶ The shop was called ‘Seng Hap Toko Batavia’.²⁸⁷ Initially it specialized in food products, dairy products, meat and fish. There was cheese from the Netherlands, caviar from Russia and tinned marmalades from Great Britain.²⁸⁸ In the 1890s the wines, sherries and champagnes were imported via Dutch firms like Hoogewerff Chabot & van Hoorn in Rotterdam. Red portwine was sold under Seng Hap’s own trade name *Cap Ayam*. A typical Dutch liquor was *oude jenever* (old gin), ‘*Oude Bols*’, a favourite drink in colonial society.²⁸⁹ Non-food products were also offered in large quantities: spoons and forks, knives and scissors from the firm F. Herder & Sohn from Solingen, Germany, as well as cucumber slicers, champagne tongs, complete dining services, money safes, leather travel suitcases and the Fongers bicycles from the Netherlands.²⁹⁰ Jewellery as well as gold and silver watches were also for sale.²⁹¹ Around 1900 the fashion was for slender ladies, so Seng Hap sold ladies corsets directly from Paris.²⁹² Weapons could be found at Seng Hap as well,²⁹³ next to as cigars and cigarettes.²⁹⁴

In Tan Tang Ho’s life family and business also became intertwined. Around 1910 Tan Tang Ho’s daughter Noni was married to Lauw Eng Siang from Java, whose father, Lauw Kie, possessed a big import firm in Batavia, called Lauw Tioe. Hereafter the cooperation between Seng Hap and Lauw Tioe intensified.²⁹⁵ The Seng Hap company had branch offices in Binjai and Pangkalan Brandan till 1925 and also in Tanjung Balei. Its logo was a peacock although the name Seng Hap meant ‘The Big Stock’.²⁹⁶ Seng Hap competed with Dutch import firms such as Borsumij, Geowehry, Internatio, Hagemeyer and Deli Atjeh. In the 1930s the company imported around 10% of all liquors and tinned food in Medan.²⁹⁷ A direct competitor to Seng Hap was the Medan Warenhuis (Medan Department store) in the

286 Interview Tan Boen Djin 25-10-1993; SP 14-10-1912.

287 SP 26-3-1900.

288 Interviews Tan Boen Djin 21-9-1992, 25-10-1993; DC 14-1-1891; 28-3-1891; 14-11-1891; 16-12-1891; DC 31-7-1895; SP 11-4-1899; SP 2-12-1898; DC 31-7-1895.

289 SP 18-2-1933; SP 7-7-1899; 21-3-1900; SP 31-12-1909; SP 28-7-1915; Interviews Tan Boen Djin 25-10-1993; 29-7-2000, 11-8-2000, 22-8-2000.

290 DC 10-6-1896; 1-1-1898; 31-7-1895; DC 14-1-1891; DC 10-6-1896; 1-1-1898; SP 24-6-1912; 24-2-1912; SP 12-12-1911; Interviews Tan Boen Djin: 21-9-1992, 25-10-1993.

291 SP 19-1-1905; 20-1-1905.

292 DC 12-9-1911; DC 1-9-1911; SP 2-3-1909; SP 24-6-1912; 24-2-1912.

293 SP 4-12-1909.

294 Interviews Tan Boen Djin: 21-9-1992, 25-10-1993; SP 28-1-1905; Handboek 1916,1919,1925.

295 SP 18-10-1918; 21-10-1918; Interviews Tan Boen Djin 25-10-1993, 22-8-2000; Paramitra 1981: 49,50,51,52,53.

296 SP 10-5-1930.

297 Interviews Tan Boen Djin: 21-9-1992, 25-10-1993.



Tan Tang Ho
Foto collection D.A. Buiskool

Hüttenbachstraat. Other, Chinese competitors were the firms Chong Lee of the Tjong family and Soey Tek Bie of Wee Swee Bee.²⁹⁸

Besides his successful trading and retail enterprises Tan Tang Ho also operated revenue farms. In 1897 he obtained a contract for the revenue farming of spirits in East Sumatra and a few years later the salt contract for Bagan Si Api Api.²⁹⁹ Tjong A Fie was the one who had made a contract for the spirit farm together with Tan Tang Ho. In 1936, many years after Tjong A Fie's death in 1921, Tan Boen Djin and his brother Tan Boen An went to the Kamerlingh Onnes Administration Office to settle a debt by Tjong A Fie to the Seng Hap firm concerning an arak monopoly. It was an agreement between Tjong A Fie and Seng Hap on this monopoly. The document was signed by Tjong A Fie, but never paid out to Seng Hap. At the Kamerlingh Onnes office they were advised to go to the Java Bank which handled the debts of the Tjong family. At the Java Bank a compromise was made for a payment of fl.10,000 through the Java Bank to Seng Hap.

Seng Hap had no double bookkeeping according to Tan Boen Djin, the youngest son of Tan Tang Ho, the last director of the firm. It obtained credit from the Chung Hwa Shang Hwe bank of Khoe Tjin Tek as well as the Nederlandsch-Indische Handelsbank, the Escompto Bank and the Chartered Bank.³⁰⁰ Many of the clients of Seng Hap used to pay on credit. To stimulate fast payment discounts were offered for those who paid within a certain period of time.³⁰¹ Tan Tang Ho was on the board of the Chung Hwa Shang Yeh bank of Khoe Tjin Tek.³⁰²

Social- and family life

Tan Tang Ho was active in the Tjong Hoa Hwe Koan, the Chinese association for education projects. He was also on the board of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce together with Khoe Tjin Tek and Oen Huat Kim. Tan Tang Ho had little contact with the Dutch. He was socially much closer to the Indigenous than to the Dutch. In 1911 Tan Tang Ho received a personal letter from the Chinese president Sun Yat Sen in appreciation of his donations to the new republic of China, especially for military necessities.³⁰³

Tan Tang Ho married two times. As his first wife could not have children, he married for the second time in middle age. His second wife Liong Peng Nio (1880–1963) was only fourteen years old when she was married to Tan Tang Ho via a *makelaarster*. They had three

298 Interviews Tan Boen Djin 29-7-2000, 11-8-200, 22-8-2000; Handboek 1916; Handboek 1919, 1925.

299 Wright 1909: 585; *Andalas* 19-10-1918; Interview Tan Boen Djin 22-8-2000.

300 Interview Tan Boen Djin 25-10-1993.

301 SP 23-4-1912.

302 SP 31-3-1913; SP 25-4-1913.

303 *Andalas*, 19-10-1918; Paramitra 1981: 49-53; Wright 1909: 581; SP 31-3-1913; SP 25-4-1913; *Andalas*, 6-4-1918; 24-8-1918; Interviews Tan Boen Djin 21-9-1992, 25-10-1993, 29-7-2000, 11-8-200.

sons and three daughters, four of them were Dutch educated and one English educated, in Penang. One of the girls married Jong King Weng, who was also a director of Seng Hap and chairman of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.³⁰⁴ Liong Peng Nio had bound feet during her youth, but afterwards no more.³⁰⁵ William Paramitra, husband of Tan Tang Ho's granddaughter Bokje, wrote a *chronique scandaleuse* about his wife's family, in which he described the romance between Tang Tang Ho and Liong Peng Nio.

In middle age, Tan Tiong Hay (Tan Tang Ho) felt the need to beget children for the continuation of his name and business. So he looked for a suitable young Chinese virgin who would bear him strong and healthy sons. And eventually, through one of his business connections he found the girl of his dreams. [...] As a small child her parents sold her to a man who carried her on his back to the harbour in Shanghai and sold her to a skipper of a 'tongkan' [...] Eventually Liang Pan Nio was sold to a lady in Medan. And there she had a narrow escape. Tan Tiong Hay who fell in love with her at first sight, managed to buy her with the help of an intermediary, before she got a chance to land in the private chambers of a tea-house. At that time, Tan Tiong Hay was in his 40s and Liang Pang Nio hardly fourteen.³⁰⁶

Now and then appeared an article in the papers from which we get a glimpse of the character of the person. Tan Tang Ho was said to be a responsible and social person.³⁰⁷ When in 1897 one of the members of a *Stamboel* died in Medan, the burial fees were paid by Tan Tang Ho.³⁰⁸ The paper *Andalas* often wrote about the many cases whereby tenants had to move out as someone else was willing to pay more to the owner. Once, a person offered Tan Tang Ho fl.6,000 and to repair the house at his own cost on the condition that Tan Tang Ho would remove the present tenant, but Tan Tang Ho refused. Similar stories could be found about Khoe Tjin Tek and Tjong A Fie.³⁰⁹ Shortly before Tan Tang Ho passed away, another positive story appeared about him as Seng Hap raised the salary of its employees as an answer to sharp inflation.³¹⁰ On October 18, 1918 Tan Tang Ho died; the funeral was

304 Jong King Weng originated from Penang and wrote and spoke Mandarin fluently. The second son, Tan Boen Hok, was the one who went to an English school in Penang (Interview Tan Boen Djin 14-6-2007).

305 She could walk normal although her feet were a little bit malformed. Several of her friends who had bounded feet could almost not walk, they stumbled. (Interview Tan Boen Djin 14-6-2007).

306 Paramitra *Crumbled Memories & scattered kisses* 1981: 49,50,51.

307 *Andalas*, 11-9-1917.

308 The Mahieu *Stamboel* company performed in Medan at the Esplanade. The cashier died in June 1897. (Cohen, M.I. *Komedie Stamboel: popular theater in colonial Indonesia 1891-1903*. Ohio University, 2006: 264).

309 *Andalas*, 6-4-1918. As told before the expression was *Tjina makan Tjina* (Chinese eat Chinese).

310 According to the Chinese paper *Andalas* this was exceptional for Chinese firms who were normally not generous towards their staff. Chinese firms gave seldom a day off, while at European firms employees had many days off. The yearly gratification (a percentage of the turnover) for employees of Chinese firms had to

at October 27.³¹¹ His sons Tan Boen An, Tan Boen Hok and Tan Boen Djin and the son in law, Jong King Weng, took over the company serving as directors.³¹²

4.3.3. Tan Boen An (ca. 1890–1946)

Tan Tang Ho's eldest son Tan Boen An attended Dutch schools in Medan and Batavia. His Dutch name was Willem. After his father's death Tan Boen An became director of the family business, but he also was well-known in Medan because of his political career.³¹³ He was the first democratically elected Chinese member of the Medan Town Council, and an important community leader in Medan. Between 1918 and 1941 Tan Boen An occupied several positions in the framework of the Town Council membership. He was an ardent promotor of Chinese interests in town.³¹⁴

Political and social activities

In 1918, when for the first time, elections for Medan's Town Council were open to all ethnic groups, Tan Boen An was chosen on behalf of the group of Foreign Orientals.³¹⁵ There was some commotion in relation to his appointment. *De Sumatra Post* of July 20, 1918 included an article about improper behavior of the (Indigenous) adjunct secretary of the town hall toward the newly-chosen Chinese municipal council member. When the mayor wanted to invite Tan Boen An, the adjunct secretary sent him the following message:

"Tan Boen An, 19 July, 8 hours, at the Mayor's."

De Sumatra Post commented on this rude behavior and asked for a public excuse.³¹⁶ The newspaper *Andalas* also remarked on this. Tan Boen An had deliberately showed the message to the press so that the public would know. *De Sumatra Post* was a Dutch paper, with colonial views, but in this way it demonstrated that it was not invariably biased towards

wait till *dji kauw mé* (Chinese New Year), while at the European firms the gratification was paid out much earlier. The same was true for the salary, in most Chinese firms payments were always too late (*Andalas*, 24-8-1918).

311 *Andalas* 19-10-1918; 22-10; 26-10 -1918.

312 Wright 1909: 585; Interview Tan Boen Djin 25-10-1993.

313 The family business provided Tan Boen An with a substantial yearly estimated income in 1920 of fl.100,000. (*Gemeenteblad* II 1921: 563-566) In 2013 this would be a value of €537,608. (<http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/calculate2-nl.php>)

314 Interview Tan Boen Djin: 21-9-1992.

315 SP 16-7-1918; *Andalas*, 20-7-1918.

316 SP 20-7-1918.

non-European members of the municipal board.³¹⁷ Directly after his installation as town council member Tan Boen An was confronted with the rickshaw question.³¹⁸ The Chinese paper *Andalas* wrote:

*“I appreciate the Dutch member Van den Brand, who strongly pleaded in the town council for the abolishment of the rickshaw business. Hopefully the new elected representative for the Chinese in the town council Tan Boen An will defend Chinese matters and also plead for abolishment of the rickshaw business.”*³¹⁹

Tan Boen An reacted in *Andalas* and agreed with the articles but warned that this business could not be abolished too abruptly, as the rickshaw pullers then would be without income.³²⁰ It was remarkable how much attention was paid to the rickshaw question by the Chinese press, while the European press wrote rather indifferently about the subject. Other controversial subjects such as the penal sanction, to which the European press paid much more attention, were seldom written about in the Chinese press.³²¹

Although Tan Boen An resigned from the Town Council for a period after his father’s death in 1918, when he had to take over the business Seng Hap, he became a Town Council member again in later years and was appointed to the abovementioned rent commission. In August 1930 he was appointed vice alderman and held this position until the Japanese invasion in 1942. Endless discussions were held in the Town Council about Dutch-Chinese education and why an English-language education was so much more popular among the Chinese than the Dutch. Tan Boen An relayed a request from his side concerning a subsidy for a Chinese school using English language. The government replied that this school did not use the Dutch language and therefore could not be controlled. Tan Boen An ironically stated that he was himself on the board of this school and remembered that several times books in the school had been seized by the police. Apparently, there was a definite control from the part of the colonial authorities on the education provided at this school.³²² The school suspected of supporting nationalist Chinese education was the Chinese Su Tung

317 The official installation in the Municipality Council was on 17 July 1918. (*Andalas*, 23-7-1918; 22-8-1918; SP 17-7-1918).

318 Medan was the only city in the Netherlands Indies where the *rickshaws* or *hongkongs* appeared in the streets (SP 4-5-1916; 9-5-1916; 10-5-1916; 11-5-1916; 16-5-1916; *Andalas*, 5-9, 21-9-1918).

319 *Andalas*, 13-8-1918.

320 *Andalas*, 17-8-1918; SP 10-9-1918.

321 *Andalas*, 24-12-1918; SP 28-10-1926; *Gemeentebld* 16-11-1927.

322 Member Leunissen replied that the council first had to support government schools. Control on the curriculum was something different from control on political direction of the schools. (SP 27-11-1930; SP 16-3-1933).



Marriage Tan Boen Djin and Margaret Wee in January 1938. Tan Boen An is the figure right also wearing a jacquet like the bridegroom. On the first row the fifth person from the left with white trousers and dark jacket is Hiu Ngi Fen. He is the short person. Besides him stands Khoe Tjin Tek in a grey suit. Chang Pu Ching with bald head wearing a light jacket stands on the third row behind the first bridegirl left from the bride.

Foto collection D.A. Buiskool.

school. Such an activity was prohibited. Tan Boen An himself was an ardent supporter of the Kwo Min Tang government.³²³

In his position as vice alderman Tan Boen An complained about insufficient Chinese participation in local politics. In 1935 he explicitly requested the appointment of a Chinese alderman instead of a vice-alderman in order to represent the large Chinese population of Medan. There were 27,000 Chinese in Medan that year, around one fourth of the city's population, who all put their hopes to the municipality, in principle at least. Furthermore, Tan Boen An pointed out that the Chinese were not equally represented in the different commissions and municipality departments. Apart from Chinese coolies, there were but a

³²³ Mr. W. Schuurbier, head commissary of police, once confidentially warned Tan Boen An, 'you better keep more quiet, there is a chance that you will be arrested'. (Interviews Tan Boen Djin 29-7-2000, 11-8-200, 22-8-2000).

few Chinese employees in the Medan municipality.³²⁴ Tan Boen An was not afraid to speak out but he always showed loyalty and respect towards the council and its members. When in 1937 the Indigenous aldermen Hakim and the Dutch alderman S.J. Schoorl left the Medan Town Council, it was Tan Boen An who made the farewell speech on behalf of the council.³²⁵

Besides his political functions Tan Boen An was active in quite a few other organizations. In 1915 he established the *Tiong Hoa Muziek Vereeniging* (Tiong Hoa Musical Association) and became its president. As mentioned above, Tan Boen An was also on the board of the Chinese *Su Tung Middle School*, chairman of the Chinese Sporting Club in Medan and member of the Chinese *Pasar Malam* Committee. In 1930 the candidacy of Tan Boen An was proposed for the *Volksraad* to represent East Sumatra, but was not pursued. Because Tan Boen An was not able to write Chinese characters, he was never appointed chairman of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.³²⁶ His younger brother Tan Boen Djin remembered his brother Tan Boen An as an honest person, never afraid to express his personal views.³²⁷ He died relatively young as he was not yet fifty years of age when passing away.³²⁸

4.3.4. Gan Hoat Soei (circa 1890–1950)

Another member of the Medan Town Council in the 1920s and 1930s was Gan Hoat Soei (Gan Hoeat Sui or Gan Huat Soey).³²⁹ Gan Hoat Soei worked with his father Gan Eng Tjan in the Seng Hap department store of Tan Tang Ho. In 1930 he established his own firm Hak (Hap) Tong. Gan Hoat Soei was commissioner of the Chung Hwa Sheng Yeh bank of Khoe Tjin Tek and together with Tan Boen An, he was one of the founders of the *Tionghoa Music Association*.³³⁰ Gan Hoat Soei was chosen as member of the town council

324 SP 28-2-1935.

325 SP 21-8-1930; SP 4-3-1937.

326 (*Andalas*, 22-11-1917; 27-11-1917) In 1918 the name of the music association was *Tiong Hoa Im Gak Hwee* (Tionghoa Music Club). (*Andalas*, 27-4-1918; *Sinar Deli*, 16-10-1930; SP 16-3-1933; SP 3-5-1933; SP 8-11-1935; Interviews Tan Boen Djin 29-7-2000, 11-8-2000, 22-8-2000; SP 11-1-1937).

327 Interviews Tan Boen Djin 18-10-1995, 22-8-2000.

328 His relative William Paramitra wrote in his chronicle scandaleuse about his uncle Tan Boen An: *He was a congenial man, an extravert, a charming cosmopolitan and an excellent causeur. Despite his enviable social status, he could not help indulging himself in 'Wein, Weib und Gesang', exactly in that order. He had countless affairs with women, but liquor was his first love. [...] he was not yet 50 years old when he died of delirium tremens.* (Paramitra *Crumbled Memories & scattered kisses* 1981: 49,50,51).

329 Most of the information about Gan Hoat Soei and his family was received from Gan Hoat Soei's younger (half) brother Gan Huat Ong. (*Gemeenteblad* 20-9-1922; Interview Tan Boen Djin 25-10-1993; Interview Hiu Kian Jin 4-11-1996; Information from Gan Huat Ong about his father Gan Eng Tjahn en his brother Gan Hoat Soei 6-2-2001, 17-4-2001, 20-4-2001, 1-5-2001). Gan Hoat Soei was probably Hokkian as he had attended the Hokkian primary school of Khoe Tjin Tek.

330 (Interview Tan Boen Djin 25-10-1993; Handboek 1933, 1940). Hap Tong was an import business of a chemist's shop selling products as perfumes *Soir de Paris*, and all sorts of men's clothing (Information from Gan Huat Ong about his father Gan Eng Tjahn en his brother Gan Hoat Soei 6-2-2001, 17-4-2001, 20-4-2001, 1-5-2001; Interview Hiu Kian Jin 4-11-1996; SP 26-2-1934; *Andalas* 22-11-1917; 27-11-1917;



Gan family 1940s. Gan Hoat Soei tallest person standing behind.

Foto collection D.A. Buiskool

for the Chinese population in 1922.³³¹ He was especially concerned with education and health matters.³³² Gan Hoat Soei was both Dutch- and Chinese-educated and pleaded for Chinese language as well as for Dutch language education. He also proposed forbidding Chinese and Indigenous children below sixteen years from entering the billiard houses in the Chinese quarter, because of the gambling going on in there.³³³ In 1923 Gan Hoat Soei was appointed as member of the financial commission, while in later years he was deputy alderman, a position from which he resigned in 1930.³³⁴ In 1935 he was a member of the government study education commission in the Town Council.³³⁵ Gan Hoat Soei passed away sometime around 1950 in Medan.

27-4-1918).

331 *Gemeentebld* 18-1-1922) He was first recorded in the minutes of March that year.

332 *Gemeentebld*, 15-3-1922; *Gemeentebld* 23-8-1922, no. 10; *Gemeentebld* 20-9-1922.

333 *Gemeentebld*, letter dated 10-9-1923.

334 *Gemeentebld* 21-11-1923; SP 21-8-1930.

335 Information Gan Huat Ong about his father Gan Eng Tjahn en his brother Gan Hoat Soei 6-2-2001, 17-4-2001, 20-4-2001, 1-5-2001; SP 1-2-1935.

4.3.5. Hiu Ngi Fen (1902–1977)

The story of Hiu Ngi Fen, a Hakka, was exemplary for many Medan Chinese who came to town through family connections. Hiu's ancestral village was Tsjiau Lin in Canton province. He arrived at Laboehan at the age of fourteen, on the request of his uncle Hiu Jun Khing who was the manager of the Chinese traditional drugstore, the *toko obat* Tek Ho Seng, located at Nieuwe Markt, which was owned by Tjong A Fie. After Hiu Ngi Fen had served several years as apprentice in Tek Ho Seng, Tjong A Fie opened a drugstore named Po Tai Fo in the Kesawan. Due to his notable performance Hiu Ngi Fen was appointed as the first manager of Po Tai Fo. Some years later Hiu resigned from the job and established his own medical drugstore, also in the Kesawan, on number 50, named Hiu Ngi Fen Trading Company. After that Hiu did the same as his uncle and called his two brothers, Hiu You Fen and Hiu Chie Fen, to Medan to assist him in his shop. Hiu Ngi Fen imported via the big five Dutch trading firms in Medan, Jacobson van den Berg, Hagemeyer, Borsumij, Geowehry and Lindeteves Stokvis. His business flourished, and at the same time he started to produce a medicinal wine Anggoer Obat Tjap Boelan, prescribed for women for a quick recovery of health after giving birth.³³⁶ Hiu Ngi Fen was married to Liu Kim Liang (1907–1989) with whom he had five children.³³⁷ The Hiu children went to Chinese schools, some of them in combination with English and Dutch language education.³³⁸

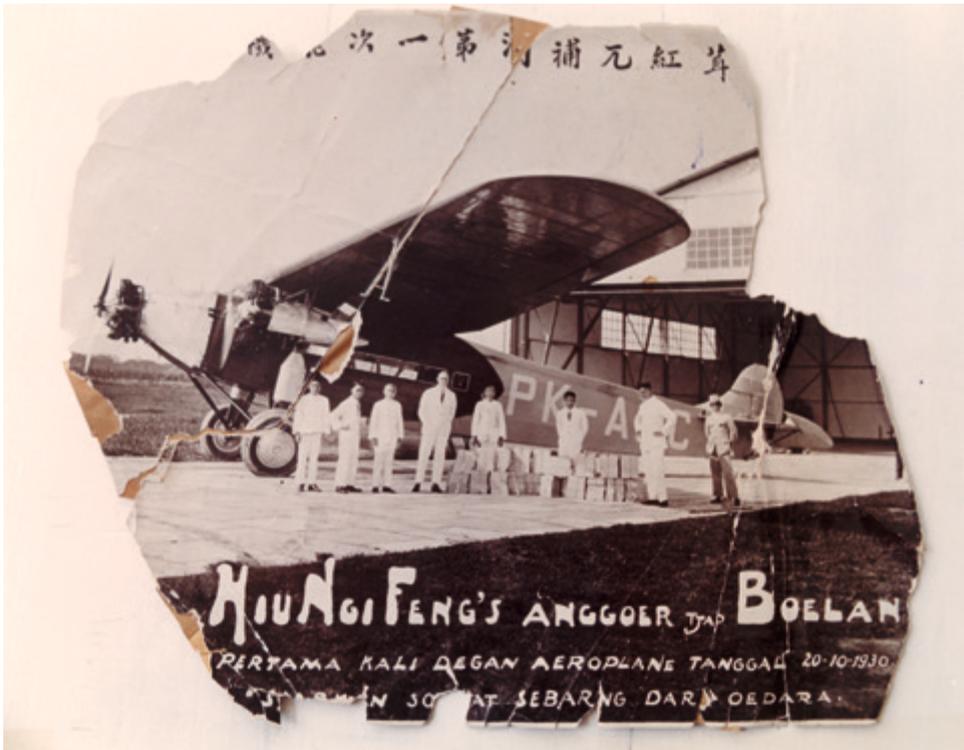
Economic and political career

As a modern entrepreneur he used the most advanced ways to promote his products. On 20 October 1930 Hiu Ngi Fen chartered a plane of the Koninklijke Nederlandsche Indische Luchtvaart Maatschappij (KNILM) (Royal Netherlands Indian Aeroplane Company) to spread a

336 Interview Hiu Kian Jin 3-2-1996.

337 The Hiu family lived in the Sportlaan. The name Sportlaan derived from the fact that the racing course, with other sporting facilities, was located here. During the Japanese time people started to call this street Jalan Bulan as Hiu Ngi Fen, owner of Apotik Boelan and producer of the medicinal wine Anggur Cap Boelan, lived in this street. From then on, the name Jalan Boelan became common. In this street lived a mixed population of well-to-do Indigenous and Chinese. Before 1941 the house of the Hiu family was in Kesawan. (Interviews Hiu Kian Jin 9-1-1996, 3-2-1996, 6-1-2001)

338 To give some impressions of the social life of the Hiu family: On Sundays the Hiu family often made trips to Brastagi or Prapat. In Brastagi they mostly had lunch in the Chinese hotel. They did not go to the Grand Hotel Brastagi, where all the westerners did go. Although the Grand Hotel Brastagi was open to everyone, the family preferred the Chinese hotel. The father Hiu Ngi Fen was European dressed while his wife Liu Kim Lian used the so-called Shanghai dress or *tjong sam*, she was old fashioned. The children were European dressed. They were of Buddhist religion, they all spoke Hokkian and Malay. (Interview Hiu Kian Jin 9-1-1996).



Aeroplane 1930. Hiu Ngi Fen second from left.
Foto collection D.A. Buiskool.

*Kabar penting boeat segala orang (Important message for everybody).*³³⁹

The event was announced in the newspapers under the heading:

Raining prices from the sky. Medan public don't forget.

in which it was written that the well-known medicine firm Foo Thai Foo Seng Kie (Poo Thai Foo Song Kie) in the Kesawan was *The king of advertisement*.³⁴⁰ The person who was able to get a signed leaflet by a representative of the firm would receive a price from Anggoer Tjap Boelan. In 1939 Hiu Ngi Fen also opened a pharmacy in the Kesawan.³⁴¹

³³⁹ Interview Hiu Kian Jin 25-10-1996; Sinar Deli, 15-10-1930; SP 20-10-1930.

³⁴⁰ The maximum price would be two drums of Anggoer Tjap Boelan or two bottles at the least. The price was available at the firm on showing the signed leaflet. (*Sinar Deli*, 15-10-1930; *Sumatra Bin Pho*, 13-1-1941).

³⁴¹ There were three pharmacies in Medan, the oldest was the European Rathkamp pharmacy. In 1938 the second pharmacy was founded Poo Thai Foo in the Kesawan under the same name as Tjong A Fie's

Besides his trading company, the medical wine production and the pharmacy, Hiu Ngi Fen also owned a printing house. In the 1920s a printing house had been founded by the brothers, Yap I Chong, Yap I Tong and Yap I Hong, the last being also chief editor of *Sumatra Bin Pho*. As well as the latter it published another newspaper, *Andalas*, both in Malay language.³⁴² In 1935 the Chinese community decided to establish another printing house for a Chinese daily newspaper named *So Hwa Siang Po* (Daily Paper for Sumatra). The directors of this printing house were Hiu Ngi Fen and Chia Liang Tong.³⁴³ During the Japanese occupation Hiu Ngi Fen bought the printing house from the Yap brothers.³⁴⁴

Hiu Ngi Fen was active in many more roles.³⁴⁵ He was chairman of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce from 1935 until 1937. During Hiu Ngi Fen's term the chamber established a consulate building, and also supported the beginning of a Chinese-Dutch trade association. In September 1935 the Netherlands Indies-Chinese trade commission, department Medan, was founded to promote trade relations between the two countries.³⁴⁶ The good relations between the Netherlands Indies and the Chinese business sector in Medan was explicitly stressed by Hiu Ngi Fen in his speech on the occasion of the silver jubilee of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in 1935.³⁴⁷ Hiu Ngi Fen was also involved in education projects and served together with Chang Pu Ching, Thio Siong Soe and Tan Boen An from 1935 till 1941 on the board of the Chinese Su Tung Middle School.³⁴⁸

In May 1930 the Sumatra Tionghoa Benevolent Association was established with chairman Hiu Ngi Fen. This association was attached to the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. It concerned itself with fundraising for natural disasters like flooding in China³⁴⁹ and for social projects such as a house for the elderly homeless retired rickshaw coolies. This home in Kampung Besar, on the road to Belawan harbour, was as said previously in part financed by Aw Boon Haw of the firm Eng Tong, producing the well-known Tiger Balm, from Singapore.³⁵⁰ Hiu Ngi Fen was agent for Tiger Balm on Sumatra. Aw Boon Haw opened

drugstore. (SP 22-7-1918; SP 5-2-1938; 7-5-1938; Veersema 1939). The third pharmacy was the Moon Pharmacy (Interviews Hiu Kian Jin 9-1-1996, 3-2-1996, 6-1-2001; Handboek 1940; *Sumatra Bin Pho*, 10-9-1941; Veersema 1939 Apotheek Poo Thai Foo advertisement part (no page numbers) after page 175).

342 Interview Hiu Kian Jin 4-11-1996.

343 SP 30-11-1935.

344 During the war these newspapers were prohibited but the *Sumatra Bin Pho* appeared again from after the war until 1960. *The New China Times* was the predecessor of the *Analisa* newspaper which still exists till today. Hiau Fie Ya. Sin Chung Hwa (*New China Times*). (Interview Hiu Kian Jin 4-11-1996)

345 Interview Hiu Kian Jin 25-10-1996; *Sinar Deli*, 15-10-1930; SP 20-10-1930; SP 4-11-1935; DC 11-11-1935.

346 SP 4-11-1935; DC 11-11-1935; SP 28-2-1935; SP 23-9-1935.

347 DC 28-10-1935; DC 4-11-1935; SP 4-11-1935; Verslag *Handelsvereniging* Medan, 1935; SP 5-3-1937.

348 Letter Hiu Kian Jin; Interviews Hiu Kian Jin 9-1-1996; 25-10-1996; Information Thio Han Cheng; Interview Tan Boen Djin 25-10-1993; MvO Mackay 1931: 179.

349 SP 14-9-1935.

350 SP 5-5-1930; Interviews Hiu Kian Jin 9-1-1996, 3-2-1996.

a branch office of his firm in Medan besides Hiu Ngi Fen's Trading Company.³⁵¹ Hiu was also in touch with another Singapore business tycoon, the chairman of the 'Chinese Benevolent Association for South East Asia', the 'Rubber King', Tan Kah Kee (1874–1961).³⁵² Tan Kah Kee opened a branch office and shop of rubber shoes and biscuits under the trade mark Bell in Jalan Kesawan, adjacent to the Hiu Ngi Fen Trading Company. So, on one side of Hiu Ngi Fen's Trading Company was the branch of Aw Boon Haw's Tiger Balm Firm and on the other side Tan Kah Kee's shoes and biscuit company. Tan Kah Kee was a Chinese self-made businessman and philanthropist who made a fortune in rubber and other enterprises.³⁵³ After Japan invaded Manchuria Tan Kah Kee and others founded the Singapore China Relief Fund Committee in 1937 and the Southsea China Relief Fund Union in 1938 to collect funds for the war effort against Japan. Tan Kah Kee was chairman in both institutions. He raised millions of Straits dollars for the Chinese cause.³⁵⁴ Tan Kah Kee appointed Hiu Ngi Fen in 1938 as the chairman to the Benevolent Tionghoa Association for East Sumatra.³⁵⁵

Politically Hiu Ngi Fen was not active until the Sino-Japanese war in the 1930s, when he started fundraising for the Chinese cause and the Kuo Min Tang.³⁵⁶ When in 1936 there were elections in China, attention was also paid to this event in Medan. In fact, the Dutch did not allow public activities in this field as it was seen as propaganda for China. Hiu Ngi Fen was even briefly detained on charges of propaganda.³⁵⁷ The following year, Hiu Ngi Fen was arrested again because of fundraising for the Kuo Min Tang. He was warned by the Dutch not to involve in anti-Japanese Kuo Min Tang activities as they did not want to provoke Japan.³⁵⁸ As a consequence of his fundraising for the war against Japan Tan Kah Kee was hunted by the Japanese, who in 1942 put a price of fl. 1 million on his head. After the Japanese invasion of Singapore, Tan Kah Kee fled via Medan, over Sumatra to Java where he hid in Malang until the end of the war.³⁵⁹ In March 1942 Hiu Ngi Fen, together with Khoe Khoen Yau, son of Major Khoe Tjin Tek, and Ciu Wan Chong, Captain of the Chinese of Medan, was interrogated by the Japanese to discover the location of Tan Kah Kee. They were given three days to reveal the place. But Hiu Ngi Fen and the others did not know. Fortunately, the Japanese finally believed them and set them free.³⁶⁰ Hiu Ngi Fen passed away at age 75 in 1979 in Medan.

351 SP 5-1-1935; SP 8-1-1935; SP 12-2-1936; *Sumatra Bin Pho*, 18-1-1941.

352 Yong 1992: 63; Handboek, 1940; Chang 1981: 122, 180; Interview Hiu Kian Jin 9-1-1996.

353 Yong 1992: 139.

354 Yong 1992: 69, xxv.

355 Interviews Hiu Kian Jin 9-1-1996, 3-2-1996; Ward 1994: 73.

356 Interviews Hiu Kian Jin 9-1-1996; 3-2-1996.

357 *Avondblad*... November 1936.

358 Interview Hiu Kian Jin 9-1-1996.

359 Ward 1994: 114, 115; Yong 1992: 111, 146, 147.

360 Interview Hiu Kian Jin 9-1-1996.



Thio Siong Soe
Foto collection D.A. Buiskool

4.3.6. Thio Siong Soe (1889–1967)

As last prominent person Thio Siong Soe is mentioned. Thio Siong Soe, a Hokkian, was born in Nan-An, Fujian. He left his homeland together with his uncle for the Netherlands Indies in 1906. Nine years later he married Goh Hia; they had six sons and two daughters. Thio Siong Soe had the business, while his wife devoted all her time to the family. The children were Chinese-educated, but some also had Dutch and English schooling. They all spoke Hokkian and Malay³⁶¹ In 1921 Thio Siong Soe established his firm N.V. Handels Maatschappij Hock Seng Lie Rubber Company. As well as the rubber company he owned an import and export firm, coconut and oil factories, tea and rubber plantations and a coffee mill. Thio Siong Soe was also member of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and the Theng Bie Khong Hoi (the Rice and Sugar Association) as well as a member of the association of rubber traders named Tjiu Leng Khong Hoi. In Hock Seng Lie Rubber he worked in partnership with Lee Kong Chian, son in law of Tan Kah Kee.³⁶² Thio Siong Soe was well known for his philanthropy. He donated funds for houses for the homeless, hospitals, schools and temples. When Khoe Tjin Tek and Chang Pu Ching established the Su Tung Middle school in 1927, it was Thio Siong Soe who provided land for the school and was in later years on the board. Thio Siong Soe passed away at age 78 in Medan.³⁶³

Summary

The nine prominent Chinese described in this chapter all made substantial contributions to Medan, both to the city and to its development in general. The story about the Medan Chinese shows many similarities with C.F. Yong's study about the Chinese roles and positions in colonial Singapore. In both places the Chinese leaders were community leaders. Their role, influence and power went far beyond their own ethnic group. Leadership was in the first place based on wealth, although most of these prominent Chinese had a humble start, which could be explained by the fact that Medan, being the center and capital of Sumatra's

361 At Chinese New Year, when the family came to pay respect to the older relatives, there was lots of nice food, the grandchildren then got their *Ang Pau*. (Information Thio Han Cheng, Medan, 2003; Willmott 1960:300).

362 (Hong Liu & Sin-Kiong Wong, 2004: 213; Information Thio Han Cheng, Medan, 2003) The firm Hock Lee still exists in Medan today (Chang 1981: 122, 123; Yong 1992: 66; Hong Liu & Sin-Kiong Wong 2004: 206; Ward 1994: 56; Information Thio Han Cheng, Medan, 2003; SP 30-11-1935). Lee Kong-chian (Hokkian), son in law of Tan Kah-kee, established in the 1920s Lee Rubber & Co. Ltd. Ten years later Lee Kong-chian started in 1932 the Overseas Chinese Banking Corporation Ltd. Lee Rubber & Co. eventually becoming the number one in rubber production in the world (Yong 1992: 50,66; Visscher 2002: 50). The family of Thio Siong Soe and of Lee Kong Chian were even closer related after the marriage between Lee Kong Chian's eldest son Lee Seng Gee with Thio Tie Hwa (Della Sutantio), granddaughter of Thio Siong Soe (Subramaniam Shivaranjani 2009; Information Thio Han Cheng, Medan, 2003).

363 Information Thio Han Cheng, Medan, 2003.

plantation industry, was a relatively new city. Consequently, its population comprised a large element of migrants of all sorts, Europeans, Chinese, Indians and Javanese. Life for such relatively new city-dwellers, socially speaking, was often hazardous. In order to provide some kind of social security to arriving migrants, each of the arriving ethnicities had to take precautions in the fields of arranging an orderly 'civil society', such as conducting marriages, looking after the poor and the orphans, taking care of the sick and the various religious needs. In the case of the Chinese only some of these arrangements were organized on the order of the colonial state. This meant that the Chinese community had to rely to a large extent on its own capacity for self-organization. It was here that the most successful intervened, often by means of charitable works. Charity as such was stimulated by the fact that the social institutions in this migrant community were not yet in place or still in their infancy. This was, in particular true for hospitals and schools, which were hardly provided for by the colonial government.

As in Singapore, the Medan Chinese community leaders were bridging the gaps with the state and with urban society in general. They became members of municipal and district councils and were active in social and cultural institutions, out of an awareness that it was in everybody's interest that there was peace and stability. In his study about the Nanyang Chinese capitalists Michael Godley mentioned some patterns in their ways of life, such as the characteristic that many well-to-do overseas Chinese became modern cosmopolitan in their economical and political views, while at the same time remaining conservative and loyal to the old traditional order. Other patterns described, which also applied to Medan, were that overseas Chinese kept contact with the motherland through family ties and personal contacts, via financial investments and political support to the mother country. In this way the emerging modern Chinese nationalism took root among most of the Chinese, stimulated by the ongoing Sino-Japanese conflict in a large part of the period under discussion.

Tjong Yong Hian and Tjong A Fie were the main players among the Chinese elite in Medan during the colonial period. They were in Deli at the right place at the right time. They profited from their positions as government-nominated Chinese officers and as businessmen in a booming economy. The brothers controlled the monopolies or revenue farms from the early days of the plantation industry on East Sumatra; here they made their fortunes. Long before the revenue farm system on Sumatra's east coast was abolished, Tjong A Fie had already acquired plantations. For their administration Tjong A Fie had employed the Dutchman Kamerlingh Onnes, who would remain his manager for many years. As Chinese officers the Tjong brothers were seated on administrative and judicial bodies, and knowing in advance the city planning, bought crucial lands and constructed houses to become substantial in real estate. In most of their business undertakings like revenue farming, shipping, banking and the railway in South China, they cooperated with their uncle Tio Tiauw Siat. As a highlight in his career Tjong Yong Hian was received by the Dowager

Empress in 1903. Tjong A Fie followed the footsteps of his brother Tjong Yong Hian in many ways, both career- and business-wise. Tjong A Fie became Sumatra's most famous Chinese inhabitant. The Tjong brothers got their good name due to countless humanitarian projects. In 1917 Tjong A Fie received an honorary doctorate from Hong Kong University which confirmed his image of a gentleman merchant.

Just as with the Tjong brothers, the last Major of the Chinese, Khoe Tjin Tek, was a successful businessman who closely cooperated with the Indigenous elite, Chinese society and the Dutch economic and administrative establishments. Also, like the Tjong brothers, Khoe Tjin Tek had a very good reputation because of his philanthropy.

The last part of the chapter looked at prominent Chinese who did not occupy public offices, but still made substantial contributions to Medan society, economically as well as politically, mainly in the period 1920–1940. Their success in business was impressive, but not quite as spectacular as the Tjong brothers. Nevertheless Chang Pu Ching, Tan Tang Ho, Tan Boen, Gan Hoat Soei, Hiu Ngi Fen and Thio Siong Soe played crucial roles in Medan's political, social and cultural life. Like the Tjong brothers and Khoe, most of them were self-made men, mostly born in China. Most of them supported Chinese interests in Medan, by taking up positions such as being the official Consul of China in East Sumatra, through associations such as the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, through educational institutions and social organizations or by participating in the town council. All this while keeping their eyes open to possible cooperation with the other ethnic groups and other institutions to build up the city. The prominent Chinese all supported their homeland China, even at times when the colonial government was not happy with that because it wanted to spare Japanese sensitivities.

Hock Lee company
of Thio Siong Soe

Khoe Tjn Tek
residence

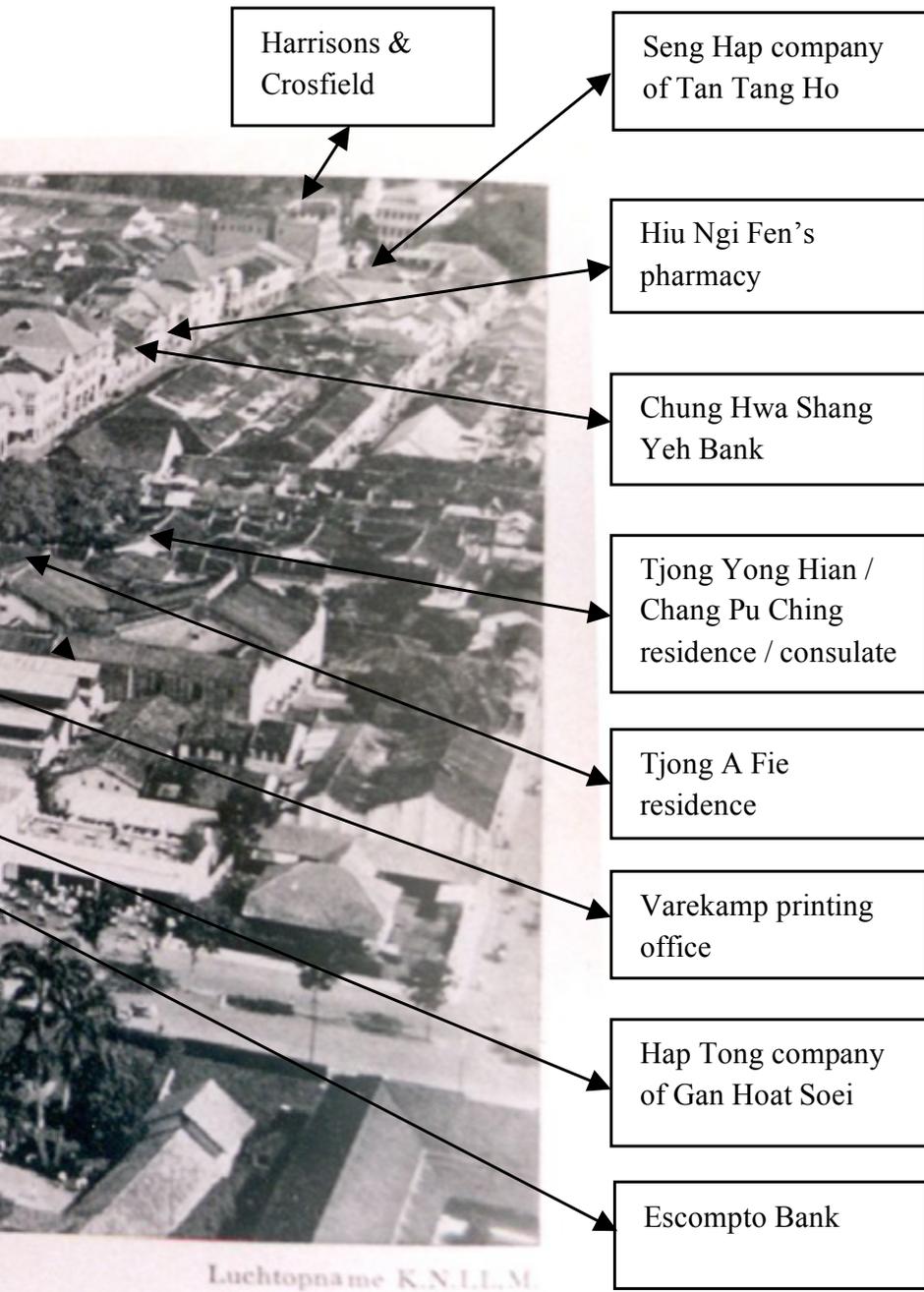


Medan

Tjong A Fie office
building

Catholic St. Joseph
Church

AVROS building



Aerial View Medan with Kesawan circa 1940

5

Social life of the Chinese in Medan

Chapter 5

Social life of the Chinese in Medan

This chapter casts light onto the social life of the Chinese people in Medan. The family was the most important binding institution among the Chinese. In the 1920s, family life was still very traditional, reflected in the subjection of women. The role of religion was also of primary importance, with Buddhist temples having a central place. Besides Buddhism, Catholicism and Methodism were on the rise among the Chinese in Medan. As well as religion this chapter sheds light on the institutions of clan, of regional and political associations, as well as on professional and social help organizations. Furthermore, it describes Medan's institutions in the fields of education and health. In the last section sport and entertainment will be examined. Sport was an important uniting factor between ethnic communities.

The key objective of this chapter is to assess the role played by the prominent Chinese in the wide range of social institutions and activities in the town of Medan. As shown in chapter 4, the Tjong brothers played a very important role in the various religious institutions, such as temples, churches and mosques, in educational projects and health care as well as in cultural and other institutions. The other prominent Chinese also made contributions in their own way. Questions to be answered are: Firstly, what sort of institutions did it concern? Secondly, what were their goals, and thirdly, who were the persons involved? Lastly, what did they achieve?

5.1. Family life

Almost all Chinese families in Medan in the 1920s were totok, most of the adult Chinese men and women having been born in China. On the plantations Chinese workers sometimes married Javanese women, but in Medan this was seldom the case. If the Chinese were not born in China, they still mainly spoke Chinese and Malay, rather than Dutch. This all contrary to Java where many Chinese were Peranakan. Regarding the families in Medan in the 1920s the parents had often come at a young age, via family or friends, to join their businesses, before starting later for themselves. Where the children were not Chinese-educated, but Dutch-educated, we can speak of Dutch orientation and assimilation. Where they were Chinese- and English-educated, it means they were more focused towards British Malaya and China than towards the Netherlands Indies.

In chapter 4 we mentioned the Hiu and Thio families. The children of these families went to Chinese schools, some of them in combination with English- and Dutch-language

education.¹ They all spoke Hokkian and Malay.² A third family was the Tan Ah Sie family, also English- and Chinese-educated.³

As we will see below in the section about education, the majority of the Medan Chinese preferred Chinese and English education above Dutch. Practically all Chinese families remained speaking Chinese at home and kept their culture and traditions alive. All this showed that there was less '*Peranakanisation*' among the Chinese in Medan.

5.1.2. The Chinese women of Medan

The Medan newspapers often published articles about the inferior status of Chinese women, due to the traditions of forced marriage and concubinage, the custom of foot binding, the drowning of baby girls, the selling of daughters, sex-trafficking and prostitution. But at the same time, one could read in these newspapers stories about emancipation and modern ideas held by Chinese women and girls. Now and then the names of Majors like Tjong A Fie and Khoe Tjin Tek appeared in articles. When there were marital conflicts the parties concerned called on the Chinese officers to settle matters.

Before 1930 there were few Chinese women in East Sumatra. However, Chinese men who went to Medan to start a new living and, after several years, were able to finance a family, returned to China to marry, thus bringing his newly-wed wife to Medan. Examples of this were Thio Siong Soe, Tjong A Fie and others. Before such a marriage the groom might have had a concubine, for instance an Indigenous woman, but no statistics are available on this. There seem to have been few official inter-ethnic marriages with Javanese, Malay, or Minang, mainly for reasons of the difference in religion. This was also true for Batak women. On the other hand, outright emigration of women was deemed incompatible for Chinese females because of the imperatives of ancestor worship. There was a fear that those who emigrated might forsake their family obligations. But if a male left his country temporarily, meaning with the intention to return, this was not considered a break of the ancestral lines. For this reason, men were permitted to leave China temporarily and, as a rule, no wives accompanied them, even if they were officially married. Further, most husbands could not afford to take their wives on a journey so expensive. Another reason for women not to migrate was that married women were obliged to remain at home with their husband's parents to keep the clan intact. Until 1894, emigration from China was officially illegal. Previously unmarried women only emigrated as concubines or prostitutes. In 1915 only 129 women and 24 children arrived. For the main part these were women of tandils (Chinese

1 Interview Hiu Kian Jin 9-1-1996.

2 Information Thio Han Cheng, Medan, 2003; Willmott 1960:300.

3 The Tan Ah Sie family arrived in the 1920s in Medan. The father was a carpenter, relatively well to do, there were 8 children, all spoke Hokkian. (Interview Tan Tek Mao, 9-6-2014)

supervisors) at the plantations. Of women of *sinkehs* (Chinese newcomers) almost none came to Sumatra.⁴

Chinese girls had in traditional Chinese law comparatively fewer rights compared to their brothers. According to the Chinese *adat* (customary law) familial relationships were only created via the male line. This was true whether the son was born of a concubine or of a non-Chinese woman. The heritage as well as the family name (*She*) followed the son, this was not the case with daughters. In cases where the father died the eldest son was responsible for taking care of his mother and younger brothers and sisters. The daughter who married left the clan and became a member of another *She*.⁵

Women and Marriage

*This is the man you are going to marry and these bangles are the tokens of your betrothal. Our uncle arranged this marriage three years ago when you were only thirteen.*⁶

In general the Chinese, in particular the females, married young, from age fourteen and older. The above quotation from Queeny Chang, the oldest daughter of Tjong A Fie, whose marriage arrangement was made without her consent when she was only thirteen, clearly shows the daughter's obligation to obey the father's, and in this case the uncle's, wish. She had to marry the son of her uncle's business partner. Marriage was like a religious duty, the earlier on one started, the greater the chance that there would be a desired male successor. Children, boys and girls, were married out in order of their age. The future bride and groom would not have met before their marriage and saw each other for the first time only on the day of the marriage. The arrangement was made by the parents, who used an intermediary. Usually this would be an older woman. Candidates for marriage should not have any incurable or contagious disease, and could not be of the same clan. The Chinese calendar was consulted for a favourite date, preferably in the spring as this is considered the most fertile period for new life. The married couple generally remained with the groom's parents. The daughter-in-law was expected to obey her husband's parents. A Chinese husband could repudiate his wife in case of infertility, adultery, disobedience with regard to his parents, talkativeness, theft, bad character and incurable disease. Jealousy was interpreted as bad character. If a husband had many concubines, any objection from the wife was considered to be a sign of her bad character. The wife's acceptance of this transformed her into a

4 Jansen, *Andere helft* 1941: 9; Willmott 1960:18; DC 28-3-1891; Jansen *Vreemde Oosterlingen* 1940: 13; De Bruin 1918: 3.

5 Jansen *Vreemde Oosterlingen* 1940: 13; Wertheim 1948: 119; Ong Eng Die 1943: 50; Kosasih 1988: 43.

6 Chang 1981: 70.

psychologically and materially impoverished creature. Girls were locked up in the home, called *pinggit*, denied an education and excluded from rights of succession. They did not inherit wealth and therefore depended on others. Because of the inferior position of the wives and what they had to endure, it should not come as a surprise that many wives committed suicide.⁷ In the Chinese law of the time, a woman had no right to property, as she herself was regarded the property of her husband. The position of Chinese women was comparable to the discrimination against Javanese women as described by Kartini.⁸

After 1919 Dutch family law was applied to the Chinese in the Indies. Now Chinese women were entitled to divorce, which had been impossible before. From then on Chinese women had the same rights as men, polygamy was no longer allowed and they were entitled to inherit.⁹ Successful Chinese businessmen frequently married several times and often had concubines and adoptive sons. As a result, they had to support large households and many servants. The successful towkay often had many wives, with each having several children. This nearly always led to family disputes involving lawsuits after the death of the *pater familias*. Wives generally came from a family equal in status to that of the husband's, while the concubine usually came from a poor family. The concubine had no rights and could be sold or repudiated at any time. The concubine did not appear in public with the man. The wife managed the household; the concubine was subordinate to her. The wife was considered the legal mother of the concubine's children as well as of her own offspring. Under Dutch law, however, children of a concubine were not legitimate and had to be adopted by the father to be legitimized. Thus, there was no reason anymore to take a concubine in case the first wife did not give birth to a son. The Dutch lawyer Fromberg wrote:

*“to keep concubines is a hobby, which only the rich can afford.”*¹⁰

Sometimes a girl could avoid her forced marriage. *De Sumatra Post* wrote in 1915 that two girls, fifteen and seventeen years old, eloped with two men whom they loved rather than marry the men to whom they had been promised. One girl attended the Methodist school and wrote fluent English. The girls corrected the version of *De Sumatra Post* and wrote the following:

7 Fromberg 1926:583.

8 Kartini, Raden Adjeng *Door duisternis tot licht: gedachten over en voor het javaansche volk*. 1912 's-Gravenhage. Raden Ayu Kartini, (1879–1904) was a pioneer in the area of women's rights for Indonesians.

9 Ong Eng Die 1943: 26, 27, 28, 45, 50; De Bruin 1918: 64,68, 71,73; Fromberg 1926: 571,577, 582; Helsdingen 1941: 107; *Indische Gids*, 1917 II: 1257; Willmott 1960: 296; Tjiook-Liem 2009: 552.

10 Wu 1999: 207; Willmott 1960: 298; De Bruin 1918: 75, 77; Fromberg 1926: 581.

My dear editor of "De Sumatra Post". Your note about run-away girls needs correcting. Neither am I nor is my friend a Christian. I did not run away in the sense that you meant. I have no lover in Medan with whom I wish to or did run away. I have often gone to the American church, but my friend never did. It is true we young Chinese girls do not purpose to be tied by old fashioned, useless, and senseless Chinese laws of 5000 years ago. I am sincerely yours, A Runaway Girl.¹¹

Stories about girls who refused forced marriages appeared over the years.¹² In 1918 there was a fight at the train station of Medan between a man who wanted to take a girl he said was his wife as he had paid fl.800 for her. The woman refused to be married to this man, who was unknown to her. The newspaper ended with the comment that both parties were brought to the Chinese Major (Tjong A Fie) for investigation.¹³ So, although the girls rejected the traditions, they still had to appear before a Chinese Netherlands Indies government nominated official, in this case Tjong A Fie, to explain about the matter. The end of the story was not reported in the newspapers.

Footbinding, drowning and selling

In 1906 there were still women with bound feet in Medan. The custom of tight binding of girls' feet at a young age prevented further growth and was painful. In China small feet were considered to be beautiful. At least this was the standard for more well-to-do families, the girls of which were not supposed to work.¹⁴ In Medan such women were born in China. The *Koloniaal Weekblad* wrote:

"At the crossing of the Tepeikongstraat a lady was sitting, of around fifty years of age with bounded feet. She does not walk like the other Chinese ladies bare feet in a pair of wooden shoes, no, she has the feet winded with some blue cotton and put them in a kind of shoe with a hard point of leather or paper and high wooden bobbins under the ball of the feet, so that one gets the impression that she has extremely small feet. Her slow, difficult and tottering walk however shows us that in a painful way she

11 SP 13-7-1915; SP 14-7-1915.

12 In 1933 a fourteen-year old Chinese girl eloped with a sixteen-year old shop assistant to avoid being married to an old Chinese man. (SP 12-10-1933).

13 *Andalas* 12-11-1918.

14 Hakka women did not have bound feet. Because of the infertile soil the Hakka in Kwantung were so poor that the women also had to work the fields for their living, whereas in other parts of China they were locked up in the houses and stop growing their feet. (Ong Eng Die 1943: 30,32)

tries to keep up the traditions of her place of birth. Although she is poor, we get the impression, in her youth she must have been well to do."¹⁵

As girls had little importance, from the viewpoint of poor Chinese families, the latter sometimes resorted to the dramatic solution of drowning female babies in order to keep the number of mouths to be filled at a low level. In China there were even stones on the riverside with inscription that female children may be drowned at a certain spot.¹⁶ This custom was also in use in Medan, as can be seen in articles from *De Sumatra Post*. In 1899 a Chinese girl, age five months, was found floating in the Belawan River, hands tied at her back. Similar stories were published about Chinese baby girls drowned in the Deli river at the Hüttenbach street and at plantations where babies were found in the river.¹⁷ This was probably still happening in 1919, as we can read in *De Sumatra Post*.¹⁸ The fact that this story was published in *De Sumatra Post* implicated that in 1919 there were still suspicions that many a poor Chinese family took this dramatic decision. It also happened that due to reasons of poverty parents sold their children. Occasionally, articles reported the selling of Chinese daughters by parents or stepparents, after which the sellers were summoned to court. As with orphan girls sold to teahouses, they were trained from age six until fifteen, after which they were rented out by the month, week or day. Parents also rented out children. It even sometimes happened that the husband rented out his wife.¹⁹ To protect the children, Indigenous as well a Chinese, the association Pro Juventute was established.²⁰ Even as late as 1941 there was still a case of parents who wanted to sell a child. In this case it was the Chinese Major Khoe Tjin Tek who intervened.²¹

15 Koloniaal Weekblad 22-11-1906.

16 De Bruin 1918: 63.

17 SP 17-2-1899; SP 1-9-1899; SP 7-4-1900; SP 30-10-1912.

18 *De Sumatra Post*: a policeman halted a Chinese man carrying a small basket with suspicious sounds. The policeman asked what was in the basket and the Chinese man said it was his youngest daughter, on which the policeman replied: "What do you want to do with her? Drown her?" The Chinese replied: "*Massa toean! Saja melantjong sadja.*" (Oh no Sir, I am just taking a stroll with her). The father explained that it was in accordance with the Chinese custom to take a stroll with the new born baby so that they would grow and become clever people. *De Sumatra Post* commented "how can you believe this!" (SP 6-1-1919).

19 SP 18-8-1909; SP 14-5-1915; SP 15-7-1930; SP 9-6-1933; SP 10-6-1933; SP 9-9-1933.

20 Pro Juventute (child care) was a Dutch association established in the 19th century by private persons with intention to prevent youth criminality, giving legal assistance to young delinquents, protect children and put them under guardianship.

21 There was the case of a girl born to a Javanese woman and a Chinese man who later returned to China, leaving the mother to live with another Chinese man. The daughter was taken care of by a well-to-do Chinese family. However, the birth mother later asked for the return of her daughter in order to sell her. Major Khoe Tjin Tek intervened and asked that the girl would stay with the Chinese family. (SP 22-7-1941).

Women trafficking

Over the years cases of women trafficking in Medan appeared in the press, like in 1915²² and in 1918.²³ In 1907 a government bureau under the auspices of the Department of Justice in Batavia was installed to stop women trafficking.²⁴ Apparently, such a decision did not wholly end this practice. Sometimes even well-educated girls from fortunate families could not escape forced prostitution, like sixteen-year old Oei A Moy. She was a daughter of Loei A Kwie, a privileged Chinese citizen, and she had finished at the Methodist school and spoke English fluently. In spite of her modern upbringing her father forced her to marry a Chinese businessman from Pematang Siantar, who sold her to a woman who took her to Batavia and forced her into prostitution. The Loei Tjioe Kongsie discovered this and advised the father to contact the police. In Batavia the girl was found in one of the many clandestine brothels there. The girl was finally brought back to Medan.²⁵ Like Batavia, Medan had in the 1910s an active nightlife, as described by *De Sumatra Post*:

*“Medan. The city of unlimited possibilities, if you want to enjoy murder and homicide, go to Medan! If you like Japanese tea girls, chroniqueurs scandaleuses, go to Medan!”*²⁶

Because of its’ many brothels, *De Sumatra Post* wrote ironically that Medan was

“as chaste as Joseph”.²⁷

22 In 1915 a Chinese girl was found wandering along the road. An interrogation disclosed that the girl had been a *baboe* (nanny) in Penang. She joined an old Chinese lady to Medan who promised her a good income. In Medan she was drugged. She heard a conversation about selling her for fl.400, but was offered fl.300. She understood she was at a brothel and fled. After two days wandering around, she was arrested by the police, which also led to the brothel keeper getting a police warrant. A few days later there was a case whereby young Chinese women from Penang was sold for 130 dollars to a brothel-keeper who later confessed to the police. (SP 20-3-1915; SP 24-3-1915).

23 There was the story of a sixteen-year old Chinese girl from Singapore who was lured into a house in the Wilhelminastraat. When the police interrogated the female brothel-keeper she tried to bribe the undercover police with two fl.10 notes. A police report was made and the brothelkeeper was convicted of woman trafficking plus effort to bribe. (SP 25-1-1918; SP 13-2-1918).

24 Based on the Staatsblad 1907 no. 29 a government bureau was installed to stop women trafficking. It had to be repeated in Staatsblad 1915, no. 152 (Gonggryp 193: 1207; SP 20-3-1915).

25 SP 15-3-1918.

26 SP 4-1-1918.

27 (SP 12-4-1913) The expression ‘as chaste as Joseph’ first refers to Genesis 39 where it is described how Joseph, the son of Jacob, refused to sleep with the wife of Potifar. The second reference to the Bible is to Matteus 1.1. where Joseph, the husband of Maria, is not the father of his son Jesus. Joseph had lived in chastity with Maria before marriage.

Many brothels in town were exploited by Chinese offering Chinese prostitutes to the customers. Chinese houses of joy, as they were called, were located along the Djalan Hongkong in the Chinese quarter at the southeast border of town. Often there was violence in the brothels, abuse of women, theft, fights and counterfeit money. After the abolition of medical tests for prostitutes in 1913 there was increase in venereal disease.²⁸ That the situation was serious was also shown by murders of prostitutes over the years²⁹ as well as cases of forced exploitation.³⁰

Many prostitutes in Medan had previously been housekeepers or mistresses or *njai* for assistants or administrators at the plantations. These *njai* had a comfortable life with a house and servants. But when the assistant replaced her with another girl, or if he returned to Europe or married a Dutch wife, the *njai* was left on her own. Many of these former *njai* entered prostitution. In 1918 in Medan there were around sixty hotels (Chinese, Japanese and Indigenous) each of them with an average of five prostitutes. In total around three hundred prostitutes. Former *njais* were ashamed to go back to work as contract coolies. That meant that they moved either to another plantation or to the city, where prostitution often was the only way to continue the comfortable way of life they were accustomed to. In 1918 there were 234 plantations on Sumatra's East coast. Consequently, if at every estate only one of the assistants replaced his *njai*, the annual influx of new prostitutes might have been two hundred women or more. Having said this, it has to be admitted that with the present state of research the proportion of Chinese women among this number, is impossible to establish.³¹ All this was the result from the fact that from early on the European staff at the plantations were prohibited to marry by their employers, the plantation companies. This only changed in the 1920s. As such those Europeans were encouraged to take a *njai* for the household and for companionship. *Njai* were generally chosen from among the female Javanese coolies, while often Japanese girls were especially chosen to become a *njai*.³² Needless to say, this general policy with regard to *njais* in the colony significantly weakened the position of non-European women.³³

There were many discussions on how to reduce prostitution in Medan. Major Tjong A Fie is quoted as saying that he hoped prostitution would be abolished, but it was difficult

28 (SP 14-3-1899; SP 22-1-1912; SP 14-9-1912; SP 1-10-1912; SP 2-10-1912; SP 15-10-1912; SP 21-1-1913) The health commission of the Culture Council was against forced medical inspection; instead it was in favour of regulation and control of the brothels. This was because when venereal diseases were discovered the men did not want to be checked, while after treatment the women were just returned to the brothels still remaining contagious. (SP 30-1-1912; SP 27-8-1913; SP 22-1-1912; SP 9-2-1912).

29 Such as in 1905 (SP 7-2-1905), later on in a Japanese coffeehouse (SP 23-4-1909) and in a brothel in the Hongkongstraat (SP 1-11-1915).

30 SP 26-4-1915; SP 25-10-1915; SP 5-11-1915; SP 22-5-1930; SP 8-7-1930; SP 10-3-1938.

31 (*Andalas* 5-7-1917; *Andalas* 7-9-1918; *Andalas* 14-9-1918; *Andalas* 28-9-1918; *Andalas* 17-10-1918).

32 Hellwig 1994: 35; SP 16-1-1913; SP 17-1-1913.

33 Interview Ann Laura Stoler in *Itinerario* vol. 40, no 3, 378: 2016. "History as Renegade Politics."

to do so within a short time. Such ex-prostitutes would need protection from a subsequent life of destitution. According to *Andalas* the government should be requested to prohibit Japanese girls from becoming prostitutes.³⁴ In 1930 the number of hotels where prostitution was practiced had grown to more than one hundred. If in every hotel two to three prostitutes were working, there should be two to three hundred prostitutes in Medan. Consequently, compared with one decade before, the phenomenon had not declined.³⁵ Besides Chinese brothels there were, remarkably, many Japanese hotels in town, all known to be brothels.³⁶ Japanese, Chinese and Indigenous women worked in the Japanese hotels.³⁷ In 1926 the town council recommended obligatory registration of all guests in Japanese hotels. At the same time street prostitution increased. It was not before 1930 that more strict regulations against street prostitution followed. The new stricter regulations and punishments against street prostitution were especially directed against pimps, exploiters of brothels and women traffickers, and less against the prostitutes themselves.³⁸

Emancipation of women

Chinese emancipated women were, of course, quite different from the prostitutes or concubines, discussed so far. Emancipated women were usually upper-class Chinese girls, who managed to follow modern education, even as far as to study law or mathematics in the Netherlands. Girls such as Anny Tan were highly emancipated.³⁹ As early as 1918 one Mrs. The Glok Lan wrote an article in *De Sumatra Post* about discrimination against Chinese women. She emphasized three points. First, she recommended that sons and daughters get equal shares of inheritances. Second, she favored equal rights for men and woman. Third, she advocated for a ban on the use of corporal punishment by husbands against their wives and no-fault divorce of a wife. However, discrimination against women could not be stopped unless Chinese mothers themselves refused to lock away their daughters upon their becoming thirteen. Women needed to organize themselves and develop intellectually, according to Mrs. The Glok Lan. Generally Chinese women's emancipation was related to the young Chinese movement.⁴⁰

34 *Andalas* 13-6-1918.

35 SP 14-7-1926; SP 14-10-1926; SP 4-12-1926; SP 25-8-1930.

36 *Andalas* 8-3-1917; Saya Shiraishi and Takashi Shiraishi, *The Japanese in Colonial Southeast Asia* (Cornell Southeast Asia Program: 7,8, 1993).

37 One Japanese Hotel in the Moskeestraat (Jl. Mesjid) advertised lodgings for reasonable prices, proper and clean rooms, electric light. Politely recommending T. Harashima. (SP 2-8-1913). In 1926 a room for one hour in a Japanese hotel in the Shanghaistraat (Jl. Semarang) cost one guilder. (SP 14-7-1926).

38 SP 14-10-1926; SP 14-12-1926; SP 10-9-1930.

39 SP 17-5-1912; Blussé *Retour Amoy* 2000.

40 SP 30-7-1918; Willmott 1960: 283.

Emancipation was also a matter of dress. Although it was traditional for Chinese women to wear trousers, the American feminist Carrie Chapman Catt advocated this piece of dress when she visited Medan in April 1912. She believed that wearing trousers afforded women freedom of movement, was healthy, comfortable and artistic.⁴¹ In Europe special exhibitions were held about women's culture, which did not escape the attention of the upper-class Chinese in Medan.⁴² It was a time in which undoubtedly modern and international ideas sprang up among the Chinese youth. Tjong A Fie's daughter Queeny Chang wrote about her idealism and her curiosity about modernization when her family lived in Switzerland in the 1920s. Queeny enjoyed her stay in Europe and the freedom she had there, in sharp contrast to the limitations in China. Queeny had much contact with Chinese students and people in diplomatic circles. The students were young and idealistic, and discussed how they might contribute to China's development. They made trips to Bern and Paris to join gatherings and discussions as well as cultural exhibitions organized by the Chinese community.⁴³ In line with these modern influences Chinese film star Yang Nai Moi of Shanghai visited Medan in 1930.⁴⁴

That there were conservative reactions to these modern ideas is not surprising. In the *China Weekly Review* in 1930 an article appeared in which Chinese women were accused of blindly following Western trends. The article noted that Chinese women cut their hair short, wore foreign clothes, shoes and bags. Everything they displayed came from abroad. They were no longer shy with men, they visited dance halls looking for fun outside the home, and they found home life boring. They disparaged traditional values, while dancing and singing immoral lyrics. They were a curse for the parents and as a married woman a burden for the husband.⁴⁵ Whatever the critique, things did not go so fast in Medan, it was not before 1941 that a Chinese Women's Organization was established. This organization organized a Woman's day on 8th March, also known as the 8 March festival. On this occasion funds were raised for China.⁴⁶ Unfortunately, one year later there was no time for a festival as the Japanese army was already at the gates.

41 (SP 27-1-1913) Carrie Chapman-Catt was befriended with the Dutch feminist and first female medical doctor in the Netherlands, Aletta Jacobs. In 1912 both of them visited the Netherlands Indies and Medan to give talks about the right for women's suffrage and women's rights (SP 2-4-1912; SP 5-4-1912).

42 In 1913 the exhibition 'De vrouw 1813-1913' (The woman 1813-1913) was held in the Netherlands. Mrs. Tjong A Fie of Medan sent a traditional Chinese patrician house with Chinese puppets inside under a glass bell for this exhibition. (SP 4-2-1913)

43 Myra Sidharta 'Introduction to the works of Queeny Chang', In: *Archipel 24*. Interdisciplinary Studies on the Malay World; Queeny Chang 'Memories of a Nonya', Singapore University Press, 1981; Buiskool 1999: 235,236.

44 SP 11-8-1930.

45 SP 7-6-1930.

46 Sumatra Bin Pho 11-3-1941.

5.2. Religion

5.2.1. Chinese beliefs. Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism.

Next to family relations, religion also might serve as a binding factor for the Chinese population. The main three Chinese beliefs are the *Sanjiao* (which stands for Buddhism), Taoism and Confucianism. The metaphysic Buddhism which is purely a construction of abstract ideas to reach heaven, free from worldly contact, into a situation of Nirwana. Taoism is more worldly and materialistic, having deities resembling existing beings who in the past had been human figures and have become divine.⁴⁷ Thirdly there is Confucianism, a set of ethical rules, which only deals with human beings and therefore is not seen as a religion as it has no dogmas about the supernatural. Confucianist Chinese were at the same time Buddhist and/or Taoist as well.⁴⁸

Around 1930 one half of the Chinese in Medan followed the *Sanjiao*, the other half adhered to Christianity.⁴⁹ That so many Chinese were converted to Christianity was mainly the result of the Christian schools. These, such as the American Methodist school and the Catholic Dutch Chinese schools, had many Chinese pupils. According to Donald Willmott the popularity of Christianity was also caused by the prestige of the west. In the beginning of the twentieth century when much emphasis was being laid on science and technology, faith in traditional Chinese mythology and belief in the magic of temple gods were on the decline. Christianity was the dominant religion in the countries where modern science originated from. Another although less clear factor was psychological. For some Chinese the concepts of personal salvation as presented by Christian churches was of greater consolation to them than the shadowy spirit world of Taoism. In general Catholicism, Calvinism and American protestant fundamentalism were better suited to the individualistic religious needs.⁵⁰ Originally the Chinese religious system was characterized by absolute tolerance towards other religions.⁵¹ The religious tolerance of the Chinese was not only based on indifference to the religion of others but also on a genuine respect for other religions as such and the feeling that everyone has the right to follow their own convictions. In Medan religious tolerance among the Chinese could also be witnessed within one family, whereby the husband was Buddhist and the wife Catholic or Protestant.

47 De Groot 1880: 560, 145.

48 De Bruin 1918: 22; Willmott 1960:199.

49 MvO J. Reuvers, 1929.

50 Willmott 1960: 243,245,194.

51 De Groot 1880: 585, 560.

Chinese temples in Medan and surroundings

To practice Buddhism or Taoism the Chinese built temples. The temples in Medan were dedicated to Chinese Taoist Gods. Appendix 5.1 presents a list of temples. Over time new temples were built, particularly in the 1930s as a consequence of the rapid growth of the Chinese population. The Guandi-miao (Kwan Tee (Tie) Bio) in the Kwan Tee Bio street was the oldest temple in town, founded in 1884 to promote the solidarity of the different ethnic groups of Guangdong (Canton).⁵² Tjong Yong Hian took the initiative for building this temple, giving the Chinese community a place to worship their gods. The Tianhou-gong (Thien Hioe Kioeng) (Wihara Ariya Satyani) temple at Kapiteinsweg was dedicated to the Queen of Heaven, Ma Tjo Po, protector of sailors and everybody who sailed the seas. As all the Medan Chinese had sailed the seas from China, or sailed back to China, they all worshipped this goddess and asked for protection against shipwreck or piracy.⁵³ In the temple is a tablet with words of thanks expressed to the deity Tianhou for protecting the Chinese merchants on their overseas voyages which enabled them to develop Deli Medan. This temple was initiated by the Tjong brothers together with their uncle Tiauw Tio Siat and others.⁵⁴

The most popular god for the Buddhist was Kwan Jin (Kwan Iem or Guanyin), the Buddhist goddess of mercy. The Kwan Jin temple at Boolweg on the road to Laboehan, was built in 1886. There is a bronze bell in the temple donated by Guanyin of Bayen and by Fang Donglai, dated 1904. Bayen probably referred to Bagan Si Api Api.⁵⁵ Chinese businessmen, including the Tjong brothers, who had commercial interests in the fishing industry in Bagan Si Api Api had donated to this temple. Kwan Jin is believed to be especially capable of answering prayers of women and children and to look after family welfare.⁵⁶

The oldest temple in East Sumatra was the Shoushan-gong temple in Laboehan, also dedicated to the Buddhist Kwan Jin. This temple dates back to the 1860s.⁵⁷ In front of the Chinese temple is an Islamic mosque and a market which indicates that Laboehan was a peaceful multi-cultural settlement with Malay and Chinese houses of worship side by side. In fact, Medan was a later repetition of Laboehan Deli, which also had a multi-ethnic, multi-racial society.⁵⁸ A very special case in East Sumatra was the Go Ja Kong temple on the road

52 Franke 1988: 82,83.

53 Jansen, *Andere helft* 1941: 54.

54 Franke 1988: 106, 110,111,112; Jansen, *De Andere helft* 1941: 53; MvO controleur J. Reuvers, 1929, KIT 679.

55 Franke 1988: 89, 90, 91,93.

56 Willmott 1960:206.

57 Franke 1988: 94; Translation by Claudine Salmon, November 2000.

58 Widodo, J., National University of Singapore, Department of Architecture. E-publication <http://medan.m-heritage.org/results/index.html> 2002.

to Binjei. It was erected in memory of members of a secret society. In 1892 an assistant at a plantation was murdered by a Chinese coolie. Five coolies were caught, only one of the five being the murderer, but none of the five admitted as they had made a blood oath of faith. All five were hanged after which this temple was erected in their memory.⁵⁹

Ancestor worshipping and superstition

Confucius wrote:

*“Serve the dead as you would have served them during their life, and as you would have served them as if they would be still with you, as this is the highest point of love for your parents.”*⁶⁰

In Chinese belief deceased persons live on in a world of spirits. It is assumed that the well-being of the deceased depended on the attentions of the living. People with traditional beliefs therefore felt obliged to carry out regular worshipping of their ancestors. So many a Chinese had a family altar to perform ancestor worshipping rites, such as the offering of incense, prostrate bowing and food offerings on special days.⁶¹ In these rites or *Hao* the soul of the parents after their death was worshipped.⁶² It included providing an elaborate and expensive funeral and grave, affordable to the family, rituals of mourning and performing special ancestor-dedicated rites at Chinese New Year, at Tjing Bing (Tshing Bing) when graves are cleaned, at Tjap-Go Meh and Gow-geh tsoih (Tjoko).⁶³

Traditionally-minded Chinese completely believed in the existence of a world of spirits and gods. This led to many superstitions. When in Medan around 1895 the electricity factory was built, the Chinese rickshaw coolies refused to ride in the evening outside the city as evil spirits were looking for human heads, which would be used as basis for the foundation of the factory. Another belief concerned a refusal to help others. It often occurred that Chinese refused to help comrades after an accident. This however was not a matter of extreme indifference for other humans, but because the belief was that the ghosts, causing the accident, did not want you to aid their victim. So, if you helped a victim, the evil spirits could attack you afterwards. All coolies wore amulets to prevent disease and accidents and fortune tellers were extremely important. If one built a house, or started a far journey,

59 Jansen, *Andere helfft* 1941: 74, 64.

60 Confucius, De Leer van het Midden (Learning of the Middle) XIX (De Groot 1880: 320).

61 Willmott 1960:199.

62 De Groot 1880: 435; Moerman 1932: 102.

63 Willmott 1960: 199,220.

the Chinese always consulted the calendar in advance to determine which were the most fortunate days.⁶⁴

5.2.2. Christian religion among the Chinese of Medan

From the 1850s the first Chinese Christians appeared in the Dutch Protestant Church of the Indies on Java.⁶⁵ From appendix 5.2 it becomes clear that Medan had Dutch-Indies' Protestant, American Methodist Protestant and Dutch Roman Catholic communities. Among the Protestants and Catholics there were European, Chinese and Batak members. The Protestant Church of the Indies in Medan had very few Chinese members. The Methodist Church especially counted many Chinese. Indigenous population groups like the Malay, the Minangkabau, the Batak from Tapanoeli and the Javanese were mainly Muslim. From around 1890 the *Nederlandsch Zendings Genootschap* (Dutch Mission Society) was active in the Karo Batak highlands, later named the *Bataksche Protestansche Kerk*.⁶⁶ This had already been preceded in Pematang Siantar by the *Rijnsch Zendelings Genootschap*, active among the Batak of Simeloengoen. The *Rijnsch Zendelings Genootschap*, actually a German missionary society originating from the Rhineland, christianized many of the Batak in the Toba highlands.⁶⁷

The first Catholic Church in Medan dated back to 1879 and was located on the Paleisweg.⁶⁸ In 1911, the Jesuit order in Medan was replaced by the Capuchins. Thirty years later, in 1941, Medan became the vicariate apostolic of the Capuchin order.⁶⁹ The Dutch Catholic missionaries were quite successful among the Peranakan Chinese in Padang where they had many converts.⁷⁰ Converting the China born totok Chinese, however, was another matter.⁷¹ In 1940 the Catholic Church issued special guidelines for Chinese Catholics in the Netherlands Indies. The guidelines permitted the bowing in front of an image of Confucius or Sun Yat Sen as they were considered as important personalities in Chinese culture. But bowing for a statue of a deceased person, an ancestor or a spirit was not allowed. Burning of sticks for a deceased person was not forbidden, as long as it was accompanied with a true Catholic prayer. Ceremonies in front of graves were not allowed, and ceremonies in Chinese

64 De Bruin 1918: 30,31.

65 In 1900 a Protestant church was built at the corner of the Esplanade with the Demmeniweg, the building was in 1928 demolished and replaced by the office of the *Nederlandse Handel Maatschappij* (Netherlands Trading Company). (Loderichs, *Buiskool* 1997:109)

66 *Regeerings Almanak voor Nederlandsch-Indië* 1940: 497.

67 Steenbrink 2007: 326,327; *Tabak en Deli* (anonymous) *Memorie van Overgave*. Article about Deli and Serdang. KIT 689; Schadee, II, 188.

68 Sinar 1991: 76; Segaar – Höweler 1998: 29; DC 20-5-1896; SP 16-10-1899; SP 26-1-1918.

69 Sinar 1991: 76; *Colombijn* 1994: 107, Steenbrink 2007:593.

70 Steenbrink 2007: 330.

71 Steenbrink 2007: 71.

temples had to be avoided. Food was also not allowed to be sacrificed.⁷² These guidelines showed that Catholicism was not particularly tolerant of Buddhism or Taoism which made it less attractive for the totok community to convert to Catholicism. In 1900, Medan had 400 Catholics of which 165 were Chinese. In 1936 the numbers had almost doubled to around 300 Chinese. This was only 1% of the Chinese population. When a priest came to Medan who spoke Mandarin or Hokkien the numbers of Chinese Catholics increased.⁷³ A Roman Catholic church was built at the Hakkastraat in 1934 especially for the Catholic Chinese in Medan, by Dutch architect J.M. Groenewegen.⁷⁴

The American Methodist community in Medan dated from around 1910. The first Anglo-Chinese School had been established in Medan in 1905 by the American Methodist Society. In 1910 a Methodist church was connected to this school. Two years later reverend W.T. Ward from Penang came to set up the Methodist Church in Medan.⁷⁵ From the beginning reverend Ward received help from Major Tjong A Fie and Mr. J. van den Brand.⁷⁶ Reverend Ward noted from his experiences among the Chinese community that Christianity, in the first generation, did not eradicate the tribal or clan spirit. Nevertheless the Methodist church was popular, with many open-air services conducted in Malay, Cantonese and Hokkien.⁷⁷ The Methodist church in the English language was orientated towards Penang and Singapore and, hence, for many Medan Chinese was more attractive than the Dutch-orientated Catholic Church. Reverend Ward also established a Chinese Christian Association which counted in 1918 around 250 members.⁷⁸ This was around 4% of the Chinese population in Medan. Probably many more Chinese joined the Methodist church.⁷⁹

Then there was the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) established in Medan in 1915. The YMCA, which was not part of the Methodist church, was also a typical Chinese activity with a board of fourteen Chinese and one American.⁸⁰ Just like the Catholics the Methodist church offered guidelines for the Chinese. In Medan in 1935 the Chinese Evangelist John Sung preached in English for the Pentecostal church about a proper combination of Chinese traditional culture and Christianity. Until then the common opinion was that the Chinese who converted to Christianity had to renounce their Chinese roots.⁸¹ The English-

72 Steenbrink 2007: 73, 520, 521.

73 Steenbrink 2007: 328, 69, 333; Volkstelling 1930.

74 SP 26-11-1934.

75 SP 6-8-1912; *Regeerings Almanak voor Nederlandsch-Indië* 1940: 506.

76 Ward, 1915.

77 Ward, 1915.

78 SP 25-9-1915; Andalas, 22-1-1918; SP 29-1-1918.

79 Verslag Handelsvereniging Medan 1912: 9.

80 Gemeentebblad 15-2-1922 no. 2.

81 Steenbrink, Aritonang: 2008: 908,909.

speaking Pentecostals were the first among the Protestants where Chinese culture could be combined with Christianity.

5.3. Chinese non-religious organizations

5.3.1. Clan and professional associations

Directly related to Chinese religion were the clan associations as they practiced ancestor worshipping together. Chinese generally assume that all people bearing the same surname must be descendants of a common, although remote, ancestor. The local and clan chauvinism was a strong binding factor and members of the same clan gave each other mutual assistance in many ways. Chinese of the same family clan were not allowed to marry, even though the degree of the relation was quite a distant one. So, Lim could not marry Lim, Hiu not Hiu, etcetera.⁸² The six main clan or sub-ethnic groups in Medan were the Hokkian, Cantonese, Hakka, Hainan, Hoklo and Tio Tsjoe. All had their own clan associations. Besides this, there were many family, political, cultural, professional and trade organizations. Unfortunately, no archives of any of these organisations have survived so that we can only give a very impressionistic survey of their social activities in Medan. Appendix 5.3. has the information. The associations helped their countrymen exclusively, including coolies of the same clan.⁸³ Lineage associations or clan funds were also established by various families like Tan, Oei, Han and others, intended to erect ancestral halls and tombs and perform sacrifices for the ancestors. Quite often these funds were also meant for educational purposes.⁸⁴ There were the Hokkian club, the Cantonese club and the Hakka club.⁸⁵

Besides associations organized along ethnic identity and family relations there were also associations having a common locality, a city or region, as its organizing principle, such as the Taipoe (Taipei) and Weichow club. All these organizations strived for the same goal, namely charity, and support for members in need, mediation in case of disputes, social functions and sociability.⁸⁶ Each different group had their own social clubs and cemeteries.⁸⁷

Then there were Chinese professional organisations, as presented in appendix 5.4, more-or-less resembling European guilds, like those of the goldsmiths, shoemakers and tailors.⁸⁸ A division can be made between craftsmen such as tailors, goldsmiths and furniture makers,

82 Interviews Hiu Kian Jin 9-1-1996, 3-2-1996.

83 (Interviews Hiu Kian Jin 9-1-1996, 3-2-1996) In Singapore were regional organizations or *huiguans* and *pang* or *bang* organizations. (Visscher 2002: 6,31,32,33,45).

84 Vleming 1926:233,186; Williams 1952:44.

85 Vleming 1926: 233; Interviews Hiu Kian Jin 9-1-1996, 3-2-1996.

86 Vleming 1926: 233.

87 Gemeenteblad 1928: 25-35.

88 *Andalas*, 25-5-1918.

and traders like sellers in automobiles and bicycles. An important organisation was the Sugar and Rice Theng Bie Khong Hoi Traders association.⁸⁹ In the 1920s Medan had sixteen trade associations.⁹⁰ All Chinese traders could become member of such organizations. So, it was not limited to certain clans or places of origin in China. Just like the lineage associations, the professional associations were also active in educational projects.⁹¹ A special case was the *Tiong Hoa Kong Ek Twan*, the association of Chinese employees, a Chinese workers union.⁹² The association had a funeral fund which also concerned itself with the mourning regulations for the Sumatra Chinese which were different from those in Java and China. In 1918 there were discussions in the newspapers about regulations concerning the clothing of the mourners such as white (traditional Chinese style) or black (Western style) dress, ribbon on the left or right arm, colour, blue, black or white. The *Tiong Hoa Kong Ek Twan* chapter for funerals therefore organized a prize contest in the *Andalas* newspaper asking the readers what regulations they believed would be suitable for application on East Sumatra.⁹³ The association also had a medical assistance fund. At a meeting in 1919 a talk was held by town council member H.A. Wakker about housing politics, ground politics and people's education and about the way how, according to him, also outside the town council inhabitants and organisations should act on such important matters.⁹⁴ In 1918 *Andalas* wrote that many Chinese associations were short-lived. Therefore, these associations were also ironically called *Tionghoa Go Hoen Tjeng Djat Sim* (active for five minutes).⁹⁵

Here we have to also mention the so-called secret societies. The *triad* or secret societies had already existed in China from the ninth century and originated from political refugees after rebellions in China. The last rebellion during the Manchu dynasty was the Boxer uprising of 1900 initiated by a secret society called "The fist of Patriotism", also called fist-fighters or boxers.⁹⁶ The secret societies in the Netherlands Indies were basically clan organizations. Their functions, however, could change and become a mafia-kind of organization with criminal intentions.⁹⁷ To become a member, secret ceremonies were held

89 SP 27-7-1934.

90 Vleming 1925: 232; Ong Eng Die 1943: 224.

91 Information Thio Han Cheng 2003.

92 In Malay this organisation was called 'Persarikatan Kaoem Penggawe Tionghoa' or Union for Chinese Employees. (*Andalas* 24-7-1917).

93 On Java the *Tiong Hoa Hwe Koan* had drawn up a list of regulations concerning mourning, but these were much influenced by Javanese customs. Therefore, they differed in various respects from the regulations used on East Sumatra. In China itself, new influences from the west such as the black ribbon also became fashionable, so regulations from the mother country were not clear either. (*Andalas*, 5-6-1917; *Andalas* 21-3-1918).

94 SP 1-5-1919.

95 The *Tiong Hoa Kong Ek Twan* union and funeral association however was a positive exception to this rule, according to *Andalas*. (*Andalas*, 25-5-1918).

96 Sandick 1909: 383; *Indië*, April 1918 – April 1919: 645,646; De Bruin 1918: 38.

97 *Indische Gids*, 1915, I, 77,78; De Bruin 1918:38; SP 16-5-1913; Yong 1992: 296.

and afterwards you had to act according to the rules of the society. Blood oaths were sworn accompanied by the drinking of each other's blood. The members spoke to each other or made certain signs so that they knew they belonged to a certain society. These signs were only known by members of the society. In case an oathbrother of a secret society had to deal with the judge, he could count on his other oathmembers that they would testify for him. If a member feels himself tied to an oath, sworn in as member of a secret society, it was extremely difficult in court cases to have a Chinese witness tell the truth.⁹⁸ In case of, for instance opium smuggling, it was therefore very difficult to find the offender.⁹⁹ Among the coolies on Eastern Sumatra several secret societies were active. It was hard to get insight into such societies as the Chinese were very close in these matters. In 1851 the Netherlands Indies government published a decree in which secret societies which undermine the society and law and order, were forbidden and their members deported. 33 years later, in 1884, in Laboehan Deli a decree was published in which membership of Chinese secret societies was forbidden and punishable. In 1907 and 1909 other ordinances were published against Chinese secret societies.¹⁰⁰ In the 1890s there were many cases involving secret societies in Deli on the plantations.¹⁰¹ Such as fights between the Gie Hing and Ho Sing associations.¹⁰² The best-known secret society on East Sumatra was the Three Finger Society, also known as Sam Thiam Hwee. This notorious association was known for its complete secrecy.¹⁰³ Often the *hari besar* was set up at different dates, to avoid clashes between adherents of different societies.¹⁰⁴ Among the extreme secret societies the members did not hesitate to kill.¹⁰⁵ After 1900 the activities of the societies declined and there were not so many activities.¹⁰⁶ However, even in 1938 one member of the Three Finger Society was still active, called 'The Terror of the Radja of Pangkalan Brandan', he instilled fear in all of the Chinese shops in the area in which he operated.¹⁰⁷ In conclusion, secret societies were active in the plantation belt and probably also in Medan, but only on a very reduced scale.

98 De Bruin 1918: 39.

99 *Indië*, April 1918 – April 1919: 645; Jansen, *Vreemde Oosterlingen 1940*: 69.

100 Sandick 1909: 418,422; SP 16-5-1913; *Koloniaal Weekblad* 22-11-1906; De Bruin 1918: 43; *Indische Gids* 1915, I: 77,78; Yong 1992: 296.

101 On Timbang Langkat Estate and at the Bekioen and Tamboenan estates were secret societies gangs of robbers. (DC 30-7-1898; De Bruin 1918: 41,42; DC 7-1-1891; SP 20-2-1905; SP 30-1-1915).

102 Information Loh Wei Leng.

103 Langereis, in *Indië*, April 1918 – April 1919, 597; SP 27-6-1913; SP 5-7-1913; De Bruin 1918: 106,107; MvO Van Kempen, 1928).

104 SP 16-5-1913.

105 De Bruin 1918: 106, 110, 111, 118; *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1909-1910.

106 Sandick 1909: 418,420,422; SP 13-5-1909; *Koloniaal Weekblad* 22-11-1906.

107 SP 10-2-1938.

5.3.2. Political, cultural, and other associations

Medan had cultural associations, such as the reading club Soe Po Sia. The Soe Po Sia, or reading rooms, (literally books and newspapers in translation). Such clubs were centres of propaganda for the Tung Meng Hui, the precursor of the Kuo Min Tang, the Chinese nationalist party from 1911 onwards.¹⁰⁸ Reverend Ward also established a Chinese Reading Room.¹⁰⁹ These literary associations were however seen with some distrust by the colonial government due to the propagandistic character.¹¹⁰ In 1912, directly after the Chinese revolution, an association with a hitherto unknown name was established, promoting the speaking of the Mandarin language. Besides that, this association stimulated an enlightened modern attitude.¹¹¹ The fact that the Chinese lived in the Netherlands Indies where the *lingua franca* was Malay was of no importance. The Dutch language was also not important. The only important language to them was Mandarin.¹¹² At the same line the Siau Lian Lian Hap Hwee or Young Chinese Association was established, especially to promote Chinese morals in the modern world.¹¹³

Another expression of this growing awareness of being Chinese, was the way how one referred to oneself or the mother country. Before 1900 the word China (Tjina) was considered a normal expression for the Chinese in the Netherlands Indies. Around or after 1900, with the rise of Chinese nationalism, the word Tionghoa (Tiong Hoa) came into use. Tionghoa and Tionggok referred to the old empire of the middle. The school association Tiong Hoa Hwe Koan (THHK) used the words Tionghoa and Tionggok for the first time in the Netherlands Indies. In 1928 the THHK officially changed the name Tjina in her constitution into Tionghoa. In Malay this organisation was called 'Persarikatan Kaoem Penggawe Tionghoa' or Union for Chinese Employees.¹¹⁴

Appendix 5.5 shows that between 1915 and 1941 there were at least eight cultural associations listed in Medan. Of these, three were musical clubs, two to promote Chinese language and morals, one Chinese reading room and one Chinese Christian association. There were also festive organizations, such as the *Pasar Malam* (Evening Fair) committee in 1934¹¹⁵ and another inter-ethnic committee for the royal wedding of Princess Juliana

108 Ong Hok Ham 1989: 54; Somers 1992: 160.

109 Ward, 1915.

110 SP 23-7-1921.

111 SP 26-8-1912; *Andalas* 22-11-1917; 27-11-1917; 18-4-1918; *Gemeentebld* 10-9-1923; *Andalas* 16-3-1920.

112 *Andalas* 13-4-1918, 18-4-1918.

113 *Andalas* 8-5-1917.

114 Coppel 2002: 369-372; SP 26-3-1915; *Andalas* 5-6-1917; *Andalas* 24-7-1917.

115 This committee had Chinese, Indigenous and European members, amongst others Hiu Ngi Fen, Khoe Tjin Tek and Tan Boen An. (SP 8-11-1935)

and Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands in January 1937.¹¹⁶ Chinese aid committees were also established after natural disasters like an earthquake in Padang and the harsh winter in Manchuria in China.¹¹⁷ In 1934 an asylum for poor Chinese was established and associations for mutual help.¹¹⁸ A different reason for the establishment of an organisation was the war with Japan. In 1941 (the Dutch East Indies so far had not yet entered the war) a newly founded Chinese Women Organization raised funds for the victims of the war in China on Women's Day, 8th March.¹¹⁹ Appendix 5.6 shows that between 1918 and 1940 there were at least ten aid associations in Medan.

5.4. Chinese education in Medan

The best way to promote the development of the Medan Chinese population was by way of education and the prominent Chinese were active in several educational projects. The appendixes 5.7 to 5.9 show that in 1924 Medan counted 10 Dutch language schools, 4 English language schools, 6 Chinese/English language schools and 6 Chinese language schools. As presented in appendixes 5.10 and 5.11 East Sumatra in 1914 had 22 Chinese schools, while six years later, in 1920, in lower Deli including Medan alone, there were 23 Chinese schools. That education was deemed important can be seen in appendixes 5.12 to 5.13, showing that in 1920 24,8% of the Chinese boys of East Sumatra followed primary education. In the case of Chinese girls this was much less, only 8%. Compared with other ethnicities, the Chinese scored worse than the Europeans, but far better than the Indigenous.

Tiong Hoa Hwe Koan schools

From the beginning of the twentieth century, as a result of the new ethical policy, the Netherlands Indies government increased the building of Dutch language schools all over the archipelago. Although many schools were established in the following years, still it was not enough.¹²⁰ In 1900 among the Chinese the already mentioned *Tiong Hoa Hwe Koan* was established, stressing the importance of education for the Chinese youth. Soon *Tiong Hoa Hwe Koan* schools were founded, with Mandarin as the language of instruction. The first Chinese school in Medan was a *Tiong Hoa Hwe Koan* school dating from 1900. Tan

116 It was decided to establish a feast committee, that would organise diverse festivities, to construct festive gates and to make decorations to Chinese houses and shops. (SP 17-11-1936)

117 SP 10-7-1926; SP 11-1-1933.

118 (SP 10-1-1934). *Vereeniging voor hulpverlening aan armen en minder gunstig bedeeden* (SP 25-7-1934).

119 *Sumatra Bin Pho* 11-3-1941.

120 *Cator* 1936: 87.

Tang Ho was among its founders. The Tjong Hoa Hwe Koan Schools were clearly linked to Chinese nationalism.

It was in response to the Tjong Hoa Hwe Koan schools that the Dutch established Dutch Chinese schools. However, it was not until 1914 that a Dutch Chinese school in Medan was founded. Chinese language schools requested Dutch as a second language, but as this request was denied by the government, the Chinese schools instead chose English as the second language of instruction. On Java the Dutch Chinese schools proved to be more popular than Chinese schools. In Medan, however, the Chinese preferred Chinese education with English as second language. This was because of the intense economic ties between Medan and the British Straits Settlements. Dutch Chinese schools were less popular. In the case of the pure Dutch language schools, only Dutch and elite Indigenous children were permitted to attend.¹²¹

Also important were the teacher training schools for Dutch as well as Chinese language schools. The question was who would teach the children and which qualifications should such teachers have? Over the years the difficulties in getting good teachers for the Dutch Chinese language schools became apparent. In 1918 there were not enough teachers for the Dutch Chinese school, the main problem being that the Medan Chinese were English- and not Dutch-orientated, which meant that Dutch teachers were less motivated to work at Dutch Chinese schools. Chinese teachers from the Netherlands Indies were also less motivated to teach at Dutch Chinese schools as they preferred a job in business. For Chinese teachers coming from China, Medan was an unattractive place to be, as they could not understand the Hokkian language (from southern China) that was spoken there. Teachers from southern China often themselves spoke Mandarin badly.¹²²

The school of Khoe Tjin Tek

In 1922 there was a discussion in the town council on the school subsidy for the school of Khoe Tjin Tek which had requested restitution of entertainment taxes. Member Gan Hoat Soei asked to make an exception for this school as it had been in existence for years and delivered thousands of pupils, among them the speaker. That there was no control on this school, which was the reason for not giving restitution, was not the fault of the Chinese but of the government that did not provide enough schools. Gan Hoat Soei's proposal was accepted by the council with twelve voting in favour and one against. Gan Hoat Soei, himself also Dutch educated, arranged that the Chinese children could go to the Dutch Catholic St.

121 Vleming 1926: 230; SP 3-12-1915; Govaars 1999: 62,61; Jansen, *Vreemde Oosterlingen* 1940: 65; Interview Mrs. Lemye in Brussels 13-3-1992.

122 SP 3-10-1918; Van Diffelen 1936: 14; De Bruin 1918: 102.

Jozefschool. So, Gan Hoat Soei pleaded for Chinese language education as well as for Dutch language education. Khoe Tjin Tek's son Khoe Khoen Hoei remembered the following:

*[...] my father started an elementary school called Hua Shang Elementary School for the Chinese children. [...] The students studied both Chinese and English literature during class. They have a daily drill each morning at the school yard and participated in different kinds of sports after class each day.*¹²³

This daily nationalistic drill was not uncommon and done at other schools as well, like the Hwa Shang Hio Thang school in the Japanese street.¹²⁴ On the occasion of Khoe Tjin Tek's birthday all the schoolchildren came to his birthday celebration.¹²⁵ The Chinese paper *Andalas* wrote that Khoe Tjin Tek, as strong supporter of educational institutions (Kong Ek), had established the Hwa Siang Hak Tong school in 1908. The school was located behind the Hüttenbachstraat. It mainly had Hokkian and Tiotjoe pupils. Since the Chinese revolution the language was Mandarin Chinese.¹²⁶ In later years Khoe Tjin Tek founded the Chinese girls' school Tiong Boa Bin Tjok as the rather traditional Khoe Tjin Tek thought it important that girls went to a special school, not mixing with boys, in order to avoid undesirable consequences.¹²⁷

Education, clan, language and politics

One factor causing the Medan Chinese to send their children to Chinese schools was that they wanted them to be educated in their own clan environment. Consequently, Hakka, Hokkien, and Cantonese schools were established. In 1918 Tjong A Fie established a Chinese secondary school.¹²⁸ In 1918 the two main Chinese schools in Medan were the Tun Pun school of the Tjong brothers, for Hakka and Cantonese pupils mainly using Hakka language, and the school of Khoe Tjin Tek. The school of Khoe Tjin Tek was a Hokkian one.¹²⁹

Over the years there were discussions in the town council on language matters and subsidies for Chinese schools.¹³⁰ This was caused by the unwillingness of the Netherlands Indies government to provide Chinese language education. Consequently, many Chinese

123 Letter Khoe Khoen Hoei 1992.

124 SP 26-6-1912.

125 Film compilation Eddy Khoe 1991.

126 De Bruin, 1918: 102.

127 *Andalas*, 13-6-1918.

128 MvO. ass. res. S. van der Plas, 1913; De Bruin 1918: 102,103; *Andalas* 7-5-1918, 8-6-1918.

129 Mrs. Lemye 1992; De Bruin, 1918: 102.

130 Gemeentebld 18-2-1925; 29-1-1925; SP 5-1-1926; SP 16-6-1938.

pupils became English- instead of Dutch-oriented.¹³¹ The language the Chinese used for trade was English, Mandarin or Hokkien, not Dutch. From the viewpoint of the Chinese, Medan's trade with the Straits Settlements was more important than that with Java.¹³² In 1905, the first Anglo-Chinese School was established in Medan by an ex-pupil of the Anglo-Chinese School in Penang. The school had connections with similar schools in the Straits Settlements and received most of its teachers from there.¹³³

In 1912, the Missionary Society of the American Methodist Episcopal Church sent missionary W.T. Ward, who had previously worked in Penang, to Medan. Ward established a Methodist school in the Chinese quarter which became rather popular. Ward played football with the Chinese, went hunting and rode around all over East Sumatra with his motorbike.¹³⁴ District officer H.E.K. Ezerman wrote in 1923 that the only public Dutch-language school which never had to turn pupils down was the Dutch Chinese school in Medan. This was because the school did not meet parents' requests for a curriculum that included English and Mandarin.¹³⁵ In 1926, only 200 Chinese pupils went to Dutch schools out of a total of 1400. As said before, the situation in East Sumatra stood in sharp contrast to Java where the Chinese were more Dutch-oriented.¹³⁶ Civil servant G. Jansen stated in the municipal gazette:

*“As the government does not sufficiently provide for the needs for education according to Chinese wishes, the result will be that the new generation Chinese will be strangers in Netherlands India. It will be advisable to start English language schools where Dutch is part of the curriculum.”*¹³⁷

However, such a plea landed on deaf ears, as only a few Chinese in Medan spoke Dutch even in 1929.¹³⁸

The Su Tung School

In 1907, Tjong Yong Hian, Tjong A Fie and Khoe Tjin Tek together with other representatives of different Chinese groups established the Tjong Pun primary school, later renamed the

131 *Andalas*, 30-6-1917; *Andalas*, 13-6-1918; SP 30-9-1918.

132 SP 30-7-1913; Suryadinata 1997: 83.

133 SP 6-8-1912.

134 (SP 6-8-1912; De Bruin, 1918:103,110; Ward 1915). In 1920 the Methodist school counted 363 pupils. (Koloniaal verslag 1921:75)

135 MvO ass. res. H.E.K. Ezerman, 1921; MvO controleur D.E. Pronck, 1923.

136 SP 18-2-1926; MvO ass. res. W.P.F.L. Winckel, 1925 KIT 675.

137 Gemeentebblad 9-12-1925.

138 MvO ass. res. afd. Deli en Serdang, S. Bouman, 1929 KIT 678; MvO controleur J. Reuvers, 1929 KIT 679.

Su Tung school.¹³⁹ In 1927 Khoe Tjin Tek and Chang Pu Ching established the Su Tung Tjong Ok (Su Tung Middle School) open for all pupils of whatever ethnic or religious background.¹⁴⁰ In 1934 all the different ethnic Chinese schools in Medan united and set up a new Chinese secondary school. The schools became known as Su Tung Primary and Secondary school, respectively. On the board Khoe Tjin Tek and Chang Pu Ching were joined by Tan Boen An, Hiu Ngi Fen and Thio Siong Soe.¹⁴¹ From 1930 on, Chinese nationalism increased in importance. There were Chinese schools that promoted Chinese nationalism together with anti-Japanese propaganda, the latter being not permitted by the Dutch.¹⁴² It was not allowed to talk about Chinese patriotism, to sing Chinese nationalistic songs or to be politically active.¹⁴³ There were also leftist influences on Chinese schools, resulting in deportation of teachers back to China.¹⁴⁴ Government control of Chinese schools on political matters remained over the years, in fact until the Japanese invasion in 1942.

5.5. Public Health Care in Medan

*“Often we see in the papers from the British Straits Settlements that many British go to Deli ‘to seek medical advice and treatment’. This has been going on for years already.”*¹⁴⁵

Education is a public good. Another crucial public good is health care. Medical care on East Sumatra was good compared to that in British Malaysia, if we consider the above quote from 1912. The concern for health care was directly related to the plantation industry. When workers became sick and died, plantation companies lost productive labour. Consequently, they built hospitals. In 1870 the Deli Company established the first hospital with a European doctor in Medan. This was a reaction to large losses in the field of labour; of the nine hundred Chinese coolies who entered Deli in 1869, by July 1870 two hundred had already died. In 1915 the town had three hospitals, the central hospital, a hospital for women and the Chinese

139 (Vleming 1926: 230) Other sources mention that the Tjong Pun school was established in 1903. (Tun Pun School, by Lim Ren Huan, translation 18-9-1999 by Hiu Kian Jin) According to Rebecca Chandra the Tjong brothers established the Dun Pen (Tjong Pun) primary school in 1908 behind the Tian Hou Temple. (Chandra 2011: 19)

140 MvO van Kempen, deel III, 1928: 444.

141 Information Thio Han Cheng; Interview Tan Boen Djin 25-10-1993; MvO Mackay 1931: 179; *Andalas*, 9-1-1917; Gemeentebld 29-1-1925; 18-2-1925; Gemeentebld 20-6-1928; Chandra 2011: 107; *Persoonlijkheden* 1938; Franke 1988:146.

142 SP 27-11-1930; SP 16-3-1933.

143 Tun Pun School, by Lim Ren Huan, translation 18-9-1999 by Hiu Kian Jin.

144 Koloniaal verslag 1921:74; SP 30-5-1930; MvO gouverneur L.H.M. van Sandick, 1930.

145 SP 9-1-1912.

hospital.¹⁴⁶ In 1930 there was a municipal hospital, with the lung clinic for tuberculosis, the Catholic St. Elisabeth hospital, the private hospital in the Timorstraat and the eye clinic in Djati Oeloe.¹⁴⁷ An overview of the hospitals in Medan in the 1930s is presented in appendix 5.20. One has also to keep in mind that health care, especially where it concerned hospitals, like many other things in the Netherlands Indies, was often the subject of segregation. It is against this background that the following paragraphs have to be read.

The Chinese hospital

In 1890 the Tjong brothers established the Tjie On Jie Jan hospital and asylum, because the local government would not take the initiative to organize medical care for the poor Chinese living in town. The hospital was located at the Hospitaalweg, between the Kwanteebiostraat and the Wilhelminastraat.¹⁴⁸ The Dutch parliamentarian Van Kol wrote in 1903 that the Chinese hospital was a dirty and unpleasant-smelling dark building. Of the two hundred patients, eighty were sick as result of opium use and forty had Beri-beri. In 1914 he visited the institution again and wrote more positively about it, probably because by now Europeans worked there.¹⁴⁹ The hospital accepted patients without charge and cared for the poor and orphans. If the Chinese housed in the asylum preferred to return to China, they were given a free ticket by the government, plus one set of clothes and ten Straits dollars from Major Tjong A Fie.¹⁵⁰ The financing was handled by the foundation of the same name, which received income by renting out shop-houses. In 1887 the local government had sold the right to utilize the meat, fish, and vegetable markets to the Tjong brothers. To support medical care the government offered the Tjong brothers the opportunity to finance the Chinese hospital from the market profits. This construction was made in 1906.¹⁵¹

Besides for a hospital for the Chinese, the local government also turned to the Tjong brothers for help concerning the lepers in East Sumatra. In 1896 there were 400 to 500 lepers in Deli and Langkat. Around 1900 Tjong Yong Hian and Tjong A Fie established the leper colony at Poeloe Si Tjanang, an island 4 km west of the road Laboehan Deli - Belawan at the mouth of the Deli river. The management of the leper colony at Poeloe Si Tjanang was ceded to the Salvation Army. In 1912 the construction of a road and new buildings for the leper colony was started by Tjong A Fie. In 1918, 347 lepers were housed in the colony. In

146 Schadee I 1918:183; SP 8-4-1915.

147 SP 28-10-1930; SP 19-11-1930; SP 14-3-1938.

148 Interview with Mrs. Lemye in Westende at 12-6-1992.

149 Van Kol 1903: 102; Van Kol wrote in 1914: "In a spacious hospital, located in a big coconut garden, are, on costs of the Chinese community, the sick nursed by European doctors. In another adjacent building, are the old people and orphans taken care of, housed and fed." (van Kol 1914: 64).

150 Letter Mr. Schneider dated 12-2-1923, Gemeentebld 1923; *Andalas*, 24-4-1920; *Andalas*, 24-4-1920)

151 Gemeentebld 1920: 428; Gemeentebld 20-7-1921; Gemeentebld 30-1-1923.

the years thereafter the plantation companies and also the government joined in to finance the institution.¹⁵² Although in 1912 there were three hospitals in Medan, there were far too few doctors. There were also ‘quacks’.¹⁵³ There were more serious approaches to solving the lack of well-trained doctors. In 1917 the Chinese medical service fund of the association *Tiong Hoa Kong Ek Twan* was established. From this fund it was possible to get a doctor quickly in case of serious illness.¹⁵⁴

After Tjong A Fie passed away in 1921, the status of the Chinese hospital changed. The old markets were taken over by the municipality and would be closed when the new central market was finished. So, the funding of the hospital was in danger. Another factor was that the municipal market would be built on the former race grounds. As the grounds on which the Chinese hospital stood were quite near the racecourse, there were discussions about its removal. In addition to this, a new municipal hospital was to be established, which should cater for all population groups. Consequently, there was less need for a Chinese hospital. One year later, the hospital became the subject of discussion in the town council, when the Chinese council member Gan Hoat Soei questioned its quality. The health commission contacted the Chinese hospital and introduced hygiene improvements. Another problem was on that on Fridays the poor patients temporarily left the hospital to beg in the Kesawan.¹⁵⁵ Nevertheless, in 1926 approximately one hundred people were still in the asylum. When in 1933 the markets of the Tjong family were finally taken over by the municipality and the new central market opened, the funding of the Chinese hospital stopped. In the years after it was reported that there were still patients in the hospital because Chinese beggars originating from the Tjong Yong Hian Foundation occasionally were seen in the streets. In those years the hospital was managed by a Tjong family member. In later years the problem appeared again with beggars who came to the Kesawan as they begged for pocket money (which they did not get in the asylum), for instance to buy opium. In 1939 the police arrested 39 beggars and put some for a day in prison. *De Sumatra Post* suggested moving the asylum to outside the city so that beggars from there would not disturb the town.¹⁵⁶

152 DC 28-3-1896; DC 26-8-1896; MvO resident W.J. Rahder 1913; SP 11-10-1912; SP 29-4-1913; De Bruin 1918: 114; MvO ass. resident W.P.F.L. Winckel, 1925, KIT 675.

153 *De Sumatra Post* wrote in 1912: “In one of the tiny, low houses at the Spoorstraat (Jalan Kereta Api) a table was placed with some instruments and pots with cream and bottles with some fluid content. Behind that, with a serious spectacled face, a Chinaman, surrounded by, as herring in a ton, shabby dressed men and women, who impatiently waited till it was their turn to receive medical treatment. We have to admit, the ‘doctor’ worked quickly, he looked in the sick eye (there were mostly eye diseases), put a plaster on it, or casted some drops from one of the bottles, and it was finished.” (SP 7-10-1912).

154 *Andalas*, 25-9-1917.

155 Gemeenteblad 25-10-1921; MvO Mackay 1931: 103; Gemeenteblad Medan 25-10-1921, 16-7-1928; Gemeenteblad 15-3-1922; SP 14-2-1924; SP 16-3-1933; SP 20-9-1934.

156 Buischool 1999: 86; MVO Ruychaver 1926; MVO Mackay 1931: 103; Levensbeschrijving; Gemeenteblad, 29-4-1921; MVO van Meyenfeldt, 1934; Interview Mrs. Lemye in Westende at 12-6-1992; SP 20-05-1938; SP 20-10-1939; *Het nieuws van den dag voor Nederlandsch-Indië* 23-10-1939.



Chinese Hospital in Medan, 1923.

Foto Baars, Harm Kamerlingh Onnes, 2000

Returning to the municipal hospital, by 1912 town council discussions about it had already started. Again Tjong A Fie stepped in as he offered for that year an amount of fl.100,000 for establishment and fl.30,000 for the maintenance of a municipal hospital.¹⁵⁷ Discussions however, continued for many years. In 1918 the population of Medan was 40.000, and the expectation was that in 50 years the population would reach 200,000. The building of a new hospital to become the municipal medical institution Stadsverband at the Paleisweg would be too small. In 1930 the population was over 75,000 inhabitants, more-or-less in line with the expectation.¹⁵⁸ The new municipal hospital was finally opened in 1930 at the Serdangweg and was open for all races.¹⁵⁹ Before that time Chinese and Indigenous were not admitted in a central hospital. The municipal hospital had a section for non-paying patients which was much larger than the section for the patients who were able to pay for treatments.¹⁶⁰

Epidemics and Hygiene

One of the constant worries of the colonial authorities in Southeast Asia, the Netherlands Indies included, were epidemics of infectious diseases. This was also the case in East Sumatra and Medan, where one was on a constant alert as far as incoming migrants from

¹⁵⁷ Gemeentebld, 16-3-1920, no. 6.

¹⁵⁸ *Andalas*, 17-10-1918; SP 8-4-1930; SP 14-3-1938.

¹⁵⁹ SP 5-4-1930; SP 8-4-1930; Gemeente Medan, 1909-1934: 26,31.

¹⁶⁰ Gemeentebld, 15-3-1922.

China were concerned. Therefore, ships carrying coolies from China had to apply all sorts of precautions with regard to hygiene. When a ship entered the harbor flying the yellow flag it was a sign the passengers were infected with the plague and was the ship not allowed to come ashore as long as the people were not cured. The plague, still regularly occurring in China, was number one on the list of infectious disease. As rats were often the carriers of the plague, destroying these animals stood central among the measures of prevention. On the occasion of the plague epidemic of 1905 strict hygiene rules were introduced in Medan. The police even used forced labourers to clean and disinfect houses. A premium of \$0.02 (Straits Dollar) for every dead rat was paid.¹⁶¹ The worst plague epidemic, however, was in 1918. The Malay Straits Settlements demanded that all ships from Belawan be disinfected. This was understandable, as several victims of the plague fell sick on plantations around Medan and in Belawan. Town council member Dr. H. Vervoort was appointed head of the city's anti-plague efforts.¹⁶² To inform the public, a film was shown in the Oranje cinema on the prevention of the plague. The Deli Maatschappij published a brochure on how to prevent plague. It specified that houses should be improved so that rats could not enter, while instructions were given on cleaning houses and on hygiene. Major points included picking up and burning of garbage, keeping food in closed tins or boxes, using rat traps, holding weekly cleaning sessions, inspecting storage areas daily, searching around hidden places and corners and eliminating straw or packing material from properties.¹⁶³ The Chinese quarters of Medan were full of blind alleys, corridors and sewers where the rats could find refuge and thrive. At this time Tjong A Fie became involved with the anti-rat campaign. Subsequently, a large-scale cleanup was started up by his employees in the Chinese quarter. One problem was the large kongsi houses where many Chinese lived together. Poor Chinese often lived there with more than one hundred to a house. Many of them were unemployed, like Hongkong Chinese, or *toekang* (craftsmen) looking for work at the plantations. Conditions in such houses were ripe for the spread of contagious diseases.¹⁶⁴ *De Sumatra Post* wrote:

*“except for the houses of the more well-to- do Chinese, there is only one type of Chinese house which at least meet limited demands of hygiene, namely the brothels, which are more hygienic, a remarkable condition.”*¹⁶⁵

161 DC 30-5-1896; SP 23-6-1899; SP 26-4-1905; SP 6-5-1905; SP 16-5-1905; SP 12-8-1913; SP 22-11-1915; SP 29-10-1918; SP 12-5-1905; SP 26-5-1905; SP 24-10-1911.

162 SP 1-8-1913; SP 25-2-1918; *Andalas* 19-3-1918; *Andalas* 23-3-1918; SP 29-10-1918; SP 30-3-1918.

163 *Andalas* 6-4-1918; *Andalas* 8-6-1918; *Andalas* 4-7-1918; SP 25-10-1918; SP 15-3-1918; SP 19-3-1918; SP 20-3-1918.

164 *Indische Gids* 1919 II: 1041; SP 23-3-1918.

165 SP 23-3-1918.

This was in 1918, in response to an outbreak of the plague, but Medan had already been dealing with the problem of hygiene from the early 1890s onwards, when there was attention drawn to a regular accumulation of garbage and bad smells, in particular in the market places. The city was full of open ditches filled with garbage as there was no sewer system as yet. One of the answers to lack of hygiene in the city was that in 1909 the local government established the first municipal bathhouse.¹⁶⁶ This public bathhouse was located in the center of the Chinese quarter, at the corner of Luitenantweg – Shanghaistraat – Swatowstraat.¹⁶⁷ Two years later, in 1911, the *Dienst Volksgezondheid* (Department of Public Health) was established.¹⁶⁸ To further promote health and hygiene, an abattoir was opened in 1915 and three years later a municipal veterinary surgeon was appointed.¹⁶⁹ That same year a cemetery for dead dogs and oxen was also established. Previously, in violation of hygiene regulations, dogs had been buried in the kampongs.¹⁷⁰ Bakeries were also often not hygienic. These problems were also witnessed in other cities in the Netherlands Indies.¹⁷¹

In matters of hygiene, drinking water was of course crucial. The Medan water company, *Ajer Bersih*, established in 1905, was responsible for the continuous supply of water to the city.¹⁷² The company provided safe drinking water which could be consumed uncooked and unfiltered.¹⁷³ Language proved to be a problem in Medan, a city of several languages, when *Ajer Bersih* announced in the newspapers in 1928 that the drinking water supply would be temporarily interrupted. Among the Chinese a problem arose. As this announcement was not published in the Chinese language papers, many Chinese citizens fell ill because of drinking unsafe water. As a consequence, town council member Gan Hoat Soei requested that all future announcements be published in Chinese as well as other newspapers. The council agreed.¹⁷⁴ Medan's local councils in general had the responsibility for the construction and maintenance of the city's public facilities, including gutters and water systems. So, in 1913 a street cleaning system was established, with sweep wagons and water flush cars. The building of the city's sewer system began somewhat later, in 1926.¹⁷⁵ All these matters were of high importance in the prevention of contagious diseases.

166 DC 23-12-1891; DC 21-12-1895; SP 10-3-1913; SP 9-6-1909; SP 15-6-1909; SP 18-8-1909.

167 SP 19-10-1915; Gemeentebblad 1923.

168 Van Bergen, L. *Van koloniale geneeskunde tot internationale gezondheidszorg Wageningen 2007*: 21.

169 SP 30-1-1912; SP 21-3-1912; SP 1-6-1912; SP 3-8-1912; SP 5-8-1912; SP 21-12-1912; SP 29-8-1913; SP 30-8-1913; SP 5-1-1915; SP 22-10-1915; SP 3-1-1918; SP 27-9-1918; van Tets 1920: 170.

170 SP 21-11-1918.

171 SP 10-2-1915; Abeyasekere 1989:73; Dick 2002: 170, 177, 173; SP 19-7-1918.

172 Naudin 1905: 43.

173 MvO controleur M.J. Ruychaver, 1926, KIT 676; SP 1-9-1915; SP 19-10-1915; SP 9-1-1918; SP 27-9-1918; SP 29-10-1918; SP 12-11-1918; SP 9-1-1942; Gemeentebblad 23-8-1922, no. 10.

174 Gemeentebblad 12-9-1928.

175 Gemeente Medan 1909–1934: 4.

Besides the plague other diseases threatened public health in the city. In 1918, for instance, the Spanish influenza reached Sumatra from Penang. On that occasion, the municipality supplied free medicines to the villages.¹⁷⁶ In lower Deli approximately 1,800 fell sick; 82 Indigenous and Chinese died. People tried to stop the epidemic in many ways: they held a symbolic procession from Deli Toewa to Laboehan to push the Spanish flu back into the sea. In every kampong new groups of villagers joined the procession from one end of their kampong to the other. The procession was constantly growing.¹⁷⁷ In 1905, 1913 and 1915 there were smallpox epidemics. In 1913 in the markets in the Chinese quarter as well as in the offices of the civil service a *dokter djawa* was stationed to vaccinate passers-by. In the first half of April 1915 an estimated 1,500 people were vaccinated, ending new occurrences of smallpox. In 1933 there were cases of smallpox again, subsequently followed by vaccinations.¹⁷⁸ Tuberculosis was another serious threat. In 1933 the Department of Public Health established consultation bureaus to prevent tuberculosis. But in December that year many victims of tuberculosis fell ill on Sumatra. The papers even wrote that one of every four Indigenous was infected.¹⁷⁹ A less-noted disease was malaria. Some thought it could be cured. For example, in 1909 advertisements appeared in the newspapers, such as:

*“The light has lighted. Malaria can be cured. The Abbey syrup of Monastery Sancta Paulo. Price per flacon fl,75. Available at drugstores and pharmacies.”*¹⁸⁰

In spite of these positive words there was a malaria explosion in Belawan in 1938.¹⁸¹

5.6. Entertainment: sport, music, theatre and cinemas

Besides the public institutions such as schools and hospitals, there were sports and cultural institutions such as football clubs and cultural organisations. Sport proved to be a particularly uniting factor. Concerning European cultural activities, there were the White Club and the Delische Kunstkring (Deli Art Society) but these institutions mainly revolved around white activities with very few Chinese or Indigenous members. Such organizations are outside the focus of this study.

176 (SP 12-11-1918). The Spanish flu or influenza pandemic killed in the period 1918 until 1920 between 50 and 100 million people worldwide which was 3 to 6% of the world population.

177 SP 25-10-1918; SP 11-11-1918; SP 12-11-1918; SP 13-11-1918.

178 SP 7-8-1905; SP 27-8-1913; SP 19-3-1915; SP 24-3-1915; SP 17-4-1915; SP 21-2-1933; SP 4-10-1933; SP 5-10-1933.

179 SP 8-4-1933; SP 27-9-1933; SP 27-12-1933.

180 SP 22-2-1909.

181 SP 22-2-1909; SP 28-10-1938.

Soccer

In June 1899 the first official soccer club, Sport Club Sumatra's Oostkust, was established by W.J.H. Mulier, editor of the newspaper *Deli Courant*.¹⁸² Matches were held at the Esplanade. It was clear that soccer united the races as European, Chinese and Indigenous played together and against each other.

"Long live the fraternization!"

De Sumatra Post wrote on that occasion.¹⁸³ Such a comment indicated that inter-racial football matches were stimulating and fostered a friendly, sporting atmosphere. From then on football games were played all the time at the Esplanade.¹⁸⁴ Over the years many soccer clubs on an ethnic basis were established in Medan like the Tjong Hoa Sport Vereeniging, the Indigenous club Matsoem, and the Dutch club Voorwaarts. Interethnic matches were played all the time by such clubs.¹⁸⁵ The Delische Voetbal Bond (Deli Soccer Federation), founded in 1907, and the Oost Sumatra Voetbalbond (East Sumatra Soccer Federation) founded in 1915,¹⁸⁶ functioned as overarching organizations. Costumed football matches were also occasionally held.¹⁸⁷

The importance and popularity of playing football is shown in appendix 5.21. Between 1899 and 1930 there were at least 21 football clubs in town, among which were four Chinese clubs and one Methodist club, the latter having a majority of Chinese players. The reality of football was that it both confirmed the prevailing racial lines in the colony, while on the other it also crossed these lines. There were both non-segregated and segregated football clubs. Each ethnic community in general had its own football club except when there were clubs organized on a religious basis or along the lines of companies. In such cases, a team consisted of different ethnic players, European, Chinese, Malay, Javanese and Batak. The Harrisons and Crosfield team, the Van Nie team and the Handelseftal were examples of

182 SP 13-4-1899.

183 Termorshuizen 2011: 642; SP 24-5-1899.

184 SP 4-4-1902.

185 SP 8-2-1909; Stokkermans K. and RSSSF 2012/13; SP 8-3-1915; SP 29-3-1915; SP 5-4-1915; SP 17-4-1915.

186 The Oost Sumatra Voetbalbond was based in Medan but extended its competition to other parts of East Sumatra, to Pematang Siantar and Tebing Tinggi, Tandjong Balei and Kisaran. (Stokkermans K. and RSSSF 2012/13; *Gemeentebld* Medan, 24-5-1920. III No. 294).

187 In 1913 the Indigenous football club *Pesisir* held a costumed match at the Esplanade. *De Sumatra Post* wrote about this event: 'a colourful costumed procession from Kampong Kling via the Demmeniweg (Jalan Raden Saleh) to the Esplanade. (SP 27-8-1913)

this.¹⁸⁸ Chinese, European and Indigenous employees played together in company teams.¹⁸⁹ Football matches over the years were held frequently and extensively reported on in the newspapers.¹⁹⁰ Even clubs from British Malaya and China came to play in Medan.¹⁹¹ Now and then charity matches were held, such as the game between Tiong Hoa and the Deli Sport Vereeniging (DSV) in May 1918. The entrance fees went to charity.¹⁹² In 1941 when the war in Europe had already started, there were even so-called Spitfire football matches held to collect money for the Spitfire fund. These Spitfire matches were not exactly charity matches but they definitely had a special goal.¹⁹³ As said before the Esplanade was the first and most important football field, another one being in the center of the former racecourse¹⁹⁴ and a third one, built in 1930, at Kebon Boenga.¹⁹⁵ A few years later discussions started about making sports fields in South Polonia around the new airfield.¹⁹⁶

An important promoter of inter-ethnic sports in Medan was the already mentioned Reverend Ward of the Episcopal Methodist Church. He was a European player active in the Chinese Sports Club.¹⁹⁷ This club played on Sundays.¹⁹⁸ However, as a Reverend he stressed the importance of Sunday rest and requested that games be held on Saturday. In spite of his efforts the games continued to be held on Sundays as this was considered the most appropriate day for sport.¹⁹⁹

Chinese community leaders also appeared in football circles. When in 1912 the new Chinese sportsclub was founded, the honorary presidency of the (Chinese) Recreation and

188 This was probably the team of the *Nederlandse Handel Maatschappij*. (SP 7-4-1913; SP 19-5-1913)

189 SP 25-1-1913; SP 27-1-1913.

190 Matches between van Nie and the Chinese Sports Club (CSC) (SP 22-3-1913) van Nie against the *DSM* (Deli Railroad Company) (SP 28-7-1913), CSC against the *Handelsselfal* (SP 7-4-1913) and the DSV. (SP 16-8-1913, 25-8-1913) (SP 22-2-1915) (SP 1-3-1915). (SP 8-3-1915; SP 29-3-1915; SP 5-4-1915; SP 17-4-1915) (Stokkermans K. and RССSF 2012/13) (SP 29-3-1915; SP 5-4-1915; SP 17-4-1915) (SP 24-1-1924) (SP 15-5-1933) (SP 9-6-1933) (SP 17-7-1933) (SP 31-7-1933)

191 In 1930 the Chinese *Loh Hwa* team came all the way from Shanghai to play matches in Medan against local football teams. (SP 3-8-1930; SP 26-8-1930; SP 21-1-1933; SP 27-1-1933; SP 13-3-1933).

192 SP 5-1-1918; SP 17-7-1933.

193 (SP 28-5-1941) The Spitfire fund was established by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands in August 10, 1940 to collect money from Dutch businesses outside the occupied area in the Caribbean and Indonesia to buy fighting planes for the British airforce. (*Trouw* 3-12-2004)

194 SP 24-1-1924; SP 29-6-1926; SP 16-7-1926; *Gemeentebld* 16-11-1927; Buiskool 1999: 89.

195 (SP 8-4-1930) This became a municipal sports park. (SP 28-5-1930; SP 11-3-1933; SP 10-4-1933; SP 25-8-1933).

196 Because of air traffic a terrain of four kilometers had to be free of high-rise buildings. This was ideal to construct sports fields. Suggestions were made to make football fields, hockey grounds, a golf course, a racing course, and a basketball court. (SP 3-11-1937). Except for a golf course, the other plans were never realized.

197 Stokkermans K. and RССSF 2012/13.

198 In a game in March 1913 against the planters, probably *DSV*, Reverend Ward led the attack and the game ended 4-1 for the Chinese. (SP 3-3-1913)

199 At the match a week later reverend Ward did not play because of the Sunday rest. He was sorely missed as he was the core of the team and the *spoorteam* (*DSM*) (railroad team) won 3-2 over the Chinese. (SP 10-3-1913)

Sporting Club was awarded to Khoe Tjin Tek.²⁰⁰ In the town council Chinese member Gan Hoat Soei stimulated the football games proposing new soccer fields.²⁰¹ In later years we see Medan's Chinese consul, Chang Pu Ching, appear to give the starting kick to a three-day Chinese football tournament in Medan.²⁰² Chinese town council member Tan Boen An appeared in sport circles as he became the chairman of the Chinese Sporting Club in 1933.²⁰³

Other sports

The *Gymnastiek Vereeniging* (gymnastic association) was older than the soccer club, having been established in Medan in November 1887. Apart from gymnastics, its members also played cricket and football, later followed by tennis and athletics.²⁰⁴ Whether other than Europeans participated in this association is not known, but in later years at Reverend Ward's school of the Episcopal Methodist Church there was an athletic course for Chinese men, women, boys and girls. Lessons were conducted in gymnastics, boxing, wrestling, weight-lifting and other sports. *De Sumatra Post* wrote that it was remarkable that at the European and Indigenous government schools no physical education was offered and that the first gymnastic lessons were provided at a private Chinese school.²⁰⁵ Also in 1893, the *Deli Wielrijders Club* (Deli Cycling Club) was founded, but here again the ethnic composition is unknown.²⁰⁶

Then there was a swimmingpool. Near the *Kerapatan* at the Paleisweg the municipality had a water reservoir for flushing gutters. Surrounded by barbed wire, this basin came into use by both Indigenous and Europeans as a swimming pool.²⁰⁷ When in 1924 the *Medansche Zwemvereeniging* (Medan Swimming Association) was established, it also resorted to using the water reservoir for swimming.²⁰⁸ In the 1920s, a new swimming pool was finally built at Jalan Radja.²⁰⁹ Although it was called a public pool, not many non-westerners went swimming there.²¹⁰ In reaction a swimming pool for the Chinese community was built at Law Aw Yok street near the end of the Julianastraat by Ng Ho Hian. Although the entrance

200 SP 17-7-1912.

201 *Gemeentebld* 16-11-1927.

202 SP 31-1-1930.

203 In 1921, the elected president of the Chinese sporting club (The Ean Khung Hean club) was Chang Coen Wie. (SP 3-2-1921). In later years the well-known town council member Tan Boen An was picked as chairman at the annual meeting of the Chinese Sporting Club. (SP 3-5-1933)

204 (Stokkermans K. and RССSF 2012/13.) In 1891 a special teacher in gymnastics came to town advertising gymnastics courses in the Deli Courant. (DC 20-5-1891).

205 SP 25-9-1915.

206 Stokkermans K. and RССSF 2012/13; DC 15-1-1898, 26-1-1898.

207 SP 30-3-1918.

208 Sinar 2005: 73; SP 19-1-1924.

209 SP 13-6-1930.

210 Interviews Hiu Kian Jin 25-10-1996, 4-11-1996.

fee was low, few people used the pool and in 1935 it had to be closed down. Ng Ho Hian had established many an institution and school for the Chinese and their children in Law A Yok street. A second swimming pool had also been planned by Ng Ho Hian at the Avroslaan. Plans to open this second pool, however, were put on hold since the first pool had not proven successful.²¹¹ Although Medan's ethnic communities lived peacefully together in harmony, the swimming pools clearly showed that racial divisions were still in place.

Tennis had been played in Medan since 1887, sponsored by the *Gymnastiek Vereeniging*. It was a popular sport around 1900 as in the different shops many tennis sport attributes like rackets were sold.²¹² Regular matches were held between the Medan tennis club and the Chinese tennis club.²¹³ Hockey was also played in Medan. The Chinese United Sports Association (CUSA) joined the OSVB (East Sumatra Soccer Association).²¹⁴ So the hockey players were united with the soccer players.²¹⁵ For the very well-to-do there was horse racing. In the 1890s the race course in Medan was built by the *Deli Ren Vereeniging* (Deli Racing Club).²¹⁶ The races were the main sporting and social events in town and continued for many years.²¹⁷ Leading businessmen participated in the races as horse owners, amongst others Wee Swee Bee and Tjong A Fie.²¹⁸ In 1924 the race course was even used as airstrip when the first airplane to reach the Netherlands Indies from the Netherlands, a Fokker Friendship of the KLM, landed in Medan.²¹⁹

Music on the Esplanade

Around the turn of the century, weekly concerts were held on the Esplanade. In 1898 there were two music bands, the former St. Cecilia Band from Singapore with musicians from Manilla, renamed into The Manilla Band, and a Military Band.²²⁰ They played European music of Johann Strauss, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and others on a weekly basis.²²¹ In the years after the band continued to give its weekly concerts.²²² In 1912 the Manillaband was

211 According to *De Sumatra Post* Ng Ho Hian got his fortune in trade in ducks and herewith financed the swimming pool. (SP 5-1-1935).

212 Stokkermans K. and RSSF 2012/13; SP 22-4-1905; SP 31-3-1913.

213 Since 1930 tennis courts built at the sports centre at Kebon Boenga. (SP 1-3-1933, 16-3-1933, 9-8-1933).

214 SP 12-4-1933.

215 SP 27-3-1933; SP 6-6-1933; SP 10-4-1933.

216 Local horses from the Batak lands were probably raced. (Lindblad, Schrikker 2011: 307, 311) The location of the racecourse was at the present central market (pusat pasar).

217 DC 19-6-1895; DC 29-8-1896; DC 15-1-1898; DC 2-3-1898.

218 SP 15-3-1905; SP 18-3-1905.

219 Loderichs, Buiskool 1997: 29.

220 DC 1-1-1898.

221 SP 4-8-1899; SP 26-3-1909.

222 At 30 October 1899 there was played among other pieces *Der lustige Krieg*, *Potpouri* of Johann Strauss, *Walzer Parade* of J. Lanner and *Der schneidige Marine - Lieutenant Marsch* of Hugo Kloss (SP 30-10-

replaced by the Muziekkorps Sumatra's Oostkust.²²³ According to J.S.Furnival, publishing decades later, there was little understanding for foreign cultures between the different ethnic groups in the Indies:

*In a plural society, however, each lives within a closed compartment [...] As with music, to most Europeans oriental music is unmeaning and to orientals a band of fife and drums just a noise. As with music, so with the arts and graces of humanity.*²²⁴

In 1912 an inquiry had been held in Medan about the Esplanade concerts, whereby a Javanese, a Chinese, an Indian and a Batak were interviewed. They all said they liked it, but in fact never listened.²²⁵ It was clearly a European cultural affair.

But soon some Chinese went into another direction, basically through the Tionghoa Music Club Medan, established in 1915 by Tan Boen An and Gan Hoat Soei.²²⁶ This association performed western music. In the same line, the Medansche Strijkorkest or *Perkoempoelan Muziek Boemipoetra Djawa-Sumatra di Medan* was established in March 1920 by Raden Marto Soepardjo together with Mas Soemoesodiro, the president Boedi Oetomo Medan, and Mohamad Joesoef, teacher at the Malay school.²²⁷ Supposing that it played European style music it should be seen as another proof of Asians appreciating Western music. The Sunday afternoon concerts were held for many years.²²⁸ In the 1920s and 1930s Tjong A Fie's youngest daughter Tjong Sze Yin studied at the Geneva conservatorium. After she returned to Medan she gave musical concerts in town.²²⁹ In 1950 she started the first music school in Medan, *Sekolah Musik Murni*.

Chinese theatre

Like every population group in the Netherlands Indies the Chinese had their own theatre culture. Chinese performing art was popular in Medan.²³⁰ Now and then descriptions appeared in a newspaper, for instance in July 1921 by *De Sumatra Post*, writing about the

1899). In 1909 the Manilla Band still played in Medan. (SP 26-3-1909)

223 SP 18-1-1912, 25-1-1912.

224 Furnival 1939: 458.

225 SP 23-12-1912.

226 Andalas, 27-4-1918.

227 Andalas, 16-3-1920.

228 Programs Esplanade concert (SP 24-7-1915, 14-8-1915, 2-10-1915) Esplanade concert Sunday 6 January 1918 among others the band played *Fantasia Un ballo de machera*, G. Verdi, *Walzer: Pas des Fleurs*, Leo Delibes and the *Marsch The charlatan*, by J.P. Sousa. (SP 5-1-1918) Concerts were still performed in the 1920s. (SP 23-7-1921; SP 5-1-1922)

229 SP 26-8-1935; Buischool 2016: 'De Grand Lady of Music uit Medan' in *Azie Down Under*.

230 SP 17-7-1933.

Chinese theatre with western eyes. It was about a performance in the Tjong Koen Tat cinema. According to *De Sumatra Post* the play gave a rather chaotic impression as the requisites were set up during the play. The orchestra consisted of drums, string instruments and flutes and produced loud music. The orchestra members played in a rather relaxed fashion, now and then the musicians sucking the opium pipe. All the actors were men, some of them dressed as women. This theatre, actually a Chinese *wajong woshg*, was a sort of *Opéra Comique*. The *schminking* (makeup) of the actors was done meticulously, making beautiful masks on their faces.²³¹ One year later, in 1923, Harm Kamerlingh Onnes visited a Chinese theatre in Medan and had more-or-less the same impression. He wrote that the stage was in a big iron hall. The musicians sat on the stage in the background and they made a hell of a noise. All requisites were on stage; during the play stage assistants were putting them at their places.²³²

Not typically Chinese but popular with all ethnic groups was the *Komédie Indian Ratoe* a well-known *bangsawan troupe* from Serdang. A *bangsawan troupe* was a type of traditional Malay opera. It was known to have developed during the 19th century from a sort of Indian theatre from itinerant Indian travelers. The stories originated from Indian, Western, Islamic, Chinese and Malay sources. Music, dance and costumes varied according to the story being told. For fourteen days the *bangsawan troupe* performed in the Orion cinema in Medan.²³³

Cinemas

The last part of popular entertainment in Medan we have to look at is the cinema. The first film in cinematographic history, *Sortie de l'usine Lumière de Lyon*, by the brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière, was shown in Paris in 1895. Only 12 years later, in 1908, a cinema was built on the Esplanade of Medan, to be followed four years later by the Oranje cinema.²³⁴ Soon after the Oranje cinema other movie houses were set up, such as the Deli cinema in the Oude Markt and, in July 1913, the Orion cinema in the Chinese quarter.²³⁵ The eccentric black clothes wearing Chinese entrepreneur Oen Huat Kim owned two cinemas, the Royal

231 SP 18-7-1921.

232 Buiskool 1999: 90.

233 SP 25-8-1913.

234 The Oranje cinema was located on the other side of the railway in the Kwanteebiostraat (Jalan Irian Barat). (SP 30-1-1912) During a show in August 1909 on the Esplanade there were fifty visitors in the loge while the third class was full with Indigenous audience. The music was taken care of by six musicians of the Manillaband. (SP 18-8-1909; SP 15-1-1913) In 1912 on the occasion of Queensday, the birthday of Queen Wilhelmina, at August 31, an open-air cinema was set up on the Esplanade. (SP 30-1-1912; SP 21-3-1912; SP 1-6-1912; SP 9-9-1912; SP 3-3-1912) In the feast committee were seated, among others Tjong A Fie. (SP 26-8-1912).

235 SP 24-7-1913.

Cinema in the Kapiteinsweg and the Hok Hwa Cinema in Hakkastraat.²³⁶ In addition there was the Chinese Tjong Koen Tat bioscope and the Rex Theatre in Kerkstraat.²³⁷ Only a few hundred meters down the street was a temporary cinema at the Central market, which later became the Olympia cinema.²³⁸

One factor to take into account with regard to cinemas and their public was the language. Because many Chinese in Medan were more oriented towards the British Straits Settlements including Singapore and Penang than to the Netherlands Indies, for watching films they preferred English language rather than Dutch. *De Sumatra Post* gave the example of the cinema tickets and wrote that:

*“the Tjong Koeng Tat cinema sold two-thirds fewer tickets if they showed a film in Dutch without English subtitles.”*²³⁹

Not only in Medan but also on the plantations movies were shown.²⁴⁰ Cinemas were also used for other purposes, like performances of *Komedie Indian Ratoe*,²⁴¹ for charity events²⁴² or for political meetings.²⁴³

In 1912 there was a discussion in the town council as to whether a cinema monopoly of the municipality should be installed, so that henceforth movies could be surveyed and, if necessary, censored.²⁴⁴ It was decided to do so but this interference by the colonial administration met with so much protest that it was dropped soon after.²⁴⁵ By 1913 there

236 The Hok Hwa Cinema was in later years renamed into Capitol Cinema. Oen Huat Kim rented out to the Dutch the Hok Hwa Cinema and the Royal Cinema. (Interviews Hiu Kian Jin 25-10-1996, 4-11-1996; Interview Mrs. Oen Iem Mie, granddaughter Oen Huat Kim 19-1-2004)

237 (*Gemeentebld* 1925:153) *De Sumatra Post* wrote about the opening of the Rex Theatre in 1938: ‘The beautiful new building, outside and inside, was gleaming in a sea of light.’ The architect was van Wezel (SP 12-11-1938)

238 This cinema was built by the Oranje Deli Cinema company (SP 15-12-1938; SP 4-6-1941) Movie theatres were often owned by ethnic Chinese in the Netherlands Indies. (Coppel in Routledge 2013: 352) In Medan this was also the case with Oen Huat Kim.

239 SP 26-1-1924.

240 The rubber and tea plantations Marihat of the German Marihat Sumatra Plantagen Co. in Simeloengoen bought many films to show at the plantations. (SP 10-3-1913)

241 The *Komedie Indian Ratoe* was a well-known *bangsawan troupe* from Serdang. (SP 25-8-1913)

242 SP 28-7-1913.

243 On May 30, 1918, a public meeting was held in the Oranje Cinema to discuss the candidates for the town council. Represented were: Organisation Insulinde department Medan, Ambonsche Studiefonds (Ambon Study fund) department Medan, Tiong Hoa Kong Ek Twan, Hoa Tjong Sie Sit, S.I. Tapanoeli and Parsatainan. (SP 15-7-1918; *Andalas*, 16-7-1918) In December 1939 Thamrin came to Medan and spoke at a Gapi meeting in the Rex cinema. (SP 7-12-1939).

244 SP 7-1-1913; SP 15-1-1913; SP 16-4-1913.

245 If the municipality should have the cinema monopoly it enabled her to control and censor films. In April 1913 a protest meeting was held was in the Medan hotel against the cinema monopoly and in favour of freedom of entrepreneurship by the electoral association Gemeentebelang of Mr. van den Brand. In July 1913 was the monopoly abolished. (SP 8-4-1913; SP 10-4-1913; SP 11-4-1913; SP 24-7-1913).

were already five cinemas in town.²⁴⁶ The question whether it was be wise to censor films, was put forward after a sad movie about concubinage had been on the screen. *De Sumatra Post* wrote:

“Sad movie ‘De liefde eener Oostersche’ (The love of an Eastern woman) in the Oranje cinema. Poignant story. Under disguise of jesting a tragedy is presented which till today is still experienced in our environment. The story is set in the Congo. The man wants to leave his concubine but she threatens to commit suicide after which he brings her with him to Europe, where he is ridiculed with his black woman. He meets his former girlfriend and wants to reconnect with her. The black woman then poisons the girlfriend. After the murder is found out she throws herself in front of a train. This is a sore spot in colonial society. How many worn-out Eastern concubines here have been deserted.”

De Sumatra Post hereafter suggested not showing this movie anymore to an Indigenous audience, due to its very sensitive nature.²⁴⁷ Racial discrimination soon became an issue with regard to showing films. When in 1913 the director of the Oranje cinema, D. A van Kaathoven, asked permission to show a film in the White Club, only to Europeans and their ‘equals’, the chairman of the Town Council S. van der Plas, responded that such a restriction would upset many citizens. Van der Plas said:

*“Europeans of the lowest quality could demand entry, while Indigenous and Chinese of high esteem, yes, even to members of this council, entry could be denied! [...] something like this is exactly what we do not want.”*²⁴⁸

To prevent that and keep the lower classes out, the club could simply decide not to permit low admission fees, according to van der Plas. Racism was also shown by a letter from the wife of a member of the White Club in which she protested against the presence of Japanese women in the cinema. Against this racist uttering one reader reacted that these Japanese women did not bother anyone and wrote:

*“If everybody would behave themselves so decent as these Japanese women, the police never would need to interfere. What happens now is that Japanese women will not give irritation, but that some gentlemen who sit in their vicinity do.”*²⁴⁹

246 SP 1-8-1913.

247 SP 21-7-1913.

248 SP 16-4-1913.

249 SP 11-4-1913.

In April 1912 the passenger steamer Titanic ran into an iceberg and sank in the Atlantic Ocean on its way from Southampton to New York. Shortly after a film was made about the tragedy and already in January 1913 this film could be seen in Medan.²⁵⁰ In the decades thereafter all the well-known Hollywood productions like the films of Walt Disney, Charlie Chaplin and *Gone with the wind* were shown in Medan.²⁵¹

Summary

As already mentioned in Chapter 4 the nine individuals who are at the center of this study had economic and, sometimes, political networks stretching all over East Sumatra and beyond, even reaching into areas such as British Malaya, Dutch Java and the Chinese mainland.

The key objective of this chapter is, however, to assess the role played by these men in the wide range of social institutions and activities in the town of Medan. In whatever field we were talking about, time and time again the prominent Chinese appear. We see that the Majors of the Chinese, Tjong Jong Hian, Tjong A Fie and Khoe Tjin Tek were often in the forefront. This will come as no surprise as they were the richest persons among the Chinese in Medan and also on top of the internal Chinese hierarchy. Moreover, their networks included Dutch colonial civil servants, other overseas Chinese as well as connections with the Imperial court and, after the fall of the Imperial government, the Chinese Republican bureaucracy.

Zooming in on the situation in Medan itself, it is obvious, that in so far as the Chinese elite was concerned, the majority of the Chinese families were still *totok* with a strong focus on the Chinese homeland until well into the 1920s. As such they remained rather isolated and hence unassimilated, living apart from the other ethnicities in town. As mentioned in the Introduction, Williams introduced the term *culturalism* to describe the attitude of the Chinese towards other ethnic groups. It meant that individuals were determined by their culture, making it difficult for an individual to leave his or her own culture. This was often the case in Medan, as elite Chinese families stayed within their own cultural zone, Chinese men marrying Chinese women, with the latter's position only changing slowly. Chinese women were known to have been in a difficult position with cultural habits like foot binding, drowning and selling of females. This fortunately changed in the 1920s with the worldwide rising of female emancipation. Furthermore, more Chinese women came to Sumatra and Medan in the 1920s, leading to a sharp increase in the number of Chinese couples.

It will come as no surprise that the Tjongs played an important role as far as traditional religious institutions, such as Buddhist and Taoist temples, were concerned. In Medan these were typical for the Chinese community, as other ethnicities took no interest in these.

250 (SP 18-4-1912; SP 6-1-1913). In 1997 a remake of the film was made.

251 SP 16-2-1923; Buiskool 1999: 93; SP 31-5-1941; SP 10-7-1941.

Crossing religious boundaries, for instance to Islam or Christianity, was a slow process in the Chinese community. We did not come across any examples of a Muslim Chinese. Christianity was a bit more successful in making inroads in the community. In this respect the Methodist Mission proved to be the most successful, which might be explained by its use of the English language. The Medan Chinese always had had a stronger orientation towards the use of English than to the use of Dutch.

The same case applied to the educational institutions, where privately-funded English language schools seemed to be as popular as the government funded Dutch Chinese schools. Many of the Chinese who went to foreign language schools continued speaking Hokkian at home. For the perseverance of its language and culture the Chinese elite also established Chinese language schools. In 1925 there were still eleven of such schools. As a result, literacy rates in Medan were on the rise, with the Chinese community preferring to send its children to schools where Mandarin and English were the languages of instruction. The orientation towards Dutch culture was profoundly less when compared to other colonial towns in the Dutch East Indies, in particular in Java. The Chinese population remained apart in their own cultural niche, like the other groups, the Europeans, the Malays, the Indian and the Batak did. However, this 'living apart together', even where it concerned simple facts of entertainment, such as sports, music and cinema, did not mean that there was some sort of permanent conflict with other ethnic groups. The social institutions of the family, of religion, cultural associations and schools, up to health care, were part and parcel of social life, sometimes playing the role of a uniting factor to the Chinese. In certain cases the general harmonious atmosphere was evident for all the citizens of Medan.

6

Politics, Press and Perceptions

Chapter 6

Politics, Press and Perceptions

During late colonial times political issues, local ones as well as subjects regarding the colony at large, were discussed extensively in Medan's local councils and in the local press. The various ethnic groups, represented in Medan's Town Council, expressed their opinions loud and clear. Such discussions also concerned the Chinese. Hence, the questions to be answered in this chapter are the following ones: First, what was the political role of the Chinese in the Town Council? Second, what were the priorities of Chinese council members? Third, what was the relation of the latter with regard to China and the Indonesian nationalists? Fourth, what was the role of the Dutch, Chinese, and Malay press as opinion makers? Fifth, what were the overall perceptions of the Dutch and the Indigenous concerning the Chinese of Medan and vice versa. The five paragraphs of this chapter largely follow these questions.

6.1. Political developments in the Netherlands Indies

Around 1900 two developments occurred at around the same time. In many parts of Asia an Asian ethos of self-determination arose and in the Netherlands Indies itself the colonial government started following the Ethical policy as laid down by central government in the Netherlands. For Asians, the defeat of the Russian fleet by the Japanese in 1905 was an earth-shaking event, as was the Chinese revolution in China and the establishment of the republic in 1911. In the Netherlands Indies the Javanese study group Boedi Oetomo (in Dutch *Het Schone Streven*) was founded in 1908, which is generally recognized as the beginning of Indonesian nationalism. Three years later, in 1911, the Islamic traders' organization *Sarekat Dagang Islam* arose.¹

6.1.1. Ethical policy

In September 1901 in The Hague Queen Wilhelmina delivered the annual throne speech to parliament, in which she spoke of a debt of honour to the Indigenous masses. This inaugurated the so-called Ethical policy.² The year before the lawyer C. Th. van Deventer (1857–1915) had published an article in the journal *De Gids*, 'Een Ereschuld' (Debt of honour), in which he stressed the moral obligation of the Netherlands to elevate the native people in the broadest way. The impact of van Deventer's article was enormous and directly influenced

1 Petrus Blumberger 1987: 19, 56; Pluvier 1953: 17,21; Kwantes 1977: 19, 104; 344; Dick, Houben, Lindblad, Thee 2002: 121; Claver 2006: 255.

2 SP 12-9-1900.

Dutch colonial policy.³ As part of the Ethical policy the colonial administration expanded her agriculture, public works and education departments, and introduced people's credit banks. The growth of the population's prosperity was considered beneficial to the government, as it would lead to higher consumption and hence to more tax revenue. Education was deemed important because it would improve the labour force.⁴ Then there was the Decentralisation Law whereby local governments became more independent from the central one in Batavia.⁵ Hereafter the first municipalities were established in 1905.⁶

From the Ethical policy also stemmed an association theory which hoped for cooperation between the Dutch and the Indigenous working towards a modern Indonesia without poverty and discrimination.⁷ The orientalist and Islam specialist C. Snouck Hurgronje and the *adat* law specialist C. van Vollenhoven, promoters of the Ethical school, were the main academic precursors of this theory. Both had a good knowledge of the then emerging modern nationalist movement. Yet, at the same time they were convinced that the road to modernism should take place under the Dutch administration.⁸ The Ethical policy thought in terms of a parent-child relationship. The Netherlands had the obligation to develop its colony along intellectual, social, economic and political lines using western models as guidelines.⁹ Independence could be discussed later.¹⁰ The early 1910s was a period in which Indigenous nationalism experienced spectacular growth with the advent of political parties and movements such as Insulinde, Sarekat Islam, Boedi Oetomo and Indische Partij.¹¹

In November 1918 Governor General J.P. Van Limburg Stirum, impressed by the revolutionary wave which swept through Europe at the end of First World War, declared that the Netherlands Indies intended to reshape its colonial policy. This declaration became known as the "November promises". The Dutch Indies should become an independent entity within the Dutch Kingdom, having its own administrative and legislative powers. A *Volksraad* (Peoples Council) was established with members from all ethnic groups.¹² The Ethical policy also had consequences for local politics, as on a regional level, particularly in the big cities, municipal councils had to be established with politicians directly elected by the people. Equal rights for different ethnic groups were promised.¹³ But the promises

3 Fasseur 2003: 239,240.

4 Pluvier 1953: 6,7,19.

5 Pluvier 1953: 20; Dick, Houben, Lindblad, Thee 2002: 118.

6 Claver 2006: 256.

7 SP 23-9-1915; *Andalas* 5-7-1917; Pluvier 1953:22.

8 Petrus Blumberger 1987: 6; Vogel 1992: 250.

9 Tamse 1988: 15,16.

10 'Wanneer is Indië rijp voor zelfstandigheid'? P.J. Zürcher Jr. in: *Indische Gids*, II: 802-805.

11 SP 3-10-1912.

12 De Graaff – Scholten *Van Limburg Stirum* 2007: 207

13 Erkelens 2013: 332; Pluvier 1953: 23-25.

were not kept, because of a conservative reaction, mainly from the part of the colonial businesses, united in the *Politiek Economische Bond* (Political Economic Association). This group feared that hasty changes might lead to destabilization. At the same time the Eurasian population also turned conservative, afraid of competition from Indigenous people in social and economic fields as a consequence of western education. After the electoral victory of the *Politiek Economische Bond*, together with the appointment of a conservative Governor General, D. Fock in 1921, conservatism ruled the colony.¹⁴

6.1.2. Chinese nationalism

Nationalism was a strong binding factor for the Chinese in Eastern Sumatra. From around 1900 Chinese nationalism became stronger in the Netherlands Indies. In the year 1900 the colonial government had established Dutch Indigenous schools but had done nothing for the Chinese. Many Chinese therefore felt discriminated against. The Chinese had to pay taxes but received little in return.¹⁵ They were subject to the pass- and quarter system whereby they were forced to reside in specially designated areas, while judicially they fell under the jurisdiction of the police courts.¹⁶ As a result the so-called Young Chinese Movement arose around 1900 on Java. This movement was directed against the colonial policy and demanded that the restrictions on travelling and residence should be abolished. In principle the Chinese wanted the same legal status as the Europeans. The growing Chinese opposition caused the Chinese in the Netherlands Indies to become increasingly conscious of their own identity, namely their Chineseness. The Young Chinese Movement wanted to learn about Chinese history, culture and customs and current events in China. The movement also led to the founding of the *Tiong Hwa Hwee Kwan School*, *Chung Hwa Shang Yeh* or Chinese Chamber of Commerce, and the politically oriented reading club, *Soe Po Sia*. The colonial administration reacted in 1914 with the establishment of the Dutch Chinese Schools. In Medan a Dutch Chinese school was opened the same year in 1914.¹⁷

In the same period a revival of the teachings of Confucius and criticism of the Chinese Manchu dynasty were developing. The opium wars from 1839 until 1842 and 1856 until 1860, the Taiping rebellion (1851–64), as well as the division of the ‘Chinese melon’ into western spheres of influence, had weakened the self-image of China. In combination with incompetence and corruption this further undermined Manchu imperial rule. The reform movement under Kang You Wei intended to restore China via economic and

14 Anrooy, F. van *Groeiend wantrouwen: onderwijsbeleid in Nederlands-Indië onder gouverneur-generaal D. Fock (1921-1926)* 2000: 2-4; Pluvier 1953: 24,25.

15 Vlekke 1961:343; Ong Eng Die 1943:237; Williams 1959:27.

16 Fromberg 1911:8,9.

17 Govaars 1999: 15,16; SP 3-12-1915.

political modernization in a moral Confucian framework with support from the young Emperor Guangxu. This led to the so-called Hundred Days Reform of 1898. However, the Dowager Empress Cixi felt her position threatened and ordered a military *coup d'état*. Hereafter Guangxu was placed under house-arrest and the reformers were executed.¹⁸ On 14th November 1908 Guangxu died and one day later the Dowager Empress. The Dowager Empress had appointed her three year old grand-nephew Puyi as Guangxu's successor. The father of Puyi was Prince Chun.¹⁹ Prince Chun however showed to be an incompetent caretaker. Consequently, criticism mounted against the Manchu dynasty while the support for the revolutionary cause of Sun Yat-sen grew. Sun Yat Sen's popularity grew steadily among the overseas Chinese causing his Tung Meng Hui (Revolutionary Alliance) to flourish. Tung Meng Hui later became the Kuo Min Tang.²⁰

According to Donald Willmott this rising Chinese nationalism and revival of interest in Confucianist teachings and writings was also western influenced. In China, and more so in the Netherlands Indies, western influence had been considerable. This was reflected in the fields of war, diplomacy, government attitude, education, missions and personal contacts. The traditional ways of thinking and values were being questioned. Consequently, the Chinese nationalist ideology was shaped, amongst others through contacts with the West.²¹

Although many Chinese immigrants worked in Deli, China was their homeland. East Sumatra was only seen as a temporary abode. Everything happening in China was of the utmost importance from their point of view. As a result, Chinese nationalism was rife in the province. In 1909 the Manchu government in Peking sent a delegation to study the economic circumstances in Deli. What was remarkable was that they arrived on naval vessels. This was done to show power in order to raise national feelings among the Sumatran Chinese.²² When the warships Haiytong and Haykee anchored in Belawan, it appeared that government Commissioner Ong Thay Tjong, secretary of the Department of Trade, Agriculture and Industry was onboard. The Chinese Commissioner was welcomed by the then Major Tjong Yong Hian and Captain Tjong A Fie and was even greeted with a *kowtow*. In Medan many Chinese flags were flown. The Commissioner visited the Dutch resident, and further paid visits to various plantation companies.²³ As far as arousing Chinese nationalism, this visit was certainly important.²⁴

18 Fromberg 1926:763; Erkelens 2013: 189,190.

19 This was the prince who was accompanied by Chang Pu Ching on his Europe tour, see chapter 4.3.1.

20 Fromberg 1926:766; Erkelens 2013: 197-199.

21 Willmott 1960:192.

22 SP 18-5-1909.

23 Williams 1959:136; SP 21-5-1909, SP 22-5-1909.

24 SP 29-5-1909

In 1909, a few years before the Chinese revolution, the Chinese ambassador to the Netherlands in the Hague advised that the Chinese Chambers of Commerce (Siang Hwees) in the Netherlands Indies should fly the Chinese flag. After the revolution of 1911 flagging remained an important item; national flags were shown on the occasion of all Chinese national holidays, to show nationalist feelings. In 1911 the Chinese Chamber of Commerce announced that in honour of the birthday of Confucius, the Chinese businesses in Medan would be closed on 18th October.²⁵ The Dutch colonial government disliked close links with Chinese organizations in British Malaya and Singapore and Chinese government officials coming to inspect the well-being of the Netherlands Indies' Chinese who were Dutch colonial subjects.²⁶

In October 1911 an article appeared in *De Sumatra Post* about a visit of the Dutch Governor General to Soerabaja. The Chinese in this city brought the nationality question and the police court question to his attention. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce stimulated the Chinese traders into hanging Chinese flags next to the Dutch flags, with the stipulation that the Chinese flag should hang at the left, which is the honorary place in China, and the Dutch at the right. The Chinese in Soerabaja stressed that they were of Chinese nationality and not just Dutch subjects. Later, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce offered some silk tablets to the Governor General with the text:

'The befriended nation (Holland) is with us in harmony and concord and our nation (China) maintains peace and understanding'.

On another tablet:

*"The Chinese settled here enjoy themselves in the obtained liberties and hope that also the police court will be abolished in a liberal way."*²⁷

This was published in a Dutch language paper. Although happening in Surabaya one could be sure that the Medan Chinese had the same thoughts about national identity and the police court question. In the Dutch Nationality Law of 1892 a distinction was made between the Dutch and the non-Dutch. The Netherlanders were Dutch nationals. Others, with the exception of other foreign Europeans, were just Dutch "subjects". Other Europeans were equal with Dutch nationals before the law. The *Wet op het Nederlands Onderdaanschap* (Dutch subject law) of 1910 did not change the status of the Chinese, they remained foreign

²⁵ Williams 1959:164; SP 14-10-1911.

²⁶ Erkelens 2013: 195.

²⁷ SP 24-10-1911.

orientals, inferior in status to Europeans.²⁸ The police court was another controversial issue, whereby the government official was not only the head of the police but also the judge, and therefore not independent. The Indigenous population and the foreign orientals were subject to such police courts. The police court was abolished in 1918. From then onwards its cases were brought to the Landraad, where the judge exercised jurisdiction concerning criminal law over both Indigenous and foreign orientals.²⁹ In commercial affairs, however, the Chinese were subject to Dutch law and tried for offenses by the *Raden van Justitie*, the European courts. This appeared to be more favourable for Dutch businesses in case of legal issues with Chinese companies. From 1918 the Chinese also fell under European law for other judicial matters, however, without ever reaching full equality to the Dutch in criminal matters. From 1919 European family law and inheritance law was applied to the Chinese.³⁰ All the above factors were important for the nationalist feelings of the Chinese in the Netherlands Indies.

Chinese nationalism came to a peak in 1912 after the establishment of the Chinese Republic. In January 1912 China was proclaimed a republic and reactions all over the world directly followed, including from Medan. Festivities were held after the official proclamation of the republic and the appointment of president Sun Yat Sen. Fireworks were lighted, Chinese schoolchildren sang national songs and did gymnastic exhibitions. The Chinese republican flag consisted of five colours: red for China, yellow for Manchuria, blue for Mongolia, white for Tibet and black for Chinese Siberia. *De Sumatra Post* somewhat sceptically wrote that the Chinese republic was not yet officially recognized by diplomatic channels. A counter revolution was still possible and could put the Manchu dynasty back on the throne.³¹

But in Medan a grand party was held in the Chinese club. Feasts were also held in Tebing Tinggi, (Pangkalan) Brandan and Binjai. Many articles appeared in the papers about the political changes in China. A few days later a film of the Chinese revolution was shown in the Oranje bioscoop.³² Many Chinese cut off their pigtailed to show their modernity. The fact that they cut these off was crucial as the pigtail had a high symbolic value. In the days after 10th January 1912 when the news of the new republic came to Medan, there was unrest in the Chinese quarter, with some Chinese being arrested and brochures being confiscated by the police. It was stated that Chinese with pigtailed were *orang alam* (primitive people). Not only in Medan but also in Batavia, Surabaya and Semarang were there many reactions after

28 Gonggryp 1934: 147; Erkelens 2013: 196; Tjiok-Liem 2009:521,522.

29 Fromberg 1926: 603, 605; Gonggryp 1934: 1227.

30 Willmott 1960:19.

31 SP 8-1-1912; SP 9-1-1912.

32 SP 11-1-1912, 15-1-1912, 20-1-1912.

the establishment of the republic.³³ From East Sumatra large amounts of money were sent to China in support of the revolution. Among the coolies on the plantations, however, little reaction was heard, as they were too uneducated to assess the importance of the changes in their homeland.³⁴ Another factor was the strict regime on the estates. Newcomers still wore the hair in a pigtail.³⁵

During this hectic period Tjong A Fie was appointed as Major of the Chinese by the colonial government. On Java the Chinese discussed holding a celebration of the founding of the republic in June. When the Medan Chinese also wanted to hold festivities, Tjong A Fie advised them to postpone this celebration as the republic was not yet stable; there was no parliament yet and no international recognition. The money for festivities could better be used to combat poverty and hunger in China and, hence, festivities could be adjourned for half a year, according to Tjong A Fie. During the middle of 1912 *De Sumatra Post* wrote about brochures found in the Pekingstraat clamoring for revolt against the Europeans and the Indigenous. But nothing happened.³⁶ The newspaper also commented on the role of Tjong A Fie, comparing him to Emperor Franz Jozef of Austria. Tjong A Fie was said to be well-informed, diplomatic and intuitive, careful and capable of keeping Chinese society together.³⁷

As the years went by Chinese nationalism and Chinese grievances were mentioned in the papers now and then. Whenever there was political unrest in China this was also known in Medan.³⁸ After the establishment of the Chinese republic, the first president Sun Yat Sen delegated power to general Yuan Shikai, thus securing the support of the army. But soon Yuan Shikai became a dictator and disbanded the Kuo Min Tang. In 1919 Sun Yat Sen revived the Kuo Min Tang and started cooperation with the Soviet Union Communist Party. The communist ideology, however, was completely different from Sun Yat Sen's. The latter did not want a socialist state; he was only against the political suppression of Yuan Shikai and the army.³⁹ It was a marriage of convenience.⁴⁰ When in 1925 Sun Yat Sen passed away flags were at half mast in Sumatra. Five years later, in 1930, the Medan Chinese still flew lowered flags in commemoration of Sun Yat Sen.⁴¹

In the meantime, there were two parties of the Kwo Min Tang in East Sumatra, one of them not being recognized by the central Kwo Min Tang in Nanking as it did not follow the

33 SP 12-1-1912; 28-2-1912; 6-3-1912; 30-4-1912; Langereis, in *Indië*, April 1918 – april 1919, 583.

34 De Bruin 1918: 109; 110.

35 MvO resident W.J. Rahder, 1913.

36 SP 10-6-1912, 14-9-1912.

37 SP 20-11-1912.

38 SP 12-3-1919; *Verslag Handelsvereniging Medan* 1927: 37,38; Buiskool 1999: 149, 245.

39 Erkelens 2013: 309,310; Yong 1992: 84, 177.

40 Marriage of convenience.

41 SP 12-3-1930; SP 11-7-1930.

statutes. The second Kwo Min Tang party was said to be the representative of the official Kwo Min Tang.⁴² In August 1930 a delegation from China came to Deli to resolve this division.⁴³

One month before, twenty Chinese of Bangkaitan in Panai (in Riouw province) had been brought before the District officer of Riouw. The reason was that they had hung out the Chinese flag for a national feast without informing the District officer or the Lieutenant of the Chinese in advance. On 1st July 1930, they had received an order from the republican government in Nanking to display the flag, as this was a national feast day commemorating the fifth anniversary of the establishment of the national government in Nanking. However, the Chinese were interrogated and a police warrant was issued. The Chinese consul in Medan was informed of this.⁴⁴ This was probably one of the reasons why consul Chang Pu Ching wanted to resign from his position, as he did not agree with the attitude of the colonial government towards Chinese nationalism on Sumatra.⁴⁵

6.2. Local Politics: Medan councils

6.2.1. The Town Council

If we walked along the fine, small, roccoco style town hall building finished in 1908, who could we see through the window in the meeting room of the municipal council? In 1909 the chairman was assistant resident E.G. Th. Maier. The members were Tjong A Fie, the Sultan or Toengkoe Besar Amaloedin, Polis, M.J. Lusink, J. Roest, H.J. Bool, J. Stecher, S. Blok, Dr. J. G. C. Vriens, dr. D.H. Arends. Absent were J.D.L. Le Febvre, H.J.G. Wolff, Dr. W.A. Kuenen, the *hoofddjaksa* (public prosecutor) and the vicar J. Brink.⁴⁶

On 6th April 1909, the first meeting of Medan's Town Council was held. At that moment there was not yet a mayor, as said the chair was with assistant resident Maier, the head of the civil service in Deli Serdang, the local colonial administration.⁴⁷ The fifteen members of the Medan Town Council in 1909 were not elected but appointed by the Netherlands Indies government. There were twelve Europeans, two Indigenous, and one foreign oriental (Chinese, Arab or Indian).⁴⁸ In 1912 a limited and partial form of democracy came to Medan, as only European males and their equals had the right to vote for the representatives of

42 SP 4-2-1930.

43 SP 18-8-1930.

44 SP 9-7-1930.

45 SP 4-2-1930; SP 7-2-1930.

46 SP 8-3-1909; SP 6-4-1909, SP 9-6-1909.

47 *Gemeente Medan* 1909-1934: 1.

48 SP 6-4-1909.

their own group. 'Equals' could be non-Europeans, people of mixed descent, like Eurasians as well as Indigenous and Foreign Oriental descent, who had obtained European legal status. Voting for the Europeans was by way of the electoral organizations *Gemeentebelang* and *Algemeene Medansche Kiesvereening*. *Gemeentebelang* was political, while the *Algemeene* was allegedly 'neutral'. The programs and goals were more-or-less the same.⁴⁹ Later on *Gemeentebelang* changed its name to *Vooruitstrevende Kiesvereening* (Progressive Association).⁵⁰ In 1912, the Assistant Resident of Deli Serdang, now S. Van der Plas, was also chairman of the Town Council.⁵¹

Subjects to resolve at the first limited democratic Town Council meeting were the ground question cum ground policy, which was discussed in chapter 2. Was the ground in Medan a matter of true ownership, in *erfpacht* (long lease) or something totally different? This was a question which was not solved overnight. Other issues were municipal electricity, the municipal slaughterhouse, the infrastructure with roads and an eventual tram exploitation for Medan.⁵² In 1917 the membership of the municipal council was extended to seventeen, consisting of ten Europeans, five Indigenous and two Foreign Orientals. This was the composition that lasted until the Japanese invasion in March 1942. It was also in 1917 that Medan got its first official Mayor, Daniël Baron Mackay.⁵³

More democracy

The next step to more democracy came in 1918. In that year the male Indigenous, Indian and Chinese population got both active and passive voting rights, on the condition that their minimum age was 23, they could read and write Dutch and have a minimum monthly income of fl.600. For European voters the minimum income was fl.900.⁵⁴ In 1918 the entire list of voters consisted of 492 names, of which 324 people voted. Consequently, around 70% of the people cast their vote.⁵⁵ Now western-educated, democratically elected Indigenous and Chinese Town Council members started to challenge the Dutch. Political parties like the *Jong Sumatranenbond* (Young Sumatra Association) were established in 1918 with the intention of uplifting the Indigenous population from backwardness and ignorance to a

49 SP 16-2-1912; SP 19-2-1912; SP 11-4-1912; SP 11-3-1915, 16-3-1915.

50 *Koloniaal verslag* 1910: 111; SP 16-7-1918.

51 SP 9-11-1912.

52 (SP 3-8-1912; *Koloniaal verslag* 1912: 93; SP 9-11-1912). See for the subject of landrights chapter 2.4.

53 Kerchman *25 jaar Decentralisatie* 1930:382; *Koloniaal Verslag* 1918: 80; *Andalas* 5-6-1917; SP 23-10-1930.

54 Loderichs, *Buiskool* 1997: 24.

55 SP 24-7-1918.

respected status. Its president was Tengkoer Mansoer, who in later years also remained an important political figure.⁵⁶

On 30th May 1918, a public meeting was held in the Oranje Cinema to discuss the candidates for the Town Council. Represented were: *Organisatie Insulinde* (a Eurasian party) department Medan; *Ambonsche Studiefonds* (Ambon Studyfund) department Medan; Tjong Hoa Kong Ek Twan, Tjong Hoa Sie Sit, Sarekat Islam Tapanoeli and the political Batak association Parsatainan.⁵⁷ The Malay Chinese newspaper *Andalas* paid much attention to the first general elections. July 1918 was even referred to as the month of politics by *Andalas*.⁵⁸ Candidates were presented by different groups, namely political parties like Insulinde and the electoral associations Vooruitstrevende and Algemeene. For the group *Vreemde Oosterlingen* (Foreign Orientals) Tan Boen An was presented by Insulinde and the Algemeene together. People mainly voted on persons, not so much for ideas or programs.⁵⁹ The political programs of the electoral associations were quite flexible. Chairman of the Vooruitstrevende was Van den Brand, the well-known lawyer and author of the brochure *De millioenen uit Deli*. Van den Brand wrote:

*“We need a new mentality, not only thinking about the interests of the European, we must also think of the interests of the Indigenous.”*⁶⁰

July 16 was the day of the elections for the Town Council for the Indigenous and foreign orientals. Kajamoedin gelar Radja Goenoeng, Moehamad Sjaaf and Tan Boen An were elected.⁶¹ Nine years later, in 1927, the total number of voters had increased to 1,473 voters with 810 Dutch, 557 Indigenous and 106 foreign orientals.⁶² In that year Medan also got its first council of Mayor and Aldermen to govern day-to-day affairs, when two aldermen and two vice aldermen were appointed. Then in 1929 the council was extended with one alderman for Indigenous affairs. All aldermen were chosen from the members of the Town Council.⁶³

56 SP 18-7-1918, SP 24-7-1918; Petrus Blumberger 1987: 164,175; Kwantes, *Nationalistische beweging 1977*: 107.

57 SP 15-7-1918; *Andalas*, 4-7-1918; 16-7-1918.

58 *Andalas* 18-7-1918.

59 *Andalas* 16-7-1918; SP 15-7-1918; 18-7-1918; 24-7-1918.

60 SP 16-7-1918.

61 *Andalas* 20-7-1918.

62 *Gemeenteblad* 1927: 23.

63 Kerchman *25 jaar Decentralisatie* 1930:383.

6.2.2. Town Council meetings

In the Medan Town Council open discussions were held about matters of racial equality, language, salaries, schools and representation. *De Sumatra Post* in 1918 wrote that since for the first time all ethnic groups had voted democratically, the council had finally received a mandate from below and not from above.⁶⁴ This was not enough however, as Indigenous members of the council protested in 1921 against racial discrimination. Generally the salaries of Indigenous and Europeans were unequal; in some cases Europeans got salaries nearly 50% higher than those of Indigenous, although they had the same function.⁶⁵ Other complaints were about the use of the Dutch language in the council instead of Malay, and the insufficient representation of Indigenous as civil servants. During a meeting in October 1921 member Abdullah Loebis was the only one whose speech was in Malay, which by then was, besides Dutch, accepted as official language of the council. Member Mohamad Noech argued that as the municipality was located in a Malay speaking country, thus he would continue to speak in Malay. He regretted that not all European members could understand him adequately. Mr. Ismail, the next speaker, stated that the Indigenous had been suppressed for centuries by the Dutch because of the passivity of the local population. They had exhibited inferiority in their dealings with the Europeans. And when they expressed their opinions, he said, they were called revolutionaries and agitators. When it came to the point that the Indigenous opposed the Dutch, openly and/or secretly, they became the object of terrorization by the Dutch. Ismail also remarked that the Malay native speakers had problems understanding the discussions in the council as they had not received adequate education in Dutch. This was the fault of the government. Why speak Dutch in an Indigenous municipality? The Malay language had already been officially accepted in the council. So why did the European members not try to understand Malay?⁶⁶

In 1922, once more, member Mohamad Noech pointed to the inequality of representation, as there were 17 members of the council: 10 Dutch, 5 Indigenous and 2 foreign orientals (Chinese, Arab, Indian), while the population of Medan in 1922 was: Dutch 3,000; Indigenous 23,000; foreign orientals around 18,000, so in total 44,000. According to Mohamad Noech, it was better to change the name to 'European council.'⁶⁷ Many years later the unequal representation of the Indigenous was still was an issue. In 1941 member Baharoedin mentioned the matter again and stated that Indigenous were still insufficiently

64 SP 13-11-1918.

65 DC 8-2-1895; SP 29-3-1909; SP 30-1-1912; *Andalas* 24-7-1920.

66 *Gemeenteblad* 28-10-1921.

67 *Verslag gemeente Medan* 30-10-1922:27,30.

represented in all commissions as well as in the Town Council at large. Member Soeleiman added that in this way ‘eastern advice’ was hardly being heard.⁶⁸

In spite of the limited representation the Town Council discussed a wide variety of municipal matters. In November 1930 the budget for the next year was discussed. Later on, peoples’ education, hospital accessibility, street pavement and taxes were on the agenda. Other subjects of discussion included taxes on entertainment, on automobiles, on roads, street taxes, on markets, and on sewage systems. During this meeting finance alderman J. de Waard answered member Sitompoel concerning public education, stating that it was the responsibility of the municipality to offer good education to everyone, including the Indigenous. However, the municipality was not yet able to provide universal secondary education. Health care was also the responsibility of the municipality.⁶⁹ Other subjects were the monthly rent of the Mayor’s residence. The mayor was morally obliged to live in that house while the rent was higher than other private homes. The difference in salaries between Indigenous and Europeans was regularly debated during the 1930s.⁷⁰

In 1937 a Town Council meeting considered the financial relations between central government and municipality. The municipality received the budget from the central government but as this was often insufficient, the municipality taxed the citizens directly on incomes.⁷¹ The subjects discussed pinpointed an aid fund for needy Europeans for an amount of fl.20,000 (fl.28,000 was requested), and other issues regarding housing and rent prices.⁷² This aid fund being only meant for Europeans, not for Indigenous or Chinese, was clearly a matter of racial discrimination. Another reason may have been that with such a low budget it was practically impossible to help the poor Indigenous and other ethnic groups; financial support could only be provided for very small numbers. Moreover, a letter from the Governor General stated that since Medan had a healthy financial condition, the government wanted to cut the resources for Medan and requested that the municipality find other ways to increase its own income. The municipality protested as this looked like a punishment for good financial behaviour. Other issues in 1937 were improvement of roads, a budget for a four-year plan for public works, sports fields, contractors for municipal works, a swimming pool and the need for low-rent houses for between fl.25 to fl.30 per month.⁷³

68 SP 18-4-1941.

69 SP 27-11-1930.

70 SP 29-12-1933; 20-9-1934; 8-12-1934; 6-3-1936; 6-5-1936.

71 SP 19-8-1909.

72 SP 11-11-1937.

73 SP 11-11-1937.

6.2.3. Chinese in politics

The Chinese of Medan were not that interested in local politics. The fact that the Chinese population group only possessed two seats on the council, while they accounted for over 33% of the population was probably the reason why they paid so little attention to local politics. Furthermore it was difficult to find Chinese candidates for the Town Council. In the 1920s the number of Chinese born in Medan was still low. Relations with China were intense also among Medan-born Chinese. Moreover, many Chinese in Medan understood English but not Dutch, and hence were less focused on interior Netherlands Indies' matters. The Chinese felt primarily Chinese, hence their lack of interest in local politics. In the background loomed the situation that the Chinese did not have the same civil rights as the Dutch.⁷⁴

According to the Malay Chinese paper *Andalas*, the language of the Town Council should be Malay, just as in the *Volksraad*. Then it would be easier to attract new members. When in December 1918 two Chinese candidates were presented by the *Nederlandsch Indisch Vrijzinnigen Bond* for the Town Council, they were not accepted by the colonial government. The reason was that they already had equal rights to the Europeans and were therefore considered constitutionally as Europeans and not foreign orientals. Thus, they could not represent the Chinese.⁷⁵ Hereafter Tjong A Fie and Jap Soen Tjhay were chosen to represent the foreign orientals.⁷⁶ Tjong A Fie remained member until his death in February 1921.⁷⁷ He was succeeded by Tan Boen An.⁷⁸ Tan Boen An of the well-known Seng Hap company, was in 1918 the first directly chosen Chinese member of the Town Council. Tan Boen An was in the 1920s and 30s chosen several times again, also as a vice alderman. Other re-elected Chinese members in the years thereafter were the aforementioned Jap Soen Tjhay and Gan Hoat Soei.⁷⁹ In 1923 it was suggested that there should be a Chinese member in the grounds commission as considerable property was in the hands of the Chinese. However, this discussion was later decided in another direction, following the idea that such a commission should have true specialists on board rather than representatives of specific racialized interest groups.⁸⁰ From this it can be seen that racial issues were never far away when it came to

74 *Verslag Gemeente Medan* 1922: 30.

75 (*Indische Gids* 1920 I, 440,441; *Andalas* 19-12-1918). The same happened three years later with Lim Wie Khoen who could not be appointed as he had got equal rights and thus considered constitutionally as European. (Government Secretary, C. Versluis. *Buitenzorg*, 21-12-1921. *Gemeentebblad* Medan 1921)

76 *Gemeentebblad* 2-1-1920; *Gemeentebblad* 18-11-1920, no. 20.

77 *Gemeentebblad* 17-7-1920; *Gemeentebblad* Medan, 23-2-1921; *Andalas* 3-3-1921.

78 *Gemeentebblad* 22-6-1921.

79 *Gemeentebblad* 18-1-1922; *Gemeentebblad* 15-3-1922; *Gemeentebblad* 20-9-1922; *Gemeentebblad* 1923: 252; *Gemeenteverslag* Medan, 1924; *Gemeentebblad* 2-3-1927; *Gemeentebblad* 12-9-1928; SP 21-8-1930; SP 28-2-1935; 11-1-1937; SP 10-2-1938; 18-4-1941.

80 Report of the research of the *Afdeeilingsraad* for the estimated budget for 1924. (*Gemeentebblad* 1923).

local politics in Medan. This was quite obvious in 1930, when *De Sumatra Post* published the following article:

“Since three years I have the same hongkong puller. He is a phenomenon under the Chinese and a jewel of his guild. I present him as Gap Gau Wang. [...] Gap Gau Wang walks with long paces and those who are driving with him forgets that it is immoral that one person pulls the other. By the way, Gap Gau Wang does not think at all that his profession is immoral and said very surprised ‘manah boleh’ (they may not do that) when I told him about the decision of the Town Council (to gradually abolish of the hongkong in Medan). My hongkong puller is a phenomenon: he can read!”⁸¹

If there was one subject that was sensitive for the racial awareness of the Chinese population it was the use of rickshaws or hongkongs, as they were called in Medan. This topic was especially upsetting to the Chinese members of the council as it not only related to the profession as such, but was seen as humiliating to the Chinese race as a whole, and hence to Chinese national self-esteem. All hongkong pullers were Chinese.⁸² Moreover, Medan was the only city in the Netherlands Indies where the hongkongs or rickshaws appeared in the streets.⁸³ In part Medan owed this to its nearness to the British Straits Settlements, where particularly in Singapore rickshaws dominated street views. Although widely in use in Singapore, at the same time the use of hongkongs was heavily criticized. It was even called a murderous vocation as many hongkong-pullers only lived to half the span of an average lifetime.⁸⁴ In May 1916 members Tjong A Fie and Van den Brand had already proposed that the Town Council establish a special commission to study the prohibition of hongkongs in Medan.⁸⁵ From then on it became a regular topic in council. In 1918 Tan Boen An pleaded for the abolition of the hongkong business.⁸⁶

When, eight years later, the hongkongs had still not been abolished, it again became a subject of discussion whereby the Chinese and Indigenous members drew one line. In 1926 Chinese member Gan Hoat Soei made a proposal for the gradual abolition of the

81 SP 11-7-1930.

82 (SP 4-5-1916; 9-5-1916; 10-5-1916; 11-5-1916; 16-5-1916). The newspaper *Andalas* wrote: ‘If the Chinese in Medan do not like to see their own race walk like a horse with a carriage, the Chinese organisations should protest against this humiliating business. The twentieth century is the age of nationalism; look at the Japanese, they are self assured and proud of themselves. The Chinese should also be that way, we should take example of the Japanese. (*Andalas* 13-8-1918).

83 (SP 4-5, 9-5, 10-5, 11-5, 16-5-1916). The term hongkong was used because rickshaws originated in Hongkong.

84 Warren 2003: 282.

85 SP 4-5-1916; 9-5-1916; 10-5-1916; 11-5-1916; 16-5-1916.

86 *Andalas* 13-8-1918; *Andalas* 17-8-1918.

hongkongs. This time the proposal was accepted by the council.⁸⁷ According to Gan Hoat Soei, the profession of hongkong-puller had a degenerating influence, also on his children. It would be unjust and tactless of the westerners to go against this wish of the easterners. Member J.W. Duys said he could not consider Gan Hoat Soei a representative of the Chinese citizens. Both Chinese members represented only a very small part of the Chinese voters. During the discussion member W. Jaski defended the profession of hongkong-puller by comparing it to that of a Venetian gondolier. Alderman de Waard reacted to this and called it absurd to make this comparison. The hongkong profession was not idyllic, only repellent. It was undignified and should be abolished. Member Mohamad Thahar did not agree with member Duys regarding the fact that both Chinese members would not represent the town's Chinese population. They indeed had been chosen by a small group of voters, but that this group was not larger was not the fault of the Chinese, but of the voting system. As they were the only candidates it could be said that they represented the Chinese population as a whole. According to member Abdullah Loebis all the Indigenous newspapers wrote in favour of abolition. So the Indigenous members were on the same line as the Chinese. Finally, the proposal for gradual abolition of the hongkongs was approved by the council, with nine to five votes.⁸⁸ In spite of this, the total abolition did not materialize before the Second World War. Nevertheless, in the 1930s fewer and fewer hongkongs were seen in town. Consequently, the hongkong question was no longer discussed in the council.

Tan Boen An, however still kept the under-representation of the Chinese on the agenda. In his position as vice alderman he complained about insufficient chances in local politics for the Chinese. In 1935 he explicitly requested appointing a Chinese alderman instead of vice alderman so that there would be more attention for the Chinese population of Medan. There were 27,000 Chinese in Medan that year, around one fourth of the city's population, who all had their interests in the municipality. Tan Boen An stressed once more that the Chinese were not equally represented in the different commissions and the municipality departments. Apart from the Chinese coolies, there were but a few Chinese personnel in the Medan municipality.⁸⁹ But as before in the Town Council the Dutch members continued to dominate, but often sought close cooperation with their Indigenous and Chinese colleagues. The Indigenous and Chinese generally spoke in favour of their fellow countrymen and were primarily concerned for the well-being of their own ethnic group. One could say that they had little influence in town politics.⁹⁰

87 SP 28-10-1926.

88 *Gemeentebld* 16-11-1927.

89 SP 28-2-1935.

90 *Gemeentebld* 2-1-1920; *Gemeentebld* 18-11-1920, no. 20; *Gemeentebld* 24-8-1921 no. 10; SP 16-12-1926; SP 21-8-1930; *Gemeente Medan*, 1909-1934: 1, 4,5; Loderichs, Buiskool 1997: 24.



Hongkong 1930s
Foto Loderichs Buiskool 1997

6.2.4. Polarisation in the Netherlands Indies and in Medan

On first sight, the Netherlands Indies of the twentieth century looked stable, but under the surface many conflicts and political developments were boiling. When in July 1918, for the first time, elections were held for the Town Council, it had the appearance of the beginning of a more democratic society.⁹¹ However this was only a façade. A few months later, in November 1918, the First World War came to an end, a crucial moment in time, leading to the

91 *Andalas*, 18-7-1918.

fall of the old order. Russia had just turned into a communist republic, Germany also became a republic and Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman empire fell apart. The American president Woodrow Wilson spoke about national self-determination and Governor General J.P. van Limburg Stirum gave the Volksraad, established in 1920, more authority than originally envisaged.⁹²

In spite of democratic tendencies in the Indies in the early 1920s, a conservative reaction was under way, which became dominant after the communist uprisings in 1927 and 1928, in West Java and West Sumatra, respectively. The colonial government tried to combine impossible matters, such as the decentralization of administration while at the same time showing more bureaucratic rigidity, and economic liberalism with government interference, 'enlightened' ethical politics and suppression of the nationalist Indonesian movement. In the end everything failed with repression and surveillance becoming more intense.⁹³

In the 1920s and 1930s communists were active in Medan with the Minangkabau Tan Malaka as the most well-known among them.⁹⁴ There was also the secret organization Roode Vloed (Red flood) which disseminated communist propaganda.⁹⁵ In 1920 communist propaganda material was found in the house of a Chinese in Shanghaistraat and people were interned.⁹⁶ In the 1930s Chinese schools in East Sumatra were controlled in particular. At a school in Tanjung Balai a Chinese teacher propagated communism.⁹⁷ For such matters the *Politieke Inlichtingen Dienst* (Political Intelligence Service) was established as one of the main tools of repression. On 28th October 1928, in far-away Batavia, several youth organizations pledged an oath that Indonesia should become one nation with one national language, Malay or Bahasa Indonesia, one anthem - the *Indonesia Raya* - and a red and white flag for a national banner. After this *Hari Sumpah Pemuda* (Youth Oath Day) the repression continued more fiercely.⁹⁸

In February 1933, the mutiny on the Dutch warship '*De Zeven Provinciën*', off the coast of Aceh took place. The causes were the unequal salaries for European and Indonesian naval personnel as well as the imprisonment of disgruntled native sailors. The ship sailed for one week under the command of the mutineers and was bombed on 10th February by a Dutch airplane in the Sunda Straits, killing twelve and injuring many more, leading the mutineers

92 Termorshuizen 2011: 174,175.

93 Lindblad in Dick et al. 2002:123; Claver 2006: 257; Pluvier 1953: 53,57,59.

94 Tan Malaka worked between 1919 till 1921 in Deli as assistant inspector of the schools run for the children of Indigenous labourers at the Tanjung Morawa estate of the Senembah Company. (*Gedenkboek Senembah Maatschappij* 22; Poeze 2008: xv-xix; Kousbroek 1992: 189; Reid 1995: 273,274, 276).

95 SP 2-10-1933; Petrus Blumberger 1987: 128; Kwantes 1977: 466, 527.

96 *Andalas*, 25-3-1920.

97 *MvO* Gouverneur B.C.C.M. van Suchtelen, 1936; SP 23-6-1926; SP 27-6-1933.

98 Dick, Houben, Lindblad, Thee 2002: 122; Pluvier 1953:27, 28; Petrus Blumberger 1987: 128; Koloniaal verslag 1921:74; SP 13-10-1933.

to surrender. The mutiny was followed again by severe repression.⁹⁹ It was reported in detail in the newspapers.¹⁰⁰ The British paper *The Evening Standard* wrote that the Netherlands had a backward colonial policy.¹⁰¹ Afterwards there was severe criticism of the government concerning how they had ended the mutiny.¹⁰²

In Medan a few months later theatrical performances with political propaganda were held. They were soon banned while at the same time the political association Indonesia Moeda (Young Indonesia) was prohibited.¹⁰³ Then there were police actions for political reasons, like in 1933 when some Indonesian *Indonesia Raja* singers were convicted for rebellion.¹⁰⁴ In the years thereafter members of the Partai Indonesia and Partai Nasional Indonesia suffered house searches.¹⁰⁵ Although Sumatra witnessed some administrative changes, such as new political contracts between the colonial government and self-ruling Sultans, no significant democratic changes took place.¹⁰⁶ Real democracy in the Netherlands Indies was still far away.

In the 1920s most of the political parties from Java had branches in Medan, such as Perserikatan Nasional Indonesia (National Association of Indonesia), Partai Komunis Indonesia and Soekarno's Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI). There were branches of older movements such as Sarikat Islam and Boedi Oetomo, of Chinese parties like the Tjong Hoa-Kong Ek-Twan and Hwa-Tjong-Soe-Sit and, for the Eurasians the Nationaal Indische Partij (Sarikat Hindia).¹⁰⁷ Eventually, the nationalists did not want to use the term Netherlands Indies any more, but from 1920 onwards used the name Indonesia instead.¹⁰⁸ In Medan there was also a branch of PNI Baru, led in 1933–34 by Soetan Shahrir's younger brother Mahruzar, as well his elder brother, Noer Alamsjah. In 1937 he became a member of the Town Council for the Partai Indonesia Raja, abbreviated as Parindra (Great Indonesian Party). The Parindra still cooperated with the Dutch, which was not the case with the more radical socialist party Gerakan Rakjat Indonesia, abbreviated Gerindo (Indonesian People Movement) which started in 1938 with various political study groups for the youth.¹⁰⁹ In the same year Dr. Mansoer established his Persatoean Soematera Timur (Union East Sumatra).¹¹⁰ In that year the Dutch parties in the council were: the Christelijk Staatkundige

99 SP 9-2-1933, 10-2-1933; Termorshuizen 2011: 241,257.

100 SP 6-2-1933, 7-2-1933, 8-2-1933; Pluvier 1953: 57.

101 SP 10-2-1933.

102 SP 13-2-1933.

103 SP 11-8-1933; SP 14-8-1933.

104 (SP 13-10-1933). *Indonesia Raja* became later the national anthem of Indonesia.

105 Kwantes 1977: SP 14-1-1935.

106 SP 4-2-1935; SP 23-2-1935.

107 Petrus Blumberger 1987: 206; Suprayitno 2005: 10; SP 25-10-1912; *Gemeentebld*, 1920, no. 64.

108 Petrus Blumberger 1987: 6,7.

109 SP 7-2-1938; SP 9-3-1938; Mrázek 1994: 21,22,23,25; Loderichs Buiskool 1997: 39, 40.

110 Loderichs, Buiskool et al, 1979: 39,40; SP 9-3-1938.

Partij (Christian party), the Indische Katholieke Partij (Netherlands Indies Catholic Party), the Politiek Economische Bond (Political Economic Bond) and the allegedly reactionary Vaderlandsche Club (Fatherland Club).¹¹¹ By now the political climate in Deli was conservative sometimes even up to reactionary.¹¹²

As said before the Chinese were not that politically engaged in national politics because of their focus on China. However, many Chinese were in favour of participation in the Volksraad, on the other hand being unhappy with the legal differentiation between the Europeans and Japanese on the one hand and Indigenous people and Chinese on the other. There were three Chinese political streams in the Netherlands Indies. There was the Chinese nationalist stream of the paper *Sin Po*, only looking at China, and the more moderate group the Chung Hwa Hui party, established in 1921. Finally, there was the Partai Tiong Hoa Indonesia founded in 1932, supporting the Indonesian nationalist cause.¹¹³ As the Chinese in Medan were mostly totok, politically orientated towards China, and not towards Indonesian politics, the Partai Tiong Hoa Indonesia and Chung Hwa Hui did not have branches in Medan.¹¹⁴

In the meantime, in 1937 the Volksraad had accepted the Soetardjo petition requesting that the Dutch government hold a conference for a more equal status of the Netherlands Indies within the framework of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.¹¹⁵ Although there were voices in Dutch parliament saying that the request was reasonable, the majority voted against the petition. As a consequence, Indonesian nationalists completely stopped any further cooperation with the Dutch. Now the Gaboengan Politik Indonesia, abbreviated as GAPI (Indonesian Political Association) arose under the leadership of Mohamad Hoesni Thamrin, who started a large campaign for equal representation in the Volksraad.¹¹⁶ In December 1939 Thamrin came to Medan and spoke at a GAPI meeting in the Rex cinema. The meeting, however, was dissolved by the police.¹¹⁷ The Dutch community continued to enjoy its privileged position and did not question the principle of colonial rule. And if it questioned it at all, it came up with many other arguments justifying Dutch rule and presence in the Netherlands Indies, such as ‘the uplifting’ of the population, ‘the gradual ripening’ of the country into an independent existence, the payment of an historic ‘debt of honour’, or simply the idea that western imperialism was an historical imperative.¹¹⁸

111 SP 30-3-1938.

112 Pluvier 1953: 36, 37; Houben and Lindblad 1999: 51.

113 Erkelens 2013: 200,201; Mackie 1976: 37; Ong Eng Die 1943: 252; Suryadinata, Culture 1997: 248 – 256.

114 Lohanda 2002: 194.

115 Soetardjo’s petition was inspired by the promise of the United States to give independence to the Philippines within ten years, and also by the United Kingdom, which promised self governance within a certain period of time to British India. (Gouka: 95, 171-188; SP 16-6-1938; Pluvier 1953: 173,175; Termorshuizen 2011: 273, 274).

116 Pluvier 1953: 78, 82,136.

117 SP 7-12-1939; *Het Nieuws van den Dag voor Ned. Indie* 7-12-1939.

118 Doorn, van, J.A.A. *De laatste eeuw van Indie* Amsterdam 1994: 99.

But then in May 1940, the Netherlands was occupied by Nazi-Germany, with the Queen and the government fleeing to London. With the Indies on its own, the colonial authorities finally felt the need for change. They now saw the need for democratic reforms and created the Visman commission in September 1940. This commission presented suggestions for constitutional reforms like direct elections of the Volksraad.¹¹⁹ Unfortunately, these suggestions could not be implemented as the mother country was occupied and hence the Dutch parliament was unable to consider the matter.¹²⁰ So now that serious democratic reforms came closer, nothing could be done.

When the Netherlands Indies set up an extra defense force in May 1941 in reaction to the Japanese threat, sensitivities rose again. In the Volksraad the Indonesian parties stated that if an Indigenous militia was to be established the Indigenous should have an equal position with the Europeans to share a sense of togetherness. Consequently, an Indigenous militia should be connected to constitutional reform. The Chinese party Chung Hua Hui stated that it agreed with the demand for equal rights, but that at this crucial moment the country should be defended first, with politics becoming second.¹²¹ In the weeks thereafter discussions continued. In the papers articles appeared proposing an independent Indonesia at the same time being closely related to the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Radical political reforms were now publicly discussed. Because in the end, the political reform was disconnected from the establishment of the militia, the militia never came as the Indonesian nationalist parties and the Dutch colonial government could not reach an agreement.¹²²

In 1941 the imminent Japanese threat was already felt throughout the Netherlands Indies. All population groups drew a common line against the common enemy. The consul general of China in Batavia, Mr. Tschou Kwong Kah wrote in the “China number” of the *Algemeen Indisch Dagblad* his appreciation for the many signs of sympathy, which the government and people of the Netherlands offered to China during the war with Japan.¹²³ After the attack on Pearl Harbor, 7th December 1941, Tschou Kwong Kah said that “*One for all and all for one*” was the message for the one and a half million Chinese in the Netherlands Indies. They should help to defend the Netherlands Indies. There were around 750,000 peranakan Chinese in the Netherlands Indies and also around 750,000 totok Chinese. Both totok and peranakan would be happy to give something back and join in the defense of the Netherlands Indies after what the country had done for them.¹²⁴

119 SP 4-12-1941; De Jong deel 11a tweede helft 1984: 570.

120 SP 26-4-1941; 5-12-1941.

121 SP 7-7-1941; Pluvier 1953: 187.

122 SP 21-7-1941 ; De Jong deel 11a tweede helft 1984: 952, 953.

123 SP 12-6-1941.

124 SP 19-12-1941.

In Medan in the meantime, resident F.J. Bruggeman had already invited the different population groups to his house and gave a speech about the outbreak of war. Jap Gim Sek responded on behalf of the Chinese community, declaring loyalty to the Netherlands Indies government. He said that the Chinese community stood as one behind the Governor General, following the call of their military leader, General Chiang Kai-Shek. Abdul Malik Karim Amroella, consul of Moehammadijah, spoke on behalf of the Indigenous population, reassuring the Resident that they also stood united behind the government.¹²⁵ *De Sumatra Post* commented on these voices of loyalty and wrote that on the one hand there were voices of loyalty to the government with regard to the war effort, but on the other hand a lot of disappointment from the Indigenous side had been heard that the government did not want to go ahead with constitutional reforms.¹²⁶

One month later, in January 1942, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Medan requested additional broadcasting from the Netherlands Indies Radio Broadcasting Corporation in Mandarin so that the Chinese could be informed about the progress of the war to avoid rampant confusion among the Chinese. This request was because many Chinese did not understand either Dutch or Malay. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce also wrote, on behalf of the Chinese population and its associations in East Sumatra that the Medan Chinese declared loyalty towards the government. Hereafter the Governor General replied with a telegram in which he expressed his gratitude

*“for the expression of faith, loyalty and compliance of the Chinese community.”*¹²⁷

However, when the Japanese entered Medan on 13th March 1942 the Indigenous and Chinese looked on from the sidelines. The European population was interned in internment camps within two weeks.¹²⁸ The Japanese directly beheaded five Indigenous prisoners and placed their heads on poles in front of the Pusat Pasar or Central Market.¹²⁹ Hereafter there was so much fear among the population that practically no resistance against the Japanese arose.

Returning to the Town Council, as mentioned previously the discussions in the council were generally open and frank, but friendly, with mutual appreciation of the members.¹³⁰ The next-to-last Town Council meeting, held on 3rd December 1941, only a few days before Pearl Harbor, concerned different subjects. The main subject was the voting rights for men and women for the next elections, to be held in 1942. The minimum income for a European

125 SP 16-12-1941.

126 SP 16-12-1941.

127 SP 16-1-1942.

128 Loderichs - Buischool 1997: 57-60.

129 Interview Tan Boen Djin September 2000.

130 SP 20-6-1941.

voter was now reduced from fl.900 to fl.300, while voters should be able to read and write. European men and women with these qualifications were automatically put on the voters' list. Chinese and Indigenous women had to subscribe to come onto the list. In 1938 there had been 1,300 Europeans who voted, in 1942 this should rise to at the least 2,000. In 1938 the number of Indigenous voters was also 2,000. The number of Chinese voters was remarkably small, while there were least 3,000 but probably 4,000 Chinese adult males in Medan. In 1938 however, there only were 300 Chinese voters. This was caused by the fact that many Chinese who had voting rights already possessed the Netherlands nationality. Consequently, the list of Chinese voters mostly concerned Peranakan, born in the Netherlands Indies. Their numbers were few in Medan. It was planned that in 1942 there would be two voting bureaus, one in the town hall, the other nearby the central market.¹³¹ The new elections never happened. The Dutch writer Rudy Kousbroek, who grew up on East Sumatra, wrote in hindsight:

*“In March 1942 the Japanese came and thereafter happened what had to happen eventually: the collapse of the world I had grown up. The former rulers were interned by the new ones and the war was fought out somewhere behind the horizon [...] So it went. The toetoe jackets were worn for the last time. No more four- handed clavier extracts of concert music would be played on the piano in the front gallery. The safe world with our faithful servants, who so lovingly cared for our children, without us caring after them, it was all over [...] It happened suddenly, in a few chaotic weeks everything was blown away [...]”*¹³²

6.3. The press in Medan 1890–1942

From the 1880s Dutch as well as Malay and Chinese language newspapers were published in Medan. Such papers can help us to understand the cultural atmosphere and mentality of the different ethnic population groups in town as well as their political engagement. Important issues in this respect were press violations and government censorship. Press violations, in so far as they happened, were mainly directed against Japan, the Dutch colonial government and the Chinese government. This aspect will be dealt with in the next paragraph, 6.4. Most analysis from the press is derived from *De Sumatra Post*, the *Deli Courant* and *Andalas*, the first two being Dutch language papers, the third a Malay one, with a mainly Chinese

131 SP 2-12-1941.

132 Kousbroek, R. in: *NRC Handelsblad*, 29-2-1980.

readership. This can be concluded from the subjects described in the newspaper describing Chinese matters in town.¹³³

6.3.1. Dutch newspapers in Medan

Deli Courant

In Medan there were two Dutch language papers, the *Deli Courant* and *De Sumatra Post*. The *Deli Courant*, founded in 1885, was the first paper in Medan with its office located in the Kesawan, the main street of town. In 1898 the *Deli Courant* started printing with steam machine operated presses in Medan, and also established a second printing office in Tandjong Poera. A weekly illustrated magazine was edited free for the newspaper's subscribers. The *Deli Courant* appeared twice a week, on Wednesday and Saturday, the subscription fee for East Sumatra was fl.30 per year.¹³⁴ It advertised for a wide range of subjects, such as for instance a map of all the tobacco plantations for the then hefty price of fl.12.¹³⁵ At the paper's printing office one could order calendars, dinner menus, dance cards, name cards, all kind of model labour contracts and other forms needed by managers of the plantations.¹³⁶ The first editors of the *Deli Courant* were J. Deen and P.R. van Staden ten Brink.¹³⁷ From 1899 until 1904 W. Mulier was editor in chief.¹³⁸ The *Deli Courant* harbored social aspirations: it supported the idea of giving the Chinese and Javanese coolies and Indigenous people (Malay and Batak) a pension so that they would feel more attached to the region.¹³⁹ Generally, however, the paper wrote in favour of the interests of the plantation companies and in case of labour problems it often blamed the coolies. One could say that the *Deli Courant* was the mouthpiece of the plantation sector. This was particularly clear in 1907 when editor in chief Kees van Bruggen had to leave Medan, because of a conflict with the management of the plantations.¹⁴⁰ Van Bruggen's successors, A.W. Naudin ten Cate and W.A. Th. Burger, in charge from 1907 until 1910, voiced opinions like the coolies consisted of the scum of the Javanese and Chinese population and that one should deal with them accordingly, meaning not applying the same standards as one would with Europeans and educated Indigenous

133 (Termorshuizen 2011: 85) The director of *Andalas* in June 1920 was Lim Bian Tek, the administrator Kam Peng Jawu, the chief editor was Hie Foek Tjhoij and editor Radimin. (*Andalas* 15-6-1920) A month later a new director came, this was Unh Beng Seing. (*Andalas* 22-7-1920) Looking at the names of the editors of *Andalas* they were mainly Chinese.

134 DC 1-1-1898; 12-3-1898.

135 DC 16-12-1891.

136 DC 28-12-1898.

137 DC 12-3-1898.

138 SP 13-4-1899.

139 DC 8-6-1895.

140 Kees van Bruggen's wife was the author Carry van Bruggen. (Termorshuizen 2011: 625).

persons.¹⁴¹ Although conservative in outlook, the editors were often very well-informed. Naudin ten Cate published for instance *Deli in Woord en Beeld*, a richly illustrated, well documented overview of the social-economic history of Deli from 1860 to 1909.¹⁴² In 1910 J.J. van der Laan became chief editor. Van der Laan was also a member of the Town Council chosen for the European group. Later, he sympathized with the Vaderlandsche Club.¹⁴³ Van der Laan and his successor, from 1936 until 1942 Willem Klooster, continued the conservative image of the *Deli Courant*. Klooster, writing under the pseudonym of Willem Brandt, was very productive, he wrote countless poems and published novels such as *De aarde van Deli* (The soil of Deli) about the history of the tobacco plantations on East Sumatra.¹⁴⁴

De Sumatra Post

In 1895 the German Jozeph Hallermann opened a bookshop in Medan. Three years later, in 1898, he established *De Sumatra Post*, also located in the Kesawan, which was to be the first daily newspaper in town as the *Deli Courant* appeared only twice a week. In 1916 Hallermann sold *De Sumatra Post* to A.P. Varekamp. *De Sumatra Post* was known to be more independent and progressive than the *Deli Courant*. From the start there was a tense competition between the two newspapers.¹⁴⁵ The rivalry lasted till 1942 when the Japanese invaded Sumatra and both papers had to stop publication. In 1946 they coalesced into *Het Nieuwsblad voor Sumatra*.¹⁴⁶ The first editor in chief of *De Sumatra Post* was the well-known lawyer Johannes van den Brand.¹⁴⁷ Van den Brand wrote in his editorial in 1898:

*“It is the goal of De Sumatra Post to employ honest conviction to discuss public events and interests.”*¹⁴⁸

Van den Brand was a high-profile figure in Medan society.¹⁴⁹ He was also the editor of *Het Jaarboek voor Deli* (The Yearbook for Deli). This book was meant for everyone living in

141 DC 22-5-1895, 28-9-1910.

142 A.W. Naudin ten Cate *Deli in Woord en Beeld* Amsterdam, J.H. De Bussy, 1905.

143 *Gemeentebld* 6-4-1927; SP 15-6-1926; 28-10-1926; .Termorshuizen 2011: 632.

144 Brandt, W. *De Aarde van Deli* N.V. Uitgeverij W. van Hoeve, 's Gravenhage 1948; DC 8-2-1936; Termorshuizen 2011: 634.

145 DC 3-12-1898, DC 31-12-1898, SP 3-1-1899, SP 18-4-1899.

146 Dootjes 1952: 97.

147 SP 24-5-1899, 3-8-1899.

148 SP 2-12-1898.

149 SP 10-2-1899; SP 21-6-1899; Termorshuizen 2011: 642; Buiskool, D.A. 'De Multatuli van Deli' in *Archipel* voorjaar 2010.

East Sumatra or with interests in the region.¹⁵⁰ However, Van den Brand was only chief editor for seven months. In July 1899 he resigned as he could not combine it with his lawyer's office.¹⁵¹ A few years later in 1902 he became famous after the publication of the brochure *De millioenen uit Deli*, about the maltreatment of coolies on the plantations in East Sumatra.

Karel Wybrands, who succeeded Van den Brand as editor was a great stylistic talent and became one of the most well-known journalists in the Netherlands Indies. On the occasion of the first anniversary of *De Sumatra Post* the paper wrote that it wanted to be an open medium and not a *doofpot*, a "cover-up" medium.¹⁵² Two years later Wybrands moved to *Het Nieuws van den Dag* in Batavia, so he was only chief editor for two years, from 1899 until 1901. In those two years *De Sumatra Post* had several rubrics, foreign correspondents, a weekly political overview and serials, adaptations of Arthur Conan Doyle and Rudyard Kipling, book reviews, everything written by Wybrands himself. *De Sumatra Post* became very popular within a short span of time. Karel Wybrands was not only a stylistic talent, he also had a talent to offend others. He was the best example of the famous and notorious *Tropenstijl* "Tropical style journalism".¹⁵³ This was described by the journalist J. Fabricius as follows:

*"To mention of man and horse is often imperative. Not from 'cancer-lust-out principle', but as the extreme way to ram the wall of bureaucratic and other bloating, is all too often necessary."*¹⁵⁴

Wybrands was racist and extremely conservative. His successor as chief editor was A.J.C.M. Tervooren, who was very right-wing. But A.J. Lievegoed, the next editor in chief, in charge from 1904 to 1914, was an enlightened ethicist, who gave a new sound to *De Sumatra Post* stressing the importance of a free press, openness in general as well as a 'healthy' western economy.¹⁵⁵ He wrote about Van den Brands *De millioenen uit Deli*, that although the pamphlet was a shock for Deli, it had started an inevitable 'fermentation proces',¹⁵⁶ so that now the conditions of the coolies could openly be discussed. The meetings of the Town Council were published by Lievegoed under the name *Vox Populi*.¹⁵⁷ The paper also

150 SP 24-5-1899.

151 Termorshuizen 2011: 642; Buischool, D.A. 'De Multatuli van Deli' in *Archipel* voorjaar 2010.

152 SP 1-12-1899.

153 SP 3-8-1899.

154 Het noemen van man en paard [is] vaak gebiedende eisch. Niet uit 'kanker-lust-uit- principe,' maar als uiterste middel om den muur van bureaucratische en andere opgeblazenheid te rammen, is zulks maar al te vaak noodzakelijk. (Termorshuizen 2011: 116; 'De journalist in Indië', *Bataviaasch Handelsblad* (11) 28-11-1911)

155 SP 22-1-1912, 7-3-1913, 8-7-1913; Termorshuizen 2011: 649,650.

156 Referring to the fermentation of the tobacco.

157 SP 18-3-1913.

published articles about new literature, feminism, voting rights for women and other social matters.¹⁵⁸

The subscribers to *De Sumatra Post* were the assistants on the plantations. Around 1910 *De Sumatra Post* was the biggest paper on Sumatra and would remain so until the Second World War.¹⁵⁹ In 1914 *De Sumatra Post* printing office moved to a location beside the Tjong A Fie mansion.¹⁶⁰ M. Vierhout succeeded Lievegoed as chief editor of *De Sumatra Post* from 1914 to 1924. He continued the ethical image of *De Sumatra Post*.¹⁶¹ Hereafter there was a change in the orientation of *De Sumatra Post* as from then on only conservative editors were in charge. The last chief editor of *De Sumatra Post*, A.P.A.A. Besnard, who led the paper from 1930 until 1942, turned it into a truly conservative medium. Besnard even harbored fascist sympathies.¹⁶² However conservative he may have been, knowing how the Jews were maltreated by Hitler's Germany, he condemned it.¹⁶³ In 1939 *De Sumatra Post* celebrated 40 years of the newspaper and a memorial volume was published.¹⁶⁴ By that time *De Sumatra Post* and the *Deli Courant* together had between 1,500 and 3,000 paying subscribers.¹⁶⁵

6.3.2. Chinese and Malay language newspapers in the Netherlands Indies and in Medan

In the nineteenth century there were very few non-Dutch language newspapers. This lack of printing presses changed with the "Asiatic Awakening" around 1900, when more Chinese Malay papers were established which soon developed into a strong voice.¹⁶⁶ Around 1910 the *Soe Po Sia*, or reading rooms, literally 'books and newspapers', were also established,

158 Mrs. Lievegoed was in 1912 president of the organization for women voting rights in Medan. (SP 23-5-1912) In that year Mrs. Chapman-Cat and Dr. Aletta Jacobs, respectively president of the American and the Dutch Organisation for women voting rights, visited on their world tour also Medan where they gave speeches. (SP 12-1-1912, 5-4-1912) Lievegoed criticized the lack of intellectual and cultural interests of the majority of the *Delianen* (*People of Deli*) and stimulated establishment of the *Delische Kunstkring*. Deli Cultural circle (SP 30-9-1912) At the Deli Cultural Circle cultural performances were held. (SP 9-9-1912)

159 (SP 2-3-1909; SP 31-1-1942) The subscription fee in the 1930s of *De Sumatra Post* was fl.5 per quarter (Medan) and fl. 6,25 per quarter Netherlands Indies. (SP 15-12-1933)

160 The bookshop and printing office were separated. In 1922 the company *Varekamp & Co.* and *De Sumatra Post* moved to the Manggalaan. (Groenhart 2012: 164; Termorshuizen 2011: 657).

161 In 1916 Hallermann sold his company to *Varekamp & Co.* with Ant. P. *Varekamp* as director. In 1922 the business moved to a new building (at the Manggalaan) In 1924 *Varekamp* replaced *Vierhout* by *van Beem*. (Termorshuizen 2011: 657)

162 Termorshuizen 2011: 659- 663, 665, 667.

163 *De Sumatra Post* reported in detail about the anti-Jewish razzias of the *Kristallnacht* on 9 to 10 November 1938 in Germany when thousands of Jews were deported to concentration camps and many were killed. (SP 18-11-1938)

164 *De Sumatra Post 1898–1939*, N.V. Boekhandel en Drukkerij Voorheen *Varekamp & Co.* Medan.

165 Termorshuizen 2011: 81.

166 Kwee 1935: 200; De Bruin 1918: 119.

which became centers of propaganda for the Chinese nationalist Kuo Min Tang party.¹⁶⁷ In 1909 the Soe Po Sia department Medan even established a newspaper named *Sumatra Po*.¹⁶⁸

On the eve of the Chinese revolution in 1910, a new Malay language weekly, *Sin Po* (New Paper) was published in Batavia. It supported the cause of the Chinese republic after the revolution of 1911. *Sin Po* published on a wide range of matters.¹⁶⁹ Those Chinese who were orientated towards China subscribed to *Sin Po*.¹⁷⁰ This newspaper (renamed *Siang Po* in 1934), represented the Chinese nationalist stream. Then there was *Perniagaan*, a more moderate paper, representing the Chung Hwa Hui party, and *Sin Tit Po* which represented the Partai Tiong Hoa Indonesia, supporting the Indonesian nationalist stream. In the 1930s, there were at least 17 Malay and Chinese language papers in the whole of the Dutch East Indies.¹⁷¹

In Medan the first Malay language paper, *Pewartu Deli*, appeared in 1901.¹⁷² The first Chinese language newspaper, the one established by the Soe Po Sia Medan department, was named the *Sumatra Po* or *So Mun Tap Lap Po* (Su-men-ta-la pao).¹⁷³ The second Chinese language paper was *Min Bao*, published in 1914.¹⁷⁴ The first Malay Chinese paper in Medan was *Andalas* established in 1912, appearing until at least 1924.¹⁷⁵ The second one was *Pertja Timoer* which was also established in 1912.¹⁷⁶ An English language paper *Sumatra News*, also started in 1912.¹⁷⁷ Other Malay language Chinese papers appearing in Medan were *Pantjaran Berita* in 1922, and *Pelita Andalas* in 1925. These papers stressed that the Chinese in the Netherlands Indies should focus on China and not on the Netherlands.¹⁷⁸ So, *Andalas* was published in the Malay language rather than in Mandarin. This was in fact a sign of the assimilation of the Chinese in the Netherlands Indies.¹⁷⁹ *Andalas* was very critical towards the colonial government on account of its discriminatory policy towards Chinese

167 Somers Heidhues 1992: 160.

168 Claver 2006: 214.

169 *Sin Po* published about subjects such as Chinese history, education, saving banks, French literature, opium and precious stones, agriculture, theatre, psychology, Chinese and western medicine. Also a fashion magazine and the weekly *De Chinesche Revue* were established. (Kwee 1935: 204, 218, 214; Helsdingen 1941: 429).

170 *Sin Po* was the biggest Chinese Malay daily with a print run of 10,000, after 1921 appeared also a Chinese edition. (Termorshuizen 2011: 85,86).

171 Kwee 1935: 204,206,207, 208, 214,215,218; Helsdingen 1941: 428,429; Ong Eng Die 1943: 261; Mackie 1976: 37,38; Suryadinata, Culture 1997: 248, 256.

172 Loderichs, Buiskool 1997: 39.

173 (Williams 1959: 109) There were different Soe Po Sia papers established. In 1909 the Hoa Tok Po in Batavia, the Djawa Kong Po in Semarang, the Han Boen Sin Po in Surabaya and the Sumatra Po in Medan. All papers were in Chinese and Malaylanguage. (Claver 2006: 214)

174 People's paper. (Suryadinata 1997: 248 - 256)

175 *Andalas* 20-9-1917, 31-7- 1924.

176 SP 5-3-1912.

177 SP 15-6-1915.

178 Loderichs, Buiskool 1997: 39.

179 Coppel 2013: 353.

and Indigenous people. One remarkable article appearing in *Andalas* was *Orang Zoeloe* (The Zoeloe people). Herein the Zoeloe people were described in disparaging terms as a primitive tribe which had almost wiped out the Boers. However, when it concerned a local subject *Andalas* was more critical and took a standpoint against westerners. When in *De Sumatra Post* the Chinese *toekang sajoer* (vegetable sellers, mostly Chinese ex-coolies) were described as *rapalje* (bandits) *Andalas* protested. Major Tjong A Fie also reacted to the press and said that it was unjust to describe the vegetable farmers in that fashion as they were normal tax paying civilians.¹⁸⁰

In the 1930s the pro Kuo Min Tang paper *The New China Times* was established in Medan.¹⁸¹ In the 1930s *Andalas* re-appeared under the ownership of Hiu Ngi Fen, who possessed, besides his pharmacy and medical wine production, a printing house which published two newspapers: The Chinese language newspaper *Sumatra Bin Pho* and the Chinese Malay language paper *Andalas*.¹⁸² In the 1920s the *Tjin-Po Medan* had already started publication.¹⁸³ In these years the demand for Chinese language papers increased as the totok community, who could not read Malay, English or Dutch newspapers, was growing. An example was the English language newspaper *Nanyang Daily News* which changed its name in 1928 into *Sin Tiong Hoa Po*, that also appeared in Medan.¹⁸⁴ All Chinese papers were explicitly Chinese nationalistic, and some were mouthpieces of the Kuo Min Tang.¹⁸⁵ On Indonesian solidarity they took a neutral position.¹⁸⁶ Support for Indonesian nationalists by Chinese papers was only based on Asian nationalism and/or anti-Dutch sentiments but very seldom by identification with Indonesian nationalists. On the other hand, there was great sympathy for the latter. A clear example was that it was in *Sin Po* in November 1928 that the future Indonesian anthem *Indonesia Raya* by W.R. Soepratman, who worked as a reporter for *Sin Po*, was published for the first time.¹⁸⁷

The Malay newspapers were read by both Indigenous and Chinese. The editors certainly had influence on their readers and sometimes were sentenced for press violations. From the advertisements we can get an impression from the way of life of the readers. Often the real number of readers was much larger than the subscribers. The Malay language papers were in general very much locally-oriented.¹⁸⁸ Malay language papers appearing in Medan in the

180 *Andalas* 2-10-1917; *Andalas* 9-10-1917.

181 The paper stopped appearing in 1942 after the Japanese occupied Medan. Information from Mr. Soffyan. Chief editor Harian Analisa 15-12-1999.

182 Interview Hiu Kian Jin 4-11-1996.

183 *Tjin Po* 10-3-1925.

184 *Pewarta Deli* 18-8-1928.

185 Moerman 1932: 41.

186 Termorshuizen 2011: 83,85, 86.

187 Kwee 1948: 35-36; Somers 1964:5,6.

188 Van Till 2006: 52.

1920s were *Pewarta Deli*, *Pantjaran Berita*, *Tjin Po*,¹⁸⁹ *Pelita Andalas*,¹⁹⁰ *Benih Timor*,¹⁹¹ *Medan Boediman*¹⁹² and *Sinar Deli*.¹⁹³ At least 16 Malay and Chinese language newspapers existed in Medan in the 1930s. (Appendix 6.2.)

In 1915 discussions were started in Medan to establish an association for Chinese journalists, particularly to improve the financial position of the editors. The salaries of the chief editors of the larger Chinese Malay papers like *Sin Po*, *Perniagaan* and *Tjoen Tjhioe* was a maximum of fl.30 per month, which was insufficient for a decent life for a family in a larger city.¹⁹⁴ Eleven years later, in 1926, an association of Indigenous, Chinese and Dutch journalists established a committee against the arbitrary behaviour of police officers acting high-handedly and unfairly.¹⁹⁵ In 1930 the journalist association ‘Perserikatan Journalist Timoor’ was established for the interest of the Indigenous and Chinese press.¹⁹⁶

The Chinese press was not only a source of news but also an advisory office and an office for complaints. Contrary to European custom, the Chinese often first approached the newspapers before going to the police office. It was therefore often the case that for a complaint people first wrote a letter to the paper. Even for medical advice they often consulted the paper with the editor reacting accordingly. The papers always had large amounts of advertisements for all kinds of medical matters and products.¹⁹⁷ In general it can be said that the Chinese press was important for political awareness including Chinese nationalism. The press also warned about all kind of vices, like the use of opium. By about 1934, opium sales in the Netherlands Indies had decreased by almost 70% compared to the level of 1928. This was partly due to the anti-opium propaganda in the Chinese press. The press also warned on other health matters such as the use of the lead-containing powder Chinese mothers used for their babies. After an intensive campaign in the Chinese press warning against this lead powder from December 1933 until May 1934, no more cases of

189 *Tjin Po* 10-3-1925; Loderichs, Buiskool 1999: 39.

190 *Pelita Andalas* 9-9-1926, 3-3-1927, 21-4-1927, 13-8-1927.

191 Loderichs, Buiskool 1999: 39.

192 The subscription fee of *Medan Boediman* was fl. 2.25 quarterly. This was a Malay language weekly for the Indigenous people, appeared in the 1910s with translated articles from the Dutch press. (SP 30-8-1915; Koloniaal verslag 1916:124)

193 The editors of the *Sinar Deli* were Mangaradja Hoetan and Hassan Noel Arifin, former editors of the *Pewarta Deli*. Published by the Handel Mij. en Electr., The printing office of *Sinar Deli* was in the Moskeestraat (Jl. Mesjid). (SP 5-3-1930),

194 (SP 7-6-1915; SP 24-6-1915). Fl.300 would have a value of €5,075 in 2015. (<http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/calculate2-nl.php>)

195 SP 10-2-1926.

196 SP 28-1-1930.

197 Kwee 1935: 197; *Sumatra Bin Pho* 13-1-1941; Advertisement Moon Apotheek; *Sumatra Bin Pho* 10-9-1941.

the lead poisoning of Chinese babies were reported, showing that the press campaign had worked very well.¹⁹⁸

6.3.3. Anti-Japanese sentiments in the press

The concept ‘the Japanese Threat’ referred to the Japanese economic and political expansion in East and Southeast Asia. In East Sumatra many Chinese businesses had boycotted Japanese goods because of Japan’s political aggression toward China in 1912. After Japan’s victory over Russia in 1905 it had ranked itself among world powers. In this position it tried to obtain, together with the imperialist European countries, political and economic domination in certain parts of China. After the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 Japan saw an opportunity to further realize this. It joined the Allied forces and sent a secret ultimatum to China demanding regional authority in Manchuria and Shantung as well as in the German spheres of influence in China. Together with the ultimatum Japan threatened war in April 1915 with the so-called “Twenty-one demands”. Sun Yat Sen declared that these “Twenty-one demands” were a secret deal between president Yuan Shi Kai and Japan with the purpose of Yuan Shi Kai being accepted as Chinese emperor. China realized that it was powerless against Japan and reluctantly agreed. At the same time China leaked the “Twenty-one demands” in the hope that the western powers would stop Japan in its aggression as it could also affect western interests. When the “Twenty-one demands” became known among the Chinese there were strong nationalistic and anti-Japanese reactions, resulting in the so-called ‘May Fourth Movement’ in China and abroad, including Medan. In 1915 the Chinese boycott ended after an agreement between China and Japan.¹⁹⁹ After that Japanese imports in the Netherlands Indies rose from 2% (in 1914) to 22% in 1918.²⁰⁰

In Medan there were quite a few Japanese citizens, shop keepers, owners of photography shops and barbers. As said earlier, in the opening years of the plantation industry there were many Japanese women employed, as nyai, domestic servants and prostitutes. In the 1920s Japanese citizens were said to be often engaged in passing strategic information about the Netherlands Indies to their homeland. At the same time anti-Japanese sentiments rose high again after Japan invaded Tsinan in 1928.²⁰¹ In the 1920s the Chinese again boycotted Japanese products and Chinese shops who sold Japanese products were attacked by the Chinese mob.²⁰² In 1931 Japan invaded Manchuria and in 1937 the Nanking massacre took

198 Kwee 1935: 222.

199 MacNair, *Modern Chinese History: Selected Readings*, Vol. 2, p. 772,787,788; Yong 1989: 3; SP 18-11-1912; SP 10-1-1913; SP 12-4-1915; SP 21-5-1915, SP 22-12-1915.

200 Claver 2006: 355.

201 (Yong 1992: 313). Jinan, formerly Tsinan, is the capital of Shandong provinces in Eastern China.

202 MvO van Kempen 1928: Deel II:55.

place.²⁰³ All this infuriated the overseas Chinese even more and resulted in more boycott actions as well as relief efforts in China itself. Many Chinese businesses were active in fundraising for the war against Japan.²⁰⁴

The Netherlands Indies government on the other hand wanted to avoid conflicts with Japan and forbade anti-Japanese propaganda. When two *kelontong* Chinese sold *kipas* on which anti-Japanese propaganda was written, they were arrested. Many Chinese traders refused to work anymore with Japanese firms in the Netherlands Indies.²⁰⁵ In the 1930s in Medan a branch was established of the 'Benevolent Organization for the Liberation of South East Asia' from the Japanese.²⁰⁶ When in 1935 a Chinese delegation to promote the Kuo Min Tang government visited Medan on a tour through South East Asia, topics discussed were the situation in China, communism and emigration to the Netherlands Indies.

Another subject was the opening of branch offices for the Chinese National Bank in the British Straits Settlements and the Netherlands Indies for better trade facilities. The delegation received a big welcome in Medan from the Chinese consul, a welcome committee and fifty representatives of Chinese organizations. According to the head of the delegation, Tjin Tjoen Poe, the Chinese in East Sumatra were economically better off than their peers in the Straits and Siam (Thailand). He said that the *Hoa Kiauw* (Chinese born abroad) in Sumatra enjoyed better laws and had closer ties to China. During the meeting in the building of the Rice and Sugar Association a Chinese representative protested against the fact that some people spoke in English and Dutch. Chinese who did not speak Chinese he considered as *Bong Kok Koei* (ghosts who do not belong to in a certain region). This remark was mentioned in the press as a particularly controversial subject.²⁰⁷ Also in 1935 the Netherlands Indies-Chinese Trade Commission for Medan was established to promote trade relations between the two countries with Hiu Ngi Fen on the board.²⁰⁸ In relation to the above, it was remarkable that Governor B.C.C.M.M. van Suchtelen of East Sumatra, wrote that the Kuo Min Tang was not very active in East Sumatra.²⁰⁹

203 During the Nanking massacre at least 300,000 Chinese civilians were killed. (www.nanking-massacre.com); De Jong deel 11a eerste helft 1984: 467, 484

204 SP 1-3-1909; SP 31-5-1905; SP 3-7-1913; SP 13-4-1935; SP 14-4-1935; MvO van Suchtelen 1936; Visscher 2002: 51, 52; Somers 1992:161.

205 SP 13-8-1930; *De Locomotief* 3-12-1931.

206 MvO gouverneur H.E.K. Ezerman, 20-8-1930 tot 24-6-1933; SP 2-10-1933; Interviews Hiu Kian Jin 9-1-1996, 3-2-1996.

207 SP 12-4-1935; 13-4-1935, 15-4-1935, 17-4-1935, 18-4-1935.

208 SP 23-9-1935.

209 MvO gouverneur B.C.C.M.M. van Suchtelen 1936.

6.4. Censorship and press violations

In British India the Newspapers Incitement to Offences Bill was introduced in 1908 which led to a new press act, the Indian Press Act. Following this example, the Netherlands Indies adopted the ‘hate speech’ articles in the criminal code in 1914, in which articles which called for hate, enmity, or contempt became punishable.²¹⁰ The problem was that the hate speech articles act was applied in an arbitrary way mostly against Indigenous journalists and seldom against European ones.²¹¹ When *Rubber* of M. Szekely Lulofs and *Van oerwoud tot plantage (Tropic Fever)* of L. Szekely appeared, portraying colonial society in Deli in a critical way, they were attacked by right wing journalists like H.C. Zentgraaff in *De Javabode*. The right-wing press also wrote about the need of censorship of the nationalist Indigenous newspapers, because of the imminent danger of the Indonesian movement. Ethical Governors Generals like Van Limburg Stirum and De Graeff were blamed for their ‘weak stupid ethical’ attitude with regard to the Indonesian movement. In 1919 Zentgraaff had even written an open letter to Queen Wilhelmina urging her to fire van Limburg Stirum as never before had such a deterioration occurred as under this Governor General.²¹² When B.C. De Jonge came into office in 1931 as Governor General, he suppressed most nationalist activities. This repression became even stronger after the mutiny on ‘De Zeven Provinciën’ in 1933. The European press wrote enthusiastically about De Jonge.²¹³

As said the press censorship was applied with double standards; press violations were handled by the court of justice based on the criminal code of 1914; European papers were seldom prosecuted.²¹⁴ After 1931 many a Malay Chinese paper was prosecuted for press violations as they wrote fiercely anti-Japanese articles after the Japanese invasion in China. The government of the Netherlands Indies, however, did not want to provoke Japan. Chief editor Kwee Kek Beng of *Sin Po*, who wrote fiercely against the Japanese aggression in China was several times sentenced for press violation because of his anti-Japanese articles.²¹⁵

Articles against the colonial government

In the Netherlands Indies the government was often criticized in a manner deemed unwelcome to the authorities. The most famous case was the 1913 ironic pamphlet *Als ik een Nederlander was* (If I were a Dutchman) by Soewardi Soerjaningrat, published

210 Termorshuizen 2011: 156.

211 *De Locomotief* 25-3-1915; Termorshuizen 2011: 159.

212 Termorshuizen 2011: 169.

213 Termorshuizen 2011: 241.

214 Termorshuizen 2011: 156, 158.

215 Termorshuizen 2011: 86.

on the occasion of the one hundred years commemoration of the regained Netherlands' Independence from Napoleonic France.²¹⁶

Soerjaningrat wrote:

*“If I were a Dutchman, I would never celebrate a jubilee in a by us suppressed country. First give this suppressed people its freedom, then commemorate our own freedom.”*²¹⁷

Initially Soerjaningrat was sentenced to exile in the Banda islands, but as an alternative was given the option to go the Netherlands instead, where he lived between 1913 and 1918. It was clearly no severe punishment.

Focussing on Medan, in 1915 there was the case of Tjie Eng Koan (chief editor of *Andalas*), who was found guilty by the court of justice of defamation by means of printed material against a civil servant, (name unpublished), with a penalty of fl.50 and process costs.²¹⁸ In 1926 Eng Thiam Tjia, chief editor of the paper *Tjin Po*, was convicted for an article showing feelings of hatred and contempt against the government of the Netherlands Indies. The verdict was a penalty of fl.50 plus costs of process.²¹⁹ One month later a protest meeting was held in the building of the *Taman Persehabatan* (Friendship Organisation) of the Indigenous and Chinese journalists, because of censorship measures taken by the police in connection with voiced criticism towards government policy.²²⁰

In 1941 Jahja Jacobeb was accused because of an article in the *Sinar Deli* in which he protested against the colonial administration in the Netherlands Indies. Jacobeb wrote that a suppressed country, regardless whether it is weak or strong, sooner or later, via violence or via passive resistance, will stand up against foreign domination. This article was written on the occasion of riots in Amsterdam against the German occupation of the Netherlands, more in particular against the prosecution of Jews by the German occupier.²²¹ In the same year the Indigenous teacher Soewarsih Djojopoespito wrote in *Kritiek en Opbouw* (Criticism and Construction) about the Japanese threat. In her article she called upon the government to set the banned nationalist leaders free in order to fight the Japanese fascist power for the sake of democracy. This article was met by the censorship ordinance because of tendentious

²¹⁶ In 1813 the Netherlands had become a kingdom again, after French annexation. Before the French intervention starting in 1795, the Netherlands was a republic.

²¹⁷ SP 2-8-1913)

²¹⁸ SP 11-2-1915, 22-2-1915, 20-7-1915.

²¹⁹ SP 29-4-1926, 4-5-1926, 6-5-1926.

²²⁰ SP 14-2-1933.

²²¹ SP 3-5-1941.

writing against the Indies' government. The Ethical journalist B. Sluimers reacted to this by writing that

“freedom and democracy are empty phrases if we do not act accordingly”,²²²

hereby criticizing the colonial government for hypocrisy.

Moesa against the Chinese Officers

In East Java the *peranakan* officers were seen by the *totok* Chinese as opponents as they did not speak Mandarin and tended to become westernized, alienating themselves from the *totok* community. This was less the case in Batavia where the *totok* Chinese were represented in the Chinese council. In East Java the officers were not financially independent and many became bankrupt after the abolition of the monopoly system, this contrary to the officers in Batavia where the Chinese officers were usually wealthy landowners.²²³ In Medan the case was different again as there were practically no *peranakan*, but only *totok* Chinese officers.

Directly related to the Chinese revolution and new Chinese republic of 1912 was the case of Moesa, in which Young Chinese protested against the Chinese officers whom they suspected of being anti-republican. There was also a tendency to be against the institution of the Chinese officers as such, as it was seen as a conservative pro-colonial, old fashioned institution not in line with modern times and Chinese nationalism.²²⁴ On Java there was much criticism against the Chinese officers on the basis of accusations of corruption and nepotism, them being portrayed as puppets of the colonial administration, not knowing Chinese culture and traditions. Discussions to abolish the institution of the Chinese officers on Java had already going on for years.²²⁵ On Java the institution was finally abolished after the first World War, in East Sumatra this did not happen before the Japanese invasion. In the mean-time the Chinese officers on the one hand had to obey the Dutch, while on the other hand they sympathized with the nationalist Chinese associations and were not eager to create enemies among the Chinese in their own city.²²⁶ There were some Chinese officers who reported the names of Sun Yat Sen supporters to the Dutch government, while others did not. Such officers, like Major Tjong A Fie, could walk the thin line between the Chinese republican nationalistic cause and loyalty to the Dutch colonial government. They tried to

222 Termorshuizen 2011: 297.

223 Erkelens 2013: 324, 325, 326.

224 Williams 1959: 135.

225 DC 29-6-1898.

226 G. Sumatra W. Cst. to G.G., 27-2-1909, 13-3-1909; Williams 1959: 136.

have the best of two worlds. How far they were willing to report to the Dutch government about *Soe Po Sia* and other Chinese nationalist organisations depended on themselves.²²⁷

The Moesa case was as follows: In January 1913 the Malay language paper *Pertja Timor* in Medan published two articles with the titles *Tidak patoet* (not just) and *Officier officier Tjina* (Chinese officers) by its chief editor, Moesa. The articles were seen as insulting for the Chinese Captain, formerly Lieutenant, Lioe En Kon and Lieutenant So Poe Tjan who were called *Luitenant oebi* (Lieutenant cassava) and *Luitenant Kajoe* (Lieutenant timber). Lioe En Kon was blamed because he, in his role of assistant to the public prosecutor, had not properly investigated the case of three accused Chinese, upon which the three were convicted to twenty days in prison.²²⁸ The three had hit a Malay horse carriage driver. Lieutenant Chinese Lioe En Kon had advised the District officer H.W. Du Cloux to sentence the three Chinese to twenty days prison. According to Du Cloux, Lioe En Kon acted correctly and was always full of concern for his countrymen. Du Cloux said that these articles had been written because young revolutionary Chinese wanted to replace the conservative Chinese headmen, who were not in favor of the Chinese revolutionary cause. Lioe En Kon stated that he had spoken to the three Chinese accused before he had advised imprisonment. It turned out that the article was not written by Moesa, the editor of *Pertja Timor*, but by Lim Bian Tek, former clerk of the firm Zeitlin en Goldenberg.²²⁹ Consequently, Moesa was acquitted by the court of justice for a press violation as he was not the author of the article.²³⁰ Moesa stated that Lim Bian Tek was the author although his own name was put under the article. He had promised to keep Lim Bian Tek's name secret on the condition that he was paid for the court costs he expected beforehand. Lim Bian Tek had paid him the money directly. However now Moesa mentioned Lim Bian Tek's name as he was afraid the money was not sufficient to cover the costs. The judge ordered Moesa to return the fl. 150 to Lim Bian Tek.

In the article it was also claimed that in the whole Netherlands Indies the Chinese officers had no more brains than a *karbouw* (water buffalo). The public prosecutor demanded fourteen days forced labour plus fl.50 fine plus court costs against Lim Bian Tek for slander.²³¹ Half a year before on February 5, 1912 Tjong A Fie had been appointed as Major of the Chinese, Lioe En Kon, a Young Chinese, as Captain and Liong Soei Tin as Lieutenant.²³² It is remarkable that Lioe En Kon, known as a Young Chinese, had these troubles. As a result of the case colleague Lieutenant So Poe Tjan was replaced by the Young Chinese Liong Soei Tin. We see that Tjong A Fie's name was not mentioned at all in the case. Maybe

227 G. Sumatra W. Cst. to G.G., 27-2-1909; Off. Chin. Aff. Batavia to Dir. Jus., 16-12-1910; Williams 1959: 135.

228 SP 5-3-1912.

229 Khoo Salma Nasution, 2006: 121; Schadee 1918: II, 244.

230 SP 5-11-1912, 6-11-1912, 8-11-1912, 15-11-1912, 6-1-1913.

231 SP 10-1-1913, 6-6-1913.

232 SP 5-2-1912.

Tjong A Fie was above criticism or the Chinese were afraid to criticize him. J. Hallermann, publisher of *De Sumatra Post*, also was publisher of *Pertja Timor*, but after the Moesa case Hallermann stopped publishing the latter.²³³

Sumatra News, against Japan.

In June 1915 Siau Lai Tjioe, administrator of *the Sumatra News* appeared before the court of justice, accused of spreading brochures arousing feeling of hate and enmity between Chinese and Japanese citizens. A Japanese named Makita, had brought the brochures to District officer V. Obdeyn and filed a complaint. In Medan and Tebing Tinggi Japanese shops were boycotted by the Chinese.²³⁴ These anti-Japanese sentiments were caused by Japan's aggressive policy towards China.²³⁵ The defendant seemed to be an elderly person, but possessing the appearance of a young Chinese. The public tribune was entirely occupied by friends and acquaintances of the defendant. *De Sumatra Post* described them as young Chinese, in modern western clothing:

*“young men with neat European suits, turned legs, pointed collars, colored socks, fancy ties and well groomed hairstyles”.*²³⁶

The defendant admitted spreading the brochures, but denied he had the intention to arouse hate and enmity. The interrogation revealed that the brochures came from Amoy (Xiamen) in China and that the defendant only had read them superficially. The brochures were written in the Hokkian dialect. The defendant thought there was nothing in the brochures which could upset the Japanese, even if it was written that they were an *arglistig slavenvolk* (crafty slave people). One of the previous years, two editors of the *Sumatra News*, Hong Lang Kong and Li Fai Song, had been deported after they had written inflammatory articles; the defendant was present when they were deported. Expert witness A.G. de Bruin, advisor for Chinese Affairs at the Deli Company, translated the brochure. The text was as follows:

“The crafty Japanese slave people have violated the neutrality of China and molested Chinese women. They want to make China like a second Korea. Let our fathers and mothers stop believing in our government. If we citizens don't join hands, the government will agree with the Japanese demands. Let us attack Japan with sticks

233 SP 2-1-1913.

234 SP 15-6-1915.

235 As mentioned above Japan threatened in April 1915 with war about the so-called 'Twenty-one demands'. (MacNair, *Modern Chinese History: Selected Readings*, Vol. 2, p. 772,787,788)

236 SP 10-6-1915.

and batons till the fields are covered with their corpses and flooded with blood. Let us fight till the end. Let everybody be determined. Let us also refuse Japanese bank paper.”

According to De Bruin the article was written in normal Chinese characters. The statement of the defendant that the piece was written in Hokkian made no difference even if the dialect group pronounced the characters differently than the other.²³⁷ De Bruin was of the opinion that the Chinese could understand that the pamphlet was directed against Japan. He had seen the brochure on some lantern poles. The president of the court asked:

“do you think the text is inflammatory?”

De Bruin replied:

*“What do you call inflammatory? It is a real Chinese text. If a Chinese is unsatisfied he writes it down on paper. The Chinese are like that.”*²³⁸

According to de Bruin this pamphlet was rather inoffensive. In China it would cause uprisings, but not here. De Bruin declared that, according to the newspaper reports, Chinese women were molested during the siege of Kiautsjau. In China the defendant would surely have been punished, but De Bruin was of the opinion that the defendant did not know that the pamphlets could cause trouble for the Netherlands. He had the impression it had just been a spontaneous action. De Bruin also explained his views in Chinese to the great astonishment of the Chinese people in the public tribune who started mumbling to each other.²³⁹

District officer V. Obdeyn was also heard as a witness. He had met Sau Lai Tjioe when Hong Lang Kong and Li Fai Song of *The Sumatra News* were deported after they had protested against the Chinese president Yuan Shi Kai. Obdeyn said that as the Netherlands was on friendly terms with China it was therefore impossible to tolerate articles in which president Yuan Shi Kai was called a thief and a robber. After the deportation of the two journalists, Sau Lai Tjioe, editor of *The Sumatra News*, had praised the journalists. Obdeyn then requested that the defendant moderate his attitude. The defendant testified that at all Chinese schools in Medan children were trained in handling guns, although not real guns but fake ones. There was some truth in this, in the sense that such training was given to

237 Furthermore, De Bruin said: ‘The average shopkeeper can read Chinese in that he can pick something from every sentence. A Chinese can only read characters he knows and in every sentence will appear some characters he can understand.’ (SP 10-6-1915)

238 SP 10-6-1915.

239 SP 10-6-1915.

Chinese pupils, probably under influence of the new Chinese republic. Proof of this is that in June 1912 an article appeared in *De Sumatra Post* describing how Chinese pupils of the Hwa Shang Hio Thang school under supervision of a teacher got military training with small model Flobert guns.²⁴⁰ All this ‘circumstantial evidence’ led to a verdict by the court in which Siau Lai Tjioe was found guilty of the crime of encouraging feelings of hatred between different groups of subjects in the Netherlands Indies. He was sentenced to two months imprisonment.²⁴¹

Press violations in the 1930s

By 1930 there was criticism in Medan of the Kuo Min Tang government in China. In 1930 the Chinese daily *New China* was investigated in connection to an article about the lack of freedom of the press in China.²⁴² At the same time Chinese books were confiscated. Several Chinese booksellers had to appear for the Landraad as they sold or lent out forbidden books from China.²⁴³ What exactly the content of the books was is not mentioned in the paper. In 1937 many left-wing intellectuals fled from Shanghai via Hong Kong to Singapore and from there to Medan where they seemed to go into hiding.²⁴⁴ Much fiercer than the anti-Kuo Min Tang writings were the anti-Japan articles, especially after Japan had invaded Manchuria in 1931. In Medan two *kelontong* Chinese were arrested for selling fans upon which anti-Japanese propaganda was written.²⁴⁵ The Netherlands Indies was afraid of provoking Japan and its aggression at the end of the 1930s and did not allow Chinese Malay papers to describe Japan as a cruel aggressor. The European papers in general abstained from anti-Japanese tendencies and tried to remain neutral, thus practicing ‘self-censorship’.

From 1930 onwards, Chinese schools were inspected for forbidden Chinese nationalism and anti-Japanese propaganda. Some Chinese teachers, whose names were hitherto unknown, were even deported from East Sumatra. In August 1930 there was an inspection of Chinese schools which showed that political ideas aimed against the Japanese and the Europeans were being promoted. Schoolbooks with these ideas were found in Pangkalan Brandan and Pangkalan Soesoe and other places. The Chinese teachers were seriously warned against

240 (SP 15-6-1915; 17-6-1915; SP 26-6-1912). Flobert was a French gun maker who designed a small rifle in 1845.

241 SP 24-6-1915, 20-10-1915.

242 SP 7-4-1930, 8-4-1930.

243 *Boekoe – boekoe jang terlarang. Beberapa orang boekhandelaar bangsa Tionghoa, kemarin dihadapkan kemoeka Landraad Medan, karena ditoedoeh mendjoeal beberapa boekoe bahasa tionghoa jang terlarang didjoeal, dibatja dan dipindjamkan. Boekoe ini memakai kalimat: Yi Pan, Pak Pak Soe Sien, dan Man Kwan Tjoe Ngi, jang didatangkan dari Tiongkok.* (Pewarta Deli, Selasa 5-2-1929)

244 Interview Hiu Kian Jin 4-11-1996.

245 SP 13-8-1930.

revolutionary propaganda and one unknown teacher was deported from East Sumatra.²⁴⁶ In five schools of the National Chinese overseas education committee in Medan a portrait of Soen Yat Sen hung in a prominent place. In February 1930 government officials found forbidden propaganda material in these schools after which the schools got a warning.²⁴⁷

In Medan the Chinese Su Tung school was suspected of teaching nationalist Chinese doctrine. Schoolbooks were also seized and two teachers were arrested. Hereafter a big demonstration of students and teachers was held in front of the main police office after which more people were arrested. Hereafter the resident decided to close the school starting 1st March 1938 for some time for this reason.²⁴⁸

Criticism of Hitler was not allowed either in the Netherlands Indies. Belonje, former editor of *De Sumatra Post* in the 1910s, appeared before the police court in Batavia in 1939. He was sentenced to a fine of fl.100 but later discharged from prosecution. Belonje had written some openly fierce anti-fascist articles in *Het Nieuws van den Dag*.²⁴⁹ In Medan anti-fascist articles appeared in *De Sumatra Post* which reported on the mass executions of the political enemies of Hitler.²⁵⁰

6.5. Europeans and Chinese in the press: Mutual Perceptions

6.5.1. Western perceptions about the Chinese

As pointed out in Chapter 1, the Plantation Belt of East Sumatra was a relatively new society. Capital, planters and workers were all imported, and in the beginning of the twentieth century the area still had a strong pioneering character. Relations between the higher and middle levels of of the plantation staff with the lower level of workers, the coolies, were difficult. The stern nature of the labour relations was strengthened by the penal code. Nevertheless, in the *festschrift* of the Senembah company was written:

*“When in the relationship between the European and the coolie, in the inner attitude he considers him as human being and adapts his orders at the knowledge of what a man can achieve and he shows justice, he can be assured that the coolie will oblige and will offer him his appreciation.”*²⁵¹

²⁴⁶ MvO gouverneur L.H.M. van Sandick, 1930.

²⁴⁷ SP 14-2-1930.

²⁴⁸ SP 16-3-1933, 26-2-1938.

²⁴⁹ Termorshuizen 2011: 285, 286, 287,288.

²⁵⁰ SP 15-1-1938.

²⁵¹ Wanneer in de verhouding tussen de Europeaan en de koelie, in de innerlijke houding die hij tegenover de koelie hij hem als mensch beschouwt en zijn bevelen aanpast aan de kennis van wat een mensch kan presteeren, [...] en blijkt geeft van rechtvaardigheid [...] kan hij ervan verzekerd zijn dat hij de koelie aan

The Senembah Company distinguished itself by a more than usual social policy towards its workers. Coolie attacks on European assistants happened seldom at plantations of the Senembah.²⁵² The quotation above shows the racial atmosphere of the time. Almost ten years earlier, in 1905, *De Sumatra Post* put this racism in another context by commenting on the barbarian treatment the new arrivals from China were used to in their homeland. That year a memorandum was submitted by the Mandarin Woe-Ting-Pan, in order to change an edict of the Emperor concerning criminal legal treatment. First, the torture of suspects and witnesses was prohibited. Second, only a convicted criminal would be punished, and not his entire family (previously a whole family was penalized for the crimes of one member). The paper concluded that if western principles of legal treatment also were applied in China, this would have positive effects on the mentality of the workers from China.²⁵³ What *De Sumatra Post* intended to say was that in fact the Chinese on Sumatra were far better off than in their home country China. The Chinese were seen as real survivors. *De Sumatra Post* wrote:

*“If we consider the miserable way he feeds himself and the all health rules ridiculing holes, in which he for countless generations has dwelled, this is possible the secret, that this, in deep misery living mass of people not yet disappeared as a people, because of lack of any sanitary precaution the weak elements already died during their childhood.”*²⁵⁴

The paper continued to praise the Chinese diligence and perseverance, dexterity, dedication to quality, thrift and soberness. *De Sumatra Post* wrote that Caucasians, with their greater material needs, cannot compete with the Chinese. A lifestyle which for Caucasians would be unacceptable, would still seem comfortable for the Chinese. Although Chinese workers were seen as strong and capable, there was a risk in hiring them.²⁵⁵ The reason for this was that in case of mass migration of Chinese workers, they soon established a variety of small businesses which eventually became monopolies. This happened in all kind of professions from small traders to bankers. As happened at the Panama Canal, the Chinese soon managed to make the entire population, not only the Chinese community, dependent on their enterprises. Therefore, in the U.S.A. and Australia, the Chinese were not allowed to enter in large numbers.

zich verplicht en deze hem een goed hart zal toedragen. (*Gedenkboek Senembah Maatschappij 1889-1914*: 31)

252 *Gedenkboek Senembah Maatschappij 1889-1914*: p. 22,31; Poeze 2008: xv-xix.

253 SP 30-5-1905.

254 SP 2-6-1905.

255 SP 24-10-1900.

In addition, there was another factor, according to *De Sumatra Post*. When the Chinese acted *en masse*, they were a difficult community to handle because they had an enormous weapon, which they loved to use quickly: their kongsî, meaning their guilds. The guilds in China were centuries old and extremely well developed. The laborers of the same profession were united through ties which were both far-reaching and close. It was second nature for a Chinese worker to sacrifice himself for his community: a one-for-all, all-for one ethos. Therefore, servants of the same house or workers from the same plantation by nature joined against their employer. If one turned against him, all turned against him hereby often causing serious problems. Private letters from planters suggested that the sadness of their own existence was not primarily because of the uncomfortable climate or the lack of a civilized environment, but could be attributed to the enduring and sometimes dangerous, almost war-like conditions, in which they found themselves, pitted against the secretly organized Chinese laborers, according to *De Sumatra Post*.²⁵⁶

From Rags to Riches in Dutch prejudice

What was the image of the Chinese? How did they manage to make their fortune? In 1899 *De Sumatra Post* published a clear career path from the poor *Sinkeh* to the rich *Babah*. This story was set in Java but also was representative, to a large extent, of the rest of the Netherlands Indies. *De Sumatra Post*:

“The Sinkeh, often called Keh, is the Chinese newcomer, freshly arrived from the Heavenly Empire, generally without any luggage except the clothes he wears. The normal fashion of a Keh is the wide pink kabaja and same colour trousers, a few wooden shoes like slippers with thick felty soles and a grey kastoren hat. Instead of some travel- or pocket money he brought with him the parental admonition: make money my son, if possible in an honest way, but anyhow, make money! This fatherly admonition remains for the rest of his life his lesson for life, but too often without: if possible in an honest way, so that the main objective in life for the Keh is simple summarized: make money! To start with, he must stay somewhere. Without any other recommendation than the fact that he is Chinese, without problem he will find a place somewhere with a countryman who has already settled in the Netherlands Indies. Once he has a place to stay, he starts his campaign. He learns the language of the Indigenous community. Because he is in daily contact and conversation, in this he succeeds quickly. Then he meets the other Chinese traders; he studies the weaknesses of the Indigenous and the defects of the Westerners, to know at which points he should

²⁵⁶ SP 2-6-1905.

attack. In one word, in this preparation period he waits to see how the cat is going to jump, in which his natural talent for knowledge of men is very useful. Not only does he have good instincts about human nature; he also has a natural talent for finance. And he has a tough constitution which enables him to live only on rice and water if necessary, so that he does not burden his hosts. We see why the Chinese succeeds in the East, where the European fails."

This stereotype quotation describes the character of the Chinese newcomer, his fashion, clothes, and, very important, his parental admonition, 'make money my son!' Practically all the Chinese newcomers were dressed the same and lived a sober life. Sometimes they had only one meal a day, as Tan Boen Djin told about his father Tan Tang Ho, still they could survive due to their strong constitution, they learnt the language and found out what the business opportunities were.²⁵⁷ Furthermore, an essential part of this story is the dependence on mutual help and support of already settled fellow countrymen. *De Sumatra Post* continued:

"When our Keh has finished his preparatory studies with success, then he makes his score and becomes a kelontong Chinese, a job he is well suited to. From the second, third or fourth hand he buys his barang which he sells at a small profit, all the time keeping in mind his parental admonition: make money, my son, make money! For money to buy his first goods, he is, against considerable interest of course, helped by his countrymen, who know with whom they are dealing with and that in this way 'one hand washes the other, both become clean'. When this first start succeeds, then the Keh will become from a nomad a respected inhabitant. In time he will establish a shop, so he moves from the status of kelontong to that of toko holder. He now no longer carries his own goods, but uses an Indigenous coolie, paying a minimum wage for which he can so to speak have a coolie for every finger. When his business succeeds, then he slowly approaches the first hand, under warrant/guarantee of some of his countrymen, who are already settled, start to buy at the European trading houses and becomes a Chinese wholesaler; the Keh became Babah. When the Keh so after shorter or longer period becomes a settled man, then he no longer lives of water and rice but enjoys considerably of the pleasant things on earth, what we also directly can see; the skinny Keh we would no longer recognize in the fat Babah. He also does not sit during this flourishing period on his moneybox, but he brings the money among the people, the capitals, which a rich Chinese spends during national

257 Interview Tan Boen Djin 25-10-1993.

(Chinese) and colonial feasts, would be enough to maintain a few hundred Keh's during a period of one year."

This was the way that many Chinese started their business, from *kelontong* Chinese, selling a wide variety of goods and helped by their countrymen. His Chinese business networks expands as the Chinese preferred to deal with fellow Chinese. After some time, he starts dealing with European trading houses. Together with his economic success he himself also changes, from a poor *kelontong* he becomes a wealthy *toko* holder. The text continued:

"The rise of Keh to Babah goes very slowly and not always along the straight road; along all kind of winding paths in which an honest person can impossibly follow him, he reaches his goal. Than he starts with a credit of five months with prolongation of another few months, and as after a certain time he is no more paying his creditors, he declares himself bankrupt, proposes a deal and in the end makes profit from it. Then he starts at another place, where he is still unknown, repeats the same game. If that trick does not work anymore, then he liquidates his business in cottons and bric-a-brac and takes a few shares in a sugar factory, which he soon takes over as owner. Finally, he became a capitalist in the Chinese way, from capitalist to moneylender and from moneylender to usurer is for him only one step and in this function the Babah is definitely dangerous for his environment. Not only among the Indigenous, also among the Europeans chooses Babah his victims, and the white man who gets into his hands is cursed! As it is for the Chinese important to remain friends with the government, especially the civil servant with private financial problems, must be careful as the Babah is very good in human knowledge as he had studied the European society thoroughly during his preparatory years as Keh. With all his charms at a first acquaintance, this individual becomes a devil in human disguise as soon as he has a victim in his power and an executioner when he gets a European, the born revenge of the suppressed against the suppressor!"²⁵⁸

In this phase we see how his businesses expand, and this does not need to be regarded as correct in the western norms. This description was ubiquitous for the western view of the Chinese businesses. Never cheat your family, for strangers you do not need to be too honest.²⁵⁹ According to the author, there is the psychological factor, revenge against the European suppressor when the latter has financial problems. This of course depends on the

²⁵⁸ SP 13-7-1899.

²⁵⁹ Ups and Downs in de Indo-Chineesche Wereld. By Th. Brondgeest Sr. in *Indië*, April 1917–April 1918, p.168-171.

person in question. His economic success was a victory over the European powerholders. The article ends:

*“And when the ex-Keh at the occasion of some feast or another, thrones in his beautiful mansion as Babah and receives the praise of high ranking European authorities with their ladies, than he really feels the deep meaning of his fatherly admonition: make money, my son, make money!”*²⁶⁰

Finally, in old age he became highly respected as wealth and respect often come together. As the story is published under the pseudonym Pietro in July 1899, the month Karel Wybrands joined *De Sumatra Post*, he probably was the author of this text. The smooth way in which it was written also points to Wybrands, who was a literary talent with a sharp pen, conservative and racist in his writings.

This caricature about the Chinese character was widespread, the shrewd merciless profit seeker, often at the expense of others, only trusting their family members, and no others. Naturally it caused anti-Chinese sentiments, which might have caused later attacks on the Chinese. Remarkably this did not happen during the colonial times in Medan. One factor was that the colonial government was an authoritarian regime, upholding the colonial law and order, directly punishing those who broke the law. However, this did not apply in times of crisis. Serious anti-Chinese riots came up after independence, in 1945–1946 during the so-called ‘*Bersiap* period’, when there was a power vacuum or a ‘regime change’ after the Japanese capitulation, turning anti-Chinese sentiments into violence. The second wave of anti-Chinese violence occurred in the middle of 1960s, when anti-Chinese sentiments were linked to anti-communism. This was connected to the change from *Orde Lama* to *Orde Baru*. The last time was in 1998 during the final days of Suharto’s *Orde Baru*, also a period of the transition of power, this time into the direction of democracy. The basis for this anti-Chinese violence is the stereotype as described in the above story ‘From rags to riches.’ It was created by the West, but was also rampant in Indigenous society.

There were not only negative images, but also positive stories about the Chinese, like the perception of Sultan Abdoel Aziz Abdoeldjalil Rachmat Sjah of Langkat about Tjong A Fie. The Sultan praised the diligence and work ethic of the Chinese. The Sultan received a Star (decoration) from the Chinese Republic in 1922 when he donated money to help with relief after floods in China. Hereafter he was interviewed by the Malay language paper *Pewartu Deli*. In Langkat the Sultan saw the Chinese as good examples for other workers. He mentioned Tjong A Jong (Tjong Yong Hian) and Tjong A Fie who came to Deli as poor workers and died millionaires. The Sultan told that Tjong A Fie had been a *krani* in the

260 SP 13-7-1899.

office of an estate, but if a coolie happened to be sick Tjong A Fie stopped working at the office, sent the coolie to rest, while he himself took the *tjangkol* to continue the work of the coolie, in order to prevent delays. The Chinese made no problem at all, they only worked and worked, nothing else. The Sultan said that the Indigenous should take example from the Chinese who work all the time and save capital.²⁶¹

6.5.2. Chinese Perceptions of Europeans

What was the perception of the Chinese towards Europeans? In China itself the Europeans had a bad reputation because of the nineteenth century opium wars.²⁶² According to the Dutch sinologist H. Borel the Chinese were quite cutting about the Europeans. Borel wrote in 1900:

*“The barbarians are not the Chinese, but the Europeans who as robbers, only driven by profit and greed, and absolutely not because of philanthropy, settled themselves in China, armed with guns and cannons, and, even worse, poisoning a sober moderate people with opium, that they by force, imported there, no matter the resistance of the Chinese government. But the most evil is that religion is used as disguise for all these greedy purposes, and as foreposts and forerunners of a conquering army in China, and not, as elsewhere using discoverers or tradesmen, but missionaries. The capitalism, intruding and robbing where it has no rights, under the false pretense of religion and civilization, this is the history of many colonies, but especially of the colonization of China. And, although some missionaries might have been driven by noble vocation, and with fallacies whatever one tries to give reason to all this, that for a Chinese these four things always forever remain in relation to each other: a missionary, a box of opium, a bible and a European warship.”*²⁶³

The Malay-language Chinese paper *Andalas* criticized the Dutch government for its denial to Malays of the right to vote for the Town Council. This was true in 1917, but no longer in 1918. Still *Andalas* complained that matters concerning the Indigenous community did not get much attention from the Town Council. One example was the street lights in the Indigenous quarters. There were hardly any lamps, while in the European quarter everything was brightly lit.²⁶⁴ A Chinese author wrote positively about Singapore in contrast to the Netherlands Indies. In Singapore there was no difference between the European and Chinese quarters, whereas in the Netherlands Indies the Chinese housing areas were neglected,

²⁶¹ *Pewarta Deli* 25-2-1926.

²⁶² DC 17-6-1896.

²⁶³ DC 29-8-1900.

²⁶⁴ *Andalas*, 21-6-1917.

while the Chinese had to pay high taxes.²⁶⁵ The Malay-language paper *Warna Warta* from Semarang stated that although the Chinese had settled in the Netherlands Indies, they still remained subjects of a foreign country, only *Tiongkok* (China) could give them the necessary protection. The Chinese should not send their children to western schools but keep their own Chinese culture and language high.²⁶⁶

In 1933 the *China Weekly Review* wrote that the Chinese suffered discrimination in the Netherlands Indies. They paid the highest taxes, yet have no seat in the parliament; they were treated rudely, in fact egregiously, as if they were an inferior race. *De Sumatra Post* reacted that it was not true that the Chinese were taxed doubly for income tax (which would indicate corruption on the part of the Netherlands Indies civil servants). According to *De Sumatra Post* Chinese residents in the Dutch Indies, contrary to the situation in China, enjoyed security of life and property, peace, and good civil order based on Dutch laws.²⁶⁷ Finally we quote the well-known Singaporean businessman Tan Kah Kee, chairman of the ‘Nanyang’ ‘Chinese Benevolent Association for South East Asia’ who wrote in 1942:

*In the Dutch Indies the government had always adopted discriminatory rules and regulations against the Chinese.*²⁶⁸

Summary

The political constellation in Medan perfectly fitted the segregation in relative harmony, which was also rather visible in earlier chapters. Furnivall’s concept of the plural society, already mentioned in the introduction of this study, stating that each ethnic group tended to have an independent social and cultural life, administered by its own elite, was also applicable to Medan’s political life after 1900. In fact, the success of Dutch colonial rule was partly based on the implementation of exactly this ‘pluriformity’. This is confirmed by Willmott’s study on the Chinese of Semarang. At the turn of the century, the segregation between the different ethnic groups was rigid. This changed by about the First World War with the abolition of the quarter system and limited suffrage for all ethnic groups. From 1918 onwards, representatives of the Chinese and Indigenous could be democratically

265 SP 5-1-1918.

266 This text of *Warna Warta* was published in *De Sumatra Post*. (SP 31-1-1918) (De Preangerbode 11-8-1909; 15-6-1918)

267 SP 9-2-1933.

268 The authorities in the British colonial territories were comparatively relaxed in their control of education. And in the American possessions of the Philippines, the government attached importance to education and treated everyone equally. So the Americans had the best name concerning freedom of education according to Tan Kah Kee. (Ward 1994: 42,43)

elected, although this occurred via a census voting system. For the Chinese community this marked the start of a category of locally elected politicians next to the government nominated Chinese officers.

After the Dutch Queen Wilhelmina's speech in 1901, which inaugurated the so-called Ethical policy the political atmosphere in the Netherlands Indies changed. At the same time an Asian ethos of self-determination arose, which in the Chinese case was followed by the proclamation of the Chinese republic in 1911. Chinese nationalism became a strong binding factor in Eastern Sumatra. Everything happening in China, not only pertaining to family affairs and the economy, but now also politics, was considered of the utmost importance. Now many Chinese became aware of their being discriminated against in the Netherlands Indies as they had never enjoyed the same legal status as Europeans. Hence, the proclamation of the Republic greatly enhanced the awareness of Chineseness, all over the world including Medan. Due to Japan's aggression towards China in the 1910s and thereafter the Japanese invasion in Manchuria in 1931, anti-Japanese sentiments grew among the Nanyang Chinese leading to the increased influence of the Kwo Min Tang. However anti-Japanese propaganda was restricted by the Dutch colonial government who wanted to avoid any conflict with Japan.

Medan had already become the seat of the residency of East Sumatra in 1886. However, it was only in 1909 that it reached municipality status with its own Town Council. This was done in the framework of the Dutch colonial Ethical Policy, announced in 1901. Whereas in 1909 the members of the Town Council were still nominated by the government, in 1912, a part of them, namely the European members were elected. However, voting rights were still limited to well-to-do European males. In 1918 such limited voting rights were extended to well-to-do males among the Foreign Orientals and the Indigenous as well. The Netherlands Indies looked stable, but under the surface many political developments began to boil, sometimes leading into armed resistance, but more importantly to the advent of Indonesian nationalism. In the 1920s, as a consequence, Dutch colonial policy moved away from the Ethical Policy, becoming more conservative and repressive.

Although there was Dutch political dominance in the Medan Town Council, discussions in the council were open and fierce about unequal representation, about rickshaws or hongkongs and schools. The Indigenous and Chinese spoke in favor of their fellow countrymen as they were primarily concerned for the well-being of their own ethnic groups. The Chinese population group in the council was represented by Tjong A Fie and from 1918 onwards by Tan Boen An and Gan Hoat Soei, the most well-known Chinese council members. Although the decision-making process and initiatives were clearly Dutch dominated, the Indigenous and Chinese members always played their role, and served as commission members. Relationships between the Chinese and the Indigenous population in the Town Council were generally good. In cases such as the rickshaw question and the issue

of unequal representation, they drew a common line against the Europeans. On the verge of the Japanese invasion all differences were put aside and the Chinese and Indigenous were loyal to the colonial government in the face of the Japanese threat.

Looking at the development of the press in Medan the censorship became tighter in the 1920s and 1930s while up until then it had been less strict, relatively speaking. What was remarkable was the high level of journalism by a newspaper like *De Sumatra Post*. This paper gave the impression of being an independent medium. In the Malay and Chinese language papers, often owned by Chinese entrepreneurs, Chinese nationalism was an important issue. This was reflected in China-oriented articles and criticism of Japan and the colonial Netherlands Indies. Generally, the Malay-Chinese papers were anti-colonial and drew one line against the Netherlands Indies government. Even though the Chinese in general wanted to remain neutral as much as possible in the case of Indonesian nationalism, the Chinese papers had great sympathy for the cause of Indonesian nationalism. The fact that the Indonesian national anthem *Indonesia Raya* was published for the first time in the Chinese-Malay paper *Sin Po* reflects this sympathy.

The European papers wrote positively about the diligence of the Chinese, but also cuttingly about their tough and merciless mentality. The Chinese in their turn wrote about the authoritarian, and discriminative character of the Dutch powerholders. So, the European and Chinese perceptions of each other were not particularly positive. Nevertheless, cooperation and synergy often occurred between the Chinese and the Dutch. They needed each other in terms of economics and welfare. Furthermore, during the years of the Japanese threat, all population groups came together proclaiming that they would stand together against the Japanese aggressor. Evidently the common enemy united them. It could not prevent the fall of the Netherlands Indies in March 1942.

Conclusion

Conclusion

From the 13th to the 19th century Sumatra had contacts with various foreign powers including the colonial Dutch. The Dutch made treaties with the local rulers, mainly in the 19th century, which amongst others resulted in the large scale agro-industry on East Sumatra. It was Jacob Nienhuys who started with the first tobacco plantation in 1864. The fertile soil of the Deli sultanate was ideal for producing products like tobacco, rubber, tea and palm oil, causing a spectacular economic development giving rise to a vast plantation belt. The province Eastcoast of Sumatra, now mostly part of the present-day province of North Sumatra, was a frontier society in which the planters had almost absolute power, leading to violence against coolies as a structural characteristic, at least until the beginning of the twentieth century. The booming plantation business also caused the fast development of the city of Medan, the capital of Deli and hence, of East Sumatra. In the following century the plantation belt of East Sumatra remained one of the most productive agricultural areas of the world. To accomplish this, thousands of workers toiled on the plantations, initially under harsh circumstances and without the protection of the law. Although the Coolie Ordinance of 1880 theoretically offered the coolies security, in practice it weakened their position as they were not allowed to leave the plantation during the term of their contracts.

In the Introduction of this dissertation, in which Medan is set central, two major questions were put forward: 1) What was the role of the Chinese elite, the local towkays, in the multi-ethnic city of Medan between 1890 and 1942? In addition to this: 2) How were the tensions, inherent to colonial society, limited and brought under control in the town and which part was played in this by the Chinese elite?

Medan as a colonial town

The colonial town of Medan developed from a tiny kampong to the financial and economic center of East Sumatra. Contrary to the oppressive and apprehensive atmosphere on the plantations surrounding Medan, the atmosphere in the town itself was one of a fast developing, bustling, affluent city. By around 1920, Medan was a modern town, a pioneer settlement with a multi-ethnic population that had mainly originated elsewhere.

The four characteristics often used to define a colonial town, as mentioned by King, were all applicable to Medan. First, Medan was developed under the influence of a western colonial power; second, it was part of a larger centralized administrative system; third, it possessed substantial western elements; and fourth, it changed its character considerably over a short period of time. That there was an international atmosphere was shown by the people who lived in or visited Medan. Kwee Hui Kian's study on 18th century Java showed how the different Chinese, Indigenous and Dutch elites used to alternate between competing

and cooperating with each other for economic and political gains. This also happened in Medan. The Chinese businessmen depended on the Sultan and the colonial government for licenses but the competition for monopolies and tax farms was obviously a Chinese affair. The socio-economic relationships between the three key groups within Medan's colonial society: Indigenous Sultan and his Malay subjects; Dutch civil servants and businessmen; and Chinese businessmen, were generally in harmony. The Chinese Major Tjong A Fie was close to the Sultan of Deli as well as to government officials such as Michielsen and Van der Plas. Khoe Tjin Tek, Tan Boen An and other prominent Chinese were on very good terms with Indigenous leaders and also with the Dutch. At the wedding of Tan Tang Ho's son Tan Boen Djin (the younger brother of Tan Boen An), prominent people from all ethnic groups were among the invited guests.

If one compares Medan during late colonial times with the cities studied by Abeyasekere, Colombijn and Dick, namely Batavia, Padang and Surabaya, we see that in Medan the ethnic groups were also clearly stratified but at the same time lived apart together harmoniously. Political changes did occur in Medan, witness the fierce debates in the Medan Town Council. The cleavages and bridges mentioned by Colombijn for Padang can also be seen in Medan. Symbols of cleavage were for instance the town quarter system and the sporting clubs and festivities. As the proportion of the Chinese population in Medan was larger than in the other Indonesian cities, Chinese nationalism in Medan was extra visible.

In many ways the urban economy was based on the trade and supply of plantation products. Based on the economic boom after the first World War the towns of Batavia, Padang, Surabaya and Medan were transformed into modern sub-urban cities with a middle class sub-urban lifestyle. However, the world crisis of 1929 was felt all over the Netherlands Indies and many companies collapsed, with recovery only slowly occurring in the second half of the 1930s. Generally the international companies were in the hands of the Europeans, while the intermediate businesses were owned by the Chinese. However, all of them suffered from the world crisis.

Prominent Chinese in Medan 1890–1942

The centerpiece of this study is the reconstruction of the biographies of nine prominent Chinese, whose careers usually started in business but brought them to public positions in society, both politically and socially. Often this broadening of the societal significance went hand-in-hand with philanthropy. Chapter 4 is devoted to these biographies. These persons dominated the Chinese community in the late colonial period up until the Japanese occupation in 1942. In 1930 the city of Medan counted almost 75,000 inhabitants, of which approximately 30% were of Chinese origin. Consequently, the local Chinese community and its leadership was a factor of importance.

The nine Chinese individuals studied in this study are divided into two categories. Those who fulfilled official functions in the framework of the Netherlands Indies colonial apparatus, such as Chinese officers bearing ranks such as Majors, Captain or Lieutenant, and those who did not have such functions. In fact, four types of Chinese leadership could be discerned, namely administrative, political, commercial and organizational ones. These types often showed overlap as they were often fulfilled by the same persons. Virtually all the prominent Chinese in this sample, whether they were officers or persons without such a government nominated position, promoted educational projects, directly or indirectly. This was accomplished for instance by the membership of the board of the Su Tung School, the first secondary Chinese school in Medan, or by giving support to better education for the Chinese minority in Town Council discussions.

Chinese business in Medan

In the period under discussion Chinese business life in Medan was characterized by family structures, strong connections with China and the Straits Settlements, an emerging Chinese nationalism as well as the conservation of good connections with the Dutch colonial power holders. The Sultan of Deli also cooperated with Chinese businessmen, i.e. the Tjong brothers by offering them special privileges regarding land rights. As in eighteenth century Java's Northeast Coast, as described by Kwee, the collaboration between the Indigenous, European and Chinese elites was a matter of dividing roles in society at large. Outright competition for financial gains and privileges hardly occurred as each elite was supposed to play its predesigned role. For Chinese business it was important to have a stable, economically viable environment, which made it strive for optimal relations with both the Indigenous and European populations. The Chinese population of Medan was practically in complete control of the intermediate trade. They owed their economic success to their working ethics and the economic networks cooperating in a wide range of fields. The majority of the Chinese people in Medan, however, belonged to the lower income class. On average they paid less taxes than the Europeans, but still more than the Indigenous people. Consequently, one had poor Chinese as well as exceptionally rich ones. In 1920 Tjong A Fie alone earned an income which was almost equal to the next 65 top ranking income tax paying Chinese.

Until about the 1910s the Chinese elite profited greatly from revenue farming. Thereafter they appear to have remained economically visible in real estate, housing construction, retail trade, department stores, banking and other businesses. Initially, in the 19th century the Chinese entrepreneurship in Medan was heavily dependent on the tax monopolies. In fact, it was the first road to 'prominence'. The monopoly system or the leasing out of the revenue farms by the government was a highly important and profitable source of income for both the colonial government and the Chinese businessmen involved. The tax farms,

granted by public auctions, almost always fell to Chinese businessmen. Quite often the wealthy Chinese revenue farmers were the same as those belonging to the class of the Chinese officers, like the Tjong brothers.

The tax farms, however, became a contested institution in the Netherlands Indies after the introduction of the Ethical Policy in 1901. From then on criticism against the existing system became rampant, since it did not contribute to the prosperity of the Indigenous people, one of the stated purposes of the Ethical Policy. Until about 1900 the monopolies had been not that controversial. With the abolition of the opium farms in 1912, the liquor, gambling and salt farms in 1918 and, lastly, in 1925 the pawn-house farms, the need for these products and services did not disappear. Opium and liquor were still available, but now only by way of official government opium dens and sanctioned liquor stores. Gambling was still allowed in certain places through a licensing system. The monopoly-exploiting Chinese entrepreneurs had already established alternative businesses in order to make money.

From that time on many Chinese entrepreneurs were related, one way or another, with the new institution of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce or *Tiong Hoa Siang Hwee*. In Medan it was established in 1910. In the Netherlands Indies these chambers were, to a certain extent, from the beginning also political institutions, representing the China homeland. In the case of Medan the names of the usual better-known Medan Chinese entrepreneurs popped up, the first chairman of the Chamber being Major Tjong Yong Hian. Until 1912 the *Siang Hwee*'s also functioned as consulates.

Social life

In the 1920s a substantial number of the Chinese families in Medan were *totok*. There appeared to be not many inter-ethnic marriages. Chinese men, who could afford it, married Chinese women from their own cultural background. This was quite contrary to the situation in Java where many Chinese were *peranakan*, namely people of mixed Chinese-Indigenous descent. Most of the offspring of *totok* couples went to Chinese schools, some of these even offering a Chinese curriculum in combination with English and Dutch language education. The Medan Chinese generally preferred Chinese and English education rather than the Dutch education. It will be no surprise therefore, that almost every prominent Chinese of Medan was in one way or another involved in education projects, mostly in English or Chinese language schools. In 1926, only 200 on a total of 1,400 Chinese pupils in Medan went to Dutch language schools. English was considered to be more practical due to the many social and business connections with the English-speaking British Straits Settlements. The preference for English rather than Dutch was, to some extent at least, also visible in ecclesiastical matters. In Medan the Methodist church, using the English language, had a bigger congregation than the Catholic church using Dutch. But the Chinese joining the

Methodist church and attending English language schools, still continued to speak Hokkian at home. This is still evidently the case even in 2019. Practically all totok families continued speaking Chinese at home and kept their culture and traditions high. Hence, the relative lack of 'Peranakanisation' in Medan.

Another remarkable fact was that in the 1920s marriages and birth rates showed a sharp increase. The number of Chinese totok women coming to Medan increased. This process coincided with improvements in the position of such migrant women. Customs like foot-binding and the selling of girls gradually disappeared. But these girls still had a long way to go. In 1920, only 8% of the Chinese girls followed primary education, which was not much compared to the 25% of the boys attending school. The gap between the boys' and the girls' participation rates was one reason why all prominent Chinese were much involved in educational projects.

Until the beginning of the twentieth century the wealthy Chinese revenue farmers were often the same as those belonging to the class of the Chinese officers. The Tjong brothers were the ultimate example. In particular, the Tjong brothers, who had amassed quite a fortune, often showed themselves from quite a different angle. They used to give elaborate festivities and receptions, hereby showing not only the face of their economic success, but at the same time promoting an image of goodwill towards their fellow-citizens regardless of their walk of life. From their economically advanced position they financed all sorts of social projects under the motto: "earning from the people and giving back to the people". Through this approach many a humanitarian project was realized, not only for the Chinese, but also for the other population groups, for instance the Muslims through the financing of mosques, and in Medan at large by promoting public institutions. The last is evident when considering that the Tjong brothers built a hospital, a leper institution and houses for the poor, as well as other projects. An important matter for the public good was health care. In the 1880s the local government had requested the Tjong brothers to participate in a hospital, an asylum and an orphanage for poor Chinese. In the following years the Tjong brothers and many other prominent Chinese greatly contributed by way of associations or by influencing local politics on matters of health care.

Politics, press and perceptions

In 1886 Medan had already become the seat of the Residency of East Sumatra, but it was not until 1909 that it became a separate municipality of its own with a Town Council, the members of which, representing the Europeans, the Foreign Orientals and the Indigenous people, were nominated by the colonial government. In 1912 limited democracy came to Medan when European males, receiving a certain minimum income, were given the right to vote for the Council. This was in line with the voting practices in the Netherlands. In

1917, similar limited voting rights were given to the Foreign Oriental and the Indigenous male populations. Although there was a clear Dutch political dominance in the Medan Town Council, the Indigenous and Chinese members had enough room to speak up for their fellow countrymen. Each group was primarily concerned for the well-being of its own people. The Chinese population group, the most important section among the Foreign Orientals, was represented in the Town Council amongst others by Tjong A Fie, Tan Boen An and Gan Hoat Soei. As the Dutch held the majority of the seats until 1942, this period of limited democracy lasted until the collapse of colonial rule. At times the Indigenous and Chinese members had voiced their objections to the under-representation of their own ethnic groups. To some extent these objections coincided with the rise of Indonesian nationalism, even in Medan.

During the late colonial period politics in general and the under-representation of large segments of society when it came to decision-making were hotly debated in local councils and in the press. Opinions were outspoken and clear. In this process the Dutch, Chinese and Malay language newspapers were important opinion-makers, both in the Netherlands Indies in general, and also in Medan. Sometimes the press published articles that revealed how the various ethnic groups in Medan perceived each other. The European and Chinese perceptions of each other were not particularly positive, in fact they were quite cutting. The Chinese were described as hard working, clever, diligent, but also shrewd and merciless. Colorful descriptions appeared, about how the Chinese made their fortune, how they thought, what their relations to their family and others were, their survival skills and their ability to succeed where others failed. The Chinese in their turn saw Europeans as ruthless and hypocritical, as was shown in the strong linkage between missionaries, opium, bibles and European warships. The reputation of the Europeans did not become more positive either, when their racial discrimination and the authoritarian character of their rule were taken into account. On the other hand, criticism in the press towards the 'old' leadership among the Chinese, namely its officers, did not occur that much in Medan. Although there were articles in which Chinese officers were explicitly criticized, in general the officers were apparently still well-respected. This was different in Java. The obvious explanation must have been that the Tjong brothers and Khoe Tjin Tek had good reputations, not least because of their philanthropy.

The first steps to 'urban self-rule', of which the establishment of the municipality and the Town Council were clear examples, coincided with the beginning of the Dutch Ethical Policy, inaugurated in Queen Wilhelmina's throne speech of 1901. The political atmosphere was changing in this period. At the same time a general ethos of self-determination was in the making in Asia leading, amongst other things, to the proclamation of the Chinese Republic in 1911. During this process Chinese nationalism arose to become a strong binding factor, also among migrants outside the Chinese mainland. In 1912 the millennia-old Chinese empire fell to the new republic. Among the Medan Chinese there was widespread support to the new Republic of China, especially among the younger generation. When the interests

of the Republic clashed with those of Japan in the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s, the Chinese in the Netherlands Indies, including Medan, responded by boycotting Japanese products. As the Dutch colonial government did not want to alienate Japan, it did not allow the Chinese to practice anti-Japanese propaganda too openly. The Chinese, however, became more and more anti-Japan after the invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and the Nanking massacre of 1937. But Chinese 'nationalism' had also been witnessed on earlier occasions, for instance through investments in the motherland, during Manchu rule. One of the best examples was the railway in Southern China financed by the Tjong brothers together with their uncle Tio Tiauw Siat. Gradually, in the Malay and Chinese language papers nationalism became an ever more important item. This was reflected in pro-China articles and anti-Japanese as well as general anti-colonial discourse. The anti-colonial viewpoints of the Chinese Malay press were caused by the limited democracy allowed for in the Netherlands Indies. The Chinese had good reason to protest against the colonial regime as for most of the period they were treated as second-rank to the Europeans and, in the first decades of the twentieth century were still forced to live in special Chinese-designated areas as well as being under the jurisdiction of the police court.

The prominent Chinese in Medan compared to the Chinese in Singapore and in Java

In the story of the Medan Chinese we see some similarities with Singapore as portrayed in the studies of Godley and Yong. The prominent Medan Chinese were, just like the Chinese leaders in Singapore, real community leaders. Their role, influence and power went beyond their own ethnic group. Leadership was mostly based on wealth, but most of the leaders had experienced a humble start. They were industrious, intelligent and had a talent for business. Charity was stimulated by the fact that social institutions in the new migrant society were either not yet in place or well-developed. Hospitals and schools were not yet sufficiently provided for by the colonial government. In Singapore as well as in Medan successful self-made business men generously donated to charity. This in turn, of course, was also in their own interests, because peace and stability were essential for Chinese business. Comparing Medan with the Chinese communities on Java (as portrayed in the studies of Erkelens, Lohanda and Willmott), as already stressed, the main difference was that on Java the majority of the Chinese were peranakan, contrary to East Sumatra, where in this period the totok element simply had the upper hand. The peranakan Chinese on Java, however, became divided between one group looking for closer ties with the motherland, China, and another group which was prepared to accommodate itself to overseas realities. This latter group was either loyal to the colonial authorities or favoured alliances for the future, by siding with the emerging Indonesian nationalism. The totok group in Medan was

large enough to keep its own culture, spoke its own language and remained focused on its own Chinese cultural and political background. Proof of this was that the Partai Tiong Hoa Indonesia, which strived towards cooperation with Indonesian nationalist parties and had branches all over Java and also in Makassar on Sulawesi, was not able to establish a branch in Medan.

Conflict and harmony in Medan

Earlier on in this study it is argued that Medan, as a daughter of the plantation industry and a societal construct of the conflict model sort was, on the whole remarkably harmonious where it concerned inter-ethnic cooperation and interaction. To some extent, advocates of a present-day multi-ethnic society would appreciate it. Despite the structural cultural distinctions between the two groups, widespread inter-ethnic clashes between Indigenous and Chinese in Indonesia only appeared in 1945, 1965 and 1998. Clashes like these were absent in Medan during the whole period under study. Why was this so? One factor might be, that this was a period of colonial authoritarian rule. However, in theory also during non-democratic governance clashes could have occurred, but in Medan they did not. Medan was and remained a multi-ethnic harmonious place. Another reason for the absence of clashes might be that this town was built up from scratch as a multi-ethnic construct. A city that grew from only a few hundred inhabitants in 1870, to 13,000 in 1905 and around 100,000 in 1940. The awareness that all ethnicities, whether Chinese, Europeans, Indians or Malays, realized themselves that they needed each other, might have contributed to a general sense of harmony. With regard to the prominent Chinese, the elite so to speak, we were able to witness that all of them contributed to the development of Medan. All of them supported Chinese interests, via associations like the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, educational institutions, social organizations or the Town Council. Furthermore, we saw that all of them tried to cooperate with the other population groups in order to build up a modern city. Social institutions proved to be strong binding factors in town. Emotional and psychological matters played a role, whether expressed in religious, ethnic, regional, clan and/or professional solidarities. This was the glue that held the different classes of the Chinese together, creating an atmosphere of harmony, strong enough to keep the conflict model from the plantations outside of town.

However, we should not be blind as not everything was rosy. Overlooking the period 1890–1942 we also see discordant, less harmonious situations in Medan. Racial inequality was certainly one of them, as shown by the division into different quarters of residence for every ethnic group. In other cities in the Netherlands Indies, such as Batavia, Padang, Semarang, and Surabaya, different quarters for each ethnic group also existed. This contrasted, however, to the British Straits Settlements and Singapore where spatial

segregation according to ethnicity with a pass and quarter system was not obligatory. In Singapore there was also no difference before the law according to ethnicity. As shown in chapter 5, in 1913 the chairman of the Town Council assistant resident Van der Plas was quite critical about racial inequality for the entrance at a cinema. Although Van der Plas' remarks were clear, they were probably his own personal opinion as the official colonial policy of the Netherlands clearly differentiated along ethnic status lines. This was the formal basis for discrimination according to race. Consequently, ethnic inequality remained a continuous point of discussion in local politics. On the other hand, many did strive towards a harmonious society, for instance Town Council members, whether Indigenous, Chinese or Dutch, when trying to realize a more social policy, from the abolition of rickshaws or hongkongs, to social housing programs, sewerage, health and schooling. The sphere of discussion in Town Council could be open and fierce, but was mostly friendly and mutually respectful. Medan was a city of people building up a town. The Chinese entrepreneurs wanted economic stability for their business and projects, not conflict. Medan was the result of cooperation rather than confrontation.

Appendices

Appendices Chapter 1.

1.1 Population district East Coast of Sumatra in 1905 and 1913

Year	European	Indigenous	Chinese	Arab	Other foreign Orientals	Source
1905	2,667	450,941	99,236	89	15,484	
1913	3,980	634,511	119,088	221	15,306	<i>Mededeelingen Handels- vereniging Medan, 1914</i>

1.2 Population East Coast of Sumatra

Year	European			Foreign Oriental			Indigenous		
	Male	Fem	Total	Male	Fem	Total	Male	Fem	Total
1905	1,703	964	2,667	103,442	11,367	114,809	247,873	203,068	450,941
1915	3,436	1,691	5,127	128,213	16,571	144,784	359,295	320,996	680,291
1927	4,905	3,358	8,263	109,237	32,487	141,724	587,348	490,482	1,077,830
<i>Mededeelingen Handelsvereniging Medan, 1929</i>									

1.3 Percentage of the total import and export of Penang within the region including East Sumatra

Percentage of the total import and export of Penang within the region including East Sumatra				
Year	Import	Export	Total	Source
1890	33.4%	28.7%	100%	
1905	24%	13.8%	100%	
1920	25.1%	8.9%	100%	
				Virunha 2003: 4/25, 6/25,7/25.

Appendices chapter 2.

2.1. Population Medan

Year	European	Indigenous: Malay, Javanese, Batak, Minang	Chinese	Other foreign orientals, Arab, Indian	Total	Source
1905	954	2,191	6,397	3,708	13,250	
1912	1,408	13,257	10,997	1,318	26,980	
1930	4,292	40,096	27,180	3,408	74,976	
						<i>Verslag Handels- vereeniging Medan 1912: 9; Volkstelling 1930.</i>

2.2. Marriages and birth Chinese population in Medan 1919–1928

Year	Marriages Chinese	Birth Chinese	Source
1919	40	188	
1920	97	407	
1921	90	362	
1922	74	496	
1923	79	450	
1924	73	568	
1925	59	543	
1926	63	599	
1927	60	657	
1928	102	611	<i>Gemeentebld 1928</i>

Appendices Chapter 3.

3. 1. Professions in East Sumatra in 1905 (exclusive plantation workers)

In the table of 1905 below we see that in East Sumatra (so not only in Medan) most Chinese were active in commerce.

Professions in East Sumatra in 1905 (exclusive plantation workers)	European	Indigenous	Chinese	Source
Government officials	121		55	
Traders	95	5,761	5,990	
Large and small industrialists	228			
Small industrialists		1,951	3,000	
Coffee planters	45			
Tobacco planters	796			
Planters of caoutchouc, pepper, etc.	6			
Teachers, male and female	17			
Other professions	53			
Pensioned	58			
Carriage renters		2,699		
Boatmen/shippers on prows		886	795	
Carriage drivers			593	
Product buyers		2,707	980	
Domestic/house servants		2,207	2,076	
				Naudin 1909: 46.

3.2. Tax results in Medan

Financially the Chinese of Medan were economically less powerful compared to the Europeans as shown by the tax results. (In Dutch guilders (fl.))

Tax results in Medan					
Personal/Poll Tax for:	Number assessments		Amount		Source
	1912	1913	1912	1913	
European	2,099	2,315	fl.88,993.98	fl.98,856.46	
Chinese	2,931	2,074	fl.32,654.89	fl.34,905.18	
Other foreign orientals	177	212	fl. 2,161.15	fl. 2,468.89	
					<i>Verslag Handelsvereniging Medan, 1912, 1913.</i>

3.3. Income Taxes Medan 1919

Income Taxes Medan 1919			
Population group	Number	Taxed	Source
European	2,600		
Japanese	400		
Total	3,000	1,115	
Indigenous	22,000	190	
Foreign Orientals, Arabs, Klingalese, Bengalese	2,500	155	
Chinese	2,000	790	
			<i>Gemeentebld 10-2-1920.</i>

3.4. Income some Chinese citizens of Medan 1920

Income some Chinese citizens of Medan 1920		
Person	Income in Dutch guilders (fl.)	Source
Khoo Boo Tek	12,000	
Oei Tjip Seng	15,000	
Tjong Lie Liong (Tjong Kong Tat)	50,000	
Law Hong Kwong	10,000	
Law Seng Lim	10,000	
Oen Po Seng	12,000	
Yeow Seng Ho	10,000	
Jap Nai Hap company Heap Tek	7,500	
Tjoe Tjang Et company Hok Huat	10,000	
Ng A Wong	10,000	
Tio Kek Hoei	8,000	
Auw Tjoei Eng company Jong Seng Ho	9,000	
Tjan A On	10,000	
Khoe Tjoen Tjen	16,000	
Tjong Seng Liong	20,000	
Tjong Hau Leong (Chang Pu Ching)	60,000	
Tjong Fa Liong (son Tjong A Fie)	12,000	
Lim King Jin (son in law Tjong A Fie)	100,000	
Kho Chan Goan	10,000	
Tan Boen An	100,000	
Khoe Tjin Tek	52,000	
Tjong A Fie	750,000	
Sim Seng Foei company Tiong Hoa	6,000	
Lim Chong Chye	3,600	
Lim Tjoei Tian	3,600	
Lau Foh Fa	4,000	

Income some Chinese citizens of Medan 1920		
Person	Income in Dutch guilders (fl.)	Source
Tjen Tjoeng company Kong Fa Chong	5,000	
Yoeng Po Tjiap company Sin Sing	6,000	
Tan Sie Wan	4,500	
Liong Khoo Siong	5,000	
Tjin A Fong	4,000	
Lau a Kang company Lau Swee Nam	10,000	
Liong Yoe Siong	6,000	
Lioe Chan Hie	3,600	
Phan Tjo company Tjo Kie	8,000	
Wong Ngok	4,000	
Poeng Chen company Koen Yick	6,000	
Oei Pi An	4,000	
Tan Hoi Soei	4,000	
Tan Thiam Teng	5,000	
Lioe Tjoek Sam	12,000	
Tjong Koen Liong (son Tjong A Fie)	15,000	
Njauw Seng Tjoe	10,000	
Tjong Tet Tong	4,800	
Lim Ngo company Lam Bie Cheong	6,000	
Sim Sie Po company Nguan Hooh Chan	6,000	
Tjo Seng company Lam Seng	6,000	
Ng Yit Lon company Hock Tiong Bie	6,000	
Bon Njan Seng	4,000	
Tjoe Wan Siang company Gim Huat	4,000	
Tan Tek Lek company Jie Seng	4,000	
Loo Ee Tiong company Hok Tong Ho	6,000	
Ong Hok Peng company Ong Thay Seng	6,000	

Income some Chinese citizens of Medan 1920		
Person	Income in Dutch guilders (fl.)	Source
Liong A Seng company On Chiong	4200	
Oen Hoat Tjing company Sin Hok Huat	6,000	
Tjoe A Hok company Eng Lau	6,000	
Jang Soei company Kong Seng	6,000	
Tjong Ta Joeng company Hong Eng Djan	4,200	
Tjian Jiam Tjoan company Kiat Cheong Chan	4,000	
Ung Kie company Kong Ho Guan	4,000	
Jap Nai Soen company Hock Lam Leong	4,000	
Tan Soen Hoey	3,900	
Lie A Phoi	3,600	
Lam Phio company Hoek Eng Hin	3,600	
Tjoa A Kau	3,600	
Foe Soe Gie company Sin Yee Aek	4,000	
		<i>Gemeentebld II 1921: 563-566.</i>

3.5. Opium monopoly

Opium monopoly				
Person	District / Region	Year	Amount	Source
Tjong A Fie with guarantors Tjong A Liang and Tio Tiauw Siat	East Sumatra	1894	fl.110,000 per month	Levensbeschrijving Tjong A Fie; SP 19-9-1899; SP 19-1-1905; SP 24-2-1909.
Tjong A Fie	Riau	1899	Fl.85,000 per month. The first three years this farm caused him a loss of fl.200,000 but later it gave large profits.	Levensbeschrijving Tjong A Fie, archief Javasche Bank. In 2016, fl.85,000 in 1899 would be around € 1, 172, 837.05 http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/calculate2-nl.php
Tjong A Fie	East Sumatra including Bengkalis	1899	fl.140,300 per month	Levensbeschrijving Tjong A Fie; SP 19-9-1899; SP 19-1-1905; SP 24-2-1909.
Tjong A Fie with guarantors Khoe Tjauw Tiong and Tjong Jang (Yong) Hian	East Sumatra	1905	fl.161,500 per month.	Levensbeschrijving Tjong A Fie; SP 19-9-1899; SP 19-1-1905; SP 24-2-1909.
Tjong A Fie	Subdepartment Simeloengoen, Rokan and Kampar Kiri	1909	For 1 year fl.18,000 For 2 years fl.6,000	Levensbeschrijving Tjong A Fie; SP 19-9-1899; SP 19-1-1905; SP 24-2-1909.

3.6. Gambling monopoly

Gambling monopoly				
Person	Region	Year	Amount	Source
Tjong A Fie	East Coast of Sumatra.	1899–1900	fl.44,030 for 1 year and 3 months	SP 19-9-1899
Oei Soei Boe (Wee Swee Bee)	Simeloengoen and Karolanden (Karo highlands)	1909	fl.120 per year.	SP 24-2-1909
Khoe Tjian Tiong	Simeloengoen and Karolanden (Karo highlands)	1909–1911	For two years the monopoly was for a price of fl.720 yearly.	SP 24-2-1909
Khoe Tjian Tiong with gurantors Lioe En Kon and Tio Tiauw Siat.	East Coast of Sumatra	1-4-1915 till March 1916,	fl.47,100 per month or fl.565,200 for the entire period.	Extract uit het register der besluiten van den Gouverneur-Generaal van Nederlandsch Indie. ARA, Min. van Kol. 1900–1963, Mailrapport 415/17; SP 8-3-1915.
Khoo Siau Eew (Khoo Sean Kwe) from Penang. Tjong A Fie represented Khoo Sean Kwe in 1917 in this farm.	East Coast of Sumatra	1917 period 1 year	fl.60,600 per month or fl.727,200 per year which was fl.100,000 more than paid in 1916.	SP 15-2-1917
Khoe Tjin Tek	East Coast of Sumatra			Information Eddy Khoe 1991; Lettert Khoe Khoen Hoei 1992.

3.7. Liquor monopoly

Liquor monopoly				
Person	Region	Year	Amount	Source
Tjong Yong Hian	East Coast of Sumatra	1 April 1900 till late March 1901 and from 1 April 1900 till the end of March 1903.	Respectively fl.20,020 and fl.20,120 monthly. Compared to the year before when f 1.12,675 and fl.15,000 were paid, this was fl.5,000 more.	SP 21-2-1900; SP 24-3-1900.
Tan Tang Ho	East Coast of Sumatra	1897	Unknown	Wright 1909: 585.
Tjong Yong Hian	subdistrict Simeloengoen and Karolanden (Karo lands)	1909	For 1 year fl.360 and for two years fl.1,332	SP 24-2-1909.
Tjong A Fie	Medan municipality	1915	Unknown	SP 22-2-1915.

3.8. Pawnhouse monopoly

Pawnhouse monopoly				
Person	Region	Year	Amount	Source
Tjong A Fie		1916	Unknown	SP 13-1-1916.
Chang Pu Ching	East Coast of Sumatra with exception the departments Asahan and Bengkalis.	Period 1-4-1921 till 31-3-1924.	Unknown	SP 4-4-1921.

3.9. Salt monopoly

Salt monopoly				
Person	Region	Year	Amount	Source
Kongsies from Medan, Singapore and Penang	East Coast of Sumatra and Bengkalis total amount yielded	1870	fl.6,4 million	Diehl 1993: 230; Wahid 2013: 110.
Kongsies from Medan, Singapore and Penang	East Coast of Sumatra and Bengkalis total amount yielded.	1895	fl.8,6 million	Diehl 1993: 230; Wahid 2013: 110.
Tan Tang Ho	East Coast of Sumatra and Bengkalis	1900		Wright 1909: 585; <i>Andalas</i> 19-10-1918.
Tjong A Fie	District Laboean Batoe	1904	Offered fl.700 per month	Report by the Resident of Sumatra's Eastcoast, signed Schaap. Medan, 27-8-1904. Afschrift, no. 3739/3.- To the Director of Finance in Batavia. ARA 468, Verbalen, Ministerie van Koloniën)
Oei Koen Poey	District Bengkalis and Panei	1-4-1910 till 31-3-1913	fl.1,500 per month	Resident S.O.K. w.g. Ballot. (ARA, Min. v. Kol. 1900-1963, mailrapport 1390)
Khoe Tjin Tek Khoe Tjin Tek with guarantors Tan Tang Ho and Tjong A Fie	East Coast of Sumatra and Bengkalis	1917	fl.438,000 a year (from April 1917 up until April 1918) (or fl.36,500 per month).	Letter Khoe Khoen Hoei 1992; Mailrapport no. 413/1917/ Extract uit het register der besluiten van den Gouverneur-Generaal van Nederlandsch Indie, Tjipanas, 15 febr. 1917.

Appendices chapter 4.

Real estate Tjong A Fie, Plantation companies Tjong A Fie, Donations and social projects by Tjong A Fie and Tjong Yong Hian.

4.1. Real estate Tjong A Fie

Real Estate Tjong A Fie in Medan	
Land and houses	Source
Kampong Petissah	SP 24-7-1913; SP 20-10-1915; SP 3-1-1918; SP 26-2-1918; SP 27-2-1918; SP 6-6-1913; SP 23-5-1913; MvO burgemeester Mackay 1931: 77,80; Gemeenteblad 1920: nr. 235; Gemeenteblad 10-1-1920; Gemeenteblad Medan 3-6-1920, nr. 295; Gemeenteblad Medan 28-6-1920; Nr. 315; Gemeenteblad 29-6-1920, nr. 1411; Gemeenteblad 14-2-1922; Pelita Andalas 13-8-1927; Gemeenteblad 2 1931: Afl. 14 Nrs 132-135; Gemeenteblad 2 1931: Afl. 13 Nrs 125-131; SP 28-9-1935; Gemeenteblad 2 1930: Afl. 10 Nrs 118-136; SP 3-11-1930; SP 13-8-1930; SP 21-8-1930; SP 10-9-1918; SP 25-9-1918; Gemeenteblad 16-8-1920: 137.
Padang Boelanweg	
Hakkastraat	
Kesawan	
Smidstraat	
Sulthan Maämoen Alrasjidweg	
Valentijnstraat	
Bothstraat	
Van Goensstraat	
Paleisweg	
Mantrilaan	
Hongkong street	
Between Kerkstraat and Hong Kongstraat	
Pekingstraat	
Soekamulia	
Parkstraat	

4.2. Plantation companies Tjong A Fie

List of plantation companies of Tjong A Fie and after 1921 of his heirs. Plantations were all administrated by the Kamerlingh Onnes office. There were 5 master organisations: Siboeelan, Soekaradja, Algemeene Cultuur Maatschappij, Tjong A Fie Landen and China Kasih. These master organisations managed the plantations.

Siboeelan
Soekaradja
Algemeene Cultuur Maatschappij
Tjong A Fie Landen
China Kasih

4.3. Plantations resorting under rubber culture company Si Boelan in 1921

Rubber Culture Company Si Boelan 1921		Source
Si Boelan	Rubber	
Bandoe Teloe	Rubber	
Tandjong Poetri	Rubber	
Bengabing	Rubber	
Soekaradja,	Rubber	
Soekaradja Oeloe,	Rubber	
Soekaradja II	Rubber	
Perdaus	Rubber	
Ramboe Sialang A.	Rubber	
Soengei Radja	Rubber	
Soengei Boengoer	Rubber	
Oeloe Boeaja	Rubber	
		Minutes Javasche Bank 13-10-1921.

4.4. Plantation company Si Boelan in 1924

Plantations under the Rubber Company Si Boelan 1924						
Plantation	location	areal	product	output (1922)	administrator	contract term
Bandar Taloe	Boven Langkat	583.4 b.	rubber	148,443 kg. rubber	G. Giese	1906–1981
Si Boelan/Panglima Radja	Deli Serdang	± 2000 b.	rubber	154,670 kg. rubber	W.J.C. Eisses	End contract 1974 (end of contract)
Bengabing	Serdang	2.066 b.	rubber/cocos	106,073 kg. rubber, 1,153,172 cocos	J. Rahusen	End contract 1962
Tandjong Poetri	Boven Langkat	8.451 b.	rubber/cocos	274,695 kg. rubber	J. de Beer	End contract 1981
Rambong Si Alang	Deli Serdang	6.390 b.	coffee/cocos	1,472 picol coffee, 1,398,817 cocos	J.H. Smits	End contract 1985
Perdaus	Deli Serdang	596 hectare	rubber/cocos	1,290,402 cocos	A. West	End contract 1986
Soekaradja	Boven Langkat	4.071 b.	tea	230,215 in half kg.	Kleijn v. Willigen	End contract 1985
Soekaradja Oeloe	Boven Langkat	not mentioned	rubber/coffee	3,760 kg. rubber, 387 picol coffee	Kleijn v. Willigen	not mentioned
Soekaradja Hilir	Boven Langkat	not mentioned	rubber	146,217kg. rubber	O. Droste	not mentioned
		1 bouw (b.) is				
		0,7 hectare				

(Source: Handboek voor Cultuur - en Handels-ondernemingen in Nederlandsch Indië 1924) (Buiskool, D.A. *De reis van Harm Kamerlingh Onnes*, Verloren, Hilversum, 1999: 272,273) In 1925 Si Boelan was under direction of the Straits und Sunda Syndikat. Si Boelan (Rubber Maatschappij). Directie: Straits und Sunda Syndikat's Administratiekantoor (Handboek 1925) From 1-1-1926 the company Harrisons & Crosfield managed the administration

of the Rubber Mij. Si Boelan with estates: Si Boelan, Soekaradja (Langkat), Soekaradja Hilir, Soekaradja Oeloe, Bandar Taloe, Tandjoeng Poetri, Bengabing, Rambong Sialang en Perdaus. Further on Soekaradja Cultuur Mij. with estates Soekaradja (Asahan) and Soengei Bengang. Harrisons & Crosfield, Ltd. Medan, 2-1-1926. (SP 2-1-1926) Siboluan under Harrisons & Crosfield. No insurance for the assistants. (SP 18-11-1926) Rubber Mij. Siboluan. New articles in Java Courant. Capital company fl.10 million. Partnership under 2 directors. (SP 22-12-1926)

4.5. Plantation company Soekaradja in 1921

Soekaradja Culture Company	
Soengei Laba I	Wood concession
Soengei Laba II	Wood concession
Soengei Laba III	Wood concession

(Source: Minutes Javasche Bank 13-10-1921)

4.6. Algemeene Cultuur Maatschappij in 1924

Plantation	location	areal	product	output (1922)	administrator	contract term
Gallia	Boven Serdang	1.396 bouw	rubber	194,111kg. rubber	J.D.D. v. Drumpt	end contract 1965
		1 bouw (b.) is				
		0,7 hectare				

(Source: Handboek 1924, 1925)

4.7. Plantations under the plantation company Tjong A Fie Landen in 1924

Plantations under the plantation company Tjong A Fie Landen 1924						
name plantation	location	areal	product	output (1922)	administrator	contract term
Bandar Baroe	Boven Deli	1015.62 b.	rubber/ tea/ coffee	rubber 11,279kg.	Lim Tjoe Lay	End contract 1984
				tea 273,810 in 1/2 kg.		
				coffee 420kg.		
Seroewai	Beneden Deli	1573 b.	cocos		Lim Koei Seng	
Paya Mabar	Deli Serdang	2.615.97 b.	rubber	72,677kg. rubber	Lim Koei Seng	End contract 1964
Pematang Djering	Asahan	1.344.30 b.	rubber/ cocos	566,817 pieces cocos	W.L. Kagei	1903-1978
Soengei Boeloe	Deli Serdang	2.964.50 b.	rubber, sugar		Lim Koei Seng	End contract 1964
Sialang Soesoe	Asahan					
Soengei Radja	Asahan	1346.55 b.				
Pematang Pandjang	Beneden Langkat	503.37 b.	rubber	Not yet in exploitation		End contract 1985
Soengei Twalang	Beneden Langkat	423 b.		Not yet in exploitation		
		1 bouw (b.) is				
		0,7 hectare				

(Source: Handboek 1924; Buiskool, 1999: 272,273)

4.8. Plantation Company China Kasih in 1925

Plantation Company China Kasih, located in Medan 1925						
Plantation	location	areal	product	output	administrator	contract term
China Kasih	Padang & Bedagai, district Deli Serdang	6500 bouw	rubber			

(Source: Handboek 1925: 105)

4.9. Donations and social projects by Tjong Yong Hian and Tjong A Fie

The donations before 1911 were from Tjong Yong Hian and Tjong A Fie together, after 1911 by Tjong A Fie alone. There were probably many more social projects, but these have not been recorded.

Year	Object	Place / country	Source
1884	Chinese temples in the Klingestraat (Jl. Irian Barat) Guandi-miao (Kwan Tee Bio) and in Poelau Brayan.	Medan	Feldwick 1917: 1195; Franke 1988: 82, 83.
1890	Chinese hospital Tjie On Jie Jan + asylum for old and handicapped Chinese with free food and lodging	Medan	Levensbeschrijving; Feldwick 1917: 1195; MvO Controleur M.J. Ruychaver, 1926. KIT 676; MvO mayor Mackay 1931:103; SP 14-2-1924; SP 15-1-1930.
1892	Chinese temple of the Five Brothers Go Ja Kong on the road to Binjai built by Tjong A Fie	Binjai, East Sumatra	Interview Mrs. Dusson, 16-2-1995; Jansen, <i>Andere helft</i> , 74.
1893	Donations after flooding	Kwantoeng province China	Kühr, 1921: 3-5; Interviews Mrs. Lemye at 13-3-1992; 12-6 and 13-6 1992.

Year	Object	Place / country	Source
1901	Hokkien Chinese temple, the Shou shan-gong in Laboehan Kota.	Laboehan, Eastcoast of Sumatra	Feldwick 1917: 1195; Franke 1988: 94; Letter Khoo Su Nin, Penang, 5-1-1995; Interview Mrs. Dussion, 16-2-1995.
1900	Hindu temple	Medan	Tjong Hung-nan and Tjong Jung-nan; MvO Mayor Mackay 1931: 79.
1901	Mosque behind the Kesawan in Jalan Mesjid	Medan	Kühr 1921: 3-5; Interview Mrs. Dussion, 16-2-1995.
1902	Nanxi Middle highschool built in Songkou, (Sungkow) (Swatow?) Tjong Yong Hian donated 80 thousand liang silver to a high school in Guangzhou.	Songkou, China	Khoe Tsjin 1994: 360.
Year un known	Donation money for construction of a mosque in Laboehan	Laboehan, East Sumatra	Kühr 1921: 3-5; Interview Mrs. Dussion, 16-2-1995.
Year un known	Donation of the ground for Catholic church	Medan	Interview Mrs. Lemye, 13-3-1992.
Before 1911	Middle school in their birthplace Mei Hsien (Moi Jen?) for the amount of 400 yuan	Mei Hsien, China	Interview Mrs. Lemye at 13-3-1992; Li Songyan 1984: 183-202; Tjong Hung-nan and Tjong Jung-nan.
Before 1911	School in Hainan	Hainan, China	Tjong Hung-nan and Tjong Jung-nan; Feldwick 1917: 1195.
Before 1911	A dam against flooding and a bridge in Songyuan, Fujian	Songyuan, Fujian, China	Khoe Tsjin 1994: 360.
Before 1911	To Lingnan University donations for the Yaoxuan building.	Lingnan, China	Khoe Tsjin 1994: 360.

Year	Object	Place / country	Source
Before 1911	Cultural literary productions. The Tjong brothers financed the compiling of a collection of poems of 13 volumes from the Song to Qing Dynasty.	China	Khoe Tsjin 1994: 360; Li Songyan 1984: 183-202.
Before and after 1911	Tjong brothers, and after 1911 continued by only Tjong A Fie, donated clothes plus five yuan to everybody of over sixty years in their home village Mei Hsien.	Mei Hsien, China	Li Songyan 1984: 183-202; Tjong Hung-nan and Tjong Jung-nan.
1905	Kek Lok Si or Ayer Hitam Temple, the largest temple in Penang was completed in 1905. The five main sponsors were Cheong Fatt Tze (Tio Tiauw Siat), Tjong Yong Hian, Tjong A Fie, Cheah Choon Seng (Captain of the Chinese in Aceh), Tye Kee Yoon and Chung Keng Kooi. (Mrs. Dusson also mentioned Oei Soei Boe (Wee Swee Bee).	Penang, Malaysia	Khoo Su Nin 1993: 37,38,105,106; Interview Mrs. Dusson, 16-2-1995.
1906	Mesjid Raya (the great mosque). This mosque was financed by four parties, the Sultan of Deli, Mahmud Alrasjid Perkasa Alamsjah, the Deli Company, the Deli Railroad Company and Tjong A Fie.	Medan	SP 25-8-1909; 3-9-1918; Interview Mrs. Dusson, 16-2-1995; <i>Pewarta Deli</i> , 27-7-1917; Feldwick 1917: 1195.
Before 1911	The Hong Kong University received 100,000 yuan from Chang Pi-shih, Tjong brothers and Loke Yew	Hongkong, China	Feldwick 1917: 1195; Tjong Hung-nan and Tjong Jung-nan; MvO Mayor Mackay, 1931:79; Godley 1981: 50; Li Songyan 1984: 183-202.

Year	Object	Place / country	Source
After 1911	Mosque at Petissah	Petissah in Medan	Feldwick 1917: 1195.
After 1911	Mosque at Sapirok.	Sapirok, Sumatra	Feldwick 1917: 1195.
After 1911	Land to the Arabs donated by Tjong A Fie land for a burial-ground and a house of worship to be built on it.	Medan	Feldwick 1917: 1195.
1911	Dam in Songyuan, Fujian.	China	Khoe Tsjin 1994: 360.
1911	Donation for floods in Chaozhou and the floods in Kwantoeng, Jiangxi, Zhejiang		Khoe Tsjin 1994: 360.
After 1911	Donation land for the first English Methodist school in Medan.	Medan	Chang 1981, 62; Ward 1915.
1911	Donation for Chinese revolution in 1911.		Li Songyan 1984: 183-202; Khoe Tsjin 1994: 360.
After 1911	Hospital in Hongkong.	Hongkong, China	Feldwick 1917: 1195.
After 1911	Three bridges in provinces Kian Foeng, Oe Sen, and Jat Kong respectively.	China	Feldwick 1917: 1195.
After 1911	Donation to hospital at Canton.	Canton, China	Feldwick 1917: 1195.
After 1911	Donation to the Red Cross Society of Soengkau.	Soengkau, China	Feldwick 1917: 1195.

Year	Object	Place / country	Source
1912	Establishment of leper colony at Poelo Sitjanang, an island four kilometers west of the road Laboehan Deli – Belawan at the mouth of the Langkat river.	Island Pulau Sitjanang	SP 11-10-1912; SP 6-6-1913; MvO resident W.J. Rahder, 1913; Feldwick 1917: 1195; SP 7-4-1921; MvO Ass. Res. W.F.P.L. Winckel 1925. KIT 675; De Bruin 1918: 50, 114; Kühr 1921: 3-5; Interviews Mrs. Lemye at 13-3-1992 and at 12-6-1992 and 13-6-1992.
1912	Clocktower for the Town hall of Medan.	Medan	SP 25-5-1912; SP 1-6-1912; MvO Mayor Mackay 1931: 33, 115; MvO ass. resident S. v/d Plas 1913; Feldwick 1917: 1195.
After 1911	Orphanage (Kindertehuis) of the Salvation Army.	Medan	Feldwick 1917:1195.
1915	Building donated for the girls' school of the Sarikat Goeroe XII. (Teacher organisation).	Medan	SP 25-11-1915; MvO Mayor Mackay 1931:145.
From probably 1916 on	Yearly donation of alms (<i>angpaw</i>) to the Chinese at Chinese New Year.	Medan	Kühr 1921: 3-5; Tjong Hungnan and Tjong Jung-nan.
From 1916 on	Alms at the end of month of fasting (Hari Raya) to the Muslim.	Medan	Kühr 1921: 3-5; Tjong Hungnan and Tjong Jung-nan; <i>Pewarta Deli</i> 27-7-1917; Mohammad Said, interview 19-11-1994; <i>Andalas</i> , 15-6-1920.
1917	Baboerabridge (Tjong Yong Hian bridge) in Medan donated by Tjong family to the city of Medan. Donation initiated by Tjong A Fie in 1913.	Medan	SP 8-5-1913; MvO Mayor Mackay 1931: 79; <i>Andalas</i> , 1-2-1917; SP 4-10-1918; Interview Mrs. Dusson – Tjong, Medan, 16-2-1995.

Year	Object	Place / country	Source
Year?	Donation to Hong Kong university.	Hong Kong, China	Feldwick 1917: 1195; Godley 1981: 50.
1917	School in Hainan.	Hainan, China	Feldwick 1917: 1195.
1917	Technical school open for all races. The lessons and maintenance free of charge.	Medan	<i>Pewarta Deli</i> 21-12-1917.
1917	Fröbel (Frebel) school (Kindergarten) in Medan.	Medan	Feldwick 1917: 1195; Interview Mrs. Lemye, 15-9-1994.
1918	f1.4,000 to the mosque in Sibolga.	Sibolga, Westcoast of Sumatra	SP 3-9-1918.
1918	Maintenance mosques in Soengei Rampah and Bedagai.	Soengai Rampah, East Sumatra	<i>Andalas</i> 5-10-1918.
1918	Foundation for old and poor Chinese for return to China donation for an amount of fl.10,000.	Medan	<i>Andalas</i> , 16-1-1918.
1918	Road improvement from Simpang Tiga to the river of Perbauangan.	Perbauangan, East Sumatra	<i>Andalas</i> 8-10-1918.
1920	Financing the building of a technical school.	Medan	<i>Gemeenteverslag</i> Medan, 15-8-1920 No. 1435.
1920	Sekolah Derma (school for midwives) at the Jalan Raja.	Medan	<i>Gemeenteblad</i> Medan, 22-4-1920; MvO Mayor Mackay 1931:145.
1916 -1918	Financing for several million guilders for planting of rice during the first world war when rice supply on Sumatra's Eastcoast was threatened.	East Sumatra	DC 4-2-1921.

Year	Object	Place / country	Source
1920	Financing rice import for East Sumatra during food shortage.	East Sumatra	<i>Gemeentebld Medan II</i> , notulen 8-1-1920; <i>Andalas</i> , 24-1-1920.
1920	Free rice distribution at the Bindjieweg, Emmastraat and Jalan Antara.	Medan	<i>Andalas</i> 19-2-1920.
1920	Free meals in Petissah, Emmastraat and Soengei Kerah	Medan	<i>Andalas</i> 20-4-1920.
1921	Financing of a museum for an amount of fl.7,000. Tjong A Fie paid the money in advance.	Medan	<i>Gedenkboek Deli Mij.</i> 1919-1929

Appendices chapter 5.

Institutions Social Life

Temples, associations, hospitals, schools and sports 1920–1942

5.1. Temples

Name	Explanation	Source
The Guandi-miao (Kwan Tee (Tie) Bio) in the Kwan Tee Bio street (Jl. Irian Barat)	Oldest temple in town founded in 1884 to promote the solidarity of the different ethnic groups of Guangdong (Canton). The statue of Kwan Tie (Guandi) is prominent in the temple. This Chinese god of war whose immense popularity with the common people rests on the belief that he can control evil spirits such that even actors in dramas share his power over demons. Kwan Tie is not only a favourite of soldiers but also of several trades and professions. Tjong Yong Hian led the initiative for building this temple.	Franke 1988: 82,83; Jansen, <i>Andere helft</i> 1941: 54.
The Tianhou-gong (Thien Hioe Kioeng) (Wihara Ariya Satyani) temple at Kapiteinsweg (Jalan Pandu Baru)	Dedicated to the Queen of Heaven, Ma Tjo Po (Mazu), protector of sailors and everybody who sailed the seas. As all the Medan Chinese had sailed the seas from China, or sailed back to China, they all worshipped this goddess and asked for protection against shipwreck or piracy. In the temple is a tablet with words of thanks expressed to the deity Tianhou for protecting the Chinese merchants on their overseas voyages which enabled them to develop Deli Medan, originally a remote place at Sumatra, into a commercial centre of Southeast Asia. Also, this temple was initiated by the Tjong brothers together with their uncle Tiauw Tio Siat and others.	Jansen, <i>Andere helft</i> 1941: 53,54; Franke 1988: 106, 110,111,112; MvO controleur J. Reuvers, 1929 KIT 679.

Name	Explanation	Source
Kwan Jin Temple. On the corner of the Oranje Nassaustraat (Jalan Thamrin) with the Louisestraat (Jalan Ghandi)	The most popular god for the Buddhist is Kwan Jin (Kwan Iem or Guanyin), the Buddhist goddess of mercy. The Kwan Jin temple in Medan was built in 1886. There is a bronze bell in the temple donated by Guanyin of Bayen and by Fang Donglai, dated 1904. Bayen probably referred to Bagan Si Api Api. Chinese businessmen, including the Tjong brothers, who had commercial interests in the fishing industry in Bagan Si Api Api had donated to this temple. Kwan Jin is believed to be especially capable of answering prayers of women and children and for family welfare.	Franke 1988: 89, 90, 91,93; Willmott 1960:206.
Go Ja Kong temple in memory of members of a secret society. On the Tio Tjoe cemetery on the road to Binjei.	In 1892 an assistant was murdered by a Chinese coolie. Five coolies were caught, only one of the five was the murderer, but none of the five admitted this as they had made a blood oath of faith. All five were hanged after which this temple was erected in their memory.	Jansen <i>Andere helft</i> 1941: 74, 64.
Shoushan-gong temple in Laboehan, oldest temple in East Sumatra.	Dedicated to Kwan Jin. Laboehan is located north of Medan at the mouth of the Deli river where the first Chinese settled from 1860 on.	Franke 1988: 94; Translation tablet in the temple by Claudine Salmon, November 2000.

5.2. Christian religion among Medan population

Religion	Population group	Mission	Source
Protestant	Batak from the Karo and Toba Highlands	Dutch and German Protestant	<i>Tabak en Deli</i> (anonymous) MvO. Article about Deli and Serdang. KIT 689; Schadee 1918 II: 188; Loderichs, Buiskool 1997:109; SP 25-10-1912; SP 26-1-1918.
Catholic	Dutch and Chinese	Dutch Capuchin	Sinar 1991: 76; Colombijn 1994: 107; DC 20-5-1896; SP 16-10-1899; SP 26-1-1918; SP 26-11-1934.
Methodist	Chinese	American Methodist	SP 6-8-1912, Ward 1915; SP 25-9-1915; Andalas, 22-1-1918; SP 29-1-1918.

5.3. Lineage or Clan associations 1920s–1930s.

Lineage or Clan associations	Explanation	Source
	Lineage or clan associations helped their countrymen exclusively, including coolies of the same clan.	Vleming 1926: 233; Interviews Hiu Kian Jin 9-1-1996, 3-2-1996.
Hokkian	The Hokkians had as an association the Hokkian Hwe Kwan Club. The Hokkian clubhouse (demolished around 2000) was opposite the Uniland building at the Kwanteebiostraat. (Jalan Irian Barat). In Medan most traders were Hokkian.	Vleming 1926: 233; Interviews Hiu Kian Jin 9-1-1996, 3-2-1996.
Cantonese	Second most numerous in Medan were the Cantonese. Many Cantonese were skilled professionals like goldsmiths, tailors, furniture makers. The Cantonese club was called the Kwantoeng club.	Cator 1936: 26,27; Jansen <i>Andere helft</i> 1941: 9; Interview Chang Tung Yin, 26-11-1992; Ong Eng Die 1943:33; Vleming 1926: 233.
Tio Tsjoe	Third most numerous were the Tio Tsjoe. Most Tio Tsjoe in East Sumatra came as plantation workers.	Jansen <i>Vreemde Oosterlingen</i> 1940: 11; Ong Eng Die 1943: 30,32; Interview Chang Tung Yin, 26-11-1992; Jansen <i>Andere helft</i> 1941: 9; Cator 1936: 26,27; Creutzberg, 1936: 33; Interviews Hiu Kian Jin 9-1-1996, 3-2-1996.
Hakka	Fourth in numbers in Medan were the Hakka, originating from Northern China. Many Hakka were like the Cantonese skilled labourers like shoemakers, rattanbinders and tinsmiths. The Hakka club was called Pat Soet Hwe Koan and their clubhouse was located besides the Hokkian club.	Jansen <i>Andere helft</i> 1941: 9; Jansen <i>Vreemde Oosterlingen</i> , 11; Cator 1936: 26,27; Vleming 1926: 233; Interviews Hiu Kian Jin 9-1-1996, 3-2-1996.

Lineage or Clan associations	Explanation	Source
Hainan	Fifth in number were the Hainan. Many Hainan were specialized in food, like <i>bami</i> sellers, and many of them worked as cooks and as servants in hotels.	Cator 1936: 26,27; De Bruin 1918: 36; Interview Chang Tung Yin 26-11-1992; Interviews Hiu Kian Jin 9-1-1996, 3-2-1996.
Hoklo	The Hoklos came, like the Hakkas, from northern China and settled in Fukien and Canton. Many Hoklos worked in agriculture, forestry, fishing and trade	Cator 1936: 26,27; De Bruin 1918: 37; Ong Eng Die 1943: 30, 32; Creutzberg 1936: 33; MvO controleur M.J. Ruychaver 1926; Reid 2005: 396.
Families like Tan, Oei, Han, Lim and others.	Lineage associations or clan funds were also established by various families intended to erect ancestral halls and tombs and sacrifices for the ancestors. Quite often these funds were also meant for educational purposes. These funds were considered by the Dutch government as legal persons, but were exempt from taxation.	Vleming 1926:233,186; Williams 1952:44.

5.4. Professional associations

Professional associations	Explanation	Source
	Chinese professional organizations in Medan resembled European guilds. In the 1920s Medan had sixteen trade associations.	
Goldsmiths Man Wah Hong		<i>Andalas</i> , 25-5-1918.
Shoemakers Kak Lie Thoen,		<i>Andalas</i> , 25-5-1918.
Tailors Foeng Jip Thoen		<i>Andalas</i> , 25-5-1918.
Ironworkers Thit Jip Thoen		<i>Andalas</i> , 25-5-1918.
Barbers Lie Fat Thoeng Jip		<i>Andalas</i> , 25-5-1918.
Song Ngiap Thon. Traders association		<i>Andalas</i> , 25-5-1918.
Theng Bie Khong Hoi Sugar and Rice traders' association		SP 27-7-1934

Professional associations	Explanation	Source
Association of Chinese <i>kelontong</i> sellers.	<i>Kelontong</i> articles were originally small light articles for domestic use like thread, needles, buttons, which could be carried on the back from door to door.	SP 27-7-1934
Association of owners of repair workshops for machines		Vleming 1925: 232; Ong Eng Die 1943: 224.
Traders in automobiles and bicycles.		Vleming 1925: 232; Ong Eng Die 1943: 224.
Haircutters		Vleming 1925: 232; Ong Eng Die 1943: 224.
Labourers (coolies on the estates)		Vleming 1925: 232; Ong Eng Die 1943: 224.
Furniture makers		Vleming 1925: 232; Ong Eng Die 1943: 224.
Rubber traders		Vleming 1925: 232; Ong Eng Die 1943: 224.
Contractors		Vleming 1925: 232; Ong Eng Die 1943: 224.
Painters		Vleming 1925: 232; Ong Eng Die 1943: 224.
Butchers		Vleming 1925: 232; Ong Eng Die 1943: 224.
Hongkong-pullers		Vleming 1925: 232; Ong Eng Die 1943: 224.
Traders without fixed domiciles such as vegetable sellers and wood traders		Vleming 1925: 232; Ong Eng Die 1943: 224.
Overseas Chinese Workers Union.	In May 1941 a fundraising meeting was held by this labour union for the Kuo Min Tang for the war against Japan resulting in some fl.3,000 raised.	<i>Sumatra Bin Pho</i> 3-5-1941.
Chinese doctors organisation Tionghoa Kioe Ie Hwee		<i>Andalas</i> 25-5-1918.

5.5. Cultural associations

Cultural associations	Explanation	Source
Chinese brass band	Reverend Ward of the American Methodist church established a Chinese brass band around 1914. The uniformed band-members played at various occasions: during church services but also at street preachings. The purchase of the instruments and the uniforms was made possible by funding from the local Chinese merchants.	Ward 1915
Tionghoa Muziek Vereeniging or Tiong Hoa Im Gak Hwee (Tionghoa Music Association)	Established in 1915 by a group of young Chinese among others by Tan Boen An and Gan Hoat Soei. At the 30 years jubilee of Tjong A Fie this club arranged a performance.	<i>Andalas</i> 22-11-1917; 27-11-1917; 27-4-1918.
Chinese music and educational association Tionghoa Ay Koen Hwee	Established in 1920.	<i>Andalas</i> 16-3-1920; <i>Gemeentebblad</i> 10-9-1923.
Association to promote the speaking of Mandarin or <i>Kuo yu</i> , the national Chinese language.	The association strived to stimulate more civilized attitudes.	SP 26-8-1912
Siau Lian Lian Hap Hwee or Young Chinese Association	Established in 1917 to promote Chinese morals in the modern world. The objectives of the organisation are to promote more broadminded thinking and good morals and health. Membership fee for entrance is three rupiah and after that one rupiah per month. Objectives are to stop the consumption of strong liquors, brothels with Chinese women, the use of opium and the influence of gambling. Members, male and female must be at least 14 years old and of proper morals and must be introduced by a person who is already a member. There are yearly and monthly, special and ordinary meetings. If people want to give donations, they will receive the title of <i>President donateur</i> . If there is a marriage or passing away of one of the members all members must be present at the ceremony. When the organisation is already functioning and in progress three obligations will have to be fulfilled: Firstly, a speech has to be given; secondly there has to be a musical organization, and thirdly there must be a Health department.'	<i>Andalas</i> 8-5-1917

Cultural associations	Explanation	Source
Association Khong Kauw Hwee promoting the teachings of Confucius or Khong Tjoe.	According to <i>Andalas</i> there was dire need for these teachings as the paper wrote in an editorial: 'The Chinese do not really know peace, they do not really defend their people and land, they do not know about humanity, this is all because they do not follow the learning of Khong Tjoe and do not follow any belief.'	<i>Andalas</i> 29-7-1920
Chinese Reading Room.	Established by Reverend Ward of the Methodist Church around 1914. This literary association however was seen with distrust by the colonial government due to its suspected propagandistic character.	Ward 1915; SP 23-7-1921.
Chinese Christian Association Seng Toh Khoean Bian Hwee	Existed in 1918.	<i>Andalas</i> 25-5-1918.
	In 1918 Mr. Lee Teng Hwee, vice president of the Christian organisation Tjeng Lian Hwee in Shanghai, held a speech in the Chinese Christian Association in Medan about the importance of one Chinese language. Lee Teng Hwee spoke in <i>Tjeng Im</i> , - the pronunciation of the capital Peking - while his speech was directly translated into Hokkian and Cantonese. He was happy to be informed that all over the Dutch Indies Chinese tried to promote <i>Tjeng Im</i> so that there should be one common Chinese language. He hoped that via the <i>Tjeng Im</i> language the Chinese can become one so that the Chinese all over the archipelago could communicate with each other. Lee Teng Hwee further stressed the importance of education for all Chinese, so that the Chinese people would not fall behind. Lee spoke about education on three fields: <i>Thejok</i> (health), <i>Tiejok</i> (intelligence, education) and <i>Tekjok</i> (morality).	<i>Andalas</i> 13-4-1918, 18-4-1918.

5.6. Help associations

Help associations	Explanation	Source
Tiong Hoa Kong Ek Twan union	Established in 1915. The Tiong Hoa Kong Ek Twan in Medan cooperated with the Tiong Hoa Keng Kie Hwee association in Batavia. In Malay this organisation was called 'Persarikatan Kaoem Penggawe Tionghoa' or Union for Chinese Employees.	SP 26-3-1915; <i>Andalas</i> 5-6-1917; <i>Andalas</i> 24-7-1917.
Tiong Hoa Kong Ek Twan funeral fund	Established in 1917. This funeral organisation also concerned itself with the mourning regulations for the Chinese.	<i>Andalas</i> 5-6-1917; <i>Andalas</i> 21-3-1918.
Tiong Hoa Kong Ek Twan medical service fund	Established in 1917. From this fund it was possible to get a doctor quickly in case of serious illnesses.	<i>Andalas</i> 25-9-1917.
Funeral organisation Woi Sin Kie Seh	Established in 1918.	<i>Andalas</i> 25-5-1918
Chinese help committee after earthquake	In October 1926 a heavy earthquake occurred in Padang. Directly afterwards a help committee was established and money was collected to aid the victims of the earthquake for an amount of fl.1,218. In 2013 this amount would have a value of €9,205.	SP 10-7-1926; http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/calculate2-nl.php
Support fund to help victims of a severe winter in 1932/33 in Manchuria	On initiative of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and other Chinese associations, a support fund was established in 1932 for the Chinese victims. The appointed committee stated that only those victims of good morals were supported, who had never been convicted, and never had used opium or had gambled.	SP 11-1-1933; SP 30-10-1933
Asylum for the poor Chinese	This association established in 1934 in the Lauw A Jokstraat in Medan was financed by the Singapore millionaire Aw Boon Haw. The association was in a way also politically concerned, as help was offered to deported Chinese. It happened quite often that Chinese who too openly propagated the Kuo Min Tang policy in the Netherlands Indies were deported. In 1940, 300 people were sheltered in the Asylum for poor Chinese in Belawan.	SP 10-1-1934.

Help associations	Explanation	Source
Mutual Help Provident Fund or Hwa Chiao Tzu Shan Hsieh Hui for help to the poor Chinese in Medan.	Established in 1925. The <i>Sumatra Bin Pho</i> wrote in 1941 that the organisation is important for charity reasons as there are many jobless Chinese and Chinese beggars 'which is a humiliation to us Chinese' according to the paper. That year was the chairman Hiu Ngi Fen, Major Khoe Tjin Tek was on the advisory board and Aw Boon Haw from Singapore was honorary chairperson	SP 10-1-1934; <i>Sumatra Bin Pho</i> 18-1-1941.
Association Hoa Kiauw Tjoe Sian Hiap Hwee (for help for the poor and less endowed)	This association, established in 1934, not only supported the unemployed, but also the elderly, orphans and others who needed help.	SP 25-7-1934
Chinese women's association	Established in 1941. March 8 was Woman's day, the so-called 8 March festival. At this occasion there was fundraising for China in the war against Japan. The 11 teams involved in the fundraising in Medan in total collected fl.3,305. This amount would have a value of €22,821 in the year 2013.	<i>Sumatra Bin Pho</i> 11-3-1941; http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/calculate2-nl.php

5.7. Dutch and Japanese language schools in 1924

School	Number of students			Language	Established by	Source
	boys	girls	total			
Mulo (Middle Education)	206	49	255	Dutch	Government	<i>Gemeenteverslag</i> 1924
Public European 1st primary school	101	100	201	Dutch	Government	<i>Gemeenteverslag</i> 1924
Public European 2nd primary school	104	52	156	Dutch	Government	<i>Gemeenteverslag</i> 1924
Public Dutch Chinese school	129	60	189	Dutch	Government	<i>Gemeenteverslag</i> 1924
Public Dutch Indigenous school I	236	71	307	Dutch	Government	<i>Gemeenteverslag</i> 1924
Public Dutch Indigenous school II	230	57	287	Dutch	Government	<i>Gemeenteverslag</i> 1924
Christian school	71	47	118	Dutch	Private	<i>Gemeenteverslag</i> 1924
School of the Medan schoolorganisation	70	78	148	Dutch	Private	<i>Gemeenteverslag</i> 1924
Roman Catholic European Primary school	26	39	65	Dutch	Catholic church	<i>Gemeenteverslag</i> 1924
Neutral Dutch Indigenous school	125	23	148	Dutch	Government	<i>Gemeenteverslag</i> 1924
Medan Japanese primary school		5		Japanese	Private	<i>Gemeenteverslag</i> 1924

5.8. English Language Schools in Medan

School	Number of students			Language	Established by	Source
	Boys	Girls	Total			
Methodist Boy's school	360		360	English	Methodist church	<i>Gemeenteverlag</i> 1924
Methodist Girl's school				English	Methodist church	<i>Gemeenteverlag</i> 1924
St. Anthony's International school	76	12	88	English	Private	<i>Gemeenteverlag</i> 1924
King George Khalsa School	30	-	30	English/Punjabi	Private	<i>Gemeenteverlag</i> 1924

5.9. Chinese Language Schools in Medan

School	Number of students			Language	Established by	Source
	Boys	Girls	Total			
Hwa Shang school	285	115	400	Chinese / English	Khoe Tjin Tek	<i>Gemeenteverlag</i> 1924
Thong Scok school	41	7	48	Chinese / English	Private	<i>Gemeenteverlag</i> 1924
Sun Chow school	54	34	88	Chinese / English	Private	<i>Gemeenteverlag</i> 1924
Yang Tsung school	72	11	83	Chinese / English	Private	<i>Gemeenteverlag</i> 1924
Pan Djit school	20	-	20	Chinese / English	Private	<i>Gemeenteverlag</i> 1924
Tun Pun school	127	119	246	Chinese / English	Tjong Yong Hian and Tjong A Fie	<i>Gemeenteverlag</i> 1924
Other Chinese Schools in Medan only mentioned by the name of the owner						
Tjong Tjoe Liong	25	-	25	Chinese		<i>Gemeenteverlag</i> 1924
Fong Lok Nam	15	2	17	Chinese		<i>Gemeenteverlag</i> 1924
Lim Toean Tjeng	15	-	15	Chinese		<i>Gemeenteverlag</i> 1924

School	Number of students			Language	Established by	Source
	Boys	Girls	Total			
Thong Jaw Man	31	4	35	Chinese		<i>Gemeenteverslag</i> 1924
Than Hong Chun	20	-	20	Chinese		<i>Gemeenteverslag</i> 1924
Ng Tat Sam	11	2	15	Chinese		<i>Gemeenteverslag</i> 1924

5.10. Chinese schools in East Sumatra 1914

Year	East Sumatra	Number of Chinese schools	Number of students	Source
1914		22	763	De Bruin 1918: 103

5.11. Chinese schools in the Lower Deli District on East Sumatra

Year	Private Chinese schools in Lower Deli District	In Medan	Total number of students at Chinese schools in Medan	Source
1922	23 schools	16 schools	1,452	MvO controleur D.F. Pronk, 1923 KIT 670

5.12. Numbers and percentage of Chinese students educated on East Sumatra

Year	Chinese boys	Chinese girls	Total	Source
1920	1,117 (24,8%)	320 (8%)	1,437	MvO controleur D.F. Pronk, 1923 KIT 670

5.13. Percentage of Chinese, Indigenous and European in the lower district of East Sumatra that followed primary education

Year	Chinese	Indigenous	European	Source
1920	14,7%	6,5%	48,1%	MvO controleur D.F. Pronk, 1923 KIT 670

5.14. Hospitals and Health Care

Name	Explanation	Source
Deli Hospital	Established in 1870 by the Deli Company at the Boolweg (Jl. Puteri Hijau)	Schadee I 1918:183; SP 8-4-1915.
Chinese Hospital Tjie On Djie Jan	The hospital was located at the Hospitaalweg between the Kwanteebiostraat and the Wilhelminastraat. The hospital was financed from market profits.	Schadee I 1918:183; SP 8-4-1915; Interview with Mrs. Lemye in Westende at 12-6-1992; <i>Gemeentebld</i> 1920: 428; <i>Gemeentebld</i> 20-7-1921; <i>Gemeentebld</i> 30-1-1923.
Leper Colony Pulau Secanang	In 1896 there were 400 to 500 lepers in Deli and Langkat. Around 1900 Tjong Yong Hian and Tjong A Fie established the leper colony at Poeloe Si Tjanang (Secanang) an island four kilometers west of the road Laboehan Deli - Belawan at the mouth of the Deli river. In 1918, 347 lepers were housed in the colony. In the years after plantation companies and the government joined in to finance the institution.	DC 28-3-1896; DC 26-8-1896; MvO resident W.J. Rahder 1913; SP 11-10-1912; SP 29-4-1913; De Bruin 1918: 114; MvO ass. resident W.P.F.L. Winckel, 1925, KIT 675.
Central Hospital or Stadsverband	Existed in 1915 'Stadsverband' at the Paleisweg (Jl. Katamso)	Schadee I 1918:183; SP 8-4-1915; <i>Andalas</i> , 17-10-1918; SP 8-4-1930; SP 14-3-1938.
Hospital for women	Existed in 1915.	Schadee I 1918:183; SP 8-4-1915.
Municipal Hospital with lung clinic	Opened in 1930 at the Serdangweg.	SP 28-10-1930; SP 19-11-1930; SP 14-3-1938.

Name	Explanation	Source
Catholic St. Elisabeth Hospital	Opened in 1930.	SP 28-10-1930; SP 19-11-1930; SP 27-2-1933, SP 19-12-1933; SP 14-3-1938.
Private Hospital in Timorstreet	Existed in 1930.	SP 28-10-1930; SP 19-11-1930; SP 14-3-1938.
Eye clinic in Djati Oeloe	Existed in 1930.	SP 28-10-1930; SP 19-11-1930; SP 14-3-1938.

5.15. Football Clubs in Medan

Name	Explanation	Players	Source
Sport Club Sumatra's Oostkust	Established in 1899, it was the first official football club founded by W.J.H. Mulier editor of the Deli Courant.	Dutch	SP 13-4-1899
Zetters Club (also known as Letterzetters)	Established in 1902 by Indigenous employees working as type setters.	Indigenous. The so-called European clubs did not bar other nationalities from playing for them, and the Nederlandsch Indische Voetbal Bond (NIVB) (Netherlands Indies Football Association) allowed clubs from all nationalities to enter the leagues organised by its local and regional member federations.	Stokkermans K. and RSSSF 2012/13.
The Delische Voetbal Bond (DVB) (Deli Football Federation)	Established in 1907. Overarching Federation.	mixed	Stokkermans K. and RSSSF 2012/13.
Voorwaarts, and came to eventually be called Go Ahead	Established in 1906.	Dutch	SP 8-2-1909; Stokkermans K. and RSSSF 2012/13.

Name	Explanation	Players	Source
Tjong Hoa Sport Vereeniging (Tjong Hoa Sporting Club) or THSV	Established in 1905.	Chinese	SP 8-2-1909; Stokkermans K. and RSSSF 2012/13.
Toengkoe VC (Voetbal Club) (Toengkoe Football Club)	Established in 1902.	Indigenous	Stokkermans K. and RSSSF 2012/13.
Harrisons and Crosfield Company Team	Established in 1915. Harrisons and Crosfield was a British plantation company.	Mixed ethnic players	SP 25-1-1913; SP 25-3-1913; SP 28-7-1913; SP 8-5-1915.
Van Nie team	Van Nie & Co. Company (Dutch).	mixed	SP 25-1-1913; SP 25-3-1913; SP 28-7-1913; SP 8-5-1915.
Handelsftal. Company Team	Football club of the Nederlandsche Handelmaatschappij (Dutch Trading Company) (Dutch).	mixed	SP 7-4-1913; SP 19-5-1913.
Deli Sport Vereeniging (Deli Sports club)	Nickname Roodbroeken (Red Trousers). (Dutch)	European	SP 19-8-1912; SP 25-1-1913; SP 27-1-1913; SP 8-3-1913; SP 22-2-1915.
Tapanoeli	Football club named after the Tapanoeli district.	Indigenous	SP 8-2-1909; Stokkermans K. and RSSSF 2012/13.
Matsoem	Football club named after the quarter of the Sultan's grounds in Medan.	Indigenous	SP 8-2-1909; Stokkermans K. and RSSSF 2012/13.
Chinese Recreation and Sporting Club (CSC)	Established in 1912 by Khoe Tjin Tek.	Chinese	SP 19-8-1912.
S.p.o.r.t.	Established in 1913.		SP 4-2-1913.

Name	Explanation	Players	Source
Oost Sumatra Voetbal Bond or OSVB (Football Federation for Eastern Sumatra)	Established in 1915.	mixed	Stokkermans K. and RSSSF 2012/13; <i>Gemeentebblad</i> 16-11-1927.
Inlandsche Sportvereniging (Indigenous Sporting Club) chose the Dutch name Voor ons Genoegen en Leven (VOGEL) (For our pleasure and life)	Established in 1920.	Indigenous	<i>Gemeentebblad</i> Medan, 24-5-1920. III No. 294.
Chinese Sportclub	Existed in 1927.	Chinese	<i>Gemeentebblad</i> 16-11-1927.
Methodist Boy's School	Existed in 1927.	Chinese	<i>Gemeentebblad</i> 16-11-1927.
Footballclub of Father Simons (Catholic)	Existed in 1927.	Mixed	<i>Gemeentebblad</i> 16-11-1927.
Hwa Siang	Existed in 1927.	Chinese	<i>Gemeentebblad</i> 16-11-1927; SP 20-1-1930; SP 24-1-1930.
Kantoorvoetbalbond (Office Soccer Federation) was formed with the aim to organize the leagues between the company clubs		Mixed	Stokkermans K. and RSSSF 2012/13.
Ambonese football club <i>VOP</i>	Established in 1930.	Indigenous	SP 20-1-1930; SP 24-1-1930; SP 31-7-1933.
Poengoean Batak club	Established in 1930.	Indigenous	SP 20-1-1930; SP 24-1-1930; SP 31-7-1933.

Appendix chapter 6.

6.1. Malay and Chinese language papers in Medan 1900–1942 (not complete)

Name	Explanation	Source
<i>Pewartu Deli</i>	First Malay language Indigenous paper in Medan, established in 1901.	Loderichs, Buiskool 1997: 39.
<i>Sumatra Po</i> or <i>So Mun Tap Lap Po</i>	First Chinese language newspaper established by the <i>Soe Po Sia</i> department Medan, 1910s.	Ad. Jap. Chin. Aff. Batavia to Dir. Civ. Serv. 3-7-1914; Protector of Chinese, Singapore to Neth. Con. Gen., Singapore, 3-3-1915; Ad. Jap. Chin. Aff., Batavia to G.G. 3-11-1914; Williams 1959: 109; Claver 2006: 214.
<i>Pertja Timoer</i>	Malay language Indigenous paper. Existed in 1912, 1913.	SP 5-3-1912; SP 6-6-1913.
<i>Sumatra News</i>	English language Chinese paper.	SP 15-6-1915; SP 20-10-1915.
<i>Min Bao</i>	Chinese language paper, established 1914.	Suryadinata 1997: 248, 256.
<i>Andalas</i>	Malay language Chinese papers established in 1912, appearing till at least 1924.	<i>Andalas</i> 20-9-1917, 31-7-1924; Moerman 1932: 41.
<i>Pantjaran Berita</i>	Malay language Chinese paper established in 1922.	Loderichs, Buiskool 1999: 39.
<i>Pelita Andalas</i>	Malay language Chinese paper established in 1925.	Loderichs, Buiskool 1999: 39.
<i>Tjin-Po Medan</i>	Chinese language paper established in 1920s.	Tjin Po 10-3-1925.
<i>Nanyang Daily News</i> changed its name in 1928 into <i>Sin Tiong Hoa Po</i>	English language Chinese newspaper, 1910s and 1920s.	Pewartu Deli 18-8-1928.
<i>Benih Timor</i>	Malay language Indigenous paper, established 1925.	Loderichs, Buiskool 1999: 39.
<i>Medan Boediman</i>	Malay language Indigenous weekly, appeared in 1910s, 1920s.	SP 30-8-1915; <i>Koloniaal verslag</i> 1916:124.

Name	Explanation	Source
<i>Sinar Deli</i>	Malay language paper appearing in the 1930s	SP 5-3-1930.
<i>The New China Times</i>	Pro Kuo Min Tang English language news paper. Established in 1931. The paper stopped appearing in 1942 after the Japanese occupied Medan.	Information Mr. Soffyan. Chief editor Harian Analisa 15-12-1999.
<i>Sumatra Bin Pho</i>	Chinese language paper, owner Hiu Ngi Fen. 1930s.	Interview Hiu Kian Jin 4-11-1996.
<i>Andalas</i>	Malay language Chinese paper, owner Hiu Ngi Fen. 1930s.	Interview Hiu Kian Jin 4-11-1996.

Old and new streetnames in Medan

Before 1942 many streets in Medan were named after persons who had fulfilled public functions or distinguished themselves in one way or another in the Dutch East Indies. The Kartinilaan was named after the Javanese feminist Raden Adjeng Kartini, and the Multatulilaan was named after the Dutch novelist Multatuli (Eduard Douwes Dekker), the latter having been a severe critic of the colonial regime in the nineteenth century.

Old names	New names	Old names	New names
Achterweg	Jl. Peringgán	Calcuttastraat	Jl. Zainul Arifin
Adindaweg	Jl. Erna Nasution	Cambodjastraat	Jl. Samudra
Adolfstraat	Jl. Kutacane	Canna, Dj	Jl. Kana
Ajam, Dj	Jl. Ayam	Cantonstraat	Jl. Surabaya
Akik, Dj	Jl. Akik	Celebesstraat	Jl. Sulawesi
Amaliastraat	Jl. Sun Yat Sen	Ceramstraat	Jl. Seram
Ambonstraat	Jl. Ambon	Ceylonstraat	Jl. Muara Takus
Amoystraat	Jl. Natal	Claessenslaan, Reinier	Jl. Amir Hamzah
Amplas, Dj	Jl. Amplas	Colombostraat	Jl. T.C dTiro/Taruma
Andraeweg	Jl. P. Kemerdekaan / Jl. Guru Patimpus	Controleurstraat	Jl. Tumenggung
Anggrek, Dj	Jl. Anggrek	Cremerweg	Jl. Balai Kota
Annamstraat	Jl. Pajang/Gg. Aman	Daendelstraat	Jl. Hayam Wuruk
Angsa, Dj	Jl. Angsa	Dagan, Dj	Jl. Dagan
Antara, Dj	Jl. Sutrisno	Dahlia, Dj	Jl. Dahlia
Ardjoenastraat	Jl. Arjuna	Daratweg	Jl. Darat
Arnhemstraat	Jl. Pancur Batu	Dardanellenstraat	Jl. Selat Panjang
Asahanstraat	Jl. Asahan	Datoekstraat	Jl. Datuk
Atjehstraat	Jl. Aceh	Deli Maatschappijllaan	Jl. Tembakau Deli
Avroslaan	Jl. Wahidin	Delistraat	Jl. G.R. Yusua
Baboerapark	Jl. Babura	Demmeniweg	Jl. Raden Saleh
Baboeraweg	Jl. T. Cik Di Tiro	Depotweg	Jl. Bawean
Bakaran Batoe, Dj	Jl. Bakaran Batu	Diemenstraat	Jl. Sriwijaya

Old names	New names
Baligestraat	Jl. Balige
Balistraat	Jl. Bali
Ballotstraat	Jl. Tumapel
Banckertlaan	Jl. Monginsidi
Bamboe, Dj	Jl. Bambu I
Bankastraat	Jl. Bangka
Bankokstraat	Jl. Bangkok
Barentszlaan, Willem	Jl. Magelang
Bawal, Dj	Jl. Bawal
Beatrixlaan	Jl. Juanda
Bengkalisstraat	Jl. Bengkalis
Bengkoelenstraat	Jl. Bengkulu
Bantengweg	Jl. Kapt. Maulana Lbs
Berawas, Dj	Jl. Berawas
Biltonstraat	Jl. Belitung
Bindjeiweg	Jl. Kapt. M. Lbs / Jend. Gatot Subroto
Birmastraat	Jl. Asia Baru
Bombaystraat / Negapatnaamstraat	Jl. Kediri
Bontekoelaan	Jl. H. Agus Salim
Boolweg	Jl. Putri Hijau
Borneostraat	Jl. Kalimantan
Bothstraat	Jl. Mojopahit
Brastagiweg	Jl. Berastagi
Bromostraat	Jl. Bromo

Old names	New names
Dillenburgstraat	Jl. Lebong
Djambistraat	Jl. Jambi
Djaparis, Dj	Jl. Rahmadsyah
Djatilaan	Jl. P. Kemerdekaan
Djohar, Dj	Jl. Johar
Doekoe, Dj	Jl. Duku
Doerianlaan (-weg)	Jl. Durian
Electriciteitsweg	Jl. Listrik
Emmastraat	Jl. Yose Rizal
Esplanade	Lapangan Merdeka
Evertsenlaan	Jl. Gerilla
Feikemaweg, Dr.	Jl. Kelapa Sawit
Floresstraat	Jl. Flores
Foetsjoestraat	Jl. Jakarta
Frederik Hendrikstraat	Jl. Tilak
Frisostraat	Jl. Ansari
Gadjah, Dj	Jl. Gajah
Galenlaan, van	Jl. Gerilla
Gedehstraat	Jl. Gedeh
Gendtlaan, van	Jl. Chairil Anwar
Gloegoerweg	Jl. Glugur bypass
Goenstraat, van	Jl. Bantam
Goentoeistraat	Jl. Guntur
Hailohongstraat	Jl. Pandan

Old names	New names	Old names	New names
Hakkastraat	Jl. Letjen. Haryono MT	Kortenaerlaan	Jl. Suryo
Hankoustraat	Jl. Sambas	Kroesenstraat	Jl. Teuku Umar
Harimau, Dj	Jl. Harimau	Kroewing, Dj	Jl. Kruing
Havelaarlaan, Max	Jl. Multatuli	Krugerstraat	Jl. Bedagai
Heemskerklaan	Jl. A. Rivai	Kuenenlaan	Jl. K.H. A. Dahlan
Heinlaan, Piet	Jl. Supeno	Kwanteebiostraat	Jl. Irian Barat
Hendrikstraat, Prins	Jl. Merbabu	Laboeanweg	Jl. Putri Hijau
Heutzstraat, Van	Jl. Perpustakaan	Laboratoriumweg	Jl. Laboratorium
Hindoesstraat	Jl. Hindu	Langkatstraat	Jl. Langkat
Hogendorpstraat, Van	Jl. Lahat	Langsastraat	Jl. Langsa
Hokkianstraat	Jl. Andalas	Langsat, Dj	Jl. Langsat
Hongkongstraat	Jl. Cirebon	Laksana, Dj	Jl. Laksana
Hospitalweg	Jl. Sambu	Leeuwenhoeklaan	Jl. Hang Jebat
Houtmanlaan, De	Jl. Ratulangi	Lemboe, Dj	Jl. Lembu
Huttenbachstraat	Jl. A. Yani 7	Ligthartlaan, Jan	Jl. Cut Mutia
Ibong, Dj	Jl. Ibong	Linnaeuslaan, Van	Jl. Hang Lekiu
Idenburgstraat	Jl. Abdullah Lubis	Linschotenlaan, Van	Jl. Samanhudi
Irenelaan. Prinses	Jl. T. C dTiro	Lodewijkstraat	Jl. Asia Baru
Jan Kin Hianstraat	Jl. Sidempuan	Lombokstraat	Jl. Lombok
Janssenlaan, P.W	Jl. Slamet Riyadi	Lotoslaan	Jl. Angsana
Japanschestraat	Jl. Har. Syihab	Louisestraat	Jl. Ghandi
Javastraat	Jl. Jawa	Luitenantsweg	Jl. Bandung
Julianastraat	Jl. Asia	Ma'moem Alrasjdweg	Jl. Jend. Sudirman / Jend. Suprpto
Kaban Djahestraat	Jl. Kaban Jahe	Maasdamstraat, Van	Jl. Kalianda
Kadasterstraat	Jl. Candi Prambanan	Mabarweg	Jl. Mabar
Kakap, Dj	Jl. Kakap	Macastraat	Jl. Garut
Kampemenstweg	Jl. Pengadilan	Mackaylaan, Burgemeester	Jl. Wali Kota

Old names	New names
Kangkoeng, Dj	Jl. Kangkung
Kanonnenweg	Jl. Teuku Daud
Kapiteinsweg	Jl. Pandu
Kartinilaan	Jl. Kartini
Katjang, Dj	Jl. Kacang
Kedondong, Dj	Jl. Kedondong
Keladi, Dj	Jl. Keladi
Kelor, Dj	Jl. Kelor
Kempenweg, Gouverneur Van	Jl. D. Sanggul
Kenanga, Dj	Jl. Kenanga
Kenari, Dj	Jl. Kenari
Kerkstraat	Jl. Letjen. Haryono MT
Kesawan	Jl. Jend. A. Yani
Ketapang, Dj	Jl. Ketapang
Kiautsjaustraaf	Jl. Banjarmasin
Klingenstraat	Jl. Irian Barat
Kloedstraat	Jl. Kelud
Kockstraat, De	Jl. Syailendra/Terong
Koeda, Dj	Jl. Kuda

Old names	New names
Madoerastraat	Jl. Madura
Madrasstraat	Jl. Jenggala
Maetsuykerstraat	Jl. Nyak Makam
Mahkamah, Dj	Jl. Mahkamah
Mahmoedweg	Jl. Surik Menari
Majoorstraat	Jl. Har. Syihab
Malakkastraat	Jl. Malaka
Maleischestraat	Jl. Syahrizal
Manggalaan	Jl. Diponegoro
Manilastraat	Jl. Manila/Kapuas
Mantrilaan	Jl. Tanjung Meriam
Marktstraat	Jl. A. Yani 3
Marnixstraat	Jl. Indragiri
Mauritsstraat	Jl. Pelaju
Medan, Dl	Jl. Sawah Lunto
Melati, Dj	Jl. Melati
Melchior Treublaan	Jl. Hang Tuah
Meloer, Dj	Jl. Melur
Mendjanga, Dj	Jl. Menjanga

Old names	New names	Old names	New names
Mentaweistraat	Jl. Mentawai	Riouwstraat	Jl. Riau
Meranti, Dj	Jl. Meranti	Riivierpad	Jl. Sungai Deli
Merapistraat	Jl. Merapi	Roembia, Dj	Jl. Rumbia
Michelsenstraat	Jl. Makayana	Roepatstraat	Jl. Rupert
Moesang, Dj	Jl. Musang	Rotan, Dj	Jl. Rotan
Molukkenstraat	Jl. Maluku	Rumphiuslaan	Jl. Hang Kesturi
Moskeestraat	Jl. Mesjid	Ruyterlaan, De	Jl. H. Misbah
Nangkingstraat	Jl. Amuntai	Rijplaan, De	Jl. Linggarjati
Negapatnamstraat	Jl. Kediri	Sabangstraat	Jl. Sabang
Neslaan, Aert van	Jl. Bahriun	Saentisweg	Jl. Sentosa
Niasstraat	Jl. Nias	Saidjahweg	Jl. Dasima
Nienhuysweg	Jl. Pulau Pinang	Salakstraat	Jl. Salak
Nieuwmarkt	Jl. Perniagaan	Samosirstraat	Jl. Samosir
Nieuwstraat	Jl. Mangkubumi	Sampaliweg	Jl. Sampali
Oetama, Dj	Jl. Utama	Sandicklaan, Van	Jl. Candi Mendut
Oldenbarneveltstraat	Jl. Kuantan	Schuffnerlaan	Jl. KH. A. Dahlan
Omaliolen, Dj	Jl. Omaliun	Sekipweg	Jl. Sekip
Oostenweg, Jan van	Jl. Tembakau Deli	Semangka, Dj	Jl. Semangka
Oranje Nassaustraat	Jl. M.H. Thamrin	Sempoe, Dj	Jl. Sempu
Oude Markt	Jl. Mayjend. Sutoyo	Sennalaan	Jl. Sena
Pachtstraat	Jl. Kumango	Serdangweg	Jl. Prof. HM. Yamin
Padang Boelanweg	Jl. Mayjend S. Parman	Seriboe Dolokstraat	Jl. Seribu Dolok
Pakanbaroestraat	Jl. Pekanbaru	Shanghaistraat	Jl. Semarang
Pakhuisweg	Jl. Gudang/Putri Merah	Siakstraat	Jl. Siak
Pala, Dj	Jl. Pala	Siamstraat	Jl. Siam
Palembangstraat	Jl. Palembang	Siantarstraat	Jl. Siantar
Paleisweg	Jl. Brigjend. Katamso	Sibolgastraat	Jl. Sibolga
Parkstraat	Jl. Kejaksaan	Sikamingweg	Jl. Sikaming

Old names	New names
Patiar, Dj	Jl. Patiar
Paviljoenlaan	Jl. Candi Kalasan
Pekingstraat	Jl. Palangkaraya
Penangstraat	Jl. Thamrin Baru
Pertjoetweg	Jl. HOS Cokroaminoto
Petersburgstraat	Jl. Jawa/Gaharu
Plasstraat, Van der	Jl. Kalingga
Poeri, Dj	Jl. Puri
Poerwo, Dj	Jl. Purwo
Poloniaweg	Jl. Imam Bonjol
Prapatstraat	Jl. Prapat
Radja, Dj	Jl. Sisingamangaraja
Rahderstraat	Jl. Airlangga
Ramboetan, Dj	Jl. Rambutan
Rangonstraat	
Renbaanstraat	Jl. Bintang
Rensstraat	Jl. Bentara
Residentsweg	Jl. Palang Merah

Old names	New names
Simeloengoenstraat	Jl. Simalungun
Sindorostraat	Jl. Sindoro
Singa, Dj	Jl. Singa
Singaporestraat	Jl. Singapura
Slamatstraat	Jl. Selamat
Smeroestraat	Jl. Semeru
Smidstraat	Jl. Letjend Suprpto
Societeitsweg	Jl. Bukit Barisan
Soekamoeliastraat	Jl. Palang Merah
Soembastraat	Jl. Sumba
Soengai Kerastraat	Jl. Sungai Kera
Soengai Rengasweg	Jl. Madong Lubis
Soesmanweg	Jl. Lubuk Raya
Speelmanstraat	Jl. Mataram
Speyklaan, Van	Jl. Urip
Spoorstraat	Jl. Kereta Api
Sportlaan	Jl. Bulan/Tanjung Pura
Stationsweg	Jl. Stasiun

Old names	New names	Old names	New names
Steenbakkerslaan	Jl. Cendana	Tjong Yong Hianstraat	Jl. Bogor
Stirumstraat, Van	Jl. Menggala	Tobastraat	Jl. Danau Toba
Sultan, Dj	Jl. Mesjid Raya	Toengkastraat	Jl. Jember
Sumatrastraat	Jl. Sumatera	Toetoeapan, Dj	Jl. Sawah Lunto
Swatowstraat	Jl. Surakarta	Tongkingstraat	Jl. Kapuas Dalam
Taiपोेstraat	Jl. Barus	Tromplaan, MH	Jl. Dr. C. Mangunkusumo
Talaudstraat	Jl. Talaud	Tjengal, Dj	Jl. Cengal
Tamarindelaan	Jl. Kemuning	Tjong A Fieweg	Jl. Cakra
Tamiangstraat	Jl. Tamiang	Valentijnstraat	Jl. Sultan Hasanuddin
Tanah Lotstraat	Jl. Tanah Lot	Vleeschmarkt	Jl. Pembelian
Tandjoeng, Dj	Jl. Tanjung	Voetpad	Jl. Candi Biara
Tapanoelstraat	Jl. Tapanuli	Voorstraat	Jl. Kol. Sugiono
Taroetoengstraat	Jl. Tarutung	Vrieslaan, Hugo de	Jl. HOS Cokroaminoto/Gereja
Tasmanlaan	Jl. Cut Nya'Din	Waringin, Dj	Jl. Waringin
Telong Belokstraat	Jl. Telong Belok	Westenenkstraat	Jl. Candi Borobudur
Tempel, Dj	Jl. Intan	Wilhelminastraat	Jl. Dr. Sutomo
Tepekongstraat	Jl. Ahmad Yani 5	Wilisstraat	Jl. Wilis
Teratei, Dj	Jl. Teratai	Willemstraat	Jl. Lampung
Terong, Dj	Jl. Terong	Wirata, Dj	Jl. Wirata
Tientsienstraat	Jl. Samarinda	Wittstraat, De	Jl. Kiantan
Timorstraat	Jl. Timor	Zwaterweg	Jl. Hitam
Tjempaka, Dj	Jl. Cempaka		Source: Loderichs, Buischool 1997: 100-101.

Glossary

Abattoir	Slaughterhouse
Akten van Concessie	Land contracts
Ang Pau	Red parcels with money
Arak	Locally brewed liquor made from palm trees.
AVROS	Algemeene Vereeniging van Rubber Ondernemers ter Oostkust van Sumatra (General Association of Rubber Companies on East Sumatra) The green copper roofed AVROS building is located at the corner of the Soekamulia and the Paleisweg.
Baba(h)	Chinese who are integrated and assimilated into the Malay Indigenous society. The other term is Peranakan which means literally ‘child of the country’, mostly offspring from a Chinese father and an Indigenous mother.
Bang (or pang)	Singapore organization for a kind of dialect-based grouping without formal institutional organization.
Batavia	Jakarta
Bami	Indonesian noodle dish
Barang	Goods
Beriberi	Beriberi is a disease caused by a vitamin B1 deficiency. There are two types of the disease: wet beriberi and dry beriberi. Wet beriberi affects the heart and dry beriberi damages the nerves. Beriberi can be life-threatening if not treated.
Borsumij	Borneo Sumatra Maatschappij. Traded between Borneo and Sumatra.
Buitenzorg	Bogor
Bric-à-brac	(Origin French), first used in the Victorian era, refers to lesser objects of art forming collections of curiosa, such as elaborately decorated teacups and small vases, etc.
Imlek	Chinese New Year. The date is calculated according to the Chinese lunar calendar but always in the period 21 st January to 20 th February. Tjap-Go Meh, the fifteenth day of the new year and was considered the birthday of the Lord of Heaven. Tshing Bing festival was on the fifth day of the fifth month, when the graves were cleaned of weeds and repainted. On the fifth day of the fifth Chinese month was the feast of Gow-geh tsoih (Tjoko) when the male principle in nature, Yang, the

	principle of light and life, won victory over Yin or the female principle of darkness and death.
Chetties	Indian money-lenders in Medan
Chroniqueurs scandaleuses	Scandalous chroniclers
Cultuurraad	Council of the Cultural Area of East Sumatra, known as the Cultuurraad or Culture Council referring to the plantations where 'culture products' such as tobacco were grown.
Damar	Resin from timber trees
Datoe	Local head of a Batak tribe
Deli Atjeh	Trading Company Deli Atjeh, previously named Nolte & Haas.
Deli Maatschappij	Deli Company
Delische Voetbal Bond	Deli Soccer Federation
Djago	Hero
Djermals	Long nets and wooden constructions fixed on the bottom of the shallow sea along the coastline to catch the fish and shrimp on the one-meter deep mudbank, which is ideal for fishing.
Djitjing (jicing)	Residue of used opium which was scraped from the used pipes
Doekoen	Traditional medicine man
Dokter djawa	Medical doctor educated on Java
Erfpacht	Lease hold or long lease
Gemeenteblad	Municipal Gazette
Hari besar	Monthly two days off
Huiguan	Singapore organization with members and a board. A huiguan could be based on family, from which area they originated, from a certain social or religious organization, or a certain job. In general, all members spoke the same language.
Internatio	Abbreviation of 'De Internationale Crediet- en Handelsvereniging Rotterdam'
Kabaja	Open jacket
Kampong	Village
Karbouw	Waterbuffalo
Kastoren	Beaver hair
Kedeh	Small shop-house
Kerapatan	Local court of justice

Kelontong	Peddler
Kipas	Hand-fans
Kongsi	(Gongsi in Mandarin) can be translated as company. A kongsi could be any kind of association, but mostly it was used for trade partnerships.
Kowtow	The act of deep respect by kneeling and bowing so low that the head touches the ground.
Krani	Writer for administration
Kromo	Javanese from the lower social classes
Landraad	Land court
Maatschappij	Company
Magistraatsgerecht	Magistrates court
Makelaarster	Wedding agent/intermediary
MULO	Middelbaar Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs (Middle Extended Primary Education)
Muziek Vereeniging	Music Association
Nanyang	Countries south of China were known as Nanyang: Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and British Malaya.
Nederlandsch Indische Handelsbank	Netherlands Indies Trading Bank
Nirwana	In Buddhism a state in which the mind, enlightened as to the illusory nature of the self, transcends all suffering and attains peace.
Officier Tjina	Chinese officer
Ontvangboekjes	Receipt books
Opiumkit	Opium den
Pah-la	Hit them
Pait	The name goes back to the Malay <i>pa (h) it</i> (“bitter”). Originally a glass of gin with a few drops of bitter ‘with it indicated, but soon it was used for’ drink ‘in general. (Sanders E. <i>Borrel woordenboek. 750 volksnamen voor onze glazen boterham</i> . Den Haag: 1997)
Pater familias	Head of the family
Peranakan	Chinese born in the archipelago called peranakan, which more-or-less meant child of the country.
Pikol or pikoel	Malay/Javanese word which means carry, especially carry on the shoulders, mostly via a carry stick or pikolan of the weight one man can carry on his shoulders or shoulder

weight. Such a weight was calculated as 100 kati's, equal to 125 Amsterdam pounds or 61,7613 kg.

Partai Nasional Indonesia Baru	(PNI Baru) New National Indonesian Party
Perlak	Langsa
Mandor	Indigenous supervisor
Raad van Justitie	Court of Justice
Rapalje	Scum
Rijksdaalder	Two and a half Dutch guilders
Sampans	Small wooden boats
Sarikat Goeroe	Teacher organisation
Singkeh	Derived from the Amoy (Xiamen) word hsin-k'o which means new guest. Another definition used for singkeh was 'fresh off the boat' Chinese from China. Instead of singkeh also the word totok was used for newcomers.
Stamboeken	Account books for coolie administration
Schuurboeken	Books for the tobacco fermentation process
Stamboel.	The Opera or Komedie Stamboel or Istanbul-style theater, originated from Surabaya in 1891. The komedie Stamboel performed a wide range of musical versions like the stories of the Arabian Nights, European fairy tales and operas such as Sleeping Beauty and Verdi's Aïda. Also, comedies and crime stories were performed by these multi ethnic (mainly Eurasian and Chinese) theatre companies.
Tael	One tael was a Chinese currency unit with a value of around 40 grams of silver.
Tandil	Chinese supervisor
Tengku Panglima	Nobleman commander-in-chief
Tidak patoet	Not just
Tjandoe	refined opium
Tjangkol	Type of hoe whereby one slashes the soil, instead of shoveling as with a spade.
Tjong sam	Shanghai dress
Toekang sajoer	Vegetable-sellers, were mostly Chinese ex-coolies who had bought a piece of land outside the cities where they grew vegetables and bred pigs.
Toko	Shop
Toko obat	Traditional Chinese medicine shop

Totok	Meant basically born in China, while peranakan meant born in the Netherlands Indies. The expression totok is also used for other ethnic groups, like totok Belanda which means typical Dutch with all the physical characteristics, typical Dutch customs and cultural habits.
Tongkang	Sailing vessel for circa forty to fifty passengers
Towkay	Chinese businessman
Toetoe jacket	Closed collar white cotton suit
Trassie	In Malay belatjan or salted shrimp was an important ingredient in the Indigenous cuisine.
Uang panas	Hot money, money that metaphorically speaking burns in the pocket as it has a controversial source.
Ulama	Islamic scholar
Volksraad	Peoples Council
Vreemde Oosterlingen	Foreign Orientals, Chinese, Indian, non-Indigenous.
Wet op het Nederlands	
Onderdaanschap	Dutch subject law.
Zelfbestuurder	Self-ruler

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Samenvatting in het Nederlands

Prominente Chinezen tijdens de opkomst van een koloniale stad. Medan 1890-1942.

In deze studie naar de sociale geschiedenis van Medan wordt de rol van de Chinese handels elite bestudeerd bij de ontwikkeling van de stad van kleine nederzetting naar belangrijk financieel economisch centrum. Cruciaal voor de ontwikkeling van de stad was de snelle groei van het aantal tabak- en later rubber- en palmolie-plantages. De explosieve toename van de grootlandbouw bedrijven vanaf 1863 in het district Deli had een sterke economische groei tot gevolg. De schaduwzijde van het economisch succes waren de arbeidsomstandigheden van de plantage arbeiders, ook wel koelies genoemd. Het harde arbeidsregime gaf aanleiding tot talloze misstanden waardoor de plantage industrie als conflictmodel kan worden bestempeld.

Vanaf 1890 groeide de stad Medan in hoog tempo. In tegenstelling tot de situatie op de plantages werd de stads-ontwikkeling gekenmerkt door een relatief harmonische atmosfeer. De drijvende kracht achter deze ontwikkeling waren de Europese planters, de Sultan van Deli en de Chinese ondernemers. Onder deze Chinese zakenlieden onderscheidden zich negen personen die een cruciale rol hebben gespeeld in de periode 1890-1942. Mede door de rol van de Chinese elite bleek het conflictmodel van de plantages niet van toepassing te zijn op de stad Medan.

In 1930 maakte de Chinese gemeenschap circa 30% van de bevolking uit. De centrale vraag in deze studie is: Wat was de rol van de Chinese elite in deze multi-etnische samenleving tussen 1890 en 1942? Hiermee in verband staat de vraag, hoe waren de spanningen, inherent aan de koloniale samenleving, beperkt en gecontroleerd in de stad en welke rol speelde de Chinese elite hierin? Wat was hun bijdrage in de lokale politiek, hun positie als gemeenschaps- en politiek leiders, en wat was hun relatie tot het moederland China? Waaruit bestonden de zaken van de Chinese elite, hoe konden ze zoveel geld verdienen en waar gaven ze het aan uit? Wat was hun positie met betrekking tot onderwijs, culturele activiteiten en gezondheidszorg? Wat was hun bijdrage in geheel aan de samenleving?

Omdat het een stadsgeschiedenis betreft wordt eveneens gekeken naar studies over andere steden in Nederlands Indië over dezelfde periode zoals Abeyasekere over Batavia (Jakarta), Colombijn over Padang en Dick over Surabaya. Net als Medan waren Batavia, Padang en Surabaya sterk westers beïnvloedde, typische koloniale havensteden, het waren economische en administratieve centra met een multi-etnische bevolking onder Europees bestuur.

Daarnaast gaat deze studie over een Chinese gemeenschap. Daarom wordt gekeken naar een aantal andere sociaal-economisch-politieke studies over Chinese gemeenschappen in dezelfde periode. Zoals het boek over Chinese handel op Java van Claver, over de machts- en invloed-verdeling van Kwee in Oost Java, de studies van Chen en Erkelens over de Chinese gemeenschap in Batavia, van Lohanda en Williams over de sociaal-politieke positie van de Chinezen op Java, van Willmott over de Chinezen in Semarang alsmede de studies van Godley en Yong over de Chinese gemeenschap in Singapore.

Net als in Singapore waren de prominente Chinezen in Medan actief in de lokale politiek en als adviseurs van het bestuur. Hun rol en invloed beperkte zich niet slechts tot de Chinese gemeenschap maar bereikte ook de andere etnische groepen met name door hun filantropie.

Een belangrijk verschil met steden op Java was dat in Medan de Chinese gemeenschap relatief gezien veel groter was met als gevolg dat de Medan-Chinezen nauwelijks assimileerden met de lokale bevolking en hun eigen taal en cultuur behielden. Daardoor was er in Medan ook minder animo voor Nederlandstalig onderwijs in tegenstelling tot Java. Wel vergelijkbaar met Java was de metafoer van de speeltafel, zoals gepresenteerd door Kwee waarbij de verschillende actoren (de Sultan, de koloniale bestuurders en de Chinese ondernemers) onderhandelden over economische belangen.

In dit verband wordt de theorie over de plurale maatschappij van Furnivall aangehaald die stelt dat in de koloniale samenleving iedere etnische groep onafhankelijk van elkaar leefde en functioneerde. De inheemse bevolking werd bestuurd door de Sultan, de Europeanen door Nederlandse bestuursambtenaren en de Chinezen door de zogenaamde Chinese officieren, met rangen van luitenant tot majoor, officieel benoemd door de Nederlands Indische regering. Het functioneren van de koloniale maatschappij was mede gebaseerd op deze pluraliteit.

Zoals hiervoor gezegd staan de plantages van Deli voor een conflictmodel. Hiervoor zijn een aantal studies van belang zoals van Pelzer, Stoler, Breman en Houben en Lindblad. Uit al deze publicaties blijkt dat de werknemers op de plantages aan de Oostkust van Sumatra tot 1905 veelal aan de willekeur van de planters waren overgeleverd. Nadat de advocaat Van den Brand in zijn schotschrift 'De millioenen uit Deli' hier in 1902 landelijke aandacht op had weten te vestigen werd in 1904 een arbeidsinspectie ingesteld en verbeterde de situatie enigszins. Maar de harde raciale verhoudingen bleven bestaan tot 1942. In de jaren 1910 was van den Brand gemeenteraadslid in Medan en probeerde hij samen met de Chinese raadsleden een meer sociale politiek door te voeren zoals afschaffing van de riksja.

Deze studie is gebaseerd op primaire en secundaire bronnen, contemporaine Nederlandse, Maleise en Chinese kranten, brieven en interviews. Veel informatie via interviews over de prominente Chinezen werd verkregen uit de eerste hand omdat het de kinderen betrof van de beschreven prominenten.

In het eerste hoofdstuk (East Sumatra. The Formation of a Plantation Economy) wordt aandacht besteed aan de ontwikkeling van de residentie Oostkust van Sumatra als administratieve eenheid. Vervolgens wordt ingegaan op de ontstaansgeschiedenis van de grootlandbouwbedrijven met tabak-, rubber-, thee- en palmolie-plantages en de machtsverhoudingen tussen de planters en koelies op de plantages. Van belang in dit opzicht was de poenale sanctie hetgeen inhield dat het de arbeiders niet was toegestaan tijdens de contract periode de plantage te verlaten. In geval dit wel gebeurde konden ze door de politie worden opgehaald. De arbeidsverhouding was dus via een burgerlijk contract geregeld dat evenwel strafrechtelijk kon worden afgedwongen. De poenale sanctie was alleen geldig op de plantags in Oost Sumatra en bleef een controversieel onderwerp in de koloniale politiek tot de afschaffing in 1931.

In hoofdstuk 2, (The City of Medan) wordt de ontwikkeling beschreven van Medan van een kleine *kampong* tot het financiële en economische centrum van de Oostkust. Aandacht wordt besteed aan ruimtelijke ordening, infrastructuur, etnische segregatie, landrechten en justitie.

Hoofdstuk 3 (An Impression of Chinese Business in Medan) beschrijft het Chinese zakenleven in Medan waarbij onder andere aandacht wordt besteed aan het monopolie systeem, op opium, alcohol, kansspelen, pandhuizen en zout. Het hoofdstuk wordt besloten met een beschrijving van de Chinese Kamer van Koophandel, de Tiong Hoa Siang Hwee.

In hoofdstuk 4 (The Prominent Chinese of Medan), worden de Chinese personen geïntroduceerd die een belangrijke bijdrage hebben geleverd aan de ontwikkeling van Medan. Het hoofdstuk is verdeeld in drie onderdelen. Eerst wordt aandacht besteed aan aspecten van leiderschap in de Chinese samenleving. In het tweede deel worden de prominente Chinezen beschreven met officiële overheidsbenoemingen. Dit waren de Chinese majoors Tjong Yong Hian, Tjong A Fie en Khoe Tjin Tek. In het derde deel worden de personen beschreven zonder dergelijke benoemingen namelijk Chang Pu Ching, Tan Tang Ho, Tan Boen An, Gan Hoat Soei, Hiu Ngi Fen en Thio Siong Soe. De bovengenoemde negen personen waren degenen die zich telkens onderscheidden in de Chinese gemeenschap van Medan van 1890 tot 1942.

Hoofdstuk 5 (Social Life) behandelt sociale instituties. Wat waren de sociale bindende factoren in Medan? Aandacht wordt besteed aan de Chinese familie en de positie van de Chinese vrouw, verder aan religieuze, onderwijs- en gezondheids-instellingen, sociale en culturele organisaties, alsmede sport en andere vormen van ontspanning.

Hoofdstuk 6 (Politics, Press and Perceptions), beschrijft de politieke ontwikkelingen in Nederlands Indië, het Chinees nationalisme en de lokale politiek in Medan. Tot slot wordt de rol van de pers belicht, alsmede wederzijdse percepties van de Nederlanders en Chinezen.

De studie wordt afgesloten met een conclusie.

De Chinese ondernemers wilden economische stabiliteit voor hun zaken, geen conflict. Net als in de studies van Godley en Yong over Singapore zien wij dat de Chinese elite in Medan gemeenschapsleiders waren. Het centrale hoofdstuk is de reconstructie van de biografieën van de negen prominente Chinezen. Vrijwel allen begonnen zij zonder kapitaal, werden succesvol in zaken en bekleedden belangrijke sociale en politieke posities. Vaak ging deze carrière hand in hand met filantropie. In Medan waren de verschillende etnische groepen duidelijk gescheiden maar tegelijkertijd leefden ze wel samen in harmonie. De negen prominente Chinezen hebben hier een belangrijke rol in gespeeld.

Curriculum vitae

Dirk Aedsge Buiskool (1957) studied history at the University of Groningen from 1981 until 1988. In 1989 he was a lecturer of German History at the Groningen Volksuniversiteit and from 1990 until 1995 a lecturer of European History at the University of North Sumatra as well as at the Teacher Trainings College in Medan, Indonesia. From 1995 until 2000 he was a Travel Consultant at Tri Jaya Tour & Travel in Medan. In 2000 he co-founded Hotel Deli River in Medan of which he was director until 2019. Besides contributions in different journals such as in *Spieghel Historiae*, *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* and *Azië Magazine*, and in books such as *Medan beeld van een stad*, *The Dutch Encounter with Asia 1600-1950* and *Kota Lama Kota Baru, The History of the Indonesian City*, he published *De reis van Harm Kamerlingh Onnes*, which received the Linschoten Award in 1999.
