

# The History of Jakarta's Chinatown: The Role of the City Gate as a Transition Area and a Starting Point in the Spatial Transformation from the First Chinatown to the Renewal Phase

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# The History of Jakarta's Chinatown: The Role of the City Gate as a Transition Area and a Starting Point in the Spatial Transformation from the First Chinatown to the Renewal Phase

## Sejarah Pecinan Jakarta: Peran Pintu Gerbang Kota Sebagai Area Transisi dan Titik Awal dalam Transformasi Spasial Pecinan Pertama ke Fase Pembaharuan

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### Abstract

In the history of Jakarta, Chinatown played a significant role to the formation of the city. The Chinatown area accompanied Jakarta along its journey and has been around since the city was still known as Batavia. The Chinese were among the actors who played a major role in the formation of urban space when Batavia began to develop. After four centuries, Jakarta's Chinatown, which is now known as the Glodok area, continues to exist and is a bustling commercial area. The research conducted tries to dig further into the existence of Jakarta's Chinatown to reveal what lies behind its current formation. The Chinatown that can be found at this time is the second phase of the Jakarta Chinatown. At the beginning of Batavia, the Chinatown area was part of the city center. In 1740 there was a massacre that killed almost the entire Chinese population in Batavia. After the massacre, the Chinese no longer lived in the city center but filled the area outside the city walls. Through the study of archives and documents, the research tries to trace Jakarta's Chinatown from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century to examine the spatial transformation that occurred when the first Chinatown was destroyed and a new Chinatown area grew. This research is a study of architectural history to better identify the formation of hidden layers in urban space. The findings show that there is an important role of the city gate or *Pintoe Ketjil* as a transition area and a starting point for the renewal phase of Chinatown. The market that develops from people's houses is a characteristic that enlivens the area. Glodok was originally the final boundary for the area before the relocation of the city center turned Glodok into the gateway for the new Chinatown.

Pecinan memiliki peran yang signifikan di dalam sejarah terbentuknya kota Jakarta. Kawasan Pecinan telah mengiringi Jakarta di sepanjang usia perjalanannya dan hadir sejak kota berdiri saat masih bernama Batavia. Penduduk Cina adalah di antara aktor-aktor yang berperan besar dalam pembentukan ruang kota pada saat Batavia mulai dikembangkan. Setelah empat abad berjalan,

daerah Pecinan di Jakarta yang kini dikenal sebagai kawasan Glodok masih terus hadir dan merupakan kawasan perniagaan yang ramai. Penelitian yang dilakukan mencoba menggali lebih jauh keberadaan kawasan Pecinan Jakarta untuk mengungkapkan apa yang berlangsung di balik terbentuknya Pecinan saat ini. Pecinan yang dapat ditemui kini adalah fase kedua dari Pecinan Jakarta. Pada awal Batavia berdiri, kawasan Pecinan merupakan permukiman penduduk Cina berada di pusat kota. Hingga di tahun 1740 terjadi pembantaian yang menghabiskan hampir seluruh penduduk Cina di Batavia. Pasca pembantaian penduduk Cina tidak lagi tinggal di pusat kota melainkan memenuhi area di luar dinding kota. Melalui kajian arsip dan dokumen, penelitian mencoba menelusuri kondisi Pecinan Jakarta di abad ke-17 hingga akhir abad ke-19 untuk menelaah transformasi ruang yang berlangsung pada saat Pecinan pertama musnah dan tumbuhnya kawasan Pecinan baru. Penelitian ini merupakan studi sejarah arsitektur untuk lebih mengenali formasi dari lapisan-lapisan tersembunyi di dalam ruang kota. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa terdapat peranan penting wilayah pintu gerbang kota atau Pintoe Ketjil sebagai area transisi dan titik awal tumbuhnya Pecinan fase kedua. Pasar yang berkembang dari rumah-rumah penduduk adalah ciri khas yang menghidupkan kawasan. Glodok pada awalnya adalah batas akhir kawasan Pecinan, sebelum kemudian terjadinya perpindahan pusat kota mengubah Glodok menjadi pintu gerbang Pecinan baru.

**Keywords:** history, urban, Chinatown, city gate, market | sejarah, kota, Pecinan, gerbang kota, pasar

## Introduction

Cities are spaces built by community activities. Spaces shape human behavior, on the other hand how humans respond to space will also affect how the space forms. Space is a social production which is formed through the relation<sup>33</sup> between spatial space and society (Lefebvre 1974). The city is not only the vertical walls but architecture is a social act and "the material theater of human activity" (Kostof 1995: 3). The city formation is activated by "a certain energized crowding of people" (Kostof 1991: 37). Many elements influence the existence and movement of city including the diversity of population.

Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia, is a port city<sup>35</sup> located on the north coast of the island of Java. Since its inception in 1619 the city has had many contacts with migrants who stopped by, where some of them settled and later became part of the city. One of the things that had a significant influence on the journey of Jakarta was the presence of the Chinese population. The Chinese have accompanied Jakarta from the very beginning until today. It can be found that in the presence of the city, there are traces which are a manifestation of the Chinese heritage, including architecture, language, clothing styles, cuisine, as well as cultural rituals. At first the presence of Chinese residents, especially in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, was concentrated in an area known as Chinatown.

As early as the 10<sup>th</sup> century almost every city on the main coast of Southeast Asia had a Chinatown area (Lombard 2005). Since the 5<sup>th</sup> century, Chinese traders traveled to the archipelago. By the 1400s the Chinese had settled in port areas, especially on the eastern side of Sumatra and the north coast of Java (Handinoto 1999; Lombard 2005). The growth of Chinese settlements on the north coast of Java was the result of trade between China and countries in the Southeast Asian region. Trade by sea allowed traders to reach southern areas by taking advantage of the northeast monsoon which blows between January - February and returns to the north when the southwest monsoon

blows in June - August. During the period of changing seasons, traders will stay in the ports. This was what triggered the initial settlements of the Chinese in Southeast Asia (Reid 2014).

Between 1405 and 1433, the shipping expeditions carried out by Admiral Zheng He (Cheng Ho) to a number of areas including the Indian Ocean and ports in Java were a period of development of Chinese settlements on the north coast of Java. Starting from the coast the Chinese settled and then shifted into inland areas. Batavia, Semarang, and Surabaya were among the port cities where the Chinese population originally settled in Java. The expansion of Chinese settlements was what marked the development of coastal cities (Handinoto 1999).

The 14<sup>th</sup> century was the greatest period of migration of the Chinese population to Java (Handinoto 1999). The increasing migration of Chinese people made the cities in the coastal areas increasingly filled with Chinese immigrants and enlarged the areas of Chinatown. Apart from economic and social factors, political factors encouraged the movement of the Chinese population to Southeast Asia. Lombard (2005) said that the development of Chinatown in Java was the result of several important developments, including developments based on an economic and demographic background with stagnant agricultural conditions in China and opportunities to farm in Java. The period of changing political power from the Ming dynasty to the Manchu dynasty (1616 – 1662) also contributed to the migration of large numbers of Chinese people. The war pushed the losing parties to be chased and made many residents then leave China and flee (Lombard 2005). As the Chinatown area develops, the presence of the Chinese population increasingly affects the areas where they live.

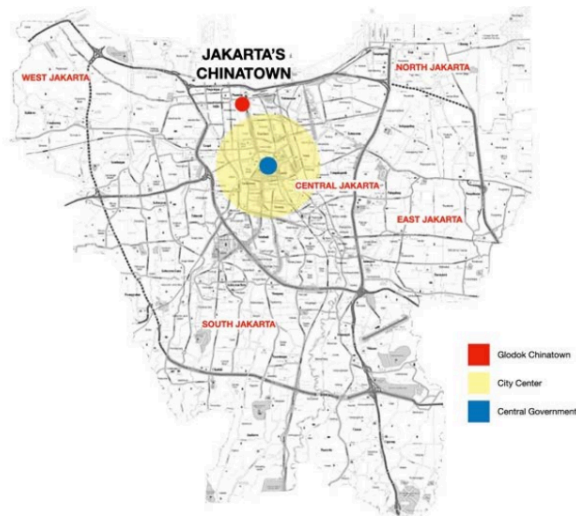


Fig. 1 Location of Chinatown Area in Jakarta. Source: Map Reproduction from [jakartasatu@jakarta.go.id](mailto:jakartasatu@jakarta.go.id)

Batavia was the initial name for Jakarta which was given by the Dutch when they built the city. This name was used until the conquest by the Japanese in 1942 which later changed the name of the



city to Jakarta (Gultom 2018). This restored the original name of the city which was originally called Jayakarta or what is often referred to by Westerners as Jacatra. Jayakarta was the first area that was captured by the Dutch when they set foot on Java. As the city built when the Dutch began to establish their power and dominance in Java, Batavia was an eyewitness to the start of colonialism in Indonesia.

Since the beginning Batavia was a city that had the largest Chinese population. In 1815, it was recorded that the Chinese has reached 52,394 out of 332,015 total population of Batavia. This number is the largest percent<sup>48</sup> among other cities in Java (Handinoto 1999). In Batavia, the Chinese were the actors who play a significant role in the movement of the city. Coming as traders, the Chinese not only increased trade and connected Batavia to the outside, but also became pioneers in cultivating agricultural land and supplying food to the city. In urban development, the Chinese helped erect the city walls and were the ones who contributed to the archetypal layout of the city. The construction of the Molenvliet canal (now Jalan Hayam Wuruk) connecting Batavia with the rural areas on the south side of the city was initiated by the idea of the Chinese. Entering the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the condition of the city had worsened, the removal of the Batavia government center from the old city center and the construction of the Koningsplein Palace in a new location (now Lapangan Banteng) also followed the excavation of a canal made by the Chinese. The Chinese not only built Batavia but also revived the city.

Currently Chinatown in Jakarta, known as the Glodok area, is a busy commercial area<sup>45</sup>. The long journey of the area, which is part of the Kota Tua Jakarta (Old Town area) and is the starting point of the city, also makes Glodok a historical tourist location. On the other hand, Glodok like other Chinatowns in Indonesia, is a city element whose existence has been tried to be obscured. During the New Order era (1965 - 1998), the government issued Presidential Instruction No. 14/1967 which prohibited public celebrations of Chinese religions and customs. The practice of worship that has cultural ties to China must be carried out internally within a limited scope. This order was issued based on the social and political interests of the authorities. The impact is that the existence of Chinatowns in various cities in Indonesia has faded for more than thirty years.

In 2000, the Presidential Decree No. 6/2000 revoked the 1967 Presidential Instruction and returned the freedom for the population to carry out various activities related to Chinese culture, whether related to religion, belief, or customs. This decision made the revival of Chinese culture and the previously-neglected Chinatown become a city space that received new attention, both from researchers and urban planners (Handinoto 1999; Tjiok 2017). The lifting of the ban on celebrations and activities of Chinese religion and culture in public spaces provided a new chapter for the existence of Chinese culture in Indonesia and the emergence of movements to reposition the Chinatown area among other elements in the urban space. Among the programs initiated, in addition to cultural activities such as Chinese cultural festivals, there is also a revitalization of the Chinatown area. One of them is by placing a gate in Chinatown areas, such as in Yogyakarta and Bogor, to mark the area and at the same time confirm the existence of Chinatown. In Jakarta, Glodok also received the spotlight with the renovation of several buildings including the Chung Hwa Pharmacy which is right at the mouth of Jalan Pantjoran, Glodok (Tjiok 2017).

Responding to Lefebvre about the production of space, Soja said that existing space is essentially a combination of space that is present (spatial representation) and space that is perceived (conceptualization of space). Behind the spaces that are present, at the same time there are

perceptions that are formed in how society perceives these spaces and what makes the space alive (Soja and Chouinard 1999). Chinatown is not just a tourist area with a collection of buildings presenting traces of the past. Inside the Glodok area is settled a part of the hidden layers of Jakarta and the journey that led to the existence of the city today. Understanding Jakarta's Chinatown is one step towards rethinking the spaces that make up the city and the aspects that bring them to life which mean to get a better understanding of the whole existence of the city.

The research conducted tries to further highlight the Jakarta's Chinatown area to explore what is behind its current existence. The Jakarta Chinatown is the only Chinatown in Indonesia that has undergone a change of location. The Glodok area is the second phase of the Chinatown. At the beginning of the city, Chinatown was a residential area within the city walls and part of the city center. In 1740 there was a massacre that almost killed the entire Chinese population of Batavia, including those living in rural areas. The massacre destroyed the houses of Chinese residents, especially those inside the city walls. Sometime after the events of 1740, the city appeared to be paralyzed without the presence of the Chinese which made the Dutch try to attract the remaining Chinese back to the city. However, after 1740 the Chinese who entered Batavia no longer remained in the city but occupied areas outside the city walls adjacent to the city gate. Over time, the Chinese people who kept arriving and filling the area made the area widened south to the Glodok region. This made the new Chinatown area outside the city walls known as Glodok Chinatown.

Jakarta's Chinatown experienced several events that affected its existence. After the 1740 massacre, there were racial riots in 1998 which again attacked the Chinese population. However, even though its existence was suppressed for a long time, Chinatown areas in various cities in Indonesia continue to endure. The presence of Chinatown in Jakarta is the result of commodity production that is fought between various interests. As said by Lefebvre, "An urban society is a society that results from a process of complete urbanization" (Lefebvre 2003: 1). The Chinatown area has created a distinctive spatial characteristic in the Jakarta city space. Starting from the arrival of Chinese migrants to Southeast Asia, the formation of settlement enclaves, and the development of new cities along the northern coast of Java, the Chinatown area grew and formed new relationships in the midst of the spaces that were formed. Jakarta's Chinatown is a reflection of the urbanization process of the urban space that continues to metamorphose along its journey. In the beginning of Batavia, the main life of the Chinatown population besides trading was farming. A developing city made changes to the spatial configuration and the Chinatown today is a large commercial area.

The research aims to explore the phase of the movement between the first Chinatown period at the beginning the Dutch built Batavia (1619 - 1740) and the renewal phase after 1740 to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to identify the spatial transformations that occurred. This identification is important as an input for history and the city to understand the overall formation of the living urban spaces. The early Chinatown as the first phase of Jakarta's Chinatown has been buried and lost. The research questions that arise are: "What is going on behind the formation of the Jakarta's Chinatown area today? How did the spatial transformation take place when the first Chinatown area died and when a new Chinatown area grew?"

The results showed that the Chinese settlement area outside the city walls is adjacent to the alternative city gate on the south side or *Pintoe Ketjil* (the Small Gate). A city surrounded by walls makes the *Pintoe Ketjil* a transitional space for residents from rural areas who would enter the city. The area around *Pintoe Ketjil* which was transformed into a market was the trigger for the development of the area. Over time, more and more Chinese people filled the *Pintoe Ketjil* area and not only resided, but also used their houses as places of business. The Chinatown which then

expanded to Glodok became a residential area for Chinese residents which was also a large commercial area.

## Methods

The research took the Glodok Chinatown area on the north side of Jakarta as the object of study. The research tried to examine the existence of the Chinatown area as part of the *Kota Tua* (Old Town) and the historical traces of the city. This research is a study of architectural history. As Henri Lefebvre said, space is a historical production (Lefebvre 1991). The space that can be found today is a collection of layers of settling space that is connected and then accumulate. One of the ways to understand space is to explore how these spaces are produced. The research was conducted using a qualitative method through an interpretive narrative approach. Through archival studies reinforced by field observations, the research tries to uncover bits and pieces of events in the past period to dig back from what is stated in the document and trace the spatial structure formed by relations from people's daily lives. The data includes notes, paintings, and photographs depicting the region mainly from the 17th to late 19th centuries. The focus of the analysis is placed on the examination of physical objects and subjective constructs (Groat and Wang 2013). This study aims to reconstruct space by arranging and putting the pieces into a perspective to get a comprehensive understanding of the area.

## Results and Discussion

### *The Entry of the Chinese into Batavia's Population*

The Chinese were skilled in the maritime sector. In Jan Hooymann and Andries Teisseire's report published in the first periodicals of Bataviaasch Genootschap in the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, they recorded that giant Chinese ships were seen sailing back and forth from the South China Sea (Lombard 2005). China even built ships for princes in Java. Another proof of the reliability of Chinese shipping technology is the spread of *Mayang* all over the north coast of Java. The *Mayang* is a boat that is generally used by Javanese fishermen and the bulkhead uses a typical Chinese watertight technique (Lombard 2005).

Long before the arrival of the Europeans, the Chinese had set foot in the archipelago. According to Tomé Pires's records in the 16<sup>th</sup> century there were quite several Chinese settlements in the coastal cities of Southeast Asia (Cortesão 1944). Hoetink wrote that in 1596 when Europeans came to Banten, there were already Chinese people living in Banten. He also mentioned that even earlier in 1411 Chinese merchant ships had docked at Grisee (Gresik), which is on the easternmost side of Java (Marcus A. S. and Benedanto 2007). By the time the Dutch landed in Banten, they found a settlement of the Chinese population which was well established and prosperous. Edmund Scott, a British lodge chief, said that at the coastal port Western settlers could easily see the Chinatown area with its distinctive character as if there was a city within a city. And it was in the Chinatown area that the British and Dutch tried to build their lodges (Lombard 2005).

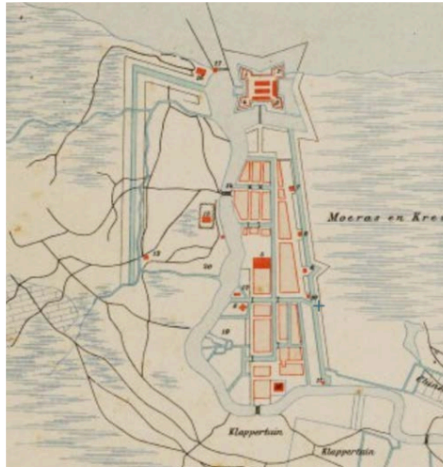


Fig. 2 The Early Urban Planning of Batavia 1625. Source: Leiden University Libraries, Dutch Colonial maps 03791.

In 1619 the VOC (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*) attempted to destroy Jayakarta and build a new city called Batavia which became the beginning of the Chinese people's ties to the city. The success of the VOC in seizing Jayakarta, led by Jan Pieterszoon Coen, resulted in the Dutch having a representative office on the island of Java (Abeyasekera 1987; Heuken 1982; Gultom 2018). Batavia which was previously a part of Banten was expected by Coen, who later became the Governor-General, to be a city to grow European society in Asia. Coen also took slaves from various places to work in Batavia. However, Coen's aspirations were hampered by the quality of VOC employees. The majority of VOC employees who were sent from the Netherlands were people who while in the Netherlands were an outcast group, such as homeless people or prisoners. Apart from having bad characters, the Dutch people who were brought to Batavia did not have the necessary skills (Boxer 1979). This made Coen turn to the Chinese.

The Chinese are known to be industrious and thrifty. The Chinese who lived in Banten became the trade representatives for goods from China such as cloth and porcelain. But they did not only trade, they also farmed. It is said that apart from cultivating pepper for export trade, Chinese people also grow rice for urban consumption (Marcus A. S. and Benedanto 2007). The Chinese were also pioneers in agriculture and mining. The Chinese were the first to open plantations and mining in the archipelago. Meanwhile, Europeans came as traders, and for a long time only dealt with buying and selling problems (Lombard 2005).

Coen saw the advantages of networking with Chinese people. In addition to Batavia obtaining basic commodities from China, the Chinese could also help market goods from Batavia. Coen's strategy was to exempt Chinese traders from anchoring taxes so that they would not turn to Banten but continue towards Batavia (Abeyasekera 1987; Blussé 1988; Niemeijer 2012). Coen tried to attract the Chinese population in Banten to move to Batavia and build kinship with Souw Beng Kong, the leader of the Chinese population in Banten. Through various approaches, gradually the Chinese entered and stayed in Batavia. The VOC also tried to attract Chinese people who came from China.

It was required for the Chinese junks coming to Batavia to bring a few people to stay, otherwise, the people on board would be forcibly taken and brought ashore. Gradually Chinese from various classes entered Batavia. In 1619 there were around 300 - 400 Chinese residents in Batavia (Marcus A. S. and Benedanto 2007). In 1673 the Chinese population of Batavia had reached 2,747 people, and this number had increased rapidly in 1815 (Castles 1967). The Chinese were different from other population groups. Coen brought people from Bali, Bugis, Makassar, Bima, Bengal, Malabar and the Coromandel Islands, and made them slaves. Meanwhile, Chinese citizens could live in Batavia as ordinary citizens. Even the Chinese population leader, Souw Beng Kong, who later became the first Chinese captain in Batavia (1619 - 1631) had the same position as the Major or Lieutenant for the Dutch (Abeyasekere 1987; Heuken 1982; Shahab 2001).

#### ***Batavia as a Chinatown***

In an area that was still dominated by swamps and forests where wild animals were roaming, the VOC began to build Batavia (Abeyasekere 1987). The Batavia configuration was designed to resemble cities in the Netherlands. The city plan adopted Simon Stevin's design in the form of a square with road sections and canals (Kehoe 2015; Gultom 2018). The first action taken in building Batavia were geographic intervention, including digging canals, clearing forests, elevating, and filling land surfaces to build settlements. The Ciliwung River or known as *Kali Besar* (the Great River), which was previously winding stretched from north to south, is straightened and becomes the main axis of the city. Like medieval cities in Europe, a wall was built around Batavia. The Chinese became the ones the VOC relied on to do so.

Batavia as it appears surrounded by thick walls was a closed city. Batavia enforced housing arrangements in the city based on class and ethnic groups. At the beginning of the city, the Javanese and Bantenese were forbidden to enter the city because they were suspected of attacking the Dutch (Abeyasekere 1987). Slaves could live in the city but were concentrated in certain blocks. The arrangement of space in Batavia reflects the hierarchy embedded in the city spaces. Settlement blocks that had direct access to canals had a higher value which reflects the class of residents in the area. Meanwhile, blocks that do not have access to canals are zones of lower value (Kehoe 2015). For example, the Banda and Malabar slave settlement blocks are far from the Ciliwung River or *Kali Besar* (the Great River) which is the main vertical axis of the city (Figure 3).

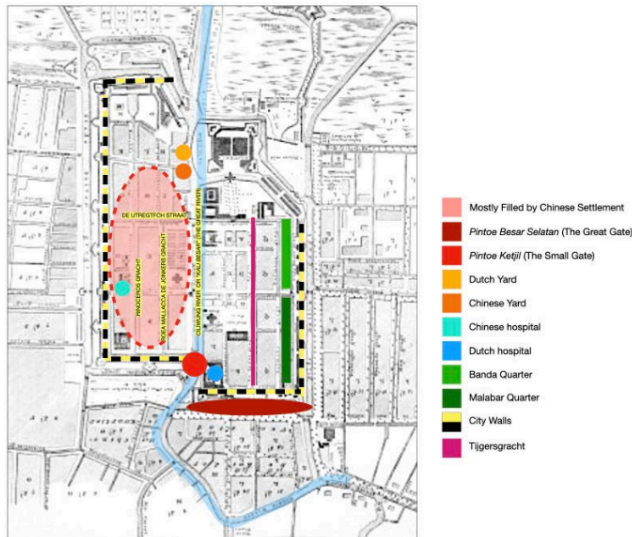


Fig. 3 The Chinatown Area in Batavia 1780. Source: Map Reproduction from Leiden University Libraries, Dutch Colonial Maps 12199.



Fig. 4 Painting by Johan Nieuhof shows the situation in Tijgersgracht in 1682 one of the elite areas in Batavia which was also Souw Beng Kong's Residence. Source: Koninklijke Bibliotheek.

The Chinese were citizens who had the privilege of living within the city walls. Unlike the Chinatown areas in other cities in Java, the residence of the Chinese in Batavia were not specifically



grouped into a cluster. It is said that the basic pattern of Chinese settlements in Java as well as settlements in port cities in South China generally consists of temples, markets, and ports with a main road axis perpendicular to the coast (Handinoto 1999). In Batavia, the Chinese lived in a European-style city configuration created by the VOC and filled the spaces between grids and canals, blending with other residents.

Initially, the Chinese only lived on the eastern side of the city. However, by 1660 the houses of the Chinese had spread all over the city, most of which were on the west side of the Ciliwung River. Sow Beng Kong as the captain of the Chinese has very luxurious houses located between Tijgersgracht and Prinsegracht (currently Jalan Cengkeh and Jalan Teh). Beng Kong's house was the most beautiful house in Batavia at the time and was often used as a party venue to entertain his Dutch guests (Lombard 2005). Apart from Beng Kong, the house of Ni Hoe Kong, captain of the Chinese in 1740, is also had a strategic location. The Hoe Kong house on Roepa Mallacca Street emphasizes the peculiarities of the Chinese population. The position of the house facing the canal and adjacent to the Ciliwung River or *Kali Besar* (the Great River) which is a commercial area, shows that the Chinese not only occupied various city spaces but also has an equal position with the Dutch and could live in premium areas.

The existence of the Chinese upper class in Batavia can also be seen in the market painted by Andries Beeckman (Figure 5). Beeckman described that among the people in the market there were wealthy Batavian people who were walking followed by their companions. The presence of the Chinese can be marked by the luxurious oversized clothes they wear. It is said that even wealthy Chinese were able to travel with more escorts than Europeans had. The habit of the rich Chinese people traveling with umbrellas which later became the procedure followed by the Dutch became an indication of how the Chinese elite influenced the lifestyle of other upper-class people.



Fig. 5 Left: Chinese Traders in Banten, 1596. Source: Rijksmuseum <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/RP-P-OB-80.257>. Right: The Batavia market, in The Castle of Batavia by Andries Beeckman, 1661. Source: Rijksmuseum <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/SK-A-19>.

The position of the Chinese who could be equal to the Dutch was not without cause. Since the beginning of entering Batavia, the Chinese population had worked hard for the VOC. In terms of trade, the Chinese population was widely used by the Dutch for various roles, including being traders as well as intermediaries to contact local population and harvest collectors. Chinese residents did not hesitate to enter the forest and open plantation land to remote rural areas where the



situation was still dangerous, even establishing processing factories. What the Chinese population did as a whole increased profit for the Dutch (Marcus A. S. and Benedanto 2007).

The Chinese population also contributed to the development of the city. In the early stages of Batavia, the Chinese helped the Dutch build the walls around the city. In 1631 Seow Beng Kong in collaboration with Lim Lacco, the second Chinese captain (1636-1645), contributed to the construction of a 30-meter wide canal along the southern city wall (Lombard 2005). In 1648 when Batavia faced the problem of flooding with puddles that submerged the city and caused the malaria epidemic to infect the residents, Phoa Beng Gam, the third Chinese captain (1645- 663) who was also an irrigation expert, was asked by the Dutch to find a solution. Beng Gam proposed the construction of a channel that would drain water from Batavia's canals out of town. The excavation of the canals was very costly while the VOC could only provide a limited amount of funds. In the end, the canal was built with the help of the Chinese Citizens Council, which collected funds from the Chinese population (Marcus A. S. and Benedanto 2007). The Molenvliet Canal provided a solution to environmental problems and acted as a corridor that connected Batavia with the surrounding rural areas. Through Molenvliet, farmers from various villages could more easily reach the city.

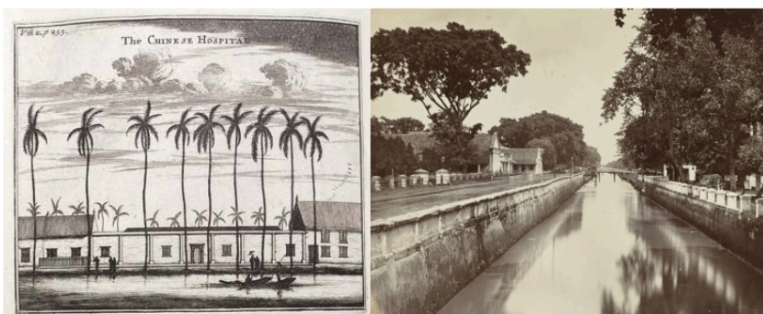


Fig. 6 Left: The Chinese Hospital 1682 by Johan Nieuhof. Source: Wellcome Images L0038159 [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The\\_Chinese\\_Hospital\\_the\\_lodgings\\_of\\_the\\_artisans\\_Wellcome\\_L418159.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Chinese_Hospital_the_lodgings_of_the_artisans_Wellcome_L418159.jpg) Right: Molenvliet 1870 - 1872 by Woodbury and Page. Source: Rijksmuseum <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/NG-1988-30-D-19-1>

Along with the growth of the city, the spaces for the Chinese population in Batavia also grew. There is not much trace left of the Chinese settlement areas. Edmund Scott who was in Banten from 1603 - 1604 (Lombard 2005; Marcus A. S. and Benedanto 2007) recorded Chinese houses in Banten built in a square pattern and mostly made of brick. Some houses also had a fence around them. According to Scott, the houses of the Chinese in Batavia, although sturdy with a square shape and roofs covered with tiles and equipped with ornaments, were more of a house that functioned for trading rather than those observed in Banten. And even though they were from the wealthy class, the Chinese population in Batavia tended not to make big houses. Many found one house occupied by several families (Marcus A. S. and Benedanto 2007). Behind the differences between Banten and Batavia, the solid conditions of both houses indicated that the Chinese population in each city lived in prosperity.

The progress of the Batavia Chinatown was also evident with the construction of social facilities such as hospitals. Interestingly, that Chinese residents have their hospital which is different from the Dutch Hospital. It is said that the Chinese Hospital has more complete facilities than the Dutch Hospital. Each of them stood in a separate zone. Similar to Molenvliet, the Chinese Hospital which was built in 1640 is evidence of the early Chinatown in Batavia. Phoa Beng Gam is a figure who contributed to initiating the establishment of the hospital. The Chinese Hospital located at *Rhinocerosgracht* (currently Tiang Bendera I Street) was successfully built and funded by Chinese citizens (Marcus A. S. and Benedanto 2007; Shahab and Hikmah 2010). The role of the Chinese in determining the development of the city gave rise to the perception that Batavia was a Chinatown.

### **The 1740 Massacre**

The early 18<sup>th</sup> century was a period of great influence for Batavia's Chinatown. The arrival of new immigrants from China made the city more crowded. It is said that at that time 4,000 Chinese living in the city and 10,000 scattered around the outer walls. With most of them being unemployed, the city was not conducive to socio-economic status of the community. Batavia, which was facing a bad economy with falling sugar prices and a decline in the trade cycle, saw immigrants as a burden on the city. The Dutch attitude became repressive towards the Chinese. The issuance of policies related to taxes and levies increasingly binding and suppressing the Chinese population. This action made relations between China and the Netherlands heated up. It was as if the Dutch changed the attitude that previously considered the Chinese as partners to become a threat. Various Dutch actions, especially Governor-General Adriaan Valckenier's order to transfer the homeless Chinese to Ceylon, eventually resulted in a Chinese population rebellion who saw the sending attempt as a Dutch move to rid the Chinese population of Batavia (Abeyasekera 1987; Blussé 1988; Vermeulen 2010).

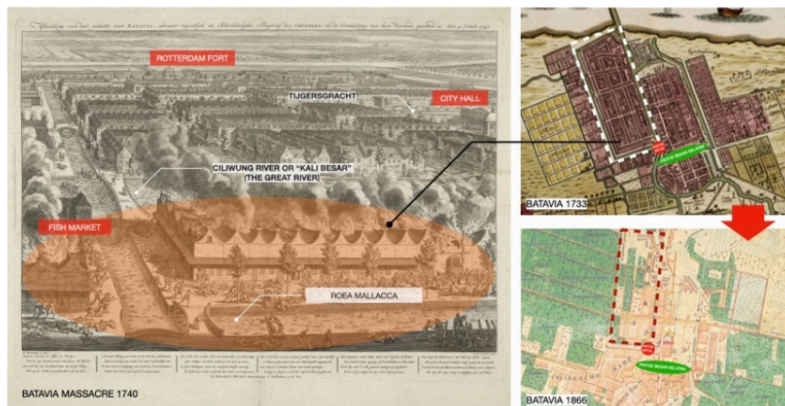


Fig. 7 <sup>46</sup>t: The 1740 Massacre, print by Adolf van der Laan. Source: Rijksmuseum <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/RP-P-OB-75.354>. Top right: Chinatowns in the crowded city center before 1740. Source: Rijksmuseum <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/my/collections/181761--tj-h-siem/batavia/objecten/RP-P-1911-211>. Bottom right: Batavia 1866 Post-Massacre with Part of the City Center Area Empty. Source: Map Reproduction from Leiden University Libraries, Dutch Colonial Maps 07244.

38

The massacre of the Chinese population in Batavia in 1740 was the culmination of a feud between the Chinese and the Dutch. It is said that at the time of the massacre, the burnt houses of Chinese people were on the east side of the city in *Theewaterstaart* and *Herrenstaart* which were the residential areas of the Dutch. That before they lived side by side. However, robbery and massive killings took place on the west side of the Ciliwung River or *Kali Besar* (the Great River) where the majority of the population was Chinese. Entire houses in Blok F caught fire including the grocery store. The flames continued to reach *Utrechtschepoort* (Block H) and burned more than half of the area. The arson even reached the Chinese Hospital (Vermeulen 2010). The massacre wiped out the Chinese in Batavia. The Chinese who avoided the massacre and fled outside Batavia and caused the rioting to spread to other cities. In Banten, the Chinese escapees failed in entering the region, which had been blockaded by Dutch troops. In Java, the Chinese attempts to attack Dutch fortresses received assistance from the Javanese people. The Chinese-Javanese resistance against the Dutch developed into a major battle (1740-1742) and was recorded as one of the significant Javanese efforts to defend the territory and was the largest contribution of the Chinese population in breaking Dutch rule in Java (Daradjadi 2013).

Batavia after the riots left a quiet space. The killing and burning of Chinese houses throughout Batavia destroyed more than half of the city. The most vital effect was that the absence of the Chinese stopped the motor of the city and caused the cessation of community activities. During a century in the archipelago, the Dutch did not pay attention to agriculture. It was only after the events of 1740 that the Dutch finally realized the merits of Chinese farmers. As Baron van Imhoff wrote on his memorandum entitled *Considerations on the Present State of the Dutch East India Company*, "It was the Chinese who started cultivating the land, now it is time for us to perfect and expand agriculture." (Lombard 2005: 248). The report of Jan Hooymann and Andries Teisseire in the late 18th century also made the same call and urged the Dutch to follow what the Chinese had exemplified in cultivating land (Lombard 2005). Without the presence of the Chinese population, Batavia lost traders and farmers and was hit by a shortage of food supplies. The weakened city situation prompted the Dutch to then move to ask the Chinese to return to Batavia with the promise of some conveniences (Abeyasekera 1987).

Regarding conditions post-1740 there are several versions of the discussion. In one version it is said that the Dutch no longer allowed the Chinese to live in Batavia, and for this a special area was created for the Chinese population outside the city walls (Abeyasekera 1987). The second version of the Dutch attracted the Chinese to return to Batavia and because the Chinese were no longer willing to live within the city walls, the Dutch specially provided residential areas for the Chinese outside the walls of Batavia (Vermeulen 2010). In the early post-1740s, the situation appeared to be leaning more towards the second version of the story considering that the Dutch themselves condemned the 1740 massacre and that Valckenier was brought to trial, and finally and especially that the Dutch needed the Chinese population.

By the 1800s the Chinese from outside Batavia gradually approached and settled in the areas provided for them. However, the Dutch attitude seemed ambiguous. The Dutch provided settlements for the Chinese in an area (*Chineesche camp*) on the south side outside the walls of Batavia. In the case of the economy, the Dutch gives the Chinese the authority to collect taxes in the market. On the other hand, in 1816 the Dutch issued a rule *passenstelsel* (pass system) which required Chinese people to carry a pass card if they were to leave their area. In 1826 the Dutch imposed a district system (*wijkenstelsel*). In the district system, every ethnic group, including the Chinese, must live in a designated area.

In several records, it is stated that the relationship between the Dutch and the Chinese never fully recovered. The post-massacre relationship is more of a mutually beneficial relationship and that it was inevitable that there was deep suspicion (Abeyasekera 1987; Blusse 1988). The concentration of the Chinese population in a special area is also said to be the beginning of segregation between the Chinese population and other residents and to build the image of the Chinese population as an exclusive community. This condition was different from the situation of the initial Chinese population within the walls of Batavia which was open (Abeyasekera 1987; Blussé 1988; Niemeijer 2012; Vermeulen 2010).

#### ***Spatial Transformation in the New Chinatown***

Until 1808 Batavia was still surrounded by city walls. Residents from outside the city who wanted to enter the city center have two accessible entrances on the north and south sides. From the port, immigrants who wanted to enter the city had to pass through *Binnen Nieuwpoortstraat* or the "*Pintoe Besar Utara*" (the Northern Main Gate). On the south side, there is *Buiten Nieuwpoortstraat* or the "*Pintoe Besar Selatan*" (the Southern Main Gate) which connects Batavia with rural areas. As the main gate, the *Pintoe Besar Selatan* was not always open, alternative access to the city was through the "*Pintoe Ketjil*" or *Kleine Poort* (the Small Gate) which was near Fort Diest (*Diestpoort*).

The new area of Chinese settlement post-1740 is located <sup>23</sup> on the east side of the river adjacent to *Pintoe Ketjil*. The alternative city gate or *Pintoe Ketjil* was the border between the city center and the surrounding areas. The Chinese settlement which was close to the city gate and side by side with a part of Ciliwung River or often called "*Kali Pintoe Ketjil*" (the Small Gate River) made the area a busy lane that is often passed by residents who want to reach the city. Johannes Rach described that in 1775 the area around *Pintoe Ketjil* was still an empty land (Figure 9). F. de Haan described that on the northern side of the Chinese quarter (Block O) there is a square consisting of rows of stalls and bamboo markets (Figure 10). The existence of the market which was an extension of the Chinese quarter and became known as "*Pasar Pagi*" (the Morning Market) eventually triggered the development of the area. *Pasar Pagi* eventually became a new focal point for the residents.



Fig. 8 Atmosphere of the *Pintoe Ketjil* area in 1775 by Johannes Rach. Source: National Library of Indonesia A 08 National Library of Indonesia <https://opac.perpusnas.go.id/DetailOpac.aspx?id=311573>

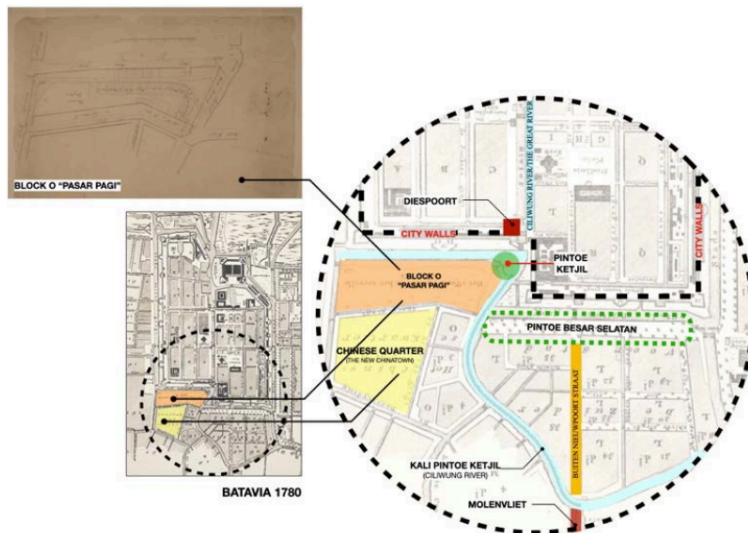


Fig. 9 Above Left: Plan of the *Pasar Pagi* Estimated after 1805<sup>56</sup> Source: Maps collected by Frederik de Haan 1906 - Serie D-52 0052A1 from National Archives Collection of the Republic of Indonesia <https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/pagebrowser/DeHaan-11-D/#source=1&page=65&accessor=thumbnails&view=imagePane> Bottom left: Location of the New Chinatown Outside the City Walls. Source: Map Reproduction from Leiden University Libraries, Dutch Colonial Maps 12199.



### *The Pasar Pagi at Pintoe Ketjil*

Batavia was an important node in the world trade chain. Since the development of maritime trade in the 15th century, Southeast Asia has been the main producer of various commodities, ranging from agricultural products, spices, mining, or minerals. Textiles were a potential commodity that European, Indian and Chinese traders used to enter Southeast Asia and exchange them for agricultural products (Reid 2014). *Pasar Pagi*, which was located close to the port, had a strategic location. The networks owned by the Chinese also helped facilitate the running of trading activities. Starting from a piece of market, *Pasar Pagi* developed into a gateway for imported goods to enter Batavia. The Chinatown which was near the city gate eventually became the gatekeeper for Batavia. The Chinese population became a hub for imported goods, especially textiles, and became a focal point for their distribution to other markets in Batavia.

The initial presence of the Chinese population in Java was formed through trading activities, but not all Chinese who settled were traders. Among the various classes of Chinese society that grew up in Java, many were farmers or served as stewards of agricultural lands belonging to Javanese aristocrats. Post-1740, it was recorded that 1,442 Chinese residents in Batavia worked by trading, as many as 935 people were farmers, and 728 people worked in sugar production or logging (Lombard 2005). This shows that apart from trade, jobs related to agriculture and plantations were also undertaken by the Chinese population. This is influenced by vast tracts of land and forests that can be cultivated by residents. As on the 1680 map (Figure 10), it can be seen that outside the walls of Batavia is entirely a green area that stretches out consisting of rice fields and plantations.

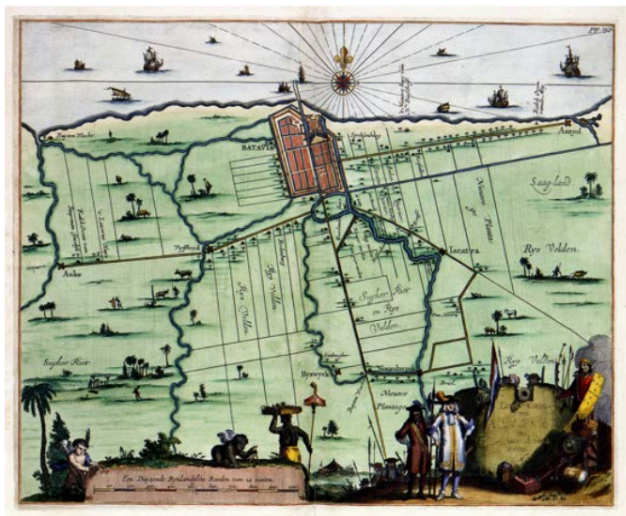


Fig. 10 Map of Batavia 1682 with lush land outside the city center by Johan Nieuhoff. Source: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Atlas\\_Van\\_der\\_Hagen-KW1049B13\\_020-Landt\\_Caerte\\_van\\_BATAVIA\\_met\\_Haer\\_onder\\_hoorende\\_Forten.jpeg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Atlas_Van_der_Hagen-KW1049B13_020-Landt_Caerte_van_BATAVIA_met_Haer_onder_hoorende_Forten.jpeg)

The Chinese population was behind the various agricultural cultivation in Batavia. Rice, tilapia, peanuts, and sugar cane which was the main basis of the sugar industry, were among those developed by the Chinese. Not all the lands belonged to Chinese residents or were cultivated by the Chinese. Governor General Baron van Imhoff (1743 – 1750) wrote in *De Considérations* that the Chinese were the ones who started the activity of cultivating the land. The Chinese drove agricultural activities and introduced new technology to the community. On the other hand, the Javanese generally act as cultivators of the land (Lombard 2005).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, conditions changed, and some agricultural cultivation initiated by the Chinese was partially no longer developed by them and had changed hands to the Dutch (Lombard 2005). In some areas of Java, the Dutch limited the involvement of the Chinese in agriculture. Apart from cultivating vegetables in suburban areas, or upland areas such as West Java, agricultural activity driven by the Chinese population declined. In Batavia, the city was getting denser and the reduction of agricultural land seemed to have contributed to changing the life pattern of the Chinese population. Of the various activities that developed in the population, trade appears to be a growing portion. This describes a change in the pattern of community life that shifted from previously the majority was farming and social structures which then emphasized urban patterns.

The development of the *Pintoe Ketjil* area can be a clue to how trading in the second phase Chinatown grew. The Chinese people who kept arriving around *Pintoe Ketjil* made the area increasingly filled with settlers. The view of the area is a row of two-story houses that stood side by side facing the river or road. Houses generally had narrow facades with a square shape that extended backward. The average roof takes the form of a curved saddle with a hanging hill roof (*xuan shanding*) or the hard hill roof (*ying shānding*). The houses in the new Chinatown seem to adopt Chinese houses styles seen in southern China which was mostly a dense urban area where the houses were not as big as in rural areas. Often the house also functioned as a place of business, with the lower floor as a shop and the upper floor as a residence. This type is known as "*Ruko*" which stands for "*Rumah-Toko*" or shophouse (Lombard 2005). In each unit, there are generally one or two meters of terraces as a transition between part of the shophouse and the public road. The narrow and elongated form of shophouses that made it difficult for lighting and air to enter the house was usually circumvented by creating an opening in the form of a courtyard in the middle of the. Like in port cities in Guangdong and Fujian provinces, *ruko* is a marker that shows the uniqueness of Chinatown in the *Pintoe Ketjil* (Handinoto 1999).



Fig. 11 Houses in *Pintoe Ketjil* in 19th Century. Source: (Left) KITLV 5240, <http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:790931>, (Right) by Woodbury & Page from KITLV 82553, <http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:932289>



The situation around *Pintoe Ketjil* showed a different condition from the early Chinese population in the center of Batavia as depicted by Van der Laan in the painting of the 1740 massacre (Figure 7). The houses that were lined up closely illustrate the limited conditions of the residents in the new Chinatown. *Pasar Pagi* which developed through a series of activities driven from each house which then turns the area into a large market reflects how people's houses were the engines that animate the community's economy. The presence of *ruko* in the *Pintoe Ketjil* area marked the second phase of the Chinese population in Batavia and made the new Chinatown area universal with manifestations that can be found in various Chinatowns scattered in other parts of the world.

Apart from the building typology that is uniform and makes the area easy to identify, another prominent aspect of the Chinatown is that residents lived their daily lives in the Chinese way. This can be seen from the language, style of dress, and daily lives of people who still adopt Chinese culture. On the other hand, the Chinese also mingled with the local community. This led to the acculturation of culture in various forms. Today you can find many traditional Chinese foods that have become popular and belong to the local population. In Jakarta, there are many foods that are derived from Chinese recipes, such as *cap cai* (ten vegetables), *fu yung hai* (omelet), chicken noodles, or other foods that were popularized by Chinese who were born in the archipelago or what is often referred to as "Peranakan Chinese" has been considered a local food.

Over time, *Pintoe Ketjil*, which was originally the city gate, became a marker for the new Chinatown area. Some records in the 19th century (Figure 12) describing the situation in new Chinatown mention the area around the river leading to the city gate as the *Pintoe Ketjil* area and the river that is part of the Ciliwung River or *Kali Besar* (the Great River) as "*Kali Pintoe Ketjil*" (the Small Gate River). The growth of the *Pintoe Ketjil* area, triggered by the presence of the *Pasar Pagi*, is reminiscent of the pattern of medieval markets in Europe, which originated from city gates that extended along roads in the city and later became a commercial area (Guàrdia and Oyón 2015; Morris 2013). In *Pintoe Ketjil* markets grew along the river leading to the city gate. However, unlike in Europe where at the end of the 18th century the arrival of the industrial revolution changed the formation of open markets into closed markets and the birth of the era of the market hall, the market in *Pintoe Ketjil*, which grew out of people's houses, mostly survived from its formation until now.



Fig. 12 *Pintoe Ketjil* as a landmark in the New Chinatown Area in the 19th Century to the 20th Century. Source: KITLV 1407164, <http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:866194> (left) and KITLV 1407228, <http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:866450> (right)

### Glodok Chinatown

It is said that the word “Glodok” comes from the sound of water in the shower or “*pantjoran*” (Heuken 1982; Shahab 2004). Meanwhile, another story states that the name Glodok comes from the name of a Balinese captain named Tjitra Glidok who oversees the area (Saleh 1953). When Batavia was still a fortress city surrounded by walls, rural residents from the southern region who would like to reach the city would follow the river by boat across the Molenvliet canal before turning along the *Kali Pintoe Ketjil* and then entering the city gate via *Pintoe Besar Selatan* or *Pintoe Ketjil*. Glodok is an area that is at the intersection point of the Molenvliet canal and *Kali Pintoe Ketjil*. Every resident who entered the alternative city gate or *Pintoe Ketjil* will automatically cross Glodok. When the Chinatown settlement area expanded to reach Pantjoran-Glodok, Glodok's position at the end of Molenvliet made Glodok appear as the final boundary for the Chinatown area. Figures 13 and 14 show that starting from a cluster of settlements near the *Pintoe Ketjil*, over time the Chinatown area expanded and became denser with roads and riversides filled with houses.

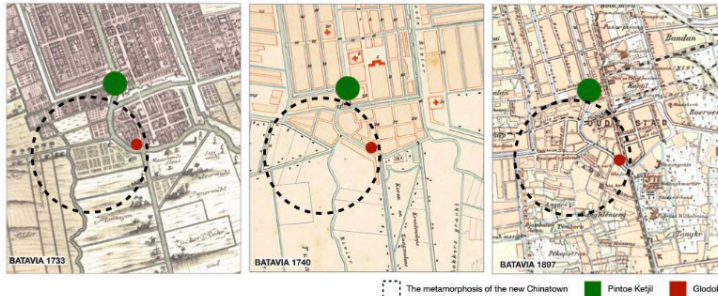


Fig. 13 Spatial transformation around *Pintoe Ketjil* before the massacre of 1740 and after the growth of new Chinatown area. Left: Batavia 1733. Source: Map Reproductions from Leiden University Libraries, Dutch Colonial Maps 07245, 03793 and 03795.



Fig. 14 Left: The New Chinatown Area 1866. Right: The Bustling New Chinatown in 1938. Source: Map Reproduction from Leiden University Libraries, Dutch Colonial Maps 07244 and 03818-2.

Entering the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Batavia underwent significant changes. The Dutch colonial government, under the leadership of Daendels (1808-1811), destroyed the walls surrounding the city and moved the city center to Weltevreden on the south side of Batavia. Batavia also expanded and was no longer limited to the area that was previously inside the city walls but covered the entire area which is now called Jakarta (Abeyasekera 1987). The movement that occurred also had an impact on the existence of Chinatown. These changes did not significantly change the intensity of population activities. The trading activities carried out by the residents continued and the new Chinatown area that had expanded to Glodok continued to develop. On the other hand, the Chinatown area which was previously close to the city center, has been thrown far away to the outskirts of the city. The changing spatial orientation also seemed to symbolize the existence of Chinese population who had also been marginalized. The inhabitants of the new Chinatown were no longer actors who had a strong influence in the city center. There were different characteristics between the first Chinatown and the renewal phase of Chinatown. The residents who filled the Chinatown area around *Pintoe Ketjil* were different figures from the early Chinatown residents who received the same privileges and position as the Dutch population. The inhabitants of the first Chinatown are the elements of the city that helped build the city and own it. This role has disappeared and is no longer found among residents in the new Chinatown. Meanwhile, the aspect that remained the same was that the Dutch continued to rely on the Chinese population in various ways especially in reviving the economy.

Furthermore, the spatial transition that occurred also changed Glodok's position. The relocation of the central government meant that *Pintoe Ketjil* was no longer the gateway for residents who were going to the city center. Instead, Glodok was the boundary between the city and the Chinatown area. The spatial arrangement of the city made Glodok take over the role as gateway to the new Chinatown area. The name Glodok Chinatown became popular in marking the area and the abandonment of *Pintoe Ketjil*.



Fig. 15 The Second Phase of Jakarta Chinatown outside the city center with the Glodok area as the gateway. Source: Map Reproduction from jakartasatu.jakarta.go.id and Batavia Map from Leiden University Libraries, Dutch Colonial Maps 07244.

The phase of expansion of the Chinatown area to Glodok also marks the strengthening of the regional characteristics. Street names that in the early years of Batavia were established in Dutch, can no longer be found in the new Chinatown. Leaving the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Glodok Chinatown area, which has become increasingly densely populated with settlements decorated with street names that carry localism. On the map, there are names including *Jalan Pasar Pagi* (the Morning Market Street), *Jalan Kongsu Besar* (the Big Partnership Street), *Jalan Toko Tiga* (the Three Shops Street), *Jalan Patekoan* (the Eight Teapots Street), *Gang Sajoer Asin* (the Salty Vegetables Alley), *Gang Tauge* (the Beansprout Alley), *Gang Kampoeng Opak* (the Opak Crackers Village Alley), *Jalan Ketjap* (the Ketchup Street), *Gang Daging* (the Meat Alley), and also *Gang Ikan* (the Fish Alley). The names that are taken from trading activities, types of commodities, or the names of food in the market seem to emphasize the new Chinatown area as a commercial district.

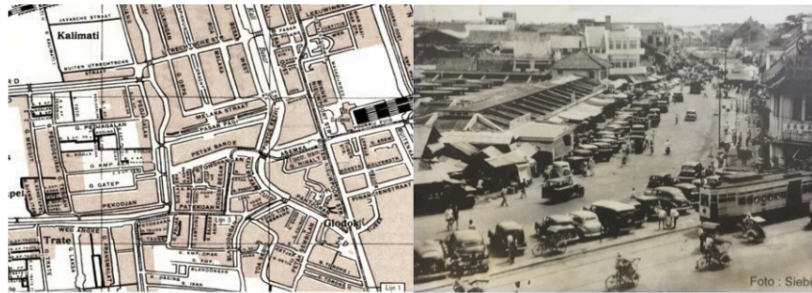


Fig. 16 Left: The New Chinatown area entering the 20th century in 1933 (left) and c. 1950 (right). Source: Leiden University Libraries, Dutch Colonial Maps 03807 (left) and Kopi Es Tak Kie Glodok (right).

## Conclusion

Jakarta's Chinatown has gone through a long period of its journey. Most of the traces from the first Jakarta Chinatown have been buried and leave bits and pieces that go unnoticed when talking about Chinatown. However, the first Chinatown was part of the urban elements that had played a role in shaping the city. These traces are still embedded in the city spaces. Among them, Molenvliet is evidence of the existence of the first Chinatown, which continues to live and become the breath of Jakarta today.

The spatial transformation that occurred and the movement of the early Chinatown from the city center to a new area outside the city walls, indicates the important role of the city gate or *Pintoe Ketjil*. *Pintoe Ketjil* is a barrier as well as a meeting point between the city and the surrounding areas. The growth of *Pintoe Ketjil* which developed into a transition area and triggered the growth of the second phase of Chinatown through the presence of the *Pasar Pagi* shows the major role of the market as an economic generator as well as a binding of social relations between communities. The market in the second phase of Chinatown is a network that grows out of people's houses and is the key that drives the region. The market in the form of a *ruko* shows the multifunctionality of the spatial structure formed and in how a system built in the domestic sphere penetrates outside and becomes the motor that moves spaces in the public zones.

The existence of the new Chinatown in *Pintoe Ketjil* reflects the industrial urban community. At the beginning of Chinatown in Batavia, spaces were brought to life by Chinese residents with their daily activities of farming and trading. The urban revolution with a developing political aspect has an impact on the control over the social structure of society and the development of urban spaces. An increasingly densely populated city and the loss of natural resources within its reachable radius, has changed the focus and perspective of the population. Agriculture is no longer the center of people's lives, which was originally part of daily life in the first Chinatown. This reminds us that cities are places where specific differentiation of occupation has grown. Apart from growing trade, the activities carried out by the population also contributed to the growth of new fields of work. The houses of residents in the new Chinatown become theater stages which are the embodiment of



activities that take place in the area and bring people to life. *Ruko* is a specific characteristic of Glodok Chinatown, while *Pintoe Ketjil* and *Pasar Pagi* are the nucleus.

Glodok at the beginning of its existence was an outer boundary for the new Chinatown area. This construction changes when there is a change in urban spatial planning and the relocation of the city center. The changing orientation of the city has not only changed Glodok but has also completely reconstructed the structure of the whole area. Today people regard Glodok as the front yard of Jakarta's Chinatown and the gateway to the area. However, as is often symbolized that Jakarta's Chinatown is a dragon's head, so its head faces the port to the north, and Glodok is the tail. Chinatown is a piece of the history of Jakarta, discussing it requires a comprehensive perspective to see the area as a whole, both in terms of spatial construction and time period.



Fig. 17 Left: Situation of Glodok Chinatown in 2020. Right: Placement of the Temporary Gate at the Entrance of Glodok Area to Welcome the 2020 Cap Go Meh Festival. Source: Freta Oktarina.

33

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