CHINESENESS IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER:

THE TRANSFORMATION OF CHINESE INDONESIAN AFTER *REFORMASI*

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School

Of Cornell University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

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August 2013

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Cornell University 2013

My dissertation is an ethnographic project documenting the transformation of Chinese Indonesians post-Suharto Indonesia. When Suharto was in power (1966–1998), the Chinese in his country were not considered an ethnicity with the freedom to maintain their ethnic and cultural heritage. They were marked as "the Other" by various policies and measures that suppressed their cultural markers of ethnicity. The regime banned Chinese language education, prohibited Chinese media, and dissolved Chinese organizations, an effort that many Chinese thought of as destroying the Chinese community in Indonesia as they were seen as the three pillars that sustained the Chinese community. Those efforts were intended to make the Chinese more Indonesian; ironically, they highlighted the otherness of Chinese Indonesians and made them perpetual foreigners who remained the object of discrimination despite their total assimilation into Indonesian society. However, the May 1998 anti-Chinese riot that led to the fall of the New Order regime brought about political and social reform. The three pillars of the Chinese community were restored. This restoration produces new possibilities for Chinese cultural expression. Situated in this area of anthropological inquiry, my dissertation examines how the Chinese negotiate and formulate these identities, and how they ascribe meaning to Chinese identities. I argue that Chinese cultural expression facilitates the re-emergence of multiple Chinese identities. The multiplicity of Chinese identities is reflected in the way they view Chinese culture, the creation of exclusionary and inclusionary boundaries, and the idea of

Chinese political engagement. All these occur as a result of different backgrounds and experiences of individual Chinese.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Setefanus Suprajitno was born and grew up in the New Order Indonesia. Coming from a Chinese family, he has been curious since his childhood about the cultural and social forces that have influenced his identity. His curiosity leads to his research interest into the lives of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the many people who helped me complete this project. Without their kindness and material, intellectual and affective gifts, this research would have been more difficult if not impossible. While for reasons of confidentiality I cannot name all my informants, it is they who have made this dissertation possible. I extend my deepest thanks to them.

I gratefully acknowledge the financial support provided for my study and research from a variety of sources. I would like to thank: the American Indonesian Exchange Foundation; the Directorate General of Higher Education, the Indonesian Ministry of Education; the Department of Anthropology and the Southeast Asia Program at Cornell University.

I am grateful for the generosity and wisdom of my stellar doctoral committee. Marina Welker helped me navigate the world of anthropology and agreed to serve as chair. I appreciate her style, challenging but always helpful critiques. Andrew Willford often asked me tough questions that sharpened my analytical skills. He sets a standard for academic and professional integrity that I respect and can only aspire to. Vilma Santiago-Irizarry introduced me to the field of linguistic anthropology. Her theorizing on the intersections of language and ethnicity has been very important to my own incursions into the study of the Chinese in Indonesia. Eric Tagliacozzo's invaluable comments helped me understand the historical trajectory of Chinese Indonesians. He has changed my perspectives on the study of history.

Last but not least, I must thank my sister, Rachel, and her children, Andrew, Nancy, and Justin, who are my constant source of motivation. I also thank my friends in the United States

and Indonesia for their support. It would be difficult for me to survive the years it has taken me to complete the doctoral degree without their encouragement.

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Introduction

In late June 2005, my nephew and I visited the Miniature Park of Beautiful Indonesia, locally known as TMII (the abbreviation of Indonesian name of the park, *Taman Mini Indonesia Indah*), in East Jakarta. TMII is a theme park that exhibits the diversity of various ethnic groups and cultures in Indonesia. The park's organization is based on provinces in Indonesia. Hence, each province has a pavilion showcasing the culture of ethnic groups who live in the province. When we were in the East Java pavilion, I saw a Chinese family looking at the display and diorama. The son asked his father in Javanese, "Dad, why can't we find the Chinese in the display? There are a lot of Chinese in East Java, aren't there?" The father laughed and said in Javanese, "I don't know." The father did not think much about the absence of the Chinese, and neither did I. But after a while, the child's question made me aware that the Chinese were conspicuously absent in the displays and dioramas in a number of pavilions I visited. In this pavilion, the pavilion of our home province, visitors can only see the Javanese and the Madurese, two major ethnic groups in the province. Even in West Kalimantan province where the Chinese are one of the three major ethnic groups alongside the Dayak and Malay, no images of Chinese ethnic group could be found.[1] The same situation was the case in all pavilions.

As a cultural development project of the New Order regime started in 1972, TMII, officially opened to public in 1975, was meant to display Indonesia's ethnic and cultural pluralism, which were incorporated into national culture such that there was harmony between national unity and regional and cultural difference (Foulcher, 1990:302-303). According to

[1] West Kalimantan is the first province whose deputy governor is an ethnic Chinese, namely Christiandy Sanjaya aka Bong Hon San. He was elected as the deputy governor in 2007. He also won the election of deputy governor for the second time in 2012. The other province that has an ethnic Chinese as deputy governor is Jakarta Special Administrative region, elected in 2012. West Kalimantan is also the first province that has a Chinese as head of regency.

Pemberton (1994), TMII demonstrates how cultural differences are deployed as local or regional cultures that are then incorporated into a national Indonesian culture. It constructs the generic Indonesian culture by presenting its local variants or cultural substratum known as "archipelagic cultures (*kebudayaan nusantara*)" (Acciaoli, 2001:3). In the official publication for commemorating the opening of TMII prepared by Yayasan Harapan Kita, the foundation that managed TMII, Suharto, the then president of Indonesia said,

> This means that *Indonesian culture is essentially one, with a pattern of diversity reflecting the wealth of Indonesian culture* and serving as a model and basis for development of the entire people, ultimately for the enjoyment of the entire people. Therefore, in guiding and cultivating the national culture, the mining and enrichment of regional cultures is an important element in enriching and lending character to the national culture (The Writers' Group, 1978:19; emphasis added).

TMII was created, in Pemberton's words (1994:153), as "an idealized Indonesia" in which local and regional cultures scattered around the archipelago constituted Indonesian national culture, and seen as an avenue for valorizing the value of "unity in diversity," the coat of arms of Indonesia, which Indonesians should revere.

TMII also served as a cultural institution in which Indonesians from diverse ethnic background learned how to cultivate relationship among various ethic groups, relationship between them and the nation, as well as how to be Indonesians (Anderson, 1987:77). As Boellstorff writes, TMII is an example of how culture and governance in the New Order Indonesia are intertwined. He coins a term "ethnolocality," which refers to "a spatial scale where 'ethnicity' and 'locality' presume each other to the extent that they are, in essence, a single concept" (2002:25). Ethnolocality, in this case, means that various ethnic groups are linked to spatial locations in the archipelago. It becomes the tool of the New Order regime in articulating regional diversity and constructing national unity, in which various ethnic cultures in different regions are parts of Indonesian national culture. In relation to TMII, ethnolocality organizes how

TMII showcases Indonesia's pluralism. The display of cultural and ethnic diversity is organized based on administrative unit — that is, province — as a part of national integration. TMII has 33 pavilions that represent the regions or provinces in Indonesia and display the cultures of ethnic groups residing in those provinces.[2] However, the Chinese are excluded in the national imagined collectivity because of their foreign origin and having no specific spatial location in Indonesia.

The similar situation also takes place in the National Museum of Indonesia in Jakarta. Displays of traditional houses, local cultural artifacts, and dolls depicting men and women wearing their ethnic costumes from each province of Indonesia greet visitors when they enter the Nusantara (Archipelago) Room. Exhibits in this room represent the ethnic and cultural diversity of Indonesia, as well as the national unity among various ethnic groups, which leads to the establishment of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (*Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia*). Again, the Chinese are clearly absent in this representation.

During the New Order era (1966-1998), as displays of ethnic and cultural diversity and national unity as an "idealized Indonesia" in TMII and the Nusantara Room of the National Museum show, despite having been living in the archipelago for such a long time, the ethnic Chinese, who do not have any specific spatial location in Indonesia, were deemed non-existent in Indonesia's national collectivity. To be Indonesians, they had to assimilate themselves into the local culture where they lived. The Chinese living in Java had to be Javanese, the Chinese living in Bali had to be Balinese, and so on. In this context, as cultural projects of national unity, TMII and the Nusantara Room of the National Museum, which the New Order regime created for

[2] Originally it had 27 pavilions representing 27 provinces of Indonesia in the New Order era. After 1999, six provinces were created. So the total number of provinces is 33. However, on October 22, 2012, the national parliament and the Ministry of Home Affairs agreed to split East Kalimantan province into two — the original East Kalimantan province and the new province called North Kalimantan. After East Timor province became an independent country on May 2002 (the referendum as to whether East Timor province would secede from Indonesian was held on August 30, 1999), East Timor pavilion was converted into East Timor museum.

showcasing the pluralism and diversity of ethnicity and culture in Indonesia were ironic, due to the absence of the Chinese. They excluded the ethnic Chinese who have been living in Indonesia for ages unless they converted to "indigenous" ethnic groups.

Institutionalizing Exclusion

The exclusion of the Chinese from the national imagined collectivity, which became the New Order regime's official policy, was rooted long before Indonesia as a nation-state came into being. Despite having been in Indonesia for such a long time and culturally localized, Chinese Indonesians were still considered as perpetual foreigners. Their existence in Indonesia was often characterized by anti-Chinese violence, which included various atrocities, oppressive state policies, and everyday discrimination (Purdey, 2006). Shiraishi (1997) observes that since early 1910s, there had been a number of ethnic riots between the Chinese and the *pribumis* (the indigenous ethnic groups). The resentment of the *pribumis* toward the Chinese could be traced back to 1854, when the Dutch colonial administration created the so-called "colonial caste structure," which classified Indonesian residents into three groups — the Europeans, the Chinese, and the natives (Wertheim and The, 1962:230). Through this hierarchical classification, putting the Chinese between the Europeans on the one hand and the natives on the other, the Dutch created the "Chinese minority," whose support and loyalty were needed by the Dutch colonial administration (Anderson, 1998:321). Like what the Hadrami Yemeni community experienced, this "institutionalization of racial difference" also created a new ethnic consciousness that inspired the Chinese "to assert themselves within the political legal boundaries that had been set up in the preceding half century" (Mobini-Khesheh, 1999:32). Coppel observes that "the dominant theme of the Chinese political activity in the late colonial period was to press for

equality of status for the Chinese with the Europeans" (1983:6). Only a handful of Chinese in this period saw any benefits in forging alliances with the natives, who were at the bottom of the oppressive colonial social structure. In this situation, the ascendancy of liberatory and anti-colonial nationalism made it harder and harder for the Indonesian Chinese — a middlemen minority — to find an effective political voice (Chirot, 1997:8). After independence, when the nation-state was established, the presence of the Chinese was considered as increasingly posing the problem in the process of new nation building.

The Chinese were excluded in the process of forming Indonesia as an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1991). Ang describes the exclusion of the Chinese aptly, "While the Indonesian nation was from its inception imagined as a multiethnic entity, the place of those marked as 'Chinese' in this 'unity-in-diversity' has always been resolutely ambiguous and uncertain" (2001:28). They were "one of the most important 'others' against which the new national identities defined themselves" (Reid, 1997:55) and condemned to the role of "being an instrument of economic growth without … social respectability" (Wang, 1976: 209). This situation resulted in an antagonistic relationship between the Chinese and the *pribumis*. It often bred violence, which in the 1960s created a mass exodus of the Indonesian Chinese out of Indonesia, most of whom returned to China or immigrated to the Netherlands (Coppel, 1983; Mackie, 1976). The disruptive relationship culminated when Suharto's New Order regime came to power after the notorious September 30 incident that took place in 1965. Suharto alleged that the incident was a coup attempt masterminded by the Indonesian Communist Party with the support of the People's Republic of China to overthrow the legitimate government. In the months following the incident, hundreds of thousand of Indonesians thought to have affiliation with the communist party were killed. Although most victims were *pribumi* Indonesians and the

communist purge was not exactly anti-Chinese violence, the Chinese became the target of the violence due to their "connection" with China, which allegedly helped the Indonesian Communist Party (Coppel, 1983:59). Since then, conflicts and tensions characterized the relations between the Chinese and the *pribumi* Indonesians. Not only did the Chinese become the target of mass violence but of discriminatory practices from the state as well.

During the New Order era, a number of discriminatory laws and regulations were issued to curtail the civil and political rights of the Chinese. In 1967, the New Order regime coined the term "Chinese Problem," to refer to what it thought of as the complexity of the various problems concerning the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. It formed a task force, *Staf Khusus Urusan Cina* (Special Staff for Chinese Affairs), to handle these so-called Chinese problems. It was then changed to *Badan Koordinasi Masalah Cina* (Coordinating Body for the Chinese Problems). By changing the name, from *urusan* (affairs) to *masalah* (problems) and from *staf* (staff) to *badan koordinasi* (coordinating body) showed a discursive change in the political discourse about the Chinese, which implied that there was increasing acrimony toward the Chinese. This coordinating body published guidelines for the solution of the Chinese problems — that is, total assimilation (Coppel, 2002:131).

By proposing assimilation as the solution to the Chinese problem, the regime overlooked the fact that "the root of racism against the Chinese minority in contemporary Indonesia is politico-economic" (Heryanto, 1997:29). In Heryanto's opinion, the regime believed that

> [T]he "Chinese problem" is essentially, if not exclusively, a cultural matter. In the dominant discourse, the Chinese communities are blamed for the popular sentiments against them that break out in periodic riots. Their alleged guilt includes being so "different" from the rest of the population, not only economically and culturally, but also biologically. They are so "un-Indonesian." (1997:29)

In the New Order regime's opinion, the anti-Chinese riots often happened because the Chinese were seen not only as the sign of capital but as the sign of foreignness as well (Aguilar, 2001; Siegel,1986).

The consistent repetition of the foreignness of the Chinese made ethnicity the primary discourse to describe, as well as to set apart Chinese Indonesians from the rest of the society. Through discrimination, stigmatization, and marginalization, Chinese Indonesians were marked as "the cultural Other" and undesirable to be reconstructed as "the Indonesian Self" (Heryanto, 1998:74). The Chinese even were cast as the inferior Other by the deliberate use of the word "Cina," which is similar to "chink" in English (Siegel, 1998:85), to replace the term "Tionghoa," which was commonly used before the New Order era to refer to Chinese.

Discourse of ethnicity as such framed the Chinese as "an unimaginable community of the nation" (Kusno, 2000:165). Their cultural signs and identities were money, bribery, corruption, and exploitation (Siegel, 1986:244-249). They were seen a foreign element that threatened the nation by expropriating the nation's economy (Chua, 2004). They were considered as intruders to the united "native" nation-state of Indonesia (Nonini 2001). Thus, anti-Chinese riots were seen as proof that the Chinese were incompatible with Indonesian society. *Badan Koordinasi Masalah Cina* issued a statement that

> Guidance in assimilation in the framework of the realization of unity of the nation should be geared toward the establishment of unity in the value system. … All forms of cultural affinity based on the country of origin should be removed, in order to give all elements of culture in Indonesia the opportunity to develop according to the Pancasila. (Cited in Tan, 1991:115)

As a result, policies and measures that regulated and even suppressed or curtailed cultural markers of Chinese identity were issued. They were, among others, prohibiting Chinese religious practices and cultural celebrations, dissolving Chinese social organizations, and banning Chinese

language and education, all of which were the regime's effort to eliminate the "three pillars of Chinese community" (Suryadinata, 1997:12). This cultural oppression was thought to be the only way to naturalize Chinese Indonesians and to mold them into real Indonesians. As Coppel writes, "The logic of the assimilation policy required the ethnic Chinese to lose their Chineseness and to be absorbed without trace into the wider Indonesian population" (2002:27).

Although the assimilation policy was able to indonesianize the Chinese totally, in the sense that many of them, especially the younger generation, did not speak their heritage language and did not know their ethnic tradition and culture, discriminatory rules and regulations were still issued. There was a special code in the ID cards of Chinese Indonesians. A note about their Chinese descent was printed on the birth certificate of Chinese Indonesians. There was a requirement for Chinese Indonesians to prove their Indonesian citizenship. This practice defeated the purpose of the assimilation policy and perpetuated the Chinese problem because it could increase a sense of difference between the Chinese and the *pribumis* and underscore the otherness of the Chinese. To make matter worse, the regime inculcated an image of "economically strong" Chinese as opposed to the *pribumis* as an "economically weak" group (Coppel, 1983:168). This image was often used as the justification for the *pribumis* to monopolize political power. The regime erected barriers that made it difficult if not impossible for the Chinese to enter civil and military service and to have political participation (Mackie, 1999:191). So, they were confined to business world. As a result, a mutual exploitation was instituted. The Chinese used their wealth to pay for political favors so that they were seen as the ones who were responsible for the corruption that plagued Indonesia, and the root of social and economic inequality. They were the social and political pariahs, who were politically useful. The

regime made the Chinese an easy target for mass violence to which it diverted any dissatisfaction and anger toward the state due to their political vulnerability. That is why, according Heryanto,

> Chinese identities are never totally to be wiped out. They are carefully and continually reproduced, but always under erasure. In fact the negation is a necessary element of the making of this ethnic Other. The New Order regime cannot possibly want the Assimilation Programme that it co-sponsors to attain its declared aims. Achieving these aims must instead be forever deferred. To dissolve Chinese identities in an effective programme of "assimilation' means to give up the division of labour by race, upon which the status quo depends so much. (1998:104)

Heryanto's statement finds support in Coppel's argument that Suharto's assimilation program is discriminatory (2002:27). The program is indeed successful in eliminating Chinese culture from the lives of Chinese Indonesians. However, the hidden transcript of the New Order policy of assimilation is not assimilating the Chinese into Indonesian society and eventually making them a part of it. Rather, through the issuance of discriminatory regulations, the regime preserves the Chinese problem and makes the Chinese perpetual foreigners although they discharge their ethnic culture. Their Chinese cultural markers disappear, but the ethnic Chinese label as a marker of difference remains.

The New Order regime institutionalized the exclusion of the Chinese from the imagined community of Indonesia. The regime stripped away Chinese cultural markers of Chinese Indonesians but at the same time strengthened their Chinese ethnic markers through discriminatory regulations and practices. The regime made it difficult for the Chinese to be completely assimilated into Indonesian society (Coppel, 1983:156). They were constructed as a disliked ethnic group. Such a construction made the Chinese scapegoats for deflecting popular anger from the government. However, to make the orchestrated scapegoating as such successful, the regime perpetuated and magnified the attributes associated with the Chinese, that is, their racial distinctiveness, religious difference, and economic dominance, three attributes that,

according to Budiaman (1999), gave the Chinese a "triple minority" status. The racist hostility that always haunted the Chinese did not give them many choices except relying on the protection from the government. To make this system self-reproducing, the regime provided necessary protection, yet at the same time, highlighted their triple minority status. Like the Dutch colonial administration that separated the Chinese from the natives in colonial Indonesia, the New Order regime also maintains the separation between the Chinese and the *pribumis* because the coalition between the two parties may jeopardize its survival. In this way, the regime maintained the precariousness of Chinese Indonesians.

Winds of Change

The Asian financial crisis that battered the region in 1997 brought winds of change to Indonesia. Various elements of Indonesian society blamed the Suharto administration for severe economic problems that plagued Indonesia. They criticized the government's inability to overcome chronic inflation, food shortages, and the rising unemployment rate. In February 1998, demonstrations in many big cities protested the economic crisis that was getting more and more chronic. The economic crisis turned into a political crisis when Suharto was re-elected in March 1998. More and more demonstrations were staged, with students and intellectuals in the forefront, to demand Suharto to step down. The political crisis culminated on May 12, 1998, when a number of protesting students from various universities in Jakarta were shot dead by snipers. Soon, the protest escalated and turned into violence and riots for several days, from May 13 to 18. On May 21, Suharto resigned.

What made the violence and riots shock the nation was that they were so massive in scale, occurred simultaneously in various parts of Jakarta and its surrounding areas, and claimed more

than a thousand lives, mostly urban poor *pribumis*. But what was more dismaying was the result of the investigation of the fact-finding team established by President Habibie. The team indicated that violence was orchestrated by so-called provocateur groups who were trained in weapons and communication. These groups provoked people to loot and attack the Chinese and their property in an organized way. The team also confirmed the allegation that Chinese women were sexually harassed and gang-raped. However, the identity of the perpetrators remains a mystery, although military agents were allegedly involved in the violence and riots.

The downfall of Suharto brought about changes in Indonesia. One of the most important changes, known as *Reformasi* (The Reform), is changes in the political and social lives, especially those of the Chinese, which illuminate how the Chinese respond to the May incident, especially, the ones that Wibowo classifies as "voice" and "loyalty." Using Albert Hirschman's theoretical framework, Wibowo (2001) classifies the Chinese Indonesians' responses to the riots into three types — exit, voice and loyalty. "Exit" refers to the exodus of the Chinese out of Jakarta and other dangerous cities to safer places inside Indonesia such Bali, North Sulawesi, and West Kalimantan, or out of the country. This concurs with Suryadinata, who writes that the riots created an exodus of the Chinese and triggered capital flight along with the exodus (2001:508). What Wibowo means by "voice" is that the Chinese remain in Indonesia and seize this opportunity to protest what has happened to them and demand fair treatment as any other Indonesians. They organize themselves and take the initiative to set up social organizations that voice their concern and protect their interest (2001:137). The third, "loyalty," refers to the Chinese's response in which they try to navigate the changes and find their position in the new socio-political climate, or they live their lives as usual, accept the suffering silently, and hope that things will improve in due time. Setting up their own social organizations and political

parties, and joining non-Chinese-based organization are an indication that the impacts of the violence and riot "produce greater ethnic and political consciousness among Indonesia's ethnic Chinese" (Suryadinata, 2001:509). Had there not been *Reformasi*, Chinese ethnic and political consciousness would not have come into existence.

Reformasi, or the political and social reform, ushers the abolition of policies and measures that discriminate and marginalize the Chinese and provides them with avenues for political and cultural expressions, and a renewed awareness of their ethnicity. The prohibition of Chinese traditions and rituals was revoked so that they can have the right to observe their cultural practice and tradition, just like other ethnic groups have enjoyed theirs. Now the Chinese can regain their cultural identity. The "three pillars of Chinese community" — Chinese organization, Chinese media, and Chinese schools — are being restored.

An example of the celebration of Chinese cultural identity was the establishment of *Taman Budaya Tionghoa* (Chinese Cultural Park). In 2002, TMII provided a piece of land inside the park for the establishment of this cultural park, was officially opened in 2008. However, this park created a furor among the Chinese Indonesian community. Many accused the committee that built the park as being very China-oriented. They also questioned the design of the park. Some of the design controversies, which remain unresolved, are: (1) the gates of the park that resembles Qing Dong Ling (The Eastern Qing Tomb), an imperial mausoleum complex of the Qing dynasty located near Beijing; (2) the plan to built a replica of the Forbidden City, the imperial palace during the Ming and Qing dynasty; and (3) the choice of Tulou (Hakka-style traditional house) as the representation of Chinese Indonesian traditional house. Qing-style gates and the Forbidden City are the cultural style of northern China, which is different from that of southern China, where the ancestors of Chinese Indonesians came from, and Chinese

Indonesians never built Tulou-style houses in Indonesia. Some also criticized the committee for not choosing localized Chinese Indonesian culture to be presented in the Chinese Indonesian Cultural Park.[3] Members of the Chinese community in Tangerang, Banten, built Peranakan Chinese Museum, which was officially opened on November 11, 2011. This museum highlights the localization of Chinese culture in Indonesia. It showcases the hybridity of Chinese Indonesian culture as a result of the blending of Chinese and Indonesian culture. Thus, with this locally-oriented culture, this museum is different from the Chinese Indonesian Cultural Park.

In tandem with the re-emergence of Chineseness, many organizations and even political parties that emphasized Chinese characteristics sprang up. After Suharto stepped down, three Chinese-dominated political parties were formed, namely, Partai Pembauran Indonesia or Indonesian Assimilation Party (PPI), Partai Reformasi Tionghoa Indonesia or Chinese Indonesian Reform Party (Parti), and Partai Bhinneka Tunggal Ika or Bhinneka Tunggal Ika Party (PBI).[4] Immediately after PPI formed, it dissolved because of the lack of support. Parti did not participate in the 1999 general election although it still existed at that time. PBI participated in the 1999 general election, winning a seat in the national parliament and several seats in the provincial parliament of West Kalimantan and Riau. Parti and PBI did not participate in the 2004 general election and soon after that, they dissolved. Besides Chinese-based political parties, a number of Chinese-based social organizations were also established. These organizations could be categorized into two groups, namely the ethnic-oriented and the non-ethnic-oriented. The organizations that belonged to the first group emphasize their Chinese ethnic identity. Perhimpunan Indonesia Tionghoa or Chinese Indonesian Association (INTI) and Paguyuban Sosial Marga Tionghoa Indonesia or Indonesian Chinese Social Clan Association (PSMTI) were

[3] I was told that in January 2013 the committee that manages the park invited the stakeholders in the Chinese community to a meeting held for discussing plan for revitalizing the park and solving controversies.
[4] Bhinneka Tunggal Ika is Indonesian coat of arm, which means unity in diversity.

organizations as such. There were also a number of Chinese traditional associations — both *zongjin hui* (association-based on shared surnames among its members) and *tongxiang hui* (association based on shared ancestral village in China) — and Chinese school alumni associations.

The re-emergence of Chineseness also sparked the interest of both Chinese and other ethnic groups to learn Chinese. Chinese language courses proliferated. Organizations for alumni of former Chinese medium schools played an important role in the revival of Chinese language in Indonesia. Rekindled by old memories of their schooling days, as well as the success of establishing Chinese language courses, some of the older alumni have even dreamed of rebuilding Chinese schools like what used to exist. Although until now (2013) Chinese schools in which Chinese culture is emphasized and Chinese language is used as a medium of instruction, like those before the New Order came to power have not been rebuilt, schools founded by Chinese organizations, known as trilingual schools[5] because three languages — Indonesian, English, and Chinese — are used, have proliferated in many cities in Indonesia. Indonesian is the language of instruction in these schools, however.

The re-emergence of Chineseness also spurred Chinese community to republish their ethnic media. During the New Order era, there was only one Chinese newspaper available, *Yindunixiya Ribao* (Indonesian Daily), published by a military-backed company. This newspaper was not really Chinese language newspaper because half of it was in Indonesian. After 1999, however, Chinese newspapers could be found in many cities, although the law that bans the publication of Chinese newspaper and that restrict the use of Chinese language in Indonesian has not been lifted. Chinese organizations are also allowed to publish their bulletin in Chinese.

[5] Popularly known as *san'yu xuexiao* (三语学校)

In a more relaxed political situation, Chinese Indonesians who used to feel suppressed during Suharto's administration suddenly found a channel to express themselves and take this opportunity to regain their sense of ethnicity. Since then, Chinese cultural celebrations began to be held in public. The Chinese Lion dance becomes a favorite icon in private as well as public gatherings. Even in general election campaigns, some political parties used this kind of dance to attract people. Many radio stations broadcast Chinese songs. Chinese films and serials appear on Indonesian televisions, and soon they became popular among Indonesian society. Even there is one television station that has a news program in Chinese.

The new openness to Chinese culture which paves the way for the restoration of the three pillars of Chinese community, however, does not imply that that discrimination is no longer a major problem for the Chinese. On the contrary, "soft knife of policies" still disrupts their everyday life (Das and Kleinman, 2002:1). Although many of the policies and measures that discriminate and marginalize Chinese Indonesians have been abolished, and now Chinese Indonesians can regain their ethnicity legally and participate in public life as an ethnic Chinese, everyday discrimination toward them is still pervasive.[6] A number of Chinese even think that the euphoria of celebrating Chinese culture in public is "a bit too much." The extravagant celebration of Chinese New Year could conjure the image of Chinese as an exclusive class and trigger a backlash. In an interview with Tempo (January 26, 2004), Silalahi, a Chinese Indonesian scholar, thinks that Chinese Indonesians "have gone overboard" in celebrating their Chineseness. Heryanto, also a Chinese Indonesian scholar, writes in the op-ed section of Kompas

[6] For instance, despite the abolition of the regulation that required the Chinese whose parents were Indonesian citizens to have a certificate of citizenship by a presidential decree in 1999, state bureaucracy in many local levels still continue to require the Chinese to produce proof of citizenship. The words "Stbld. 1917" is still printed on the birth certificate of Chinese Indonesians. "Stbld 1917 (Staatsblad 1917) refers to the state gazette issued by the Dutch colonial administration regulating the issuance of the birth certificate of the Chinese, which was under the category of "eastern foreign orientals."

daily (February 4, 2004) that the reappearance of Chinese culture in Indonesian public could create an "unintended racism." The Chinese whom I talked to during my fieldwork often warned themselves to be very careful. They thought of the confusion they had. They welcomed the changes that enabled them to celebrate their ethnicity, nevertheless, they did not know how far they could go. Assessing this situation, Budianta writes,

> While we have seen consistent progress in securing the cultural rights of the Chinese Indonesian, in practice, on the streets and in the petty officials' desks all over Indonesia, prejudice and discrimination are still rife. With social jealousy against the rich few, strongly characterized with their Chinese features, we can understand the fear of 'backlash' from Chinese Indonesians who have strived to assimilate and erase the marks of difference. (2007: 186)

The Chinese who were like my informants thought that there seemed to be an invisible line surrounding them, and if they went beyond this line, the anti-Chinese feeling would be rekindled. They said to me that this situation was difficult for them.

The new openness to Chinese ethnicity and culture, which the Chinese should welcome, turn out to produce ambiguity. On the one hand, it gives the Chinese community hope. The Chinese can celebrate their cultural identity and voice their aspiration as an ethnic Chinese, whose ethnic and cultural identity were suppressed. But on the other hand, it triggers anxiety and fear. They are afraid that anti-Chinese would come back to Indonesia. They are caught in a double bind, between revealing their ethnic and cultural identity or not revealing them. One informant, who was accused of being a leftist and sympathizer of the Indonesian Communist Party — the accusation which he denied, said,

> As Chinese, we should behave ourselves. We should know our place. Remember that we are minorities here. I don't see the benefits of showing off our ethnic identity and culture. As long as we believe that we are Chinese, and that we can practice our ancestors' teachings, I think, that's enough. The best thing for the Chinese is to be quiet and not to get involved in anything political.

His statement reflects his belief that the Chinese should avoid any kinds of activities that may flaunt their Chinese identity and culture or activities that seem to be political because those can invite danger. His belief comes from his traumatic experience, when he was accused of being a leftist and sympathizer of the Indonesian Communist Party, the accusation which he denied. While not all Chinese were accused of being leftist, all of them were traumatized by the New Order regime's created myth that "the ethnic Chinese are suspected of being deeply attached or essentially susceptible to communism" (Heryanto, 1998:98). For the older generations of Chinese, their trauma underscores the severity of the erasure of Chinese identity and culture, as one informant, Ayi Ai Ling, said, "During the New Order era, we were like a tree that was forcefully uprooted." Because of their traumatic experiences, many Chinese believe that the best way to do is to be quiet, to shun politics and political organizations, and not to flaunt their Chinese identity and culture. In this way, they think they can avoid jeopardy, although the fact is that all Chinese who have been totally assimilated into Indonesian society and who were not involved in politics were nonetheless also suffered from discrimination.

The restoration of the three pillars of Chinese community and the fear that the anti-Chinese sentiment will come back are crucial to my dissertation, which focuses on the re-emergence of Chineseness. Using a case study of the Chinese in Surabaya, I analyze the ideological role of Chineseness in influencing their "mental maps" of identity and socio-political possibility. I argue that these mental maps consists of their understandings of being Chinese as well as being Indonesian, and avenues of possible social and political participation in a more democratic Indonesia. They are reproduced through discursive practices that are taking place in the changing Indonesian community, where ethnic identity is constructed, molded, and contested.

Habitus and Doxa

In analyzing processes that reproduce Chinese ethnicity and the way Chinese Indonesians in Surabaya negotiate and formulate their identities, I situate my dissertation at the junction of two broad theoretical trajectories. First of all, my dissertation relies on Bourdieu's theory of habitus and doxa. Bourdieu defines habitus as

> structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them" (Bourdieu 1990:53).

Habitus is a learned behavior that generates perceptions and practices, and guides people to act or to behave in line with the cultural norms of the social world in which they live. Bourdieu describes habitus as

> a product of history, [which] produces individual and collective practices — more history — in accordance with the schemes generated by history. It ensures the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee 'correctness' of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms. (1990:54)

As a learned behavior, habitus is a set of dispositions acquired through experience, socialization, and upbringing. These dispositions are constructed within particular social conditions. Different social conditions result in different dispositions. Because of this, habitus is present subjectively within the individuals and socially in the behaviors of the individuals who live in the social world formed by different dispositions. Through the concept of habitus, I will show how Chineseness has multiple interpretations that influence the political, social, and cultural realms of the Chinese individuals, as well as how these realms are grounded in their experiences.

According to Bourdieu, habitus is constructed by doxa, that is, "the relationship of immediate adherence that is established in practice between a habitus and the field to which it is

attuned, the pre-verbal taking-for-granted of the world that flows from practical sense" (1990:68). Doxa takes place "when there is a quasi-perfect correspondence between the objective order and the subjective principles of organization (as in ancient societies) the natural and social world appears as self-evident" (Bourdies, 1977:164). In his opinion, doxic thoughts

> can produce the objectivity that they do produce only by producing misrecognition of the limits of the cognition that they make possible, thereby founding immediate adherence in the doxic mode, to the world of tradition experienced as a 'natural world' and taken for granted. (Bourdieu, 1977:164)

Doxa is like a commonly held belief that produces "the naturalization of its own arbitrariness" whereby "the natural and social world appears as self-evident" (Bourdieu, 1977: 164). Thus, doxa is like the unspoken social order which is taken for granted as the natural order of the universe. In the case of the Chinese of Surabaya, ideologies and thoughts that generate the Chinese habitus as shown in their effort to (re)construct Chineseness include language, traditional rituals, ethnic media, ethnic organization, ethnic culture, and "mythic" China, all of which serve as symbolic forms of ethnicity.

However, as habitus is subjective and formed by different dispositions, Chinese ethnicity is subject to different interpretations, which depend on the social and cultural contexts of the Chinese individuals. Habitus, therefore, can lead individuals to different "position-takings," namely, the manifestation of choices, tastes, and preferences in various aspects of life, such as language, entertainment, news, and politics (Bourdieu, 1998:6). Different position-takings can be seen in various meanings the Chinese of Surabaya ascribe to Chineseness, based on personal beliefs and previous experiences. They are the reflections of the tensions among the Chinese of Surabaya regarding the different meaning of Chineseness. Thus, Chineseness is like a social field, that is, an arena of ideological struggle, where the meanings of Chineseness and being Chinese are contested.

Ethnicity

My other point of departure is framed by anthropological debates on ethnicity that view social relations as the determinant factors in identity construction. Ethnicity arises because of social and political strategies. Its aspects are open to negotiation, depending on the factors people use in constructing and portraying their ethnicity (Nagel, 1994). They are, among others: cultural elements and values that play a role in constructing ethnic identity (Erickson, 1993); contribution of economic interest in the formation of ethnicity (Cohen, 1974); and the roles of ideology in ethnic identity construction (Williams, 1989). These opinions imply that ethnicity is actually not "natural" but rather that ethnicity is a kind of social categorization. It is "a fundamental means of ordering social life, a means that relies on manipulating 'cultural traits' and ideas about origin so as to communicate difference" (Verdery, 1994:44). Verdery opines that social and cultural elements and values do play a role in constructing ethnicity as ethnicity is "the result of a dialectical process involving internal and external opinions and processes, as well as the individual's self-identification and outsider's ethnic designation" (Nagel, 1994:154). Verdery's and Nagel's opinion on this dialectical process find support in Bourdieu's opinion that personal elements (such as preference, belief, and previous experiences) and social structures are in a permanent dialectic. In Bourdieu's opinion, not only are people agents who act, but who are acted upon as well.

The anthropological debates on ethnicity above resonate with the experience of the Chinese in Indonesia. Chinese ethnicity is a construction that is in a dialectical process. In Ang's opinion, Chineseness is an open signifier whose meanings are constantly renegotiated and rearticulated based on historical context (2001:38). It is molded by the social contexts where it exists, and at the same time, it also influences them. Thus, being Chinese varies from place to

place. This means that Chineseness is dynamic and fluid. Barth's view on ethnicity offers critical insights on my analysis on the ethnicity of the Chinese in Surabaya.

Barth's seminal work on ethnic groups and boundaries (1969) changes the way people view the construction and maintenance of ethnicity. Prior to his work, studies on ethnicity focuses on description of traits and cultural content, and overlook analysis of process. Ethnicity is seen as primordial, natural, and immutable (Geertz, 1963). Ethnic groups are seen as "culture-bearing units" (Barth, 1969:11). Barth opposes this idea. In his opinion, this concept of ethnicity neglects the role of social and cultural process in the construction of ethnicity, and results in a static view of ethnicity that does not answer the questions of how and why ethnicity develops and changes. Barth argues that ethnicity is situational, which means that ethnicity is not fixed. It is situationally defined in relationship to its social interactions with other groups, as well as the boundaries it establishes and maintains between them as a result of these interactions. An ethnic group, in Barth's opinion, is like a social organization whose critical feature is "self-ascription and ascription by others" used for categorizing themselves and others (1969:13). Because ethnicity is situational, people can alter their ethnic ascription based on the changing social contexts and circumstances. This shows the permeability and fluidity of identity. In Gillespie's opinion, "identity is not an essence but a positioning" (1995:1).

The ideas that ethnicity is situational and that identity is a positioning imply that it is "the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses" (Barth, 1969:15). Barth argues that ethnic boundaries are the main identifiers of ethnic groups. Ethnic boundaries "generate feelings of similarity and group membership" (Lamont and Molnar, 2002:168). They "determine who is a member and who is not and designate which ethnic categories are available for individual identification at a particular time and place" (Nagel, 1994:154). In the process of

creating boundaries, members of an ethnic group use certain symbols — "overt signals or signs" and "basic value orientations" — as the markers of their identity that classify them as one group and/or separate them as a group which is different from others (Barth, 1969:14). The symbols used as the markers of their identity are subjective elements collected from their historical past or from their present specific conditions. These elements transform themselves into characteristics that create socio-cultural boundaries which separate an ethnic group from others, as Barth writes, "ethnic groups only persist as significant units if they imply marked difference in behavior, i.e. persisting cultural difference" (1969:15-16).

Barth understands that boundary markers, "marked difference in behavior," may vary from place to place and change over time depending on circumstances, as the result of social interaction (1969:15). However, as long as an individual is "playing the same game" in their interaction with another, that is, performing that agreed upon boundary or identity markers, even if they are different from one another in other way, they could consider themselves and be considered by others as members of the same ethnic group (Barth, 1969:15). In this way, Barth prioritizes ethnic boundaries in the formation of ethnic identity.

Barth's emphasis on ethnic boundary is subject to critique. It discounts the role of the cultural elements within the ethnic boundary in the construction of ethnic identity. People perceive that "outsiders" are different from them because they have "an already existing sense of shared experiences and values, a feeling of community, of 'us-ness' and group belonging" (Smith, 1988:49). They draw boundaries that separate them from others and construct their identity based on their experiences and cultural resources they have. Smith argues that "the sense of ethnic identity emanates from a commitment and attachment to the shared elements which unite the members of a group, rather than from the differences which debar outsiders" (1988:49).

According to Smith, ethnic boundaries are not the primary factors of identity construction. Smith's opinion finds support in Roosens, who writes,

> What is found inside the boundary, namely, what one is and what one possesses as a specific social category, cannot be reduced to being the product of boundary formation. One could say that the feeling of continuity, or identity, comes logically first, and that this identity originates from genealogy "before" it has anything to do with boundaries. (Roosens, 1994:87)

Smith's and Roosens' arguments underscore the role of the cultural elements within the ethnic boundaries in the process of ethnic identity construction. This means that ethnicity focuses on feelings of group belonging — a sense of identity with group members and difference from others outside the group, self-identification and identification by others, and the perception and expression of these through symbolic means (Edwards, 1985:5). What is more important here is the feelings of ethnicity, rather than its knowledge or practice. Stuart Hall notes, "identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language, and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from,' so much as what we become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we represent ourselves" (1996:4). Thus, ethnic identity comes from the narrativization of the self and from the imagination of belongingness to a certain group of people. In so doing, members of ethnic group draw attention to their shared culture that binds them into an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1991).

In the formation of their imagined community, people use symbols more than the practice of ethnic culture. Herbert Gans writes that the logic of modern ethnicity works based on symbols and feelings of identity. In his opinion, ethnicity is symbolic. Explaining European immigrants to the United States, he writes, "people are les and less interested in their ethnic cultures and organizations, and are instead more concerned with maintaining their ethnic identity, with the

feeling of being Jewish, Italian, or Polish, and findings ways of feeling and expressing that identity in suitable ways" (1979:202). Because the feeling of identity and expression of that feeling are the primary ways of being ethnic, ethnicity depends largely on the uses of symbols, which become the identity markers for ethnic group members.

The characteristic of symbolic ethnicity, however, is arbitrary. Depending on the situational context and on how important their ethnicity is to them, individual members of ethnic group may have different ways in perceiving and expressing symbols of their ethnicity. This is called "ethnic salience," defined as "the importance one attached to being ethnic (Mackie and Brinkerhoff, 1984:117). Ethnic salience has a close relationship with ethnic persistence as the former captures the notions of the latter. There is a hierarchy of salience in various aspects of ethnicity. Members of ethnic groups may consider some aspects of their ethnicity are more important than others. These aspects may play an important role in ethnic persistence, which is to say that they could create the feelings of identity and of being ethnics. In this case, they function as ethnic identifications.

Ethnic salience is used for reinforcing ethnic persistence. The reinforcement of ethnic persistence results in maintaining a sense of groupness that defines an ethnic group as an imagined community. Anderson believes that "communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (1991:7). It is the "forms of imagining" that construct a community (Anderson, 1991:24). Anthony Cohen also writes that the construction of a community is symbolic. In his opinion, the idea of community itself is symbolic. Community is "symbolic, rather than a structural construct" (1985:98). He sees that the core of community is a feeling of belonging and identity and a sense of distinction. This community consciousness operates through symbols and representations (1985:15). They create

a symbolic tradition to establish and maintain ethnic boundaries that define their imagined community.

Barth's emphasis on ethnic boundaries also overlooks the influences from outside the ethnic boundaries. Although he mentions that "ascription by others" has a role in the maintenance of ethnic identity, this role receives secondary importance. Barth still views the primacy of ethnic boundaries. This view is held, in Jenkins' opinion, "at the expense of categorization" (1994:197). Jenkins explains further that categories assigned by "others," especially those who have power or authority can dominate or even be forced on ethnic groups (1994:199). While acknowledging that ethnic boundary entails transaction between "ego" and "others," Jenkins contends that these transactions are not always "rooted in reciprocation, exchange, and relatively equitable negotiation" (1994:201). In this way, ethnicity is no longer "a social resource" but "social liability or stigma" (Jenkins, 1994:201). In Nagel's opinion, "we do not always choose to be who we are; we simply are who we are as a result of a set of social definitions, categorization schemes, and external ascriptions that reside in the taken-for-granted realm of social life" (1996:26).

Critique on Barth' opinion over ethnic boundaries highlights the fact that ethnic boundaries and the culture associated with it are interrelated.

> Boundaries answer the question: Who are we? Culture provides the content and meaning of ethnicity; it animates and authenticates ethnic boundaries by providing a history, ideology, symbolic universe, and system of meaning. Culture answers the question: What are we? It is through the construction of culture that ethnic groups fill Barth's vessel — by reinventing the past and inventing the present. (Nagel, 1994:162)

Quoting Handleman, Jenkins adds,

> 'Cultural stuff'… and ethnic boundary mutually modify and support one another. The former establishes and legitimizes the contrast of the boundary; while the latter, often in response to external conditions, modifies or alters the relevance to the boundary of aspects of the former. (2008:21)

Both Nagel and Jenkins do not deny that ethnic boundaries are vital in the formation of ethnic identity. However, they argue that ethnic identity cannot be separated from the cultural "stuff" ethnic boundaries enclose. It is the cultural "stuff" that creates ethnic boundaries and makes ethnic identity fluid.

Language Ideology

One of the cultural "stuff" that defines ethnic identity is language. As a social construct, language is closely related to ethnicity, as May writes, "[Language] does still have strong and felt associations with ethnic and national identity. As such, language cannot be relegated to a mere secondary or surface characteristic of ethnicity" (2012:135). The relation between language and ethnic identity warrants a view of language "as a set of ideologically-defined resources and practices" (Heller, 2007:2). Following Kathryn Woolard, what I mean by ideology is: that it is not necessarily conscious, deliberate, or systematically organized thought, or even thought at all; it is behavioral, practical, prereflective, or structural; that it is the representation of the interests of a particular social position; that it is seen as ideas, discourses, or signifying practices for acquiring or maintaining power; and that it could be distortion, illusion, error, mystification, or rationalization for acquiring or maintaining power (1998:6-7). Woolard's concept of ideology I outline above is useful in examining the relationship between language and identity.

From an anthropological perspective, the issue of language and identity is informed by the concept of language ideology, a field of inquiry that emphasizes on speakers' ideas about language and discourse and about how these ideas articulate with various social phenomena (Kroskrity, 2000:5). There are various definitions of language ideologies put forward by linguistic anthropologists (see discussion in Woolard and Schieffelin, 1994). Michael Silverstein,

for example, defines language ideologies as "any sets of beliefs about language articulated by its users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use" (1979: 193). This means that people have certain beliefs about language, and their beliefs become the basis of what they think of and do with language, that is, what they perceive ways of speaking and those who use these ways of speaking. In other words, Silverstein's idea treats language ideology as a consciousness of language that confirms the speakers' values and practices, which include how they feel about language as speakers, as well as how their values and practices are projected on other speakers as well. Another scholar, Judith Irvine, defines language ideology as "the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interest" (1989:225). Irvine's definition of language ideology shows that people, as speakers of language and socio-cultural actors, naturalize the link between the linguistic and the social, as well as its ideological weight so that they do not see that it is ideological. Whereas, Joseph Errington writes that:

> Language ideology refers to the situated, partial, and interested character of conceptions and uses of language. It covers a wide range of concerns: the differential openness of language structure for metalinguistic objectification; the ways metalinguisitc discourses can mediate social interests; the naturalization of social differences through construals of language as embodying identity and community. In these and other ways, language ideology is a rubric for dealing with ideas about language structure and use relative to social contexts. (2001:110)

The definition above informs readers that consciousness about language confirms the speakers' values and practices. This consciousness comes from metalinguistic objectification, which often links something linguistic to something social. For example, a certain linguistic practice or accent is associated to a certain social or ethnic group. This kind of association is "naturalized" and taken for granted.

There are several aspects of the naturalization of the link or the association between the linguistic and the social, which underlie the speech community's values and practices. First of all, Paul Kroskrity writes that "language ideologies represent the perception of language and discourse that is constructed in the interest of a specific social or cultural group" (2000:8). Language ideologies are grounded in the social structure. Thus, linguistic practices in a certain culture relate to the exercise of power and to the problems of inequalities. Secondly, "language ideologies are profitably conceived as multiple because of the multiplicity of meaningful social divisions (class, gender, elites, generations, and so on) within sociocultural groups that have the potential to produce divergent perspectives expressed as indices of group membership" (Kroskrity: 2000:12). The multiplicity of social division and the production of divergent perspectives lead to the multisitedness of the language ideologies. "Sites may be institutionalized, interactional rituals that are culturally familiar loci for the expression and/or explication of ideologies that indexically ground them in identities and relationships (Kroskrity: 2000:19). This means that setting and context where talk and speech take place should be taken into consideration in analyzing language ideologies. Thirdly, language ideologies show how speakers display varying degrees of awareness of their language ideologies (Kroskrity, 2000:18). This implies that people may develop different degrees of awareness of ideologically grounded discourse, depending on the role they play in a given community. Finally, language ideologies mediate between the social structures and forms of talks (Kroskrity, 2000:21). Language users articulate their sociocultural experience and linguistic resources by linking their linguistic forms and resources to features of their sociocultural experience. In this way, language ideologies influence the understanding and deployment of linguistics forms and resources, from linguistic

foci such as accent and vocabulary choices (Silverstein, 1979) to wider social and political foci such as ethnic and social group (Lippi-Green, 1997; Spitulnik, 1998).

By examining ideological processes, linguistic anthropology examines the connection between linguistic practices and social experience. It also deals with the relationship between language and socio-cultural life, between speakers' idea about language and their role in socio-cultural activities, as Kathryn Woolard writes,

> Ideologies of language are not about language alone. Rather, they envision and enact ties of language to identity, to aesthetics, to morality and to epistemology. Through such linkages, they underpin not only linguistic form and use but also the very notion of the person and the social group, as well as such fundamental social institution as religious rituals, child socialization, gender relations, the nation-state, schooling, and law. (1998:3)

Language ideology, according to Wortham (2008) mediates social identity as speakers draw on ideologies that circulate widely in a society, and subsequently position themselves and others in characteristic ways. Language ideology allows linguistic anthropologists "to explore relations between the emergent meanings of signs in use socially circulating ideologies, and broader social structure" (2008:91).

Chinese Ethnic Group as an Analytical Category

The conceptualization of ethnicity, together with Bourdieu's habitus and doxa, as I mention in the previous section, provide a useful analytical framework for examining the Chinese community in Surabaya. They inform me that the Chinese community is very diverse. This diversity is due to generation, class, and family background of members of this community. They have diverse perspectives on various social and political issues concerning their ethnic community. Their views on the re-emergence of Chineseness are in no way monolithic. This is so because Chineseness involves "a claim to status and recognition … . [Chineseness] is to

ethnic category what class consciousness is to class ... a contingent and changeable status that, like class, may or may not be articulated in particular contexts and at particular times" (Brass, 1991:19). The experience of Chinese Indonesians shows that political institutions manipulated history, symbols, and social structures to create a category of identity that classified some people into one group and place others outside the group, namely, the indigenous Self and the Chinese Other. Exacerbated by the conflation of race, ethnicity, economic class, and social status, the state's construction of Chineseness marginalized and discriminated against the Chinese.

During the Old Order era (1945-1966), the Chinese's responses to discrimination could be categorized into two, namely, those who proposed *integrasi* (integration) and those who favored *asimilasi* (assimilation). The integrationists advocated that the Chinese should be accepted as one of the many ethnic groups living in Indonesia, who were allowed to preserve their Chinese cultural heritage. Like any other ethnic groups, they would then become an integral part of the Indonesian nation. The assimilationists thought differently. In order to be a part of Indonesian society, the Chinese should abandon their Chinese cultural identity markers that made them different from the natives. Despite the same goal, that is, the abandonment of Chinese cultural heritage, the approaches this group took varied, from a moderate approach, namely, gradual assimilation that eventually eliminated the distinctions between the Chinese and the natives to an extreme one, such as, total assimilation through intermarriage, religious conversion to Islam as the religion that the majority believed in, the eradication of all features of Chineseness, and the adoption of the culture of the society where they lived as their own.

In the New Order era, the integrationist approach was under attack and banned. The regime adopted the extreme approach of assimilation that forced the Chinese to abandon their cultural heritage. However, as I pointed before, despite the policy of forced assimilation, the

New Order regime perpetuated the foreignness of the Chinese. According to Heryanto, the policy of the New Order regime toward Chineseness is that "Chinese identities are never totally to be wiped out. They are carefully and continually reproduced, but always under erasure" (1998:104). In this way, the regimes maintained the scapegoating process of the Chinese community. The reproduction and erasure of Chineseness was instrumental in supporting the regime's legitimacy among Indonesians. Evaluating the New Order regime's policy of assimilation, Purdey writes,

> In reality, the complete elimination or assimilation of ethnic Chinese identity, as professed by the assimilationists in their manifesto, would have undermined the usefulness to the New Order of this group. Rather, its policies were designed to exacerbate confusions and fear within and outside the Chinese community, while reinforcing their "difference." (2003:426)

The confusions and fear influenced the way the Chinese respond to the revival of Chinese culture and the re-emergence of Chinese ethnicity.

While the succeeding administration after the New Order regime gave the space for the Chinese to celebrate their ethnicity, their responses to this policy varied. Indonesians from various ethnic backgrounds welcomed the revival of Chinese culture, although there were some native ethnic groups that voiced their concern on the celebration of what they thought as foreign culture. But that was not the case with the re-emergence of Chinese identity. People might think that when the state opened up the possibility for the Chinese to regain their ethnicity, the Chinese would adopt the integrationist approach. After all, most of the restriction, if not all, had been lifted. But that was not the case. There were Chinese who pursued integrationist approach in their effort to find a place in the new socio-political environment. Yet, there were those who still believed in assimilation which was without coercion. And there were those who, according to Hoon, adopted cultural hybridity (Hoon, 2006).

Because of the plurality of responses to the new socio-political environment, in this dissertation the Chinese is not reified as a fixed ethnic group. Reifying them as such cannot accommodate the multiplicity of Chinese Indonesians' voices on the re-emergence of Chineseness. Instead, I treat them as an analytical category. In so doing, I affirm that the heterogeneity of the Chinese affects the way they view the restoration of the three pillars of Chinese community and the possibility of the return of anti-Chinese sentiment. This manifests in the negotiation and formation of Chineseness. I approach the negotiation and formation of Chineseness as a process in which a variety of experiences, stories, and traditions come together and use a phenomenological paradigm in examining this process. By analyzing Chinese Indonesians' experiences, I expose how they use their feelings, thoughts, and perceptions to make sense of their situations, as well as how they understand and construct the meaning of their experiences in relation to their Chineseness. Thus, my dissertation demonstrates the flexibility and plurality of Chineseness, both synchronically across geography and diachronically across temporal period.

Research Site

In this research, I chose Surabaya, a major city located in East Java, as the site of my fieldwork. I am aware that by choosing Surabaya, I could invite a criticism that my research would be Java-centric. Indeed there are numerous studies on post-New Order Indonesia and Chinese Indonesians living in Java, such as Yen-Ling Tsai (2008), Sai Siew Min (2006), Hoon Chang-yau (2008), Aimee Dawis (2009), Fadjar I. Thufail (2007). However, to the best of my knowledge, most of them are Jakarta-focused. Thus, Java still offers a lot of areas to explore. Besides that, Surabaya is chosen because it is the second largest city in Indonesia with a

substantial number of Chinese. Although its history is longer than Jakarta, Surabaya has received less attention from scholars than it deserves in terms of general significance. Much more attention has been given to Jakarta than to Surabaya. Yet, Surabaya has a Chinese community comparable to Jakarta.

The choice of my research site and subjects could also attract another criticism. Because I am from Surabaya and my ethnic background is Chinese, my dissertation is about my own "place" and my own "people." This means that I am doing "anthropology at home." To classic anthropologists, I may be so familiar with my field site and research subjects that I cannot do a thorough and careful analysis beyond cultural behaviors that are taken for granted. To them, geographical and cultural proximity "inhibits the perception of structures and patterns of social and culture life" (Aguilar, 1981:16). In Passaro's words, "for most people the essential question was whether by doing fieldwork" in Surabaya "I was 'distant enough' to produce adequate ethnographic knowledge. Whether I was 'close enough' was never an issue" (1997:153). In their opinion, because of my familiarity with my field site and research subjects, I cannot be objective enough in conducting my research. According to Passaro, there is an assumption that "an epistemology of 'Otherness' was the best route to 'objectivity'" (1997:152). This means that Surabaya is not "anthropological" enough for my fieldwork (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997:13).

I acknowledge the fact that I am familiar with Surabaya and know the Chinese community living there, as I am a part of it. However, I can also experience "cultural diversity" and "otherness" in Surabaya because the Chinese community here is "fragmented by class, … and ideology-related affiliative differences, and all cultures (including subcultures) are characterized by internal variation" (Aguilar, 1981:25). In Passaro's opinion, "Otherness is not a geographical given, but a theoretical stance" (1997:153). So, what matters here is not the

geographical space, but the "social space" (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997:38). Besides that, as Aguilar writes, "The insider researcher … should conduct his researches as an insider because his or her orientation to field experiences enables ethnographic interpretations to stand as not only a statements about the culture but also an expression of the culture" (1981:15). As an insider researcher, my cultural practices are a part of the ethnographic expression, not a representation, that can help me understand the processes in which I am immersed during my research.

Research Methodology

I started my fieldwork in September 2009 and ended in May 2011. I employed interview, participant-observation, and textual analysis to collect data for my research. Participant-observation and interview were the principle methods of data collection. They were supplemented with textual analysis, which was used for analyzing news reports and contemporary and historical documents and archives about Chinese Indonesians.

I utilized interview technique for investigating the strategies the Chinese Indonesians used in negotiating and formulating their Chineseness. The interview was used in order that I understood my informants' perspectives on their lives, experiences, or situations as expressed in their own words (Taylor and Bodgan, 1984). Since the interview I conducted entailed repeated encounters between my informants and me, I spent a great length of time with them. This was important because I could build a good rapport with them, as well as increase my understanding of them.

I employed two types of interviews. One was focused, open-ended, semi-structured interviews guided by interviews schedule. This type was for my informants who felt comfortable

with the interview. The second type, which was for those who did not feel at ease with the interview, was a casual, interview-like, "everyday life" conversations. The interviews consisted of questions pertaining to, among other things: personal and family life histories; meaning of being "Chinese," "Indonesian" and "Chinese Indonesian;" ethnic prejudice and social contact between the Chinese and the indigenous Indonesians; their participation in social and political activities; and their aspirations.

During the interviews, I analyzed how discursive practices affected the negotiation and formulation of Chinese ethnic identification. In light of the discursive practices, I interviewed the activists, leaders, and intellectuals of the Chinese communities. These people were important intermediaries that linked constituent to the public arenas of identity politics (Boyer and Lomnitz, 2005). I also interviewed other ordinary members of Chinese community. Those two groups of people were my primary informants. Besides interviewing Chinese Indonesians, I also interviewed other ethnic groups. I wanted to find out how the non Chinese construct the notion of Chineseness.

I used the "snowball" technique to recruit informants. Using my social network, I contacted people who might be interested in my research. Some of them were activists and officials of Chinese organizations. I told them about my research project and asked them if they were willing to be my informants. I also asked them to introduce me to other people, both Chinese and non-Chinese, who could be my potentials informants.

Overall, I interviewed 25 informants in semi-structured and recorded interviews, and 30 informants in casual and interview-like conversation, both recorded and unrecorded as some did not feel comfortable with the interview being recorded. I met with some of them at least two or three times, and with some others I met repeatedly. However, only one or two interviews were

recorded. In the case of unrecorded interviews, I usually took notes during the interview, but most of the time, immediately afterwards because I sensed that my informants felt awkward to see me taking notes. These interviews did not include informal chatting.

At first, I thought that the interview process was easy because, after all, I was from Surabaya, and for Chinese Indonesian informants, I had the same ethnic background as them. But that was not the case. One problem that I encountered was the fact that I was from Surabaya and of Chinese descent. Almost all informants said that I knew their plight and their experience, and I did not need to interview them since I knew what they were going to say. The second problem that I faced was my informants thought that they did not have the qualifications to be informants that I needed, or they felt that there were somebody else who were more knowledgeable than them. However, after much persuasion and with the help of my contacts who explained my research in my informants' language, they agreed and became very helpful.

Another problem that I encountered was that some informants "challenged my control" during the interview. For example, one informant had agreed to be interviewed, and when we talked over the phone, she asked me what questions I wanted to ask her. I told her the topic that I wanted to discuss, and she agreed. However, during the interview she talked about something else, despite my repeated efforts to direct our interview to the original topic. With much patience and more time to know my informants better, I could overcome this problem.

Nevertheless, this situation triggered my curiosity. I wanted to know why she seemed to hide something when I asked her about her experience and her opinion on being Chinese. Until now, I have not got the answer that satisfies my curiosity. But my assumption is that for her, talking about her bitter experiences during the New Order era could open the wound. That was why she preferred not to talk about it. The anxiety and fear still linger. My assumption finds

support in what is happening now in the Indonesian community. On one hand, they welcome the openness toward Chinese identity and culture, but on the other hand, they are afraid that the public display of Chinese identity and culture could trigger a backlash and ignite anti-Chinese feeling.

The experience with the above informant also occurred when I interviewed some other people who gave minimal answers. All of these were the older generations of Chinese Indonesians, unlike their younger counterparts who were more outspoken. This made it difficult for me to keep the interview going on. I felt that they were reluctant in talking about their past experience. Although they still answered my questions, their answers could not give any ethnographic data I needed. Hu Laoshi was such an informant. I wanted the interview with him to be like a conversation, with open-ended questions that allowed me to get more in-depth data, but the result was not like what I wanted. My interview with him below illustrated the difficulty I experienced.

> Setefanus: What is your opinion on the development of Chinese language in Indonesia?
> Hu Laoshi: It is good.
> Setefanus: Erh, there are a number of public secondary schools offering Chinese language as an elective course. What do you think about this?
> Hu Laoshi: Oh, that's good.

In this interview, in which short response was given, I faced difficulties in digging up more information as I did not want to give Hu Laoshi an impression that I grilled him. So I stopped asking him more questions. I felt that I needed to change the way I conducted interview.

During the next meeting with him, I did not interview him directly. Instead, I talked about the topic, told him my views on it, and asked for his opinion. I talked about a short essay published in *Qiandao Ribao*, on May 10, 2010. This essay was written by Basuki Novianto, or Wang XiaoMing, a Madurese student who spoke Chinese fluently. Then I told Hu Laoshi that it

was embarrassing that as a Chinese I did not speak Chinese well. Hu Laoshi laughed and said that indeed it was, but people should understand why many young Chinese Indonesians did not speak Chinese. I told him that he was right, but I still encountered people who were surprised to know a Chinese person who did not speak Chinese. Hu Laoshi then told me what he thought about Chinese language in Indonesia. Soon the interview ran smoothly, and I got more nuanced data for my dissertation. This experience made me aware that asking my informants only would not generate in-depth data. I should have offered my own views on the interview topic in order that there was a conversation like I wanted the interview to be so that I can unearth ethnographic data. As a result, my subsequent interviews with him and other people were much better.

Participant-observation method was used to understand the social, cultural, and political contexts in which my informants were embedded (Spradley, 1980). As a participant-observer, I engaged in activities appropriate to the situation and observed the activities, people, and physical aspects of the situation. This was different from ordinary participants who only came to the situation to engage in activities. Besides that, I maintained a "wide-angle lens" in the observation process, including the detailed cultural rules guiding the behaviors of the people being observed. As a participant-observer, I experienced being both an insider and outsider simultaneously by being subjectively involved in the social situation and objectively analyzing the situation at the same time. Moreover, participant-observation gave me a chance to increase introspectiveness about ordinary activities rather than merely to take the experiences for granted, as well as to teach me to keep a detailed record of both objective observations and subjective feelings in order to help my retrospective analysis of observation. In this method, I participated in both formal and non formal meetings and activities of various Chinese organizations. I also participated in the activities of informants who were not active participants of Chinese organizations, such as their

social functions where I could join, paying them social visit, informal gathering, and other social activities.

Chapter Outline

The rest of the dissertation presents an ethnographic analysis on how the Chinese in Surabaya construct the notion of Chineseness. By using the restoration of the three pillars of Chinese community, namely, Chinese language education, Chinese media, and Chinese organizations, I divide this dissertation into three parts. Part one is about Chinese language education. Part two is about Chinese media, and part three talks about Chinese organization.

Part one is divided into two chapters; chapter one, "Language Ideology and Chineseness," and chapter two "Authenticating Chineseness through Language." These chapters examine the interplay of language, education, and ethnic identity of the Chinese. Through this interplay, I analyze how the Chinese-educated Chinese use Chinese language education to create a sense of Chineseness and provide students with connectivity to Chinese language and culture so that students can feel and act Chinese. I also investigate how learners of Chinese language, almost all of whom are younger generations, view Chinese language and respond to this situation. In these chapters, I am attentive to the negotiation, protest. and accommodation to a new notion of Chinese ethnicity.

Part two is also divided into two chapters, chapter three "Chinese Media and Imagining Chineseness" and chapter four "Crafting Chineseness in the New Political Climate." This part starts by arguing the openness toward Chinese culture encourages the Chinese community to establish their own ethnic media, whose cultural mission is preserving Chinese culture and identity. In so doing, the Chinese media use the symbolic forms of Chinese ethnicity to create a

sense of Chineseness. At the same time, they also underscore that the Chineseness of Chinese Indonesians should also be connected the local context. This part then moves to how the Chinese respond to the symbolic form of ethnicity used in the media. Their responses show how they construct exclusionary and inclusionary boundaries in defining their notion of Chinese and Indonesian identities.

Part three consists of one chapter, "Discourse of Victimization, Resistance, and Reluctance," which investigates Chinese Indonesians' strategies in the socio-political setting. It explores how Chinese organizations capitalize on the marginalization and victimization of the Chinese to construct an avenue for Chinese social and political participation, and how some Chinese Indonesians accept this kind of construction and some other resist it and create their own version of participation, which gives meaning to Chineseness.

The last chapter is the conclusion, in which I summarize my ethnographic analysis. Drawing from this analysis, I suggest that that Chinese Indonesians' experiences inform their ethnicity. I argue that despite their shared history and unifying ethnic narrative, due to their diversity, Chinese Indonesians have different habitus and ideologies on Chineseness. These differences affect the way they ascribe meanings to the symbolic forms of Chinese ethnicity and lead to various notions of Chineseness.

Part 1

Chinese Language Education

After the New Order regime crushed Indonesian Communist Party in 1965 because of the allegation that the party masterminded the coup d'état and that China supported it, Chinese language education was prohibited in Indonesia. It was not until 1998—the year when the repressive New Order regime fell down—that Chinese language education came to life. A former teacher of a Chinese school described the aftermath of the purge of communism as "a moment of 'decline and annihilation' for Chinese language education" and the fall of the New Order regime as "a time of [its] "revival and development" (quoted in Sai, 2006:66). Since then, a number of members of the Chinese community, especially those who went to Chinese schools before they were banned, planned to revive Chinese language education in Indonesia.

Chinese language education, which is considered one of the three pillars of the Chinese community, is considered important by the Chinese community for their continuity in Indonesia. In colonial Indonesia, Chinese schools were established as a community resource that provided education based on Confucianism and Chinese culture for Chinese children.[1] Originally the language of instruction was Hokkien. However, in line with growing Chinese nationalism, Hokkien was replaced by Mandarin Chinese (Nio, 1940:16). This was done to create a uniform

[1] The educational system of the Dutch colonial administration excluded the Chinese. The rich Chinese hired private tutors to teach their children. Those who could not afford it sent their children to study in Chinese temple. The Church Council of Batavia (the former name of Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia) was annoyed with the existence of Chinese education as such because the council thought that it taught idolatry. In 1652, the council submitted a proposal to set up a school that primarily catered the Chinese, the school where "Chinese children … would then learn to read from Christian books" (Govaars-Tjia, 2005:37–38). At first the proposal was rejected, but then the colonial administration permitted the establishment of such a school. The school as such was not well received among the Chinese because the education the school provided was religious education. The Chinese community then established its own school based on its own cultural tradition. The Dutch administration labeled these schools as "wild schools," which it thought of sowing the seed of Chinese nationalism that could be detrimental to the Dutch presence in colonial Indonesia. In 1908, Dutch Chinese School (known as HCS, Hollands-Chineese Scholen) was established. Despite the general perception that HCS offered bettered education, many Chinese still sent their Children to Chinese school.

sense of Chinese identity among the Chinese who spoke various Chinese languages. Mandarin Chinese was then elevated as a marker of Chinese identity. Describing the development of Chinese schools, Williams writes that the curriculum of those schools was an attempt "to dignify their nationalism" (1960:54). Their curriculum reflected this attempt through propagating and arousing awareness of great Chinese cultural heritage. When Indonesia gained its independence, Chinese schools remained popular among the Chinese. However, their focus shifted from instilling Chinese nationalism to maintaining the cultural and ethnic identity. The Chinese community's determination in preserving Chinese cultural and ethnic identity became the raison d'être that underpinned the continuation of Chinese language education in independent Indonesia.

The closure of Chinese language education after the 1965 incident was seen as an effort to destroy Chinese community. The erasure of Chinese language and culture in Indonesia creates a generation of Chinese who does not know their heritage language and culture — a generation of Chinese who has lost their Chineseness, something that the Chinese who received Chinese education lament. When the succeeding administration lifted the ban on Chinese language and culture, Chinese citizens seized this opportunity by establishing Chinese language schools, which also means restoring one pillar of their community. Focusing on the re-establishment of Chinese language school, in this part, which is divided into two chapters — chapter I and II, I examine the role of Chinese language education in the (re)construction of Chineseness.

I argue that Chinese language has "symbolic power" (Bourdieu, 1977b), that is, the power to ascribe meaning and to define one's identity. The meaning and the identity Chinese language ascribes and defines are dependent upon the ideology people have on that language. In chapter I, I identify two language ideologies concerning Chinese language that circulate in the

Chinese community, namely Chinese language as a Chinese identity marker and Chinese language as a foreign language. I examine how different linguistic habituses in Chinese community produce these two ideologies. Although they are different, those ideologies renew the interest among Chinese Indonesians to learn Chinese. The growing interest to learn Chinese motivates Chinese-educated Chinese to re-establish Chinese language education in Indonesia.

Chinese language education is important for Chinese-educated Chinese because it is the kind of education that can inculcate a sense of Chinese identity among younger generations of Chinese Indonesians. In chapter II, using the case study of Yonghua Chinese Language School, I examine how the language ideology that Chinese language is an identity marker of Chinese identity operates in this school. It guides the programs and activities, which create connectivity to Chinese culture for its students. This connectivity is important because it is thought of having the ability to foster Chineseness. Nevertheless, because of having different habitus, those who do not subscribe to the same ideology have different ideas on Chinese language and these differences also affect their notion of Chineseness.

Chapter 1

Language Ideology and Chineseness

It was a balmy Monday evening in early May 2010 when I visited *Ayi*[1] Ai Ling at her house. I knew her in late October 2009, when I tried to find respondents for my research. A friend of a friend introduced me to her. After getting her phone number, I called her to introduce myself, as well as to ask her if she could be my respondent. At first, she was hesitant, refusing to be my informant. She said that she knew nothing about my topic. However, after several phone calls and much persuasion from my friend and me, she agreed to meet me before making a commitment to be my informant.

The dinner was my fourth meeting with her. This was the first time I went to her house and met her husband, *Shushu*[2] Huat Beng. I was told that that they were in their late sixties. Both of them graduated from a Chinese high school in Surabaya, the highest level of Chinese education available in Indonesia. They have two daughters and one son. The daughters have married. One lives in Los Angeles, and the other lives in Perth. Both married Chinese Indonesians. The son, who is in his mid-thirties, is still single and lives with them. None of their children went to Chinese school because it was banned.

The dinner was great. Typical Chinese and Indonesian dishes were served. Over the dinner, we had a conversation. *Shushu* Huat Beng asked me about my research project.[3] He was particularly interested when I told him that the resurgence of Chinese language in Indonesia was phenomenal, but he lamented that many young Chinese did not speak Chinese anymore. When she heard this, *Ayi* Ailing said to me:

[1] *Ayi* is the Chinese word for aunt.
[2] *Shushu* means uncle.
[3] All interviews were in Indonesian, mixed with Javanese and sometimes Chinese.

> Ai Ling: Steph, I want to show you something. You can read Chinese, can't you?
> Setefanus: My Chinese is limited, *Ayi*.
> Ai Ling (giving me a Chinese newspaper): Try to read this.[4]

I read the section that she pointed out. It was a short essay written by Wang Xiaoming, a Madurese middle school student, whose real name is Novi Basuki. The title was "I am 'Chinese.'" In this short essay, he wrote that it was a pity that many Chinese Indonesians did not speak Chinese, and hence, in his opinion, they lost their Chinese characteristics, whereas, he himself, who was ethnically Madurese, could speak Chinese. Rhetorically, he asked who the Chinese was, those who had Chinese ancestry but could not speak Chinese, or him, who is ethnically Madurese but spoke Chinese fluently. He ended his article by saying that it was not wrong if he could claim that he was "Chinese." After finishing reading it, I returned the newspaper to her, and I asked what she thought of that article. *Ayi* Ailing said that she couldn't agree anymore with Novi Basuki. The Chinese who could not speak Chinese lost their Chineseness. *Shushu* Huat Beng shared his wife's opinion.

Ayi Ai Ling's and *Shushu* Huat Beng's opinion as such reflects the idea that language is not neutral, that language is not just a medium for conveying messages in a communication. In this case, Chinese language is closely related to Chinese identity. Their educational background could explain why they had the opinion that the Chinese should be able to speak Chinese, and that those who did not speak Chinese lost their Chineseness. Because language is a system actively defined by socio-political processes and institutions such as schools, it can only be understood with reference to the social contexts in which it exists (Bourdieu, 1991:45). In a similar vein, the Chinese school in which they were educated inculcated an idea that Chinese language was inseparable from Chinese identity — the idea that she subscribed, it was

[4] *Qiandao Ribao*, May 10, 2010.

understandable why she labeled the Chinese who did not speak Chinese as "Cino tapi gak Cino."[5]

For Chinese Indonesians like *Ayi* Ai Ling, the Chinese education they received and their upbringing socialized a set of dispositions towards Chinese language, which Bourdieu calls "linguistic habitus." The linguistic habitus Chinese schools socialized dictated that speaking Chinese granted Chinese Indonesians a membership to Chinese ethnic group. Those who spoke Chinese were regarded as members of Chinese ethnic group. The Chineseness of those who did not speak Chinese was put in doubt. In this context, "language is not only an instrument of communication or even of knowledge, but also an instrument of power" (Bourdieu, 1977b:648), that is, the power to classify who belong to which group.

Because linguistic habitus is socially constructed disposition, within an ethnic group, an individual's linguistic habitus may be different from his or her co-ethnics. The way Chinese-educated Chinese ascribe value to Chinese language may be different from the Chinese who did not get Chinese education, or from the Chinese who grow up in the New Order era (1966-1998), when Chinese language was forbidden. The Chinese who grow up during the New Order era and whose parents hired private tutor to teach them Chinese clandestinely may have different linguistic habitus from those who did not learn Chinese. Differences in linguistic habitus affect their view on the relationship between Chinese language and identity. The interplay of language as a social construct and identity lays the groundwork for the use of ideology in analyzing this interplay.

[5] A Javanese expression that literally means "Chinese, but not Chinese." It refers to people whose ethnic background is Chinese but they do not behave like a member of that ethnic group anymore. The common perception among the ethnic Chinese community in Surabaya is that the ability to speak Chinese is one important criterion of behaving Chinese.

In this chapter, through the narratives of my informants, I examine language ideologies that circulate in Chinese Indonesian community. I focus on Chinese Indonesians' language ideologies towards Chinese language, which was banned in Indonesia during the New Order era. Examining these ideologies could shed light on the revival of Chinese language education in post-New Order Indonesia and on the relationship between Chinese language and identity. During my fieldwork, I found multiple ideologies operative in the Chinese community in Surabaya. However, there were two ideologies that were salient and relevant to Chineseness. The two ideologies are discussed in the sections below.

Circulating Ideology 1: Chinese Language as a Marker of Chinese Identity

Ayi Ai Ling's and *Shushu* Huat Beng's idea, that being Chinese means being able to speak Chinese, is not an isolated case. Many Chinese Indonesians, especially those who went to Chinese school, subscribe to the idea that the ability to speak Chinese is one important marker of Chinese identity, or to use Bonnie Urciuoli's idea (1996), speaking Chinese is indexical to being Chinese.[6] This is one ideology that circulates among the Chinese community in Surabaya. *Bapak*[7] Wong is one example of a Chinese who holds that ideology. When I asked him how he described a Chinese, he said, "Obviously one is Chinese if he is of Chinese descent. Besides that, he should be able to speak Chinese. It looks strange if a Chinese does not speak Chinese." *Bapak* Wong's opinion that a Chinese was a person who had Chinese ancestors and spoke Chinese might come from his own experience.

[6] All my respondents share the idea that having ancestors coming from China, Chinese blood, and racial or phenotypical features are the primary criterion of being Chinese.
[7] *Bapak* is the Indonesian word for "mister" or "sir."

Bapak Wong described his family as a *totok* Chinese family.[8] *Totok* was one of the two cultural categories of Chinese in Indonesia that referred to the Chinese who were born in China, spoke Chinese, and culturally oriented towards China. Their descendants who were born in Indonesia were likely to stay *totok* because they went to Chinese school. The other category was *peranakan*, the locally born Chinese who were the descendants of early Chinese migrants with indigenous women.[9] *Peranakan* Chinese had usually lost command of the Chinese language. They used Indonesian and other local languages as a means of communication. The *peranakan* elite who went to Dutch school spoke Dutch. However, during the peak of Chinese nationalism in the early 20th century, many *peranakan* Chinese went to Chinese schools. They still went to Chinese school before the school was banned during Suharto's administration. Nowadays, virtually all Chinese in Indonesia, with the exception of a very few new immigrants from China, have been *peranakanized* or *Indonesianized*. Thus, the dichotomy between *totok* and *peranakan* is out-of-date.

Bapak Wong's *totok* family background plays a role in his affinity towards Chinese language and culture. The Chinese cultural affinity and orientation towards China were cultivated in his family. Describing his father, he said,

> My father was born in Fujian, China. He was in his mid teens, probably 16 years old, when left Fujian for Jakarta in around 1920s. I can't remember exactly. … My father was very traditional in thinking. He wanted his children, who were born overseas, to go to China to see our hometown.[10] Only my eldest brother was able to go there. I think he went there with our uncle in 1941. Originally my father wanted him to stay there. However, the Japanese occupation ruined his plan. According to my brother, life was tough. So the uncle decided to go back to Indonesia.

In the early 20th century, it was quite common for the overseas Chinese family to send their children to go back to China to study there so that they became "proper Chinese" (Pan, 1994).

[8] The Chinese term for *totok* is *xinke huaren* (新客华人), which means Chinese newcomers.
[9] *Peranakan* is *tusheng Huaren* (土生华人), which means locally born Chinese.
[10] *Bapak* Wong used a Chinese term for "hometown," namely, *jiaxiang* (家乡)

Explaining the reason why his father wanted his children to stay in China, he said, "… my father was a very traditional Chinese. I think he considered that he and his family were sojourners here. One day, we would go back to our hometown."[11] The elder Wong considered his family as sojourners who would stay temporarily in Indonesia. One day, they would return to their ancestral country. The idea of sojourning was actually pervasive among the overseas Chinese communities prior to the Second World War. Wang Gungwu (2003) notes that during the late 19th and mid-20th century, shortly after the independence of new nation-states in Southeast Asia, the Chinese migrant communities there still considered themselves as sojourners who might return to China some day, despite having been in the region for such a long time and for generations. In the case of *Bapak* Wong's family, the elder Wong inculcated the idea of sojourning and returning to China to his children. Perhaps because of this, it was natural that he wanted Chinese education for his children, as Chinese schools in Indonesia at that time followed the curriculum of the national education in China and prepared their students who wanted to return to China (Sai, 2006: 67-68).

Besides family background, *Bapak* Wong's linguistic practices supported the notion that Chinese language was inseparable from Chinese identity. *Bapak* Wong and his siblings went to Chinese schools for their primary and secondary education, and they used Chinese language at home. This was partly because of his father. He said, "Of course, we used Chinese at home, especially when my father was around. He would beat us mercilessly if we did not speak Chinese to each to each other." Describing his linguistic practices, he said,

> Chinese was the main language of communication among classmates. But I spoke Javanese among friends in my neighborhood. I also spoke Chinese with my siblings, especially when we were at home, but sometimes when we played together with friends; I mixed my Chinese with Javanese. … [*responding to my question whether he made an effort to speak Javanese or spoke the language automatically*] Well, since I knew that

[11] *Bapak* Wong used the Chinese term *qiaomin* (侨民) for sojourner.

> they did not speak Chinese, I think I spoke Javanese automatically [to them]. … [*responding to my question why he sometimes mixed Chinese with Javanese when he talked to his brothers and sister*] Actually, I didn't know why (laughing). It was just like that. Automatically, I mixed Chinese with Javanese. But Chinese dominated the conversation. Until now I still use Chinese and Javanese when I talked to them. However, now I guess Javanese dominates the conversation.

Bapak Wong's story about his linguistic practices showed that Chinese language was very important, at least for his father. His father, who considered his family as sojourners, demanded that his children spoke Chinese at home. His father's action seemed to inculcate the idea that Chinese language was inseparable from Chinese identity, although his father and mother spoke Hokkien when they talked to each other. But, according to *Bapak* Wong, their parents could be considered as speaking Chinese even though they spoke Hokkien was spoken because Hokkien was one of Chinese languages.[12] His father did not want their children to forget their roots, as some *peranakan* Chinese whom the father knew because they did not speak Chinese at all. However, as *Bapak* Wong said, Javanese also crept in when he spoke to his siblings. This indicated that he might have a strong emotional affiliation towards Javanese. Speaking Javanese may also be a way of his identification with the place where he was born. In other words, through Javanese, unconsciously he identified himself with the society where he lived.

Bapak Poo, another informant, also believed that Chinese language was inseparable from Chinese identity. He said that it was the Chinese language that made somebody Chinese. It was the main identifier of being Chinese. He said,

> Well, what makes Chinese Indonesians Chinese? Of course, being born in Chinese family, and having Chinese blood. But I think this is not enough. Do you know that Chinese language is one pillar of Chinese community? If the pillar is spoilt, it is time for a

[12] Chinese language in this dissertation refers to Chinese Mandarin. Hokkien, known as Minnan hua in China, is the language spoken mainly in Fujian province, China, where many Chinese in Java came from. At first Chinese schools in Indonesia used Hokkien as the language of instruction. However, during the early 1900s, these schools switched to Mandarin Chinese as a result of the growth of Chinese nationalism and the elevation of Mandarin Chinese as the national language of China. See Suryadinata (1972).

> structure to start crumbling. If the Chinese do not speak Chinese, the Chinese community also starts crumbling. So, a Chinese should be able to speak Chinese.

By using a metaphor that Chinese language is like a pillar that supported a structure, that is, Chinese community, he emphasized the importance of Chinese language. Without Chinese language, Chinese community would lose its Chinese characteristics.

Bapak Poo was born in Surabaya 1945. Both of his parents came from China. He did not know when they came here. *Bapak* Poo's story was like *Bapak* Wong's. The father was the central figure in the family. Like the elder Wong, the elder Poo also considered his family as sojourners who would go back to their hometown one day. However, unlike the Wong family, none of the Poo family's children returned to China. *Bapak* Poo's parents, especially the mother, often talked about their lives in their *jiaxiang*, about Chinese folktales, as bed-time stories. It seemed that stories about their longing for their *jiaxiang* made him feel that he was Chinese. He talked about his family:

> We lived in the old part of Surabaya, in Kapasan area, in a two-story house. The first floor was used as a sundry shop. The living quarter was on the second floor. This shop was the only source of income for my family. Perhaps because our shop and our house were in the same building, our parents, especially mother, were very close to us. In their free time, they often told stories about *jiaxiang*, about the lives in China. They also told stories about Chinese folktales. All these made me close to Chinese culture and tradition, which my parents often celebrated.

Although he felt very close to Chinese culture, *Bapak* Poo did not realize or think that he was Chinese. When asked when and how he realized that he was Chinese, *Bapak* Poo answered,

> Well, when was that? Perhaps was it when I was in primary school? I can't remember now. Perhaps because I often listened to Chinese folktales and saw my parents practicing Chinese traditions and rituals, I thought all were parts and parcels of people's lives, not just the lives of the Chinese. I did not have close encounter with the non Chinese. So I thought all were just like my family. We feel different from others when we encounter with people who are different from us, don't we? If not, how do we realize the differences? I started to feel different when I played with other children in the neighborhood. Perhaps not really different, I just realized that I belonged to one ethnic group, Chinese, and most children in the neighborhood belong to different ethnic groups.

> I went to Chinese school. At school, we all spoke Chinese, and so did I when I was at home. At home, Dad demanded us to speak Chinese. He said that I was Chinese, and I should speak Chinese. But that was not the case when I was outside and played with kids in the hamlet. My house was on the main road. Most houses on the main road belonged to the Chinese, or rented by them. Behind our house there was a small hamlet. I often went and played with the kids there. Most of them were Indonesians.[13] I have many Indonesian friends. I was born here in Surabaya. So I was the native of Surabaya, *arek* Surabaya.

Like *Bapak* Wong, *Bapak* Poo's story also exposed the role of family in constructing his Chinese Identity, especially in terms of language. Chinese language as one important factor in determining Chineseness is often stressed. *Bapak* Poo's Chinese identity was also constructed by Chinese traditions and cultures that his parents practiced. His recollection on these things was very nostalgic. This showed that they gave him a deep impression, an impression that led him to his identification of himself as a Chinese and with his *jiaxiang*. It was in the year of 2000 that he had a chance to visit his *jiaxiang* for the first time.

Bapak Poo's identification of himself as a Chinese and with a place in China, which were based on his family's lineage, did not prevent him to claim his indigeneity to Surabaya. He claimed himself as *arek* Surabaya, which literally means the young people (or *pemuda* in Indonesian) of Surabaya, a term widely used for referring to the native of Surabaya (Frederick, 1989:1). *Arek Surabaya* could include people of different ethnic backgrounds who "were pulled together by an attachment to their particular environment and by a belief that they carried forward a tradition of bravery" (Frederick, 1989:6). As *pemuda*, the revolutionary force in Indonesian struggle for independence (Anderson, 2006), *arek* Surabaya held the spirit of revolutionary nationalism that went beyond ethnic boundaries. It also held a sense of

[13] Based on my observation, it was quite common among older Chinese (about 60 years old and above) to use the term *orang Indonesia*, which literally means Indonesian, to refer to the indigenous ethnic group. This is perhaps a matter of linguistic habit for them, as the term for distinguishing the Chinese and the non Chinese, and it does not have any connotation. Besides that, when *Bapak* Poo was still a child, he was not Indonesian citizen. He told me that he became Indonesian citizen in the early 1970s.

camaraderie. By calling himself as an *arek* Surabaya, *Bapak* Poo claimed his indigeneity based on the place he was born and on his attachment to the people of Surabaya, as seen in his statement that he had many Indonesian friends. For *Bapak* Poo, there were no contradictions in claiming himself as Chinese and Indonesian at the same time. Like Javanese Indonesians, for example, they could be both Javanese and Indonesians at the same time. So according to *Bapak* Poo, he could be Chinese and Indonesian at the same time, and the ability to speak Chinese was the characteristic of being Chinese. He mentioned the ability to speak Indonesian or other ethnic languages as one criterion of being Indonesian.

> Of course, they [Chinese Indonesian] should also be able to speak Indonesian, or other regional languages. But you must remember that they have Chinese blood. Their ancestors came from China. If you speak Indonesian, Javanese, or other regional Indonesian languages, you are not different from other people. But if you speak Chinese, then you know who you are.[14]

In this interview[15], *Bapak* Poo used the Chinese term *Huaren* for "Chinese" and "*Yinni gongmin*" for Indonesian. *Huaren* literally means "the people of Hua (*Hua* means Chinese, *ren* means people or person). The term *Huaren* is different from *Zhongguoren*, although in English both are translated as Chinese (*Zhongguo* means China).[16] *Huaren* stresses on the nuances of cultural China, whereas *Zhongguoren* implies the affiliation towards political China. According Tu Wei-ming, "*Huaren* is not geopolitically centered, for it indicates a common ancestry and a shared cultural background, whereas *Zhongguoren* necessarily evokes obligations and loyalties and political affiliation and the myth of the central country" (1994:25). *Bapak* Poo did not use the term *Yinniren* for Indonesian (*Yinni* means Indonesia). Instead he used the term *gongmin*, which

[14] As a multi-ethnic country, Indonesia has many ethnic groups with their own ethnic languages. In Indonesian parlance, Indonesian language is called *bahasa nasional* or "national language," and ethnic language is called *bahasa daerah* or "regional language."
[15] The interview was conducted in Indonesian, mixed with Javanese and Chinese, a typical register of Indonesian used by the Chinese.
[16] In Chinese characters, Huaren is 华人, Yinni gongmin is 印尼公民, and Zhongguo ren is 中国人.

is often translated as "citizen." The use of this term implies his legal status and political affiliation towards Indonesia. Thus, through the choices of words he used, *Bapak* Poo constructed his cultural and political identities.

Like the two informants above, *Ibu*[17] Meta also believed that Chinese language was a main identifier of being Chinese. *Ibu* Meta was born in 1954. She went to a Chinese elementary school until she was in the third grade. She switched to an Indonesian Christian school when the government banned Chinese school in Indonesia in 1966. She chose this school because it allowed her to continue her study in the third grade, whereas some other schools, especially the public ones, insisted that she should repeat her first grade due to her limited Indonesian proficiency. What struck her about her new school was that although almost all of the students were Chinese, they did not speak Chinese at all. Instead of hearing the word "wo" or "ni," she often heard Dutch words, such as "ik" and "jij" spoken.[18] She felt that this was strange because a Chinese could not speak Chinese. Although much later on, she knew why they did not speak Chinese, she still felt it was still strange for her. She felt lucky because she was still able to speak Chinese, thanks to her parents who insisted that Chinese should be spoken at home, although her Chinese reading skill was not good. When I asked her to define a Chinese, she said, "A Chinese should be able to speak Chinese." Despite her limited Chinese educational background, she could speak Chinese, and was able to maintain her Chinese proficiency. She added further, "I tried to speak Chinese whenever possible. I guess it was the right thing do in order to maintain my Chinese proficiency."

[17] Indonesian horrific title, which means Mrs.
[18] "Wo (我)" and "ni (你)" are Chinese words which mean "I" and "you." "Ik" and "jij" are Dutch words for those pronouns. The Chinese she referred here were the *peranakan* Chinese, many of whom came from Dutch-educated families.

Some Chinese with *peranakan* background also held this ideology. *Bapak* Jimmy is one of them. *Bapak* Jimmy was born in 1951 in Jombang. His parents named him Eng Hoa. However, in 1970, he changed his name to Jimmy.[19] His family moved Surabaya in 1954. He did not know which generation he was. Perhaps he was the fourth or fifth generation. Nobody in his family spoke Chinese. The language used at home was Indonesian and Javanese, mixed up with Hokkien. His parents did not go to school. For his family, the mother tongue was Malay, mixed up with Javanese and Hokkien. *Bapak* Jimmy was the youngest child in the family. He has one brother and one sister. All three went to Chinese school. Dutch school still existed in Indonesia when his brother and sister entered elementary school, but his parent did not sent them to study there, although studying at Dutch school would have given them an advantage. Perhaps it was because of financial consideration. Having Dutch education could pave way of having *gelijkgesteld* status, the status that many people dreamed of. He remembered once his parents talked about a rich relative who had the *gelijkgesteld* status. It was a long arduous and costly process to get that status during the Dutch colonial era. The *gelijkgesteld* status granted the holder the same legal rights as Europeans (Schijf and The, 1992:36). In her memoir, Tan Sian Nio, a *peranakan* Chinese who once worked as a school principal, wrote that the holder of *gelijkgesteld* status could claim Dutch citizenship (Pearson, 2008:195).

However, when *Bapak* Jimmy entered elementary school in 1960, the only options for him was either studying in Indonesian national school or Chinese school. He thought it was natural for his parent to send him to Chinese school, like his brother and sister. Although his

[19] In the midst of anti-Chinese sentiment when the New Order regime came to power, as a measure of assimilation, a decree (No. 127/U/Kep/12/1966) was issued by Cabinet Presidium to demand the Chinese who were Indonesian citizens to change their Chinese names into Indonesian-sounding names. One year later, Presidential Decree No. 240/1967 was issued to emphasize the decree of the Cabinet Presidium No. 127. This presidential decree strongly demanded Chinese Indonesians to assimilate into Indonesian society and to adopt Indonesian-sounding name. Because of these two decree, Eng Hoa had to change his Chinese name into "Jimmy." Any names were acceptable as long as they were not Chinese ones.

family was *peranakan* Chinese and did not have any legal documentation proving that they were Chinese citizens, they were considered as Chinese citizens. The Chinese citizenship law at that time was based on *jus sanguinis*. Those who had Chinese ancestry, no matter where they were born, were identified as Chinese citizens (Mackie and Coppel, 1976:9). So in his opinion, studying in Chinese school was the right choice, although his family never talked about returning to China.

Bapak Jimmy described himself as Chinese Indonesian, or *Yinni Huaqiao*.[20] He described a Chinese as a person "of Chinese descent, having Chinese cultural heritage, … observing and practicing Chinese tradition and rituals, such as *Imlek*[21] and *Cingbing*,[22] and speaking Chinese." For him, Chinese language was an important factor. He explained, "There is a proverb, *bahasa menunjukkan bangsa*.[23] So if a Chinese does not speak Chinese, well, I guess he is lack of Chineseness." When I asked him what he thought of the Chinese in Indonesia who did not speak Chinese, he said,

> That is the problem with the Chinese in Indonesia. Because of political situation, many of them do not speak Chinese anymore. They are still Chinese because originally their ancestors came from China, but they are lack of Chinese characteristics. And of course, they are also Indonesians because their citizenship is Indonesian.

In *Bapak* Jimmy's mind, a person is Chinese because he has ancestors coming from China. And to be fully Chinese, he has to have the ability to speak Chinese. If not, he is less Chinese or not so Chinese. Thus, Chinese language is one characteristic of being Chinese. In a similar vein,

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[20] *Yinni Huaqiao* (印尼华侨) literally means Chinese sojourner who live in Indonesia. *Yinni* is the Chinese term for Indonesia. *Hua* means Chinese, and *qiao* means living abroad. So *Huaqiao* means Chinese sojourners. *Huaqiao* refers to Chinese citizens sojourning overseas who will return to China someday. A neutral term is Huaren (华人), which means Chinese people. I believe that *Bapak* Jimmy used the term *Huaqiao* out of habit. His use of *Huaqiao* did not carry any connotation.

[21] *Imlek* is the Indonesian loan word for Chinese New Year. It is a Hokkien word, which means lunar calendar, pronouncing as *yinli* (阴历) in Mandarin Chinese.

[22] *Cingbing* is the Indonesian loan word from Hokkien, known as Tomb-sweeping Day, usually falls on the first week of April. In Mandarin Chinese it is call *Qingming Jie* (清明节).

[23] Literally, it means that language one uses shows one's ethnic group/nationality. Metaphorically it is used for describing that the way people speak or behave shows their upbringing.

Chinese Indonesians should have the ability to speak Chinese. After all, they are of Chinese descent. Nevertheless, *Bapak* Jimmy admitted that younger generations of Chinese, especially those born after 1960s, did not have Chinese education because of political circumstances. He then complained about the double-standard many Indonesians had. A couple of years ago, he visited his aunt in Jogjakarta. There he saw a lot of people talked about a group of Javanese from Suriname. They could not speak Indonesian. However, they could speak Javanese. He said,

> When *pribumis* saw Javanese from Suriname speaking Javanese, they praised these Javanese as the ones who did not forget their root. However, when Chinese spoke Chinese, they accused the Chinese as being exclusive, they accused them as the ones who did not want to assimilate into the society where lived. It was a double standard, wasn't it?

But he admitted that nowadays the situation was better, as many people, including the *pribumis*, learned Chinese.

Some *peranakan* Chinese who do not speak Chinese, also subscribe to this ideology. Despite their inability to speak Chinese, they believe that speaking Chinese is an important characteristic of being Chinese. One informant as such is *Tante* Goat Nio.[24] *Tante* Goat Nio was born in Surabaya in 1943. Like *Bapak* Jimmy, she did not know which generation she was. No body in her family spoke Chinese. She said that her grandparents did not go to school. But her father and mother went to Dutch Chinese School. At home they spoke Dutch to each other, but spoke Indonesian to their children. Goat Nio said that she went to Dutch Chinese School for only a few years. After that, the school was closed. She continued her education in Catholic school, until she graduated from high school. Describing who the Chinese were, she said,

> They have Chinese blood. … [T]hey should not forget Chinese language, culture and tradition. … [*Explaining why she did not speak Chinese despite her belief that Chinese language was an important element of Chinese identity*] Well, this is the problem with *Peranakans*, many don't speak Chinese. The Chinese should be able to speak Chinese. If

[24] *Tante* is an Indonesian loanword from Dutch, which means auntie. Among the Chinese, *tante* is used for addressing *peranakan* women, whereas *totok* women are addressed as *ayi*.

> not, well they are not so Chinese. They are lack of Chinese characteristics. I regret that as a Chinese I don't speak Chinese. But, well, there is a reason why.

Another *peranakan* informant, *Oom* Toan Khing (male, 55 year old), also shared *Tante* Goat Nio's idea.[25] He said, "We, the *peranakan* Chinese, are different. We say that we are Chinese, but we cannot speak Chinese." By claiming that he was a *Peranakan*, *Oom* Toan Khing acknowledged that he was Chinese, albeit he thought that *Peranakans* were strange Chinese as they did not speak Chinese.

When *Tante* Goat Nio and *Oom* Toan Khing mentioned that they were a different kind of Chinese because of their inability to speak Chinese, they sounded a bit apologetic. It seemed to me that they associated the inability to speak Chinese with embarrassment. They felt that one aspect of their Chinese identity was lost. Their essentialized view the Chinese identity is dependent upon Chinese language is not unique. There are other *peranakans* who share their opinion. According to Tan Chee Beng, such a view that Chinese literacy leads to a closer affiliation to Chinese culture and makes those who are literate in Chinese more Chinese than those who are not is commonly held among the Chinese in diaspora, both those who speak Chinese and those who don't (2004:122).

While the ideology that Chinese language is a marker of Chinese identity is pervasive among the older generation, there are also some younger generations of Chinese who believe that being Chinese means being able to speak Chinese. Hendra is an example. He was born in 1980. Thus, he did not go Chinese school. But his parents did. So, at home his parents spoke Chinese to each other but switched to Indonesian when they talked to their children. Hendra went to a Christian school for his primary school, where the majority of the students were of Chinese descent. Then he went to public school for his high school and university education. Here, he

[25] *Oom* is a Dutch word for uncle. *Oom* and *Tante* are commonly used among Indonesians for addressing uncle and aunt.

was a minority. His limited encounter with Chinese language at home encouraged him to learn Chinese. He took Chinese language course in a language school for quite some time. After earning his bachelor's degree in engineering, in 2005 he went to China to study Chinese. He received scholarship from the Chinese government. He stressed the ability to speak Chinese as one important factor that defined being Chinese. He said,

> A person is Chinese if he has Chinese blood, either from the father or mother. Besides that, I think a Chinese should be able to speak Chinese. A Chinese who cannot speak Chinese lacks Chineseness.

Even, among the non Chinese, the ability to speak Chinese is the main identifier of being Chinese. Besides Novi Basuki, whom I write in the beginning of this chapter, I encountered a number of them who shared the idea the Chinese language was tied to Chinese identity. A Javanese man commented on his Chinese acquaintance who did not speak Chinese. He said in Javanese, "A Chinese who cannot speak Chinese is strange. What kind of Chinese is that? I cannot imagine a Javanese who do not speak Javanese."

With their firm subscription to this ideology — that is, Chinese language is a main identifier of Chineseness — informants in this group believe in the importance of Chinese language in constructing Chinese identity. In this case, Chinese language is not only seen as a means of communication but as a symbol of Chinese identity as well. That is why, as what the respondents in this group said, the Chinese who do not speak Chinese are lack of Chineseness.

However, history shows that Mandarin Chinese is not the language used by the ancestors of the Chinese in Indonesia, who mostly came from South China, where the languages used were Hokkien or Cantonese. Even Chinese schools in colonial Indonesia did not use Mandarin Chinese, preferring Hokkien or Cantonese (Clark, 1965; Govaars, 2005). In line with the emergence of Chinese nationalism, *Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan*, the major Chinese organization in

colonial Indonesia, revamped Chinese education. It introduced Mandarin Chinese as the language of instruction. The adoption of Mandarin Chinese is the language of the Chinese rooted in the development of Chinese consciousness in China in the late 19th century. Suffering from an identity crisis because of the domination of Western powers in the late Qing (Manchu) dynasty era that challenged the way China perceived itself as *Zhongguo* (the Middle Kingdom), "a name that literally put China at the center of its world, *Tianxia* (the realm under heaven)," China needed to reconstruct its identity and history (Chow, 2004:50). Zhang Binglin, a revolutionary nationalist, wrote that Chinese history was non-linear as it was demarcated by various dynasties. Thus, to establish an ethnic Chinese consciousness, a homogenous *Hanzu* or Chinese ethnic identity was constructed through the lineage of the Han dynasty, whose first emperor, the Yellow Emperor (*Huangdi*) was considered as the first grand ancestor (Chow, 2004:57). This new identity became the root of the early period of Chinese nationalism as it created a distinction between the Han people, the native of China, and the Manchurians who established the Qing dynasty that occupied China. To secure this new identity, there should be a homogenous language system that unified people across the country. Thus, *Hanyu* (Mandarin dialect, the language of Han, spoken in the northern part of China) was elevated as the national language (Guoyu) that unified the Chinese (Han) people (Chow, 2004:71, 76). Through the reconstruction of history and language, an essentialized Chinese identity was created. According to Chow, "[T]he Hanzu [Chinese] identity presented as a racially and culturally homogenized lineage has contributed to suppressing the enormous diversity of local cultures and dialects" (2004:76). This idea — that Chinese language is a part of Chinese identity — was adopted by Chinese Indonesians who hold the ideology I mention above.

Those who hold this ideology believe that Chinese language is inseparable from Chinese identity. For them, Chinese language serves as "an ideological construction" that represents their ethnicity (Irvine and Gal, 2000: 37). In investigating the ideological process in linking linguistic forms and social phenomena, Judith Irvine and Susan Gal use Peircian semiotic approach in which ideology is constituted by some semiotic processes, one of which is iconization. According to Irvine and Gal,

> Iconization involves a transformation of the sign relationship between linguistic features (or varieties) and the social images with which they are linked. Linguistic features that index social groups or activities appear to be iconic representations of them, as if a linguistic feature depicted or displayed a social group's inherent nature or essence. The process entails the attribution of cause and immediate necessity to a connection (between linguistic features and social groups) that may be only historical, contingent, or conventional. (Irvine and Gal, 2000:37)

Iconization refers to features of linguistic repertoire that are considered as inherently reflecting the nature of a social or ethnic group. The linguistic repertoire is perceived as an iconic representation of this group.

In the process of iconization, language also serves as an index to cultural and social values, as Paul Kroskrity writes，

> One of the key advantages of such semiotic-functional models is the recognition that much of the meaning and hence communicative value that linguistic forms have for their speakers lies in the "indexical" connections between the linguistic signs and the contextual factors of their use — their connection to speakers, settings, topics, institutions, and other aspects of their socio-cultural worlds. (2000:7)

This means that language has the social or non-referential indexicality, namely, the connection of linguistic elements with social elements, such as identity.

In the mind of those who held this ideology, the iconization process entails the belief that Chinese language corresponds to Chinese identity. This is because the language is seen as an inherent property of being Chinese. Through iconization, Chinese language is considered

essential to being Chinese. The Chinese should be able to speak Chinese, as Chinese language is indexical to Chinese identity. Chinese language is thought to have the ability to develop Chinese consciousness, as seen in *Bapak* Wong's statement,

> The Chinese here [in Indonesia] should remember where their ancestors came from. They have to know their … erh … cultural heritage. Many young Chinese born here may not realize that their ancestors came from other place. But it does not mean they that they have to be *orang Tiongkok*. They are still *orang Indonesia*, but their ethnic background is *Tionghoa*.[26] This is like a Javanese here. He is Indonesian but ethnically Javanese. That is why I think it is important for them to have that, the language. That enables them to understand more their cultural heritage.

Similarly, *Bapak* Jimmy echoed *Bapak* Wong's statement. He said,

> In my opinion, knowing another language is important because language is like a key that opens door to other culture. So the knowledge of Chinese language can be a key that opens door to Chinese culture. If you speak Chinese fluently, you can have a deeper understanding of Chinese culture. That is why I believe that knowledge of Chinese language and culture is very important for young Chinese Indonesians, many of whom do not know their root. Nowadays, many of them can speak English. As a result, they become westernized.

Other respondents also expressed the opinion that Chinese Indonesians who do not speak Chinese should learn Chinese so that they can regain their ethnicity.

> *Ibu* Meta: Through the mastery of Chinese language, they [Chinese Indonesians who do not speak Chinese] know Chinese culture better, the culture of their ancestor. … Of course, as Chinese, they should know their culture. Otherwise, they will forget their root. *Wong cino ilang cinone*.[27] If the situation as such happens, then what makes us different from other people?
>
> Daniel (30-year-old male): Chinese language would certainly help Chinese Indonesians know their cultural roots better. It is a bit embarrassing if we, the Chinese, do not speak Chinese or do not know our culture. When I was in China, I know a Canadian guy who was famous there because of his role in a traditional Chinese comedy. He even became a television host in some shows in some Chinese television channels. ... Political factors uprooted Chinese Indonesians, especially those who were born after the political

[26] Orang is Indonesian word for people or person. *Tiongkok* is the loan word from Hokkien, which means China or Chinese (Mandarin: *zhongguo* (中国)). Hence *orang Tiongkok* refers to China Chinese, as opposed to *orang Tionghoa* (Mandarin: *zhonghua* (中华)), which refers to those of Chinese descent, regardless of their citizenship. In Mandarin, this group of people is called *huaren* (华人).

[27] A Javanese expression which means that the Chinese have lost their Chineseness.

> upheaval in 1965. But now, the regulations that ban Chinese language and culture have been lifted. This is great for the Chinese to relearn their cultural heritage.

In the eyes of the people in this group, many Chinese Indonesians are lack of Chineseness. They have been uprooted from their culture and tradition. Another informant, Olivia, a 34-year-old *peranakan* Chinese who received her bachelor's degree in a British university and started learning Chinese a few years ago, said,

> Language can be used for understanding culture. Of course language is primarily used as a means of communication. But actually the function of language is more than that. It is more than using different words for the same objects. Language has different ways in seeing things. In other words, language reflects the way its users view the world, and that is called culture, I think. For example, the Chinese have different world view from the Europeans. It is through language that we can see differences in the respective worlds. So if we understand Chinese language, it is easier for us to understand and to appreciate Chinese culture. This can reinforce the pride of our cultural heritage.

Through learning Chinese language and culture, Chinese Indonesians who are thought of losing their Chineseness are expected to be aware of their Chinese ethnicity.

This opinion is prevalent among these people, that Chinese Indonesians, especially the young ones, should learn Chinese, as the language can invoke their Chinese identity. One example is the conversation between *Bapak* Poo and his grandson, Guo Qiang, when Guo Qiang's father brought his family to visit *Bapak* Poo.

> *Bapak* Poo (in Chinese): Guo Qiang, *chi fan le ma*? (Guo Qiang, have you eaten yet?)
>
> Guo Qiang (in Indonesian): A gong,[28] belum. (Grandpa, not yet).
>
> *Bapak* Poo (In Chinese): Oh, *hai mei chi ya*? *Lai, lai, a gong gei ni Lemper*. *Xihuan ma*? (Oh, you haven't? Come here, I'll give you lemper.[29] Do you like it?) [*seeing that Guo Qiang looked confused, he repeated it Indonesian*]: *Suka*? (do you like it?).

In the conversation above, *Bapak* Poo talked to Guo Qiang in Chinese. Guo Qiang understood what *Bapak* Poo said, but he replied in Indonesian. *Bapak* Poo, then, asked him again in Chinese.

[28] A gong is the Chinese term for paternal grandfather.
[29] Lemper is an Indonesian cake made of glutinous rice and shredded chicken.

But this time, Guo Qiang, did not understand. So *Bapak* Poo repeated it in Indonesian. One week later, when I asked *Bapak* Poo why he did not use Indonesian when he talked to Guo Qiang,[30] he said,

> I want Guo Qiang to be able to speak Chinese, so that he is not like his father who does not speak it. I want him to learn Chinese. It is important for him to know the language. … Of course it is important because we all are Chinese.

Bapak Poo stressed that he wanted his grandson to be able to speak Chinese because they were Chinese. For people like him, the relationship between language and ethnic identity is closely intertwined, a relationship that that made Chinese language necessary for the Chinese. For *Bapak* Poo and others like him, Chinese language is one of the most important elements of their Chinese ethnicity. Those who do not speak Chinese are deemed being "less Chinese," as *Tante* Goat Nio described, "Chinese, but not being Chinese." This assumed connection between Chinese language and Chinese ethnicity also makes the non-Chinese expect that the Chinese can speak Chinese, which is in line with what some non-Chinese respondents said.[31]

For people who hold the opinion as such, language constitutes their ethnic identity. However, ethnic identity is often associated more with the symbol of a separate language than with its actual use. In other words, Chinese language here functions more as a symbol or icon of Chinese identity rather than a means of communication. Most of the respondents mention that Chinese language is the attribute of Chinese identity. However, despite their Chinese fluency or the fact that for a number of them Chinese is their mother tongue, they often mix Chinese and Javanese. The conversation between *Bapak* Poo and his wife illustrates this. When he wanted to

[30] I observed that *Bapak* Poo's conversation with Guo Qiang started in Chinese for a few moments. Then it slipped into Indonesian. This happens most of the time.

[31] The same situation also occurs in North America. In the U.S. mainstream culture, Chinese language is one main criterion of being Chinese. The Chinese are expected to be able to speak Chinese, and those who don't are seen as less Chinese (Louie, 2004; He, 2009; Hinton, 2009).

give a cake to Guo Qiang, he asked his wife, Chun Hua, who was in the middle of doing something in the verandah:

> *Bapak* Poo [in Chinese and Javanese]: *Hua, zai Holland Bakery mai de dangao iku mbok seke' ndi*? (Hua, where do you put the cakes we bought in Holland Bakery?)
>
> Chun Hua [in Chinese and Javanese]: *zai zhuozi shang zai pawon* (They are on the table in the kitchen).

Although both of them speak Chinese and Javanese fluently, they often mix them in their conversation.

During my field work, I encountered a number of similar situations. In mid-April 2010, I met a respondent in the office of the Huang clan association. By coincidence, the Huang clan association received guests from another local Chinese organization. I was told that there was an official reception, and after that, there were some performances from both associations. The official reception started with the welcoming speech from the chair of the Huang clan association, and the leader of the guests also gave a speech. The two speeches were conducted in Chinese. The master of ceremonies also used Chinese. However, the people in that event conversed in Indonesian and Javanese, or mixed languages — Chinese, Indonesian or Javanese — although there are those who conversed exclusively in Chinese. This event shows that Chinese is used as a public script. However, their private script uses Chinese, Javanese and Indonesian. The same practice also occurs in the meetings of various Chinese organizations, where speeches and other official matters were in Chinese but participants used Chinese, Indonesian, and other languages they are comfortable with, or a mixture of Chinese and other languages. But, if the meetings are not the internal Chinese organizations, then in line with the language policy or the national language, Indonesian is used.

From a prescriptive point of view, mixing Chinese and Indonesian or Javanese produce a chaotic mixture of languages, which is against the grammatical rules of each language. However, seen from different perspectives, the mixture of Chinese and Indonesian or Javanese creates a style of communication that accomplishes important cultural work (Zentella, 1997:113). In her study on Puerto Ricans in New York who mix English and Spanish, Zentella argues that the use of Spanish serves as a "tag-like emblem of Puerto Rican identity" (1997:110), and through "Spanglish," they want to say that they belong to both English and Spanish world (1997:114).

Similarly, the language use and language choice among the Chinese in Indonesia — that is, mixing Indonesian/Javanese with Chinese — imply their local (Indonesian) and Chinese identity, and Chinese functions as a symbol or an icon of Chinese ethnicity. This finds support in Heller's study on code-switching practices in Quebec and Ontario (1988) and Woolard's in Barcelona (1989). In their opinion, code-switching entails a political strategy to resist or to redefine the value of symbolic resources in linguistic marketplace. In a similar vein, Chinese Indonesians use code-switching as a symbol of their ethnic identity. The Chinese words or terms used in their code-switching practices are often words that reflect personal involvement and intimacy.

Circulating Ideology 2: Chinese Language as a Foreign Language

There is also another ideology concerning Chinese language; that is, Chinese language is a major language or global language in the world, which is important for job or economic opportunity, but it has nothing to do with being Chinese. Zhang *Laoshi* (Teacher Zhang) is an example of someone who holds this belief, despite being a Chinese language teacher in a Chinese school before it was banned, as well as one of the founders of the association of Chinese

language teachers in Surabaya. Thus, I assumed that he linked the ability to speak Chinese to Chineseness. Zhang *Laoshi* was in his mid-seventies when I met him in February 2010. His family background was a typical *totok* family. His parents, who came from China, were very traditional. They practiced Chinese traditional rituals and taught them to their children. They also taught their children Chinese culture and impart Chinese traditional value. Describing what a Chinese is, he said,

> Obviously, [a Chinese] should have Chinese ancestors. … A Chinese is a person who has Chinese blood, whose ancestors came from China. … [*responding to my question whether Chinese language and culture are also factors that make somebody Chinese*] In my opinion, if we ask about the origin of the Chinese, the answer is definitely that they came from China, or their ancestors came from there. Why are we called Chinese Indonesians? In Chinese, Chinese Indonesian is called *Yinni Huaren* or *Yinni Huayi*, simply because we are *orang Indonesia*, not *orang Tiongkok*.[32] But we must remember that our ancestors came from China. Tradition or culture is a matter of upbringing and habit, I guess. If Chinese tradition and culture are not practiced and taught to us, how do we know them? And so is Chinese language. If it is not taught to us, how can we speak it? If we rarely use Chinese language, how can we speak it fluently? There are many Javanese or Madurese children in Jakarta, and they don't speak Javanese or Madurese at all. Nevertheless, they are still Javanese or Madurese, aren't they?[33]

For Zhang *Laoshi*, the main criterion of being Chinese is having Chinese blood or ancestors coming from China. In his opinion, a Chinese person should know Chinese tradition, culture, and language. However, there are factors that prevent them to know their cultural heritage, such as habit and upbringing, and in the case of Chinese Indonesians, Zhang *Laoshi* mentioned that because of political factors, Chinese language and culture were banned in Indonesia. That is why many Chinese born in 1960s, whom he called "the lost generation," do not speak Chinese. Nevertheless, in his opinion, mastering Chinese is important. He said,

[32] The two terms here are Indonesian terms. *Orang* means person or people. *Tiongkok* means China. Hence, *orang Indonesia* means Indonesian, and *orang Tiongkok* means Chinese with an understanding that the person is China Chinese.

[33] Javanese are the major ethnic group in Indonesia. The traditional geographical location of Javanese is in Central and East Java. Madurese is a major ethnic group in East Java. Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, is located in the western part of Java, in which major ethnic groups there do not speak Javanese or Madurese.

> Of course nowadays it is really good if you speak Chinese because it is the key to economic opportunities. … I think it is beneficial for Indonesians, regardless of their ethnic background, to speak Chinese.

Zhang *Laoshi* believes that mastering Chinese is important because of the rise of China in the political and economic world.

Gao *Laoshi*, another informant who is Zhang *Laoshi*'s contemporary, shared Zhang *Laoshi*'s opinion. However, unlike Zhang *Laoshi*, Gao *Laoshi* came from a *peranakan* family background. He went to Dutch-Chinese elementary school but then switched to Chinese school for his secondary education.[34] Upon completion of his study, he worked as a teacher in a Chinese school in Surabaya. In his opinion, "a Chinese is a person who has Chinese ancestry and hold Chinese values such as filial piety." These are the primary characteristics of being Chinese. Other characteristics, such as Chinese language, are not so important. He said,

> Here in Indonesia, somebody is a Javanese if he is of Javanese descent. Similarly, a Chinese is a person of Chinese descent. Besides that, a Chinese can be called Chinese if he holds Chinese cultural values such as filial piety. Filial piety is the foundation of Chinese culture. If a Chinese does not have filial piety, I think it was difficult to believe that he is Chinese. … [*Responding to my questions on the role of Chinese language*] Chinese language is a matter of habit, and so are Chinese cultural practices. Many Chinese Indonesians who grew up during the New Order era, do not speak Chinese, and do not know much about Chinese culture because those were considered illegal. So we cannot blame them for not speaking Chinese and knowing Chinese culture. There are reasons why they do not speak Chinese. There are reasons why they have a little knowledge on Chinese culture.

Gao *Laoshi* does not link Chinese language to Chinese identity. In his opinion, a Chinese who does not speak Chinese is pretty normal because the mastery of a language depends on a number of factors such as the opportunity to learn that language. However, during the interview he often

[34] Dutch Chinese primary school (*Hollandsch Chineesche Schollen*) was established by the Dutch colonial government to cater for the educational need of the Chinese in colonial Indonesia.

attributed Chinese Indonesians' inability to speak Chinese to social and political environment. This was apparent when he talked about the Chinese in Singapore and in Malaysia.[35]

> We cannot compare Chinese Indonesians with their counterparts in Singapore or Malaysia. In Singapore, the Chinese there should take Chinese as their mother tongue, and there are Chinese schools in Malaysia. What a shame if a Chinese Singaporean or Chinese Malaysian does not speak Chinese. The situations in the two countries are different from that in Indonesia, where Chinese language was once forbidden.

His opinion that Chinese Singaporeans or Chinese Malaysians should be able to speak Chinese because of favorable environment and no restriction for learning Chinese may reflect his perspectives on the relationship of Chinese language and Chinese identity. I got the impression that to some degree he believed that in normal circumstances Chinese language was one factor of being Chinese. Since Chinese Indonesians have been in abnormal circumstances, it is understandable that they do not speak Chinese nor know Chinese culture.

There are some people from *totok* and *peranakan* background and having Chinese education who hold the same opinion as Zhang *Laoshi*'s and Gao *Laoshi*'s — that is, Chinese language is not a main identifier of Chineseness. There are other features such as cultural values, like filial piety and hard work, which characterize Chineseness. However, among the people in their generations, they are minority. Most of the people believe that Chinese language is an important marker of Chinese identity.

On the contrary, many of their younger counterparts believe Chinese language has nothing to do with Chineseness, although they admit that the mastery of Chinese could sharpen their competitive edge in job market. One informant, Dina, said, "Look at job vacancies in

[35] There are no Chinese schools in Singapore, although the ethnic Chinese makes up more than 70% of the population. The language of instruction in schools in Singapore is English. However, Chinese students have to take Chinese Mandarin course as their mother tongue, which is offered from primary to secondary level. Chinese schools, in which Chinese is used as a language of instruction, are allowed in Malaysia until secondary level. However, public Chinese schools are found in the primary level only. Public secondary schools can offer Chinese language, labeled as "Pupils' Own Language" class. There are Chinese schools at the secondary level, called "Independent Chinese Secondary School," but they are not recognized by the government.

newspaper. Many require people who can speak Chinese. I think Chinese helps us find a job faster." Dina was born in 1983. She came from a *totok* family. Her parents were in their early sixties, both of them went to Chinese school. However, a few months before graduating from their high school, Chinese school was banned. Dina said that their parents spoke Chinese fluently. She observed this when her parents talked to their relatives in China. Nevertheless, they rarely spoke Chinese to each other.

> Mom and Dad always use Indonesian when they speak to each other. But they speak Chinese when they talk about something off the record, or about something they don't want others to know.

Although her parents spoke Chinese, as far as she remembered, they did not encourage her to learn Chinese, although occasionally they said to her that she should learn Chinese. However, it was never translated into action.

> When I was in elementary school, in the third or fourth grade — I can't remember exactly, I saw a Chinese stamp on an envelope. I thought the Chinese characters were interesting. So I told my dad that I was interested in learning Chinese. My dad said, "Oh, that's great. I will try to find a tutor who can teach you." But it took for ages to find the tutor so that my interest of learning Chinese was gone. … I don't know why, but I guess that at that time my parents thought that Chinese language was not a priority. I should concentrate on English and other subjects. Besides that, in 1990s Chinese language was forbidden, so learning Chinese was like a clandestine activity.

Only after graduating from the Communication Department in a university in Surabaya did she go to Beijing to study Chinese for one year. Her primary motivation was studying Chinese, as she felt that it could help her in her career. For her, Chinese language was not a main identifier of being Chinese.

Dina thought that having Chinese blood and Chinese ancestors are the important criteria of being Chinese. Another is phenotypical features. She said that it is the "physical characteristics, such as, fair skin color" that makes a person Chinese, not the mastery of Chinese language, which in her opinion depends on social environment. She gave an example of her

native Indonesian friends whose mastery of Chinese was better than hers. She stressed that despite their good mastery of Chinese, they could not be considered as Chinese. Comparing herself to one of her friend, she said,

> I can speak Javanese fluently. I think my Javanese is better than my Javanese friend who is from Jakarta. She can't speak Javanese. But no matter what, I cannot be a Javanese, despite my Javanese name. I am still Chinese. It is not that I insist that I am Chinese, but the society think that I am Chinese.

In her opinion, language is not an important part of ethnic identity. So, Chinese language is not an important part of her Chinese identity. It is like any other important languages in the world, such as English.

Another respondent, Arman, who belongs to *totok* family, shared Dina's opinion that Chinese language is not the main criterion of being Chinese. Arman, who was born in 1977, went to Catholic school for his education. Like Dina, he graduated from a university in which the majority of the students were Chinese. Arman said that he spoke Chinese.

> I started learning Chinese since I was a kid. At first I was reluctant. I made no progress at all. Then, I stop attending the course. But when I was a teenage, I felt that it was important for me to master Chinese. So I took Chinese course again.

Arman graduated from a university in Surabaya and worked in his alma mater as a lecturer. In 2004, he was awarded a scholarship that enabled him to pursue his masters' degree in Europe. It was in Europe that he met some Chinese from China. They became good friends, and his friendship with them improved his Chinese, because he always spoke that language with them. Many of Chinese friends underestimated and looked down upon other Chinese Indonesians who did not speak Chinese. He explained,

> Many Chinese from China belittled Chinese Indonesians. They said that Chinese Indonesians called themselves as Chinese, but they did not speak Chinese. However, after knowing the historical background, they understood why. Some of my friends from China were interested in knowing more about Chinese Indonesians.

Arman said that the historical background of Chinese Indonesians could explain why many of them did not speak Chinese. Because of that, in his opinion Chinese language is not an important characteristic of being Chinese.

> Well, I think the ability to speak Chinese is not a criterion of being Chinese. A person can be called Chinese is he is of Chinese ancestry and practicing Chinese culture and Chinese values, which I think are more important than Chinese language. The ability to speak Chinese is not an issue here. Language ability depends on various factors such as opportunity, education, and especially in Indonesia, social and political environment.

Despite his fluency in Chinese, Arman believes that Chinese language is not related to his Chinese identity.

Ratna, another informant, told me that she knew or realized that she was Chinese because of the Chinese language. Ratna was born in 1966, the year when Chinese schools were banned. She was second-generation Indonesian. Her paternal grandparents came from China. Although her maternal grandparents were born in Indonesia, she said that they were not *peranakans*. Ratna herself did not speak Chinese. But her parents did. She said that her parents went to Chinese school, but they did not finish their high school.

Ratna went to a Catholic school, where the majority of students were of Chinese descent, for her primary and secondary education. Then she attended a public university, majoring in English. She now works as an English teacher in a Catholic school. She talked about her experience.

> I know that I was Chinese since I was a kid. … Erh, it was because of grandparents. They spoke Chinese with my parents. But they used Indonesian or Javanese with other people. So I asked my parents why *ama* and *akong* used Chinese. My father said that because we were all Chinese.[36]

[36] *Ama* and *akong* are Hokkien words which mean grandmother and grandfather. Most of kinship terms and Chinese food names the Chinese in Surabaya use are Hokkien, or other Chinese dialects, not Chinese Mandarin.

At first she believed that Chinese language was one criterion of being Chinese. But over time, she found that such a belief was fallacious. She stressed that she was still Chinese although she did not speak Chinese.

> I am definitely Chinese, although I don't speak Chinese. I have Chinese blood. My ancestors came from China. I cannot change that fact, and nobody can change it either. Chinese language, like any other languages in the world, is a matter of habit, a matter of priority, I guess. When I was a student, English was far more important than Chinese. Besides that, Chinese language was forbidden.

She then gave an example of her Malaysian cousin who did not speak Chinese. She also talked about her Batak close friend, who did not speak Batak. Yet people still thought of this friend as a Batak.[37]

Jenny, a respondent in her mid-twenties, has different experience. She came from a *peranakan* family, where Chinese was never spoken, except for kinship terms and food. Even those were Hokkien, not Chinese (Mandarin). Nevertheless, her parents said that their children should have learned Chinese because they thought that the mastery of Chinese was important and that as Chinese they should be able to speak Chinese. However, this was just a wish because of the government's restriction on Chinese language. Jenny said that her parents regretted for not speaking Chinese. Jenny started learning Chinese when she was a freshman in college. After she got her bachelor's degree, she went to Beijing and studied Chinese for one year. At first, before going to Beijing, she thought that Chinese language is indexical to Chinese identity. Thus, in her own words, she wanted to be more Chinese. But despite her better fluency in Chinese, she felt Indonesian.

> Jenny: When I speak Chinese, I feel that I am Indonesian.
> Setefanus: Oh, really? Why?
> Jenny: Well, perhaps my Chinese proficiency is not good.
> Setefanus: Did you take HSK[38] before?

[37] Batak is an indigenous ethnic group of North Sumatra.

> Jenny: Yes, I did. I was in the intermediate level.
> Setefanus: Intermediate level is good enough. You can read, write, and speak Chinese, can't you? So what makes you think you are Indonesian when you speak Chinese?
> Jenny: Erh, well, it is difficult to answer. I just feel it. Perhaps because I speak Chinese with Indonesian accent. So my Chinese is different from the Chinese spoken in China. Besides that, my mind always thinks in Indonesian. So I think my Chinese is not automatic.
> Setefanus: I guess it is normal.
> Jenny: Yes, I think so. But this strengthens my feeling of being Indonesian.

Holding a different opinion than *Bapak* Poo, Jenny said that Chinese language strengthened her identity as an Indonesian. For her, Chinese language was a foreign language. Although she spoke it quite fluently, she spoke it with Indonesian accent. This accent made her feel Indonesian.

Arman also had the same opinion, that speaking Chinese strengthened his Indonesian identity. He said,

> Many people in my father's generation believe that Chinese language is inseparable from Chinese identity. Chinese language is one of three pillars of overseas Chinese community. A Chinese should be able to speak Chinese. My father has that opinion, too. But for me, Chinese language is my third or even foreign language. … When I speak Chinese, I feel that I am Indonesian. Why? Because first of all, my accent clearly displays that I am Indonesian. Secondly, I think in Indonesian, not in Chinese.

Arman shared his encounter with his Chinese friends from China. He often made full use of this opportunity by brushing up on his Chinese. So most of the time, he spoke Chinese with them, unlike other Indonesians who communicated in English. He did not have any problems in daily conversation. However, when they talked about more complicated subjects, he said that he had to think in Indonesian before he uttered the words in Chinese. In this occasion, he felt that he was Indonesian and that Chinese language is not his native language.

[38] HSK is the abbreviation of *Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi* (Chinese Proficiency Test), a standard test for measuring the Chinese proficiency of non-native speakers. It is administered by China National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (*Zhongguo Guojia Duiwai Hanyu Jiaoxue Lingdao Xiaozu Bangongshi*), known as *Hanban.*

Integrative and Instrumental Orientations

The two circulating ideologies expose the different perceptions and uses of Chinese language among the Chinese community in Surabaya. The differences are caused by social, political and even cultural factors (Blommaert, 2005). However, despite the difference in viewing the role of Chinese language in Chinese identity, people in both camps agree that Chinese language is important.

In her anthropological study on bilingualism and identity, Woolard (1989) uses Gardner's and Lambert's concepts of instrumental and integrative motivation in examining the language behavior of migrant people in Catalonia. Instrumental motivation refers to the utilitarian purposes of learning a particular language, such as better career prospect or success in their work, whereas integrative motivation refers to a more personal desire, such as the desire to be accepted by another group who speaks the target language, or to be a part of the target language's speech community.

Almost all of my informants learn Chinese or ask their children/grandchildren to learn Chinese because of the instrumental motivation. Many of them believe that mastering Chinese can open doors to a better economic prospect.

> Dina: Nowadays, speaking English only guarantees a good job. You have to be able to speak Chinese, if you want to have a better position. Chinese can sharpen you competitive edge.
>
> *Ibu* Meta: Nowadays, if you want to have a good business, you have to deal with China. So, the mastery of Chinese language will help.
>
> Zhang *Laoshi*: Mastering Chinese language is important for us nowadays. It is not because we are Chinese so that we have to be able to speak Chinese, but because of the rise of China, Chinese is an important language in business world.

Others say that learning other languages, not only Chinese, is good for personal development. However, since Chinese is widely spoken in Asia and it is an important language of commerce, it is fair that Chinese is chosen among other languages such as French, or Spanish.

> Ratna: It is very important that nowadays people speak more languages. When people learn a new language, they also learn about cultures, and they understand people better. I would encourage my children to learn Chinese, since it is an important language in Asia.
>
> Gloria (40-year-old woman who said that she was *peranakan* and did not speak Chinese): I want my children to know at least English and Chinese. Knowing more languages will help open their horizon on the international world.

In my informants' opinions above, learning Chinese language becomes a strategy to have a better economic prospect or for personal development. In this way, Chinese language forms an integral part of a political economy, where various languages of linguistic varieties are competing for power and status. The value of Chinese language lies on "its ability to give access to desired positions in the labor market" (Gal, 1985:353).

While almost all informants have instrumental motivation, those who believe in the ideology that Chinese language is one marker of Chinese identity also have the other motivation, that is, integrative motivation.

> Hendra: Chinese language helps us understand Chinese culture more deeply. English or Indonesian translation of books on Chinese culture cannot grasp the subtle nuances Chinese language carries.

In Hendra's opinion, Chinese language can be a vehicle for connecting him to his cultural heritage. However, for Hendy, Chinese language is linked not only to his cultural heritage, but to his religious heritage as well. He said,

> I believe in Daoism. Although we can find Daoist scriptures in Indonesian or English, we have different feeling when we read them in Chinese. Besides that, the ritual in Daoism is performed in Chinese. So Chinese is the language used in our religions, just like Arabic for Muslims.

Daniel, a 20-something years old, shared Hendy's idea. As an activist in a Daoist organization, he felt the need to learn Chinese. He said,

> I think I should speak Chinese. Not only is it my ethnic language, but the language of my faith as well. I try to read Daoist scriptures in their original language. It is really hard, but I think it is really worth reading them.

There are others who think that the mastery of Chinese language can help them connect to other Chinese,

> Angela: We don't get a sense of loss in Chinese cultural environment, if we speak Chinese. Besides that, the ability to speak Chinese also makes it easier for us to be accepted by other Chinese communities. They will see us as one of them.

It also can connect them as well to their roots,

> *Bapak* Poo: I really wish that Guo Qiang could speak Chinese so that he can understand his origin, so that he can secure a connection to his root.
>
> *Shushu* Huat Beng: Learning Chinese language enables us to know our Chinese root. Knowing our Chinese root is important. If we don't know who we are, or where we came from, we cannot have a strong Chinese character.

The word "root" or *gen* in Chinese has an important metaphorical meaning, especially in the diasporic Chinese. According to Ling-chi Wang,

> At another level, [the word *gen* or "root"] is used to designate one's birthplace, ancestral village, or native place, and the source from which one derives one's personal identity. Identity here is inextricably tied to and equated with one's ancestral village. The bond to one's roots is unique, sacred, and eternal. At still another level, especially among overseas Chinese, *gen* takes an additional meanings as Chinese culture and a geographic entity called China, one's *zuguo* (motherland). It is this bond between overseas Chinese and China that undergirds the unique racial and cultural identity of the overseas Chinese. (1994:186-187)

By using the root metaphor, which describes the origin and the connectedness among diasporic Chinese and with their *zuguo*, *Bapak* Poo and *Shushu* Huat Beng emphasize the important role of Chinese language in the identity of the Chinese.

Instrumental and integrative motivations may not sufficiently cover the complexity of identity in relation to language learning. Language learners' intents and needs are more complicated than what the two motivations can explain. Borrowing Anderson's concept of imagined community, Bonny Norton writes that language learners' motivation must be seen in the context of imagined community, that is, images of the speech communities language learners have in which they are going to participate in the future (2001:164-166). Through these images, they envision themselves in the respective communities. They are not members of their imagined communities, but they hope that they become one some day when they gain access to these imagined speech communities. My informants' imagined Chinese community is constructed partly their experiences and partly by their own imagination of the speech community of Chinese language. Those who believe that Chinese language is a marker of identity are concerned about their (in)authenticity, after more than 30 years of being deprived of their cultural identity, that is, the period when Chinese language was banned, as *Bapak* Poo said about the Chinese in Indonesia, "We are like trees without roots." Feeling "inauthentic" due to the deprivation of Chineseness, they welcome new openness to Chinese language and culture, as a way of reauthenticating themselves. One way of proving themselves as "authentic" Chinese is gaining access to the membership of Chinese communities world-wide through social participation in which Chinese language is used. On the other hand, those who believe that Chinese language is like any other foreign languages imagine that the mastery of Chinese language will enable them to participate in the Chinese business community in other parts of the world.

Conclusion

In his book on ideology and the politics of language in Tanzania, Blommaert opines that ideologies "are being reproduced by means of a variety of institutional, semi-institutional and everyday practice" (1999:10). Following his argument on the reproduction of ideology through practice, in this chapter, I illuminate how language ideologies that circulate in the Chinese community in Surabaya influence the way Chinese Indonesians view the relationship between language and ethnicity. Their views on this relationship reflect debates regarding the relevance of language to their ethnic identity, like a situation that takes place in the Puerto Rican community in Puerto Rico. Zentella observes that there have been a range of responses to the perceived invasion of English. At one end of the spectrum, some believe that Spanish is an identity marker of Puerto Rican identity — "In the essence of the Puerto Rican being, our Spanish language possesses a singular strength of irrefutable identity" (1990:84). At the other end, they view that language is inessential to Puertoricanness — "being Puerto Rican is not a question of language" (1990:88). In a similar vein, some Chinese argue that Chinese language is an important marker of Chinese identity, and those who do not speak Chinese are lack of authenticity. Others maintain that it is also possible to be Chinese although they do no speak Chinese.

For most generations of Chinese Indonesians who received Chinese education, Chinese language is an integral part of their ethnic identity. For them, Chinese language serves as a vital vehicle for sharing fundamental common cultural values and the feeling of being affiliated within their ethnic group. Chinese language is perceived as an essential element for their ethnic salience, that is, "the importance one attached to being ethnic (Mackie and Brinkerhoff, 1984:117). In their opinion, to maintain Chinese ethnicity, people of Chinese descent should at least be able to speak Chinese language. Chinese language was the most important dimensions of

Chinese ethnicity. Thus, they equated the policy of the New Order regime in which Chinese language was banned in Indonesia to the erasure of their Chinese ethnicity.

Their ideology about Chinese language — that is, Chinese language is an important marker of Chinese identity — also can be seen in their linguistic practice. Although most are multilingual — that is, speaking Chinese, Indonesian, and Javanese or Madurese — they often code-switch from one language to another, that is, they mostly they speak Indonesian or Javanese, splashed with Chinese idioms or words, although they sometimes speak Chinese mixed Indonesian or Javanese words. Chinese language is exclusively used when they deliberately wanted to show their ethnic identity. This practice illustrated that their language ideology also functioned as an agency. The choice between Indonesian and Chinese may be seen as a personal choice, but following Duranti's observation that code-switching may serve as a resource for a persons to show their resistance to the official language policy, "the choice of a particular language over another may index one's ethnicity or a particular political stance towards the relations between language and ethnicity (1997:18), I argue that those who switched from Indonesian to Chinese and vice versa, or who use Indonesian mixed with Chinese, might manipulate conversational strategies in order to show that they were Indonesian with Chinese heritage, which was against the official policy of the New Order era, that demanded the Chinese in Indonesia to assimilate totally and to identify themselves with the local community where they lived.

Those who do not subscribe to the idea that Chinese language is an important marker of Chinese identity have their own ideology. For them, Chinese language is peripheral in the formation and maintenance of Chinese identity. Some believe that there is more to being Chinese than speaking Chinese language. Others opine that Chinese language is not related to being

Chinese. What is important in constituting Chineseness is Chinese cultural and traditional values. Nevertheless, all agree that the mastery of Chinese language is important. Those believing in the second ideology emphasize the importance of Chinese as a linguistic skill needed for professional development and economic progress.

Although the two language ideologies above are opposite poles, they are able to encourage the Chinese community to learn Chinese language. Those who believe in the first ideology — that is, Chinese language is indexical to Chineseness — feel that they need to "authenticate" the younger generations of Chinese who do not speak Chinese through the opportunity to learn Chinese language. Those who believe in the second ideology, namely Chinese language is not an identity marker of Chineseness, also think that Chinese language is important, not as an identity marker, but as the way of getting ahead in their work and business. For this group of people, Chinese language is indexical to better career prospect. Because of the belief that Chinese language is important, albeit for different reason, the two language ideologies inspire the Chinese community to revive Chinese school. In the next chapter, I will analyze how the school is being revived.

Chapter 2

Authenticating Chineseness through Language and Culture

I was in Yonghua Chinese language school when I met Ratna in late September 2012. She accompanied her children, 12-year-old Cindy and 10-year-old Ryan, who studied Chinese there. I asked them whether they liked learning Chinese. Cindy said that it was okay. She did not seem really interested in it, but Ryan said that he liked learning Chinese. When I asked him why, he answered that normally after class, their mother brought them to a shopping mall to have ice cream or pizza or other things that they liked. Ratna laughed. When their class started, Ratna and I went out of the school to a food court in shopping mall nearby. Ninety minutes later, she would be back to the school to pick them up. While we had some snacks and tea, Ratna said that now Chinese Indonesian children were lucky. They could learn their heritage language without restriction. Although Ratna does not think that Chinese language is an identity marker of Chineseness, she still believes that it is a good idea for Chinese Indonesians children to learn their heritage language. She shared her experience of traveling to China as a tourist. Since she looked phenotypically Chinese but could not speak Chinese, local people were surprised. Their surprise triggered a sense of loss and longing for Chinese culture. She said,

> I don't know if my children will encounter this sense of loss and longing later on, but I want them to know their cultural heritage. Well, at least I have provided them an opportunity to learn it. It is their problem if they don't want to do that. But if later on they encounter the same feeling as mine, they cannot blame me for not introducing their Chinese cultural heritage to them. Since *Reformasi*, actually I wanted to learn Chinese, but I am too old to learn a new language.

Although Ratna does not equate the mastery of Chinese language with Chineseness, she firmly believes that cultural heritage, including language, is important because it can connect people to their roots. However, she explained that due to some circumstances, like the political factors in

the New Order Indonesia, Chinese Indonesians might not get a chance to know their cultural heritage, but this did not make them less Chinese.

Ratna's emphasis on the connection to Chinese root resonates with many other Chinese, such as *Bapak* Poo, who describes Chinese Indonesians growing up in the New Order era as "trees without roots," which wait for their time to die. However, the new political situation after the fall of the New Order regime ushers openness to Chinese culture. This gives hope among Chinese Indonesians to revive their culture and to know their roots. One way of doing so is reviving Chinese school.

The Revival of Chinese Language School

During the New Order era, when Chinese language and culture were banned, Chinese language schools were clandestine. There were only two universities in Indonesia that were allowed to have a Chinese language department – the University of Indonesia (known as UI), a public university, and Dharma Persada University, a private university funded by a foundation that has a close relationship with the military. I was told by a former student of UI's Chinese Department that before they were matriculated, they had to fill out a form in which they had to enter their ID, contact number, and reason for studying Chinese. But the openness after the cultural policy toward the Chinese was amended sparked an interest in learning Chinese. Another factor that encourages the back-to-heritage movement is the awareness that China is one of the superpower countries and this has confirmed its Chinese identity. The rise of China also attracts many non-Chinese to study the language. Chinese language course is in a great demand. This leads to the revival of Chinese language in Indonesia.

Various Chinese organizations, such as alumni association of former Chinese schools and associations based on ancestral place of origins in China, play an important role in reviving Chinese language in Indonesia. In her anthropological study on Chinese language education, Sai Siew Min (2006) observed that the more relaxed political situation after the fall of the New Order inspired many Chinese-educated Chinese to re-establish Chinese language schools for materializing their mission, reviving Chinese culture in Indonesia, and reconnecting young Chinese Indonesians who do not know their cultural heritage to their cultural roots.

Originally, the so-called Chinese language schools were a kind of school that offered Chinese courses to children and adults. Because of greater demand, this language school proliferated in many cities in Indonesia. The success of this school made alumni dream of rebuilding Chinese schools like what they used to have, that is, schools that provide education that cultivates Chineseness. During the early 1950s, the Indonesian government started exercising some control over these schools by asking them to register with the Ministry of Education, because of its concern on the intrusion of Chinese nationalism. There was no actual control over the teachers, the curriculum, and the students of these schools, though. Depending on whether the schools were pro-Beijing or pro-Taipei, most of the teachers were educated in China or Taiwan, and the curriculum used were those used in China or Taiwan (Suryadinata, 1972:66-67).

Currently in Indonesia, re-establishing schools as such still will encounter difficulties because of the policy of national education in which schools in Indonesia have to follow the curriculum the Ministry of Education designs. Sai Siew Min writes that in the past, Chinese education was "a version of 'overseas Chinese education' and an extension of the nationalist education system in mainland China" (2001:67). Since almost all Chinese in Indonesia are

Indonesian citizens, such an education may not fit the Indonesian national educational system. Chinese Indonesians now have different educational needs. Eventually, various Chinese organizations decided to establish schools the follow national education system that use Chinese as the language of instruction, along with Indonesian and English. The Indonesian Ministry of Education work together with the Chinese community, represented by *Badan Koordinasi Pendidikan Bahasa Mandarin* (National Coordinating Body for Mandarin education) — an association set up by Chinese school alumni organizations on January 18, 2004, to introduce Chinese language in national school in Indonesia. Even some universities, including public universities, jump into the wagon. Cooperating with Chinese community, they offer Chinese language courses and even open Chinese department. Describing this phenomenon, Zhang *Laoshi* said,

> The Chinese community could help the government, which now realizes the importance of Chinese language in the world today, with our expertise. I think this is a good way to show to other ethnic groups that we, the Chinese, are Indonesians who are like them, having great concern to the progress of Indonesian community. Promoting Chinese language is not a sign of exclusiveness.

For Zhang *Laoshi*, not only is the new situation good for Chinese language education but for the interest of Chinese community as well. He gave an example of the effort of the association of Chinese language teachers in Surabaya, which was established by the Chinese community. The association helps the provincial and municipal office of the Ministry of Education to implement the policy of teaching Chinese in public schools. It often invites experts on Chinese language from China and Taiwan to conduct workshops, seminars, and training for Chinese language teachers. Even it becomes the vetting body for the scholarships the Chinese government provides for Indonesians who wants to study Chinese language in China. In Zhang *Laoshi*'s opinion, these

efforts can give a good impression on the Chinese community, and as a consequence the promotion of Chinese language will not have any problems.

On June 2, 2008, in an article entitled "*Bangkit dari Mati Suri* (Resurrecting from Hibernation)" *Kompas* daily quoted Didi Kwartanada, a researcher on Chinese Indonesian community, as saying that the phenomena in which some segment of Chinese Indonesian community relearned and revived Chinese language and culture were a kind of the nostalgia of the past. Another researcher, Mona Lohanda, shared Kwartanada's opinion. Lohanda said that the work of the alumni of various Chinese schools in Jakarta, Surabaya, and other cities to re-establish Chinese-medium schools was driven by their nostalgic memories of their schooling days.

Kwartanada's and Lohanda's observations show how the first language ideology I mention before, that is, Chinese language is a part of Chinese identity, facilitates the establishment of Chinese schools. In this chapter, I show how this language ideology operates in Chinese schools. In so doing, I examine the schools' programs and policies in order to connect their students to Chineseness. However, as I also point out that there is another ideology that is in opposition with the first ideology, I also show how those who believe in the second ideology — that is, Chinese language is not an identity marker of Chineseness — respond to the schools' programs and activities and interpret their own version of Chineseness.

Language Ideologies and Imagined Community

Language ideologies tend to occur in the realm of imagination. Through the power of imagination, people can change their reality and identity. Imagination, in Appadurai's opinion, can serve as "a social practice" (1996:31). It may operate as a way of appropriating meanings

and creating new identities. In this way people position their imagination in their daily lives and envision themselves in it through socially constructed practices. In a similar vein, language learners position their expectations, hopes, desires, and self-image to the future world, where they aspire to belong. The future world here is best described by Anderson's term imagined community. This is imagined because "the members will never know most of their fellow-members … yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (1991:6). Anderson's notion imagined community is adopted in Lave's and Wenger's anthropological framework of learning (1991). They emphasize that learning is a part of social practice and a process of individual becoming legitimate participants in a community of practice, through the acquisition of knowledge and skills. They call this framework situated learning. In their opinion,

> [L]earning is not just a cognitive process of acquiring a set of skills and knowledge but part of changing participation in communities of practice. One learns as one enters a community and comes to take part—first peripherally, and later more fully—in its particular practices. Learning thus is situated in local community practices, shaping and shaped by concrete relationships.

In Lave's and Wenger's situated learning perspective, language learners use the notion of imagination as a form of belonging to communities of practice, which influence their motivation (Wenger, 1998). Thus, their learning experiences are characterized by varying degrees of investment in these imagined communities of practice. Norton, for example, says that "a learner's imagined community invited an imagined identity, and a learner's investment in the target language must be understood within this context" (2001:166). She explains further that language learners have certain images of the communities they plan to participate in the future, and "these images profoundly affected the learners' investment in the target language and their concomitant actions and learning trajectories" (Kano and Norton, 2003:243). Their imagined communities, of which they are not member yet but they aspire to be, influence their

"investment" in their language learning process. In other words, language learners' current social participation and perceived future affiliations motivate their learning.

Several studies on the relationship between language and identity investigate how the notion of imagined communities are used in both individual and institutional levels (Kano and Norton, 2003; Dagenais, 2003; Kano, 2003; Norton and Kamal, 2003; Blackledge, 2003). These studies show that the role of imagined communities in language learning is not restricted to individual learner because they are constructed not only by individuals but by groups of people as well. They also demonstrate individuals or institutions with more agency, such as parents or schools, imagine communities for others. Parents make an educational decision based on an imagined community they want their children to join in the future. In designing their programs, schools use their vision of their students in an imagined community they the students will participate. Thus, when social structures or institutions create an imagined community that reflects their vision, they change the imagined community into their ideology that guides their actions and practices. This line of thought illustrates the effort the Chinese community in reestablishing Chinese language education. It envisions an imagined Chinese community in which Chinese language and culture become parts and parcels of Chinese Indonesians' daily life, the life like they used to have. However, younger generations of Chinese may not share the same ideas as their older counterparts. They envision different kinds of imagined communities. I use the case studies of Yonghua Chinese Language School and several Chinese language learners in exposing these differences and answering the questions this chapter addresses.

Connectivity to Language and Culture

Yonghua Chinese language school was founded in 2001 by the alumni association of the defunct Yonghua Chinese School. The building of the Yonghua Chinese School was confiscated by the government when it was banned. However, the school was able to retain one building, which now houses the office of its alumni association. It in this building that Yonghua Chinese Language School runs its Chinese language school. It offers Chinese courses for children, teenagers and adults, from basic through advanced levels. Each level is spread into four or five terms, and four months is needed to complete each level. The course is conducted twice a week, about 90 minutes each meeting. Most of the students are of Chinese descent, but there are a substantial number of non-Chinese in the teenage and adult classes. In 2011, two students of this school received scholarships from the Chinese government to study Chinese in China for four years. After the completion of their study, they are supposed to teach Chinese in Indonesia.[1]

Explaining the reason why Yonghua Alumni Association established a Chinese language school, one member of the board of the alumni association said,

> During the New Order era, we, the generation who received Chinese education, felt that there was something wrong. While other ethnic languages were promoted, the language of the Chinese was banned. This was against Indonesian coat of arm, "Unity in Diversity." But we could do nothing, due to the government's oppressive policy. As a result, many Chinese do not speak Chinese. They also do not know about the culture of their ancestors. … We plan to rebuild our old school because we think that Chinese education is really needed for Chinese Indonesians now, many of whom do not know their own language and roots. But I believe it is a long and arduous journey [to build Chinese school]. So for the time being we established Chinese language course.

Another member said,

[1] The success of its Chinese language school triggered the interest of Yonghua alumni association to revive the old school. In 2008, a former senior teacher of Yonghua High School informed me that many alumni had pooled enough money to buy a piece of land and build the school. However, it was not until October 2010 that they started the physical construction of the building. Until now, Yonghua alumni association has Chinese language school only.

> Now the shortsighted policy takes its toll.[2] Compared to our neighboring countries such Singapore and Malaysia, we are left behind to tap business opportunities in China. The government overlooked that fact the business in Asia was dominated by the Chinese, both from China or from other countries. So our dream of establishing our old Chinese school is not only teaching Chinese culture and tradition to Chinese Indonesians so that they know their roots but also introducing them to other ethnic groups so that they understand Chinese culture, which can help them in their business with the Chinese from other parts of the world. In this way, we can contribute something to our nation, Indonesia.

From what my two informants above said, Yonghua Chinese Language School was established primarily to foster Chineseness that has been "lost" among Chinese Indonesians who grew up during the New Order era. Yonghua Chinese Language School is not unique. All Chinese schools have the same mission. Nevertheless, they are not exclusively for fostering Chinese identity because there are also students from other ethnic groups. However, Chinese culture has a central position in their activities, which I will describe below.

On a Thursday afternoon in January 2010, I made my first visit to this school. The administrative office and the classrooms were like any other office and classroom in a typical Indonesian language school except that the decorations in the room were typically Chinese, such as Chinese sculptures, paintings and calligraphies. When I arrived there at around 2 p.m., there were only two staff members in the office, middle-age women, who conversed in Javanese mixed up with Chinese. They were former students of Yonghua Chinese School and now worked in language school. They spoke Chinese well, although they did not finish their high school education because of the closure of their school in 1966. Thirty minutes later, teachers started coming one by one, as class started at three. Most of the teachers were former teachers or young Chinese Indonesians who had bachelor's degree in Chinese from universities in China. Soon, conversation in Chinese dominated the office. The switch to Chinese intrigued me as when class was over and not many students in school, Indonesian and Javanese, although still mixed with

[2] The shortsighted policy refers to the New Order policy of prohibiting Chinese language and culture.

Chinese, slipped in again, especially among young teachers. Later, I was told that there was no official policy regarding language use but all were encouraged to use Chinese when class was in session to create a "Chinese language" environment.

The domination of the Chinese language was not only in the administration office but also in class as well. While there was no "Chinese-only" policy, teachers tried to speak Chinese as much as possible. They also encouraged students to speak Chinese in class, although the later often used Indonesian. The two vignettes from children class below illustrated this situation.

> Chen *Laoshi*: *Di yi duan bu tai nan*. *Shei yao du*? (The first part is not too difficult. Who wants to read?) [Nobody answers.] *Shei ya*? (Who?)
> Girl [in Indonesian and Chinese]: Aku, *Laoshi*. (I will, teacher).
> Chen *Laoshi*: *Hao* (great).
>
> Yang *Laoshi*: *Ni mingzi shi shen me*? (What is your name?)
> Boy: [looking confused and keeping quiet]
> Yang *Laoshi* [in Chinese and Indonesian]: Ni mingzi shi shen me? Siapa namamu? (What is your name?)
> Boy: Adi.

While teachers in basic children class occasionally use Indonesian in explaining the lesson, those in teenage and adult class rarely used Indonesian.

Yonghua Chinese Language School also has a weekly Chinese conversation club in which participating students should converse in Chinese in a non-formal setting. In its calendar of events, the school also lists various school events that expose students to learn about their heritage along several dimensions such as cultures and traditions. Normally, events as such are held to celebrate Chinese traditional holidays like Chinese New Year, *Duanwu Jie*, *Zhongqiu Jie*[3], and Chinese Teachers' day (that celebrates the birthday of Confucius). In these kinds of events, Chinese cultural environment was created, and Chinese language was formally used. Describing big events like these, one teacher explained,

[3] *Duanwu Jie* is known as Dragon Boat Festival, usually held on the fifth day of the fifth month of Chinese calendar. *Zhongqiu Jie*, falling on the 15th day of the eighth month of the Chinese calendar.

> Events like this are good because they can make everybody get together. Many parents come. A number of the alumni of the Chinese school also participate. Normally, they rarely come. The events become more lively, and children are happy. They know what *Duanwu Jie* and *Zhongqiu Jie* are, not just eating dumplings and moon cake only.

When I met her on an occasion celebrating *Zhongqiu Jie*, *Tante* Goat Nio (see chapter I), who accompanied her granddaughter to learn Chinese this school said, "Event(s) like this is good for children who forget the language and culture of their ancestors. It is like creating an atmosphere for them to know more about Chinese culture." *Tante* Goat Nio's statement may voice the hope of the schools and some parents who sent their children to learn Chinese there and to participate in cultural events as such because those events could create an environment for the students to get immersed in so that they may "feel and act Chinese" (Zhou and Li, 2008:175). In the absence of an environment that support the practice of Chinese language and culture, the events the school hold could provide an avenue for the participants to get a feeling of cultural practice that link them to their Chinese root. One senior teacher said,

> It often happens that people refer to *wushi* [Chinese lion dance], *wulong* [Chinese dragon dance], and the like when they talk about Chinese culture. Through poems, idioms, Chinese folktales, stories from Chinese history, and so on, we try to impart the tradition and the values of the Chinese culture to younger generations of Chinese who forget all these.

He elaborated further that the activities of the cultural events held were geared to understanding Chinese culture, and thus all had the central themes, which he said in Chinese "*dui zhongguo wenhua you guanxi*."[4] Another senior teacher added:

> Nowadays, many children do not give respects to elders. They really forget their cultural root. They do not know *xiaoshun*.[5] I admit that it is difficult teach them *xiaoshun* and other Chinese values. But we hope through skit performance taken from Chinese folklores that display those values, at least they want to think about it and to practice it.

[4] A phrase which means "having a connection with Chinese culture" (in Chinese character: 对中国文化有关系).
[5] A Chinese term for filial piety (in Chinese character: 孝顺).

In other words, through cultural elements — such as traditional food, traditional costumes, and skit performance taken from Chinese folktales — the school creates an environment where Chinese cultural heritage is transmitted. In this case, the school serves as a cultural agent that transmits specific values, beliefs, and attitudes so that the subsequent generation could maintain the cultural system of the previous generation (Spindler, 1997).

Programs of immersions, such as those held by Yonghua Chinese Language School, are also held by some other language schools and formal educational institutions, especially the ones founded by Chinese community. One Chinese department in a university in Surabaya had a "Chinese only" policy on Mondays. It also had a calendar of events for Chinese traditional celebrations. Its students association had an "official uniform" for its members, *qipao* (Chinese gown) for female students and *changpao* (Chinese tunic) for the male.

The sudden visibility of spoken Chinese created in the school, as well as in the cultural events, was in contrast to the position it occupied in Indonesian daily life, where the use of Chinese was rare in public, or was confined to family members. Even the number of Chinese families who use Chinese language is minuscule, and most of them are the old members of the families. Thus, language and cultural practices in Yonghua Chinese language school as described above moved Chinese language from the periphery to the center, by embedding it within a vibrant community of practice. The Chinese conversation club and the "big" events in which Chinese language was widely used ensured that the language became a "lived" language used by a community. These practices described how language ideology paved the way for feeling and acting Chinese, as Spitulnik said that language ideology is "embodied in a very fundamental and implicit sense within the everyday practices of institution" (1998:163). A sense of Chineseness, replete with Chinese conversation club and other Chinese language-dominated celebrative

activities that provide the connectivity of Chinese language to the lives of the students where the language is rarely used, is created.

Learners' Language Ideologies

The Chinese-educated Chinese who are behind the establishment of many Chinese language schools make a concerted effort to implement their language ideology to ethnic Chinese learners of Chinese. However, these learners may have their own ideologies, which sometimes are different from the schools' or their parents'. Andrew, *Bapak* Jimmy's son, is an example of these learners.

Bapak Jimmy (see chapter 1) believes that Chinese is one of the identity markers of being Chinese. However, his son, Andrew (born in 1985) has his own ideology. I met Andrew when I visited *Bapak* Jimmy in his house in late December 2009. *Bapak* Jimmy lamented that he could not continue his Chinese education until high school. When he finished his primary school, Chinese schools were banned. He said that his Chinese proficiency was rusty, as he did not practice it quite often. He is happy to experience the current, changing situation in which the Chinese could learn their heritage language freely. Then he stressed that actually all segments of Indonesian society could learn Chinese. Learning Chinese was useful for professional development, especially when China was the economic engine of the world. He told me that that his children, Andrew and Sylvia, learned Chinese. Knowing that his children now learned Chinese, I wanted to interview them. However, only Andrew was willing to be my informant.

Andrew has a bachelor's degree in computer science. He works in an Indonesian company that often does business with companies in China. Although he works in the computer and data processing unit in which he rarely meets customers, he feels that mastering Chinese

could advance his career. That is why, after going home from office, he decided to take Chinese course in Yonghua Chinese Language School. Yonghua was chosen because it was not far from his office and located on his way home.

On February 8, 2010, I met him at Starbucks in a shopping center downtown. Since Chinese New Year was around the corner (it fell on February 14), the shopping center was decorated with Chinese ornaments. Chinese lanterns could be found hanging in the ceiling. Plum blossoms and Chinese calligraphies greeted the customers. Even the Starbucks counter had a small plastic tangerine tree with red packets hung in it. Looking at the Chinese-inspired festive decorations around us, Andrew commented that the Indonesian society showed more openness toward all things Chinese. When I asked him what made him think so, he pointed out at the Chinese ornaments around us and said that in the past, celebrating Chinese New Year as a public holiday in Indonesia and to use Chinese decorations in a public space would not have been possible. I said that I couldn't agree anymore to his idea about the use of Chinese decorations in public, but I told him that it remained to be seen whether it reflected greater acceptance towards the Chinese because it was the business sectors that installed the festive regalia. He somewhat agreed with me. Then he continued with the litany of complaints about various discriminations the Chinese still suffered even after *Reformasi*. He shared his opinion when he renewed his ID card he was asked to give some coffee money. Although he admitted that people from other ethnic groups might also be asked to give coffee money when dealing with bureaucracy, the Chinese were usually asked to give more. He jokingly asked me why food sold by the Chinese was usually more expensive than the one sold by the Javanese. I laughed and said that perhaps it was more delicious. Andrew responded that taste was very personal, and continued,

> Anyway, the answer is that living expenses of the Chinese are higher than other ethnic groups. They have to pay more when they deal with bureaucracy such as renewing their

> ID or getting a passport. Even in the neighborhood association, they are expected to contribute more money just because they are Chinese.

Although he laughed when he said that, I could feel his sarcastic tone. He went on saying that the government demanded the Chinese blend themselves into Indonesian society to the extent that they should leave behind their cultural heritage, including the language. As result, they could not be distinguished from the indigenous ethnic groups in terms of language and culture, yet they were still discriminated against.

One impact of the discrimination that Andrew highlights is language. After the September 30, 1965, incident, Chinese language was banned. As a result, many Chinese who were born in the 1960s did not speak their heritage language. This, in his opinion, was detrimental to Indonesian society in general. The lack of the mastery of Chinese language among Indonesians made it difficult for Indonesia to benefit from the rise of China. He told me that actually he learned Chinese because of he wanted to gain something from the rise of China.

Our conversation then moved to his work. He said that the company where he worked was doing well thanks to the business it did with China. He added that nowadays having Chinese skills was a must. So, in order to sharpen his competitive edge, he took Chinese language lesson. He said,

> Before taking course at Yonghua, I didn't speak Chinese. The only Chinese words that I know were numbers and some common words often used. At home, conversations in Chinese are never heard, although I often hear Chinese pop songs. My parents like them. Thus, despite being Chinese, Chinese language is a foreign language for me.

Although his father believed that a Chinese should be able to speak Chinese, as far as he remembered, Andrew said that his father never forced him to learn Chinese. Occasionally, his father told him to study Chinese, but he always found excuses for not doing it.

Despite his Chinese background, Andrew did not have a real connection to Chinese language. He attributed this to his family background where Mandarin was never spoken. Although Chinese rituals were practiced at home since his parents believed in *Tridharma*,[6] those rituals were just the tradition he followed. He did not have any idea what they were about. He stopped joining his parents in praying and giving offering to the ancestral tablet when he converted to Christianity. He said that Chinese language had no relevance to his life. He did listen to Chinese popular songs and watch Taiwanese serials that were popular at that time, but those were just for pure enjoyment. He did not have the need to learn Chinese. For him, English was more important than Chinese.

When Andrew entered college in 2003, he took English course in his university's language center, although it also offered Chinese. In his opinion, at that time Chinese was not as important as English. He preferred to devote some of his time for learning a more important language, English. He did take Chinese for a few months, but he found it boring and quite tedious. It was different from the English course he took. He said,

> I took English class first. One year later, after I could manage my time, I took Chinese. I still took English, though. But halfway through, I stopped taking Chinese. I find it different from the English course I took. … I find my English course interesting because the teacher was very good in teaching. He could create a great atmosphere to learn English. So learning English was not boring. But, my Chinese teacher was different. He emphasized on grammar, etc. His pedagogical skill was not good. The class was monotonous. … [Moving to another class] was difficult due to time constraint. Moreover, I lost the mood of learning Chinese.

Andrew's reason to prioritize English over Chinese at that time was simply because he thought English could help him secure a good job later on when he graduated. He said,

[6] *Tridharma*, which means "three teachings," is the Indonesian term of *Sam Kauw* (Mandarin Chinese: *San Jiao*), the Hokkien words referring to the blending of Chinese traditional religions, namely, Daoism, Confucianism, and Chinese Buddhism.

> My primary motivation of learning English was for advancing my future career. Thirty or twenty years ago, most job advertisements did not require applicants to speak English. But now, being proficient in English is a must for a good job.

He did understand that Chinese was also important. That was why he also took a Chinese course. When he had to make a choice between English and Chinese due to time constraint, he chose English because of its "value" and partly because of the boring environment of his Chinese class. The importance of having English skills encouraged him to continue taking English courses during his academic years at the university. After graduation, he found a job in the where he still worked until now.

After a year of working, he gradually started to think that Chinese would be good for his career. He thought so because of China's astronomical economic progress. He also mentioned that some of his native Indonesian friends and officemates learned and spoke Chinese. There was one female officemate who spoke Chinese fluently, although she was not Chinese. When I asked him whether he felt embarrassed because he, who was of Chinese ethnic background, did not speak Chinese, he answered laughingly,

> Why should I feel embarrassed? Ethnically, I am Chinese, but I don't think that every Chinese here in Indonesia should speak Chinese. I know that common perception here is that a Chinese should speak Chinese. The ability to speak Chinese is a matter of education and practice. I know a Malaysian Chinese who does not speak Chinese.

Andrew felt that he should have Chinese skills if he wanted to have a better prospect in his career. He said that he wanted to learn Chinese because "Chinese proficiency, I think, could help me in my professional development. Having Chinese skill could give me a better prospect. Who knows I want to change job."

Andrew's motivation in learning Chinese is instrumental. He connects it with career and economic progress. Thinking that Chinese could help him in his professional development, he did not mind spending much time after work and effort in learning Chinese. He also said that

nowadays more vacancies were available for those who spoke Chinese. Andrew's statement about the need of having Chinese skill is proven when I checked job advertisement in both local and national newspapers. A number of job vacancies require applicants to speak Chinese. The phrase "bisa sedikit mandarin," which means that the applicant should have at least basic Chinese skill, is often found in those ads.

For Andrew, learning Chinese is an investment that can pave way to material success. Despite his Chinese ethnicity, he did not associate Chinese language with his Chinese identity. He said that Chinese was a foreign language to him. Although English and Chinese were foreign languages to him, he could communicate in English much better than in Chinese. Thus, Chinese language has nothing to do with his ethnicity. In one interview, Andrew said that English and Chinese were like keys that "can open door to economic opportunity."

Despite his metaphorical use of language as a key to economic opportunity, Chinese has some impact on his identity. For him, Chinese language is access to his dreams and career goals. In this case, Chinese language does not index to his ethnic identity. Rather, it could be seen as a defining factor that made him distinct from others. Arman also shared Andrew's opinion. Arman explained,

> Perhaps fifteen or twenty years ago, having English skill was enough. This could guarantee you a job, but not anymore. Nowadays, everybody speaks English, but not Chinese. So, if you want to be different from others, you should have the skills that not many have. Chinese is one of them. Besides that, Chinese skill is very marketable now.

For Andrew and Arman, only mastering English was not enough to secure a job. English was necessary in the job market because the situation required people to learn it. So, everybody spoke English, albeit in varying degrees of fluency. To set him apart of the crowd, Andrew felt that he needed learn Chinese as it could give him a better economic prospect. That is why, for Andrew

and other like-minded people, Chinese is an index to success and economic progress, not to his ethnic identification.

Andrew's opinion that Chinese language for him is not an index to his Chinese identity is also reflected in his ideas about cultural roots. Since the notion of Chinese culture as the "cultural roots" of Chinese Indonesian were pervasive among the Chinese, I asked him what he thought of his cultural roots. His reply was interesting:

> I don't know what my cultural roots are. I used to think that my roots are Chinese, but I don't have affinity towards Chinese culture. In fact, it is something foreign to me. How can I claim it as my root? I also think of Indonesian as my root. But then, although I feel that I am familiar with Indonesian culture because I was born and bred here, I don't feel like I am really Indonesian. I feel like I am a stranger here because, you know, a kind of racial discrimination, albeit subtle, often reminds me of being a foreigner in my own country. [*Laughingly*] I feel like being neither here not there. So for me, cultural roots are not important.

His words, "being neither here nor there," resonate with a number of Chinese I encountered, especially those who grew up during the New Order era, when their cultural heritage was detached from them, and they were forced to adopt Indonesian identity. As a result, they do not feel that they are Chinese. Yet, their supposed Indonesian identity does not prevent the racial discrimination they suffer. This situation often leads them to apathy toward their cultural root, like what Andrew said, that he did not know where he belonged. His attachment to Indonesia is spoilt by discrimination, and his attachment to Chinese culture actually does not exist at all.

Because of the non-existent attachment to Chinese culture, Andrew did not think that cultural programs at Yonghua, intended to inculcate a sense of Chineseness, are interesting:

> All the cultural and what so-called immersion programs are good for children, and perhaps old people who are very nostalgic. For me, they are not really useful. Fun may be. … [*responding to my comment that programs as such could give some knowledge on Chinese culture*] I agree that they can give some knowledge on Chinese culture. The programs are sometimes fun. But you see, it often happens that performances are so traditional that they do not appeal to people of my age. That is why, I find it less useful. And if you observe, those participating are mostly Children, and old people.

Since I did not have a chance to observe the cultural programs held by Yonghua, I could not verify Andrew's statement that most participants are children and old folks. However, when I attended similar cultural events held by some alumni and clan associations, the participants fit Andrew's description.

For older Chinese, cultural events and celebrations as such may serve as way of reproducing Chineseness. However, as Andrew said, they do not appeal to young Chinese who live in a different world. Young Chinese may enjoy them as a cultural entertainment, but they do not have emotional attachment to them, as the older generations have. For young Chinese like Andrew, Chinese language is not more than a key to economic opportunity. Thus, cultural events for celebrating Chinese traditional festivals are not more than a Chinese cultural performance.

Andrew's metaphorical use of key is also echoed by Jocelyn, who was born in 1988. Despite coming from *totok* family, Jocelyn did not speak Chinese at all. She described her family background:

> Although I have *totok* family background, Chinese is rarely used at home. When *emak* and *engkong*[7] were still alive, only *empek*[8] used Chinese to communicate with them. Mom and dad used mixed language, Chinese and Indonesian But they use Indonesian more. Perhaps because they do not speak Chinese fluently. Before they finished their primary school, Chinese education was banned. They had no other choice except continuing their education in Indonesian school.

Although Chinese language was rarely spoken at home, Chinese popular songs were often played. Jocelyn's parents liked listening to those songs. She remembers her parents' favorite singers, such as Teresa Teng, Liu Wen Cheng, and Chang Siau Ying. Jocelyn did not understand Chinese, but she like listening to them, too. In her opinion, Chinese was nice to hear and unique. Once she told her parents that she wanted to learn Chinese:

[7] Chinese Indonesian terms for grandmother and grandfather, originally from Hokkien.
[8] From Hokkien word for father's older brother.

> I think it was when I was nine years old. Yes, nine years old. I was in Primary Three at that time. I told my mother that I wanted to Learn Chinese. Mom hired a private tutor to teach me Mandarin. Chinese language schools at that time were forbidden.

Her mother also asked Jocelyn's brother to learn Chinese, but he refused. Yet, she was not angry and did not force him.

Jocelyn could not remember much about her Chinese language experience with the private tutor, except that the lesson was boring:

> The tutor was a former Chinese school teacher. She did not make me enthusiastic in learning Chinese, I guess. The lesson was boring. After about six months, I told Mum that I was busy with my study. Knowing that I did make progress in my Chinese class and that was hardly able to cope with my school work, she asked me not to worry about the Chinese lesson. I should concentrate on my school, instead. A week after, my Chinese tutor did not come.

In Jocelyn's mind, her parents were very supportive. They were not angry when she stopped learning Chinese. A few months after she stopped learning Chinese, her *Toapek*[9] came to visit her family. He said that he planned to hire a Chinese tutor for his two children, and asked if Jocelyn's parents wanted her to take Chinese course again. He believed that more students in the tutorial class meant more chances to speak and practice Chinese, which he thought was good. Jocelyn's parents let her to take her own decision.

When she was in middle school, Chinese language was one of the elective courses students take for their co-curricular lessons. Jocelyn decided to take Chinese. "Basically, I am interested in learning languages," she said. Chinese lesson offered in her school gave her a more positive view of Chinese. She attributed this to the teacher whom she thought had "very good pedagogical skills" and created "a passion for Chinese." Because of the passion for Chinese, together with some friends, Jocelyn took Chinese enrichment class with a private tutor. She

[9] A Hokkien kinship term for father's eldest brother.

continued learning Chinese until she finished her high school in 2006. Shortly after, she went to China to pursue her bachelor's degree in Chinese. She wanted to improve her Chinese.

At first, Jocelyn was confident that her Chinese was good. After all, she has been learning Chinese for four years.[10] But her immersion to Chinese in Taiwan in 2005 changed her perception about her Chinese. Knowing that she has been selected as a participant in Chinese summer camp supported by Taiwanese government, she was excited about the prospect of using Chinese for real communication. For this camp, students of Chinese origin from various countries came to Taiwan to study Chinese and to get exposure in that language for about one month. The participants paid for the transport between their country of origin and Taiwan. The Taiwanese government provided meals and accommodation. But it turned out that her Chinese proficiency was quite low, and so was the proficiency of some other participants, although there were those who had a good proficiency. In the end, English was used as a means of communication among fellow participants coming from different countries and between the participants and the Taiwanese students assigned to accompany them. This incident dampened her confidence in her Chinese proficiency. However, it also motivated her to improver her Chinese. She decided to go to Beijing.

Jocelyn's motivation to go to Beijing at that time was to improve her Chinese. She did not have any plans for her future career. She said that basically she liked studying languages. She felt that her talent might be in languages. Since she was in primary school, she always had good grades in English. This encouraged her to learn other languages. When she was in the second grade of middle school, she took a French course at CCCL[11] for nine months, until "Basic Three"

[10] The meeting for the Chinese course she took was twice a week, 90 minutes each. For the whole year, she studied about 32 weeks.
[11] Le Centre Culturel et de Coopération Linguistique de Surabaya, French language center supported by French embassy in Jakarta.

level. However, she did not continue to the intermediate level because she concentrated more on Chinese, which was taught at school as extracurricular course.

> I stopped taking French course because I did not have much time. Although the meeting was twice a week, ninety minutes each, I still needed to devote a lot of time for studying the language. And the Chinese course at school was getting more and more difficult, I also needed time to study. If I study a language, I want to be able to use it for communication. So besides studying, practicing the language is important. I had a group of friends whom I could practice my Chinese with. But I did not have a lot of friends whom I could practice French with. The only opportunity for me to speak French was at CCCL.

She felt that the Chinese class she took demanded more of her time. She had no other choice except sacrificing French, which was not a language taught at her school. Otherwise, she would end up by speaking none of them. For her, speaking well in the language she learned was important. She admitted that she had a competitive nature, and she wanted to excel among her peers. So having a good Chinese proficiency could make her feel good because it distinguished her from others:

> Everybody speaks English quite well. So I wanted to be different from others, I have to speak Chinese well. First of all, not all students take Chinese. And secondly, when you are in Karaoke lounge, you can sing with the correct pronunciation. [*Laughing*] And that was really something.[12]

When she compared the two languages she spoke, she was more confident in speaking English than in speaking Chinese. She thought perhaps this was because she learned English longer, and having English exposure more, that is, she had more opportunities to speak English. It was her experience in Taiwan that served as an eye-opener for her — that her Chinese was only comprehensible in Surabaya. This made her more determined in studying Chinese.

One evening, I invited Jocelyn, Andrew, and two other friends for dinner because I wanted to express my gratitude for their willingness to be my informants. We went to Pizza Hut.

[12] Karaoke is popular among Indonesians regardless of their age, especially the Chinese. Chinese songs dominate the collection of the songs in many Karaoke lounges.

In the table near ours, there were three Westerners speaking French. One of them used English when she talked to the waitress. Seeing this situation, Jocelyn commented that everybody spoke English nowadays. Then she recalled her experience in Taiwan during summer camp, in which English was used as means of communication. She also added that in Beijing, in the first few months, many of classmates who did not have the confidence in speaking Mandarin used English. Because of her personal experience that English was widely spoken in the world, among people with diverse linguistic backgrounds and from different countries, Jocelyn did not completely associate English with a particular country or culture.[13] "Many people from different nationalities speak English," she said. For her, English was just a lingua franca among people in the world. This is totally different from her idea about French, which she associated with France and French culture, or about Chinese, which she associated with China and Chinese culture. Because of the association of Chinese language with China and Chinese culture, Jocelyn said that for her Chinese language is like a key that open door to another culture. She said, "The mastery of Chinese is like a door to another world, to Chinese culture." She mentioned that after studying Chinese for four years in Beijing, her Chinese improved tremendously. She didn't have any substantial difficulties in reading Chinese newspapers or books or watching Chinese movies without Indonesian subtitle.

However, despite stating that acquiring Chinese was like a door to Chinese culture, Jocelyn did not think that immersing herself in the Chinese society in China made her Chinese. On the contrary, she felt that she was more Indonesian when she was there, or to be more specific, she did not feel that she Chinese in China, she felt more as Chinese Indonesian. Elaborating further, she said,

[13] Jocelyn associated modernity, not English, with American culture and the United States.

> Before going to China in 2006, I felt that I was Chinese. First of all, my physical appearance is different from my Javanese friends. Secondly, my family has different culture and traditions. I also feel different from Javanese friends. However, I didn't feel that I was Chinese when I was in China. And strangely, suddenly I realized that there were a lot of similarities between me and Indonesians from non Chinese background, who also studied in Beijing.

Although she and her Chinese friends[14] have similar phenotypical appearance, she felt that she was different from them, like the feeling that she was different from her Javanese friends in Indonesia. Explaining why she felt different from her local Chinese friends, she said,

> Um, I think I am still Chinese, but not like the Chinese from China. I am different from my Chinese friend from China, although we have similar physical appearance. Here in Indonesia, many Chinese still practice Chinese cultural traditions such worshipping and giving offerings to ancestors. They also have ancestral tablets in their home, although I find this practice is slowly disappearing. These practices are quintessentially Chinese. But in Beijing, you cannot find those practices.

In Jocelyn's opinion, practicing what she thought of as quintessentially Chinese made her Chinese. However, her experience in Beijing proved that what she thought as quintessentially Chinese was not practiced in China. This made her different from her Chinese friends, whom she thought as true-blue Chinese:

> I heard from some Chinese friends that they didn't practice it [worshipping and giving offerings to ancestors] anymore in China. They said that those practices were superstitious. Even the way we celebrate Chinese New Year is also different. Here, the Chinese who still believe in Buddhism, Daoism, or Confucianism usually go the temple for offering prayers in Chinese New Year's eve. There is no such tradition in China. Our Chinese New Year goodies are also different. In China, pineapple tart cookies are not a part of the goodies like here in Indonesia. We cannot find *Lontong Cap Go Meh*[15] there, either.

Because of cultural differences, she felt that she was more (Chinese) Indonesian when she was in China. When I highlighted the fact that she stayed in Beijing and that the culture of South China,

[14] She has many Chinese friends from different countries, but the words "Chinese friends" here refers to the Chinese from China. The original words she used are "*teman Zhongguo*," *teman* is the Indonesian word for friend, and *Zhongguo* is the Chinese word for China.

[15] *Lontong Cap Go Meh* is a traditional Chinese Indonesian food for celebrating the fifteenth day of the first month of the Chinese calendar (*Cap Go* is the Hokkian word for fifteenth). In Chinese Mandarin, this celebration is called *Yuan Xiao*.

the place of the ancestors of Chinese Indonesians came from, was different from that of North China, she said,

> Yes, the culture of North China and South China is slightly different. The filling of *Ronde*[16] in North China is grounded meat, whereas in the South it is nuts or sesame, like *Ronde* in Indonesia. But still there are differences in the Chinese New Year goodies between those in South China and in Indonesia. In South China, *Bandeng*[17] is not a part of the goodies, but here it is. That is why we have heard *Bandeng Imlek*.[18]

Besides tangible differences as she described above, Jocelyn also shared her observation on the intangible ones, such as differences on world views and values. She felt that Chinese Indonesians still held Chinese traditional values relatively more strongly than the Chinese in China did. In her opinion, filial piety was strongly upheld in Indonesia. However, in China, it was not strong as that in Indonesia. She also gave an example of family ties, which was very important for Chinese Indonesians. They were more family-oriented, whereas in China she found that family was not so important as she had thought. However, she said that she could be wrong, but that was what she observed.

Jocelyn's experience in China shows that there is a gap between the Chinese culture she was taught and the Chinese culture that exists in China. The Chinese culture in China is lack of performative elements that express what she thinks of the essentials of Chinese culture. However, she understands that the gaps or differences are imperative because the cultural atmosphere between China and Indonesia are different. She believes that the culture and traditions she holds are Chinese Indonesian culture, the culture that originally came from China, but has been

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[16] *Ronde* is the Indonesian name for *tangyuan*, small balls made of rice or glutinous rice flour filled with grounded nuts and beans or grounded meat. Those filled with nuts are eaten with sweet ginger soup, popular in South China, and those filled with meat are found in North China and eaten with meat-stock soup. This is a typical food for celebrating *Dongzhi* (Winter solstice) festival,

[17] *Bandeng* is the Indonesian word for milkfish, (Latin: Chanos Chanos). Fish is traditionally a part of Chinese New Year diet. Probably because *bandeng* is abundant in Indonesia and relatively not so expensive, compared to other fish, it was then adopted as a fish for Chinese New Year dinner. However, during Chinese New Year, *Bandeng*, especially the jumbo one, is much more expensive.

[18] *Bandeng* for Chinese New Year (*Imlek* the Indonesian loanword from Hokkian, which is used for Chinese New Year. Literally it means lunar calendar (Chinese: *yinli*).

changed or influenced by Indonesian local culture and history, whereas the traditional culture in China has been change of the historical events taking place in that country.

Although she works as a part-time teacher, she enjoys getting involved in cultural events that her language school holds. In her opinion, events as such are good because they can introduce traditional Chinese culture and its values. But she doubts that those make students and participants more Chinese:

> I don't think those activities will make students more Chinese. Through activities as such, students know more about Chinese traditional cultures. However knowing more about Chinese traditional cultures is different from making becoming Chinese.

For Jocelyn, what is important is that the events can bring fun, so that students are interested in learning Chinese. She brought up her first encounter with Chinese lesson, which dampened her mood to study. For her, nowadays, having Chinese skills was a necessity, as it can open the window of opportunities and give its speakers added value that is useful in their job search.

Henny, another informant, had an interesting experience about learning Chinese language. She was born 21 years ago in Surabaya. Although she comes from *totok* family, she did not speak Chinese until she was in high school. She said that only her maternal grandfather was born in China. He came to Indonesia in late 1930s. Describing the language situation in her family, she said,

> My parents were born in Surabaya. They went to Chinese school, but in 1966, when they were in Elementary 4, they had switch to Indonesian school because Chinese education was banned. Nevertheless, they speak Chinese. They used Chinese when they talked to my grandparents. But since my grandparents passed away, they only use Chinese when they talk to our relatives in China.

Her parents used Chinese when they talked to their parents or their relatives in China, but they rarely used Chinese exclusively when they talked to each other. Henny guessed that this was because of her parents' limited Chinese education. Nevertheless, in her opinion, her family was

very Chinese, in the sense that they always observed Chinese traditional rituals. Even they had ancestral tablet at home. However, in her opinion, they did it out of the habit. They just followed what the older generation taught, without knowing or understanding it.

Because of her limited exposure to Chinese language, Henny did not speak Chinese until she was in the second grade of high school, when she started taking Chinese lesson in a language school. That was four years ago. After finishing high school, she decided to study Chinese language and literature in a university in Surabaya. She is a junior now. She majored in Chinese because she felt that "it was strange if a Chinese did not speak Chinese." In her opinion, as a Chinese she should be able to speak Chinese. This was out of her own will:

> I chose Chinese as my major because I want to study Chinese, not because my parents asked me to do so. My parents are open-minded. They encourage me to study anything as long as I have interest in it and I will not do it half way, but once my father said that it was a good idea to major in Chinese.

Henny felt that her Chinese identity was blurred because of her inability to speak Chinese. For her, Chinese language was a main identifier of being Chinese. A Chinese who did not speak Chinese was not a true blue Chinese. She said that her relatives in China often pulled her leg:

> I can only talk to my uncle and aunt who still speak Indonesian, but I don't know how to talk to my cousins, who only speak Chinese. My uncle often teased me by asking stupid questions, such as whether I was Chinese or not.

Henny found that there was some truth in what her uncle said. That was why she chose to study Chinese in order to overcome the handicap she had in establishing her Chinese identity and found her root.

Henny's sense of Chinese identity also came from experience. She said that throughout her life, she often felt discriminated against because of her Chinese heritage. She was mugged several times and became the target of racial slurs many times just because she was Chinese:

> Actually, when I was still a kid, I never thought that I was different. I knew that I was Chinese because my parents said so. But I did not see the differences between my non-Chinese friends in the neighborhood and me. I mean, well, there are differences such as, they did not practice ancestor worship like my family did, but I though that was normal, and should not be a problem. However, things started to change when I was in elementary school. The majority of the students were of Chinese descent, but I had to go out of the neighborhood every time I went to school. It was outside the neighborhood that I became the target of racial slurs and mugging.

She also said that whenever there was incident involving the Chinese and the *pribumis*, the Chinese was always the one to blame. However, she also admitted that nowadays the situation was better, although the attitude of many people towards the Chinese did not change much.

Because of her bitter experience of discrimination Indonesia, Henny had a dream of leaving Indonesia and working in a country where her Chinese ethnicity would not be a target of discrimination. Her choice was China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, or Singapore. She believed that since the majority of the population in those countries was of Chinese descent, she would not be discriminated against. So, the first step she would take was mastering Chinese.

Henny constructed Chinese language as an identifier of Chinese ethnicity. This construction, together with her dream of working and living in Chinese-majority countries, motivated her to study Chinese. She imagined that mastering Chinese language was crucial to gaining membership in Chinese community worldwide as she said that her inability to speak Chinese serve as a handicap for her to construct her Chinese identity.

Henny said that her decision to study Chinese was a good one. Majoring in Chinese opened her horizon. She understood and made sense of Chinese tradition and rituals that her family and she observed:

> All the traditions and rituals actually have no meanings at all except we construct something out of it. People may think that burning ghost money[19] during funeral or

[19] Ghost money is a sheet of paper that symbolizes money burnt as an offering in a funeral ceremony or ancestors veneration, in Chinese it is called *yinsizhi* (阴司纸).

> giving offering to ancestors is useless and superstitious. But if we look at it from another perspective, it teaches us the essence of Chinese culture, such as respect and filial piety.

Her understanding on the rationale of Chinese traditional rituals made her appreciate Chinese cultural values more and gave her sense of satisfaction. In so doing, she said that she could feel more Chinese.

Henny's imagination about Chinese language and culture and Chinese society enabled her to act in a certain way, and she had a sense of legitimacy in her action, like what Taylor writes, "social imaginary is not just a set of idea ideas; rather, it is what enables" (2004:3). In other words, Henny's imaginary enable her to continue learning Chinese and to give here a sense of legitimacy to do so. However, after coming back from one-semester immersion program in a university in China, her ideas about Chinese language changed:

> At first, before going to China, I felt that I was Chinese, but when I was in China, I did not feel that I was Chinese. … Perhaps because the idea of being Chinese that I thought before was different from the reality. I mean, definitely, local people here in Quanzhou are Chinese, but they are different from me, although both of us are Chinese. For example, before, I always labeled those who did observe Chinese traditional rituals as less Chinese. But I don't think I can label the Chinese in China as less Chinese.

Besides constructing Chinese language as a marker of Chinese identity, Henny also employs practices of Chinese traditional rituals as Chinese identity markers. In Indonesia, it is easy for her to label those who do not practice the rituals as less Chinese. However, she cannot do this in China be because the Chinese there are "authentic" Chinese. Henny added:

> However, in some another aspect, the Chinese in Quanzhou are very Chinese. My parents often said that one characteristics of being Chinese is good work ethic. Chinese do not mind working very hard. In general I find that the Chinese in China work much harder than the Chinese in Indonesia. I think this is the reason why China rises so tremendously in the world.

Henny then continued with her observation about the Chinese in China, whom she thought of not practicing many important Chinese traditional rituals, such as praying and giving offering to

ancestors, spending Chinese New Year's eve praying in the temple, burning paper money during a funeral. Even she observed that the funeral rites in China were not so elaborate as the funeral of a *totok* family in Indonesia. In her opinion, many forms of Chinese traditions still survived among Chinese Indonesian families. She attributed this to the Indonesian government's policy. Despite its repressive policy toward Chinese culture, the New Order regime did not impose a blanket ban on Chinese traditional rituals. Chinese Indonesian families were allowed to practice them as long as they were conducted inconspicuously and as private affairs. Unlike in China, during the Cultural Revolution, the so-called "four olds (*si jiu*)"[20] — namely, old customs, old culture, old habit, and old idea — were forbidden and destroyed, and its impact can be seen until now. For many Chinese in China, Chinese traditional rituals are superstitions.

Henny said that now she was confused about the definition of the characteristics of being Chinese. She also added that her opinion about Chinese language as one main identifier of being Chinese has also changed. She found out that in China, there were people who did not speak Chinese.[21] Nevertheless, she still believed the mastery of Chinese language could be like an entry ticket to the membership of Chinese community, as this community spoke Chinese. She said,

> Chinese language is important among the Chinese community. If you want to work in China, you have to be able to speak Chinese. If you want to have a better prospect in your business or your career, you have to be able to speak Chinese.

The words "work" and "better prospect" she uses for describing the importance of Chinese language reflect her changing opinion on Chinese language. It is no longer a marker of Chinese identity but a way to successful career. However, she still believes that Chinese cultural

[20] In Chinese character: 四旧

[21] Henny used the term *Hanyu* for Chinese language. *Hanyu* means the language of Han, the biggest ethnic group in China. It was elevated as the national language, known as *Putonghua* (literally means "common language") in China. It is known as Mandarin Chinese.

traditions, which survived in the New Order Indonesia and are still practiced, are relevant in the lives of Chinese Indonesians although many do not practice them:

> Many Chinese in China do not celebrate Chinese cultural traditions and rituals, but I think the Chinese here should know the cultural traditions and rituals because they are our roots. They have values that should be handed down to the next generation. Whether the Chinese in China do not practice them anymore, that is a different story.

Although the Chinese in China do not practice Chinese cultural traditions and rituals and they consider them as superstitions and see them as cultural performances which are for fun, Henny still holds the idea that Chinese Indonesians should know Chinese traditions, customs, and rituals because:

> They can teach us Chinese cultural values that might be forgotten by many people. We may not speak Chinese because, you see, language is like a skill. You have to practice it if you want to master it. Linguistic environment in Indonesia is different from that in China or in other Chinese-dominating countries such as Singapore or Taiwan, where Chinese is widely spoken. So, it is understandable that Chinese proficiency of Chinese Indonesians is not good. Or even they do not speak it because they do not get a chance to learn it.

For her, the importance of Chineseness lies in the practice of Chinese traditions, customs and rituals, which cultivate values such as honoring ancestors, which has faded in China. Because of this reason, she thinks that celebrating and introducing Chinese cultural traditions are good for young Chinese who learn Chinese. They may not be able to speak Chinese fluently, but they do not lose Chinese traditional values. That is why Henny supports activities which, in one senior teacher's phrase "*dui zhonguo wenhua you guanxi*," have connection with Chinese culture. Those activities could cultivate Chinese traditional values among the younger generations of Chinese. She said, "What makes us Chinese is upholding Chinese traditional values such as hard-working, self-reliance and filial piety."[22]

[22] Many Chinese Indonesians believe that hard-working, self-reliance, and filial piety are some characteristics of Chineseness. They distinguish the Chinese from other ethnic groups in Indonesia, whom the Chinese think as lazy, irresponsible, and having no respect to their seniors and elders.

According to Henny, although many Chinese in China do not practice Chinese traditions, customs, and rituals which they think as superstitious, she thinks that Chinese Indonesians should preserve them because of the virtues they cultivate. Henny's opinion may be right in the ideal realm, that Chinese traditions, customs and rituals cultivate virtues. However, in the practical realm, they may be a way for Chinese Indonesians who have lost their Chinese language to distinguish themselves from other ethnic groups. They are used for preserving Chinese ethnicity because they have the ability to boundaries between the Chinese and the non Chinese, as well as to be symbols that connect them to traditional Chinese cultural world.

Henny's opinion on Chinese traditions, customs and rituals differs from Jocelyn, although both of them believe that cultural activities that showcase Chinese traditional celebrations and rituals are good for students of Chinese language so that they know Chinese traditional culture. Jocelyn thinks that hard-working and self-reliance are not the characteristics of Chineseness. In her opinion, they are individual attitudes, not innately Chinese. She also believes that filial piety can be found in every culture, although the Chinese give it more emphasis. In Jocelyn's opinion, the Chinese cannot implant Chinese culture that originally came from China to Indonesia directly. She said,

> Chinese traditional culture is good, no doubt about it. But the problem is whether all of their aspects are suitable or not. Does it mean that in order to be filial, we have to worship our ancestors? Remember, culture is not static. Local social and political environment influence its development greatly. Adaptation should be made according to time and place. Otherwise, it cannot grow well. Like what a Chinese phrase explains, *shuitu bufu*, which means unable to acclimatize in the new environment.[23]

Jocelyn seems to problematize the notion of Chinese culture. In her opinion, the efforts of bringing back the so-called authentic Chinese culture to life in Indonesia is good for knowing what Chinese traditions are like. In her opinion, they are like cultural performance. They are

[23] In Chinese: 水土不服.

great to enjoy, but never or rarely practiced in daily life because they are out of touch with reality. Using an old Chinese maxim, she explained,

> Chinese culture in Indonesia should acclimatize in local environment so that it can grow well. There is a Chinese proverb in *Yanzi ChunQiu*, which says "*ju sheng huai bei ze wei zhi*," which literally means tangerine that grows in Huaibei is not a good tangerine because it is bitter.[24] That means suitable environment is need for a good growth. So we cannot implant Chinese culture here directly because Indonesian temporal and spatial environment may not be suitable for its growth. We have to avoid this situation. After all, Chinese Indonesians are not like their counterparts in China.

For Jocelyn, in order to survive in Indonesia, Chinese culture should be localized or embedded in the local situation. In this way, she thinks about hybridity, that the culture of her ethnic group, Chinese Indonesians, is neither Chinese nor Indonesian, rather, the mixture of Chinese and Indonesian culture. Giving an example of Chinese Indonesian culture, which is neither Chinese nor Indonesian, she said,

> A good example of this mixture is traditional food served during *Imlek* festivity. Although the Chinese in China do not celebrate *Imlek* like Chinese Indonesians do, such going to the temple or venerating their ancestors, *Imlek* is a major holiday there. For them, our traditional *Imlek* food such as *Bandeng Imlek* or *Lontong Capgomeh* is not pure traditional Chinese food served during *Imlek*. But for us, it is traditional food associated with our *Imlek* tradition.

She also thinks that she is neither Chinese nor Indonesian. Before going to China, she felt that she was Chinese, but when she stayed there for a few years, she realized that actually she was not so Chinese as she used to imagine. She felt that she was different from the local Chinese there. She got that feeling because she related herself to Chineseness whose yardstick came from China. Describing herself as a Chinese Indonesian identity, she said,

> A good way of describing how I am now as a Chinese Indonesian is using Lu Xun's famous quotation, *qu qi jinghua, qu qi zaopo*, which means "extracting the essence,

[24] *Yanzi Chunqiu* (晏子春秋) or *The Spring and Autumn of Master Yan* is a collection of stories about Yan Ying, the advisor of the Duke Jing of Qi in late 6th century BC. The maxim that Jocelyn quotes, *ju sheng huaibei ze wei zhi* (桔生淮北则为枳), literally describes that tangerine is fruit that grows in the south, so when it is planted in the north, where the climate is colder, the taste changes drastically.

> disposing the dross."[25] He wrote it when China faced Western imperialism. He advocated the Chinese should not blindly accepted Chinese traditional culture and rejected foreign ones. They should what was good about each culture. I guess the same situation is also applicable here. We should take what is a good and suitable about Chinese and Indonesian cultures and reject what is not good for us as people who live in the two cultural worlds, the Chinese and the Indonesian.

The narratives of the three informants above illustrate that Chinese language learners have their own "ideological becoming" (Bhaktin, 1981:342), that is, the way they view the world, beliefs, value, as well as their positioning, interaction, and alignment with others. Their ideological becoming is shaped by their experiences in a cultural, social, and political world that is different from their parents. Obviously, it also affects the way they see Chinese language and culture.

Conclusion

The introduction of *Reformasi* (the Reform) in 1998 brought about greater acceptance towards Chinese culture. Various Chinese organizations, the members of which were Chinese-educated, seized this opportunity by reviving Chinese education. They established Chinese language and formal schools as an "agency of [cultural] project" (Ortner, 2006:152). Through this cultural project that transmits Chinese cultural values, the Chinese-educated Chinese wants to resinicize the Chinese who have lost their Chineseness. Their cultural project provides Chinese Indonesians connectivity to Chinese language and culture so that they can "act Chinese." Acting Chinese is important because "what makes people Chinese is acting Chinese" (Ebrey, 1995:34). This means that in order to be Chinese, one should behave according to Chinese cultural models and codes — "basic beliefs and values about what constitutes person, about what person is (and should be), what person can do (and should do), and (and should) feel"

[25] Lu Xun (1881 – 1936) is a renowned Chinese writer who is considered as the father of modern Chinese literature. In Chinese character, his quotation used by Jocelyn is 去其精华, 去其糟粕.

(Carbaugh, 1996:28), which are inspired by Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. The connectivity that expects Chinese Indonesians to act Chinese puts China at the center of cultural identification. Here, one can see why Chinese language education matters.

For the Chinese-educated Chinese, Chinese language education matters because it serves several important roles. First of all, it helps younger generations of Chinese know their cultural heritage. It tries to increase their awareness on their Chineseness. Secondly, through the use of Chinese language and shared Chinese culture, it tries to connect them to other Chinese ethnic communities. Lastly, through the connectivity to Chinese language and culture, it helps foster the sense of Chineseness that has been lost among them.

However, Chinese language learners, especially the younger generations, may not reflect the school's belief, but instead have their own ideas and opinions in order to develop their own positioning with regards to the relevance of Chinese language and culture to their identity, as they "are able to positions themselves and take from the authoritative discourses what they need to forge their own ideological becoming" (Maguire and Curdt-Christiansen, 2007:74). The experience Jocelyn, Henny, and Andrew prove this.

Jocelyn's and Henny's experience in the center of cultural identification and authenticity, China, produce the opposite result. Instead of being more Chinese, they question what constitute Chineseness for them as the Chinese culture in the center (China) is not so "traditional" or is not like what was taught to them as the one in the periphery (Indonesia). Their experience is understandable as Chinese traditional cultural values in China have changed dramatically, altered by the introduction of the values of Marxism and Socialism, which became a part of the curricula of the national education and the state-oriented values that may diminish Chinese traditional cultural values — inspired by Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism (Fouts and Chan, 1995; Li,

1990), the values that the Chinese-educated Chinese Indonesians hold. In other words, the cultural practice of the Chinese-educated Chinese does not resonate with the belief of the subsequent generations who have their own perception regarding Chinese traditional culture. The older generation's way of resinicizing the younger generation of Chinese whom the former think of losing Chineseness along the way by forcing the latter to relate themselves to the Chineseness the yardstick of which coming from China is not successful because China in the mind of the older generation is different from China the younger generation encounters. This difference leads the latter to form their own ideological becoming, which makes produce their own version of Chineseness. Jocelyn's Chineseness is a hybridity of Chinese and Indonesian cultural values. Henny's tends to gravitate towards Chinese traditional values, the values that she thinks of fading away in China. Andrew, who has never lived in the center, does not know whether Chineseness there is similar to or different from the one in the periphery. However, in his opinion, that is not important. Because of that, he never thinks much about it.

In summary, the Chinese-educated Chinese try to "re-authenticate" younger generations of Chinese Indonesians whom they think of losing Chineseness because of the New Order's oppressive cultural policies. The meaning of being Chinese is inculcated through the teaching of Chinese language and the connectivity to Chinese culture. However, Chinese habitus varies depending on the experiences of individuals. Because of that, individuals have their own personalized versions of Chineseness, and this also lead to different kind of imagined Chinese ethnic communities. The Chinese-educated Chinese envision an imagined Chinese ethnic community whose members are "authentically" Chinese, with China as the yardstick of the authenticity. Others, like Henny, have similar vision, but they do not use China as the standard for measuring their Chineseness. For these people, Chineseness lies in the continuity of

traditional Chinese cultural values, which start to fade away in their country of origin. There are also others, who are like Jocelyn. They envision an imagined Chinese ethnic community who adopts hybridity, the synthesis of Chinese and Indonesian cultures. And the last one is a group of those who do not think that Chineseness is important for them. They learn Chinese language because they think it can help them in their business or career.

Part 2

Chinese Media

As one of the three pillars of Chinese community, Chinese media play an important role in the lives of the Chinese in Indonesia. According to Coppel, the spirit of Chinese Indonesian community depends on, among others, Chinese media (1976:65). The publication of Chinese media obviously needs the state's tolerance, which the Chinese community did not get during the New Order era. However, the regime that succeeds the New Order permits the Chinese community to publish their ethnic media. In major cities in Indonesia nowadays, people can find Chinese media. A local Chinese media expert describes this situation, "After experiencing over three decades of darkness, the Chinese-Indonesian press can finally welcome the light of the morning sun" (quoted in Hoon, 2008:103). In this part, I explore the role of Chinese media in post-Suharto Indonesia, after being absent for more than 30 years.

My analysis in this part is spread over two chapters, namely Chapters III and IV. In Chapter III, based on previous studies on the relationship between ethnic minorities and their media, I show how the Chinese community in Indonesia tries to establish their own ethnic media with the intention of reviving Chinese culture. Through the revival of Chinese culture, they hope to foster and develop Chinese cultural identity, especially among the generations of Chinese who grew up during the New Order era, the generations whom they think of losing Chineseness. Using the case studies of two Chinese newspapers in Surabaya, *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao*, I analyze how Chinese media use the symbolic forms of Chinese identity in their coverage to achieve their goal. In Chapter IV, I examine how the Chinese respond to the symbolic forms of Chineseness used in both Surabaya newspapers. I argue that they use the symbolic forms of Chineseness in the newspapers to create exclusionary and inclusionary boundaries. The

exclusionary boundaries are used to distinguish them as an ethnic Chinese group from others whereas, the inclusionary boundaries are created for establishing their Indonesian national identity.

Chapter 3

Chinese Media and the (Re)construction of Chineseness

On Saturday morning in mid January 2010, I visited Hu *Laoshi* (Teacher Hu). Hu *Laoshi* used to be a teacher in a Chinese school in Surabaya, as well as a reporter of a Jakarta-based Chinese newspaper before Chinese schools and Chinese newspapers were banned in Indonesia in late 1960s,. He ran a business after he lost his job. He is retired now. He devotes much of his time to several Chinese organizations. Because of his past experience as a journalist and his mastery of Chinese language, in 2001 he was asked to help a Surabaya-based Chinese newspaper in its publication.

When I arrived at his house, Hu *Laoshi* was not at home. *Ayi* Shumei, Hu *Laoshi*'s wife, told me to wait for a while, as Hu *Laoshi* would be back soon. While I was waiting for him in the sitting room, *Ayi* Shumei accompanied me. The room was embellished with several Chinese ornaments, one auspicious Chinese calligraphic painting hanging on the wall and three mini statues of Fu Lu Shou Daoist gods (gods of luck, prosperity and longevity) standing in a bookshelf that also functioned as a partition. On the floor near the bookshelf, there were stacks of Chinese magazines and newspapers. Knowing that I took one newspaper, as well as trying to break the ice, *Ayi* Shumei asked me if I could read Chinese characters. I told her that my Chinese was very basic and I might have difficulties in reading Chinese at intermediate level. Then, she said:

> Yes, I understand that most Chinese-Indonesians born in 1960s onwards do not speak and read Chinese. It is really a pity that they do not know their own language.[1] But well, that

[1] The Indonesian phrase she used was "bahasa mereka sendiri," which literally means their own language. This term is commonly used among many older Chinese for referring to Mandarin, which was seen as the "mother tongue" of the Chinese. But I think the more appropriate term for Mandarin would be heritage language as the mother tongue of Chinese Indonesians is not always Mandarin. It can be Hokkien or Cantonese.

> is due to political problems. Luckily now the government changes the policies. We, the Chinese, are free to learn our language and culture.

I responded that I could not agree more and added that now young Chinese-Indonesians were fortunate because they could get a chance to learn their heritage language. She nodded in agreement. When she was about to say something more, Hu *Laoshi* came in. The three of us then continued our conversation regarding new political climate that brought openness towards Chinese culture. Pointing out to stacks of Chinese magazines and newspapers, Hu *Laoshi* said, "If not because of the changing political climate, we would not be able to see Chinese publications as such." Hu *Laoshi*'s statement underscored big changes in the policies concerning the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. One of them was the policy about Chinese language and culture, which were banned during the Suharto era.

On January 7, 2000, President Abdurrachman Wahid issued a Presidential Decree No. 6/2000, which abolished President Suharto's Executive Order No. 14/1967 that prohibited Chinese traditions, language and culture in Indonesia. This presidential decree paved the way for the re-emergence of Chinese language and culture in public. The re-emergence of Chinese language and culture in public creates a discursive space in which Chinese language is used a means of communication and Chinese culture can be performed freely. The discursive space, such as social gatherings and reunion dinner of Chinese social organizations, provides opportunities for the Chinese to develop their social collectivity.

Encouraged by a more relaxed political situation, the Chinese who used to go to Chinese school and master Chinese language, write articles and essays in their internal bulletins on their schooling days before Chinese language and culture were banned. Their writings are subjective and nostalgic, and

> [They] expressed the highly personal memories of the writers about their alma mater and the personal relationships they had established while they were in school. They were highly emotional in tone and were aimed at striking an emotional chord with or at least eliciting an emotional response from readers in the Chinese language public (Sai, 2006:73).

I argue that their essays have an agency. In this case, the essays have the ability to develop their collective identity, namely, as a Chinese-educated group, which leads to the creation of a self-referential term, "we, the generation who had been educated in Chinese language schools," a phrase that differentiates them from younger generations of Chinese who did not have Chinese education (Sai: 2006:56). The term "we, the generation who had been educated in Chinese language schools" is not just an ordinary speech act. There is a performative act in it, that is, they were a part of the history of Chinese education in Indonesia, who had a historical mission to (re)construct Chineseness and Chinese identity by reviving Chinese language and culture that have been dormant since Suharto came to power. Using an allusion from Chinese martial arts folktale, Sai writes that these Chinese-educated people are like swordsmen who have emerged from their retreat in the mountains and returned to the scene (2006:47). They serve as a link that connects the past and the future of Chinese culture in Indonesia.

Their performative act implies that Chineseness and Chinese identity are not "natural." They are social constructs and ascribed by individuals themselves or by others. Their performative act is translated into efforts to materialize their historical mission by giving Chinese culture in Indonesia a new lease of life through reviving Chinese language education and Chinese media. Seminars, workshops, and meetings were conducted by various Chinese organizations to expose the importance of Chinese language education and Chinese media and to explore the possibilities of establishing Chinese schools and publishing Chinese media. These activities are examples of "public sphere" where people are united by problems associated with

them as a social collectivity. The public spheres are like a discursive space where information and opinions on collective problems are identified and discussed. According to Warner, "public" is created by discourse. "A public is a space of discourse organized by nothing other than discourse itself" (Warner, 2002:67). He also writes that the circularity of discourse is an important factor on how publics come into being. "A public is the social space created by the reflexive circulation of discourse" (Warner, 2002:90). In this circulation of discourse, there is a social aspect, that is, public is not about text or discourse, but what is more important is how text and discourse can serve as a transformative agent. The transformative characteristic of "public" is what Warner calls as the "real path for the circulation of discourse" (2002:90). The memories of their schooling days when Chinese language and culture flourished inspired the Chinese-educated Chinese to revive Chinese language and culture.

On June 12, 2012, *Qiandao Ribao*, a Surabaya-based Chinese newspaper, moved to a new office. Because of growing business, its former office, a two-floor shophouse, was now too small. The management decided to build a new office that could accommodate its growth. In the ceremony to inaugurate the new office, Huang Xiaozhong, a senior reporter of *Qiandao Ribao* said, "This newspaper was published in memory of our teachers in Chinese school and to serve as learning avenues for young Chinese-Indonesians." Huang's statement underscored the central position of Chinese newspaper in the historical mission of the Chinese-educated Chinese. Chinese newspaper is their "real path for the circulation of discourse." Through Chinese newspaper, this group of Chinese tried to revive Chinese language and culture in Indonesia.

The Rise of Chinese Media

Since the fall of the New Order regime in 1998, Indonesia has seen a boom in ethnic Chinese media. In many big cities in Indonesia, people can find locally published Chinese newspapers. Chinese media, which have been dormant since Suharto came to power in 1965, started to get a new lease of life. This situation changed the "mediascape" in many parts of Indonesia, including Surabaya (Appadurai, 1996). The mediascape in Surabaya also saw the publication of the ethnic Chinese newspapers, beside the mainstream ones. The Chinese attributed this to President Abdurrachman Wahid (Gus Dur).

> Liu *Laoshi* (a senior editor of *Qiandao Ribao*): The freedom that Gus Dur gave to the Chinese is one important factor that underpins our effort to publish a Chinese newspaper.
>
> Samas (a former journalist and Secretary of PSMTI): Gus Dur issued a presidential decree in January 2000 to annul Suharto's Executive Order that banned Chinese language and culture. This decree paved a legal way for the republication of Chinese newspaper, which flourished before Suharto came to power.

Other informants also shared the same idea as Liu *Laoshi*'s and Samas'. They agreed that democratization taking place after the fall of Suharto brought about openness and changing policies concerning the Chinese, but it was Gus Dur that gave a legal basis for the publication of Chinese media. However, although the legal obstacles for the publication of Chinese media have been eradicated, they face hurdles in their business.

There have been a number of new Chinese-language and Indonesian-language Chinese media, both newspapers and magazines, published since 1998. Yet, there are those which ceased publication after quite some time in business. According to Andreas Pandiangan, the short lifespan happens because Chinese media fail "to understand their potential readership and the contemporary Chinese community itself" (2003:419). Chinese media have a limited readership. The readership of those published in Chinese is even more limited as not many Chinese-

Indonesians, especially the younger generations, can understand Chinese. Thus, increasing readership is a challenge that they have to overcome because all Chinese media compete for "a slice of the sales and readership pie" (Hoon, 2008:104).

The people behind the publication of the Chinese media believe that despite the limited readership, through their ethnic media, the Chinese "develop their visions of their futures in Indonesia" (Turner and Allen, 2007:120). In their opinion, Chinese media provide an opportunity for the Chinese community to express themselves, to regain their ethnicity and to celebrate their culture that has been banned during the New Order regime. Chinese newspapers have a mission to preserve Chinese language and culture in Indonesia, and this serves as the impetus for their survival.

Preserving Chinese culture also implies the idea of maintaining Chinese ethnic identity. One informant who is involved in the publication of *Qiandao Ribao* and wants to be anonymous says,

> There was a long tradition of Chinese journalism in Indonesia. Firstly, it was the Chinese who pioneered the publication of newspaper in Indonesia. Do you know that *Jawa Pos*[2] was originally published by a Chinese? Secondly, it functions as the link that connects us with our cultural heritage and with other Chinese communities.

Liu *Laoshi* adds,

> Through the publication of *Qiandao Ribao*, we want to give our contribution in preserving our culture that many do not know about. We hope that many young Chinese who do not know much about their language and culture can study them, develop and foster their ethnic belonging. How many ethnic groups have a tradition that has survived for more than five thousand years? We should be proud of it. …. [*Responding to my question that the Chinese here were actually Indonesians and they should be proud of their Indonesian heritage*]. Yes, I agree that we are Indonesians. But that does not mean that we have to deny our Chinese part, which was neglected or ignored due to political factors.

[2] *Jawa Pos* is a Surabaya-based newspaper, which publishes various regional editions across Indonesia.

The informant's and Liu *Laoshi*'s opinion, like that of other Chinese-educated Chinese, stress the importance of Chinese culture. They believe that young Chinese-Indonesians, many of whom forget their cultural heritage, should know the history, traditions, and values of their ethnic culture so that they can imprint their ethnic consciousness. Thus, for them the motivation to increase readership is not primarily for increasing revenue, but for accomplishing their mission. This becomes the impetus for their survival.

Enthusiasm as a result of openness towards Chinese culture and the mission to revive Chinese culture in Indonesia are the driving force behind the Chinese-educated Chinese to publish Chinese newspaper. They want to instill Chinese ethnic consciousness among the Chinese youth, whom they think of losing it, as Hu *Laoshi* says,

> Many young Chinese do not have a sense of Chinese ethnic consciousness.[3] In the eyes of many *pribumis*, they are seen as the outsiders. But they do not feel that they are Chinese.

He tells me the experience of one of his grandchildren, who is confused about his ethnicity. His grandson's Javanese friends saw him as a Chinese, yet he did not feel as one. Hu *Laoshi* believes that knowing Chinese cultural heritage can serve as a means of defining and affirming Chinese identity. Chinese newspaper, in Hu *Laoshi*'s and other like-minded people's opinion, can help cultivate and promote Chinese culture. This, in turn, can influence on Chinese ethnic consciousness.

Such an opinion, however, is not unique to the Chinese Indonesian community. A number of studies prove that there is a connection between ethnic media and perception and expression of ethnic identity. McQuail writes that media produce and transmit texts that have

[3] The Indonesian phrase Hu *Laoshi* used for "a sense of Chinese ethnic consciousness" was "rasa ketionghoaan," which literally means a sense of Chineseness. In my subsequent conversations with him and other informants who often used the phrase "rasa ketionghoaan," I believe that for them "rasa ketionghoaan" evoked nuances in which Chinese ethnic traits influenced their social and cultural attributes and provided them a sentiment of self-identity, that is, the basis of a viewpoint of "us" versus "them." Thus, in my opinion, Chinese ethnic consciousness is a more appropriate English translation for "rasa ketionghoaan" in this context.

cultural values, as well as serve as an important tool for group identification (1992:276). This is especially so for minority groups, which are often neglected and racialized in the mainstream media. Wilson and Gutierrez write that the driving forces of the establishment of ethnic minority media are among others, negative and stereotypical portrayals of ethnic minority groups in mainstream media, the effects of portrayals as such on the self-image of the ethnic minorities, the views of the majority groups on these minorities, and the minorities' lack of access to the mainstream media to express their views (1985: 40-53).

In a similar vein, in tandem with the freedom to celebrate ethnicity, the ethnic Chinese media in post-Suharto Indonesia underscore the need to express concerns, to voice protest against discrimination, to preserve language and culture, and to make people aware of the issues and problems of the community, within the context of Indonesian nation. In so doing, they resume what they did in the pre-Suharto period — that is, serving the interest of the Chinese community, although they are not as politically-oriented as they used to be. Traumatizing experiences the Chinese community suffered during the New Order era make the people behind the Chinese media — most of whom are those who used to work in the pre-Suharto Chinese newspaper industry — believe that political orientation is counter-productive and can jeopardize the Chinese community. Thus,

> [T]heir influence on the contemporary Chinese media has manifested in a focus on nostalgia and traditional Chinese culture. Notably, the Chinese press has become a 'space' for these people, who had been silenced over the three previous decades, to speak out and socialize. (Hoon, 2008:100).

Their traumatic experiences prompt the older generations of Chinese to evaluate the perceived risk getting involved in political matters and responded to that risk by staying away from politics and political organization for fear of oppression, as one informant said, "…The best thing for the Chinese is to be quiet and not to get involved in anything political." His opinion reflects the

perception of many Chinese who suffered from oppression during the New Order era, that is, any behavior that seems to be political should be avoided because it can threaten the safety of the Chinese community. This is the reason why Chinese newspapers in the post-New Order era tend to focus on Chinese culture and nostalgia.

The focus on nostalgia for the past in which the Chinese can celebrate their culture openly inspires Chinese media to promote Chinese culture. Greater acceptance toward things Chinese triggers what Appadurai calls "imagined nostalgia" or "ersatz nostalgia," namely, "things that never were" (1996:77–78). During the New Order era, there were no cultural media at their disposal to construct their Chineseness. So, when the restriction was lifted in early 2000s, the older generations of Chinese longed for things that actually they did not have before. The current socio-political climate that shows openness and acceptance towards Chinese culture creates among the Chinese experiences of losses that never take place. They tried to reclaim their sense of belonging to Chinese culture through a cultural connection to their "mythic" China, the connection that is not directly related to them. The ersatz nostalgia is important for the Chinese "to understand concepts of selfhood and collective conscience because the core meaning of any individual or group identity is sustained by remembering; and what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity" (Dawis, 2009:38). Harnessed by the "ersatz nostalgia," Chinese media, which view their role as preserving Chinese culture, try to fill the gap between the past and the present. They try to (re)construct the Chinese ethnicity and identity of Chinese-Indonesians, especially those of the younger generations, which they think of having lost as a result of the oppressive policy of the New Order.

Chinese Media and Chinese Identity

Liu *Laoshi*'s statement that the publication of Chinese newspaper played a role in preserving Chinese culture and helping young Chinese develop and foster their ethnic belonging underscores the relationship between Chinese media and Chinese identity. The ability of the Chinese media to develop and foster Chinese identity is illustrated by the concept that that ethnicity and identity are social constructs (Cohen 1978, Banks 1996, López 2000, Spencer 2006). This concept implies that the "origins" of ethnicity and identity are located in the mind of people and that people can imaginatively construct (ethnic) communities without physically inhabiting them and without having any direct interaction with (other) members of these communities. In other words, ethnicity and identity are social constructs that are symbolically imagined. An imagined ethnic linkage is made possible through perceived identification with a group and its shared symbols, which provides a feeling of identity and group belonging. As a result, each ethnic group can be distinguished by the symbolic means by which its members come to perceive themselves as a community, and how they maintain that sense of "groupness" (Brubaker, 2004).

In their effort to establish and maintain their sense of groupness, members of ethnic group try to sustain the feelings of identity and of being ethnic. The continuity of these feelings, which is called as ethnic persistence, is important because it give individuals a sense of identity, a sense of belonging, and social existence. In other words, ethnic persistence refers to the features of ethnic group that gives to its members a sense of belonging to their fellow ethnics as well as a sense of distinction from others.

In the construction of community, "print-capitalism" — magazines and newspapers — makes it possible for people to "imagine" a linked community that has previously enjoyed no

special forms of togetherness. The imagined linkage media brings about, in Anderson's opinion, "derives from two obliquely related sources." The first one is what he calls "calendrical coincidence" (1991:33). This refers to events occurring at various places on the same date, which readers read. They anonymously share whatever they read to other readers. This suggests that they belong to the collective body of readers. The second one is that media creates what he calls "mass ceremony" (1991:35). Readers and audience participate in the consumption of media. Although the consumption of media "is performed in silent privacy," readers and audience knows very well that "the ceremony" they perform is also simultaneously done by "thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence [they are] confident, yet whose identity [they have] not the slightest notion" (1991:35). The situation as such enables them to think of themselves as a part of a community of readers/audience with whom they have no direct interaction. Calendrical coincidence and mass ceremony have a role in the formulation of collective identity of members of this imagined community. However, one should remember that the formulation of collective identity does not produce equality of identity.

Supported by the circulation of ersatz nostalgia, media play a constitutive role in the creation of symbols and representations that leads to a sense of community. Media, according to Arjun Appadurai (1996), construct collective imaginations within the public spheres of a community. It is important to note that imagining here does not equal to fantasizing. Imagining has the capacity of agency. "It is the imagination, in its collective forms, that creates ideas of neighborhood and nationhood, … . The imagination is today a staging ground for action, and not only for escape" (Appadurai, 1996:7). The collective imaginations and experiences media provide, which are formed as a result of discursive practices, have the ability to rouse agency, as well as to create solidarities and to stage a ground for actions.

Grounded on this framework of ethnicity and media — namely, that ethnicity is a mental construct of an imagined community that is symbolically created through ethnic salience and persistence, and that the circulation of ersatz nostalgia in Chinese media facilitates the creation of symbols of ethnicity which trigger solidarity and agency for action — in this chapter I try to delineate the role of Chinese media in the construction of Chineseness and Chinese identity of Chinese-Indonesians. This role is very important for the Chinese media because they act and are perceived as the preserver of Chinese culture and the advocator of the rights of the Chinese. These serve as the raison d'être of Chinese newspapers in Indonesia.

The Mediascape of Surabaya

The fall the New Order regime in 1998 has changed the mediascape of Surabaya. In addition to mainstream Indonesian newspapers, tabloids and magazines, Surabaya used to have a few Chinese newspapers. Published in March 1999, *Harian Naga Surya* or *Longyang Ribao* was the first Chinese newspaper published in Surabaya after the fall of the New Order. However, it ceased publication in 2000. Since then on, two other Chinese newspapers were published; *Harian Nusantara* or *Qiandao Ribao*, started its publication on October 2000, and the other was *Harian Rela Warta* or *Sishui Chengbao*, published for the first time in 2004. However, only *Qiandao Ribao* can survive until today. *Guoji Ribao* or *International Daily* is also a Chinese newspaper that is published in Surabaya. However, it is different from *Qiandao Ribao*, which is a Surabaya homegrown newspaper. *Guoji Ribao* was published first in Jakarta in 2000 by three overseas Chinese newspapers, namely, Los Angeles-based *Guoji Ribao*, Hong Kong-based *Wen Wei Po*, and China-based *People's Daily* or *Renmin Ribao*. In its development, *Jawa Pos* Group, a Surabaya-based newspaper, took over its management. Through remote printing technique and

editioning, *Guoji Ribao* has four editions, Jakarta, Surabaya, Medan and Pontianak. Each edition features different content on local events and issues. So, only *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao* are produced and widely circulated in Surabaya nowadays. During my fieldwork, I encountered a number of my informants reading various Chinese publications both produced locally in Surabaya and from Jakarta. While they occasionally read Jakarta-based Chinese newspapers, tabloids and magazines, they read *Qiandao Ribao* and/or *Guoji Ribao* quite regularly. These two newspapers are easily available in Surabaya. In this chapter I focus on these two newspapers.

The Structure of Chinese Newspapers

The structures of *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao* are like any other newspapers. They have headline, international, national, business, regional and local news. But what makes them different from mainstream newspapers is that they have sections devoted to news about and report on China, Chinese culture, and people of Chinese ancestry world-wide. In *Qiandao Ribao*, sections on China and Taiwan news are *Liang'an Sidi* (Cross straits) and *Taiwan Xinxi* (Information on Taiwan). News and report on activities of local Chinese community can be found in *Huashe Dongtai* (Dynamics of Chinese Community), *Huashe Xinxi* (Information on Chinese Community). These two sections also often feature information and report on the Chinese community in the provinces in China where the ancestors of many Chinese-Indonesians came from such as Guangdong and Fujian. Another section, *Tianxia Huaren*, features prominent Chinese in the world. The *Fukan* (supplement) section of *Qiandao Ribao* consists of sections related to Chinese culture, such as Chinese traditional medicine, Chinese language and literature. This section also has a children's corner where Chinese folktales and parables are featured, and a Chinese language corner where students can send their writings. The opinion section features

guest writers whose articles are related to the Chinese both in Indonesia and overseas. This section also provides a space for the Chinese to write their life stories, biographies and commemorative essays on specific people or events during their Chinese schooling days that are very nostalgic. Sections about China, Chinese culture and the Chinese are spread over nine pages. The rest — headline, international, national, business, regional, local news — are also spread over eight pages. News in Indonesian language is printed in one page and two pages are reserved solely for advertisement, although it is also found in other pages.

Guoji Ribao's structure is not much different from *Qiandao Ribao*'s. It devotes eight out of 20 pages for sections that feature China, Chinese culture, and Chinese around the world. It has *Zhongguo Xinwen* (China News) that reports news about China. It also has *Huashe Xinwen* (Chinese Community news) that features events in Chinese communities in Indonesia and in the world. *Huashe Xinwen* also appears in the Surabaya edition. In this edition, this section focuses on the activities of the Chinese community in Surabaya. Besides having guest writers' articles, the opinion section also *Yinhua Luntan* (Chinese Indonesian Forum) in which readers writes anything related to Chinese-Indonesians. The *Fukan* (supplement) section has *Shi Sheng Yuandi* (teachers' and students' corner) that talks about Chinese language and provides space for students to publish their writings. This section also features information and reports on the ancestral villages of Chinese-Indonesians. The rest is like *Qiandao Ribao*'s supplement.

Compared to mainstream newspapers, as their structures reveal, a lion's share of *Qiandao Ribao*'s and *Guoji Ribao*'s reports and coverage is about China, Chinese communities and culture. The structures of *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao* also reflect the interests of the ethnic Chinese in Surabaya. The fact that *Qiandao Ribao* is produced in Surabaya and gives more space to its report on the activities of Surabaya Chinese community and that *Guoji Ribao* has different

editions for each city where it is produced — Jakarta, Surabaya, Medan, and Pontianak — and thus has different local content prove their locally oriented features. Since they are produced for Chinese community, *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao* cannot ignore issues in the lives of the Chinese, who are portrayed as a minoritized ethnic group. Ethnicity and cultural rights are favorite topics in the discourse of Chinese community. *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao* adopt these topics in their content. They try to serve as social and cultural forces that object to discriminatory practices against the Chinese.

Forms of Imagining

My analysis on how Chinese newspaper construct the ethnicity of Chinese Indonesian community is informed by Gupta's and Ferguson's study (1992), which emphasizes the salience of imagination in the construction of ethnic community. The Chinese Indonesian community see themselves as an imagined construct, which is constituted by a feeling of identity and belonging that derives from an attachment to a shared body of symbols (Anderson, 1991; Cohen, 1985). Some aspects of ethnic culture that give members a sense of belonging and distinction from other cultures function as differentiating symbols for its imagination and representation which are indexical to ethnic identity.

The distinction of Chinese-Indonesians as an imagined community comes from the belief in a common ancestry and a sense of identity and groupness, which are experienced and expressed through various cultural symbols that show their ethnic salience. *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao* use these symbols to inculcate a sense of imagined ethnic community. The symbols are "forms of imagining" (Anderson, 1991:24), which mediate between the readers of the ethnic media, that is, Chinese-Indonesians, and their ethnic identity. Attachment to these symbols may

maintain their imagined ethnic community. In this part, I identify and examine symbols that often appear in Chinese newspapers.

The first symbol is language. For the Chinese community, Chinese language is important because it serves as a fundamental expression of a group's collective identity, and a means of preserving it. The incident I describe below attests to importance of Chinese language for the Chinese community.

On one Saturday morning in late July 2012, *Bapak* Tedja and I went to a Chinese temple, where he served as a member of the board. There was meeting he was going to attend there. When we arrived at the temple, there were other board members, so he introduced me to them. Not long after that, I saw a number of people who did not look Chinese visit the temple. One of them was a Muslim woman wearing a veil. What happened next surprised the board members. She greeted us in Chinese and started talking to us in Chinese. Not all members spoke Chinese fluently. After the woman left, we all talked about her. We commented how good her Chinese was. One said in Javanese, "This is really embarrassing. I am Chinese and a member of the board of a Chinese temple, yet I don't speak Chinese well and fluently. *Cino, ning ora Cino*."[4] We all laughed. Then I asked him (in Indonesian) why he thought so. He replied in Javanese and admitted that he was Chinese but did not speak Chinese well and fluently. He continued that the *pribumi* woman should be the one who was real Chinese because she could speak Chinese well. Other members who did not speak Chinese fluently laughed and agreed that it was very embarrassing for them to say that they were Chinese and took care of a Chinese temple, but they

[4] *Cino ning ora Cino* is a Javanese expression which literally means "Chinese, but not Chinese." It refers to people whose ethnic background is Chinese but do not behave like a Chinese anymore. The common perception among the ethnic Chinese community in Surabaya is that the ability to speak Chinese is one important criterion of behaving Chinese. Hence, if people of Chinese ethnic background do not speak Chinese, their Chinese ethnicity is questionable.

did not speak Chinese well. Laughingly, another person said in Javanese, "Well, we, Chinese-Indonesians, are like that. *Cino wurung, Jowo dhurung, Londo nanggung*."[5]

This incident supports that for many Chinese, Chinese language is the epitome of being Chinese. Chinese language is perceived as an important vehicle for maintaining their ethnic and cultural heritage. The mastery of Chinese language is essential because it defines a person's Chineseness. For them, Chinese language is "a key symbol of ethnic identity, a marker that summarizes a number of perceived differences between" them as Chinese and other ethnic groups (Woolard, 1989:1). Chinese language is not only a means of communication, but also a fundamental expression of their collective identity as a Chinese ethnic group. That is why one informant above described the Chinese who did not speak Chinese as "not Chinese anymore." Other Chinese, like *Ibu* Liem and *Bapak* Wong, shared the same idea.

> *Ibu* Liem: Why is Chinese language important for us the Chinese? Because it is the language of our ancestor. In order that we preserve our tradition and culture, we should be able to speak Chinese.
>
> *Bapak* Wong: If you know Chinese language, it is very easy for you to communicate with other Chinese in many parts of the world. Chinese language is tool that unites all Chinese in the world.

The idea about Chinese language as the language of their ancestors and as the language that unites all Chinese, and as a means of preserving Chinese cultural heritage explains that for the Chinese like *Bapak* Wong and *Ibu* Liem, Chinese language is more than being a means of communication.[6] Chinese language is indexical to their cultural heritage and ethnic identity. Thus, through Chinese language, the Chinese-Indonesians who were born in late 1960s, when

[5] *Cino wurung, Jawa dhurung, Londo nanggung* is a Javanese expression which means, not Chinese anymore, not Javanese yet, and half-baked Westerner. It is often used for describing peranakan Chinese in Indonesia who has lost contact with Chinese culture or do not know much about things Chinese, but they are not completely Javanese/Indonesians or Westerners.

[6] *Ibu* Liem and *Bapak* Wong used the Indonesian term "Bahasa Tionghoa" for Chinese language. This term refers to Mandarin. They overlooked the fact that not all Chinese in world speak Mandarin, and that Mandarin in not the ancestral language of all Chinese. Chinese coming Guangdong and Fujian, for example, speak Cantonese, Teochew, and Hokkien.

Suharto banned Chinese language and culture, are supposed to regain their ethnicity. Describing Chinese-Indonesians who were born in that era, a Chinese-Indonesian scholar, Aimee Dawis, writes that, by having the mastery of Chinese language, "this [young] generation of Indonesian Chinese does not have to bear the deep sense of cultural loss that member of [her] generation endured during the Soeharto era" (Dawis, 2007).

Aimee Dawis' idea resonates with some scholars, among others, Driedeger (1989) Anderson and Friedres (1981), who write that language is one of indicators of ethnic cohesion. They also argue that there is a strong correlation between ethnic language retention and the development and reinforcement of ethnic consciousness. However, that opinion is subject to criticism. In their study on French and Flemish Belgian students, Edwards and Shearn (1987) find that language is not an essential condition for general identity maintenance. Zentella's study (1990) shows the disagreement among Puerto Ricans on the role of Spanish in the construction of Puerto Rican identity. Despite differences in the importance of language in identity formation, those studies suggest that language has a role in identity formation, as Edwards and Shearn write, "language is important in group identity but can be overvalued if considered in isolation, and is not a necessary element in identity maintenance and continuity" (1987:147).

The importance of language in identity formation varies with different ethnic groups and cultural context. In the case of the Chinese, Ningshen Xia (1992) argues that the maintenance of Chinese language correlates with a persistence of Chinese identity among Chinese Americans. For them, retaining Chinese language is perceived as an important way of maintaining their cultural heritage and identity. This is so because language is seen as a symbol that functions as a constituent of Chinese identity. The paradox of language use in which a non-Chinese spoke Chinese fluently, whereas the Chinese did not speak the language well, and the loss of language

among young Chinese-Indonesians illustrates how Chinese language becomes a signifier of Chinese identity, and Chinese-Indonesian's yearning for reclaiming their cultural identity.

Another symbol that I find is ethnic traditions, rituals and culture. Celebrations of ethnic festivals, traditions, and rituals can function as major means of practicing and maintaining ethnicity (Gans, 1979: 205). My fieldwork proves that rituals and practices associated with Chinese tradition and culture are seen as central to Chinese identity.

On Friday night on April 1, 2010, I called *Ayi* Giok Tjhing (see Chapter I). I planned to meet her for an interview, although I met her twice before. I had tried to make an appointment with her the week before, but she was busy. She suggested that we meet that weekend, but I should call her in advance. Over the phone, I asked her if she was free on Sunday morning. She said that on Sunday, April 3, she had to go the cemetery to clean the tomb of her parents and to honor them. She reminded me that it was *Qingming Jie*.[7] However, she suggested that we could meet in the food court of Pasar Atom, a shopping center in North Surabaya, for lunch, after she came from the cemetery. I agreed and told her that we could have *dim sum* there. There was a good *dim sum* stall, and the price was not so expensive.

Ayi Giok Tjhing was there with a friend when I arrived at the food court. Soon we ordered a number of *dim sum*. Then, she started the conversation. She said,

> Today *Qingming* is not like it used to be. … Nowadays, only older Chinese go to the cemetery, pray, and honor their deceased parents or grandparents. Young Chinese do not want to do anymore. Like a Javanese proverb, *Wong Cino wis ilang Cinone*.[8]

Then Pei Ling (*Ayi* Giok Thjing's friend) laughingly said,

[7] *Qingming Jie* is known as Tomb-sweeping Day, the day when Chinese visit the graves and burial grounds of their ancestors.

[8] Literally it means that the Chinese have lost their Chineseness. She copied this statement from a Javanese proverb, *wong Jowo ilang jawane*, which literally means that the Javanese have lost their Javaneseness. It refers to the Javanese who have lost their Javanese characteristics and values so that they can no longer be considered as Javanese. In the same way, in *Ayi* Giok Tjhing's opinion, many young Chinese have lost their Chinese characteristics and values. It is hard for her to see these Chinese as Chinese because they did not practice Chinese traditions and values such as paying respect to their deceased ancestors.

> Well, we cannot blame them for not holding Chinese values anymore. We should blame ourselves for not teaching them about our tradition. They would not be like Chinese anymore if we, the older generation, did not teach them.

Another person, *Shushu* Huat Beng (see chapter I), also complained that many Chinese, especially the young ones, did not behave like Chinese:

> Many of them do not have Chinese characteristics anymore. They do not know about the virtue of Chinese culture and tradition, the culture and tradition of their ancestors. Look at Chinese New Year, for example. What they think of Chinese New Year is just having reunion dinner and *hongbao*.[9]

For Chinese like *Ayi* Giok Tjhing, Pei Ling, and *Shushu* Huat Beng, festivals and traditions, such as Chinese New Year and *Qingming Jie*, are ritualized symbols for their ethnic group to create a sense of belonging (Driedeger, 1989:161). Special meanings attached to ritualized symbols as such have a bonding effect which can help preserve a sense of Chinese ethnic identity. In this case, Chinese New Year, *Qingming Jie*, and other traditional rituals are seen as an affirmation of Chineseness, which provides a sense of continuity from the past to the future. These rituals are constructed within a cultural context and socialized into dispositions, or what Bourdieu (1977) calls "habitus." Through these dispositions, the Chinese like *Ayi* Giok Tjhing reproduced themselves as members of Chinese community. When *Ayi* Giok Tjhing and other like-minded Chinese practice Chinese traditions and rituals, consciously or unconsciously they also take the values and the ideology attached to those traditions and rituals, which become a habitus that reflects their Chinese ethnicity and ultimately dictates how a Chinese should act or behave. When younger generation of Chinese do not perform the rituals as the older generation think they should do, or do not know much about them, the older generation believe that their younger counterparts do not internalize the values and meanings of those rituals. As a result, they lose their Chineseness. Chinese traditions and rituals, in this case, become symbolic forms of

[9] *Hongbao* is a red envelope in which people put money. It is given in an auspicious occasion as a token of good luck.

communication or interaction whose meanings may deepen communal bonds and strengthen and preserve ethnic Chinese identity.

Another symbolic carrier of Chinese ethic identity is ethnic institutions. They function as a powerful mechanism that contributes to the creation and maintenance of ethnic identity and boundaries. Driedeger writes that ethnic institution correlates with ethnic identity. Institutional completeness — the degree to which an ethnic community has developed its own institutional network — may serve as an indicator of ethnic cohesion (1989:160). The more institutionally complete an ethnic community is, the greater the likelihood for its retention of ethnic culture and identity. The existence of ethnic organizations can reinforce a strong sense of ethnic identity. People affiliated with organizations as such are likely to demonstrate a strong sense of ethnic identity. *Ayi* Sioe Ing shared her experience in joining a *zongqin hui*.[10]

At first, *Ayi* Sioe Ing was not interested in joining any Chinese organizations. The only organization she joined was her Chinese school alumni organization. She said she did not enroll membership. She was enrolled automatically. Because of that, she was not active at all. Occasionally, she attended the association's dinner, and that was it. She preferred to man her shop or to do the never-ending household chores. But her husband joined this association, so she sometimes followed him when he went to the association's function. After all, she also knew all of its members. However, when her children were in their teenage years, she was not so busy as she used to be. She started to get bored. She had more idle time than before. A good friend of her who knew her situation invited her to join a weekly singing session held by this association. She accepted the invitation. She said,

[10] Zongqin hui (宗亲会) is a clan-based Chinese association, an association founded by those who share the same surname. There are a number of Chinese clan associations in Surabaya. These associations were established based people who shared the same surname. Some of them are Yayasan Lima Bakti, founded by Lin (Liem) clan, Yayasan Margo Utomo, founded by Wu (Go) clan, and Perkumpulan Marga Huang, founded by Huang (Oei or Wong) clan.

> Basically I like singing. So joining the singing session was good way to kill time. *Shushu*[11] also likes singing. It is great that two of us have the same hobby. Occasionally we hired an instructor to teach us how to sing well. This improved our skills. At that time, karaoke was still non-existent. So, we had to rely on our singing technique. In 1990s, karaoke started to gain popularity. Of course we switched to Karaoke, then. … Not only that, you see, I did not finish my Chinese high school. I speak Chinese, though. But my Chinese is not good, and it is getting rusty years by years. Now I can say that my Chinese is also getting better. All songs we sing in the karaoke are Chinese. And I don't want to be able to sing them only. I also want to know the meaning. In this way, I force myself to learn Chinese again.

In *Ayi* Sioe Ing's opinion, joining karaoke held by the association was great. She could enjoy her hobby, as well as improve her Chinese. She also said that the association offered cultural classes such as Chinese traditional musical instrument, Chinese calligraphy, Chinese dragon and lion dances, and Chinese language. However, she only joined the karaoke session. Occasionally, the association also organized tours to China, which she did not give them a miss, because, in her opinion, they were different from other package tours. Besides visiting the usual places of interest, the package tours organized by the association also visited the ancestral village of members of the tour group. The tours sometimes organized a meeting with local *Qiaoban* and *Qiaolian* in China.[12] She concluded,

> Joining the association's activities is great. They are fun and good ways of killing time. Besides that, we can also learn more about things Chinese, like Chinese traditions, Chinese festivals, and Chinese cultures. The association also celebrates Chinese festivals such as Chinese New Year. In a special event such as *Qingming Jie*, it also holds ceremonies for honoring our ancestors. In so doing, we are taught not to forget them.

Another person whom I spoke to also had the same opinion as *Ayi* Sioe Ing. Lin *Laoshi*, a senior teacher in Yonghua Chinese Language School, said he was member of several Chinese

[11] *Shushu* is a Chinese term for uncle. Since I called her *Ayi* (Auntie) and her husband *Shushu*, she uses these term for addressing herself and her husband.

[12] *Qiaoban* (侨办) is Office of Overseas Chinese Affairs, China's government body that is in charge of overseas Chinese. *Qiaolian* (侨联) is Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese, a supposedly non-government organization, however, it works under the leadership of the state.

organizations, Yonghua Alumni Association, a *zongqin hui*, and a *tongxiang hui*.[13] Different from *Ayi* Sioe Ing, right from the beginning Lin *Laoshi* was an active member of the Chinese organizations he joined. Perhaps this was because of his job when he was young, a teacher in a Chinese school before Chinese education and cultural celebrations were banned in later 1960s. Lin *Laoshi* described that the situation was very hard for him and other teachers who lost their job and often stigmatized because of their ethnic background. It was the Chinese organizations who helped him build networks so that he could get a job after a few years of unemployment. Later on, Chinese organizations served as an avenue for the Chinese to maintain and preserve Chinese tradition and culture, such as teaching Chinese language to those who were interested in learning it, albeit clandestinely. Chinese traditions were also celebrated in a low-profile way. Despite the restrictions they faced, the activities of Chinese organizations were focused on themes that, as Lin *Laoshi* said, "*dui Zhongguo wenhua you guanxi*."[14] However, Lin *Laoshi* said, "All activities are open now. This is good, as young Chinese-Indonesians can learn their ethnic tradition and culture."

Ayi Sioe Ing and Lin *Laoshi* did not explicitly mention that the joining the association as such could strengthen Chinese ethnic identity. However, what they said — such as ancestral village, Chinese traditions, *dui Zhongguo wenhua you guanxi*, and learning ethnic tradition and culture — implied that Chinese organizations gave them a sense of Chinese identity. Through their programs, Chinese organizations provided social activities and the context for the expression and sharing of ideas among the Chinese, and met the desire of their members for Chinese traditions and cultural practices, all of which made them more aware of their ethnic identity. Appadurai's concept of ersatz nostalgia can explain how the efforts that they made for

[13] Tongxiang hui (同乡会) is a place-based Chinese association, that is, an organization founded by the Chinese who came from the same ancestral village.
[14] A Chinese phrase, 对中国文化有关系, that means "having a connection with Chinese culture."

joining the activities the association offered — namely, learning things Chinese — can reflect their intention of strengthening their Chinese identity, as Roosens suggests that ethnicity is a matter of emotional attachment to their ethnic consciousness (1989:12). By providing support, as in the case of Lin *Laoshi*, and greater interaction among their members, Chinese organizations stimulate and strengthen their members' sense of ethnic distinction. In this way, ethnic institutions have a role in reinforcing one's ethnic identity. Chinese institutions provide the Chinese a space where they reconnect with Chinese culture and have deliberate interaction with other Chinese. During the New Order era where the state tried to erase Chinese identity, this space served as a site for the maintenance of Chinese identity. Now, when the Chinese have the opportunity to regain their ethnicity, it serves as a construction site for Chinese identity of the Chinese who were born and grew up in the New Order era, whom the older generation of thought of losing their Chineseness.

Because of their position as a "foreign" ethnic minority, many Chinese-Indonesians, if not all, often view themselves as part of a diaspora. Anthias defines diaspora as "connection between groups across different nation states whose commonality derives from an original but maybe removed homeland; a new identity becomes constructed on a world scale which crosses national borders and boundaries. … it may also denote a social condition, entailing a particular form of 'consciousness'" (1998: 559-560). As a diasporic community, they often identify themselves with global Chinese identity. Their identification as a part of Chinese diaspora, which also obviously shows the Chinese in Indonesia as an ethnic community, can be seen in the last two forms of imagining, namely, Chinese pop culture and interest in Chinese diaspora.

Chinese pop culture — songs, films, serials on televisions, for example — could help Chinese diasporic community maintain their cultural identification. Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz

(1992) write that electronic media, particularly television, has the power to create instant histories that becomes a part of the audience's collective memory, tradition and identity. In her study on Indian community in England, Marie Gillespie (1995) shows that Indian films shape and influence the collective memories of the "mythic homeland" in the Indian community. Gillepsie's idea resonates with Ma's study on the audience of television program in Hong Kong (1999). Ma finds that pop culture constructs their collective memories and imagination of membership in the Chinese nation-state. Lanny's story attests to this.

Lanny is a second generation Chinese Indonesian. She does not speak Chinese, but her parents do. She was born in 1970, so she did not get Chinese education. Since she was a child she knew that she was Chinese. That was because her parents spoke the language. From my encounter with her, I got a sense that she had an ambivalent attitude towards her contested homeland. She said that since she was born in Indonesia, Indonesia was absolutely her homeland. However, due to racial discriminatory treatment that she often received, she sometimes questioned whether Indonesia was really her homeland. She had never been to China, so she did not know how life there would be. Nevertheless, she felt proud of being Chinese.

> I often feel proud of Chinese culture. It has a very long history. Not many civilizations have history like Chinese. Look at many Chinese kungfu movies that depict the grandeur of Chinese cultures. … I really like watching Celestial Movie Channel.[15] It airs classical kungfu movies and others that tell story of various dynasties that once ruled China. … I like the beautiful scenery [in the movie]. It looks like traditional Chinese paintings.

For Lanny, Chinese kungfu movies evoked a sense of pride of being Chinese. The pride of being Chinese and fueled by the racial problems she often encountered in her life often led her to think that China was her homeland, a mythic homeland because she has never been there, but she claimed it as a part of her identity, especially, since her paternal grandparents who were born in

[15] Celestial Movie Channel or *Tianying Pindao* (天映频道) is a Hong Kong-based pay-tv channel offered by several cable TV stations in Indonesia. This channel specializes in broadcasting Chinese movies, especially kung fu genre.

China often told stories about their *jiaxiang*.[16] The story of her grandparents' *jiaxiang* and the image of a majestic China depicted in kungfu movies seemed to strengthen her claim that China was a part of her identity.

Besides identifying with Chinese nation state, through consuming Chinese pop culture, Chinese-Indonesians also identify themselves with other Chinese diasporic community in the world, who also consume the same pop culture. Chua Beng Huat writes, "Within this dense traffic of cultural production, circulation and consumption is potential for the emergence of an imaginable 'pan-Chinese community,' which can manifest itself through different channels, modes and media of communication" (2006:87-88). A good example of the consumption of Chinese pop culture that creates a "pan-Chinese community" is Chinese pop songs.

Ayi Sioe Ing's story about Chinese pop songs sung by her fellow Chinese-Indonesians during karaoke sessions could explain how karaoke serves as an expression of identity. Through Chinese pop songs they choose in karaoke session, they express their Chinese ethnic identity. *Ayi* Giok Lan, a 65-year-old Chinese woman who also likes Karaoke, said, "There are various songs that we can choose, but my friends and I prefer Chinese songs, especially oldies songs." Because of their fond memories of Chinese songs, those songs serve as a cultural connection to their ethnicity. It is the cultural connection to Chinese ethnicity that people like *Ayi* Sioe Ing, her husband, and Giok Lan follow news about Chinese pop songs and their singers from China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan — the centers of Chinese pop culture. In other words, through the consumption of Chinese pop culture, Chinese-Indonesians like them may reinvent and renegotiate their Chinese identity

The interest of the Chinese Indonesian community in Chinese diaspora could strengthen their ethnic identity. Driedeger's study shows that knowledge of and interests in one's history are

[16] *Jiaxiang* (家乡) means ancestral hometown/village.

important means by which ethnic identity is symbolically reinforced (1989:161). This can be seen in my conversation with some people I met during my fieldwork.

On Friday afternoon, July 29, 2011, I went to ITC shopping mall in North Surabaya to say goodbye to some of my informants because I was going to the United States on August 10. ITC shopping mall is located in the Chinatown of Surabaya. Every Friday afternoon, there are a number of Chinese playing *Xiangqi*[17] in the food court there. When I arrived there, I saw *Bapak* Wong and Lin *Laoshi* having a conversation with their friends. So I joined them. *Bapak* Wong introduced me to some people whom I had not met before. Then, one gentleman, *Pak* Acai, asked me about a Chinese American named Luo Jiahui.[18] I said that I had not heard this name before. Then he told all of us about Luo Jiahui from a Chinese newspaper. He continued that we should take a leaf out of Luo Jiahui's book. Luo Jiahui was a new U.S. ambassador to Beijing. In his opinion, it was really an achievement for Luo Jiahui to be a governor of a state, and then an ambassador to China, his ancestral country. *Pak* Acai continued that it was difficult to imagine an ethnic Chinese to be a governor in Indonesia or an Indonesian ambassador to foreign countries.[19] Soon the topic of conversation moved to outstanding Chinese in diaspora whose success stories were often heard. I was surprised to know that most of them knew a number of Chinese politicians from Southeast Asia, whom people might not think they were Chinese. Apparently, they often read news about Chinese community in other parts of the world. Gans writes that current events in their fellow diasporic community assume symbolic significance for many ethnic group members and become the focus of their ethnic orientation and identity (1979: 206). Thus, consuming news about what is happening in other ethnic Chinese communities, a

[17] *Xiangqi* (象棋) is Chinese chess.
[18] Luo Jiahui is the Chinese name of Gary Locke.
[19] So far, there are no Chinese who are elected as governors. However, there are two Chinese vice governors. One is in West Kalimantan, who was elected on November 28, 2007, and then re-elected for his second term on November 8, 2012, and the other one is the vice governor of Jakarta who was elected on September 28, 2012.

Chinese Indonesian community may share images and feelings with other Chinese communities, which could lead them to be a part of the imagined Chinese diasporic community.

The forms of imagining above — namely, ethnic traditions and rituals, ethnic language, ethnic institution, ethnic pop culture, and the interest in fellow diasporic community — show Chinese Indonesian community as an imagined community with its ethnicity being symbolically perceived and expressed. They contribute to the creation of such an imagining through the salient symbols constituting the Chinese ethnic identity. These symbols are used by Chinese ethnic media in their effort to reconstruct the identity and ethnicity of Chinese Indonesian, which I explain in the next section.

Vehicles of Imagining

My fieldwork finds that Chinese newspapers use the above forms of imagining as a means of developing and fostering ethnic belonging, and stimulating Chinese cultural consciousness and ethnic identity of Chinese-Indonesians, especially the younger generations, whose ethnicity and ethnic identity have been reduced and lost during the New Order period. This can be seen from their content because it provides an index to their ethnic culture, values, norms, and tradition. The content, which exposes ethnic symbols that become forms of imagining the ethnicity and ethnic identity of the Chinese, reinforces the feeling of sense of belonging of the imagined Chinese community. The exposure of those symbols can be seen in news reports, articles, editorials, opinions and some other features. Thus, Chinese newspapers are geared toward promoting Chinese culture and accentuating Chinese identity.

As mentioned earlier, one of the ethnic symbols is ethnic organization. The news report in the Chinese media usually covers numerous activities of Chinese organizations, especially in

their effort to counter the negative stereotyped portrayal and the negative stigmas of the Chinese-Indonesians, whom the natives often accused of not having the loyalty to Indonesia; as being anti-social, as well as being economic animals (Turner and Allen, 2007; Coppel, 1983). *Qiandao Ribao*'s *Huashe Dongtai* (The Dynamics of Chinese Community) and *Guoji Ribao*'s *Huashe Xinwen* (Chinese Community News) are full of news as such.

An example of the activities that *Huashe Dongtai* and *Huashe Xinwen* cover is charity. The news report also exposes the nationalistic face of the Chinese, through, for example, the use of Indonesian nationalistic attributes and symbols in the activities Chinese organizations hold. Chinese organizations' cooperation with various elements of the society, both the Chinese and the non-Chinese so that they can participate in building Indonesian society is also often covered in the news report of the Chinese media.

Since early August 2010, about two weeks before August 17, 2010, the Indonesian National Day, *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao* reported numerous activities of a number of Chinese organizations in Surabaya in celebrating the 65th anniversary of Indonesian independence. However, an event that received much coverage was charitable activities. In reporting charities held by Chinese organizations, the coverage exposed the Indonesian nationalistic attributes and symbols used in the activities. When reporting some Chinese organizations that worked together for charities on August 8, both *Guoji Ribao* and *Qiandao Ribao* highlighted that the Chinese who were involved in the charities wore a pin that had an image of Garuda, the Indonesian national emblem. News on other charitable activities held in conjunction with Indonesian independence also followed similar fashion. Members of the Chinese organizations involved in the activities were reported to wear accessories such as red and white ribbon (the color of Indonesian flag) and cap embroidered with Indonesian flag,

which were associated with Indonesian nationalism. Other local mainstream newspapers, such as *Jawa Pos*, *Radar Surabaya*, and *Surya*, also reported these charities. However, they did not mention that the Chinese wore accessories that had nationalistic symbols. For these newspapers and for Indonesian society in general, there was nothing special in those accessories because the festivities of Indonesian independence were in the air since the first day of August. Buildings facing main streets were decorated with small Indonesian flags and national emblem. Red and white drapes, the color of Indonesian flag, billowed gracefully from the top of the building. Thus, wearing a Garuda pin, red and white ribbon, and other accessories that were associated with Indonesian nationalism were very common during that period and did not attract much attention. But that was not the case for Chinese newspaper, which wanted to highlight the nationalistic face of Chinese-Indonesian community.

Another event of the Chinese organizations that receives coverage is the efforts in helping the Chinese and voicing the aspiration of the Chinese community that discriminatory laws which still exist should be abolished. These events are not only covered in the news report but featured in articles as well. An example of discrimination that is often reported is the requirement to have *Surat Bukti Kewarganegaraan Republik Indonesia*, that is, Indonesian citizenship certificate, known as SBKRI. Until now, there are a number of Chinese who are undocumented and hence stateless, despite being born and bred in Indonesia. When the Minister of Law came to Surabaya on April 9, 2008, to give SBKRI to about 150 stateless Chinese, both mainstream and Chinese newspaper reported this event. *Qiandao Ribao* (April 10, 2008) also reported the inconvenience and the problems of not having SBKRI, such as feeling like in a house arrest and unable to go far from home for fear of being arrested because of the inability to produce identification card, being unable to go to school and to apply for a job. As additional

reports, the newspaper also wrote the Chinese who had proof that they were Indonesian citizens, such as national ID cards, family cards, and birth certificate, were still required to produce SBKRI when they dealt with bureaucracy.[20] Yet the Chinese were asked to produce this document. This obviously discriminated against the Chinese because other ethnic groups were not required to do so. In so doing, the Chinese media remind the Chinese that there are still problems they face as an ethnic group. This entails a reminder of their ethnicity. Yet at the same time, they also remind them of their position as one of the ethnic group in the country, together with the responsibility that comes with that position.

Besides the activities of various Chinese organizations, the celebration of Chinese traditions also receives a wide coverage. While Chinese New Year, as the biggest celebration which was declared as a national holiday by President Megawati in 2001, is also covered in any newspaper, the coverage in Chinese ethnic media is more intense and often includes the history behind the tradition and the rituals of the celebration. They also report how ethnic Chinese in other parts of the world celebrate it. However, they also show that no matter how universal the Chinese New Year celebration is, the one in Indonesia also has local flavor. For example, the local influence can be seen in the food the Chinese in Indonesia prepare for this celebration, such as *Lontong Capgomeh*[21] (*Qiandao Ribao*, February 17, 2010). Through this kind of coverage, Chinese ethnic media may build an image that the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia are also a part of the world-wide Chinese community, yet at the same time, they are also rooted in Indonesia. However, the emphasis on being a part of Chinese community world-wide implies that

[20] Presidential Decree No. 56, issued in 1996, states that national identification card, family card, and birth certificate can be use as a proof of Indonesian citizenship. President Habibie's Executive Order No. 4/1999 also reiterates that SBKRI is not needed for those who have the documents stipulated in the Presidential Decree No. 56/1996.

[21] *Lontong Capgomeh* is a traditional Indonesian dish for celebrating Chinese New Year, usually found in Central and East Java. *Lontong* means rice cakes. They are served with various side dishes such as *Lodeh Rebung*, soup with bamboo shoots, *Opor Ayam*, chicken with coconut gravy, *Telur Sambal Petis*, egg cooked with shrimp paste, and soybean powder.

Chineseness and Chinese identity are much more important. Other Chinese rituals and traditions — such as Q*ingming jie*, *Duanwu jie*, *Zhongqiu jie*, which national newspapers may not report, are also exposed in the Chinese newspapers. This shows the importance they put on Chinese traditions and rituals as parts of Chineseness.

Chinese newspapers also pay much attention to Chinese culture. One of their missions is the preservation of Chinese culture. Hoon writes that Chinese newspapers consider themselves as "one of the gatekeepers of Chinese culture" (2008:116). Pandiangan's observation shows that the news coverage of some Chinese newspapers, both in Chinese and in Indonesian, tends toward cultural issues (2003:416). Chinese newspapers devote more space for cultural matters. Features about Chinese culture, such as Chinese cultural commentaries, Chinese tradition, and Chinese classical stories are abundant in *Fukan* sections of *Guoji Ribao* and *Qiandao Ribao*. Through news report and coverage that are full of cultural nuances, Chinese newspapers want to develop Chinese consciousness.

The content of Chinese newspapers also exposes Chinese language. For many older generations of Chinese-Indonesians, Chinese language is an important part of Chinese identity. Chinese language is quintessence of Chineseness. The promotion of Chinese language is reflected in the space the Chinese newspapers allocate for Chinese language teaching and learning such as *Guoji Ribao*'s *Shi Sheng Yuandi*. *Qiandao Ribao*, for example, provides a space in its *Fukan* section in which students studying Chinese can publish their writings.

The rise of China in global politics also contributes to the promotion of things Chinese, which the Chinese media say is helping their goal. An editor of *Qiandao Ribao* says,

> Nowadays Chinese is an important language in the world, thanks to the growth of Chinese economy grows well. China now is the third or second largest economy in the world. So learning Chinese can give us a competitive advantage. … Many young Chinese-Indonesians learn Chinese because they want to have a better economic prospect.

> That is fine. They can search for their roots later on, after they are exposed to Chinese culture.

Wang *Xiansheng*, a journalist of Guoji Ribao, adds,

> Obviously, it is not easy to ask young Chinese-Indonesians to learn their neglected cultural heritage and to search for their roots. There are no tangible benefits in them. So let them learn Chinese language first. I believe they know the benefits of mastering it. When they learn Chinese language, they also learn Chinese culture indirectly. I remember that when I was still a student in a Chinese school, the textbooks used in Chinese language subject were full of Chinese culture, traditions and values.

The two statements above imply the salience of ethnic language and culture as parts of ethnicity. Chinese language and culture can develop the Chineseness of young Chinese-Indonesians.

The rise of China in world politics and the role of the global Chinese diaspora also reinforce the interest of Chinese-Indonesians in China and identify themselves as a part of Chinese diasporic community. Their interest in their ancestral country and their identification as a Chinese diasporic community are reflected in the coverage of Chinese diaspora. This coverage provides not only information on their fellow diasporic community, but common points of reference as well. Through this information, the "deterritorialized subjects," like Chinese Indonesian community for example, may sustain their "cultural continuity" (Thompson, 1995), which could strengthen their ethnic identity. The Chinese media give them points of cultural identification, in which they can imagine their coherent and continuous identity. *Qiandao Ribao* has *Tianxia Huaren* in which successful diasporic persons whom Chinese newspapers believe as their fellow Chinese diasporic community are featured with the hope that Chinese-Indonesians are inspired by their success stories. *Guoji Ribao* features successful Chinese in diaspora in its *Huashe Xinwen*. This feature "assumes a (trans)nationalistic pride of belonging to the Chinese 'race,' even though they are in different locations" (Hoon, 2008:114).

This identification can also be seen in the pop culture news. All Chinese-language and most of Indonesian-language Chinese media cover Chinese pop culture, that is, China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Indonesian pop culture receives a little attention. Perhaps this is due to the huge popularity of Asian pop culture. However, Chinese pop culture, as seen in the Chinese media, can be thought as the desire of the Chinese community (at least those behind the Chinese media) to identify themselves with what they believe as their ethnic pop culture, as proven by Sinclair (et al.) that entertainment programs on television can generate a sense of belonging and identity (2000:35). The consumption of Chinese pop culture may be regarded as the reflection of "the epistephilic desire" of Chinese-Indonesians for entertainment from "home" (Naficy, 1993:107).

In the mind of the people behind the Chinese media, the identification of Chinese-Indonesians with other Chinese communities in other parts of the world, as seen through the Chinese media's coverage on news and events in China and in Chinese diasporic communities, as well as Chinese entertainment news can foster their Chineseness and Chinese identity. This kind of coverage is thought to have the ability to make Chinese-Indonesians feel that they share the same cultural belief and traditions, and that they become a part of the imagined diasporic Chinese community. It is this kind of coverage that conveys an "image of communion" with Chinese diaspora. The "image of communion" with Chinese diaspora is central to the discourse of Chinese newspapers, in which Chinese-Indonesians are imagined as a part of the Chinese community world wide. As a part of the Chinese community in the world, Chinese-Indonesians are supposed to share cultural characteristics that define their ethnicity. Yet, due to the political situation during the New Order period, they were cut off from their ethnic and cultural heritage.

As a result, they have lost their Chineseness. In the section below, I elaborate the rationales of imagining Chineseness as a way of making them more Chinese.

Foundation of Imagining

On a Friday afternoon in early June 2010, I visited Lin *Laoshi*. When I arrived at his house, he was busy making news clippings. He asked me to wait for a moment. After cleaning his desk from pieces of papers cut for the clippings, he told me that the news clippings he focused on were the ones which were related to a Chinese association he was a member of. He wanted the news about the association's cultural and charitable activities. He told me that the Chinese organization he joined, a *tongxiang hui*, was going to celebrate its anniversary. He planned to make a yearbook in which news articles about the organization were included. He said that the news clipping about the organization could inform its members about its activities. He hoped that there would be more members getting involved in the organization's activities. He continued,

> Only a handful of members were active and support the associations' activities. Of course occasionally, when we are holding charities, more members are getting involved. Nowadays, the association has more activities. You know, Chinese New Year is a public holiday now, and we can celebrate Chinese tradition and culture openly. All these mean more activities for us. But, the growth of our activities is not in tandem with the members' involvement. They are still enthusiastic in attending the celebrations and the parties, but joining the organizing committee is a different story, whereas, we need more resources for those activities.

Besides that, Lin *Laoshi* also hoped that more young people joined his association:

> Look at our members, most of them are old people. This is my concern. When we, the old people die, how is our *tongxiang hui* going to survive? Some members have encouraged their children to join this association. So far, they are unsuccessful. Well, when there are parties or celebrations, a number of young people are coming. But they just want to soak in the fun. They are not interested in being active members. Most young Chinese don't really care about our Chinese tradition and culture, which our association wants to preserve. Many of them do not have a strong feeling of being Chinese, like most of us do.

> Once, the chairperson called for a meeting to discuss efforts to attract young people to join. A number of ideas were suggested. Some were implemented, such as, creating Chinese cultural immersion program, organizing a seminar or workshop on improving employability skills for young people, and conducting charitable activities that involve them, but so far, they were still unsuccessful in increasing membership among young people. … Anyway, I hope that featuring our association's activities in the yearbook could trigger their interest in knowing the association further. Who knows their perception of the activities of *tongxiang hui*, which is always associated as the activities for old people, could change, and young people are interested in joining our association.

The lack of interest among young generations of Chinese in joining Lin *Laoshi*'s *tongxian hui* was, I believe, because most of them, if not all, were born in Indonesia and did not maintain regular contact with their ancestral villages or homeland in China. Thus, their ties with China were loosening over time. They might have relatives in China, such uncles and aunts, but their ties with them were weaker than their parents. Even they might not be able to communicate with their cousins in China.[22] Obviously, this led to diminishing ties or even a nonexistent connection.

The predicament of Lin *Laoshi*'s Chinese organization in its effort to attract young generations of Chinese was not unique. Many Chinese organizations, both *tongxiang hui* and *zongqin hui*, faced similar problems in attracting young Chinese to join them. When asked whether he also actively joined any Chinese association, Jonathan, whose father served as a member of the Board of Trustees of a Chinese temple and was an active member of several Chinese associations, said,

> I was a member of my father's Chinese organization. Well, I guess I was automatically enrolled as a member because of my father. But I never attended its functions, except when it celebrated Chinese New Years and its anniversary. The reason is, you know, good food. … I am never involved in other activities. Occasionally, I join its charitable activities. But it was because I serve as a driver. For me, the association is the place where old people get together to talk about anything, mostly about nostalgia.

[22] This happens especially to Chinese-Indonesians who do not speak Chinese. One of my interlocutors, a 34-year-old woman told me that her uncle and aunt returned to China in 1960s. She could communicate with them because they spoke Indonesian. However, she could not talk to her cousins because she did not speak Chinese and her cousin could not speak Indonesian or English. In this situation it was difficult to maintain ties with her cousins.

Other young people whom I asked also shared Jonathan's idea. Jocelyn, who speaks Chinese fluently, said that she was not interested in joining Chinese associations as such because they were not the association where she belonged. In her opinion, they were "old-fashioned." In other words, for younger generations of Chinese, these organizations did not hold much emotional or practical appeal. They were full of sentiments and nostalgia to which young people could emotionally connect. However, Lin *Laoshi* might overlook this fact. In his opinion, this was because young Chinese did not have a sense of belonging to Chinese culture, as seen in his statement, "most young Chinese don't really care about Chinese tradition and culture," and "they don't have a strong feeling of being Chinese." He added, "We the old Chinese feel that *Huashe* is like our spiritual home."[23]

Lin *Laoshi*'s statement underscores the important role Chinese organizations played in the lives of the Chinese community of the Chinese. The metaphor he uses, "spirit," described the relation of members to their organization. This metaphor suggests that Chinese organization give meaning to its members. Since Chinese newspaper, Chinese education, and Chinese culture were prohibited during the New Order era, Chinese organization still provided the Chinese a world where they could reconnect with other Chinese in a Chinese environment and where Chinese culture and traditions were practiced, albeit clandestinely. Chinese organization, in this way, provided a space in which Chineseness were maintained. Thus, for the generation of Chinese like Lin *Laoshi*, Chinese organization gave life to their Chinese ethnic consciousness.

Lin *Laoshi*'s opinion that young Chinese did not care about Chinese traditions and culture also mirrored what his contemporaries who received Chinese education, believed, namely, Chinese ethnic consciousness among young people had weakened over the years. Some even went further, saying that this also happened to older generation of Chinese, especially those who

[23] *Huashe* is the abbreviation of *Huaqiao shetuan* (华侨社团), which means overseas Chinese organization.

were not Chinese-educated. It became the object of their concerns. A chief editor of a Chinese media said, "Chinese culture has a fine history of 5,000 years. Assimilated Chinese have lost this noble culture. They are notably [unChinese] in their personality, including their morals" (quoted in Hoon, 2008:117). This current situation was different from the one before Chinese school was banned in 1960s. A former teacher of a Chinese school said,

> In the past, Chinese language schools were established to prevent our children from becoming barbarians, hoping that our children can preserve and continue Chinese culture and language. (quoted in Sai, 2006:68)

During that period, Chinese education in Indonesia was aimed to cultivate Chinese cultural and ethnic consciousness. But when Chinese language and culture were banned, the Chinese were not allowed to celebrate their ethnic heritage. As a result, the Chinese who grew up during the New Order era did not know much about their cultural heritage and the Chinese-educate Chinese thought that these young generations had lost their Chineseness.

When the ban on Chinese language and culture in Indonesia was lifted in 2000, Chinese newspapers started to appear, with the mission of reviving Chinese culture in Indonesia like in the old days and introducing it to Indonesian public in general and young Chinese in particular. Through exposure to Chinese culture, they hope that their readers, especially the young ones, could understand their ancestral roots and cultural heritage and reaffirm their ethnic identity because, to quote Ong, "the overall framing of messages [in *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao*] suggests that the identity at stake is [Chinese Indonesian] subjects" who have been detached from their ethnic and cultural heritage (1999:169). Chinese newspapers thus try to reconstruct Chinese ethnicity, which the Chinese-educated Chinese thought of having lost due to the New Order's oppressive policy on Chinese culture.

In their effort to reconstruct Chinese ethnicity — namely, a mental construct of an imagined Chinese community — *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao* use symbols and representations such as Chinese language, institution, culture, tradition, rituals and the interest in co-ethnic diaspora in their news report and coverage. Both newspapers opine that those symbols and representations can forge ethnic identity, as what the people behind these newspapers believe.

Those behind the Chinese newspapers, many of whom are older generations of Chinese, believe that there are two basic determinants of ethnic identity. The first is one's ancestry, and this is the reason why they strongly believe that they are Chinese. However, it does not mean that they are not Indonesians. They claim that they are Indonesians or Indonesian citizens with Chinese ancestry. They emphasize "Chinese ancestry" when I ask them to describe themselves. A senior journalist of *Guoji Ribao*, Wang *Xiansheng*, says,

> Before, we were *Zhongguo ren*. Now we are *Yinni ren* since we are Indonesian citizens. However, we still have Chinese blood. We are *Huayi*. Look at the Javanese here in Surabaya, if you ask them their ethnicity, I am sure they will answer that they are Javanese. So, no matter what, we are still *Hua ren*. If you want to be exact, we are *Yinni Hua ren*.[24]

For Wang Xiansheng and other like-minded people, Chinese ancestry is a very important marker of their ethnic identity. That is why, despite their claim of being Indonesian, they still use the term Chinese as a part of their ethnic identification. Thus, Chinese serve as an important attribute in their identity. My conversation with Wang Xiansheng below attests to this.[25]

> Setefanus: Wang *Xiansheng*, what is your answer when somebody asks about your ethnicity?

[24] *Zhongguo ren* (中国人) is often translated as Chinese. However, in Chinese language, this refers to the people of China, as *Zhongguo* means China, and *ren* means person/people. *Yinni ren* (印尼人) is Indonesian. *Yinni* means Indonesia. *Huayi* (华裔) means people of Chinese ancestry. It is often used interchangeably with *Huaren* (华人), the people of Chinese, regardless of their citizenship. Thus, *Yinni Huaren* (印尼华人) means Chinese Indonesians.
[25] Like in in all interviews I did, Wang *Xiansheng* and I used non-standard Indonesian, a variant of Indonesian language, which is usually associated with the Chinese, peppered with Mandarin Chinese for certain terms.

> Wang: It depends on where I am. When I am in Indonesia, I would say that I am Chinese. I don't think I need to explain that I am Indonesian. I believe it is understood that I am Indonesian. So I do not use the word "Indonesian." However, when I am overseas, obviously, I identify myself as Indonesian. My passport is an Indonesian passport. I should be proud of my nationality, that is, Indonesian nationality. But, you see, I am also of Chinese descendant. Since I am proud of my Indonesian nationality, I should not be ashamed of admitting my Chinese ancestry. I would say that I am Chinese-Indonesian.[26]
>
> Setefanus: Why do you think that you need to use the word "Chinese?" I know that Indonesians consist of people from different ethnic background, but isn't it enough to say that you are Indonesian?[27]
>
> Wang: Some people might think so, that Chinese-Indonesians are *Yinni ren*.[28] But personally, my Chinese ancestry is as important as my nationality. So I feel that it is a part of my identity. That is why when I am overseas I identify myself as Chinese Indonesian.[29] In Indonesian, when people ask who you are, they usually want to know your ethnicity because they assume that you are Indonesian. So by saying that you are Indonesian, you don't answer them. As a Chinese saying goes, *zuoren yinshui yao siyuan*.[30] In Indonesian, the saying is that as human beings, when we drink water, we should not forget its spring. It means that people should not forget their origin.

The proverb *zuoren yinshui yao siyuan* seems to inspire people like Wang Xiansheng to remember their ancestral origin. This makes Chinese an important part of their ethnic identity, as seen in their ethnic identification as Chinese-Indonesians.

The idea of remembering Chinese ancestral origin leads to the second determinant of ethnic Chinese identity, that is, "acting Chinese." Acting Chinese is important because it is "what makes people Chinese" (Ebrey, 1995:34). This means that in order to be Chinese, one should behave according to Chinese cultural models and codes — "basic beliefs and values about what constitutes person, about what person is (and should be), what person can do (and should do),

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[26] Wang *Xiansheng* used Mandarin Chinese, *huaren* (华人), and Indonesian, *orang Tionghoa*, when he mentioned "Chinese" as his ethnic identification. He did not use *zhongguo ren* (中国人).
[27] I used Chinese terms, *huaren* (华人), for Chinese, and *yinni ren* (印尼人), for Indonesian.
[28] Here he used the term "orang Tionghoa di sini," which means "the Chinese here (in Indonesia)." However, I translated it as "Chinese Indonesian" because this phrase referred to Chinese Indonesian.
[29] Wang *Xiansheng* used both Chinese and Indonesian terms for "Chinese Indonesian," namely, *Yinni Huaren* (印尼华人) and *Tionghoa Indonesia*. The original sentence (in Indonesian) is "Itulah alasannya, mengapa kalau di luar negeri, saya bilang bahwa saya ini orang Tionghoa Indonesia, saya ini Yinni Huaren."
[30] In Chinese characters, the proverb that he mentioned was 做人饮水要思源.

and (and should) feel" (Carbaugh, 1996:28). For older generation of Chinese, Chinese cultural models and codes were socialized by Chinese institutions, especially Chinese education and Chinese press, which existed when they grew up, into their habitus through which they maintain their Chineseness. However, younger generations of Chinese did not have the opportunity where Chinese cultural models and codes were socialized into dispositions through which they could reproduce their Chineseness.

Because of the salience of Chineseness as a part of their ethnic identification, I argue that for the people behind the Chinese newspapers — such as Wang Xiansheng, for example — knowledge of and interest in Chinese history, traditions and cultures; and the way they are remembered and celebrated are important means by which Chinese ethnic identity was symbolically reinforced. In their opinion, the exposure and attachment to ethnic Chinese symbols have the ability to generate and sustain the feeling of ethnic identity of the Chinese, whom they think has weakened and lost. Reminiscing about China and their ancestral villages is a way of conceiving and expressing their ethnic belonging. Through news report about China, especially special reports about Guangdong and Fujian — the two provinces of China where the ancestors of most Chinese-Indonesians came from, Chinese newspapers try to foster a sense of connection to their ancestral home and cultivate a feeling of being Chinese. By reporting prominent Chinese in other parts of the world, such as those found in *Qiandao Ribao*'s *Tianxia Huaren* and *Guoji Ribao*'s *Huashe Xinwen*, they also try to create a sense of being in the same boat with other Chinese across the globe, or to quote Ang, they want to cultivate a global Chinese ethnic identity by placing Chinese-Indonesians "not as minorities within nation-states, but as members of global diasporas which span national boundaries" (2001:76).

The people behind Chinese newspapers also naturalize Chinese language, tradition and culture as important part of Chinese ethnicity. Those who do not have sufficient knowledge or practice what they think as essential parts of Chinese culture are deemed losing their Chineseness.

> Wang *Xiansheng*: We, the old people, have a wish, that is, seeing the revival of Chinese culture in Indonesia. Now the ban on Chinese culture has been lifted. Of course we are happy. But well, there is another problem. Since late 1960s, when Chinese culture was banned, the Chinese in Indonesia were not allowed to celebrate their cultural heritage. As a result, most young Chinese do not know their ancestral culture. It is really a pity that young Chinese-Indonesians have to give up Chinese cultural practices so that they are accepted as Indonesians.[31] They have to give up Chinese language. They do not do Chinese traditional rituals, such as paying respect to ancestors, which are very important in the lives of the Chinese. Yet, because of their physical feature, they cannot hide the fact that they are Chinese. Now the situation has changed, but the impact of the ban of Chinese culture can still be seen until now. Many young Chinese forget their culture. They forget their root. They forget that they have Chinese blood. We, the generation who used to get Chinese education, feel that we can give our contribution in reviving Chinese culture in Indonesia, and introducing it to young Chinese. One way of doing so is through publishing Chinese newspaper, in which Chinese culture is promoted.
>
> Guo *Laoshi* (an editor of *Qiandao Ribao*): Our goals in publishing *Qiandao Ribao* are first of all, being the mouthpiece of Chinese community. At first, when *Qiandao Ribao* was published in 2000, the Chinese still faced a lot of discrimination. Although now, the situation is getting better, there are still problems that Chinese-Indonesians face. If we look at this situation carefully, the problems Chinese-Indonesians face are also the problems for Indonesian society. Thus, the problems of the Chinese are also the problems of Indonesian society. We want to contribute in this matter. That is why, our motto is "*qiandao anxiang renmin xingfu*," which means "thousands of islands are peaceful, people are happy."[32] Secondly, we also hope that the younger generations of Chinese, who were deprived of their rights to learn Chinese language and culture during the New Order era, can learn them. It is really pity to see Chinese who do not speak Chinese. The Chinese who do not speak Chinese can be a laughing stock. In this way, Chinese newspapers play their role as the *huoju shou* of Chinese language and culture in Indonesia.[33]
>
> Chen *Laoshi* (a senior journalist from *Guoji Ribao*): Chinese newspaper is one of the three pillars of the Chinese community. Besides reporting news and events in the Chinese community, Chinese newspapers also introduce Chinese culture. In fact, they are not only

[31] In this sentence, Wang *Xiansheng* used Indonesian words *kebiasaan, adat istiadat, dan tradisi Tionghoa*, which literally means "Chinese habits, customs and traditions." However, I translated this phrase as *Chinese cultural practices*.

[32] The Chinese characters of this motto are 千岛安祥, 人民幸福. Indonesia is also known in Indonesian language as "ribuan pulau," which means thousands of islands, or *qiandao* (千岛) in Chinese.

[33] *Huoju shou* (火炬手) means torchbearer.

> introducing Chinese culture and literature, but also trying to cultivate them. In this regards, we are different from other newspapers in Indonesia.

The naturalization of Chinese language and culture as the inseparable parts of Chinese ethnic identity inspired Chinese newspapers to position themselves as the torchbearer of Chinese culture in Indonesia. Owners, editors and senior journalists, like those from *Guoji Ribao* and *Qiandao Ribao*, believe that it is their responsibilities as the Chinese who received Chinese education to revive Chinese culture in Indonesia. The role of Chinese newspaper in this cultural aspect is as important as that in the social or political, such as voicing the problems the Chinese community often faced. *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao* not only report events taking place in Chinese community, but create beliefs about Chinese culture and celebrate it as well. They are committed to the revival of Chinese culture. In their opinion, Chinese culture is an integral part of Chinese identity, and losing Chinese culture is equal to losing Chineseness. Through the coverage and information on Chinese culture, they try to resinicize the younger generations of Chinese who show a weakening interest in Chinese traditional institutions and cultural practices, and whom they thought of losing their Chineseness. Thus, by producing symbolic forms of Chinese ethnicity in their content, *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao* hope to reconstruct the Chinese identity of Chinese-Indonesians who, according to Liang Yingming, have lost contact with their ancestral culture for more than 50 years (*Qiandao Ribao*, October 9, 2010).

The coverage and exposure of the symbolic forms of Chinese ethnicity act as the vehicle for resinicizing the Chinese, especially the younger generations whom the people behind the publication of *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao* thought of losing their Chineseness. Using these symbolic forms, which are salient to Chinese identity, in their publication, Chinese newspapers become the path for the circulation of discourse of the reconstruction of Chineseness. This discourse is central to their mission so that they are willing to bear financial loss.

When *Qiandao Ribao* celebrated its 10th anniversary, which fell on October 10, 2010, Sugondo Margonoto, a successful businessman who is also one of the Chinese businessmen who support to the publication of this newspaper, said,

> It has been ten years since *Qiandao Ribao* was published. The founding fathers pledge to continue publishing this newspaper although it suffers financial loss all these years. … It is impossible for Chinese newspaper to gain profit. However, we are willing to cover the financial loss. We believe that we should keep on publishing our newspaper because it has an important mission, namely, preserving Chinese language and culture in Indonesia.

Margonoto's statement underscores what the Chinese-educated Chinese projected to be the role of Chinese media. Being the torchbearer of Chinese culture and reconstructing Chinese identity of the Chinese who "have lost" their Chinese ethnicity are the foundation of imagining Chineseness. Although the excitement as a result of the acceptance towards Chinese culture produces a shared platform for (re)constructing Chinese identity, they fail to notice that the Chinese identity of Chinese Indonesian community is not a single identity. Instead, it is a composite of identities, which may be different from one another, as in the case of Lanny, Jonathan and Jocelyn.

Conclusion

The demise of the New Order in 1998 leads to the emergence of Chinese public sphere, in which people could discuss Chinese culture openly. Chinese public sphere creates what Appadurari (1996) calls "ersatz nostalgia," that is, nostalgia for things which in fact have never existed in their lives before, or things which are not directly related to them. This kind of nostalgia gives the Chinese in Indonesia an opportunity to revive their ethnic culture which was prohibited since late 1960s. The revival of Chinese culture has paved the way for the Chinese-Indonesian community to establish its own media, whose cultural mission is preserving,

developing, fostering and stimulating their culture and identity, especially that of the young generation of Chinese who experienced cultural identity erasure. Their cultural mission is supported by the circulation of the images of their nostalgia. The Chinese community believes that Chinese media, as the case of *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao*, can function as an important way for the reconstruction of Chineseness and Chinese identity that have been lost.

In the reconstruction of Chineseness and Chinese identity and the formation of Chinese habitus, *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao* try to reinforce Chinese Indonesian community's imagining (perceptions and feelings) of ethnicity through the use of ethnic symbols salient to Chinese cultural consciousness. They believe that through emotional attachment to shared ethnic (Chinese) symbols, people (Chinese-Indonesians) may perceive their belonging to one (Chinese) community. The strategies they adopt in their use of ethnic symbols for identity reconstruction are reflected in their content. Through news reports, opinions and some other features in their publications, they create an "image of communion" (Anderson, 1991:36) in the minds of its readers, whose frequent exposures to the media are expected to strengthen and maintain that imagined community. Through the imagined community, they attempt to promote, foster and stimulate Chinese ethnicity and hope that the exposure to Chinese ethnic symbols, their Chinese readers could (re)affirm their Chinese identity. However, they overlook the fact that the imagined community created a composite of identities, and there are possibilities that sometimes identities created do not fit the imagination.

Apparently they are very committed in their cultural mission. Despite being unable to making profit, in fact they may suffer financial loss, they are still insistent on their effort in resinicizing the Chinese whom they think of losing their Chineseness. In my opinion, they are successful in bringing back Chinese culture to Indonesian public. Not only do the Chinese who

do not know their language and culture, but also the non-Chinese show their interest in learning it. However, it remains to be seen whether they are able to resinicize Chinese-Indonesians whom they think of having lost their Chineseness. In the upcoming chapter, I will discuss how Chinese-Indonesians perceive the process of imagining used by the newspaper.

Chapter 4

Crafting Chineseness in the New Political Climate

"We, the Chinese, have a great time-honored tradition," said *Ayi* Giok Tjhing when I met her on Sunday, April 3, 2010. It was *Qingming Jie*, the day when the Chinese visited the grave and burial grounds of their ancestors for giving offering, praying, and paying respect to them, a Chinese ritual of venerating ancestor. She was from the cemetery for doing what she described as a "time-honored tradition":

> Through ancestor veneration, we are taught to remember the deceased loved ones and our ancestors. It teaches us to ingrain *hao*.[1] But well, like I said before, young Chinese are reluctant to do this.

On the same occasion, when I met him two days before *Qingming Jie*, Lin *Laoshi* said,

> Remembering our deceased parents and forefathers, and giving them appropriate honor and credit for what they have done are commendable. Things like burning paper money and joss sticks, offering food and fruit are pale in comparisons to what they have done. Unfortunately, many, especially the young, do not want to do these anymore.

Honoring and paying respect to the elders gradually disappear in not only rituals, but daily life as well. *Ayi* Chun Hua said,

> Nowadays, many Chinese do not show their respect to their seniors. They do not know Chinese manners and decorum. Many children call their older brothers and sisters by their names only.[2]

Like the three people above, a number of my informants who still hold Chinese tradition believe that honoring their ancestors and deceased loved ones through ancestor veneration, paying respect to their elders and addressing them using the proper Chinese family titles are the

[1] *Hao* (Mandarin: *xiao*, 孝) is the Hokkien word for filial piety. In the Chinese context, it refers to the Confucian traditional value of honoring and paying respect to the elders and the dead, especially one's ancestors.

[2] Chinese manners and decorum dictates that children should address their brothers and sisters according to their ranks in the family, such as, First Brother, Second Sister. The Peranakan Chinese family in Java usually use a kinship term coined from Chinese (Hokkien) and Javanese words such as Kodhe (coined from Koko, Hokkien word for older brother, and gedhe, a Javanese term for big) for first/older brother.

cultural values that define their Chinese identity. Definitely, those values are found, as well as emphasized in other cultures. However, the Chinese take those values to a much higher level, as reflected in the principle of *xiao*, which becomes the bedrock of Chinese culture. The principle of *xiao* obliges the Chinese to, among other, "perform ceremonial duties of ancestral worship" (Ho, 1996:155). The ancestor veneration can ensure the preservation of family history and continuity through the rites performed and their paraphernalia, such as *paiwei*.[3]

Confucianism, the soul of Chinese culture, dictates that "to be filial is to remember where we are from" (Wang, 2011:84). Central to the value of filial piety is the knitting of self into the family:

> It is a matter of soup versus a slice of pie. In the West, we tend to regards ourselves as one part of a whole, that is, a slice that is related to the other but who maintains his/her individuality; in the East, on a deeply buried unconscious level, one is part of a vast barley or lentil soup in which the ingredients swirl around each other and in which one's identity and sense of self is inextricably established only within the context of the whole. Autonomy, as defined in the West and as a personal, culturally supported goal, is essentially inconceivable for most East Asian societies. The inevitable result is that the family assumes a crucial, life-determining significance. The individual is not an "I", rather he/she is an inextricably part of an encompassing "we" (Slote, 1998:43-44).

To be filial, people should remember their roots, their ancestral origin. It is this piety that defines their identity. However, in the mind of older generation of Chinese-Indonesians, their time-honored tradition, which makes them Chinese, has waned. They attribute this situation to the New Order policy toward the Chinese, which lead to the diminishing of the Chinese identity of Chinese-Indonesians over the years.

In Chapter III, I show that the new political climate in Indonesia encourage the older generation of Chinese who received Chinese education to revive Chinese culture, which was

[3] *Paiwei* (牌位) is a tablet inscribed with the names of deceased family members and ancestors. Pan (1994) notes that through genealogical records and ancestral tablets, which serve as the symbol of clan continuity, one can trace back their family lineage for a few centuries. Based on her research in Fujian and Guangdong, there are a number of family that that could trace their ancestors as far back as 20 or 25 generations, and many can trace back till the end of the 16th century.

forbidden during the New Order era in Indonesia. Because of their worry that Chinese-Indonesians lose their Chineseness as a result of the New Order policy, they publish Chinese newspapers with a cultural mission to reconstruct the Chineseness of Chinese-Indonesians who has lost.

My observation on Chinese media, exemplified by *Guoji Ribao* and *Qiandao Ribao*, shows that in order to accomplish their cultural mission, the publications use ethnic symbols that characterize ethnic salience. This resonates with previous research on ethnic media — among others, Wilson and Gutierez (1985), Subervi-Velez (1986), and Barlow (1988) — that expose the role of ethnic media in ethnic identity retention. Ethnic media reinforce ethnic identity of their audience by triggering emotional attachment to the ethnic symbols they use. It is this emotional attachment that develops ethnicity and ethnic identity. Thus, through the use of Chinese ethnic symbols, Chinese media hope they can raise Chinese ethnic consciousness.

Chinese media are also aware of the perceived foreignness of Chinese-Indonesians, which leads to the latter's precarious position in Indonesia. In their efforts to develop Chinese ethnic identity, Chinese media do not disregard that Chinese-Indonesians are Indonesian nationals. They "send" a message that despite their foreign ancestry, Chinese-Indonesians have "the qualification" to be a full member of the Indonesian community. This message is an effort to counter the negative stereotypical portrayal of Chinese-Indonesians. News coverage in Chinese media often reports that Chinese-Indonesians are involved in charities and other altruistic activities. It also exposes the nationalistic face of the Chinese, through, for example, the use of Indonesian nationalistic attributes and symbols in the activities they hold.

In this chapter, I demonstrate how, through the consumption of the ethnic symbols in *Guoji Ribao* and *Qiandao Ribao*, the Chinese in Surabaya cultivate Chinese ethnic consciousness

and Indonesian national identity. In so doing, they create boundary markers that distinguish them from other ethnic groups, and the boundary markers emphasizing that they are also a part of Indonesian society.

My analysis in this chapter is informed by Barth's anthropological works on ethnic identity and boundary. Despite the critique that he focuses much on the boundaries separating one ethnic group from another and overlooks the role of its cultural elements, Barth's idea on ethnic boundary can explain well the fluidity of ethnic identity:

> Categorical ethnic distinctions … entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories. (1969:9)

Through "exclusion and incorporation" and "self-ascription and ascription by others" people create and modify ethnic boundaries that distinguish them from others. Explaining this process, Nagel writes, "While an individual can choose from among a set of ethnic identities, that set is generally limited to socially and politically defined ethnic categories with varying degrees of stigma or advantage attached to them" (1994:155).

Using Barth's ethnic boundary model, I analyze the response of Chinese Indonesian readers of Chinese newspapers to the newspapers' efforts in cultivating Chinese ethnic and Indonesian national identity. I argue that through the exclusion process, Chinese-Indonesians try to reconstruct and strengthen their Chinese ethnic identity, albeit the varying degree of Chineseness. The inclusion process is used for showing their Indonesian national identity. In so doing, Chinese-Indonesians create exclusionary and inclusionary boundaries (Lacy, 2007).

Exclusionary Boundaries

Like any other newspaper, *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao* fulfill a role of giving information and entertainment to their readers. According to Hu *Laoshi* and others, Chinese newspapers give them information in such a way that it fits the social and cultural milieu they are comfortable with. Their statement underscores that what they are looking for in reading Chinese newspaper is not only information about what is happening in the world, but something that they can connect with as well. This is exactly what Chinese newspapers in Indonesia provide. Like what Guo *Laoshi* describes, as the *huoju shou* or the torchbearer Chinese culture, Chinese newspapers believe that they have a mission to revive Chinese culture in Indonesia and to resinicize Chinese-Indonesians who have lost their Chineseness. In their opinion, Chinese culture is an integral part of Chinese identity, and losing Chinese culture is equal to losing Chinese identity. That is why they provide their readers ethnic symbols salient to Chinese identity. Using these symbols, the readers create exclusionary boundaries that distinguish them from other ethnic groups. One symbol they often use is Chinese New Year, known as *Imlek*,[4] a Chinese traditional holiday that has been an Indonesian public holiday since 2001.

Since late January 2010, two weeks before *Imlek* — which fell that year on February 14 — many buildings and some other public places in Surabaya had been decked out with red color, the auspicious color in Chinese culture. Chinese lanterns were hung in front of the buildings and on some street posts. Dragons, the auspicious animal, and tigers, the animal of the year, populated shopping malls, banks and hotels. *Imlek* revelry was in the air. A few days before and after *Imlek*, the coverage on this public holiday was found in numerous newspapers in Surabaya, both the mainstream and the Chinese newspapers. Not only did they report *Imlek* in Surabaya or

[4] *Imlek* (In Chinese it is called *yinli* (阴历), is the Indonesian term for Chinese New Year. It is a loanword from Hokkien, which means lunar calendar.

East Java, but in other parts of Indonesia as well. Besides reporting the rituals, they also reported the booming of economic activities. *Jawa Pos* (February 3) and *Kompas* (February 13) reported that business of *Imlek* accessories, imported from China was booming. In its February 11 edition, *Kompas* featured a section of 4 pages reporting about pre-*Imlek* festivities. *Radar Surabaya* (February 15) reported the festive atmosphere of *Imlek* ritual in a Chinese temple, although it was done at midnight. *Guoji Ribao* (February 18) and *Qiandao Ribao* (February 17) reported the festivities of *Imlek* celebration in various parts of Indonesia. *Bapak* Wong said, "At that time [during the New Order era], Chinese culture was forbidden, but *Imlek* was allowed to be celebrated as long as it was a private affair. Obviously, it was very quiet, not like how it is now."

Bapak Wong was not alone. Other informants voiced the same statement, that during the New Order era, *Imlek* celebration was restricted. Public display of Chinese culture — and by extension, Chineseness — such as how *Imlek* is celebrated now, was unthinkable during the New Order era when a forced-assimilation policy towards the Chinese was implemented. In 1967, President Suharto issued a Presidential Decree No. 14/1967 that repressed Chinese cultural and religious expressions. This decree stated that Chinese customs, beliefs and religions centered on China, and the focus on Chinese ancestral land was detrimental to the process of assimilating the Chinese into Indonesian society. It instructed that they should be observed within the family circle. If it was held in public, it should not be held outside the temple building. Although discriminative laws were issued, the New Order regime did not declare that Chinese religions were illegal because such a declaration was against the Indonesian state ideology that guaranteed freedom of religion. However the restriction on the celebration of *Imlek* continued. *Kompas* (January 23, 1993) and *Tempo* daily (January 30, 1993) wrote that on January 11, 1993, Directorate General of Hinduism and Buddhism, Ministry of Religious Affairs issued a circular

(No. H/BA.00/29/1/1993), stating that *Imlek* was forbidden to be celebrated in the temple because it was not a part of Buddhist religious festival. The circular stressed that non-religious activities should not be held in the temple for political purposes.[5] The circular implied that for the New Order regime, *Imlek* was a Chinese tradition. Since the regime associated China with communism, which it regarded as a common enemy of the people, celebrating *Imlek* in public was akin to spreading communism. In the eye of the regime, *Imlek* celebration was a political activity. Lin *Laoshi* said,

> It really pained me to see that [during the New Order era] we paid our respect to our ancestors clandestinely. It seemed that paying respect to the ancestors was a Chinese political activity, and thus could not be performed in Indonesia. But what could we do, except succumbing to the oppressive policy?

The Chinese who were born after 1970s and did not have a chance to see Chinese cultural practices in public also shared the same opinion. Budi, who was born in 1978 and did not speak Chinese, was an example. He said,

> I think the New Order regime was paranoid of Chinese *Imlek*. Well, not only *Imlek*, but Chinese culture in general. I don't understand why Chinese culture was associated with communism. It's true that China is a communist country. [*Laughingly*] Or not anymore? Anyway, at that time, it was regarded as a truly communist country. But you see, the anti-communist Taiwan, Malaysia, and Singapore allowed its citizens to practice Chinese culture.

A number of my informants believed that the New Order regime's adverse attitude towards Chinese culture led to the negative image of Chinese traditional rituals both in the society and the media.

> Hu *Laoshi*: I was always upset every time I read newspapers about *Imlek*. I always encountered wrong assumptions that *Imlek* was a foreign tradition that should not be celebrated publicly, that Indonesian citizens should be discouraged to celebrate *Imlek*,

[5] The Presidential decree No.15/1967 classifies Confucianism, Daoism, and Chinese Mahayana Buddhism as Buddhism. The blending of these religions is known as *Tridharma* or "Three Teachings" (In Chinese, it is called *San Jiao Hui*, 三教会). As a result, Chinese temples are converted into Buddhist temples and the Chinese names of the temples were changed into Sanskrit. See Salmon and Lombard (2003) for further discussion on the conversion of Chinese temples into Buddhist ones.

> that celebrating *Imlek* could weaken their ties with Indonesia and strengthen their connection with their ancestral country.
>
> Budi: The government advised that *Imlek* should be celebrated privately. This gave readers an impression that *Imlek* was like a social menace to Indonesian society.
>
> Jocelyn: Obviously, the [New Order] regime portrayed *Imlek* in a negative light. The media, which were ignorant and did not know much about Chinese traditions and culture, seemed to follow this step. The negative portrayal of Imlek, seen as a foreign culture and practicing it was a sign of loyalty to China, could stigmatize the Chinese further.

Most of my informants were concerned about the negative image of *Imlek* and other Chinese traditional rituals. How those celebration and rituals were perceived and characterized, and what the social implications might be when they were portrayed negatively were important issues to my informants. The older generations and the younger ones who practiced Chinese traditional rituals were especially troubled by the contrast between the negative image of Chinese traditional rituals portrayed by the state and their perception of those rituals as a way of inculcating filial piety and remembering their ancestral root, the two things that constitute Chineseness. The younger generations who did not practice these rituals were also disturbed because the negative image could lead to the stigmatization of Chinese, as Budi and Jocelyn said.

The restriction and the negative image of *Imlek*, and Chinese traditional rituals in general, took its toll. Over the years, they have diminished, less and less people performed them. Chinese-Indonesians underwent an erosion of Chinese tradition, a "detraditionalization" process (Ong, 2003:323). One of the factors that contributed to detraditionalization was the New Order regime's policy of anti-Chinese culture.

Things have changed since *Imlek* became a public holiday in 2002. Now *Imlek* can be openly celebrated. This situation also affects the *Imlek* coverage in Indonesian Media. *Imlek* is now depicted as a cultural tradition, celebrated by ethnic Chinese, regardless of their religious affiliations. *Tempo* daily (February 15, 2003) reported that the Chinese Muslims in Jogjakarta

held a special prayer session for celebrating it. This was possible after the Indonesian Ulema Council, Jogjakarta branch, issued permission for them to do so. *Jawa Pos* (February 19, 2007) wrote that a Catholic church in Surabaya, which was specially decorated with red Chinese lanterns and an artificial Cherry blossom tree with *hongbao* hanging on it, held a special mass for *Imlek* celebration. *Kompas* daily (February 19, 2007) also reported that some Catholic churches held a mass with Chinese New Year nuances. The coverage as such shows that despite their different backgrounds, many Chinese-Indonesians saw this celebration as a way of celebrating their ethnicity.

Both mainstream and Chinese media report *Imlek* celebration. Based on my observation, the coverage of *Imlek* in Chinese and mainstream newspapers are similar. *Shushu* Huat Beng agreed. He said that he could not see the differences in their coverage on *Imlek*. However, Chinese newspapers have more *Imlek* coverage than their mainstream counterparts. This occurs because mainstream newspapers do not cater for a certain community only, whereas, Chinese newspapers devote the space in their papers to the activities of various Chinese organizations, especially when they celebrate their biggest holiday. Lin *Laoshi* said,

> Chinese newspapers focus on Chinese community, so of course their coverage on the Chinese is more than the Indonesian newspapers'. But basically the content is more or less the same.

Besides that, reports in Chinese newspapers are presented in such a way that they gave their readers a sense of connection to the readers' social and cultural realm. Hu *Laoshi* said,

> Chinese newspapers give us information in the language we are comfortable with and present it in a style that appeals to our culture. They reports news related [to] the Chinese more than other newspaper.

This may be the reason why many Chinese, especially the older ones, preferred the *Imlek* coverage in the Chinese newspapers. However, there is something that Chinese newspapers have

but the mainstream newspapers do not offer. This makes Chinese newspapers different and becomes an important factor in older Chinese choosing Chinese newspapers as a better source of *Imlek* coverage.

Unlike mainstream newspapers, which report "popular" Chinese traditional festivals such as *Imlek* and Mid-Autumn Festival, Chinese newspapers report both the "popular" and the "less popular" ones. They also report rituals performed in a certain temple, such as the rituals commemorating the deity worshipped in the temple since each temple has different deity worshipped. Besides that, they often include the history behind the tradition and the rituals of the celebration. In so doing, they not only report the celebration of the rituals, but also feature Chinese culture, which could enable their readers to understand and appreciate Chinese traditional rituals and culture. According to Hu *Laoshi*,

> They [Chinese newspapers] also inform their readers about Chinese culture. They are different from Indonesian newspapers. Indonesian newspapers report *Imlek* only. Whereas, the cultural backgrounds of *Imlek* and its rituals, which I think are more important, are not reported.

What Hu *Laoshi* said highlighted that in their coverage, mainstream newspapers seemed to objectify and decontextualize Imlek and other Chinese traditional rituals and made them a part of a "folkloric" culture. Mainstream newspapers describe Chinese traditional rituals "in purely folkloric terms; hardly ever is any attention paid to their historical, cultural and anthropological dimensions" (Campani, 2001:47). The reports and coverage on *Imlek* in mainstream newspapers are full of the depiction of people holding joss sticks and praying in the temple, lion and dragon dances, *hongbao*, Chinese lanterns, and calligraphies. Responding to my statement that now *Imlek* was a public holiday and that more people celebrate it, some of my informants shared their opinions about the coverage of *Imlek* in the mainstream newspapers. Lin *Laoshi* said,

> *Imlek* celebration is lacking its values. It is true that *Imlek* is getting more and more festive, but at the same time, the essential part of *Imlek*, the traditional values of *Imlek*, which make Chinese "Chinese," is disappearing.

He continued that nowadays people of different ethnic background also welcomed and celebrated *Imlek*, but they saw it as a cultural festival with a lot of fun activities, such as beauty pageant contest whose participants wore *qibao* (Chinese gown) and used Chinese hairdo. In his opinion, mainstream newspapers reported the superficial *Imlek* celebration and ignored the values of *Imlek*.

> *Ayi* Ai Ling: People nowadays do not really observe Chinese tradition. Having dinner in a restaurant for *tuannian fan*[6] has become popular. According to the tradition, we should prepare and have the dinner at home. In so doing, we can also make food offerings to the ancestral tablets. Having dinner in a restaurant would defeat the purpose of *Imlek* celebration. The essence of celebrating *Imlek* is not a celebration with the living, but with the deceased as well.
>
> *Bapak* Poo: This [the cultural background of Chinese traditional ritual] is actually very important. In the coverage of *Imlek* or other Chinese rituals, information on the tradition behind them is very important because it can eradicate misunderstanding. For example, the goal of celebrating *Imlek* is venerating ancestors and asking their blessing in the New Year ahead. This is very important. In so doing, we will not forget our origin. Many Chinese who embrace the neighbors' religions[7] do not want to celebrate *Imlek* or celebrate it by having dinner only. They are really *Kasno*.[8]

The key theme in the *Imlek* narrative of my informants is that now *Imlek* is seen as a celebration that shows openness towards Chinese culture. This resonates well with Hoon's statement that *Imlek* has been a symbolic festival for the Chinese in Indonesia that "gives cultural meanings to many Chinese-Indonesians, even if they do not understand the historical origin and cultural meanings of the festival" and that "becomes increasingly commercialized" (2009:103). The flourishing growing popularity of *Imlek*, however, does not correlate with the growing sense

[6] *Tuannian fan* (团年饭) is the Chinese term for reunion dinner, that is, dinner on the Chinese New Year's Eve.
[7] In this context, the term "neighbors' religions" is a euphemism of Islam and Christianity. Many Chinese Muslims and Christians do not perform ancestor veneration.
[8] *Kasno* is a typical Javanese name. However, it is parodied as the abbreviation of "bekas Cino," which literally means "ex-Chinese."

of Chineseness. According to my informants who are like Lin *Laoshi* and other like-minded people, *Imlek* celebration loses its essential elements, as seen through the *Imlek* coverage in the mainstream newspaper. They lamented this situation. In their opinion, the superficial *Imlek* celebration failed to capture the meaning of the *Imlek*, and this was equal to diminishing Chinese ethnic consciousness as the meaning of *Imlek* was the one that defines Chineseness. That is why they welcome how *Imlek* is reported in the Chinese newspapers, such as *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao*.

In a way, *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao* also follow the mainstream newspapers' reports and coverage. However, they distinguish themselves from the latter by providing cultural information on *Imlek* or other Chinese rituals celebrated, as well as emphasizing the values of those rituals through, for example, Chinese folktales and mythology. In so doing, in the eyes of the Chinese, *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao* not only report the events, but also give information on Chinese culture, which could help the younger generation understand why such rituals are important.

> *Ayi* Ai Ling: It is said that celebrating *Imlek* is equal to idolatry. This is totally wrong, How can respecting ancestor be called idolatry? This wrong view should be corrected.
>
> *Bapak* Poo: When newspapers report *Imlek* or other Chinese traditional holidays, they should also report the cultural background of those holidays so that people know about them, and can appreciate their values, such as why ancestor veneration is central to Chinese traditional holiday.

The informants above and others hoped that the reports and coverage of Chinese traditional rituals in Chinese newspapers could help create the "correct" image of Chinese traditional rituals. What was very important in these rituals were the values that made the Chinese "Chinese," not just celebrating it, like Lin *Laoshi* said, "other ethnic group also celebrate it as a form of festivity." Specifically, my informants mentioned that filial piety as seen through venerating

ancestors, which became the foundation of most Chinese traditional rituals was the essence of being Chinese. Thus, practicing the rituals behind the *Imlek* celebration would definitely make Chinese "Chinese." This opinion also resonates with people from other ethnic groups, like Priyo and his family.

Priyo, a Javanese Muslim, works in the civil service. Due to his high position in the bureaucracy of Surabaya municipality, he was often invited to attend social functions held by various Chinese organizations in Surabaya. When I asked him what he thought of *Imlek*, he said,

> Well, in the past it was seen as a foreign tradition which was not suitable for Indonesians, even if those Indonesians were Chinese. But we are more open than we used to be. So *Imlek* celebration is not a problem. It is like when you celebrate International New Year. It is based on western culture, isn't it? But people can accept that. So why can't we accept *Imlek*, a traditional holiday that belong to one ethnic group in Indonesia?

In Priyo's opinion, *Imlek* was associated with Chinese culture. This association made Chinese culture forbidden in the past because it was seen as the culture of the enemy of the state. But now, *Imlek* is accepted as a tradition of an ethnic group in Indonesia. He even said that he celebrated *Imlek*, noting "I am often invited to attend *Imlek* celebration. I always accept the invitation and join them to celebrate *Imlek*."[9] His wife, who wore a veil, added,

> We try to wear red clothes when we attend the celebration. Red is an auspicious color in Chinese culture. It seems that it is the "official color" of *Imlek*. Even, my nine-year-old daughter wears *qibao*. [Laughingly] She looks cute in *qibao*, like a *nonik*.[10]

Jonathan, a businessman who is not from Chinese background, also said that he joined and participated in *Imlek* celebration. He said, "I have a good relationship with many prominent figures in the Chinese community here [in Surabaya]. I am often invited to attend the celebration. Of course I would like to join in the fun."

[9] Since *Imlek* became a public holiday, there has been a national *Imlek* celebration, which is always graced by the President of Indonesia. Chinese organizations on some provinces and municipalities also jump into the wagon by holding provincial or municipal *Imlek* celebration. This is the kind of *Imlek* celebration that Priyo referred to.
[10] *Nonik* is an informal Indonesian word which refers to an appellation for a Chinese girl.

There were more and more *pribumi* Indonesians who, like Priyo, his wife, and Jonathan, could accept *Imlek* as a part of an ethnic holiday in Indonesia. In a survey about how *pribumi* Indonesians viewed *Imlek, Kompas* daily found that almost half of the respondents said that they were very enthusiast in attending *Imlek* celebration in their cities (February 13, 2010). According to Budianta, *Imlek* transformed itself as a part of Indonesian pop culture and was commodified. She writes,

> [A]s Chineseness is absorbed into the market, it becomes a part of urban life style. Sending *Gong Xi Fa Cai* (Happy Chinese New Year) SMSs to friends has become a trend. Hypermarkets and malls make a marketing opportunity of Chinese New Year as they do with Christmas and the Muslim Id holiday (a commoditization of culture that some call mallticulturalism). The popularity of Taiwanese TV series and popular music has made things Chinese agreeable to national youth culture. (2007:174)

Hoon also observed that Imlek cultural symbols became "part of the wider popular culture, learned and performed not only by Chinese-Indonesians but also Indonesians of other ethnic background" (2009:103).

For people who are not from Chinese background, celebrating *Imlek* is like participating in a pop culture performance that has nothing to do with Chineseness. Jonathan, who is a Christian, said, "*Imlek* celebration is like a party full of fun. You can see many authentic Chinese cultural performances." Priyo also agreed with Jonathan. He said, "*Imlek* celebration, at least the one that I often attend, is not a religious ceremony. I feel at ease in joining in the celebration."

Based on my observations, the *Imlek* celebration as such was like a showcase of Chinese cultural performances over good food. No elements of Chinese rituals found there. And this is the kind of *Imlek* that younger generations of Chinese-Indonesians are familiar with:

> [F]or many of the younger generations, especially those who have become Protestants or Catholics, and the smaller proportion who have become Muslims, these festivals and traditions have lost their religious meaning or even their meaning as a part of Chinese tradition. What remain are the social and familial aspects of honoring parents and older relatives and visiting and paying respects on Chinese lunar new year's day (especially if

> grandparents are still around); in fact, even this event has, for some, become simply an occasion for wearing nice clothes and partying. (Tan, 1995:23)

For the older generation of Chinese, *Imlek* celebration like that was a party welcoming Chinese New Year. They did not oppose that kind of celebration, as what Lin *Laoshi* said,

> Of course, I think such a celebration is great. It can introduce Chinese arts and culture to Indonesian society. Erh, well, actually not only to Indonesian society, but to young Chinese as well. Besides that, it can also be used for cementing the relationship between the Chinese and other ethnic groups.

However, they lamented that essence of the celebration that made Chinese "Chinese" had been lost. Lin *Laoshi* continued,

> The public *Imlek* celebration is usually held a few days after the *Imlek* holiday. In fact, it is not a part of *Imlek*. Having a party is not a problem, but don't forget to venerate the ancestors, praying and giving offering to deities.

Many Chinese shared Lin *Laoshi*'s opinion, that the essence of *Imlek* is the rituals that connect them with their ancestors, not the celebration full of fun.

Imlek, in this case, can be seen from different perspectives. Some look at it as a kind of cultural celebration. Others believe that it is a way of performing Chineseness, as when *Imlek* celebrations in mosques and churches occur, in which ancestor veneration is definitely forbidden. Supriyono, a Chinese Muslim in his sixties, said that he was aware that there were some mosques that had Chinese in their congregations held a special prayer session for *Imlek*, although the Cheng Ho Mosque, the mosque he usually went to, did not do that. Liliana a congregant of a Chinese church in Surabaya said that her church did not have a special service for *Imlek*. When there was a traditional Chinese holiday, what the congregation in her church did was bringing the traditional food associated with the holiday, such as *Bakcang* or *Tiongjiu Pia*,[11] to share after the service. Yet there are Muslims and Christians who still practice ancestor veneration. These

[11] *Bakcang* is the Hokkien words for rice dumpling, special food for *Duanwu Jie* celebration, which falls on the fifth day of the fifth month of Chinese calendar. *Tiongjiu Pia* is the Hokkian term for moon cake, a cake specially prepared during Mid-Autumn Festival, also known as Moon Cake Festival.

people are like Lin *Laoshi*, Hu *Laoshi* and other who still embrace Chinese traditional religion. For these people, ritual such as ancestor veneration is inseparable from their life. Describing his *zongqin hui* (clan association), which often held Chinese traditional rituals, Lin *Laoshi* said, "It is like our spiritual center, our spiritual home." His statement implied that Chinese traditional rituals are like his spiritual strength, as in another occasion, he said that venerating ancestors was the spirit of the Chinese. His statement shows that Chinese traditional rituals are like spiritual resources of the Chinese, the resources that give them strength when they faced political and cultural oppressions, which destroyed their Chinese identity. By performing these rituals, they sustained their subjectivity as Chinese.

Informed by Willford (2006), whose research on Tamil Malaysians shows how the marginalization of Tamil community leads to Hindu revivalism — through the rituals of Thaipusam and Adi Puram — as an expression of Tamil identity, I argue that older generation of Chinese use Chinese traditional rituals that accompany Chinese traditional holiday such as *Imlek* which are depicted in Chinese newspapers as tools for reaffirming and reconstructing Chinese identity of Chinese-Indonesians. Performing these rituals and holding their values distinguish them from other ethnic groups who just celebrate the traditional holiday without keeping these values. These rituals function as exclusionary boundaries that separate them from other ethnic groups.

Besides traditional rituals, *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao* also provide other ethnic symbols that are salient to ethnic identity. These symbols are also used for creating exclusionary boundaries that mark ethnic identity. They are found in various sections in the newspaper. Some people talked about their favorite sections.

> Lin *Laoshi*: I like *Guoji Ribao*'s *Shi Sheng Yuandi* (Teacher — Student Corner) and *Qiandao Ribao*'s *Fukan* (Supplement)[12] and *Wenyu Tiyu* (Culture and Sport). They are useful for people who want to know more about Chinese tradition, culture and language. *Qiandao Ribao*'s *Fukan* and *Guoji Ribao*'s *Shi Sheng Yuandi*, for example, provide space for Chinese language learners to publish their writing in Chinese. This is good for sharpening their writing skills.
>
> *Shushu* Huat Beng: I like *Qiandao Ribao*'s *Zhonghua Wenhua* (Chinese Culture) section, where you can read essays and other writings about many aspects Chinese culture in China, Taiwan, or Hong Kong, written by experts from China. This is section is good for us in Indonesia. We know more about Chinese culture and its development. *Gujin Yi Shi* (Ancient and Contemporary Anecdotes) and *Huawen Yuandi* (Chinese Language Corner) are great sections for those who learn Chinese.
>
> *Ayi* Sioe Ying: What I like about *Guoji Ribao* is its *Yinhua Wenxue* (Chinese Indonesian Literature) section. You can find short stories written by our own people. Besides that, you can also find memoirs and life-stories of Chinese-Indonesians, not necessarily the famous ones. In fact the memoirs and life-stories of ordinary people are interesting. I can learn something from there. Their writings deal with the similar problems that we often have.
>
> *Bapak* Wong: Besides news about China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, I like *Tiannan Dibei* [of *Qiandao Ribao*]. It presents feature articles on ordinary people and events among the Chinese all over the world.

It seems to me that for Lin *Laoshi* and others, Chinese newspapers are not just a source of information or news about what is happening in the world. As *Qiandao Ribao*'s and *Guoji Ribao*'s primary focus on "ancestral hometowns," traditions, and cultures, they satisfy their readers' "epistephilic desire," that is, the desire to know and the keep update about news, events, and people back "home" in China (Naficy, 1993:107). They also provide direct information about "home right now" (Sinclair et al, 2000). In one meeting with *Shushu* Huat Beng and his wife *Ayi* Ayling, I asked them why they were so keen on reading news about "ancestral homeland." *Shushu* Huat Beng gave general typical answer, namely, it was simply because China was their ancestors' country. But *Ayi* Ay Ling said,

[12] Depending on the day, *Fukan* section features different contents. Those are, among others, students' composition, news and reviews about Chinese movies and celebrities, children's stories, Chinese cooking.

> We, Chinese-Indonesians are like a daughter of a family who married somebody else. She follows her husband and lives in a foreign place. However, she still cares about what is happening to her parents and relatives in her old place.

Ayi Ay Ling's answer evokes the symbolic cultural values of her relationship with her mythic homeland. I call it "mythic" because she was not born in China. This is not a unique case. Most of Chinese-educated Chinese viewed China as their homeland. This is not surprising because when they were still studying in Chinese school, they were Chinese citizens, and they were taught that China was their homeland.

In the context of the Chinese in Indonesia, *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao* maintain the temporal and spatial connections between their readers — people like Hu *Laoshi*, Lin *Laoshi*, *Ayi* Sioe Ing, *Shushu* Huat Beng, *Bapak* Wong, and other like-minded people — and their readers' memories of the past. I believe that memories as such are crucial for them because of the discriminatory experience that led to identity fracture they faced during the New Order era. Memories of the past that are transformed into the symbolic forms of imagining are used by *Qiandao Ribao* and *GuojiRibao* to foreground Chineseness. The Chineseness serves as a point of identification that links Chinese-Indonesians' sense of self to their mythic homeland. The point of identification also creates a sense of belonging that gives them support in counterbalancing an identity fracture, as Weeks writes, "[I]dentity is about belonging, about what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others. At its most basic, it gives you a sense of personal location, the stable core to your individuality" (1990:88).

Besides individual identity, the Chineseness that *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao* project also constructs an imagined Chinese community. As Anderson writes, the imagined simultaneous news reading stimulates people's sense of belonging to a community — locally, nationally, or internationally — that is based on a conceived deep horizontal comradeship.

Qiandao Ribao's and *Guoji Ribao*'s coverage on Chinese living all over the world construct a symbolic sense of belonging which unite a dispersed Chinese in many parts of the world into a single Chinese community. In Aihwa Ong's words, this single Chinese community is "a sense of Chinese community that is not place-bound but that in fact disembeds the process of identity making from the local matrix of social relationships" (1999:162).

When Beijing held Olympic Games in August 2008, *Qiandao Ribao*, *Guoji Ribao*, and mainstream newspapers in Indonesia wrote an extensive coverage of the games. All newspapers reported China's achievement in sport, proven in the Olympic Games as the overall champion, which drew accolades. They also praised China's efforts in winning medals in the Games, but Chinese newspapers went further by writing that that was for the first time an Asian nation was the overall medals champion, and that the Chinese in Indonesia should be proud of China's achievement, not just because China was an Asian nation, but because China was the ancestral country of the Chinese in Indonesia.

Besides the coverage of the overall champion, the coverage of the opening ceremony was also different. All newspapers wrote on the grandeur and splendor of the opening ceremony which was reported as spending more than forty million dollars. However, there were differences in the coverage of the opening ceremony between *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao*, on the one hand, and other mainstream newspapers on the other. Words such as "fireworks," "colossal dance," "pyrotechnology," and "journey of the Chinese nation," were used to describe the ceremony. But Chinese newspapers added that the opening ceremony was a display of Chinese culture and the progress of the Chinese nation. The spectacular of Beijing's opening ceremony was still vivid in the mind of my informants when they watched the opening ceremony of London's recent hosting of the Olympic Games. On Friday afternoon, August 3, 2012, in the

food court of ITC shopping center, my informants and I had small talk. Since the London Olympic Games had just begun, we then talked about it.

> Hu *Laoshi*: Everyone who saw the opening ceremony of London Olympic Games, I believe, compared it with that of Beijing. In one mailing list, I read that somebody wrote that London could not compete with Beijing, both in terms of money and the spectacular. He did not mean that London's opening ceremony was terrible. It was good, but in his opinion, Beijing presented a spectacular show, but London presented a fun party. Beijing showed its great historical narratives, but London showed the details of daily life. So in this way, London's opening ceremony was good.
>
> *Pak* Acai: I still believe that London's ceremony was nothing compared to Beijing's. If you remembered, each part of Beijing's ceremony showcased the contribution of Chinese civilization to the world. Beijing was also able to display its 5000 year-old cultural heritage in a ceremony that lasted for a few hours.

Obviously, phrases like "a display of Chinese culture and the progress of the Chinese nation," "great historical narratives," "the contribution of Chinese civilization to the world," and "5000 year-old cultural heritage" go beyond the description of the opening ceremony. They intend to invoke a pride in Chinese culture and to appeal to the ethnic sentiment of the Chinese. Exemplified by Hu *Laoshi*'s and *Pak* Acai's narratives, Chinese newspapers are able to cultivate in Chinese-Indonesians a strong connection with their fellow co-ethnics and a strong affinity to Chinese culture.

Based on my analysis above, I contend that the symbolic forms of imagining Chineseness employed by Chinese newspapers, such as coverage of Chinese rituals and culture, and news about China, provide an avenue for identity construction and community formation. They serve as cultural capital that has a decisive role in developing the collective memory of Chinese Indonesian community — the collective memory of the Chinese-educated Chinese or that of the Chinese who grew up in an environment that is friendly to Chinese culture. The collective memory creates exclusionary boundaries that distinguish them from other ethnic groups and provides legitimacy for Chinese identity construction and community formation.

I also argue that the importance of the symbolic forms of imagining for Chinese Indonesian community reflects a kind of "cultural ambivalence and ongoing identity negotiation generally taking place in each individual" (Tufte, 2001:45). Not only did Chinese-Indonesians suffer from cultural oppression, but they experienced discriminatory practices as well. Although Chinese cultural expression is accepted now, discriminatory practices can still be found.[13] In this situation, the mythic homeland — that is, China — and ethnic belongingness are often imagined as the "utopia" they dream of, as opposed to the perceived "dystopia" in which they live now. Therefore, the symbolic forms of imagining, encapsulated in the memories of the past, refer to the identity fracture and social situation Chinese-Indonesians experience. However, a certain ethnic symbol may also provide ethnic salience for some, but it may not carry a lot of weight with others. Lillian is an example.

Lillian (born in 1988) said that her family was a totok family. However, Chinese was rarely used at home. Nobody spoke Chinese, except her grandparents. Her parents, who grew up during the New Order era, did not have the opportunity to attend Chinese school. Nevertheless, Chinese traditional rituals and cultural practices were religiously observed.

> My family practices *Tridharma*, so Chinese traditional rituals are parts of our lives, thanks to my paternal grandparents who lived with us. Because of them, we are familiar with venerating ancestors and Chinese traditional holidays. She never failed to prepare offering for our family's ancestor tablet. But when my grandparents passed way, occasionally, my mother took over that duty. Well, my parents still do that, but not so religiously as my grandparents.

[13] Despite openness and acceptance towards Chinese culture since the fall of the New Order regime in 1998, there are some local-scale incidents. For example, *Pontianak Post* (May 31, 2010), a local daily in West Kalimantan, reported that a group of ethnic Malay in the province staged a demonstration on May 28, protesting a dragon statue in Singkawang, a regency in the province, which has a great number of Chinese. One year before that, in January 2009, a group of ethnic Malay in Pontianak protested a Chinese New Year parade. All these occurred in West Kalimantan, where the ethnic Chinese is the third largest ethnic group in the province. Some of my informants were worried about this and planned to scale down the Chinese New Year celebration. See Chapter V for recent discriminatory practices against the Chinese.

Despite her familiarity with those rituals, she does not subscribe that idea that a Chinese must perform them. She said that it was partly because of her disinterest and partly because of her experience in China. After finishing her high school, she went to a university in Xiamen to study Chinese for one year. Then she moved to Beijing for her undergraduate degree in a university there. Staying for five years in China gave her a chance to observe how the Chinese there were different the Chinese in Indonesia. Describing *Imlek* in Indonesia and in China, she said,

> I think *Imlek* celebration in Indonesia is more traditional than the one in China. Here, you can find Chinese-Indonesians who still prepare offering for their ancestral tablets and pay respect to their ancestors. But in Beijing, such practices are virtually nonexistent. … There, ancestor veneration is a practice of the bygone era.

She also thought that Chinese-Indonesians followed Chinese traditions and rituals more strictly than the Chinese in China. She attributed this to the Chinese government's effort in attenuating Chinese traditions during the Cultural Revolution. Although during the New Order period, Chinese cultural traditions were suppressed, at least, Chinese-Indonesians were allowed to practice them freely in private. This was different from the situation in China where a blanket ban on them was imposed.

Lillian may sound like she is exaggerating her observation on the absence of Chinese traditions in China. In remote areas in China there may be people who still practice them. However, her opinion implies that Chinese traditions are better preserved in the Chinese community overseas, in this case, in Indonesia. This finds support in the experience of a Chinese historian, Shehong Chen. Chen writes that Chinese cultural traditions were considered as "mere superstitions," and "carrying out such activities amounted to crime during the height of Cultural Revolution." She learned about them through movies and books. Only after she

came to the United States did she have a firsthand experience of Chinese cultural traditions, which were practiced by Chinese Americans (1997:1).

Like Lillian, Collin, another informant, also said that Chinese traditional practices were better preserved in Indonesia than in China. Collin was a Chinese citizen who married a Chinese-Indonesian. He works in Surabaya and lives with his parents-in-law. Describing them, he said,

> My parents-in-law are very traditional, different from my parents. They are very fervent in practicing Chinese traditions. My parents never practice them. Chinese traditional practices are very superstitious. [*Pointing to a red and yellow small clothe bags hanging on the top of the door*] They do not hang stuff like those things. They also do not have ancestral tablet.

Collin and his wife rarely performed Chinese rituals. During *Imlek* or *Qingming Jie*, they did the rituals out of respect to the elders in the family. Collin said that he was still Chinese, even though he did not perform the Chinese traditional rituals. In his opinion, all those rituals were just traditions that could change over time, and Chinese culture in Indonesia was "frozen in time" because it did not experience transformation and modernization like the one in China.

Similarly, Lillian rarely practiced those rituals, although her parents sometimes scolded her. In her opinion, showing respect to parents and remembering one's origin are not equal to practicing Chinese traditional rituals. She said,

> Ancestor veneration is intended to cultivate filial piety. However, I think nowadays such a practice seems to go overboard. Even people in China, the true blue Chinese, don't do that. Besides that, I believe it is far more important to show respect to our parents when they are still alive.

Another informant, Andrew, added,

> Indeed, young generation like us is alienated from the more "sophisticated" Chinese culture. We do not know exactly how the proper rites of, for example, ancestor veneration should be done. All we know is just burning the joss stick. Even we don't know how many sticks we should use. … Personally, I don't have an intention of knowing all those things. They are very traditional. My Chinese language teacher told me that in China not many people do that. So why should we stick to that traditions that have not practiced in their place of origin?

Lillian's, Andrew's, and other informants' reasons for not practicing Chinese traditional rituals were, among others, that they were not accustomed to practicing those rituals, that the rituals lost their appeal, and that the rituals were outdated for they were not practiced anymore in the country where they originated. Yet, this did not mean that those who did not practice them were not Chinese, or lacked Chineseness.

Like the issue of Chinese rituals, other symbolic ethnicities used by Chinese newspapers also did not attract the interest of young Chinese.

> Jocelyn: Most news in Chinese *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao* is about China. It is too China-focused. I find it boring. Besides that, it is taken from other sources such as Xinhua.[14] So I prefer to read news about China from the original sources.
>
> Andrew: I read Chinese newspaper simply because of the language section. I find it useful. I prefer to read news from other sources which I think offer more diverse views.

In the mind of Jocelyn, Andrew, and others, the content of *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao* gravitates towards China. This is of course not attractive for young Chinese, who do not have affinity towards China. This is the reason why Chinese newspapers are not popular among them. Besides that, the gravitation towards China negates the fact that Chinese-Indonesians do not share a common experience. Hendra, a 35-year-old informant, said,

> The Chinese community was classified into two, the *totok* and the *peranakan* Chinese. Although this classification is no longer valid, it shows that the Chinese community is not a homogenous community. So, if Chineseness is emphasized on China, those who do not have affinity towards China would not accept it.

Lilian voiced similar idea.

> I find that Chinese newspapers tend to focus on China. Look at the news in those newspapers. They have an extensive coverage on China. The supplement section is not much different. Instead of featuring the experience of Chinese-Indonesians, it emphasizes the linkage between Chinese-Indonesians and the ancient great traditions of China. It should focus more in the acculturation of Chinese and Indonesians. We have a unique Chinese Indonesian culture. They should explore this.

[14] Xinhua is the official China news agency.

Another informant, Ratna, gave an example,

> Instead of popularizing *qibao* as a special *Imlek* dress, why not featuring *Kebaya Encim*? Isn't it *Kebaya Encim* a dress worn by Chinese Indonesian women in the past?

Lillian, Andrew, Jocelyn, and Ratna are not the only ones who do not subscribe to the exclusionary boundaries created by the older generations of Chinese. There are others who have the same opinion as them.

The crux of the disagreement on the exclusionary boundary markers is different perceptions on the symbolic forms of Chinese ethnicity used in Chinese newspaper, primarily Chinese traditional rituals. Chinese ritual practices "contain within them a certain ambiguity" (Willford, 2006:260). Each individual has different interpretation on them. On one end of the spectrum, there are people like the older generations of Chinese who think that the rituals are inseparable from their ethnic identity. On the other end of spectrum, there are people, especially the younger generations, who believe that rituals as such are seen as traditional and superstitious. Between the two ends there are also those who modify the rituals according to their beliefs. The same thing also happens to the other symbolic forms ethnicity. Those who received Chinese education use "mythic China" as a source of their ethnic identity. Those who do not receive Chinese education adopt locally-based identities. These differences mean that the exclusionary boundary markers do not work for the whole Chinese community.

Inclusionary Boundaries

Chinese newspapers also use the symbolic forms of imagining for transmitting news, opinions, concerns of the Chinese and making people aware of the problems and issues the Chinese community faces; and for "objecting to discriminatory practices not yet dismantled or

still being enacted against Chinese-Indonesians" (Turner and Allen, 2007:120). They are also used for overcoming negative portrayals and the stigmas faced by Chinese-Indonesians, who are often accused of being anti social and economic animals, as well as not having the loyalty to Indonesia.

> *Tante* Goat Nio: I am accustomed to all the prejudices towards the Chinese. … Nowadays, it is better, although the prejudices are still prevalent. Fifteen or twenty years ago, I often heard people saying "cino, sucine ora ono."[15]
>
> Hu *Laoshi* [*responding to my question whether he ever heard the Javanese racial epithet that Goat Nio mentioned*]: Yes, I heard that before, some people told me about it, but I have never heard or seen directly that a Chinese was scolded by using those words. … However, it does not mean that stigmas and negative stereotypes of Chinese have disappeared. I still often hear people labeling Chinese as stingy, anti-social and economic animal. A couple of years ago, I met a person who said that the Chinese always though about money and profit. Then I said it was because the living expenses of the Chinese were higher than other ethnic groups. When they wanted to get ID, they had to pay more, when they need some papers from bureaucracy, they also paid more. … They fail to see that many Chinese became successful because of their hard work. There is a Chinese saying that describes the Chinese, *bai shou qi jia*,[16] which means they started their work from scratch. Using their ingenuity and business acumen, the Chinese built up their business. Would they use the phrase "economic animal" for describing successful *pribumi* businessmen? I don't think so.
>
> Ratna: When I was a child, I often became the target of racial slur. Now the situation is much better. I rarely heard racial slurs, but that was not the case if the Chinese go or pass through slum areas.

My other informants agreed that the situation was better now. However, it did not mean that racial discrimination had disappeared. Even people could still find it in newspaper. Hu *Laoshi* shared his opinion:

> The case of Eddy Tansil was an example of racism that was prevalent in Indonesian media.[17] Indonesian newspapers reported Eddy's crime, to which I don't have any objection. But what I think objectionable is that they always mentioned that Eddy Tansil

[15] Javanese words, which roughly means "there is nothing good about Chinese" (cino means Chinese).
[16] The phrase is 白手起家.
[17] Eddy Tansil or Tan Tjoe Jong was a businessman jailed for 20 years in 1996 for a US$565 million embezzlement. He escaped from Cipinang penitentiary on May 1996. In 2007, Tempo newspaper reported that Indonesian Financial Reports and Analysis Center had a proof that Eddy Tansil wire-transferred money to Indonesia. Based on this report, Indonesian anti-corruption task force vowed to find him. But his whereabouts is not known until know. However, rumor has it that he is a successful businessman in Fujian China.

> is of Chinese descent. … There is a double standard here. If the criminals are of Chinese descent, they always mention their ethnic background. But if they are *pribumis*, they never mention their ethnic background. The case of Alan Budi Kusuma and Susi Susanti is also an example of prevalent racism.[18] Perhaps because they brought glory for Indonesia in the [1992] Olympic Games, newspapers did not mention that both of them are of Chinese descent. Perhaps the newspaper did not see the benefit of mentioning that Alan Budi Kusuma and Susi Susanti were of Chinese descent. If that is the case, then, what is the benefit of mentioning the ethnic background of those criminals?

What Hu *Laoshi* said highlighted the prevalence of racism in Indonesian media. It was common to see that crime reports often use phrases such as *warga keturunan* (citizen of Chinese descent), or *yang bernama Cina* (whose Chinese name is) when giving additional information about the offenders whose ethnic background was Chinese, but they did not mention the ethnic background of the offenders if they were *pribumis*. But when an ethnic Chinese brought pride and glory, they failed to acknowledge his or her Chinese background. The phrases commonly used for them were *putra Indonesia* (the son of Indonesia), or *anak bangsa* (the child of the nation). However, based on my observation practices of using phrases *warga keturunan* or *yang bernama Cina* gradually disappeared since mid-2000, although there are newspapers, especially those that of the yellow journalism ilk, which still practice it.

Nevertheless, other discriminatory practices in the mainstream media still exist. It often happens that some mainstream newspapers report news about the Chinese by using negative stereotypical portrayal associated with the Chinese, or by labeling the Chinese negatively without justification. The "favorite" topic within the negative portrayal of the Chinese is their purported "exclusivity." The "exclusivity" of the Chinese found in media is often associated with, for example, close-knitted networks, using a language that Indonesians in general do not understand, and an unwillingness to mingle with other ethnic groups. Obviously, aspects of the exclusivity of the Chinese as such can also be found in any other ethnic groups, but they are not

[18] Alan Budi Kusuma (Goei Ren Fang) and Susi Susanti (Ong Lian Siang) are the first Indonesian athletes that won gold medals in Olympic Games. Newspapers never mentioned their Chinese names in their reports.

used in describing the non-Chinese. One may believe that the choices of words in describing the Chinese are not a coincidence, but they reflect the ideology behind the use of those words.

> Ratna: The Chinese are often accused of being exclusive, that is, living in a posh and gated housing complex. It's true that the majority of the residents in posh housing complexes, such as Dharma Husada, Darmo, or Citra Land, are Chinese. But we can find people of non-Chinese origin living there, can't we? Why are the non-Chinese living there not called as exclusive?
>
> *Bapak* Poo: Up till now, I often heard directly that the Chinese were accused of being exclusive, unwilling to integrate into Indonesian society, the accusation which I found ridiculous. About two years ago, I read in the readers' forum in a local newspaper — I forgot which newspaper — that someone complained that the Chinese should do more to integrate into Indonesian society by, for example, not speaking Chinese in public. I really cannot understand his rationale. If it were years ago during the New Order era, I couldn't say anything, but it was just two years ago, so it was not that long. Couldn't he think that Chinese is a major language in the world? Didn't he realize that Chinese language is one of foreign languages taught in Indonesian high school?[19] Once I also read in an editorial of a newspaper that advised the Chinese not to use Chinese language in public or in the meetings of a Chinese organization to avoid being exclusive. I don't understand what is exclusive about us when we speak Chinese in our own organizational meetings, when we use Chinese in our conversation with friends? Why is English not labeled as exclusive?

The topic of "exclusivity" employed by mainstream media, I believe, reflects that a process of "othering" takes place, that is, a process in which the boundaries of identities are drawn between "the self," that is, the Indonesians, and "the other," the Chinese. Although some Javanese and other ethnic groups considered as the indigenous Indonesians may share some qualities of the "exclusivity" of the Chinese, they do not belong to the negative categorization, which solely refers to the Chinese. The negative categorization of the Chinese reinforces a discourse in which the Chinese are the "other" that is in contrast with the characteristics of being the Indonesian "self," such as having social concern. The event I describe below illustrates this.

[19] Chinese language has been one of the five foreign language courses student can choose in High School National Final Examination since 2003/2004 academic year (Department of National Education, 2003).

On October 27, 2010, the China-committee of Surabaya branch of Indonesian Chamber of Commerce celebrated the 60th anniversary of the diplomatic relationship between China and Indonesia. The special performance in the celebration was the performance of Chinese People's Liberation Army Song and Dance Troupe. The East Java Governor, East Java Military Commander, and Chinese Consul General graced the event. The next day, local newspapers reported the celebration. It was great and the performance of PLA troupe was fantastic. However, what was missing in the report was that Chinese-Indonesians businessmen attending the event used it to raise funds for charity. *Qiandao Ribao* (November 3, 2010) highlighted this missing part and reported that the fund raised was used for Indonesian Red Cross, Cancer Society, and for the development of local performing arts such as *Ludruk* and *Reog*.

For some, the missing part, which was not reported, in the mainstream newspaper might not be a big deal; however, for others, like Hu *Laoshi*, this was very important. I met him by chance when I was with the *Xiangqi* group on early November, and he told me about this lack of coverage. He was a bit unhappy, and said, "I think Indonesian mainstream media always, well intentionally or unintentionally, never reported the charity of Chinese community." His statement highlighted the belief among the Chinese-educated Chinese, who were behind the publication of Chinese media, that is, the importance of Chinese media for the Chinese community

In the eyes of the Chinese-educated Chinese, mainstream newspapers tend to represent the view and the position of the majority, which is reflected in the selective presentation of information and views that often neglect the interests, concerns, and views of the Chinese. Chinese newspapers for them could provide an alternative voice for correcting, disputing, and supplementing the work of the mainstream newspaper, as *Qiandao Ribao* did on its November

3, 2010 edition. The newspapers could also be used for countering one-sided, negative stereotypical portrayal of the Chinese, which was still prevalent in Indonesian community; for giving the Chinese a voice, by expressing its concerns, advancing and defending its interest, and by interpreting issues from the Chinese community's perspectives. All these are implicitly found in the coverage on the activities of the Chinese community.

When asked why "The Dynamics of Chinese Community in Surabaya" section often reported the charities and the philanthropic activities of Chinese organizations, a senior journalist of *Qiandao Ribao* said,

> First of all, we want to show to the society that the Chinese are like any other ethnic groups in Indonesia, who have social concerns. Most of the news about the outreach programs and charities of Chinese organizations are rarely reported in the mainstream newspapers. So through this section, we want to let public know that we, the Chinese, also contribute to the Indonesian society, through our community outreach program and charities. We are members of Indonesian society. We also have a kind of social responsibility towards the society we live. … Besides that, well, we also want to show to the Chinese community the importance of having social concern. We hope that the coverage in the section could inspire more Chinese to get involved in community outreach programs and charities. While there are no direct financial gains or rewards, I am sure they will get credits that could be used for establishing *guanxi* for their business. Besides that, their names and their organizations appear in the news coverage in a very positive way.

Although he wrote the importance of social concern and responsibility, he implicitly mentioned the rewards that the Chinese could gain, that is, a good social network and relationship with bureaucracy, as well as social status and prestige. In other words, this could serve as good public relations for the Chinese individuals and for their organizations. An official of PSMTI agreed,

> Actually, you can find a number of Chinese Indonesian philanthropists. You can also find ordinary Chinese-Indonesians who often donate to charities. If there are no people like them, how can Chinese organizations survive? Nevertheless, culture of philanthropy is not deeply rooted in the Chinese community. We need to cultivate it. Reaching the point where awareness of philanthropy here is like the one in the West is a long journey, I guess. So in the mean time, we have to accept the fact that some Chinese donate to

> charity because their donation could improve their image and serve as public relations for their companies.

An officer of INTI said laughingly,

> I think news about the philanthropic activities or charities of Chinese organizations or individual is a good way of increasing the awareness of philanthropy or donation to charity. It can give others a kind of peer pressure. You see, the Chinese are concerned about face. Obviously, they do not want to be out-muscled by their colleagues of friends. This can attract others to give to charities.

While press coverage that features them or their organization is good bait for those who want to engage in charitable activities because of the possibility of earning social prestige, there are others who see that press coverage about them had the potentials of giving them troubles. *Pak* Jatmiko, a successful businessman who is in his late sixties and active in various Chinese organizations, is an example of a person who did not like being featured in the news coverage. He shared his unpleasant experience with several organizations that had connections with the military and bureaucracy. They often came to his office to solicit money for charities, which he doubted, with a veiled threat if he did not give them what they wanted. That is why he said,

> Press coverage on our associations is good. It will make them more visible and could attract people to join.[20] However, personally I don't want to appear in the coverage. It would invite problems and inconveniences. Many organizations would come to solicit money for reasons, which, I believe, are not related to charities.

Pak Jatmiko was not alone. Some Chinese businessmen whom I spoke to also faced this unpleasant experience. During the New Order era, it was very bad. Although now it was getting better, they still faced situations as such. Thus, people like them preferred not to be featured in press coverage, although they are willing to get involved in philanthropic activities of their organizations. In their opinion, being featured in the news coverage would put them under the

[20] *Pak* Jatmiko is active in five Chinese organizations, namely, PSMTI, Paguyuban Masyarakat Tionghoa Surabaya, a Chinese school alumni organization, a *zongqin hui*, and a *tongxiang hui*. According to *Pak* Jatmiko, it was difficult to attract young people to join the last two organizations. Only a few young Chinese wanted to join them. A lot of efforts have been invested, but they were not successful. He thought this was because young Chinese do not feel a connection toward their ancestral village and their clan.

spotlight and sometimes invite extortion. If their philanthropic activities are not reported, they are accused of not having social concern. They feel that they are in a double bind.

Many informants agreed that the situation was better now, but it did not mean that racial discrimination had disappeared. Most believed this happened because of the stigmatization and the negative perception towards the Chinese. In their opinion, the Chinese should improve their image in the society. One way of doing so was through philanthropic activities and charities. That was why these activities were often reported in *Qiandao Ribao*'s and *Guoji Ribao*'s coverage on Chinese community.

Since early August 2010, about two weeks before August 17, 2010, the Indonesian National Day, *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao* reported numerous activities of a number of Chinese organizations in Surabaya in celebrating the 65th anniversary of Indonesian independence. However, an event that received much coverage was the organizations' charities. In reporting them, the coverage exposed the Indonesian nationalistic attributes and symbols used in the activities. When reporting some Chinese organizations that worked together for charities on August 8, both *Guoji Ribao* and *Qiandao Ribao* highlighted that the Chinese who were involved in the charities wore a pin that had an image of Garuda, the Indonesian national emblem. News on other charitable activities held in conjunction with Indonesian independence also followed similar fashion. Members of the Chinese organizations involved in the activities were reported to wear accessories such as red and white ribbon (the colors of the Indonesian flag) and a cap embroidered with Indonesian flag, which were associated with Indonesian nationalism. Other local mainstream newspapers, such as *Jawa Pos*, *Radar Surabaya*, and *Surya*, also reported these charities. However, they did not mention that the Chinese wore accessories that had nationalistic symbols. For these newspapers and for Indonesian society in

general, there was nothing special in those accessories because the festivities of Indonesian independence were in the air since the first day of August. Buildings facing main streets were decorated with small Indonesian flags and the national emblem. Red and white drapes, the color of the Indonesian flag, billowed gracefully from the top of the building. Thus, wearing a Garuda pin, red and white ribbon, and other accessories that were associated with Indonesian nationalism were very common during that period and did not attract much attention. But that was not the case for the Chinese.

When asked why he wore a Garuda pin, *Shushu* Huat Beng, who was involved in the charity held on August 8, said, "Since we held this charity for celebrating our Independence Day, we thought of wearing something that shows the spirit of Indonesia. We decided to choose a Garuda pin." His wife, *Ayi* Ai Ling, added, "The charity was held in August. So Garuda pin a good accessory for *Agustusan*."[21] Phrases such as "the spirit of Indonesia" and "*Agustusan*" may reflect the desire of *Ayi* Ai Ling and *Shushu* Huat Beng, and as well as other Chinese who wear Indonesian nationalistic attributes to show that they are as nationalistic as other indigenous ethnic groups despite their Chinese background. Public display of Indonesian nationalism was important as a way of refuting the stigmatization of the Chinese, who are accused of having no loyalty to Indonesia, as *Pak* Jatmiko said,

> We, the Chinese, are also a part of the [Indonesian] nation. We are Indonesians who happen to be born as Chinese. Is that wrong? A person who was born as Javanese here is Indonesian. But you see, despite living and being born in Indonesia, the Chinese are always seen as the outsider. They are often accused as people whose loyalty goes to China. The pribumis cannot see that although we share the same ethnic background with those in China, we are red and white Chinese, we are not red Chinese.

By stating that the Chinese in Indonesia are red and white Chinese, the colors that refer to those of Indonesian flag, not red Chinese, which refers to the color of the flag of China, *Pak* Jatmiko

[21] *Agustusan* is a Javanese word, which means celebrating the month of August. It is commonly used for referring the festivity of the celebration of Indonesian independence.

emphasized that Chinese-Indonesians are true blue Indonesians, just like Javanese Indonesians, or Indonesians of other ethnic background.

Other charitable activities that received coverage were those held for celebrating Chinese traditional rituals, Indonesian holidays, for commemorating the anniversary of Chinese associations that organized them, or for celebrating Indonesian holidays. For example, *Guoji Ribao* and *Qiandao Ribao* in their February 8, 2010, wrote that in conjunction with Chinese New Year 2010 that fell on February 14, several Chinese organizations in Surabaya worked together to hold charity on February 6. They donated food staple to the poor who live in north Surabaya. They also provided free medical checkup and generic medicine for people who suffer from ailment. As quoted by *Guoji Ribao*, chairperson of the committee said,

> Chinese New Year is a moment of sharing and caring among family members. So here we are, celebrating Chinese New Year with those who are less fortunate than us, although Chinese New Year itself is still a week from today. We want to share our happiness with our fellow Indonesians. Despite our different ethnic background, we belong to one Indonesian family.

In their coverage of the event, both newspapers explained why Chinese New Year was important. They wrote that it was a time-honored tradition that the Chinese celebrated. By quoting the chairperson's statement above, Chinese newspapers, or in this case, *Guoji Ribao*, emphasized that Chinese New Year was a family celebration. It was the time when "sharing and caring among family members" was celebrated, and by celebrating the happy moment of Chinese New Year together, Chinese-Indonesians extended sharing and caring to other ethnic groups whom they considered as their family. In other words, through the coverage of the celebration of Chinese New Year, in which festivities and happiness were shared with other ethnic groups whom the Chinese considered as their family members and stressed that the

Chinese themselves were Indonesians, Chinese newspapers tried to invalidate the stigma that Chinese-Indonesians were exclusive.

Another example of charities was the one that *Qiandao Ribao* reported on September 3, 2010. The coverage wrote that on September 2, 2010, Sin Hwa High School Alumni Association (a Chinese high school in Surabaya) visited a village in the south of Surabaya where most of its residents were below poverty line. They went there to celebrate Eid Al-Fitr, an Islamic holiday, which fell on September 10, although almost all members of the association were not Muslim, by giving food staples to poor residents in the village and to an Islamic orphanage.[22] The chairperson of the committee was quoted to say,

> Our contribution reflects the concern of Chinese-Indonesians to the residents in this village and to the children in this orphanage. Despite different ethnic background, we help with sincerity. We all belong to the same family, the Indonesian family. We do hope that what we give could be useful for them.

The charity Sin Hwa High School alumni association was also featured in the same way as the Chinese New Year charities. The coverage reported that despite coming different ethnic and religious backgrounds, the alumni association participated in the celebration of the Islamic holiday because they felt that they were a part of "the Indonesian family," as the chairperson of the committee said. In quoting the chairperson's statement, the newspaper wanted to prove that the Chinese were not an "exclusive" group that did not want to mingle with other ethnic groups. Different from news and coverage on Chinese rituals and China, news on charities and other

[22] All mainstream local newspapers reported the charity that was held in conjunction with the celebration of Chinese New Year, but only Chinese newspapers reported the charity held by the alumni of Sin Hwa High School. This happened because the scales of the two events were different. In the charity held on February 2, it was a part of the celebration of Chinese New Year, a public holiday in Indonesia. Local bureaucracy and police department were roped in, and obviously it was much bigger than the one held by Sin Hwa High School. Because of this reason, namely, the scale of the events, mainstream newspapers did not report Sin Hwa High School' charities. There are numerous charities held for celebrating different special occasions. If all of them were reported, mainstream newspapers would not have enough space. Chinese newspapers are different. They have a special section devoted for the activities of Chinese communities. *Qiandao Ribao* reserves two or three pages for the activities of the Chinese community in Surabaya only.

philanthropic activities are more easily accepted by young Chinese. My experience with them supports this.

One evening, I invited my informants, Daniel, Jocelyn, Andrew and Sylvia, for dinner because I wanted to express my gratitude for their willingness to help me in this research. We went to a Pizza Hut restaurant inside a shopping mall in Surabaya. The restaurant was on the fifth floor. We sat near the window, from which we could see what was happening in the atrium on the ground floor. The atrium was packed with people. There was a donation drive for a local charity. Daniel said that nowadays there were so many donation drives for various charities in Surabaya that they made him suffer from "giving fatigue." We all laughed. We then continued our conversation. Since Daniel talked about donation drives and charities, we moved our topic to this one. Jocelyn initiated this topic. As a regular reader of *Qiandao Ribao* — she was the only one who can read and speak Chinese effortlessly in our group that evening — she observed that many Chinese organizations were reported to do charities. She then asked us whether the key motivator of the charities of Chinese organizations were altruistic or non-altruistic motivation. All responded to her statement.

> Andrew: For me, whether their motivation is altruistic or not is not important. As long as they are willing to do that and the society does get the benefit of the charities, we don't need to know what their motivation is. I don't think we can get the true an honest answer.
>
> Sylvia: I agree with Andrew. There are no ways that you will know their real motivation. Besides that, it is really good if Chinese organizations are reported to get involved with charities. This can eradicate the perception of the society that the Chinese are economic animals, who are always concern with profit making, even at the expense of others.

Andrew and Sylvia explained that what was important nowadays was overcoming the stereotypes of Chinese-Indonesians who like exploiting the *pribumis* for their own benefit.

They said that there were always some bad apples, but there more Chinese who were not like what the *pribumis* thought of. Andrew then added,

> Charity is like a cultural thing. I heard that American society is much into charity and community funding. We should cultivate this kind of attitude. It is good that Chinese organizations are very much involved in charities. They can start a new culture. This can help improve ethnic relationship

Daniel agreed, but he had some reservations. He said,

> Although we are of Chinese descent, we are Indonesians. If we have the means, helping our fellow Indonesians who are less fortunate than us is commendable. Charity can counter the stigma and the stereotypes of Chinese. It can make the relations between the Chinese and the non Chinese closer. It can also create a feeling of togetherness. However, I think, in the long run, the Chinese cannot be like Santa Claus, who is always ready with a lot of gifts to give. Doing charity is good, but it cannot be done all the time.

All of us, then, talked about this topic, while enjoying slices of pizza. All agreed with Daniel, that there is possibility that charities the Chinese organizations have done may perpetuate the perception that the Chinese are rich, and this can make them the object of extortion. Nevertheless, all agreed that charities could unite the Chinese and the non-Chinese.

My informants' opinion regarding the charity done by the Chinese, as often reported in the Chinese newspaper, resonates with other people. While they do not question that charity is good, especially when there are natural disasters, they are afraid that charity can reinforce the image that the Chinese are rich people and make them a cash cow again. Hendy, the chair of the youth wing of PSMTI, shared his opinion. He thought that various Chinese organizations preferred social and charitable activities simply because they could make them popular. Specifically, they could be featured in newspapers. He did not object to those kinds of activities because they were good examples that the Chinese also shared social concerns about the society where they lived. But he personally preferred activities that could empower people in the low rank of economic ladder because they would have a long-lasting impact. He said,

> Like a saying, don't give people fish, but teach them how to fish. Unfortunately, as far as know, there are no Chinese organizations which have programs like that. I am saying Chinese organizations here. There are of course individual Chinese who are involved in programs like that, so those programs are not carried out by a Chinese institution.

William, the chairperson of Surabaya branch of INTI, agreed with Hendy. Although charities were good for overcoming the stereotypes of Chinese-Indonesians, he preferred that Chinese organizations had empowerment programs, which he thought worked better in overcoming the prejudice. He said,

> I think these programs will work better. First, they leave long-lasting impacts. Secondly, they can force Chinese organizations work together with other organizations because they may not be able to be carried out by the Chinese organizations alone.

More importantly, he continued,

> Most organizations that have experiences with this kind of programs are not Chinese-based organizations. Thus, these program can also create an opportunity for Chinese and non Chinese organization to work together.

In William's opinion, the opportunity of working together across racial lines could help increase understanding between the Chinese and the non-Chinese organizations. This, according to William, could "improve the ethnic relationship between the Chinese and other ethnic groups." In so doing, William continued, "they may be able to create a movement that addresses social structures that impede Indonesians from pursuing social justice." This, he believed, was much better than just charities that many Chinese organizations did.

Despite differences in how they are carried out, inclusionary boundary markers are easily accepted by Chinese-Indonesians across the board. All Chinese believe that one major problem the Chinese encounter is that they are not accepted as an integral part of Indonesian society. To overcome this problem, the Chinese need to show that they are genuine Indonesians and really care for Indonesia. In their effort to do so, they emphasize their nationalism and a sense of belonging to Indonesian nation, as seen in the language they use, such as "caring and

sharing," and "the Indonesian family," in describing their activities. In this way, they create inclusionary boundaries. By establishing inclusionary boundaries, they seek to blur the distinction between the Chinese and other ethnic groups.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I argue that Chinese-Indonesians in Surabaya, especially those who received Chinese education, consume the symbolic forms of Chinese ethnicity and Indonesian nationality *Qiandao Ribao* and *Guoji Ribao* employed in their news reports and coverage for creating boundary markers. The symbolic forms of ethnicity are used establishing exclusionary boundaries, that is, reigniting the Chinese ethnic consciousness of Chinese-Indonesians whom they thought of losing it. Those of the Indonesian nationality are used for establishing inclusionary boundaries, namely, blurring the distinction between Chinese-Indonesians and other ethnic groups.

Chinese-Indonesians in Surabaya are not a homogenous group. Their heterogeneity can be seen from their different perceptions on the symbolic forms of ethnicity and nationality. These forms are "thick symbols" that offers various different interpretations, whose meaning is "up for grabs." Depending on their backgrounds and experiences, the Chinese-Indonesians ascribe different meanings and values to those symbols. They view the exclusionary and inclusionary boundaries in different perspectives.

The exclusionary boundaries I found during my field work are primarily Chinese ritual practices, and interest in China and Chinese culture. Because of the increasing popularity of Chinese traditional holidays, such as *Imlek*, Indonesians from various ethnic backgrounds participate in the celebration of this holiday. While they welcome this situation — because they

see it as a greater acceptance towards things Chinese, the older generations of Chinese who grew up in Chinese cultural milieu emphasize Chinese ritual practices, like ancestor veneration, which cultivate *xiao* — as exclusionary boundaries that mark one's Chinese identity. In their opinion, other ethnic group who join the celebration of Chinese traditional holidays would not participate in these rituals. In their opinion, these rituals are important because they are the spirit of being Chinese. Thus, the Chinese who do not perform the Chinese rituals are considered as the ones who are lack of Chineseness. This group of Chinese, in my opinion, seems to dictate their "thin" interpretation on Chinese rituals. There are other Chinese who hold the idea that rituals, such as ancestor veneration, are not inseparable from Chinese ethnic identity. Thus, performing them or not does not affect their ethnic identity. There are also Chinese who believe that those rituals are very traditional and outdated because, in their opinion, those rituals are neglected. This group of Chinese also thinks that those who believe that the rituals are part of Chineseness are trapped in a time lag. Similarly, interest in China and Chinese culture coming it fails to create an ethnic identity marker for all Chinese. The Chinese who try to regain their ethnicity through their "mythic" homeland and its "authentic" culture seem to neglect the diversity of their ethnic group. Due to different backgrounds and experiences, the Chinese do not share the same cultural symbols. Thus, common exclusionary boundaries do not gain currency in the Chinese community.

Different from exclusionary boundaries, inclusionary boundaries are more easily accepted by the Chinese across the board. All think that there is a need to overcome the negative portrayal and prejudice against the Chinese. They need to shore up their identity, which is not only Chinese, but Indonesian as well. In so doing, they establish inclusionary boundary markers that blur the distinction between their Chinese and Indonesian identity. Those who reject or are

reluctant to accept exclusionary boundaries grew up during the New Order era, received Indonesian education, and hence gradually became Indonesianized. Although, there were some efforts the Chinese undertook in maintaining Chinese traditions, language, and culture, the power of Indonesianization was much more than their agency in resisting the state's erasure of their ethnic heritage. As a result, they are not familiar with Chinese cultural milieu. And this is why they can accept inclusionary boundaries more easily, namely, the unfamiliarity with Chinese cultural milieu and the need to blur the distinction between the Chinese and the non Chinese.

In summary, a more democratic Indonesia has made a strong overture to Chinese-Indonesians by giving its consent to the re-establishment of the three pillars of Chinese community — Chinese education, Chinese media, and Chinese organizations, a reversal of the New Order regime's policy. This encourages the Chinese to celebrate their ethnicity. Inspired by the symbolic forms of ethnicity in Chinese newspaper, they create exclusionary boundaries that highlight their ethnic and cultural heritage. At the same time, greater acceptance towards them — which shifts their identity, from the China-based to the Indonesia-based — and the need to overcome the stigmas projected to them, motivate them to establish inclusionary boundaries that blur the distinction between themselves and other ethnic groups. However, the exclusionary boundaries, which seem to accentuate Chinese cultural milieu, are not so well accepted by the younger generations of Chinese who are not familiar with it. On the other hand, inclusionary boundaries are more easily accepted.

Part 3

Chinese Organizations

After the September 30, 1965, incident, like the other pillars of overseas Chinese community — Chinese school and Chinese media — Chinese organizations (*Huaqiao Shetuan*)[1] were abolished because of the allegation that they were connected to Indonesian Communist Party and to Communist China. Although the new regime focused on Baperki, a politically-oriented organization, other social organizations such as *zongqin hui* and *tongxiang hui*, were not spared. The new regime imposed a blanket ban on all Chinese organizations. These social organizations became dormant. However, their members still worked together to provide social support for the Chinese who suffered from the persecution. They also organized gatherings where fellow members can meet as well as social activities. Describing this situation, Lin *Laoshi* said that Chinese organizations were like the "spiritual home" for the Chinese. During the 1980s, when the political situation was more relaxed, some Chinese organizations appeared. However, since they use Indonesian term, "*yayasan* (foundation)," nobody knew that they were Chinese organizations. A Taiwanese journalist described these organizations as *wuxing de Huashe*, which literally means "Chinese organizations without form," as opposed to those before 1965, which he described as *youxing de huashe*, or "Chinese organizations with form" (Suryadinata, 2002:18–19).

Things started to change after May 1998 riot. Chinese associations, which were under the disguise of *yayasan*, claimed that they were Chinese organizations. *Zongqin hui*, or clan organizations, use their clan name in the name or their organization, and *tongxiang hui*, organizations based on the shared ancestral village in China, added the name of their ancestral

[1] In Chinese characters: 华侨社团.

village in their organization name. A number of Chinese established Chinese-based non-governmental organizations — and even some Chinese-based political parties — were formed.

The May 1998 riot also created a narrative of victimization among the Chinese. The victimization and the traumatic experiences during the New Order era triggered a collective memory in which shared grievances and shared perceptions of injustices are prevalent. In this part, following Brubaker's opinion that collective could build mechanisms of group formation and solidarity (Brubaker, 2004:12), I examine how the some Chinese organizations use the discourse of victimization to transform Chineseness, which re-emerges after 1998, into resistance. However, not all Chinese can accept this idea. On the contrary, due to their traumatic experience, discourse of victimization is transformed into discourse of reluctance.

Chapter 5

Chineseness as Discourse of Victimization, Resistance and Reluctance

On Sunday, May 8, 2011, Surabaya held a cultural parade to celebrate its 718th anniversary. Spectators started to gather in the streets where the parade would pass long before the scheduled start. Like previous parades, the parade this year was also a public display of the traditions and cultures of the people of Surabaya. Various cultural shows, especially the traditional ones, were performed by participants coming from social organizations, business associations, and the municipality's institutions. The starting point of the parade was the street in front of the office of the governor of East Java. It ended in the city park, a few miles away to the South. A tribune was set up for the mayor of Surabaya who would grace the event. At about noon, around one hour behind schedule, the master of ceremonies announced that the parade would start soon, after the vice mayor, who filled in for the mayor, gave an opening speech. The parade began with a group of people enacting a scene of the Majapahit court, an old Javanese empire in the 14th century, to remind people of the glory of the past of East Java. Then, troupes of traditional cultural performance followed, such as Reog dance, other traditional East Java dances, and gamelan ensemble on a flower-decorated truck. There were also traditional cultural shows from Sumbawa and Papua, performed by the Sumbawans and Papuans living in Surabaya, as the MC announced. Modern performance was also found in the parade, such as marching band, performed by students from some schools. To show that Surabaya was a tolerant city, people wearing costumes of church ministers, Catholic priests, Islamic clerics, Buddhist monks, and Hindu priests joined the parade. There was one thing, however, that distinguished the parade this year from those in previous years, that is, the presence of Chinese cultural performances, such as dragon and lion dances. A friend told me that this was the first time a lot of dragon and

lion dance troupes joined the parade. I observed that Chinese dragon and lion dance troupes were not only from Chinese social organizations and Chinese temples, but from Islamic schools as well. I saw a lion dance troupe whose female performers wore veils carrying their school crest, an Islamic Senior High School. When a lion dance troupe jerked and swayed down in front of the tribune where the vice mayor of Surabaya sat, the vice mayor stood up and gave the dancers a *hongbao,*[1] the spectators clasped their hands. Joyous atmosphere was in the air.

The parade commemorating the anniversary of Surabaya is like a stage for the performance of culturally-informed codes of Surabaya. It is not difficult to see the symbolic references to the glory of the Surabaya's history and its characteristics, such as openness, tolerance, and camaraderie among people of different ethnic background as embodied in the term of *arek Surabaya*, which refers to the native of Surabaya, regardless of one's religious and ethnic background.[2] Diverse ethnic cultural performances in this parade are the projection of Surabaya ideals, that is, a sense of community belonging among people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds who live in this city. Through Chinese cultural performances, the city of Surabaya wants to show its openness and acceptance toward its Chinese residents, who were discriminated against during the New Order era, and the Chinese want to display that they are a part of Surabaya community, by participating in the parade and contributing their ethnic cultural performance. Thus, in this sense of community belonging, the Chinese are also considered as a part of Surabaya community.

Tante Goat Nio (see Chapter 1 for her background), who went to watch the parade with her grandchildren, told me that she was happy that she could watch the lion dance, which was not allowed during the New Order era. She said,

[1] *Hong Bao* is a red envelope stuffed with money, a Chinese tradition of monetary gift.
[2] See Chapter 1 for a detailed discussion on the concept of *arek Surabaya*.

> Nowadays, Chinese-Indonesians enjoy freedom. They can celebrate their tradition and culture. It is different from the New Order. I never thought that we could see lion and dragon dances here in Surabaya.

An old Chinese gentleman who also watched the parade said to me,

> Nowadays, Indonesian society is more open in accepting Chinese culture. In the New Order era, it is impossible to perform lion and dragon dance.

The comment that Tante Goat Nio and the gentleman made reflected the perception of the Chinese community, that is, since Suharto stepped down in 1998, there have been greater openness toward Chinese culture. Chinese tradition and culture can be celebrated in public. Chinese New Year, known as *Imlek*, has been a public holiday since President Megawati came to power in 2011. Looking at the new situation, some segments of the Chinese community believe that the designation of *Imlek* as a national holiday ushered the revival of the Chinese community (*Suara Pembaruan*, January 26, 2006). But the reality is not as beautiful as a painting. While there has been increasing tolerance toward the Chinese, racial discrimination toward them is still rampant.

A *Jakarta Post* article by Christine Susanna Tjhin, a researcher in the Center for Strategic and International Studies, "Seeing Red: 'Imlek' and the Politics of Recognition" called into question the opinion that the celebration of *Imlek* as a national holiday signified the revival of Chinese Indonesian community. She wrote,

> To say that *Imlek* reflects the "victory" of the Chinese Indonesian in gaining recognition, as some figures have been quoted saying in various media, is also questionable. Is it good enough that we have *barongsai* dancing here and there, while the ethnic relations bill in the parliament's National Legislation Program risks further compartmentalization of ethnic groups in Indonesia? Is it fulfilling enough that President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono celebrates *Imlek* at a festive gala dinner, while there are still reports of numerous poor Chinese-Indonesians being denied access to birth certificates or identification cards? (The Jakarta Post, February 2, 2006)[3]

[3] As *The Jakarta Post* is an English language newspaper, Thjin's article was written in English. She wrote an article with the similar topic in Indonesian, "Imlek, Esensialisme dan Pengakuan [Imlek, Essentialism, and Recognition]," which was published in *Kompas* on January 28, 2006.

Tjhin's article serves as a wake-up call for the Chinese Indonesian community that openness and acceptance toward Chineseness and the celebration of Chinese traditions in public do not mean that racial discrimination toward them has been eradicated. Although the fall of the New Order regime and changing national leadership in 1998 brought about political and social reform, which resulted in the abolition of many discriminatory rules and regulations, the "soft knife of policies" still disrupts their everyday life (Das and Kleinman, 2002:1). Racial discrimination is still part and parcel of the lives of Chinese-Indonesians, although it is not as severe as it used to be during the New Order era. *Bapak* Goen's experience illustrates this.

Bapak Goen is a small grocery store owner in a suburb in South Surabaya. He has been running his business for more than 20 years. In early February 2010, he had to renew his license. However, the fee that the city official asked him was much more than the amount the regulation stipulated. He grumbled, but he paid the money the official asked. He told me that the city official asked that amount of money because he was Chinese. If he were not Chinese, the official would still extort money, but not that much. His story was not an isolated case. Many of my informants told me that they often became the target of extortion. Describing this situation, Harry Tjhan Silalahi, a Chinese community leader and scholar from the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a think tank in Jakarta, said, "Keturunan Tionghoa masih kerap jadi sapi perah (Ethnic Chinese are still being milked like cows)."[4]

Besides the covert one, the Chinese also experience overt discrimination, as seen in the experience of Anthony Lee, a Chinese Indonesian from Jogjakarta. On September 8, 2009, Lee wrote to "Letters to the Editor" section of *Kompas* daily about his experience in buying a plot of land in Jogjakarta. The land that he bought was a free-hold land. However, a public notary whom

[4] "Sisa Diskriminasi di Mana-mana [Residues of Discrimination are Everywhere]," *Tempo* August 16 – 22, 2004.

he engaged for the land purchase told him that there was a local regulation in Jogjakarta that prohibited Indonesians of Chinese descent to have a free-hold land in that area, they were only allowed to have a lease-hold title, which had to be renewed every 20 or 30 years.[5] Feeling unfairly treated, Lee argued that the National Agrarian Law did not prohibit Indonesian citizens of foreign descent to have a free-hold land and that based on Indonesian Citizenship Law of 2006, *pribumi* and *non pribumi* citizens[6] were no longer distinguished, all were Indonesian citizens.[7] He wrote that he had to accept the fact that he had to convert the land he purchased from the free-hold title to lease-hold title, after the notary told him that the National Land Agency would not issue the certificate if he did not convert the land title. Lee ended his letter by expressing his bitterness because of being racially discriminated.

Lee's case appears to be an isolated one as the prohibition against Indonesians of Chinese descent owning free-hold land only occurs in Jogjakarta. In other parts of Indonesia, there is no restriction for the Chinese to have free-hold land. However, the prohibition was sometimes cited as the reason why anti-Chinese riots rarely occurred in Jogjakarta. Ahmad Norma Permata, a researcher from Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, wrote that anti-Chinese riots often happened in Solo, a city nearby Jogjakarta because the ethnic Chinese were allowed to have free-hold land, and this triggered a feeling of social injustice among the natives (*Kompas*, July 26, 2009). The feeling of injustice was then let out as anti-Chinese riots that often rocked the city. Permata overlooks that there are cities in Indonesia where there are no restrictions for the Chinese to have free-hold land, and yet no anti-Chinese riots occur. The point learned from

[5] The regulation the notary told Anthony was the Jogjakarta Gubernatorial Decree No. K.898/1/A/1975. Although this decree contradicted National Agrarian Law No. 5 Year 1960 and Presidential Decree No. 34 Year 1984 that obligate the implementation of National Agrarian Law in Jogjakarta, it has not been abolished until now.
[6] *Pribumi* refers to the indigenous ethnic groups in Indonesia. *Non pribumi* refers to the non indigenous groups, especially the Chinese.
[7] Anthony made a mistake here. It was not the Indonesian Citizenship Law of 2006, but the Third Amendment of Indonesian constitution that legally abolished the term *pribumi* and *non pribumi*.

Permata's research is that the result of his study shows that racial discrimination toward the Chinese is still rampant.

Another kind of racial discrimination that targets the Chinese is citizenship issues. The Indonesian constitution abolished what so called the "colonial caste structure," a social structure that classified Indonesian residents in colonial Indonesia into three groups, namely, Europeans in the first tier, foreign Eastern ethnic groups — including Chinese — in the second tier, and the natives at the bottom of the social hierarchy (Wertheim and The, 1962:230). Independent Indonesia only recognizes two categories of residents — that is, citizens and aliens. Based on the Constitution, Indonesian citizens are equal before the law and accorded the same rights, regardless of their ethnic origin. However, in reality, the government compartmentalized the Indonesian society into two groups, that is, the *pribumi*, and the *non pribumi*, a term which usually referred to the Chinese. Through discriminatory rules and regulations, the government marginalized Chinese-Indonesians. They are required to have *Surat Bukti Kewarganegaraan Republik Indonesia*, that is, Indonesian citizenship certificate, known as SBKRI. As the name suggests, it is a proof of Indonesian citizenship. However, only the Chinese are required to have this certificate.

In 1996, President Suharto issued Presidential Decree No. 56/1996 in which SBKRI was decreed as no longer valid. Article 4 Section 2 of the decree mentions that any Indonesian citizens who have a National ID card, a Family Card, or a Birth Certificate no longer needs an SBKRI. But in reality, Chinese-Indonesians were required to produce SBKRI every time they wanted to get a loan from bank and other financial institution, to open a bank account, to purchase house or land, to register in school,[8] and to get birth certificate, ID cards, and other

[8] During the New Order era, Chinese Indonesians who had not reached 18 years old could use their parents' SBKRI for school registration. After they reached 18 years old, they had to possess their own SBKRI.

documents.[9] After *Reformasi*, through Presidential Instruction No. 4/1999, President Habibie reiterated that SBKRI was not required. In a meeting with the parliament on June 10, 2002, Minister of Human Rights and Justice, Yuzril Ihza Mahendra, said that his ministry no longer issued SBKRI and that a birth certificate could be used as a proof of Indonesian citizenship (*Kompas*, June 11, 2002). However, many government offices still required Chinese-Indonesians to produce SKBRI. The absence of ancillary regulation is often cited by bureaucracy as the reason why SBKRI was still needed. A well-known example was the case of Alan Budi Kusuma and Susi Susanti, national shuttlers who won gold medals in the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, the first Indonesian athletes that won gold medals in the Olympic Games. They were required to produce SBKRI as a proof that they were Indonesian citizens (*Kompas*, April 10, 2004). *Tempo* (August 16-22, 2004) wrote that household names like them were still required to produce SBKRI, let alone ordinary Chinese-Indonesians.

A new Indonesian citizenship law, issued in 2006, again emphasized that SBKRI was no longer required, and that birth certificate could be used as a proof of Indonesian citizenship. Yet, Chinese-Indonesians were still required to produce SBKRI as a proof of Indonesian citizenship. On January 30, 2009, *Kompas* reported that Chinese-Indonesians who wanted to get passport or to renew it in the Immigration Office in Pontianak were required to produce SBKRI.

It was not only the living who were discriminated against but the dead as well. *Kompas* (Feb 26, 2007) and *Tempo* (March 1, 2007) reported that Deli Serdang regency in North Sumatra issued a law that discriminated Chinese cemetery by imposing the so-called *Pajak Kuburan Mewah* (Luxurious Cemetery Tax). It stipulated that a tomb that was larger than two meter

[9] In December 1998, when I was a student at the National University of Singapore in Singapore, my passport would be expired in August 1999. I went to the Indonesian embassy there to renew my passport. I had all the documents needed for passport renewal. I had the copy of my birth certificate, in which it was stated that I was Indonesian citizen. But I did not bring the copy of my SBKRI. Since I could not produce a copy of SBKRI, my passport renewal application was rejected.

square was taxable, although it was against tax law No. 34/2000 that exempted cemetery as a taxable object. Many Indonesians, both the Chinese and the non-Chinese ethnic groups, believed that this by-law targeted the Chinese. A Chinese tomb traditionally is more than two meters square, the normal size in a public cemetery. The Chinese who want to have a bigger plot use a private cemetery, usually managed by Chinese organizations. Since it is the Chinese who often need bigger burial ground, the belief that the city officials targeted the Chinese was not unfounded.

Victimization and Collective Memory

Cases of discrimination above illustrate that despite greater acceptance and openness toward the Chinese, anti-Chinese sentiment, and discrimination are still pervasive. According to Ignatius Wibowo, the former chair of the Center for Chinese Studies at the University of Indonesia, stigmatization, marginalization and victimization characterized the lives of Chinese-Indonesians (1999:xv-xvi) . The Chinese were stigmatized as exclusive, anti-social, and China-oriented. Their culture was depicted as having destructive influences and as being inappropriate for Indonesians. Because of this social stigma, they were considered as intruders to the united "native" nation-state of Indonesia (Nonini 2001). They were incompatible with an Indonesian nation, and their very existence in Indonesia was labeled as the "Chinese problem" (Allen, 2006:387). Hence, they were marginalized. Their marginalization in social, political and cultural sphere was justified as the regime's effort to solve this problem. It was reflected in the issuance of rules and regulations that discriminated against the Chinese. Consequently, the marginalization process victimized the Chinese. Wibowo wrote that the word "victimization" was derived from Latin word "victima," which meant an animal that was sacrificed. Thus, the

policy of victimization toward the Chinese was intended to make them as a sacrificed animal (1999:xvi). Although the policy of victimization was not formalized into a set of law, it was widely practiced. Thus, the feeling of being a sacrificed animal was rampant among the Chinese. One informant, *Bapak* Goen, said,

> There are 12 Chinese zodiac signs[10] in the world, except in Indonesia. Here the Chinese-Indonesians' Chinese zodiac signs are *sapi perah* (cash cow) and *kambing hitam* (scapegoat).

Another respondent, Samas, the then deputy chair of East Java chapter of *Paguyuban Social Marga Tionghoa Indonesia* (PSMTI), a Chinese-based organization, agreed. He said,

> During the New Order era, the Chinese were [like cattle and] put in a cage. It was said that they were put in Tapos[11] and fed. When they grew and became fat, they were slaughtered.

Bapak Goen's sarcastic remark on Chinese-Indonesians' Chinese zodiac signs and Samas' allusion to Suharto's Tapos for describing the fate of Chinese-Indonesians resonated with the feeling many Chinese-Indonesians had — that is, they often became scapegoats and the target of social unrest in Indonesian history. They are turned into a cash cow when they need a paper from bureaucracy, from applying for a business license to getting an ID card or driving license, just because of their ethnic background. Here, Chinese ethnicity was a sign of wealth gained from exploiting the natives, and thus it served as the justification for overcharge that they had to pay.

[10] Chinese zodiac signs are represented by the combination of twelve animals (rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, rooster, dog and pig) and five basic elements (wood, fire, earth, metal and water). Thus, there are five types of each animal sign, for example, wood dragon, fire dragon, earth dragon, metal dragon, and water dragon. In Indonesian, the word *sapi* means ox or cow.

[11] Tapos is the location of Suharto's ranch, at the foot of Pangrango Mountain, West Java. In this place he developed an experimental station for agriculture and animal husbandry, as well as built a place for retreat. He was very proud of Tapos, and often invited guests and other world leaders to this place. Tapos became famous in March 1990, when Suharto invited a number of Chinese-Indonesian tycoons to Tapos and asked them to transfer 25% of the equity shares of their companies to cooperatives as a way of establishing a fair income distribution in Indonesian society. For the Chinese tycoons invited, Suharto's demand might be seen as extortion. See Bachriadi and Lucas (2001), Mallarangeng (2002), and Thee (2006).

The racially-specific overcharge not only occurred in the Chinese' dealing with bureaucracy but in a variety of contexts as well. In neighborhood association, for example, the Chinese were expected to contribute more than the natives. Even when they dealt with the natives for a kind of business transaction, the natives felt that they entitled to charge more.

Samas shared his experience when he bought some bananas from a road-side vendor in Malang. She sold bananas to him twice as much as the price she sold to a Javanese who bought it before Samas. When he asked the vendor why she charged him more, the vendor said that because he was Chinese. The Chinese were usually rich, richer than the Javanese, so of course the price for the Chinese should be higher. Samas then asked her whether there were Chinese in her neighborhood and what they did for a living. She said that there was one Chinese family in which the husband worked as a mechanic in a small repair shop, and the wife worked as a part-time domestic helper. Samas asked her again whether this Chinese family was rich. She answered that just like her they were not rich. Samas questioned here why she thought the Chinese were rich. She replied that people said so. Based in this incident, Samas concluded that the vendor's opinion reflected the society's perception on the Chinese — a perception which was often unfounded and triggered discrimination toward the Chinese.

Anti-Chinese atrocities, oppressive state policies, and everyday discrimination characterize the lives of Chinese-Indonesians. They gave the Chinese "a paralyzing sense of being eternally victimized" (Ang, 2001b:24) and triggered "a profound sense of unjust victimization … for which there was apparently no clear, livable explanation, no story to tell except through the discourse of victimhood itself" (Ang, 2001b:25). Psychologically, they were very damaging as "they invoke a feeling of helplessness because race — the only characteristic that could be changed to avoid future attacks — is immutable" (Kang, 1993:1928). It was the

feeling of helplessness that made atrocities, discriminative policies and everyday discrimination traumatic.

> Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life. Unlike commonplace misfortunes, traumatic events generally involve threats to life or bodily integrity, or a close personal encounter with violence and death. (Herman, 1997:33)

Acts of violence may not be automatically traumatic. They could be traumatic if they make the traumatized people alert all time because of their constant wary that similar violence may take place or if the memory of the violence persists as if it haunts the traumatized people. It means that it is the imagination and the interpretation of acts of violence that make violence become trauma. In this case, trauma serves as a social construction the meaning of which goes beyond the acts of violence themselves. Events, in Alexander's opinion, "are not inherently traumatic. Trauma is a socially mediated attribution" (2004:8). Thus, through imagination, interpretation and construction, victimization is culturally traumatizing.

Cultural trauma, according to Alexander, occurs "when members of a collective feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever, and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways" (2004:1). His understanding of cultural trauma as such describes the cultural trauma Chinese-Indonesians experience, as a result of victimization they suffer because of their Chinese background. They were marked as "the cultural Other" and undesirable to be constructed as "the Indonesian Self" (Heryanto, 2008:74). They were framed as an "unimaginable community of the nation" (Kusno, 2000:165). Their cultural signs and identities are money, bribery, corruption and exploitation (Siegel, 1986:244-249). They were seen as a foreign element that threatens the nation by expropriating the nation's economy (Chua, 2004). Because of this discourse, the oppression toward the Chinese seemed to be justified as an

act of protest toward an enemy. This becomes a traumatizing experience for the Chinese. "Experiencing trauma can be understood as a sociological process that defines a painful injury to the collectivity, establishes victims, attributes responsibility, and distributes the ideal and material consequences" (Alexander, 2004:22). The repetition of the occurrences of traumatizing experiences changes the experiences into a collective memory for the Chinese.

Collective memory is a social construction embedded in time and space. Collective memory is not a construction of the past. Rather, it is a "reconstructed picture" framed in the present as a response to present problems and perspectives (Halbwachs, 1982:60). Thus, memory is not a constant variable. Memory is the way people's thought and perception work in a social context. It is not only mediated but structured by social conditions as well. "It is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize and localize their memories" (Halbwachs, 1992: 38). In other words, collective memory "is not simply a mental operation that a person uses or that she or he can refine and improve. It is, instead, a phenomenon of community" (Blair, 2006:52). This means that people need the testimony and evidence of others to authenticate their interpretations of their own experience and to provide information of the contents of their memories.

> To be aided by other's memory, ours must not merely be provided testimony and evidence but must also remain in harmony with theirs. … A remembrance is gained not merely by reconstituting the image of a past event a piece at a time. That reconstruction must start from shared data or conceptions. These are present in our mind as well as theirs, because they are continually being passed back and forth. This process occurs only because all have been and still are members of the same group. (Halbwachs, 1980:31)

Because of group interaction, collective memory becomes "a record of resemblances" (Halbwachs, 1980:86), a point of view that Halbwachs calls a "social framework for memory" (Halbwachs, 1992). In the social framework for memory, narrativity plays an important role in organizing experiences and communicating one's memories to others. Jerome Bruner writes that

collective memory is realized through narrativity, which he calls "memory schemata" in which past experiences are placed into socially shareable frameworks. Their collective memory helps them elucidate the notion of their ethnic "ways of seeing," which has a role in the ethnic group-making process (Brubaker, 2004:77). For them, collective memory is not a lament of the past, but, as Hannah Arendt says, a way to address the future, and to inspire future action.

> Without remembrance and without the reification which remembrance needs for its own fulfillment … the living activities of action, speech, and thought would lose their reality at the end of each process and disappear as though they have never been … the 'dead letter' replaces something which grew out and for a fleeting moment indeed existed as the 'living spirit.' (Arendt, 1958:95)

The 1998 reform that brought winds of change introduced more freedom for Chinese-Indonesians. This freedom, together with acceptance and openness toward Chinese ethnicity and culture, transform victimization into a social and political tool for leaders of the Chinese-Indonesian community. Chinese-Indonesians' collective memory of victimhood and traumatic events here served as "a push for greater representation among many ethnic Chinese within civil society" (Turner, 2003:349). In other words, the collective memory of victimhood and traumatic events inspire the Chinese to struggle for political recognition.

Seeds of Political Recognition

In the April 1998 vol. 34, no. 4 edition of *Asian Business* magazine, correspondent Susan Schlachter, wrote a report, entitled "The Flames of Hatred," on anti-Chinese riot that occurred in Pamanukan, West Java.

> The riots that rippled across Indonesia toward the beginning of this year hit Pamanukan on February 13. They began in similar circumstances: with rumors of profiteering among shopkeepers sweeping the small Javanese town. … The protesters began stoning a pharmacy, then a food store. Then other people started joining in, attacking shops and shouting "cina promboro [destroy the Chinese]."

> Once again, Indonesia's ethnic Chinese had become everyone's favorite scapegoat. … The rioters often do not confine themselves to shops but will attack any Chinese-owned property, including homes. Churches are another common target (many ethnic Chinese are Christians). Four of Pamanukan's five churches were destroyed in the recent riot and the town's five hotels, all Chinese owned, were ransacked.
>
> The scene is repeated all over the town centre, where about 150 shops and homes were looted and many set alight with petrol. Hundreds rioted on that grim Friday afternoon, throwing stones at shops and homes, driving the occupants out before ransacking the premises. Buildings in large stretches of the main road were reduced to charred skeletons in fires that raged for 24 hours. Vehicles were also attacked, and the twisted metal remains of burnt-out trucks and cars line the road into town. Buildings and cars owned by pribumi have been hastily daubed with "Muslim family," or "pribumi property." Some stores and homes have Muslim prayer mats draped over their doors or hanging from balconies. The smashed shop-fronts of ethnic Chinese properties are boarded up and marked with a different kind of graffiti: "Cina tobluk mata duit" ("stupid Chinese who only see money") and "Usir benok Cina" ("Chinese out").
>
> Television news footage of the riot showed beaming looters triumphantly carrying away televisions, furniture and crates of food. Dazed ethnic Chinese women spoke of jewelry being ripped off their throats and wrists as they fled to the police station, where they remained in hiding overnight before fleeing to Jakarta and other big cities. "They bought their cars and pedicabs," says a pribumi waitress at a Chinese-owned restaurant. "They took our tables, our chairs, they even took our clothes. We just ran away."
>
> "The streets were packed with people, no cars could pass," says resident Suhamin. "I saw motorbikes set on fire and I know all the Chinese-owned restaurants were destroyed. There were no Chinese on the streets; most of them went into hiding. The Chinese here need to fear for their lives. They are in danger."

About two months later, *New York Times* (June 8, 1998) reported the riot in Jakarta.

> In addition to the looting and arson that was largely aimed at Chinese neighborhoods in three days of rioting in Jakarta last month, human rights and women's aid groups have begun to document what they say appears to have been an organized campaign of assaults, gang rapes and killings of ethnic Chinese women.
>
> The aid workers say they have talked with dozens of victims or relatives of victims and they estimated today that more than 100 women and girls may have been attacked and raped in Jakarta alone as their neighborhoods were burning between May 13 and 15. There were reports of similar attacks during riots in other cities that preceded the fall of President Suharto on May 21.
>
> The reported attacks ranged from the degrading and humiliating to the horrific; from women who were made to strip and perform calisthenics in public to women who were repeatedly raped and then thrown into the flames of burning buildings.

The reports involve girls and women ranging in age from 10 to 55, the aid workers said. Some were gang-raped in front of a crowd in the Chinese commercial district of Glodok, said Rita Kolibonso, executive director of the women's group *Mitra Perempuan*.

"Some of the rapists said, 'You must be raped because you are Chinese and non-Muslim,'" said Ms. Ita, who works at a crisis center called *Kalyana Mitra*. … Slowly and painfully, she and other counselors have compiled accounts like these:

- A student was abducted at a bus stop, taken to a swamp near the airport and raped by four men in a car. There was a green uniform in the car and she asked her abductors if they were police officers. "If you are police, you have to save me," she told them, according to Ms. Ita. One of them answered: "No, I have to give you a lesson. You are a woman and you are beautiful and you are part of the Chinese."
- In the midst of the riot, a group of men stopped a city bus and forced out all the non-Chinese women. "Then they chose the beautiful women among the Chinese and raped them inside the bus," Father Sandiyawan said. "The victims of that incident are really depressive. They are in the hospital with their families. They are trying to hide themselves from the public."
- A 10-year-old girl returning from school discovered that the shophouse where her family lived and worked had been burned. As she went in search of her parents, she was seized by two men and raped in front of her neighbors.
- One woman, a bank officer, told a local reporter that she was seized from the back of a motorcycle in the middle of the riot and thrown to the ground by a group of men. "She told me she was so hysterical and she was so panicked that she does not remember what happened," the reporter said. "But she showed me a lot of bruises on her body, especially on her legs."
- In an incident of public humiliation, a group of about 15 men entered a bank where 10 ethnic Chinese employees were taking refuge from the riot. The men locked the door, made the women take off their clothes and ordered them to dance. In a similar incident during a riot in the city of Medan on May 4, 20 female students at a teachers' training college were stopped by police officers when they tried to flee the violence on their campus. The officers forced them to take off their clothes and perform calisthenics. In both cases, the women reported that they were fondled but not raped. In another incident of harassment during the riot in Jakarta, a number of ethnic Chinese women were reportedly stripped and made to swim in a pond.

Ms. Ita told of an ethnic Chinese woman who hid in her house with her two younger sisters as the rioters approached. About 10 men came into the house and found the sisters on the third floor. They made the two younger women take off their clothes and told the older sister to stand in a corner, "because you are too old for us."

Meanwhile, arsonists entered the lower floors and set fire to the building. "After they had raped her two sisters, the two men said to her, 'We are finished and we are satisfied and because you are too old and ugly we weren't interested in you.' So they took her two sisters and pushed them to the ground floor where there was already fire, and they were killed.

> "When her mother heard the news, she had a heart attack and died," Ms. Ita said. "So now this woman is in a psychiatric hospital. Sometimes she cries when she tells the story and sometimes she is normal again. That is one of the stories we have confirmed."

Descriptions of racial violence as such serve a powerful narrative of victimization. The descriptions of the lootings, the attacks, and the rapes provide images in which Chinese ethnicity is the reason why the victims became the target. The narrative of victimization of the Chinese as such was often cited in speeches and actions of Chinese organizations in Indonesia to garner support for unity among Chinese-Indonesians. For example, in a speech before a multiethnic audience in 2004, the Chairman of Perhimpunan INTI "reiterated the victimization of the ethnic Chinese throughout Indonesian history before calling for reconciliation and the restoration of citizenship rights to the ethnic Chinese" (Hoon, 2008:92). The narrativity of victimization on public stage "marks an important moment of self empowerment for previously subordinated and oppressed peoples, paving the way for efforts to redress past injustice and present disadvantage" (Ang, 2001b:22). It is the repetitive narrativity of the victimization and traumatic experiences that changes victimization and traumatic experiences into a collective memory for the Chinese, a collective memory in which shared grievances and shared perceptions of injustices are prevalent. The narrativity of their cultural trauma and victimization as a collective memory could build mechanisms of group formation and solidarity (Brubaker, 2004:12). The case of the Pasuruan[12] Chapter of *Paguyuban Sosial Marga Tionghoa Indonesia*, usually abbreviated as PSMTI,[13] (which literally means the Indonesian Chinese Social Clan organization), as told by Hendy, the head of the youth-wing of PSMTI, illustrates this.

[12] Pasuruan is a regency in East Java Province.

[13] PSMTI was founded in Jakarta on August 28, 1998. Its Indonesian name, *Paguyuban Social Marga Tionghoa* (Indonesian Chinese Social Clan Association), is innocuous, but that is not the case with its Chinese name, *Yinhua Baijiaxing Xiehui*. *Yinhua*, which means "Indonesian Chinese," and *Baijiaxing*, which literally means "one hundred surnames," refers to the Chinese surnames, and by extension to Chinese people, seeming to give emphasis on Chineseness. *Xiehui* means association. Thus, its Chinese name suggests the spirit of this organization — that is, reviving Chinese clan spirit, namely, "self-help and community-assistance" (Kong and Yeoh, 2003:207).

> In 1999, there was an anti-Chinese riot in Pasuruan. This riot triggered solidarity among the Chinese across the country toward their fellow Chinese in this city. They shared the grievance the Chinese of Pasuruan suffered. Support was outpoured for the latter. In the same year, PSMTI then opened a chapter there to provide advocacy. This is the reason why the Pasuruan chapter of PSMTI was founded earlier than the East Java province chapter, which was founded in 2003.

The Chinese-Indonesians' experience of victimhood and traumatic events in the past was reconstructed to forge a sense of solidarity that was intended to develop a new identity by integrating information about their ethnic past experience with the present condition. Their solidarity and unity were needed in their demand for reconciliation process that leads to equality. A Chinese who was in the legislative council of Surabaya said:

> May 1998 riot really disturbed humanity. It not only brought about a great loss and deep trauma for the Chinese, but fear and worry about their future and existence in Indonesia as well. The loss, trauma, worry, and fear triggered the awareness of the Chinese to do something to address the problems and racial discriminations that penetrates their daily life.

William Raharja, the former head of the Surabaya chapter of *Perhimpunan Indonesian Tionghoa* (Chinese Indonesian Association), known as INTI,[14] told me,

> When the New Order regime was in power, Chinese-Indonesians were racially discriminated. Various policies were made to marginalize them in cultural, social, and political sphere. The only field that was open for them was the economy. Their "privilege" in economy made them successful in dominating the Indonesian economy. This triggered social jealousy and made them the target of the people's anger and frustration when the economy was getting worse. For the sake of their vested interest, many bad politicians transformed this social jealousy into racial hatred, which culminated in the case of May 1998 riot. We have to take a lesson from this riot. … May 1998 riot was an eye-opener for us, that is, we have to do something. We should not be trapped in the "privilege" the New Order gave us, the Chinese. The privilege is in quotation marks because it discriminated us, changed us into cash cow and scapegoat. We have to do something, or else, the May 1998 tragedy could occur again.

[14] INTI was founded in Jakarta on April 10, 1999. Originally the founders of INTI named their organization *Perhimpunan Indonesia Tionghoa* (Chinese Indonesian Association), but the government showed its objection on that name. So, it was changed into the current name, *Perhimpunan Indonesian Keturunan Tionghoa* (Association of Indonesians of Chinese Descent). Only after the name was changed could they register their organization. However, the Chinese name of the organization remained the same, that is, *Yinni Huayi Zonghui*, which means the general organization (*zonghui*) of Indonesian people (*Yinni*) of Chinese descent (*Huayi*). This name suggests the ideology of this organization, that is, it emphasizes on "people of Chinese descent (*Huayi*) in Indonesia, not ethnic Chinese (*Huaren*).

Hendy also shared the opinion.

> We were shocked to see May 1998 riot. We asked why this [racial discrimination against the Chinese] always occurred in the history of Indonesia. Together with other groups, such as non-ethnic based pro-reform university student organization, we founded anti-riot groups. This group became the embryo of a Chinese organization that we founded. There have been some Chinese organizations before, but they did not dare to use the name "Chinese." So we pushed some Chinese leaders to found Paguyuban Masyarakat Tionghoa Surabaya (The Association of the Chinese of Surabaya). At first, they wanted to name their organization Paguyuban Pengusaha Surabaya (The Association of the Businessmen of Surabaya). We felt that we were discriminated against, so in our struggle, why don't we use the word "Chinese," which was our ethnic identity. We felt that we should not hide our Chinese identity. In fact, we should strengthen our identity, not for ethnic or chauvinistic reason, but for the sake of our civil rights.[15]

Sentences such as "worry triggered the awareness of the Chinese to do something," "We have to do something, the May 1998 tragedy could occur again," "We were shocked to see May 1998 riot," "we should strengthen our identity," and the like are like mantras for ethnic bargain — that is, negotiation between the ethnic minority and the majority which specifies inter-ethnic relationship and channels politics into a fair condition and peaceful direction (Jenne, 2007:14). Discourse of victimization becomes a tool for getting a better ethnic bargain and paving the ways for overcoming the New Order oppressive policies that marginalized the Chinese.

Although there have been a number of anti-Chinese riots in the history of Indonesia, the May 1998 riot serves as an institutional opportunity, that is, a "political environment that emerges, often unexpectedly, to alter the balance of power" in Indonesian society (Jenne, 2007:11). As an institutional opportunity, the May 1998 riot brought the New Order regime to an end, which paved the way for a more democratic Indonesia. It also provided Chinese-Indonesians leverage for the effort in their ethnic bargaining.

[15] In 2003, together with other people, Hendy invited PSMTI to open a chapter in East Java province. He helped PSMTI prepare for the new chapter, and became the head of the youth-wing of the East-Java Chapter.

The New Order regime, which was in power since 1966, was described as a "bureaucratic-authoritarian regime" (King, 1982). Like the operation of a panopticon, which controls the movement of the people under its surveillance (Foucault, 1977), this regime had tight control over every aspect — political, social, cultural and economic — of the society, by using various ways such as "repression, cooptation, and typically a network of corporatist organizations (King, 1982:111). In this way, the New Order bureaucratic-authoritarian regime was able to exert its control over every layer of Indonesian society. Through its development program, which according to Yoshinori Murai "generated a 'crisis of development' marked by a widening gap between rich and poor, unemployment, increased dependency, depletion of natural resources, and despoliation of the environment" (Murai, 1994:42), the regime was able to garner people's allegiance. However, its development program only benefitted the privilege few, who were close to the ruling elites, and created corruption and nepotism. "A handful of the masses may have had their wishes fulfilled, but the majority of people realize that their hopes have been in vain and thus have been reduced to greater despair" (Murai, 1994:41). The regime did not give the society much political space. It even crushed those who opposed it. In this situation, it was very difficult for people who had dissenting opinions. People did not have space for airing their political aspiration, unless their aspiration was voiced through the regime's corporatist organizations, or it received the regime's blessings. Obviously, in this way the regime censored the activities. Thus, it is understandable why Chinese-Indonesians did not or could not openly show their resistance, despite the oppression they faced and the restrictions they encountered in political and social life.

The only institution through which Chinese-Indonesians could voice their aspiration was *Badan Komunikasi Penghayatan Kesatuan Bangsa* (Communication Body for the Appreciation

of National Unity, known as BAKOM PKB), founded in December 1977, under the aegis of the Minister of Home Affairs. Bakom PKB was founded to give advice to the minister of home affairs in matters related to ethnic Chinese community and promoting and strengthening national unity. It also served as a liaison body between the government and the Chinese community, assisted in "resolving problems related with citizenship such as naturalization and the process of acquiring the Surat Bukti Kewarganegaraan Republik Indonesia (SBKRI)" (Tan, 2004:32). However, despite "the good intentions of the officials and prominent people who sit on the central board of the organization … local boards of the organization at the provincial level usually act only as a tool for soliciting financial contributions from the local Chinese community for national and local celebrations" (Dahana, 1997:69).[16] Some of my informants shared their opinions about Bakom PKB.

> *Ayi* Giok Tjhing: Bakom PKB was not helpful. I spent much money for getting SBKRI in 1995, but it was fruitless.[17]
>
> Budi: I had bad experiences with Bakom PKB. In 1996, when the government facilitated the process of naturalization, BAKOM PKB was appointed as the agency that helped the Chinese to get Indonesian citizenship. It was said that the fee was not expensive, but Bakom PKB charged me a lot of money for various reasons.[18]
>
> Sandy: I did get my SBKRI through Bakom PKB in 1997. But the fee was expensive, much more then what the government announced.[19]

[16] After the May 1998 riot, some members of the central board of BAKOM PKB quit the organization and founded *Forum Komunikasi Kesatuan Bangsa* (Communication Forum for National Unity, abbreviated as FKKB). One interlocutor who was close to the central board of Bakom PKB told me that after the fall of the New Order regime, the organization tried to reform itself.

[17] Giok Tjhing received her SBKRI in 2006. She did not know what the problem was when she applied for SBKRI in 1995. When I asked a former member of Bakom PKB about the problems people encounter so that they did not get SBKRI, he said that it could be incomplete documents submitted. Through Giok Tjhing's case, I want to highlight people's opinion toward Bakom PKB, that is, this institution serves as a body collecting money from the Chinese, and this opinion could be wrong. However, this reflects people's trust or distrust towards this institution.

[18] Like Giok Tjhing, Budi received his citizenship certificate years later.

[19] I know three people who pay the fee as it was stipulated, but this situation was rare as most pay more than the stipulated fee. There were a number of people who paid exorbitantly.

The bureaucratic-authoritarian New Order regime made Chinese-Indonesians separated from political life. Before 1966, a number of Chinese were actively involved in politics, but during the New Order era, Chinese politics, according to Charles Coppel, was dead (1983:167). Only a handful of Chinese-Indonesians participated in Indonesian political life. A few joined the existing political parties. Others, such as Chinese intellectuals and youth activists preferred to have indirect participation through their personal relationship with high-ranking officers in bureaucracy and military (Coppel, 1983:168), or through institutions such as Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), founded by Ali Moertopo and Soedjono Hoemardani, high-ranking military officers who were close to Suharto, with support from Chinese intellectuals and businessmen. According to Suryadinata,

> The pattern of Chinese political activities during the Suharto era appears to be of "broker-type" politics. Chinese interests are articulated through Chinese leaders who have connections with the indigenous authorities. A few government-sponsored institutions such as Bakom and the semi-official body such as the CSIS are often used to channel Chinese pressure, and the *Cukong* System is also another channel for the Chinese inputs to politics. (2004:53)

I argue that these organizations were not be effective in giving the government pressure on its policies concerning the ethnic Chinese as the situation prevented the Chinese to be public figures in Indonesian politics. Hence, their political leverage was limited. Their limited political leverage was seen in what so-called *Cukong* system,[20] in which the Chinese used their financial prowess to gain political influence, which was especially used for their business interests, although there might be those who used the political gains for influencing policies so that these policies could serve the interest of the Chinese community.

[20] Cukong (Mandarin: zhugong, 主公) is the Hokkien term for master. However, "in Indonesia, it is used to denote a skillful Chinese businessman who closely cooperates as a middleman with those in power, especially the military" (Suryadinata, 2005:128).

In this situation, it was difficult, if not impossible, for the Chinese to find ways for channeling their political aspiration, other than voicing it through government-sponsored organizations or through their personal relationship with high-ranking officers. This situation, in my opinion, instituted a norm of mutual exploitation, in which the Chinese exchanged their wealth with political favor, a norm that bred corruption from which the Chinese could not extricate themselves easily. It also made the regime reluctant to give the Chinese space in fields other than economics. Instead, the regime pushed the Chinese to refrain from politics, and to concentrate on economics because it made the Chinese a good cash cow. Giving them political space was equal to giving them buffer that could protect them from preying officials. To make matter worse, a task force under the State Intelligence Agency, *Staf Khusus Urusan Cina* (Special Staff for Chinese Affairs), which was changed into *Badan Koordinasi Masalah Cina* (Coordinating Body for the Chinese Problems) in 1973, was formed to handle what so-called Chinese problems (Suryadinata, 2005:230). Through the formation of this task force, the security apparatus kept the Chinese under surveillance.

> Samas: In the New Order era, we [Chinese-Indonesians] did not have the freedom [to found a Chinese organization]. Bakin always kept us under surveillance.
>
> William: The Chinese community could not found an organization like INTI during the New Order era. The security apparatus would not allow the Chinese to have such an organization.[21]

Thus, it was natural for the Chinese to employ indirect resistance in maneuvering the hostile environment.

However, winds of change blew when Asian monetary crisis that took place in 1997 battered Indonesia. The financial crisis transformed into protests toward the New Order

[21] During the New Order era, the Chinese were allowed to found their own organizations. However, these organizations were under the strict surveillance of the government. They were, among others, alumni organizations, organizations based on family ties and kinships, and the like. Most worked as a self-help group or focused on philanthropic activities.

bureaucratic-authoritarian regime. These protests triggered an anti-Chinese riot that rocked the country in May 1998. The riot forced the regime to step down. The fall of the regime led to a more democratic Indonesia, which give Indonesian society, including the Chinese, space for diverse political aspiration.

History shows that discrimination and anti-Chinese riots often characterized the lives of the Chinese in Indonesia during the New Order era. The Chinese were accustomed to this situation, as Sofyan Wanandi writes, "Rioting and looting directed at the property of Indonesian Chinese are not new phenomena, and are even regarded by some as a kind of inevitable social costs" (1999:133). In negotiating this situation, the Chinese developed flexible identities in dealing with people from various backgrounds, or established a close relationship with high-ranking bureaucracy and military officers, a kind of mutual-exploitation relationship. But the May 1998 riot was different from other riots because according to Hendy, the scale was different. William added,

> The scale of the riot was much bigger than any anti-Chinese riot that had occurred since Indonesia became independent. And one more thing, this riot took place in Jakarta, the center of the power. So obviously the impact was much greater than any riots before.

That the riot occurred in a large scale and in Jakarta, the center of the power in Indonesia, created such a big impact among the Chinese. The impact was magnified by the fact that the riot toppled an authoritarian regime. This condition, in my opinion, transformed the riot into an institutional opportunity that triggered "collective grievances" among the Chinese (Jenne, 2007:11). The collective grievances led the Chinese to rethink of the racial discrimination they experience and the way they deal with it. Before, they resisted the discrimination through everyday form of resistance. Now, they believed that the problems the Chinese face should be solved completely, if not, like William Raharja said, "We have to do something, or else, the May 1998 tragedy could

occur again." In this case, as an institutional opportunity, May 1998 riot "produced mobilization" (Jenne, 2007:11). Chinese mobilization is geared toward the creation of solidarity and unity for having a better ethnic bargain in their demand for equality. According to INTI, PSMTI, and some other Chinese, having a better ethnic bargain means that the Chinese have more leverage in which discourse of victimization transforms into discourse of resistance. In reality, however, there are a number of Chinese who still show their apathy toward political openness, as one informant said, "The best thing for the Chinese is to be quiet and not to get involved in anything political." Thus, discourse of victimization can also transform into discourse of reluctance.

Reluctance and Resistance

On January 15, 2011, I saw *Bapak* Poo, his wife, and Guo Qiang, their grandson, at a shopping center in downtown Surabaya.[22] I approached them to say hello. *Bapak* Poo said that they were going to have dinner at a Pizza Hut in the shopping center. "Guo Qiang wants to have pizza," he said. Knowing that I would go to the United States two days later, he asked me to join them. So there we went to the restaurant. It was about two weeks before Chinese New Year, which fell on February 3. The Chinese festivities were in the air. The shopping center was full with Chinese lanterns and artificial plum blossoms, typical Chinese ornaments. A spring couplet decorated the entrance of the outlet.

While waiting for our order, we talked about the festive atmosphere. *Bapak* Poo's wife said that she was happy to see the Chinese New Year festivity. *Bapak* Poo said he was happy, too, because it showed greater acceptance toward Chinese culture. However, sometimes he felt that the Chinese New Year festivities as found in many shopping centers were too much. He was afraid this would trigger a backlash. He then continued that a national newspaper reported how in

[22] See Chapter 1 for their biographical information.

December 2010 the Council of Indonesian Ulema voiced their displeasure over what they thought of excessive Christmas decoration in shopping centers.[23] He also recalled an audience of an interactive radio program in Surabaya who criticized the Tunjungan Plaza shopping center, which installed a big Christmas tree. This person reminded the management of the shopping center to be mindful of the feeling of the Muslims, to avoid unexpected circumstances.[24] While so far, he heard no reports about the objection of the Chinese New Year decoration, he said,

> The Chinese should be mindful when they celebrate Chinese New Year. If the festivities too much, I am afraid they can trigger social jealousy that reignites anti-Chinese sentiments. These festivities could give the impression that all Chinese are rich, which is not true.

Most of my other informants shared *Bapak* Poo's opinion.

> Teja: Now Imlek is a public holiday, so we can celebrate it publicly. Imlek is our cultural heritage, isn't it? However, we should also be mindful. Don't be excessive in celebrating it.

> Jocelyn: As a part of Chinese culture and a public holiday, I think it is okay to celebrate Imlek. However, I think we should not celebrate it extravagantly. Indeed, there is a greater acceptance toward Chinese culture. Yet, we should be wise and mindful. There are people who believe that we are not native Indonesians despite being born and bred here. [Responding to my question about excessive celebration] But it is really difficult to determine what an excessive celebration is like. There are no standard. Well, perhaps we should use our own judgment. I believe we all know if a celebration is excessive or not.

However, there were a small number of Chinese who believe that Chinese New Year was a very important event in Chinese culture. Kian Hwa said, "As long as one was able to afford it, extravagant celebration should not be a problem. We have to take note that Imlek celebration is for giving thanks to deities and respecting our ancestors." He also pointed out that other ethnic groups in Indonesia also held extravagant celebrations. Rhetorically, he asked why these extravagant celebrations were accepted. He answered his own question by stating that

[23] "MUI: Simbol Natal Berlebihan [Symbols of Christmas is Excessive]," *Republika* daily, December 22, 2010.
[24] The phrase "unexpected circumstances" is my own translation of "kejadian yang tak diinginkan," which literally means "unwanted events," a euphemism of mass protest that often leads to anarchy and chaos.

Indonesians had a sense of belonging toward those celebrations because the ethnic groups holding the festivities were the indigenous groups and hence considered as the Indonesian "self." Whereas, Chinese New Year festivities were seen as the "foreign" festivities. Kian Hwa's idea about a sense of belonging reflects the perception that the Chinese were still considered as "the other." The process of othering the Chinese is exacerbated by the idea that the Chinese were rich, as seen through the so-called extravagant Chinese New Year celebration. The wealth they had was a sore to the eyes of many poor Indonesians.

Bapak Poo believed that the excessive Chinese New Year celebration reinforced the perception that Chinese-Indonesians were rich, while in fact, there were a lot of them who were poor. But the poor Chinese were invisible. *Bapak* Poo theorized that this perception was prevalent because most Chinese-Indonesians were business owners, small and big. But this happened because they were shut out from other fields, such as politics and government. He shared his experience,

> Actually, I was not interested in business, but what could I do? I could not continue my study because of my Chinese education, and my parents did not have the means to send me to study overseas. We could not venture out in other fields because of the government's restriction.

Bapak Poo's statement shows the predicament of the Chinese, in which they were forced to be in the economic field as others were close for them. A number of my informants also had the same opinion as *Bapak* Poo.

This opinion reflects the patron-client relationship between the Chinese on the one hand and the bureaucracy and the military on the other hand. Patron-client relationship was prevalent in both big and small businesses. The bureaucrats and the military officers were the patrons and the Chinese were the clients. Daniel Lev writes that many Chinese businessmen were dependent on the political power of the bureaucracy and the military officers for their protection and the

continuation of their business, and in return they had to pay money for that (2000:59). However, the May 1998 riot proved that the protection the Chinese expected was nowhere to be found. Pattiradjawane observed that when the riot occurred, the military and the police worked very slowly or did nothing to prevent the lootings and the riot (2000:228). This incident, I believe, may change the mindset of the Chinese that they cannot rely on patron-client relationship because it did not guarantee them security. On the contrary, it bred extortion and made them the cash cows for the bureaucracy and the military. According to Lev, in order to stop this exploitation, the Chinese should enter politics (2000:59).

Daniel Lev's idea that the Chinese should not concentrate their power in economics and that they should enter the politics so that they stop becoming the cash cows was supported by Chinese businessmen and intellectuals. Shared grievances and shared perception of injustice, which came up as a result of May 1998, leveraged their resistance. One way of doing so is having a more meaningful political participation.[25] Chinese organizations that had sprung since the fall of the New Order regime encouraged Chinese political participation.

> Hendy [*explaining the history of the East Java chapter of PSMTI*]: We held a seminar once a month, discussing many aspects of the life of the Chinese in Indonesia, the political, the social, and the cultural.[26] After some time, our monthly seminars broached the idea of Chinese political participation. The Chinese should participate in the political life in Indonesia in order to move forward. This idea was also reinforced by the establishment of INTI and PSMTI in Jakarta.
>
> Charles: May 1998 riot showed the anxiety the Chinese-Indonesians had. Before they thought that their close relationship with bureaucracy and military could help them. But this riot changed this perception. The Chinese feared that the situation could get worse. The rich could escape to other countries. But how about the poor? The poor had to stay here to bear all the hardship. All were confused, asking why this happened since the Chinese were not involved in politics. They just concentrated on their business. Well, I think this is the problem. We cannot just concentrate on our economic activities and

[25] Broadly defined, political participation refers to a variety of political activities in which citizens exercise their rights such as voting, running for public office, and joining political parties.
[26] Hendy referred to the Communication Forum of the Chinese of Surabaya, founded by some prominent Chinese in Surabaya in 1998, as a reaction to the May 1998 riot.

> depend on the bureaucracy and the military for protection. We, the Chinese, should also participate in the decision-making process in politics because it really affects us. In other words, we also venture into politics, not just business only.

Most of the informants who were young, well-educated, and active in social organization, believed that Chinese political participation was needed, and so do those who did not belong to this age-range, but used to be active in Chinese organizations before.[27] However, some believed that political participation was needed, but they were skeptical about it at the moment. Bagus, a 45 years old Chinese businessman, was an example. He said,

> I do agree that political participation is needed. However, it is not up to the point of joining mayoral or gubernatorial race for example. Joining the race for legislative council is acceptable, I think. … Why do I think so? Well, Indonesian society is still not free from racial prejudice. During a racial riot in Pontinanak, West Kalimantan, in 2007, there was a group of pribumis who voiced their unhappiness toward the political situation in West Kalimantan.[28] The vice-governor of West Kalimantan was a Chinese, and there was also a Chinese regent there. They said, "The ethnic Chinese have dominated the economics, and now they want to enter the politics, then what do we, the pribumis, get?" This is my concern. I am afraid that the more the Chinese enter the politics, the more unhappy the ethnic pribumis are. This could also fuel anti-Chinese sentiment. Like the proverb goes, *kalau pandai meniti buih, selamat badan sampai ke seberang*.[29] What is important is that we have to be able to have a good rapport or relationship with the politicians and play a role behind the screen. I believe it is much safer to be low profile.

Bagus believed that the Chinese should have a meaningful political participation. However, he opined that the current situation was not conducive for certain political activities such as running for governorship or mayorship. This was similar to Ratna's opinion.

In mid-February 2010, Ratna (see Chapter 1) called me to ask if I could help her find some articles on Maxine Hong Kinston, an Asian-American writer. She wanted to write a paper about this writer. She knew that Cornell University had good online resources to which I had

[27] I define "young" as 40 years old and below, well-educated as having tertiary education.
[28] The riot that occurred in December 6, 2007, was triggered by a fight between a young Chinese and a young Malay Muslim. This fight led to anti-Chinese riot, which the police was able to localize so that it did not spread to other areas. Some believed that a certain group who was unhappy with the result of the gubernatorial election, in which a Christian Dayak was successful to be the governor of West Kalimantan and his running mate who became the vice governor was a Chinese, was the provocateur who changed this youth fight into a racial riot.
[29] Literally, this proverb means that if you know how to walk on waves, you can cross the ocean. It means that if one knows how to use his skills or his brain to find the solution for his problem, he will be successful in his life.

access. After receiving the files I sent to her email, she called me again to thank me and invited me for coffee. In one afternoon a week later, I met her in a café in Sutos, a new shopping center near downtown. Sipping tea and talking about Maxine Hong Kinston's work and the lives of Asian-Americans, Ratna showed me a quotation from an article that I sent her, in which Kingston said. "That word *Chinese-American* — that's brand-new. To make a Chinese American you'd better do a lot. You'd better work out the politics, the art of being a Chinese-American" (Janette, 1996:42).[30] We then discussed how Kingston portrays Wittman Ah Sing. I told Ratna that Wittman might be Kingston's mouthpiece in voicing her idea on ethnic consciousness of the Chinese in the United States. Through Wittman, Kingston demonstrates Chinese-Americans' need of political endeavor in bringing about social changes. Ratna said that she couldn't agree more with me. I used this opportunity to ask her opinion about the political position and participation of Chinese-Indonesians, the topic that she often avoided during my several meetings with her. Responding to my question on Chinese-Indonesians' political apathy and the need of their political participation, she said,

> Perhaps, erh, because of the historical background, there was political apathy within Chinese-Indonesian community. This situation occurred since the New Order was in power. I remember that prior to the New Order era, many Chinese-Indonesians were active in politics. When the New Order regime was in power, political world was closed for them. Although things have changed since 1998, I would prefer that the Chinese do not go overboard in their political participation, such as running for a public office, for example. Don't get me wrong, I agree that political participation is needed, as Maxine Hong Kingston suggests in *Tripmaster Monkey*. But I think Indonesian society is not ready [to see Chinese running for a public office]. We have to take the openness and acceptance toward the Chinese with a pinch of salt.

Ratna continued that the political situation in the United States was different from that in Indonesia. In her opinion, ethnic minorities in the United States had greater political awareness

[30] This article is a conversation between Michelle Janette and Maxine Hong Kingston. The quotation here is Kingston's answer on Janette's question about Wittman Ah Sing, the male protagonist in her novel, *Tripmaster Monkey*. The setting of the novel is 1960s, where the Civil Rights Movement exposes the racism that was pervasive in U.S. society, and led Asian-American groups worked to together to act politically.

than those in Indonesia, and the U.S. civil rights movement had long been rooted in the society. Besides that, the rule of law was really upheld. In Indonesia, the situation was different, political awareness was quite low and the system could be easily abused. This explained her skepticism on Chinese-Indonesians' political participation. Nevertheless, she still hoped that Chinese-Indonesians could have meaningful political participation. Ratna and some others whom I talked to admitted that civil rights movement in Indonesia was still limited. For such a long time, Indonesia was under an authoritarian system, and only recently did democratization enter Indonesian politics. Because of this situation, ethnic Chinese who joined the mayoral or gubernatorial race, for example, often became the target of racial slurs or mudslinging campaign, such as being accused of China-oriented, non-native.[31] Although there were Chinese who were successful (as deputy governor, mayor, and regent), some said that it would be better not to join in these sorts of races.

Most of them were aware of the political impotence of their ethnic (Chinese Indonesian) community, despite the economic prowess they had. They also knew that the absence of political participation was detrimental to their community as they did not have adequate representation in the negotiation of power. They mentioned that the reasons were among others political apathy and the tendency to focus on economic activities for making a living. When I asked *Bapak* Goen whether he was interested in politics, he said,

> Well, making ends meet is already difficult now, let alone participating in politics. Where can I get the money for *nyalon*?[32] *Nyalon* needs money.

[31] The recent case of Mari Elka Pangestu, the Minister of Trade from October 2004, who was reshuffled as the Minister of Tourism and Creative Industry, reflects how she was attacked because of her Chinese origin. She was accused of being unpatriotic and not doing her job as the Indonesian minister of trade. She was accused of securing a trade deal for China by allowing Merpati Nusantara Airlines, a state-owned company, to buy some China-made aircraft.

[32] *Nyalon* is a coinage in Indonesian, which means "becoming a candidate," referring to the candidate for public office of legislative council.

In *Bapak* Goen's opinion, participating in politics means joining the race to become mayor, regents, governors, or members of legislative council. I explained that political participation could also mean voting and joining political parties. He responded,

> Voting or not voting does not make any difference. All are the same. They just want to get elected. Before the election, all made a lot of promises. But after being elected, all their promises are gone bust.

Two other informants shared their opinion.

> *Tante* Goat Nio: The Chinese should not fool around with politics. It is better for us to work so that we can make ends meet.
>
> Bagus: Running for public office and legislative council incurs high political finances. It is very difficult to recuperate the cost. That is why corruption is rampant.

A number of Chinese who were politically apathetic mentioned that the Chinese could not influence the decision-making process though political power.

> *Bapak* Poo: The number of the Chinese [in Surabaya] is relatively minuscule compared to other ethnic groups. So, it is difficult for a Chinese candidate to win a seat in legislative council. In Surabaya in 2004 general election, I know a Chinese, Dede Oetomo, who ran for a seat in *Dewan Perwakilan Daerah*.[33] But he was not elected.[34] There are no Chinese in the legislative council of Surabaya either.[35] So I guess we, the Chinese, are politically powerless.

Most of them, however, believe that the Chinese can actually influence the decision-making process through their economic prowess. This belief, in my opinion, leads to patron-client relationship, which is detrimental to the ethnic Chinese. Besides that, they perceive that a political participation is equal to running for public office or legislatures. While I am sure that many Chinese-Indonesians would like to see their fellow ethnic Chinese to hold a public office and to be legislators, the Chinese activists that I interviewed said that the goal of meaningful

[33] *Dewan Perwakilan Daerah* literally means Regional Representative Council. It is the upper house of the Indonesian bicameral legislature. It is like the Senate in the United States.
[34] William, the chair of Surabaya chapter of INTI told me that the former secretary of INTI East Java chapter ran for a seat in the national parliament in 2004, but he failed to win the race
[35] Out of 50-member of 2009-2014 Surabaya legislative council, there were only three Chinese. Not many people know that they were of Chinese descent (Personal communication with one of the three Chinese legislators).

political participation was not encouraging the Chinese to run for a public office. Rather, they hope that through political engagement, the Chinese could make a well-informed decision when the later casted their ballot in the general election. These activists wanted the Chinese to be really involved in the democratic process. Yet, this was a daunting task as political was still prevalent.

Such an attitude, in my opinion, characterizes Chinese-Indonesians as being disconnected from the political process and democratic institutions because of the New Order's political oppression. As a result, the Chinese are not politically active, unlike their counterparts before 1966. Describing the political participation of the Chinese during the New Order, Samas said:

> During the presidency of Suharto, there were a few Chinese legislators. Except those such as Kwik Kian Gie, most were elected firstly — well, not elected, perhaps the best term is appointed by Golkar, the ruling party — because of their money. All of them were rich businessmen. And secondly, they were appointed as a decoration which showed that the New Order regime did not neglect the ethnic minority. In reality, they did not have any influence at all. The legislative during the New Order era was just a rubber stamp.

Samas' statement above shows that the policy the New Order practiced in appointing the Chinese to be legislators was merely a "tokenism" (Prato, 2009:2). This created an impression that the state adopted inclusive practices, which were not true because the Chinese legislators were not given a voice to articulate the interest of the Chinese community, or they in fact did not represent their ethnic group.

Samas and other like-minded people, who believe that Chinese-Indonesians should have a meaningful political participation and not just a token one, were aware that people would definitely prioritize making ends meet. However, they lamented the indifference toward politics Chinese-Indonesians showed. In their opinion, Chinese-Indonesians in general could not see that politics was actually relevant to their lives. They even did not grasp that engaging in politics could actually protect their rights and interests as an ethnic minority. Explaining the prevalence of indifference and political apathy, Guo *Laoshi* shared his opinion,

> An old Chinese proverb says, "ke zheng meng yu hu"[36] or "tyranny is fiercer than a tiger," which means that involvement in palace politics is dangerous. This proverb describes the lesson we, the Chinese learnt, during the tumultuous period in 1965-1966. We should avoid political activities because they can lead us to persecution. Our experience during the New Order era proves it. Remember, we are the minority here.

Guo *Laoshi* is not alone. There are many Chinese, especially those who suffered from the New Order regime's oppression, believe that staying away from politics is the best way for the Chinese to survive in Indonesia. Lin *Laoshi* is one of them. Talking about various Chinese organizations, he said,

> There are two kinds of Traditional Chinese organizations. One is *zongqin hui*, which is based on surname, and the other one is *tongxiang hui*, which is based on ancestral village. They are mutual aid or social organizations. In Surabaya, there are a number of such organizations. However, there is one thing in common in the guidelines of these organizations, that is, not to be involved in politics.

Despite political openness, many Chinese are still reluctant to have political engagement. Their traumatic experiences and the memory of oppression still linger in their mind. As I write in Chapter 3, they prefer to focus on Chinese culture. Responding to my statement that as Indonesian citizens, Chinese-Indonesians should participate in Indonesian politics, Zhang *Laoshi* said laughingly,

> I know that it is a typical opinion of young people. It is often said that we, the Chinese, should get involved in politics. But actually, I don't understand what getting involved in politics means. I believe all of the Chinese who have the right to vote will cast their ballot in election. If getting involved in politics means that we have to join political parties, well, I think every Chinese has his own idea. But personally, other than voting in elections, I believe that the Chinese should not get involved in politics. It is dangerous for us. We can contribute to our nation Indonesia in other fields. For example, nowadays, the progress of China is tremendous. So antagonizing China is not a wise move. Indonesia should be able to make use of China's progress for its own benefit. In this case, we can make our contribution. We introduce Chinese language and culture to Indonesian society. Understanding Chinese language and culture can open doors to business opportunity with China. We also help Indonesian students to get scholarships to study in China.[37] Don't you think that all these things are our contribution to Indonesia?

[36] In Chinese character: 可郑猛于虎

[37] Chinese government offers a number of scholarships. Some Chinese organizations are appointed as the vetting body that selects the recipients of the scholarship. For example, the association of Chinese language teachers in

In his opinion, the rise of China can give the Chinese community in Indonesia a role to play. Introducing Chinese language and culture, which was banned from 1966 to 1998, could help Indonesian cultivate cultural and business linkages with China. Zhang *Laoshi* had a point when he told me about the contribution of the Chinese community, despite their so-called political apathy. However, for those who are politically-inclined, political apathy among the Chinese is a problem that needs solution.

Realizing this situation, in which political apathy was prevalent, many Chinese leaders, through organizations such as INTI and PSMTI, wanted to raise the interest in politics or the awareness of the importance of political participation. They tried to reconnect the Chinese electorate to the political system. INTI, for example, has a number of programs for addressing the problems of political apathy among the Chinese.

> William: May 1998 riot made us aware of the need for the Chinese to enter politics. INTI encourages many Chinese to participate in Indonesian politics, to be politicians, to work in public sectors. In its effort to encourage the Chinese, INTI offers leadership trainings and other programs that could equip the Chinese to enter politics.

INTI emphasizes that it is a non-political organization, and it accepts members from across the political spectrum. However, it encourages its members and other Chinese Indonesian to get involved in Indonesian political process. In so doing, it offers education in political and civic engagements through seminars, discussions, conferences, and media publications. Some INTI officials whom I talked to said that this method was chosen because of INTI's objectives, that is, to increase political and civic engagement among Indonesians, especially the Chinese, with the hope that they would have political awareness and involve in political processes and democratic institutions.

Surabaya, which is a Chinese-dominated organizations, although there are other members who are of non-Chinese origin, is entrusted to select the scholarship recipients to study Chinese in China.

INTI explicitly mentions that the solution of the Chinese problems, the problems as a result of historical processes and not just the products of the Old or New Order regimes, as the vision and mission of the organization. The vision of INTI is "The solution of the problem of Chinese people in Indonesia has to be done holistically, circular and intact, all Chinese-Indonesian citizens as one of the components of the nation, into the big resurrection current of Indonesia, in all areas (aspect) life of nationalism, toward the new supreme and competitive Indonesia, in a more and more globalize world." And its mission is "To unify, maintain, develop and guide all potentials of Chinese-Indonesian citizens, to be one of the accepted components, devoted to the development of Indonesia."[38] The phrases *all Chinese-Indonesian citizens as one of the components of the nation* and *one of the accepted components* shows that INTI believes that because of their ethnicity they have not been accepted as a part of the Indonesian society. Yet, some members of INTI said that the Chinese were not considered as a part of Indonesian society because of their own failings. They only cared for their economic activities, and even did anything for the growth of their business. Obviously, this triggered negative sentiments toward them. One of INTI officials said,

> We realize that many Chinese businessmen prioritize their economic activities. Becoming businessmen is great, nothing wrong about it. It could help the nation's economy. However, INTI hopes that they also have nationalistic values and social responsibilities to the nation.

For this INTI official, having a meaningful political participation is equal to having nationalistic values and social responsibilities because it showed that the Chinese were concerned with what was going on and what was going to happen in Indonesian politics, which obviously affected the nation. Because of this factor, political and civic engagement programs that INTI has also touch this issue. It tries to arrest the negative sentiments among the non-Chinese. In its effort to counter

[38] See en.inti.or.id/profile/6/

the negative sentiments among the non-Chinese, INTI also holds social and charitable programs. In implementing its programs, both political/civic engagements and social/charitable activities, INTI works together with various organizations, both the Chinese-based and the non Chinese-based.

PSMTI, another Chinese organization, also envisions that the Indonesian citizens of Ethnic Chinese, as one of the ethnic groups in Indonesia, have the same rights and obligations as other ethnic groups in Indonesia. In its statute, PSMTI writes that its goal is materializing the national integration (*mewujudkan integrasi bangsa*) and struggling for the equal rights for the ethnic Chinese in particular, and the society in general (*memperjuangkan kesetaraan hak-hak asasi suku tionghoa khusunya dan masyarakat pada umumnya*).[39] The phrase "the equal rights for the ethnic Chinese" in its mission statement implies that there is no equality between the ethnic Chinese and other ethnic groups in Indonesia. Whereas, as one of the many ethnic groups in Indonesia, the ethnic Chinese should be treated equally as other ethnic groups, and not be discriminated against because of their ethnic origin. It stresses that ethnic Chinese in Indonesia has the same rights as well as obligation as other ethnic groups. And that is why, it strives to abolish the discriminatory laws targeted the ethnic Chinese. However, despite its political mission, PSMTI, unlike INTI, emphasizes more on social and charitable programs. One member, who was born in 1954, of the executive board of PSMTI East Java chapter said,

> PSMTI statute mentions that it is not to be involved in politics, and it does not have any affiliation to any political parties. PSMTI serves as a communication forum among its members. It also functions as an avenue for interactions between its members and the governments, as well as other parties in the societies. So I guess, it is right if PSMTI's programs are social and charitable. They could lead to greater acceptance toward the Chinese. However, I am not saying that political empowerment is not good for the Chinese. It is good, and in fact, the Chinese need it, but let other organizations do that [political empowerment].

[39] Chapter 5 article 7.

Other PSMTI members who belonged to the same generation as the informant above shared the same idea. They believed that social and altruistic activities were effective in increasing the visibility of PSMTI in the community. As PSMTI is associated with the Chinese, social and altruistic activities it held could send messages to the government and the non Chinese that although their ancestors came from China, they were Indonesians, who had the same rights and obligations as other Indonesians. They were not exclusive, and were loyal to Indonesia. One of them said, "They [social and altruistic activities] can erase negative prejudice the non-Chinese have toward the Chinese." Social and altruistic activities PSMTI held were, among others, social services, providing financial help for the victims of natural disasters. Besides that, by collaborating with other organizations PSMTI also had educational and cultural programs, such as running Chinese language courses and promoting Chinese culture, including Chinese calligraphy, Chinese dragon and lion dances, as parts of the cultural heritage of Chinese-Indonesians. However, younger generation of PSMTI members were skeptical about the program. In the minds of young people, programs as such would not be of much impact on Chinese-Indonesians, nor would they be able to empower the Chinese politically.

> Obed [*a 20 years old college student who used to be active in PSMTI youth wing*]: PSMTI's activities are, well, hmm, just like that. They do not bring any impact, I guess. Perhaps this is the reason why young people feel reluctant to join PSMTI.

Obed's opinion resonated well with other young members, who are mostly still in college or had just graduated from college. They may have a youth idealism, which often conflicts with that of their older counterparts.[40] Nevertheless, some tried to find a common ground between the old and the young members.

[40] On the contrary, INTI has a lot of members who are still young, mostly recent college graduates. Some people attributed this to William, the then chair of Surabaya chapter. When he was still in college, William was a student activist. He was an activist in *Gerakan Mahasiswa Kristen Indonesia* (Indonesian Christian Students Movement).

> Hendy: Being in the executive board of the East Java and Surabaya chapters of PSMTI, we want to have a political and civic engagement program, which hopefully can raise the awareness among Chinese-Indonesians on the need of political participation. We have prepared a road map for that program. However, those in the board of trustee have different opinion. They want social and charitable programs, which certainly can make them popular. … Nevertheless, despite this limitation, we do our best to make our programs can raise the awareness on meaningful political participations.

Samas and Hendy admitted that social and altruistic activities could be popular, but they might not achieve the goal of political empowerment. However, through carefully designed volunteering, informal community network, and altruistic acts, PSMTI exposed the Chinese to the "experience of politics in the micro level" (Pattie et al, 2004:113). The experience in micro-politics may raise their awareness on the need to have political engagement in "formal politics." One such program was *Kampung Ilmu* (literally means "the village of knowledge").

In 2008, the Surabaya municipality tried to clean up street vendors selling used books along Jalan Semarang. In the name of cleanliness, the municipality wanted to evict them. PSMTI, represented by Samas (who had a good relationship with Surabaya bureaucracy) and Hendy, helped them negotiate with the municipality. Samas and Hendy prepared a business plan in which they were permitted to use the municipality's empty plot of land on Jalan Semarang and develop it into a place where used-book vendors were localized. The municipality agreed that they could use the land and build the building for used-book vendors. The municipality together with some donors from PSMTI provided the fund for developing that land into a center for used-book street vendors. In Kampung Ilmu, there is a café and open-space plaza where people can enjoy musical and art performance. The café and the plaza frequently were used for discussions on various topics. Hendy often brought Chinese Indonesian youth to this place. Hendy envisioned that this place could be used for cultivating ethnic relationship between the Chinese

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INTI East Java and Surabaya chapters were founded not long after he graduated. When he was recruited by INTI, he also asked his friends to join this organization.

and the non-Chinese, as well as for educating them on political empowerment and civic engagement. Although it remains to be seen whether this place could develop like what he envisioned, it had the potential to be some sort of civic space of encounter in which community members of various ethnic background could discuss topics of general interest and social interaction could help improve inter-ethnic relations.

There were differences in plans and programs in dealing with the problems Chinese Indonesian community have, but in my opinion, both social organizations and those with political tones — despite their political neutrality in the sense that they did not have affiliation with any political parties, believed that the root of the problems was Chineseness. In the eyes of the *pribumis,* Chineseness was seen as a sign of foreignness and intrusions. This rendered Chinese-Indonesians unsuitable for Indonesian nationhood. Although the fall of the New Order regime in 1998 changed the social and political landscape of Indonesia and there has been greater openness and acceptance since then on, Chinese-Indonesians still suffered from the "soft knife of policies" that marginalize them.

One ways of solving this problem was changing the perception of the Indonesian *pribumi* society toward the Chinese, from the perception that the Chinese were foreign intruders to the one that Chinese-Indonesians were a part of the mosaic of Indonesian society. This was done through social services and community outreach programs. However, some said that this was not enough. Programs as such were useful, but they did not hit the target, unless the Chinese got involved in the decision making process in the political corridors. This group of people encouraged the Chinese to have a more meaningful political participation and representation. Yet, despite the first group's acknowledgement of the need of political participation and representation, it has some reservations about political participation and representation.

Political Participation and Representation

Although most Chinese believe in the importance of political power to protect the rights and interests of the Chinese, many disagreed on how they should gain a political power. There are two opposing camps for the problem of political representation, but they have the same central consideration — that is, Chinese ethnic background. On the one hand, there are those who asserted that the Chinese should not run for public office or legislature. They feel that it could trigger backlash toward the Chinese community in general. In their opinion, the Chinese should let the non Chinese be in the political stage and the Chinese could play behind the screen. They believe that this is much safer. On the other hand, there are those who believe that the Chinese have the right to join politics, just like any other citizen. They argue that this could be a way of showing that the Chinese are not interested in business and economic activities only.

Those who hold the first opinion, like Ratna, may have a point. They think that the non-Chinese are better candidates, not because of their quality, as the Chinese can have the same or even better, but rather because of society's acceptance of them. A number of people who support this opinion cite news of how Chinese public office holders were rocked by various problems created by those who were unhappy with them.[41] As a result, they cannot do their duties well because they concentrate their energy for tackling those problems.

Those who hold the second opinion emphasize the need to change the image of the Chinese, as well as to get involved in the political decision-making process. They admit that problems faced by the Chinese public office-holders may be much bigger than their non-Chinese counterparts. However, these problems can be used for sharpening their skills in politics. Besides that, they argue, Indonesian society is more democratic and open, despite there were teething

[41] The case of the Regent of Singkawang, West Kalimantan, was often cited by my interviewees.

racial and ethnic problems. In their opinion, Chinese organizations can play a role. In one interview, William said,

> Actually, INTI wants to educate the Chinese on political engagement. We hope that firstly, the Chinese can vote based on a well-informed decision in election so that they do not choose the wrong candidates and regret later on. Secondly, we expect that the Chinese could also enter politics. I think as citizens, the Chinese also have the rights to enter politics. We hope that Chinese political participation is not limited to casting their ballot, but there are Chinese who want to run for public office or legislature. If the Chinese could be accepted as governors, mayors, or members of legislative council, I think, it could be a proof of the acceptance of the Chinese as a part of the Indonesian nation.

William's opinion above expressed his concern on the need of the Chinese to engage in the politics of Indonesia. In so doing, they were not just bystanders but a part of the Indonesian nation.

Between the two opposing views, my fieldwork showed that at least in Surabaya, the society showed openness and acceptance toward the Chinese. Marto, a Javanese Muslim who is a lecturer in an Islamic college, shared his experience:

> I was born in a small city known as Santri society. In my village, all residents were Javanese and Muslims. Only in downtown can we find Chinese and Christian. We knew nothing about the Chinese. The books we used in school never mentioned the Chinese. … The people in my village have a negative stereotype toward the Chinese. They often made a generalization, which is not true. I did have a prejudice toward the Chinese. However, my view changed when I came to Surabaya and started to know some Chinese. My encounters with them changed my perception on them. …. I find that Chinese culture is interesting. It can be a cultural capital of Indonesia, I suppose, since there are Chinese who are Indonesians.

Marto's experience was an example of how inter-ethnic relationship could run well if there was a good communication. Because of his good relationship with the Chinese, Marto was interested in Chinese culture. He believed that Chinese culture could be a cultural capital for Indonesia. He had no qualms about Chinese running for public office or legislature. In fact, he supported that idea.

Teguh, another *pribumi* Muslim, also shared the same idea as Marto. Responding to my question on the idea of Chinese entering politics, he said:

> Growing interest and awareness among the Chinese to enter politics are good for Indonesian society. Most Chinese who enter politics are economically stable, and they are successful in their business. Thus, they enter politics not for making it as a source of income, but for their existence, dedication, and service to the society. This is different from other people who enter politics for the sake of economics access. These people tend to be corrupted. The Chinese's effort in entering politics could be a learning experience for other politicians to improve their image and political action in this country.

Teguh's opinion regarding the Chinese's political participation shows his acceptance toward the Chinese who enter politics. However, his statement that the Chinese who entered politics were economically stable and were successful in business was very essentializing and made problematic assumptions. Nevertheless, his opinion resonated well with Eddy Gunawan's experience.

Eddy Gunawan, a Chinese businessman, was born in 1965. He joined the Surabaya mayoralty race in 2010. He was also a deacon in a protestant church in Surabaya. Because of this position, he was active in Surabaya Interfaith Forum, which promoted religious understanding among people from diverse religious background. Answering my question why he decided to join the race, he said,

> In one meeting in June 2009, the chair of the forum Haji Moh Zakin asked me to leave the room for a while. Then, after that, he asked me to come to the room again. When I entered the room, everybody clapped their hands. Haji Moh Zakin told me that this interfaith forum had a dream of improving Surabaya. The mayor's terms of office at that time ended in 2010. The forum had been thinking of finding a new figure to support in 2010 mayoralty race since, so far, it was disappointed with the candidates it support. Members of forum thought of supporting a Chinese candidate because so far, no Chinese joined the race in Surabaya. They also thought of giving the Chinese a chance to lead Surabaya.

At first, Eddy declined the forum's proposal, first because he did not have enough experience in politics and secondly because he supported another candidate, Risma, who, in the end, won the

mayoralty race. If the forum wanted a Chinese to be the candidate it supported, he suggested two other Chinese to be the forum's candidate. One of them was William Raharja, the chair of Surabaya chapter of INTI. However, both also declined. After much persuasion, three months later Eddy accepted the proposal. He said,

> I was touched to see how *Kyai*, *Ustad* and leaders from other religions showed their support for me, a Chinese and a deacon in a Protestant church. I was touched to know how people from a variety of religious and political stripes helped me lobby political parties to get their support and endorsement. It was really heartening to see that ethnicity and religion were not a problem.[42]

Although in the end for some reasons Eddy could not register his candidacy to the election committee, Eddy said that he was not disappointed. After all, he did not intend to join the mayoral race. On the contrary, he was happy to see the person whom he supported won the race. However, many of his supporters were disappointed. One of them said,

> *Pak* Eddy could not register because I suspect that some people in Election Committee played dirty. They foiled our registration. … We were optimistic that *Pak* Eddy's candidacy was supported some political parties, but our talk with them was fruitless so we decided that *Pak* Eddy would register as an independent candidate. There were more requirements for an independent candidate. We made efforts to meet all the requirements. One requirement was met, then the committee issued another requirement, until we could not meet the deadline.

I could not verify the statement of Eddy's supporter regarding the election committee, but from several sources, I found that a group of political parties which Eddy's supporters talked to had several people for whom it fielded as its candidates. Since it had to choose one person only, obviously it chose the one who could benefit the parties, and who had a bigger chance to win the race. Perhaps these parties did not give recommendation for Eddy, so that the election committee considered Eddy as an independent candidate. The requirement for independent candidate was more complicated than the candidate who was supported by political parties.

[42] Kyai and Ustad are honorific title for Islamic clerics.

Although he was unsuccessful, Eddy's experience could prove that actually the fear of some Chinese who was worried about the Chinese candidacy in the election was exaggerated. There might be some truth in their fear. However, based on my observation, Surabaya society was mature enough. It could not be swayed easily by racial issues. My experience below attested it.

At the junction of Jalan Tidar, Jalan Embong Malang, Jalan Kedungdoro, and Jalan Blauran, there was one big billboard that depicted a smiling Eddy Gunawan in a campaign advertisement. Looking at his picture, people would recognize that he was of Chinese descent, although his skin was tanned. In one afternoon, I took a *bemo*[43] to go to Yong Hua Language School. On the way there, I passed through this junction. Two fellow passengers who were not of Chinese descent talked about Eddy Gunawan's billboard in Javanese language.

> A: Look at that billboard. One Chinese *nyalon*.
> B: Oh yes.
> A: I wonder why a Chinese *nyalon*. Normally they are in business.
> B: Although that person is Chinese, as long as he is a WNI, I think it is okay for him to *nyalon*. Who knows he can bring improvement to the society? The Chinese is usually rich, and if he *nyalon*, he has money. So I hope if he is successful, he will not make the public office or legislature a source of income. I am really fed up to read news about corruption in bureaucracy and legislature. Frankly speaking, now my trust in them nosedives.

While people at the grass-root level pined their hope for better governance on the Chinese because of the latter's economic wealth so that a chance of corruption was limited — at least they may not make public office and legislature as their source of income, an opinion that is based on the essentialization of Chinese, more politically savvy people believe that ethnic background should not be an issue. Saputra is one of them.

I knew Saputra from Andrew (see Chapter 1). Born and bred in Surabaya, Saputra considered himself as an *arek Surabaya*. He came from a Javanese Muslim family. He said that

[43] A van used as public transport.

his family was not really pious, but they always performed their religious duties. His father was an engineer in a state-owned company. He attended public schools from primary till high schools. Almost all students there were *pribumis*, and the majority was Muslims. However, he attended a private Christian university, which was often labeled as Hong Kong University because the majority of the students and faculty members were of Chinese descent. Nevertheless, he never had any problems. In fact, studying there widened his horizon. It was in this college that he started having Chinese friends. His close relationship with them changed his perception of the Chinese. He said the he did not have any prejudice toward the Chinese, except that, in his opinion, they prioritized economic activities. However, his opinion was not true. Many of his Chinese friends had social concern. Their concern was almost always translated into action, such as, conducting social service, joining a group that taught street children in Surabaya, doing fund-raising activities for helping victims of natural disaster. He believed that they did that out of their genuine concern. "Unlike businessmen, for example, who are doing charities so that they are reported in newspaper, which is good for their image," he said.

In one evening, I invited him for a coffee in *Sutos*, a new and trendy meeting place, filled with restaurants and cafés which were popular among young executive, located in South Surabaya. I told him about Bagus' opinion regarding the situation in West Kalimantan. The *pribumi* ethnic group voiced their dissatisfaction to see the Chinese' political participation. The Chinese were successful in business, and now they wanted to enter politics. This would leave the *pribumis* high and dry. Saputra laughed, and then he said,

> I know. I often heard the *pribumi*'s envy. But you should remember that the *pribumis* who are envious are minority. Hmm, if most of *pribumis* feel that way, why did they elect the Chinese? Why can't they cast their ballot for the *pribumis*? After all, the Chinese are the minority here, even in Kalimantan. Although the percentage of the Chinese population there is very high, the *pribumis* still outnumber them. For me, hmm, let's say that you are a Chinese. You are running for legislature. Then I say to you, "Sorry, I can't

> vote for you because you are Chinese." I don't think I will do that. For me such an attitude is illogical. You can be Javanese, Malay, or Madurese whom people think as rude, but if I like the way you think, the way you will do for representing me in legislature, definitely I will cast the ballot for you. …. I do not subscribe the idea that only the Javanese or *pribumis* can represent me. Anybody can represent me or protect my interest, as long as that person and I have the same ideals.

Saputra was not the only one who felt that it did not make sense to vote a candidate because of his ethnicity. He and the two *bemo* passengers, as well as some other *pribumis* thought that a Chinese might be a better candidate for the *pribumis,* as long as he had integrity or could voice the interest of the people.

> Teguh: What is more important is integrity, and I believe that integrity is color-blind.
>
> Alex: It is really difficult to say [that a *pribumi* candidate could better represent and serve the interest of the community which are *pribumi*-majority]. I used to have a negative prejudice toward the Chinese. But definitely I will vote for a candidate who has a quality as our representative and whom I can trust. These should come first — quality and trust. Ethnic background is secondary.

In a similar vein, when asked whether a Chinese candidate could better represent the Chinese community, Desmond, who is ethnically Chinese, said,

> In my opinion, ethnic background has nothing to do with this. Just because one is of Chinese descent, he can represent the Chinese community. He may have a good understanding on his own ethnic community, but it does not mean that people from different ethnic background is worse than him in understanding the Chinese community. Representation is a matter of understanding and voicing the interest of the community represented. This can be done by anybody who try to understand the community in question.

Since "representing an interest or an opinion usually entails promoting certain specific outcomes in the decision-making process" (Young, 2000:140), in my informants' opinion, ethnic background should not be a primary consideration in voting somebody to represent them. A person, regardless of his or her ethnic background, could be the representatives of any community in legislature, as long as his or her position fits with the views the community holds. Thus, according to William, the Chinese who are afraid of entering politics or who believe that

entering politics could be detrimental to the Chinese community should change their mindset. Like what Samas said, "Instead of being cash cow or scapegoat, it is better for the Chinese to struggle for political power although they may be defeated. But at least, they showed their effort to do so." In other words, since political representation was color-blind, the ethnic Chinese should be encouraged to enter politics especially when they were under-represented in the corridor of power. Saputra said,

> It is not a matter of ethnicity, but a matter of fairness. I believe that there are Chinese who have the potentials to be politicians. We should not deprive them from developing their potentials.

Saputra's statement that political representation was not a matter of ethnicity, but of fairness, struck a chord. Hendy, for example, said:

> If the ethnic Chinese is under-represented, then, I think, the whole society will lose out a talent. I am not saying that that a Chinese is better than any other ethnic group, but I am pointing out that we should give a chance to anybody who is capable and has the quality [to be in public office or legislature] regardless of their ethnic background.

William, who responded to my question if Chinese representation was not a matter of ethnicity, why then Chinese organizations such as INTI hoped that there would be Chinese holding public office or becoming members in legislature, said laughingly,

> This question is like chicken and egg question. But first of all, the Chinese should break the stereotype, that is, their interest is in business only. Secondly, having Chinese in the decision-making process means that Chinese interest could be reflected or will not be overlooked.

Jocelyn, another informant, said,

> … our motto in the coat of arms is *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*,[44] I think this [diversity] should also be reflected in our bureaucracy and legislature. Don't leave Chinese out because of their ethnicity. They should be inclusive in terms of ethnicity. There Chinese who are qualified, they should not be excluded. Besides that, sometimes it is just the Chinese who understand the need of their own community. I am not saying that the *pribumis* cannot represent the Chinese or they want to discriminate against the Chinese, but you see, it often happened that we don't understand what the needs of others are. We think that this

[44] *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* is a Sanskrit phrase which means unity in diversity.

> is not important, but in fact it is. The same thing can happen in the legislative council. The *pribumi* councilors may not intend to discriminate the Chinese, but they just don't grasp what the Chinese community needs. As a result, the Chinese could feel discriminated against.

For people like Saputra, Hendy, William and Jocelyn, Chinese political representation is a matter of fairness and ethnic diversity in politics. They are of the opinion that Chinese political representation could benefit both the Chinese and the non-Chinese communities. Chinese activists hope that Chinese political participation is not only voting, but also running for public office and legislature as well. They hope to see the growth of Chinese-Indonesian politicians. However, they do not resonate well with the older generations of Chinese who faced oppression during the New Order era. The fear that oppression could come back makes them shun political activities. Their fear is understandable because prejudice and stigmas toward the Chinese are still pervasive in the society, although they are not like they used to be. Because of their education and class, people of non-Chinese origin, such as Marto, Saputra or Alex, believe in fairness in politics. It is not a problem for them if Chinese-Indonesians enter politics, but it is hard for the uneducated mass, which forms the majority of Indonesian society and is easily swayed by anti-Chinese rhetoric, to accept Chinese-Indonesians politicians.

Conclusion

The fall of the New Order regime in 1998 ushered a new era for Indonesians. The authoritarian regime was replaced by a more democratic one. Although there has been improvement, Chinese-Indonesians still face discrimination and victimization. Unlike the previous era, in which many accepted their condition as what the fate decided, in the Reform era, the Chinese enjoy more freedom, acceptance, and openness. All of these transform discrimination and victimization into a social and political tool for some Chinese community

leaders to encourage the Chinese to fight for their rights. The fall of the regime served as an institutional opportunity for them to get more political leverage for their struggle and resistance.

The discrimination and victimization the Chinese suffer are because of their ethnicity. This is the reason why they center their struggle and resistance on their ethnicity. They did not get access to political power, which resulted in patron-client relationship. In this relationship, the Chinese paid the political power holders for safety and continuation of their business. However, this relationship was not sustainable. In fact, this relationship made the Chinese prone to exploitation. In order to stop this exploitation the Chinese should get involved in politics and have meaningful political participation. Chineseness became the driving factor for their effort.

Although there was disagreement on how to have meaningful participation, the Chinese had a united voice, that is, their ethnic political impotence should be addressed. On the one hand were those who preferred to play behind the scene. They cited the experience they had in the past as the reason why they resorted to this way. That is why they are reluctant to enter politics. They prefer to play in the cultural field, which in their opinion, can also help bridge the ethnic difference between the Chinese and the non-Chinese. On the other hand were those who believed that entering politics was inevitable. My fieldwork showed that the latter found support among people from diverse ethnic background. They believed that the under-representation of the Chinese was detrimental not only to the Chinese community, but the Indonesian society as well. Nevertheless, a problem remained. The Chinese community that belonged to the first group was uncomfortable with the political representation of the Chinese in public office and legislature. In overcoming this problem, some Chinese activists cultivated the idea that Chineseness was imperative in the identity of Chinese-Indonesians. Thus, they tried to strengthen Chinese-

Indonesians' Chineseness, which could be used for ethnic unity, as well as to develop their Indonesian identity by participating in the political process in Indonesia.

Conclusion: The Ideology of Chineseness

When I began this study, I saw how the May 1998 incident changed the course of the history of Chinese Indonesians. The fall of the authoritarian regime 1998 paved the way for a more democratic Indonesia and gave space for the Chinese in Indonesia to celebrate their ethnicity, which has been suppressed since 1965. The celebration of Chinese ethnicity could be seen in the restoration of the three pillars of Chinese community, namely, Chinese language education, Chinese media, and Chinese organizations. Using the case study of the Chinese in Surabaya, I set out to investigate how Chinese Indonesians negotiate and formulate their identities, and how they ascribe meaning to Chinese ethnicity. During my field work, I found that the Chinese in Indonesia were not a single entity, static and easily changed. On the contrary, they were a heterogeneous group of people, as reflected in their various articulations of interest and cultural identities. Because of their diversity, the impacts of the restorations of the three pillars are varied. They also respond to the re-emergence of Chineseness differently, although they face the same social and political problems, which almost never change, that is, racial discrimination, marginalization, stigmatization and prejudice.

Many Chinese, especially those who grew up during pre-New Order era, have affinity toward the so-called three pillars of Chinese community. It was these three pillars that sustained the continuation of Chinese cultural identity. Thus, the Chinese community saw the elimination of these three pillars during the New Order as the elimination of their community. When there were restored after the fall of the regime, the Chinese seized this opportunity for regaining the ethnic and cultural identity. Since then on, Indonesia has seen the revival of Chinese language education, Chinese media, and Chinese organizations.

Many Chinese-educated Chinese see the revival of Chinese language education as a golden opportunity. They consider that Chinese Indonesians who grow up during the New Order era and who do not speak Chinese lose Chineseness. It is their *noblesse oblige* to resinicize the latter by teaching them Chinese language and culture so that they remember their roots. For the Chinese-educated Chinese, Chinese language is important because it is indexical to being Chinese. It is an integral part of being Chinese. So, Chinese language education can help them achieve their goal. In their opinion, mastering Chinese language could make Chinese regain their Chinese identity.

Chinese media are also used for advancing their effort to re(construct) Chinese identity. Focusing on the use of symbolic forms of ethnicity, which are salient to Chinese cultural consciousness, in their coverage, Chinese media try to foster Chinese Indonesians' perceptions and feeling of Chinese ethnic and cultural identities. They create exclusionary boundaries, that is, the boundaries that distinguish the ethnic Chinese from other ethnic groups. In so doing, they emphasize Chinese identity. But, they are also aware that the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia are both Chinese and Indonesians. Thus, they also create inclusionary boundaries that blur the distinction between the Chinese and the non-Chinese, the boundaries that emphasize Indonesian national identity.

For the Chinese-educated Chinese, Chinese ethnic and cultural identities matter because they affect the lives and the experiences of the former. Because of these identities, the Chinese suffered from oppression. Yet, these identities also gave them fortitude in facing the oppression. Chinese ethnic and cultural identities that Chinese organizations tried to sustain during the New Order era were described as their "spirit." In the new political climate, Chinese ethnic and cultural identities give them a sense of subjectivity, a sense of who they are. These identities

reconnect the Chinese with their root. Quoting the Chinese maxim, *zuoren yinshui yao siyuan*,[1] which means that people should not forget their origin, one informant underscored the importance of knowing one's root.

For the Chinese-educated Chinese, knowing Chinese root is important because it enables them to act Chinese, that is, behaving according to Chinese cultural models and codes, which Carbaugh define as "basic beliefs and values about what constitutes person, about what person is (and should be), what person can do (and should do), and (and should) feel" (1996:28). Acting Chinese is inseparable from being Chinese because it is "what makes people Chinese" (Ebrey, 1995:34). For them, all of these were socialized by Chinese institutions, which existed when they grew up, into their habitus through which they maintain their Chineseness. The younger generations of Chinese who grow up during the New Order era, however, did not have the opportunity to experience Chinese cultural models and codes being socialized into dispositions through which they could reproduce their Chineseness. Thus, in the eyes of the Chinese-educated Chinese, many of them have lost their Chineseness. That is why, through the restoration of the three pillars of Chinese community, the Chinese-educated Chinese try to re-authenticate the younger generations of Chinese whose Chineseness has been lost. In their effort to do so, Chinese culture is objectified and broken into practices, customs and traditions that carry symbolic weight and can be measured to indicate the degree or authenticity of Chineseness. In this line of thought, some are considered more Chinese because of having more Chineseness, and others are less Chinese due to their limited or lost Chineseness. This opinion essentializes Chineseness and reflects the perception that Chinese culture is considered as static and unchanging. Such an opinion, obviously, does not gain currency among the Chinese who grew up during the New Order era and have different habitus from the Chinese-educated Chinese.

[1] In Chinese character: 做人饮水要思源.

A more democratic Indonesia should have made the Chinese vocal in asserting their rights. However, other than focusing on and engaging in what Appadurai calls "ersatz nostalgia" in order to make Chinese culture visible again in public, many Chinese are very cautious in political engagement. As I explain in Chapter 5, the May 1998, riot serves as an institutional opportunity for the Chinese to demand equality. The riot triggers collective grievances among the Chinese and changes the discourse of victimization into the discourse of resistance. According to some informants, the Chinese must do something in order to prevent to riot to occur again. In this context, Chineseness, which was seen as a liability during the New Order era, is now considered as an asset. It is often used as a driving factor for addressing their ethnic political impotence. The Chinese must strengthen their identity to form a unity among themselves and to fight for their rights by engaging in politics. They need to get involved in the decision making in the political corridors. Only by participating in politics can exploitation and discrimination against the Chinese be eliminated. Not many Chinese, however, support this idea. Those who suffered oppression during the New Order era think that entering politics is not a good move because it can threaten the safety of the Chinese community. For this group of Chinese, discourse of victimization becomes discourse of reluctance. They are reluctant in getting involved in politics. Instead, they prefer to play in the cultural field, as my encounters with the three informants below attest.

On May 28, 2011, the Lion Dance Association of Surabaya held a Lion Dance competition for celebrating the 718th anniversary of Surabaya. Various lion dance troupes across Indonesia participated in this competition. A member of the organizing committee said that the idea of holding a lion dance competition was broached in 2009, when some Chinese who pioneered the reappearance of lion dance had a meeting and thought of what their lion dance

troupes could contribute to the celebration of Surabaya anniversary. They came up with this idea, which was well accepted by the mayor of Surabaya. Since then on, the association was able to hold the competition annually. So, the year 2011 was the third time the competition was held. *Pak* Chandra, the chair of the association said,

> Lion dance is originally from China, but it is popular in the world. Through this competition, we hope that we can make this Chinese traditional performance more and more popular in Indonesia. Look at the athletes.[2] All comes from different ethnic groups. There are no Chinese, Javanese or Madurese. All are Indonesians in this game.

By mentioning that the athletes were Indonesians despite their diverse ethnic backgrounds, *Pak* Chandra emphasized the role of lion dance in fostering unity. Guo *Laoshi*, who was also there to report the competition for his newspaper, said to me,

> It seems to me that non-Chinese like lion dance. Only a handful of the athletes are Chinese. Most are non-Chinese. I feel proud, yet a bit sad. … I am proud that our ancestral heritage is recognized and accepted in Indonesia. But sadly not many Chinese like it. …. But anyway, this is a good development. You see, culture can bridge differences among the Chinese and the non Chinese here.

Guo *Laoshi* agreed with *Pak* Chandra that Chinese culture, in this case the lion dance, which was popular among Indonesians, could help improve the ethnic relation between the Chinese and the non-Chinese.

Lin *Laoshi*, another informant, shared a similar idea. As a member of the executive board of the Association of Chinese Language Teachers in Surabaya, Lin *Laoshi* is often involved in a number of programs the association holds. However, he likes one activity, a workshop for Chinese language teachers to improve their pedagogical skills. In his opinion, this workshop is useful for him, although he does not teach Chinese anymore. The association conducts such a

[2] Although it is called "dance," the lion dance actually is like an acrobatic sport. That is why the lion dance, known as "barongsai" in Indonesia, is considered as sport. Thus, its "dancers" are seen as athletes. When he graced the Third Dragon and Lion Dance World Championship, which was held in Surabaya on December 8-10, 2006, Zhang Faqiang, the Chinese Vice Minister of Sports, was quoted as saying that China hoped that dragon and lion dance would be included in the Olympic games (The Jakarta Post, December 12, 2006).

workshop annually. The speakers and the trainers in the workshops are from China and Taiwan. The association managed to get the sponsorship for inviting them. He said that Chinese language teaching in Indonesia was a new field, and Chinese language teachers needed to hone their skills. In mid July 2011, he invited me to attend the workshop. In the lunch break, he asked me what I thought of the workshop. I told him that the workshop was good because the speakers and the trainers gave practical tips to the participants on how to improve their teaching skills. Then, Lin *Laoshi*, who believed that Chinese Indonesians should avoid politics, said,

> Look at the Chinese language teachers attending this workshop. I think almost half of them are non Chinese. This is really a good development. The ban on Chinese language was lifted in 2000, and Chinese language was one of the examinable elective foreign languages. … Through our programs, besides improving Chinese language teaching in Surabaya and East Java, we also introduce Chinese culture to public. By knowing and appreciating Chinese culture, we hope that the misunderstanding of the Indonesians toward us, the Chinese Indonesians, could be eliminated.[3] Reviving Chinese culture in Indonesia is not equal to loyalty to China. Chinese culture is our heritage. It is like the Javanese who preserve Javanese culture. … We do hope that the relationship between the Chinese and non Chinese can be improved.

In *Pak* Chandra's, Guo *Laoshi*'s, and Lin *Laoshi*'s opinion, the promotion of Chinese language and culture in Indonesia could create a civic space where the Chinese and the non-Chinese could interact without prejudice. In their opinion, the culturally created civic space is better than the politically-created one. What makes *Pak* Chandra, Guo *Laoshi*, Lin *Laoshi*, and other like-minded Chinese prefer to play in the cultural field? Their experiences provide the answer for this question.

The new political climate provides the Chinese avenues for celebrating their ethnicity and culture. The new political climate also gives them a voice to express their concerns and protest against discrimination. Yet, when they voice their concern and protest, they are worried about backlash. They fear that the openness and acceptance towards things Chinese they enjoy would

[3] Lin *Laoshi* used Chinese terms for Indonesians and Chinese-Indonesians, namely, Yinni ren (印尼人) and Yinni Huayi (印尼华裔).

be short-lived, as stigmas and prejudice are still prevalent. The oppression during the New Order era still leaves an impact on the Chinese community. Their traumatic experiences and the residual effects of the elimination of the three pillars of Chinese community breed political apathy. Although they live in a more democratic era now, the Chinese like them eschew political activities because they are afraid that the oppression will come back. They are still negotiating precariousness among themselves and balancing between anxiety and desire of re-ethnicizing themselves, as seen through the creation of exclusionary and inclusionary boundaries.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Chinese Indonesians are heterogonous with various articulations of interest and cultural identities. Because of their heterogeneity, Chinese Indonesians do not share the same cultural symbols. In terms of Chinese language, for example, younger generations of Chinese, many of whom do not speak Chinese, do not subscribe to the idea that Chinese language is an identity marker of Chinese identity. Nevertheless, in their opinion, Chinese language is important because it can give them an opportunity to get ahead in their work and business. In the case of Chinese media, they may be fond of symbolic forms of ethnicity used in the Chinese media. Unlike the Chinese-educated Chinese, however, they do not have similar affinity towards those symbols. Thus, it is difficult for them to accept the exclusionary boundaries that emphasize the ethnic identity. It is easier for them to accept the inclusionary boundaries that affirm the national identity. The same thing also happens in some Chinese organizations' efforts in encouraging the Chinese to have meaningful political participation. Most, if not all, of younger generations of Chinese, are open to political engagement, which they see as a way of eliminating racial discrimination against them.

In conclusion, the negotiation and formulation of Chinese identities create an overarching ideology, that is, a collection of knowledge and beliefs used for negotiating and reproducing

Chineseness. What I mean by the ideology of Chineseness is a composite of perceived symbolic form of Chinese ethnicity, collective memories and experiences shared by the Chinese. The ideology of Chineseness manifest itself in stories of the elimination of the three pillars of Chinese community — Chinese language school, Chinese media, and Chinese ethnic organizations — during the New Order era, the pursuits to restore those pillars, as well as the responses to those stories and efforts. This ideology is loaded with symbolic markers that display Chinese identity. Chinese identity, which is shaped by personal memories and experiences, is the way the Chinese express their understanding of the ideology of Chineseness, the understanding that shows how they want their ethnic and cultural identity to be construed. It implies that Chinese identity is not static. It is subject to the play of history and evolves over time. The dialectical relationship between the collective and the personal here produce multiple Chinese identities because identity is a social process involving mediation, as well as a social construct that is constructed through the accumulation of various elements over time. Through the invocation of their Chinese identities, they locate themselves in the trajectory of Indonesia.

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