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## Ancient Chinese Cemeteries of Indonesia as Vanishing Landmarks of the Past (17th-20th c.)

*Anciens cimetières d'Indonésie comme jalons d'un passé en voie de disparition (XVII<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> s.)*

**Claudine Salmon**

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CLAUDINE SALMON<sup>1</sup>

## Ancient Chinese Cemeteries of Indonesia as Vanishing Landmarks of the Past (17th-20th c.)

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先人遗骨为我之身，先人本体封葬於窆，  
或生或没一体至亲。不能护守安用后人。

We are the product of the bones of our ancestors  
whose remains are buried under tumuli; alive or dead  
we all are cognates. If we can't protect the graves  
or our forefathers what's the point of having descendants?<sup>2</sup>

Chinese settlements in Indonesia may be traced back to the 15th century, and are rather well documented for the 17th century onwards, thanks to European and Chinese sources. However, much less is known regarding the burial grounds of these former communities.<sup>3</sup>

Apart from the tomb of the seagoing merchant and first Captain So Bing Kong 苏鸣岗 (ca. 1580-1644, native to Tong'an 同安, Fujian) (Plate 1),<sup>4</sup>

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1. CNRS, Paris.

2. Wang Heming 王鹤鸣, Ma Yuanliang 马远良, Wang Shiwei 王世伟 *zhubian* 主编, *Zhongguo pudie yanjiu* 中国谱牒研究. *Quanguo pudie kaifa yu liyong xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 全国谱牒开发与利用学术研讨会论文集, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999, p. 174, quoting the family instructions, *jiaxun* 家训, regarding the protection of tombs, *bao fenmu* 保坟墓, contained in a genealogy.

3. For a general view of cemeteries, graves and geomancy, see J.W. Young, "De bergaafplaatsen der Chineezen zoo, in Nederlandsch-Indië als in China," *De Indische Gids*, 9:2 (1887), pp. 1522-1560.

4. Also written So Bing Kong. See inter alia B. Hoetink, "So Bing Kong. Het eerste hoofd der Chineezen te Batavia," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 75 (1917) – 79 (1923),

formerly located within the private cemetery of the So family (Map 1), in the densely crowded area of Mangga Dua<sup>5</sup> which has somehow remained as a landmark in the history of the Chinese in Batavia/Jakarta—it was repaired a first time in 1909<sup>6</sup> at the initiative of the heads of the Chinese, a second time in 1929 during the rule of the last major Khouw Kim An 许金安,<sup>7</sup> and a third time in 2008, at the initiative of the late Hendarmin Susilo (Su Sien Ming), Head of the association named Yayasan Kapitein Souw Beng Kong<sup>8</sup>—little attention has been paid to epitaphs of old. It was not until the late 1970s onwards that scattered tombs, remains of anciens cemeteries, started to draw the attention of historians and archaeologists. The first undertook to collect their inscriptions throughout the whole country, while the second excavated an old cemetery near Banten (West Java).

Despite the incessant expenditure over time, both individually and collectively, by the Chinese of Indonesia to conserve and secure their graveyards, the latter have never been really protected from destruction. As early as 1668, the community of Batavia lodged a complaint against a group of Ambonese who resided near the cemetery and had desecrated some four hundred graves.<sup>9</sup> During the next century, another danger came in addition to the risk of looting; by following the development of the towns of the northern coast of Java, some burial sites once plotted in the countryside were enveloped by settlements and gradually threatened with demolition. The first case for which we have historical records is the old cemetery of Semarang. A set of ancient tombs, which at the end of the 18th century was located close to the shopping district of Pekojan, was felt by the Dutch authorities to be an obstacle. In 1797, they asked the captain to move the graves outside the city, as we will see below.

The threats caused by urban development still increased at the end of the 19th and especially during the 20th century with the population growth.

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pp. 344-414; 1-44. The five other graves of the So family cemetery were destroyed during the second half of the 20th century.

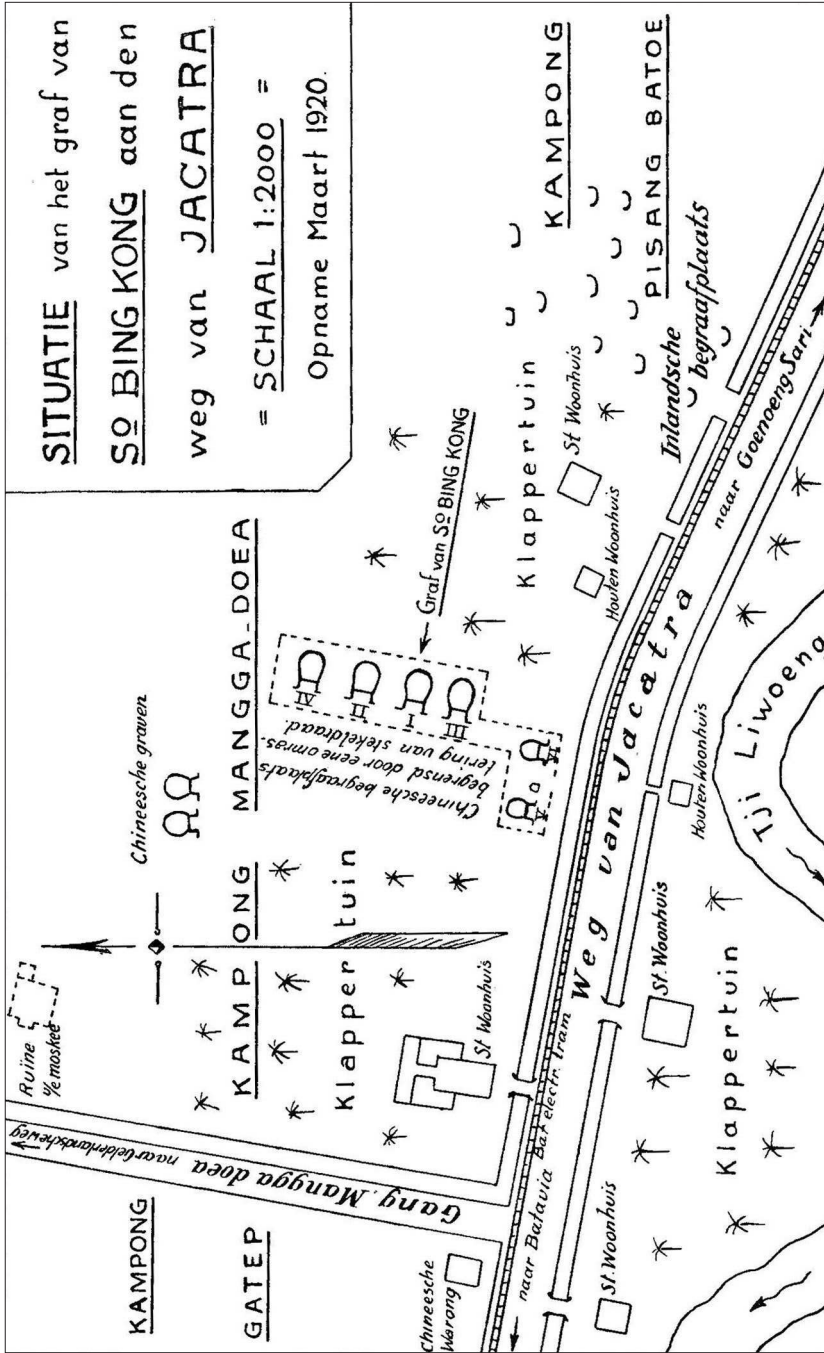
5. The tomb, surrounded by houses, is situated in Gang Taruna, Jalan Pangeran Jayakarta, Mangga Dua, in an area which has long been invested by squatters.

6. Cf. Hoetink, “So Bing Kong,” plate opposite p. 34.

7. Next to the epitaph, Major Khouw Kim An erected a stele which retells So Beng Kong’s life story, see W. Franke, C. Salmon & A. Siu (eds.), *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Indonesia / Yindunixiya huawen mingke huibian* 印度尼西亚华文铭刻汇编, vol. II. Part 1, Java, Singapore: South Seas Society, Paris: École française d’Extrême-Orient, Association Archipel, 1997, p. 112.

8. Cf. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgPXordYVBs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgPXordYVBs)

9. *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek, 1602-1811* (Collection of edicts of the Dutch Indies, hereafter *Plakaatboek*), edited by J.A. van der Chijs, Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, ‘s Hage: M. Nijhoff, 1865-1897, vol. II, p. 465, 20 Nov. 1668. The Ambonese presumably intended to steal the coins which were usually placed in the graves, as we will see below. It should be noted that the ancient cemeteries were mostly without boundary fences.



Map 1 – Map of the private cemetery of the So family in Mangga Dua, Batavia in the 1920s. (Source: B. Hoetink, “So Bing Kong. Het eerste hoofd der Chinesezen te Batavia”)

Areas, often very extended, occupied by cemeteries on the outskirts of cities or even in the countryside were gradually squatted with the tacit consent of the authorities. The demolitions were very sudden so that the families of the deceased had no time to intervene; and it is probable that if they had the possibility of making a transfer, in the majority of cases, they would not have been in a position to assume it financially.

Here we intend to focus on the historical development of certain cemeteries in particular those of Batavia/Jakarta, and Banten, which date back to the 17th century, and have in a different manner been exposed to gradual demolition. We will also give attention to the rare old tombs which escaped destruction and have become the object of a genuine worship on the part of the population. Finally, we will cast a glance at the manner Chinese communities especially the one in Batavia, which is better documented, tried to maintain their cemeteries, and how they administrated them in regard to the state policy.



Plate 1 – Epitaph of So Beng Kong (1644).  
(Photo: W. Franke)

## Rise and Fall of Chinese Cemeteries in Batavia/Jakarta

We will successively consider the foundations of burial grounds to the east and to the west of city, their systematic demolition, and in order to get an insight into these burial landscapes we will consider four descriptions emanating from contemporary European travelers.

### *First Expansion to the Southeast of the City (17th-18th c.)*

Apart from rich Chinese who used to be buried on their own land, the poor residing in Batavia had great difficulties in finding a place to entomb their dead, because they were not permitted to dig graves on the lands owned by the Dutch East India Company (hereafter VOC). However, according to de Haan a Chinese burial ground already existed in the 1620s which was located to the southeast of the city, north of Herrenweg.<sup>10</sup> The *Kai Ba lidai shiji* 开吧历代史记 or “Chronicle of the Chinese in Batavia,” states that the first collective cemetery, *yizhong* 义冢,<sup>11</sup> near Jakatraweg or Herrenweg, dates from 1650 (Map 3). The needed plot of land had been purchased by the heads of the community.<sup>12</sup> In its present state, the *Plakaatboek* of the year 1650 does not record this request, but a regulation dated 11 June 1660 stipulates that the Chinese have asked the permission to open a new burial ground near the fort of Jakatra, not far from the earliest cemetery, because the latter had become too small. Gradually, from the middle of the 17th century until the end of the 18th century, the Chinese officers tried to enlarge the cemetery southwards by buying plots of land along the river Ciliwong.<sup>13</sup> The *Plakaatboek* and the archives of the Kong Koan 公馆 or Council of the Chinese<sup>14</sup> record the successive concessions granted by the authorities of Batavia (1668, 1696/1697, 1728, 1745/1746, 1761).<sup>15</sup>

10. Frederik de Haan, *Oud Batavia. Gedenkboek uitgegeven ter gelegenheid van het 300 = jarig bestaan der stad Batavia in 1919*, Batavia, Weltevreden, Leiden: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen & G. Kolff & Co., vol. I, p. 504, paragraph 934.

11. The first meaning of *yizhong* is “charitable cemetery,” but in Batavia the term *yizhong* was understood as a burial place intended for all the Chinese of the city.

12. *Kai Ba lidai shiji*, edited by Hsü Yün-Ts’iao 许云樵, *Nanyang xuebao* 南洋学报, vol. XI:2 (Dec. 1955), p. 30. The cemetery was located not far from the tomb of Captain So Beng Kong.

13. *Plakaatboek*, vol. II, pp. 335-336.

14. Just after the 1740 revolt, the VOC reorganized the officers administrating the Chinese community and formed a College which was in charge of the registry office. This College called Gongtang 公堂 had its first office in a house in Roa Malaka. At the beginning of the 19th century the office was moved to Jalan Tongkongan and it later took the name of Kong Koan (or Gongguan). The Council of the Chinese was an influential element in the Chinese community. It also controlled the cemeteries on its own land and the temples. After the Pacific War, the Kong Koan lost its remaining social functions, and during the 1950s it was dissolved.

15. 1668: *Plakaatboek*, vol. II, decision of 20 Nov., p. 465; 1696-1697: *Plakaatboek*, vol. III, decision of August 1707, p. 583; 1728: *Kai Ba lidai shiji*, pp. 38-39; 1745/1746: *Kai Ba lidai shiji*, p. 47; *Realia, Register op de generale resolutiën van het kasteel Batavia, 1632-1805*, Leiden: Kolff & Nijhoff, 1882-1886, vol. I, 23 August 1746, p. 281; 1760/61: *Kai Ba lidai shiji*,

In 1761 the foundation of the “New Cemetery” or Sentiong 新冢, which reached as far as Kemayoran and Gunung Sari areas (Map 2),<sup>16</sup> and the donations made for that purpose, were commemorated in an inscription set up by a Buddhist monk and engraved on a stone tablet which was originally imbedded in the wall of the said cemetery (since demolished). This inscription, which is presently sheltered in the courtyard of the Vihara Tri Ratna, is not only the oldest known stele in Jakarta, but also the oldest recording the foundation of a cemetery in Insular Southeast Asia (see Plate 2). Its title reads “Wall narrative commemorating the construction project of the collective cemetery of Gunung Sari” or Changjian Niulangshali yizhong biji 倡建牛郎沙里义冢壁记 (see Appendix).<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, the Chinese captain had bought a house formerly belonging to the Governor-General Frederik Coyett,<sup>18</sup> to set up a funerary temple near this new cemetery, hence its name of Klenteng Sentiong or Temple of the New cemetery or also Vihara Buddhayana<sup>19</sup> (Chinese name: Wanjie si 完劫寺). During the last decades of the 18th century a small sanctuary later called Dizang yuan 地藏院 “Temple dedicated to the God of Hell,” also called Vihara Tri Ratna, was constructed at the rear of Klenteng Sentiong in order to shelter ancestral tablets. J.J. Vogelaar provided the best known description of the large *Qingming* 清明 festival which was celebrated in 1789 in both sanctuaries.<sup>20</sup>

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p. 51; Netherlands National Archives, The Hague, K.A., 676, Oktober 6, 1761.

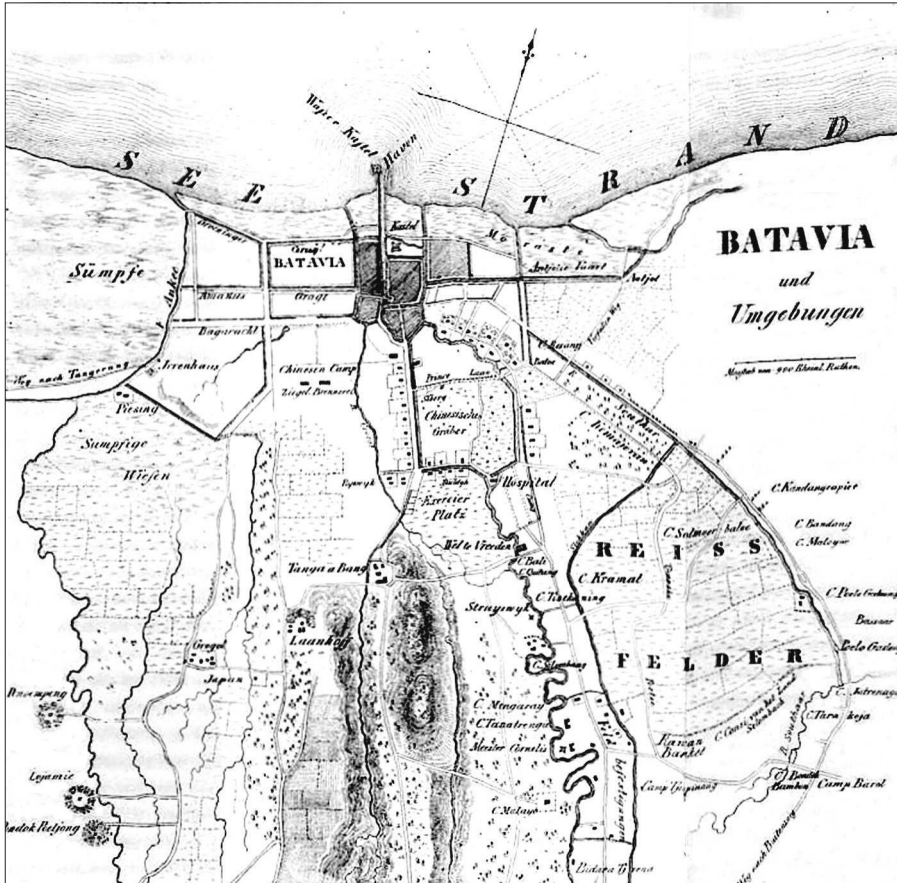
16. See here Map 2: Detail from the map entitled “Batavia und Umgebungen” (Masstab von 900 Rheini. Ruthen), in Eduard Selberg, *Reise nach Java und Ausflüge nach den Inseln Madura und St. Helena*, Idenburg: G. Stalling; Amsterdam: M.H. Schonekat, 1846.

17. See inter alia C. Salmon & D. Lombard, *Les Chinois de Jakarta. Temples et vie collective / The Chinese of Jakarta. Temples and Communal Life*, Paris: Études insulindiennes-Archipel 1, Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, 1980, pp. 245-247; Franke, Salmon & Siu (eds.), *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Indonesia*, vol. II. Part 1, pp. 36-37. The inscription is rather blurred and several characters are hardly decipherable.

18. Cf. “A travers le vieux Jakarta (2) : le Wihara Buddhayana,” *Archipel* 4 (1972), pp. 111-114.

19. See inter alia Frederik de Haan, *Oud Batavia*, vol. 1, pp. 504-505; Salmon & Lombard, *Les Chinois de Jakarta. Temples et vie collective*, pp. 110-115.

20. Jan Jacob Vogelaar, “Beschrijving van de Tjembing (doodenfest) der Chinezen,” in *Verhandeligen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, vol. II, 1823, pp. 216-243. French translation in Salmon & Lombard, *Les Chinois de Jakarta*, pp. 271-174.



Map 2 – Detail of a map of Batavia and its surroundings, showing the cemetery of Gunung Sari (Chinesische Gräber). (Source: Eduard Selberg, *Reise nach Java*, 1846)

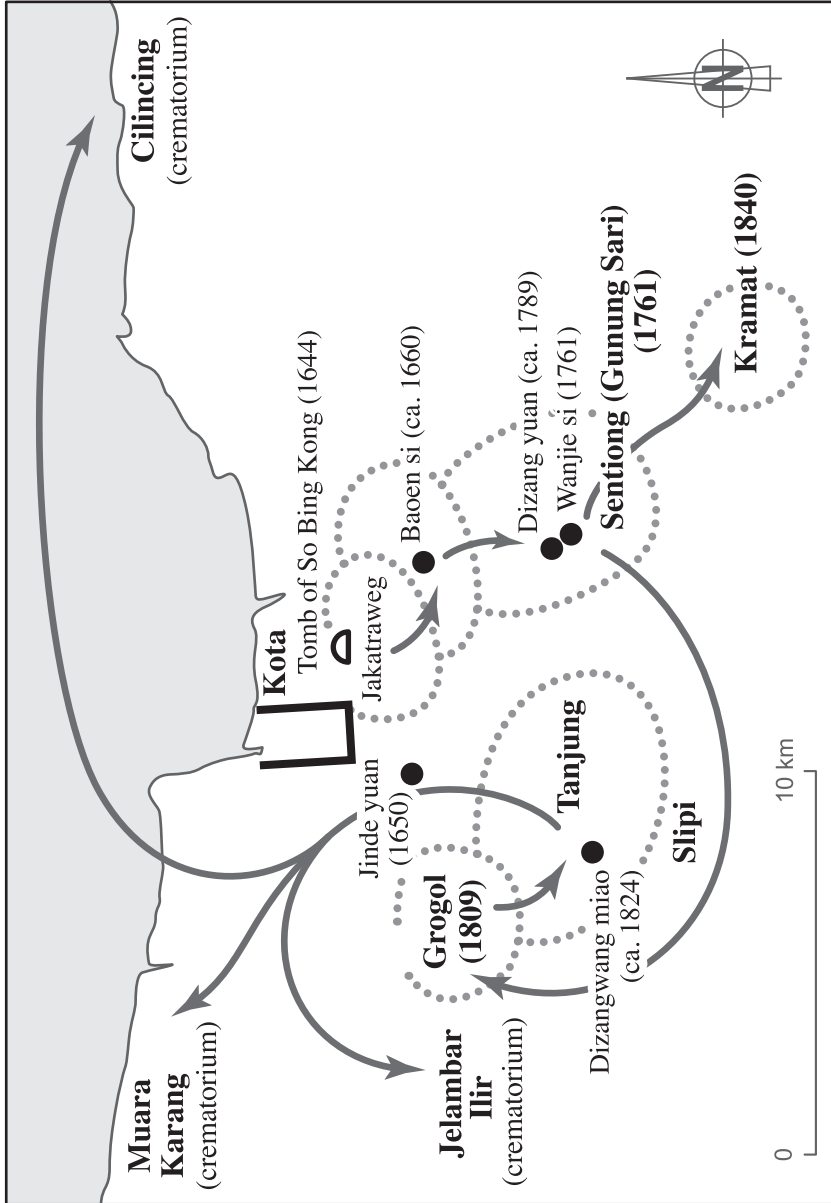
### *Second Expansion to the Southwest of the City (19th c.)*

At the beginning of the 19th century, the Chinese were refused permission to dig new graves in the Gunung Sari region, probably in connection with Daendels’ plan to establish the new town of Weltevreden (around Koningsplein, present Lapangan Merdeka or Independence Square).<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, in 1809 they were allowed to open a new cemetery in the western suburb, in the region of Ketting fort (now Grogol).<sup>22</sup> In the new site the graves also spread

21. Marshal Herman Willem Daendels was Governor-General in Batavia from 1808 to 1811.

22. *Plakaatboek*, vol. XV, pp. 906-909, 30 Sept. 1809.





**Map 3** – Map showing the chronological development of cemeteries in Batavia. (Adapted from C. Salmon & D. Lombard, *Les Chinois de Jakarta. Temples et vie collective / The Chinese of Jakarta. Temples and Communal Life*, Paris: *Études insulindiennes-Archipel* 1, Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, 1980)



Plate 2 – Stele commemorating the foundation of the Gunung Sari Cemetery in 1761. (Photo: C. Salmon, 2015)

southwards, into the Tanjung, and Slipi regions (Maps 3 and 4). As might be expected, the need arose for a new funerary temple and the Dizang wang miao 地藏王庙 or “Temple to the God of Hell” at Tanjung was built towards 1824. According to Li Minghuan in the 19th century, most of the burial plots were located in Tanjung and Slipi. Only after the 1870s were Jati and Jelambar mentioned; as for the name Cidang, it appeared in the early 20th century.<sup>23</sup>

23. Li Minghuan, “A Portrait of Batavia’s Chinese Society Based on the Tanjung Cemetery Archives,” in Leonard Blussé & Chen Menghong (eds.), *The Archives of the Kong Koan of Batavia*, Leiden. Boston: Brill, 2003, p. 81.

Other cemeteries opened elsewhere too, in particular in the region of Kramat, where the German naturalist Junghuhn (1809-1864) reported the existence of Chinese graves towards 1840. He says:<sup>24</sup>

There are two Chinese cemeteries near Batavia. A small one close to Kramat, to the East of the road leading to Buitenzorg [now Bogor] and a bigger one between Batavia and Gunung Sari, in a region where walls of the old Jakarta<sup>25</sup> half hidden in the greenery are to be found.

The reason why Junghuhn and his contemporary Eduard Selberg<sup>26</sup> do not allude to the cemetery of Tanjung is perhaps that it was still off the beaten track.

In the 20th century other new sites were opened on the outskirts of the town, in particular at Bidara Cina (South of Jatinegara), near Bogor road, and at Kampung Dalam, south of Tebet.

### ***Demolition of the Old Chinese Graveyards after Independence***

After Independence, urban development was such that land became extremely expensive and the existence of graveyards within the city seriously threatened.<sup>27</sup> The Gunung Sari cemetery was gradually parcelled out and the stele of 1761, near the Dizang yuan is virtually the only reminder that this whole vast area was once filled with graves. The same thing happened to the West where the superficies occupied by Chinese tombs was even bigger, and new districts grew up, replacing the burial grounds.<sup>28</sup> In the Kota Bambu region (to the north of Slipi), we saw the last tombs being demolished by the inhabitants in 1975, but it was impossible to attempt any resistance against this rush on land. Absolutely nothing has been left to show what the former use of the area was, although the former cemeteries were characterised by impressive constructions influenced by the European architecture of that time. Land had become expensive everywhere, even in the suburbs, and it was no longer possible to buy burial ground in perpetuity.

Cremation has become virtually the sole solution for many Indonesian Chinese of small means. If in mainland China cremation started to be widely used by the population living in the capital and in the major cities of the

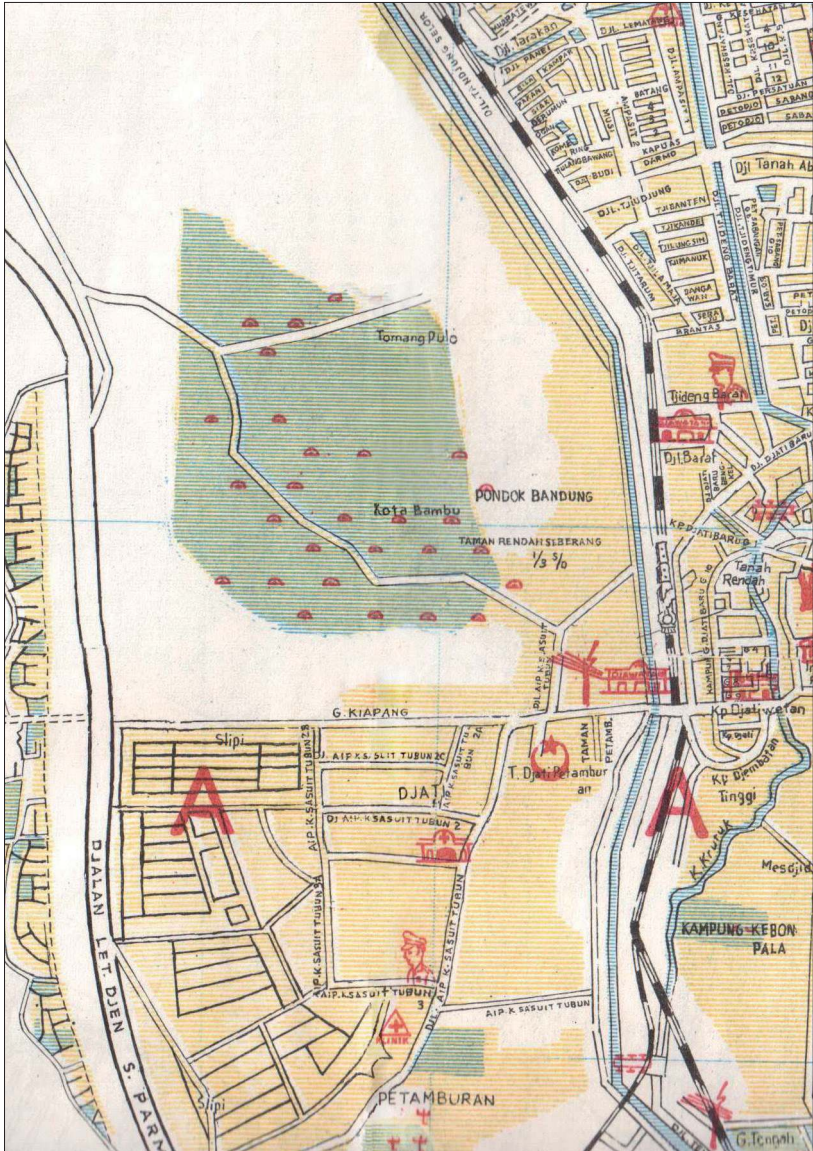
24. Friedrich Franz Wilhelm Junghuhn, *Topographische und naturwissenschaftliche Reisen durch Java*, Magdeburg: E. Baensch, 1845, p. 45.

25. This is in fact the Jakarta fort built by the Dutch to the South-East of the walled city.

26. See Map 2.

27. For a very good study of the closure of the Chinese cemeteries of Surabaya in 1958 by the municipal government, because they had become the refuge of homeless squatters, see Sarkawi B. Husain, "Chinese Cemeteries as a Symbol of Sacred Space. Control, Conflict, and Negotiating in Surabaya, Indonesia," in Freek Colombijn and Joost Coté (eds.), *Cars, Conduits, Kampongs: The Modernization of the Indonesian City, 1920-1960*, Leiden: Brill, 2014, pp. 323-340.

28. See the location of the Western cemetery on the map of Jakarta of 1968 (Map 4).



Map 4 – Detail of a map of Jakarta showing the remnants of the western cemeteries in the late 1960s. (Source: Peta Djakarta, Djakarta – Surabaya : Pembina, Edisi 1968). Scale ± 1 : 15 000

Song times where land was very expensive,<sup>29</sup> in Indonesia it is a fairly recent phenomenon which from a religious point of view is connected with the progress of Buddhism. The writer and theosopher Kwee Tek Hoay 郭德怀, who died in 1951, was apparently the first to ask to be cremated. Since then, thousands of Indonesian Chinese have followed his example. Two crematoria were built, one at Muara Karang (northwest of the city) in 1958, sponsored by two associations, Jajasan Shamsan Bumi and Gabungan Sam Kauw 三教 Indonesia, and the other, almost at the same time, at Jelambar Ilir (area of Grogol), sponsored by the Jajasan Krematorium which was linked with the Gongguan or Council of the Chinese. The first, which practised open-air cremation, was closed in 1973 by the authorities because of the disturbance it caused to the neighbouring inhabitants.<sup>30</sup> The second was also shut not long after, while a new cremation oven was founded in Cilincing in 1975 with improved facilities. A colombarium was added with special sections for Buddhists and Christians (see Map 3). Moreover Cilincing being close to the coast, the families could also easily disperse the ashes of the deceased into the sea. Since the early 2000s new crematoria were opened in relation to the crisis faced by municipal cemeteries inside the city.

### Chinese Burial Grounds in the Eyes of European Travelers

It is worthy of note that a great number of the Europeans who came to Batavia between the 17th and the mid-19th century were extremely keen to visit the Chinese cemeteries in order to enjoy the atmosphere emanating from these funerary landscapes, as they would have done in a public garden, and for some of them—ethnographers *avant-la-lettre*—also to observe the rituals practiced during the Feast of the Dead or *Qingming*,<sup>31</sup> as well as during funerals. Their records are highly valuable because they are the only testimonies of the manner the Chinese reshaped the landscapes in order to create a peculiar atmosphere and give the impression that death was a continuation of life, though in a separate realm. Here we will limit ourselves to four observers.<sup>32</sup>

One of the first was the French Jesuit Guy Tachard (1648-1712) who was in Batavia in 1684. He happened to visit the cemeteries near the Fort of Jakatra and left the following description which gives a good idea of the landscape

29. Cremation was almost universal in the capital Hangzhou 杭州 and the city crematory ovens (then called *hua ren chang* 化人场, a term which has been since superseded by that of *huozang chang* 火葬场) were inside Buddhist monasteries; cf. Jacques Gernet, *La vie quotidienne en Chine à la veille de l'invasion mongole 1250-1276*, Paris: Hachette, 1959, p. 190.

30. See *Sinar Harapan*, 19 Augustus 1973, "Gubernur DKI Tutup Tempat Pengabuan di Muara Karang."

31. The *Qingming* was celebrated on the 5th of the 4th semilunar month.

32. For a fuller list, see Salmon & Lombard, *Les Chinois de Jakarta*, pp. 281-282.

and the space arrangement which provided altogether a beautiful perspective and a pleasant atmosphere.<sup>33</sup>

As we went out of *Batavia* we found three or four of these Walks, all which at their end, met at the chief Gate, by which we went out, we took the middlemost, which was our way to the place intended. (...) Within half a League we found the first burying Place of the *Chineses* in a Coppis Wood, where they had made several small Paths, which all led to several Sepulchres. There it is where the Chinese of mean Quality are buried, and indeed the Place is somewhat in disorder, and there is nothing of State in their Tombs: a few steps from thence stands the little Fort of *Jakarta*; (...) Beyond that Fort we entered into a Wood, or rather into a large Champian full of little Hills, covered over with Groves and Thickets on all sides, which yielded a pretty pleasant Prospect, and in that second Burying-place the *Chinese bonzes* inter the Persons of Quality of their Nation. Upon the top of one of those little hills I saw an Arbour very well made, and a Table standing in the middle of it, with Benches all around it, where nearly forty People might commodiously sit. There I saw a great many odd antick Idols hanging upon the Branches that covered this Arbour. They say that the *bonzes* make Feasts for the dead, and bring them thither for them to eat; most part of these Tombs are so many little Mausoleums, very neat and pretty; here is the figure of one of the loveliest of them made after (Plate 3), by which you judge of the rest, for they are all made after the same Fashion, with difference only, that some have Dragons in stead of Lyons upon the Gate, as you enter into them, and that they are more or fewer Steps high, according to their Magnificence.

Being come out of the Burying-Place, we heard the Noise of Cimbal and little Bells, and following the Sound, came to a little Temple of the *Chineses*, where their Priests were assembled to offer Sacrifice.

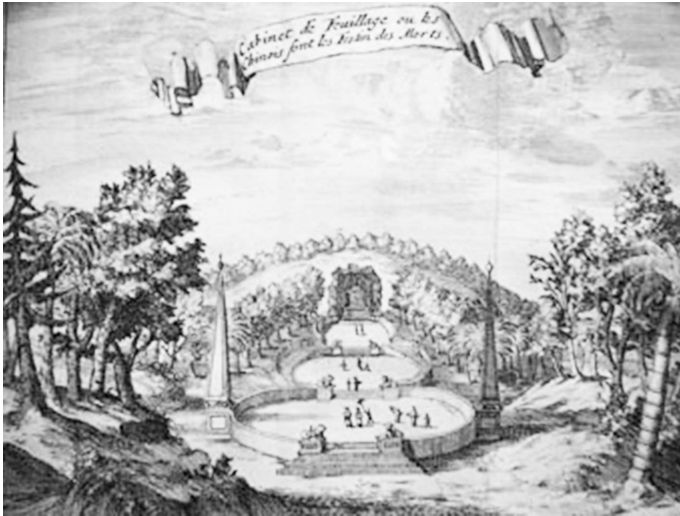
Tachard also provides the unique description of the ceremonies made by monks in a funerary temple, very likely the Baoen si 报恩寺 or “Temple of the Filial Gratitude” which is briefly mentioned in Cheng Xunwo 程逊我’s travelogue.<sup>34</sup> The temple has since been destroyed, perhaps during the troubles of 1740.

Cornelis de Bruyn (ca.1652-ca.1727), Dutch artist and traveler, who sojourned in *Batavia* in 1706, visited the Chinese cemetery at the time a deceased person was buried. After having described the coffin and the manner the tomb was prepared, he gives an interesting description of the funeral ceremony, which in the French version is accompanied by two rather accurate drawings (Plates 4 & 5).<sup>35</sup>

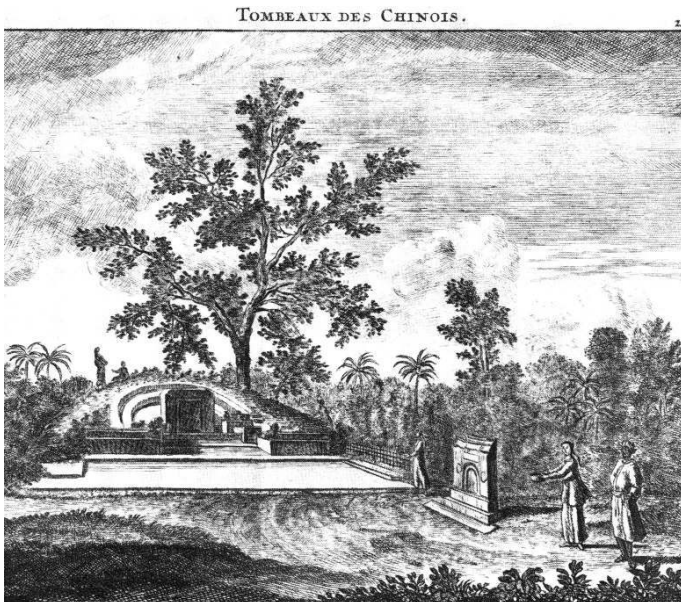
33. Guy Tachard, *A Relation of the Voyage to Siam Performed by Six Jesuits sent by the French King, to the Indies and China in the Year 1685* (first published at London in 1688, original in French, 1687), Reprint Bangkok: White Orchid Press, 1981, pp. 122-123.

34. Cf. Cheng Xunwo, *Gelaba jilie* 葛喇吧纪略, in *Xunmintang congshu* 逊敏堂丛书, p. 4. Cheng Xunwo was in *Batavia* from 1729 to 1736 as preceptor in a Chinese family.

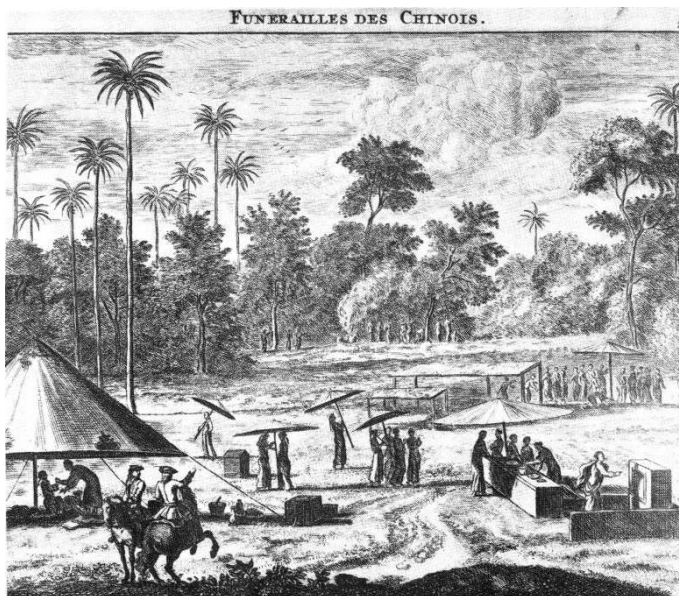
35. Cornelis de Bruyn, *Reizen over Moskovie, door Persie en Indie*, Amsterdam; translated from the French version: *Voyages de Corneille le Brun, par la Moscovie, en Perse et aux Indes Orientales*, Amsterdam: Wetstein, 1718, vol. II, pp. 370-371.



**Plate 3** – A sumptuous 17th-century Chinese grave in Batavia. (Source: Guy Tachard, *A Relation of a Voyage to Siam*, 1687)



**Plate 4** – Chinese mausoleum in Batavia, drawing by Cornelis de Bruyn. (Source: *Voyages de Corneille le Brun, par la Moscovie... et aux Indes Orientales*, 1718)



**Plate 5** – Funeral ceremony in Batavia, drawing by Cornelis de Bruyn. (Source: *Voyages de Corneille le Brun, par la Moscovie... et aux Indes Orientales*, 1718)

When I arrived in this place, some people were busy making one of these tombs for a person that they were going to bury. The convoy went there shortly after, & I saw several tents equipped with all necessary things for the kitchen and the tables set. I watched carefully all the ceremonies of the convoy, which resembled a procession, because of the large number of persons it was composed of, and the ornaments they wore, namely flags, parasols, and a canopy in which they carried one of their Saints known as Joosje.<sup>36</sup> I also heard the sound of a few things. When the body has come to the place where it was to be buried, everything was done quickly and in a very good order (...): They threw some coins into the grave and then put in the body. A priest who was standing near the grave, carried a book, in which he read; there was another priest next to him, with a silver dish filled with seeds which from time to time he threw to the audience, on the coffin and on the child of the woman who had just been put into the grave; the child standing on the other side of the tomb, was covered with a dress of raw canvas, passed over his head, after the manner of the ancients (...) This child, who was no more than ten years old did the same several times, and each time returned to his place according to the order he received from the onlookers, among whom was his father dressed in white. Then the priest ordered the said child to spread a few handfuls of earth on the coffin of his mother, and thus ended the ceremony. While people were busy preparing the cement, we started eating with more than five hundred persons among whom were several women dressed in white (...) We remained there under the trees, until the evening. One sees everywhere thousands of small circular hills of ten to thirty feet high, which are separated from each other by narrow depressions. Many line up side-by-side along the side.

**36.** *Joosje*, from the Portuguese *Deos*, Cf. *Hobson-Jobson. A glossary of Anglo-Indian colloquial words and phrases and of kindred terms*, by Henry Yule and A. Burnell (First edition 1886), New Edition edited by William Crooke, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968, reissued in 1969, pp. 463-464.



Charles François Tombe, a French combat engineer, who worked in Batavia for the Dutch Government in the early 1800s, left a description of the Gunung Sari Cemetery he visited on the occasion of the *Qingming* festival.<sup>37</sup>

On the fourth of April [1804], one of the Chinese merchants who brought my food supplies having informed me that the next day being their All Souls' Day, I went at the sunset in the middle of the tombs to be witness to the ceremony that I will describe:

As soon as the sun rose, an infinite multitude of Chinese of both sexes and all ages, some on foot, others on horseback or by car, went to Jakatra near the location of the capital of this former Kingdom,<sup>38</sup> where are all the tombs of this nation. These tombs were already decorated with strips of paper or silk of various colors, and on each of them burned three candles of red wax. Each Chinese brought or made his slaves bring different dishes which were deposited as an offering on these tombs. One could easily distinguish the opulence of some of them by the luxury of their dishes. There were some dishes garnished with all what the most splendidly served Eastern table could offer of meat, fish, desserts, sweets and drinks. After leaving these different dishes several hours on the tombs, they ate some, offered others to the foreigners who were spectators, and took the rest back. Several of them however left roasted poultry which were whole preserved for the purpose.

Women were crying on the tombs of their husbands, children deplored the loss of the authors of their days, old men groaned on those of their companions and seemed to regret their surviving (...).

The German Friedrich Franz Junghuhn (1809-1864), our fourth and last observer, was in Batavia from 1835 to 1845 as military doctor. Since he was also a naturalist, a botanist, and a painter, he was more attracted by the unusual beauty of the funerary landscape of Gunung Sari than by the religious atmosphere. He paid great attention to the colors, the smells, the richness of the vegetation, and his description is imbued with a romantic enthusiasm:

The Gunung Sari cemetery constitutes a stretch of land that one may cover in a quarter of an hour. It is surrounded by a high embankment planted with trees from which emerge slender Palm trees. It contains very notable tombs of a very remarkable nation and offers a spectacle quite worthy of attention. Their hemispheric summit is formed by the rounded part of the tomb which is in a peculiar masonry, the entry of which appears on one of the sides of the small hill. Usually these hills are surrounded by two or more concentric walls that leave in their centre a convex space that has the shape of a flattened dome. These walls are in a semicircle and stop on the front where the grave ends vertically and where the entrance is closed by one or two stones. Before this entry which is strictly speaking the façade of the tomb and has a height of 6 to 8 feet, lies a small space around the sides which are shaped like benches going up to the green edge of the hill that drops in this place to the plain. On the stone that closes the entrance are engraved very beautiful characters that are enhanced with black and Golden color. Everything is painted in a bright white which contrasts sharply with the clashing green of the hill. Many of these tombs are in ruins and their inscriptions erased; the entire area is covered with a very dense vegetation that covers these hills as a hair would do for many skulls (*wie die Haare eben so vieler Schädel*). When we contemplate the landscape, we can but be satisfied with this new and strange as much as beau spectacle. Thousands of round hills are covered by a head of hair of an inextricably beautiful vegetation, which plunges into every unevenness, and stands on the side of each hill, through the green of which the bright white of the graves burst here and there.

37. Charles-François Tombe, *Voyage aux Indes Orientales pendant les années 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805 et 1806*, Paris: Arthus Bertrand, 1811, vol. I, pp. 250-251.

38. See above note 23.

If one enters this thicket full of pleasant scents and sweet perfumes, one is stunned by the extraordinary variety of grasses and flowering bushes that grow there (the author enumerates more than a dozen plants).<sup>39</sup>

The fascination of the 18th and 19th centuries European travelers for the Chinese deathscapes of Batavia may be explained by the fact that they shared some similarities with the garden cemeteries which took several decades of French reform movements to take form, even if Europe had suffered from the overcrowding of urban churchyards since the late 1700s. The Cemetery of Père Lachaise, the first and most celebrated garden cemetery did not open until 1804.

### Fates of Abandoned Cemeteries in Banten

In contrast to Batavia/Jakarta which since the 17th century has preserved its status as the capital, Banten once the political and economic centre of the Sultanate of same name, has not ceased to decline after its conquest by the VOC in 1682. Since the 1630s the Chinese were involved in sugarcane plantations and sugar processing and they sold their production to European merchants until the latter were expelled by the Dutch. Indeed, their influence extended to all sectors of the economy but they gradually moved to Batavia. However, a small community remained there which was involved in local trade. According to a census of the Chinese in Banten in 1727/1728, it appears that the former China quarter population was only 128 inhabitants (women, children and slaves included); while that of the Karangantu Pecinan (to the East) amounted to 361 inhabitants, to which should be added those of an area more to the east and which amounted to 306 inhabitants, so all together 795 (Map 5).<sup>40</sup> Currently the Chinese community is almost non-existent. The three long-ago abandoned and almost forgotten cemeteries which have been traced so far reflect successive periods of the Chinese settlement spanning the second half of the 17th century to 1854. According to Edmund Scot who was in Banten on several occasions between 1602 and 1605 the rich Chinese merchants who happened to pass away in Banten had their ashes sent back to China: “When any of them that are wealthy die in Banten, their bodies are burnt to ashes, which ashes they put close in Iarres and carry it to China to their friends.”<sup>41</sup> This may perhaps explain why no older tombstones have been found so far.

39. Translated from Junghuhn, *Topographische und naturwissenschaftliche Reisen nach Java*, pp. 45-46. See the list of plants in Salmon & Lombard, *Les Chinois de Jakarta. Temples et vie collective*, pp. 281-282.

40. C. Guillot, Nurhakim Lukman & C. Salmon, “Les sucriers chinois de Kelapadua, Banten, xviii<sup>e</sup> s. Textes et vestiges,” *Archipel* 39 (1990), p. 143.

41. Edmund Scot, *A Discourse of Iava and of the first English factorie there with divers Indian English and Dutch occurents, written by Master Edmund Scot contayning a Historie of things done from the eleventh of Februarie 1602, till the sixt of October, 1605, in Purchas, His Pilgrimages*, London, 1625, Part III, chap. 4, vol. II, p. 165. This statement is corroborated by François Pyrard de Laval, *Discours du voyage de Français aux Indes Orientales*, Paris, 1611, p. 248.

***Former Burial Ground of the Sugarcane Planters of Kelapadua (17th c.)***

Johan Peter Cortemünde (b. ca. 1618) a surgeon attached to the Danish East India Company who was in Banten in 1673,<sup>42</sup> states that some Chinese were also settled outside the city in a big village called “Clappadoa” (Kelapadua) where they owned an impressive sugarcane mill as well as several *arak* distilleries. This village could be reached by boat. As a matter of fact, Kelapadua which was located some 9 km to the south of the capital (and to the north of the present town of Serang), was like a little Chinese centre within the sultanate where the population was involved in sugarcane plantation, sugar processing and *arak* distilling (Map 5). The excavations made in 1998 revealed in five places (Sukalila, Kelapadua, Malangnengah, Beberan and Cantilan) the existence of scattered Chinese tombs datable to the second half of the 17th century ([1661] -1670s), as well as remnants of four brick walls, which were apparently the enclosure walls of some Chinese houses.<sup>43</sup> It is worth noting that these ruins, which are landmarks in the former Chinese village of Kelapadua, were still regarded as *kramat* or “Holy Buildings” by the population when we made our survey. The cemetery had a superficies of about 1 km<sup>2</sup>. The owners of the five tombs, which retain their epitaphs, were all men. Three of them were native to Zhangzhou 漳州 prefecture (Fujian) where the culture of sugarcane was practised extensively.<sup>44</sup> One may judge the social status of the deceased by the size of the graves—the biggest has a width of 4 m and is preceded by a grave court, *muting* 墓庭, built of masonry—, and the quality of the tablets. The latter were either in granite imported from Fujian province, for those who could afford the expense, or in local white madreporite for the others. The biggest size was 41x57 cm.<sup>45</sup> We know from other sources that after 1727 the name of the village disappeared from the list of Bantenese sugar mills established by the Dutch. The latter preferred to purchase the sugar they needed in Tanjung Kait and Sumurangsana on the northern coast, to the west of the river Ci Sedana, which were closer to Batavia.<sup>46</sup>

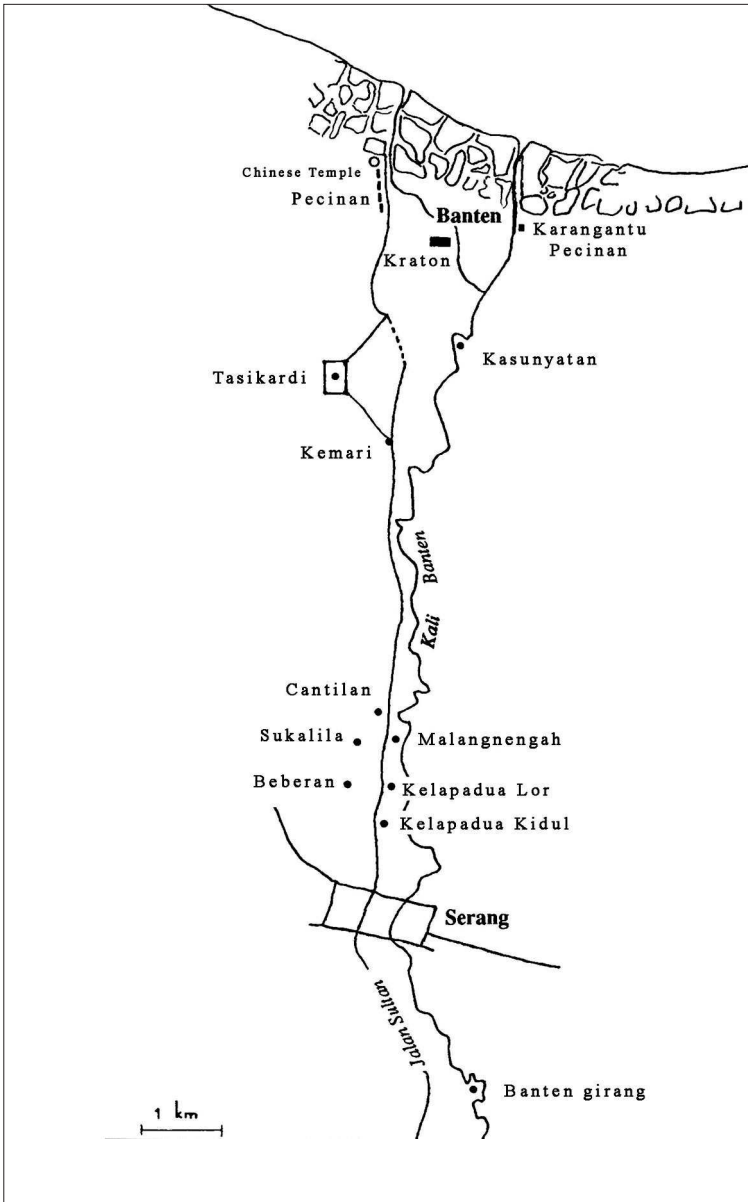
42. J.P. Cortemünde, *Dagbog fra en Ostindiefart 1672-75*, edited by Henning Henningsen, Søhistoriske Skrifter V, Kronborg: Handels- Og Søfartsmuseet, 1953, p. 126.

43. Guillot, Lukman & Salmon, “Les sucriers chinois de Kelapadua,” *Archipel* 39 (1990), p. 149. The grave containing one coin from the town of Kampen (Netherlands) dated from the period 1612-1619, the two cyclical characters *xinchou* 辛丑 engraved on the epitaph may be equated to 1661.

44. See inter alia Ng Chin-keong, “The Peasant Society of South Fukien 1506-1644,” *Nanyang University Journal*, 6 (1972), p. 211.

45. For their transcripts, see Guillot, Lukman & Salmon, “Les sucriers chinois de Kelapadua,” pp. 150-154, 158.

46. Guillot, Lukman & Salmon, “Les sucriers chinois de Kelapadua,” p. 143.



Map 5 – Map showing the localization of the three cemeteries in Banten. (Adapted from C. Salmon, “Le cimetière chinois de Kasunyatan à Banten Lama”)



**Plate 6** – Overview of the graveyard of Kasunyatan, Banten. (Photo: Puslit Arkenas)

### ***Puzzling Graveyard of Kasunyatan (late 17th-early 18th c.)***

During a Franco-Indonesian archaeological campaign in Banten, between 1988 and 1992, the attention of the archaeologists was attracted by the presence, in the middle of the rice fields, of a strip of land slightly elevated and covered with trees (Plate 6). This plot of land, located on the left bank of the *kali* Banten, some two hundred meters from the Kasunyatan Mosque, and approximately 1 km south of the ancient walls of the city, was in effect a former Chinese cemetery which had been abandoned long ago.

Clearing away the undergrowth allowed us to count some 96 graves in Chinese style, to which should be added some twenty Muslim tombs located to the southwest for two of them and to the northeast for the others, among which two that are regarded as holy or *kramat*.<sup>47</sup> It is so far the biggest complex of ancient Chinese tombs ever found in Java, but it left no trace in the memory of the inhabitants. It is not until the 1960s that, under economic pressure, the local population had the idea of recovering this piece of land in order to plant productive trees. We were unable to find information regarding the legal status of this old cemetery which has never been claimed, although it is located at about 700 m to the west of the great *pesantren* (religious training centre) founded during the reign of Sultan Maulana Yusuf (d. in 1580) whose tomb is still in situ.

<sup>47</sup> C. Salmon, “Le cimetière chinois de Kasunyatan (Banten Lama) - fin XVII<sup>e</sup> - début XVIII<sup>e</sup> s.,” *Archipel* 50 (1995), pp. 41-66.



**Plate 7** – Typical Minnan-style grave, the epitaph of which has disappeared, Kasunyatan cemetery. (Photo: C. Salmon, 1992)



**Plate 8** – Epitaph of Lian Qiangong, dated Kangxi *wuyi* (1698), Kasunyatan. (Photo: Puslit Arkenas)



**Plate 9** – Tomb of Guo Juguan, Kangxi *bingwu* (1706), Kasunyatan. (Photo: Puslit Arkenas)

In contrast to Kelapadua where the graves are largely scattered, in Kasunyatan they are instead tight against one another on a strip of land having a length of approximately 110 m and a maximum width of 40 m. The little space left between the tombs allows us to assume that either the land was very expensive, or that the area conceded to the Chinese had been poorly measured. However, in terms of geomancy the location was excellent.

The tombs are identifiable by small circular mounds at the soil surface. Their state of conservation varies. In a general way, the masonry which covers the top of these tombs is well preserved, but most steles have disappeared (Plate 7), for the simple reason that they have been used for any other purpose by the villagers. The tombstones which have survived are in granite, andesite, and madrepore, as are those in Kelapadua, while their sizes are very similar too. Of the eleven epitaphs, the oldest are datable to [1693] and [1697] (Plate 8) and the most recent to [1721], some are undated or their date is unreadable. As regards the owners of the graves, all men as in Kelapadua, they also come from Zhangzhou prefecture.

### ***Last Cemetery in the Western Pecinan***

When we visited the village of Banten in 1974, the former Western Pecinan had been invested by villagers some of whom lived in the ruined houses left by the Chinese. These new settlers saw in the abandoned cemetery a valuable



**Plate 10** – Old tombstone dated Qianlong 19 (1754), enshrined under a side altar of the Chinese temple, Banten.  
(Photo: C. Salmon)

reserve of stones and they quasi systematically dismantled the tombs of their steles in order to use the latter as gateways in rice fields or as stones for washing. Thanks to the Indonesian Archaeological Service, the oldest funerary steles (18 in all, ranging from 1759 to 1854) were collected and finally sheltered in the Museum Situs Banten Lama. Moreover the rather recent Chinese temple which is located to the north of the former Pecinan even shelters an older epitaph dated 1754 (Plate 10). This epitaph is enshrined under a side altar on which are placed four ancestral tablets that, when opened, indicate the dates of four people who respectively lived from 1737 to 1791, from 1748 to 1808, from 1757 to 1802 and finally from 1770 to 1816.<sup>48</sup> These relics which nowadays embody the history of the former community are worshipped by the pilgrims who come to visit the sanctuary.

These epitaphs and ancestral tablets allow us to cast a last glance at the Chinese community of Banten. The deceased men, one excepted (from Guangdong province), were native to Zhangzhou prefecture. Four tombs belonged to women: one dated 1812 housed the remains of a mother, the Lady

<sup>48</sup> For more details, see C. Salmon & D. Lombard, “À propos de quelques stèles chinoises récemment retrouvées à Banten (Java ouest),” *Archipel* 9 (1975), pp. 99-127.





**Plate 11**– Tomb of the Balinese lady Huang Jinlian, dated Da Qing *bingzhen* (1676, 1736, 1796 or 1856), Western Pecinan, Banten. (Photo: C. Salmon)

Xie Quanniang 谢全娘, and her daughter; another, probably dating from 1796, belonged to Lady Huang 黄, who bears the personal name of Jinlian 金莲 or Golden lotus, but it is stated that she was of Balinese origin. We know from other sources that around this time the Chinese of Java gladly married Balinese women (Plate 11). This Lady Huang was even granted the title of *ruren* 孺人, which in China was conferred upon wives of subordinate dignitaries.<sup>49</sup> Moreover we find the names of three captains (who respectively passed away in 1759, 1791 and 1836) and one lieutenant who died in 1791. After Banten had come under the influence of Batavia, the harbour master or *shahbandar*, who also acted as head of the Chinese community, was replaced by a captain. From 1751 onwards and perhaps earlier, the captain, and the lieutenant under him had to be appointed by the VOC.<sup>50</sup>

49. For more details on Indonesian wives who were given tombs in Chinese style, and eventually Chinese names, see C. Salmon, “Women Status as Reflected in Chinese Epitaphs (16th-20th Centuries) in Insulinde,” *Archipel* 72 (2006), pp. 157-194.

50. Salmon & Lombard, “À propos de quelques stèles chinoises récemment retrouvées à Banten (Java ouest),” pp. 113-114.



**Plate 12** – Sacred tomb of a Bugis lady, dated Qianlong 12 (1747), formerly part of the Chinese cemetery of Tanjung Kait. (Photo: C. Salmon)

### Sacralisation of Ancient Graves

In the late 1970s one could still see some rare remains of former cemeteries. During our successive field works we discovered eight tombs whose owners were for the most part men native to South Fujian, and in one case the Indonesian wife of a Chinese settler.<sup>51</sup> The oldest dates back to 1664 and the most recent to 1801. Seven were found on the north coast of Java, and the eighth in Ambon (Moluccas). From West to East:

#### *Tanjung Kait*

Cape located 40 km north of Tangerang famous by its Chinese temple which is the object of pilgrimages.

A funerary stele of 1747 (Plate 12) located on the left side of the road leading to the temple, not far from it, in a place called Kebon Baru, which formerly was part of a Chinese cemetery. During the second half of the 18th century Tanjung Kait was a centre of sugar production (as we have seen above). It started to decline towards the end of the 18th century in relation to the sugar crisis that shook West Java. This very fact may explain why the Chinese sugarcane growers gradually moved elsewhere, leaving behind an abandoned cemetery.

<sup>51</sup>. See C. Salmon, “À propos de quelques tombes chinoises d’Indonésie,” *Archipel* 12 (1976), pp. 207-218.



**Plate 13** – Tomb of Tumanggung ... dated [1701] located behind the market of Pasar Pagi, Cirebon. (Photo: C. Salmon)

### **Cirebon**

Four graves which are the leftovers of a former cemetery whose location was still indicated on a map of Cirebon from the early 1940s. Two respectively dating from [1701] (Plate 13), one from 1702, and the last from 1765. The two, dating from [1701], are extremely interesting and little-known by the population because they are situated in the backyard of a midwifery school founded in 1922 and whose buildings are at a distance of about 400 m from Sukalila. The owner of one of these tombs is “Tumenggung 淡版公,” a title given to high ranking civil servants. The epitaph is erased and the name of its owner illegible. The two latter tombs are located behind the market of Pasar Pagi, in a closed park, near the street of Sukalila North bordered by the canal of same name. As for the second Tumenggung, Chen Sancai 陈三才 (or Tan Sam Tjay in Hokkien), it is difficult to know if his title appeared on the original stone inscription or not. The dates of Qianlong *yiyou* 乾隆乙酉 (1765) and Guangxu 光绪 30 (1904) seem to be the dates of two successive repairs (Plates 14, 15). On the new tablet engraved when the tomb was repaired in 1904, the title does not appear in the central column but curiously on the right side and is followed by that of Adipati 二把 or “Regent”, after the date. According to the commemorative inscription of 1923 (in Chinese, Malay and Javanese) Chen Sancai was also granted the title of Aria Wira Tjoela by Sultan Sepuh and he was also granted a piece of land in Sukalila.<sup>52</sup> Anyway these two tombs confirm the tradition according to which the Chinese were very influential in Cirebon.

<sup>52</sup>. There are some discrepancies concerning the date of death of Chen Sancai. The modern inscription in Malay states that Chen Sancai passed away in 1739 of the Javanese calendar, which should be equated to the year 1812 of the Gregorian calendar.



Plate 14 – Overview of the sacred grave of Chen Sancai dated 1765, Cirebon.  
(Photo: C. Salmon)



Plate 15 – Epitaph of Chen Sancai.  
(Photo: C. Salmon)

## Semarang

Three steles, two of them dating from 1797 (Plate 16) and the third from 1804. They are located south of the city, in a place called Gergaji, on the western side of Jalan Gajah Mada and at the foot of the Hill of Candi.

## Ambon

A tombstone of 1664, repaired in 1913 (Plate 17) located opposite the city across the Bay, in a place called Rumah Tiga that was easily accessed by boat.

An interesting fact is that at least six of these tombs became the object of genuine worship on the part of the inhabitants—newcomers, local born Chinese and even other Indonesians—who do not hesitate to spend money to maintain these historical sites nowadays regarded as sacred—*kramat* in Indonesian. The way in which the cult was formed is not always very clear. The only dates that could give us information about the emergence of the cult are the restorations of monuments: 1904 and 1923 for the tomb of Tumenggung Chen Sancai in Cirebon, 1932 for the tomb of Ambon. One would think that these cults are not very old; they probably appeared at a time when the old burials were beginning to be rare and when ancient cemeteries were disappearing gradually. The contact with the ancestors then crystallized on a few privileged graves in front of which the fervent worshippers questioned the oracle with the use of *beijiao* 杯皎 or “divination blocks.”

At Ambon, the encountered devotees told us that it was the grave “of the first Chinese to settle in the island and of his wife”, but in fact the implantation of the Chinese goes back to the Ming.<sup>53</sup> The first Chinese captain appointed by the Dutch in 1625 at Ambon was a Christian named Herman. In Tanjung Kait, the cult took a native form; the tomb bears the name of Kramat Embah Dato Kebon Baru or “Holy Tomb of the Grandmother of Kebon Baru.” There is in effect a set of three large tombs, and two small ones, all considered as *kramat* and visited by pilgrims who come to spend the night nearby and ask the deceased’s help. Sticks of incense and an oil lamp are burning continuously before the graves. Only the largest preserves its stele, which shows that the tomb owner is a woman, presumably a Bugis (transcribed in Hokkien as Bu-git 武吃)<sup>54</sup> whose husband’s surname is Lu 卢 (Plate 12). In Cirebon, the cult rendered to Chen Sancai by the Sino-Indonesians of the place is explained, according to the inscription of 1923, by the fact that during his lifetime this great character had done much to aid his compatriots. The effectiveness of

53. Cf. the excellent study by Seiichi Iwao, “On the Chinese Quarter at Amboyna in the Early Ming,” in *The Tōyō Gakuhō / Reports of the Oriental Society*, vol. XXXIII: 3-4 (Oct. 1950), pp. 1-43 (in Japanese).

54. Wang Dahai 王大海 in his travelogue used the same transcription; cf. *Haidao yizhi* 海島逸志, ed. Yao Nan 姚楠 & Wu Langxuan 吴琅璇, Xianggang, Xianggang xuejin shudian, 1992, p. 64.

Chen Sancai seems to have affected the neighboring tomb dated 1702 which belongs to a certain Chen Kuanguan 陈宽官. As the two deceased bear the same surname and are native to the same district, the story goes that it is the tomb of the father of Chan Sancai, which is likely.

In Semarang the worship of the two tombs appeared in a different way. When in 1797 (as we saw above) the rather dilapidated tombs of the former cemetery had to be transferred outside of the city, Captain Tan Yok Sing 陈煜生 entrusted the matter to his assistants who asked a master in geomancy to find a suitable location, and the bones contained in jars were placed into two mass graves on which was erected a stele each. The first bearing the characters *Diling tonggui suomu* 地灵同归所墓 “Collective tomb located in an efficacious place” (Plate 16), and the second, a commemorative inscription entitled *Yingxiu tonggui* 营修同归 “Construction of a place where [the deceased] return together,” which briefly retells the transfer process.<sup>55</sup> At the same time, to protect the population from the evil influence of the dead who had been disturbed, a stone bearing the invocation “*Namah Amitâbha* [Honor to the Amitabha Buddha] 南无阿弥陀佛 [Auspicious Peace] *ji'an* 吉安” was fixed into the wall of a house in *Jalan Petolongan* close to the location of the displaced tombs, by fear of the unsettled spirits.<sup>56</sup> After Captain Tan Yok Sing passed away in 1800, his eldest son, Tan Liong Djoe 陈隆裕, replaced him as head of the community. Having seemingly a great compassion for the dead whose remains had been disturbed, he appealed to all notables, including the captains of *Pekalongan* and *Tegal*, to whom he was probably related since they share the same surname. In 1804 he erected a building intended for the cult of the dead (since destroyed). The event was commemorated by a third stele that could still be seen lying on the ground next to the mass graves. The introductory text shows the affliction of the captain and his desire to worship the deceased:

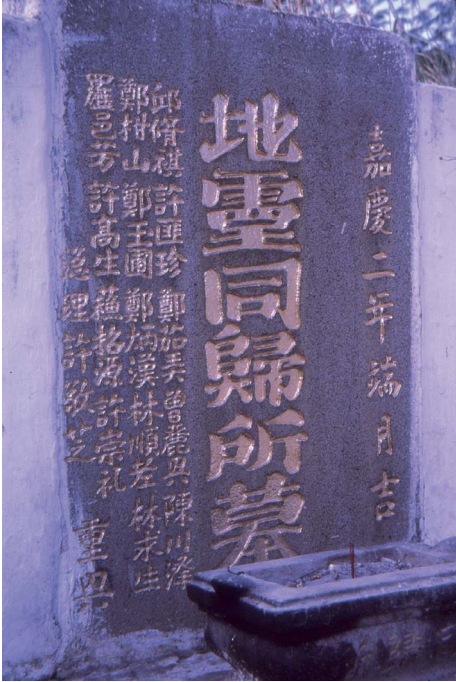
It is distressing to attend a funeral, but to worship the dead is even more distressing. In order to perpetuate the sacrifices, we erected a building of four intercolumnations [dedicated to the souls of the dead]. The faithful, according to their means, secretly make donations that are transmitted to the Nine Sources. Each year, during the Feast of the 3rd day of the 3rd month, all together we offer a banquet. Everyone approved this, and we did erect a stele so that these facts do not fall into oblivion.<sup>57</sup>

序曰：埋固艰，祭更艰，欲垂祀事於千古，爰建缘屋之四间，同归灵感，士人向前丰约，随其善愿，阴隲施及九泉。每届上巳，共钦奠筵。念曰：然然勒碑不涸。

55. Liem Thian Joe [林天佑], *Riwajat Bangsa Tionghoa di Indonesia. Riwayat Semarang*, Semarang: Kamadjoean, [ca. 1933], pp. 57-58.

56. Liem Thian Joe, *Riwajat Bangsa Tionghoa di Indonesia*, pp. 60-61. The inscription is still *in situ*.

57. See Salmon, “À propos de quelques tombes chinoises d’Indonésie,” pp. 214-218; Franke, Salmon & Siu (eds.), *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Indonesia*, vol. II. Part 1, pp. 405-407.



**Plate 16** – Sacred collective tombstone erected after the transfer of a former cemetery in Semarang, 1797. (Photo: C. Salmon)



**Plate 17** – Sacred tomb said to be of “the first settler in Ambon and of his wife,” dated 1664. (Photo: C. Salmon)

We ignore what happened after Captain Tan Liong Djoe passed away in 1811. However, according to Liem Thian Joe, in the early 1930s the Chinese population of Semarang still used to burn incense at the graves and seek advice from the deceased when they participated in games of chance,<sup>58</sup> and in the 1990s freshly consumed incense sticks could still often be seen in front of the tombs.

The examples presented above show enough that the owners of the graves may be a menace for the living, but also a source of power which may be manipulated. They are also a link between the first settlers whose history is often forgotten and the present communities; this very fact explains why some graves may become the centre of ritual activity emanating from people who are not related to their owners.

### Control and Management of Burial Grounds

We intend to end this essay by reflecting on the way burial grounds were granted in concession by the political authorities, either local or colonial, the manner the Chinese community leaders administrated cemeteries, and made profits from them.

To the best of our knowledge no written sources concerning the cemeteries of the sultanates of Banten and Cirebon have surfaced so far. From what has been said above, one may infer that, as regards Banten, the Chinese based in Kelapadua were rather free to bury their dead within the compound which was at their disposal. It seems that their counterparts residing in town did not enjoy such a free scope. The superficies allotted to burial grounds in Kasunyatan and the Western Pecinan give the impression that either for financial or political reasons the land for cemeteries was given sparingly.

As for Cirebon, the situation seems to have been rather different. If we judge from the huge superficies of the *kramat* of Chen Sancai, and the space occupied by the two tombs of 1701, which are now all in the heart of the city, one may assume that land for cemeteries was granted more generously.

In Batavia the Dutch tried to control Chinese funerary practices and limit the spaces occupied by public cemeteries within the city by implementing a series of taxes and by setting fines to offenders, the amounts of which were supposed to be used for the maintenance of the Chinese Hospital (founded in 1640). For the period 1602-1811, the *Plakaatboek* records a series of rules. A tax on funerals (*graff gelt*), graduated according to the quality of the deceased, was first issued in 1641.<sup>59</sup> Nineteen years later its amount was increased from 2 to 3 rixdollars; while a new tax was added for the engraving of an epitaph which amounted to 12 rixdollars.<sup>60</sup>

58. Liem Thian Joe, *Riwayat Bangsa Tionghoa di Indonesia*, p. 58. The two tombstones are still in situ.

59. *Plakaatboek*, vol. I, pp. 454-455, 2 Dec.- 2 Feb. 1641.

60. *Plakaatboek*, vol. II, pp. 335-336, 11 June 1660.



Further rules were added which concerned the size of the tombs: “It was decided so because it is the habit of this nation to bury only one body in each tomb, which has the consequence of very quickly filling the cemeteries.”<sup>61</sup> James Cook who was in Batavia ca. 1771 also insists on this singular use which results in the fact that the Chinese cemeteries around Batavia occupy huge superficies and he says that it is the reason why the Dutch are angry to see such a waste, and sell burial lands to the Chinese at the most exorbitant prices.<sup>62</sup> In 1791 the VOC added a new rule concerning the size of the tombs of the heads of the Chinese. Henceforth their graves shall not exceed a width of 24 feet, a length of 36 and a maximum height of 8 feet, with the possibility to raise the latter to 10 and 11 feet, provided that the earth necessary to this extra height is not taken from the cemetery. As for the tombs of other members of this nation, they should be limited to a width of 8 feet, a length of 12 and a height of 6. The captain is requested to ensure that no one transgresses these new limitations under penalty of a fine of 500 rixdollars.<sup>63</sup>

Further rules were issued that deal with the manner the Chinese must run their graveyards. In particular, they should get rid of all the brushwood twice a year, and dig drainage channels to avoid that water stagnates there.<sup>64</sup> As for rich merchants who wanted to create private graveyards, they also had to obtain a special permission from the VOC.

For the 19th and 20th centuries Dutch regulations are more difficult to come by, but we have an incomplete collection of the records for the Tanjung cemetery<sup>65</sup> owned by the Kong Kuan and entitled *Danrong yizhong bu* 丹绒义冢簿.<sup>66</sup> These archives provide an insight into the manner the Chinese officers administrated the said graveyard and made profit by selling burial grounds in perpetuity.<sup>67</sup> They may be divided into two parts: twenty-three volumes make up the Funeral registers or *Danrong ping'an zongri qingbu* 丹绒平安总日清

61. *Plakaatboek*, vol. X, p. 174, 31 Dec. 1778.

62. James Cook, *A Journal of a Voyage round the World in the “Endeavour,”* 1771, published in *Hawkesworth’s Voyages*, 1773; French translation: *Relations des Voyages entrepris par ordre de sa Majesté Britannique act. Régnante; pour faire des découvertes dans l’Hémisphère Méridional, et successivement exécutés par le commodore Byron, le cap. Carteret, le cap. Wallis & le cap. Cook*, Paris, 1774, vol. IV, p. 286.

63. *Plakaatboek*, vol. XI, pp. 283-284, 9 August 1791. For more details, see C. Salmon & Myra Sidharta, “The Manufacture of Chinese Gravestones in Indonesia – A Preliminary Survey,” *Archipel* 72 (2006), pp. 195-220.

64. *Plakaatboek*, vol. IX, 1766, pp. 503 and following.

65. The common appellation of Tanjung cemetery in fact encompassed five burial grounds: Tanjung, Selipi, Jati, Jelambar and Cidang.

66. These archives, formerly kept in the Chinese Council, are now sheltered in Netherlands at the Leiden University Library (Sinologisch Instituut). Worth of note: The digital version of the Kong Koan Archive of Batavia is online on the website of the Leiden University Library: <http://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl> (Type “Kong Koan” and click “view online,” then all links to the archive in the Collection Guide appear).

67. This paragraph is based on the study made by Li Minghuan mentioned above, footnote 23.

簿; the others, called *Zhongdi fengshui bu* 冢地風水簿 or in Malay *Buku Hongsui*<sup>68</sup> are records of purchasing burial grounds. The funeral registers, which cover the period 1811-1896,<sup>69</sup> list all deceased people who belonged to the Chinese community of Batavia of those times regardless of whether they were rich or poor, and regardless in which of the five cemeteries they were buried. They also gathered information about the names and addresses of the dead, birthplace and residence during their youth, their property, sex, and in some cases ethnic origin, their age, and testament, and the size of the tomb. They were Chinese for the great majority, but non-Chinese wives are included. The second registers dealing with purchasing of burial grounds, which are the most voluminous, provide interesting insight into this lucrative trade, and into the manner the deals were made. They cover the period 1812-1944, but are rather complete for the years 1860-1865 and 1872-1878.

According to Li Minghuan the available book accounts reveal “that selling of burial grounds and collecting of land rents formed two stable and long-term revenues for the Batavia Kong Koan of the times.” More precisely, between 1861 and 1906 there are three years for which the revenues gained from selling burial grounds were more than ten thousand guilders per year. “Making use of its surplus fund, the Batavia Kong Koan, for the first time in 1883, could invest 105,850 guilders to buy stocks. However, it should be noted that fifty percent of the revenues gained from selling of burial grounds were used to cover the expenses of the *weeskamer* or Orphan Chamber.<sup>70</sup> Moreover it appears that the Kong Koan acted as the VOC did as regards the privileges granted to certain persons the Company wanted to reward by conceding plots of lands. The relevant records show that the Kong Koan could also give burial plots as a reward to certain persons including the high ranking Chinese officers, employees working for the Dutch, the Kong Koan, as well as the heads of Chinese temples.<sup>71</sup>

## Conclusion

This diachronic overview, even if far from being comprehensive, shows the importance of cemeteries in Chinese *mentalités*, and highlights all the sacrifices that families have been prepared to make in order to give their dead a place to rest in peace, in a pleasant landscape located close to the urban areas where they may easily come to visit the graves and communicate with their deceased. In Indonesia the 20th century saw practically the death of

68. *Hongsui* or *fengshui* 風水, literally “wind and water” is here an euphemism for burial ground.

69. With a few years missing between 1811 and 1852.

70. Li Minghuan, “A Portrait of Batavia’s Chinese Society Based on the Tanjung Cemetery Archives,” pp. 91-93.

71. Li Minghuan, *Op. Cit.*, p. 89.

the big Chinese urban cemeteries in which *burial lots were typically sold in perpetuity*. Temporarily still surviving are the burial grounds inside Christian and public urban cemeteries for which the families of the deceased have to renew the lease every three years or so if they don't want to see the tombs of the latter disappear and the remains of their owners put into mass graves.

The records left by European travelers also reveal the fact that these deathscapes designed by the Chinese of Batavia were to some extent the forerunner of the future cemetery garden and memorial park. Western travelers enjoyed walking in these deathscapes as they did first in the public gardens and later in garden cemeteries of their respective countries.<sup>72</sup>

Cremation, practiced for a long time in some China's Buddhist milieu, which, in the Jakarta of the 1950s-1960s, was for many a choice dictated by the constraints of urban development, has gradually become more acceptable with the emergence of columbaria and gardens of remembrance.

If now the dead have less and less their place within the megacities and metropolitan areas of Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries,<sup>73</sup> the idea of designing places to shelter the deceased has not disappeared so far. The 21st century is characterised by the creation of private memorial parks located far outside the limits of cities, but in areas which can easily be accessed by road and by air (and which may also have a crematorium and a columbarium). These cemetery gardens, which cater to a rather rich urban population are initiated by great developers: such as Taman Makam Quiling located in Jonggol, in the area of Bogor (2002/2003), funded by Naga Sakti Group;<sup>74</sup> Lestari Memorial Park/Fugui shanzhuang 富贵山庄, in Krawang Barat Km. 46 (2003), managed by a joint venture between PT. Alam Hijau Lestari and the funeral company from Malaysia NV. Multi Corporation Berhad, a subsidiary of Nirvana Asia Ltd which is one of the biggest in the world; it runs memorial parks in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, etc.; Taman Memorial Graha Sentosa/Taigong lingyuan 泰宫陵园, in Kampung Kali Gandu, Teluk Jame, Karawang (2003), operated by PT. Permata Bumi Kencana, a subsidiary of

72. See for instance the description of La Madeleine Cemetery founded in Amiens in 1811 in Stéphane Conte, *Promenades au cimetière de la Madeleine, précédées d'un précis historique*, Amiens: Imprimerie de Duval et Herment, 1847 (BNF, Gallica), p. 8: "On serait loin de se douter, en passant devant le cimetière de la Madeleine, qu'on est en présence d'un établissement de cette nature, tellement il est gracieux au premier aspect, avec des allées ombrées, ornées de dahlias, des rosiers aux riches couleurs et de vigoureux tilleuls aux troncs desquels s'enroulent les chèvre-feuilles grimpants, et dont le tout forme plutôt l'entrée d'un magnifique parc que d'un lieu destiné aux sépultures."

73. About the planned death of cemeteries in Singapore, see Kevin YL Tan (ed.), *Spaces of the Dead. A Case of the Living*, Singapore: Singapore Heritage Society, Ethos Books, 2011.

74. The Memorial Park has a superficies of 123 hectares. The founder of this group is Suwito Muliadi whose family formerly ran the coffin shop Hiap Djie Hoo in Toko Tiga (Jakarta, Kota); see "Suwito Muliadi: Tidak boleh tamak" 2/5/2012, online: <http://entrepreneur.bisnis.com/read/20120502/267/75177/suwito-muliadi-tidak-boleh-tamak>

Grup Artha Graha which is involved in real estate business. Last but not least, San Diego Hills Memorial Park and Funeral Homes (2007) managed by PT Lippo Karawaci Karawang, and which is based on the renowned Forest Lawn cemetery in Glendale California. San Diego Hills cemetery is said to have “a total area of 500 hectares, which is greater than all public cemeteries owned and operated by the municipality of Jakarta” and where up to five millions people could be buried.<sup>75</sup>

These memorial parks, that have tremendous financial and economic implications, modify the cultural landscape of the surroundings of the cities, and may to some extent transform the mentalities by marketing death and managing all the funeral rituals.

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75. Tom Wright, “Death takes a holiday: a recreational cemetery,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 14 February 2007.

## Appendix

## Changjian Gunung Sari Yishan Biji 倡建牛郎沙里义冢壁记 [1761]

## Introduction

The text that was conceived by a certain Chen Liyi 陈立义 and composed by the Buddhist monk Gan Jiang 干江, is interesting for three reasons.

First, it shows the great importance of the dead for the living. It also reveals the fear of the Chinese at the idea of not being in a position to handle decent burials of their deceased, as their forefathers did, and their desire to ensure that no abandoned souls will roam the paths.

Second, it highlights the fact that the author of the stele presents the project and the realization of the cemetery as if everything occurred within the Chinese world, without any allusion to the fact that Captain Lim Tjipko 林缉官 (in office 1756-1774, year of his death)<sup>1</sup> had first to obtain the permission of the VOC; in other words, as if the Chinese of Batavia were their own masters, and lived their own lives without interference.

Third, it exposes the willingness of the leaders of the community to engage themselves to enlarge the burial ground by purchasing a new plot of land, and collecting the money for the purpose among the Chinese in Batavia. In effect, apart from the captain, the list includes the four lieutenants (*leizhenlan* 雷珍兰) in office: Khouw Hong Liang 许弘良 appointed in 1756,<sup>2</sup> Lim Kienko 林健官 appointed in 1751, Lim Theecko 林钗官 appointed in 1754,<sup>3</sup> and Thee Ponko 戴牟官 appointed in 1759.<sup>4</sup> It also lists the names of three *boedelmeesters* (*wuzhimi* 武直迷) or “inheritance curators”.<sup>5</sup> Among the donors (74 names) are listed Lian Musheng 连木生, who was portrayed as a literatus in Wang Dahai 王大海’s account,<sup>6</sup> Cheng Guoshi 陈国使 who donated a tablet to the temple of Ancol (in the vicinity of Batavia) in 1755,<sup>7</sup> and a lady, called *Nhai Jian Shou* 翦寿.<sup>8</sup> The list also contains the names of two other captains:

1. Hoetink, “Chineesche officieren te Batavia onder de Compagnie”, p. 54.

2. In the list of lieutenants published by Hoetink, “Chineesche officieren te Batavia onder de Compagnie”, p. 90, the character 弘 is replaced by its Hokkien homophone 芳. Wang Dahai 王大海, *Haidao yizhi* 海岛逸志, Yao Nan 姚楠 & Wu Langxuan 吴琅璇 (ed.), Xianggang, Xianggang xuejin shudian, 1992, p. 45, provides a biography sketch of the lieutenant whose personal name is written as on the stone inscription.

3. In the list of lieutenants published by Hoetink, “Chineesche officieren te Batavia onder de Compagnie”, p. 90, the character *jiao* 钗 stands for *chai* 钗.

4. The captain and his associates formed a Chinese Council, called *gongguan* 公館, that administrated the community under the control of the VOC.

5. Namely Chen Qiaolang 陈巧郎 and Shi Huaguan 施华官 whose names appear in the list of *boedelmeesters* which precedes the *Kai Ba lidai shiji*, p. 19, and a third one, Lin ?chunshu 林口椿舍, unidentified.

6. Wang Dahai, *Haidao yizhi*, pp. 42-43.

7. W. Franke, C. Salmon and Anthony Siu (eds.), *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Indonesia / Yindunixiya huawen mingke huibian* 印度尼西亚华文铭刻汇编, Singapore: The South Seas Society, vol. II, 1 (1997), p. 24.

8. The Malay term of address *Nyai*, which means “Madam”, is transcribed in the inscription with the character 雅 and the radical *nü* 女 that is added below the character.

Huang Jingguan 黃井官 formerly in office in Semarang (Central Java),<sup>9</sup> and Yang Xuanguan 楊璇官, as well as Lieutenant Chen Jingguan 陈静官. These two latter names appear neither in the Chinese lists of captains and lieutenants, nor in the Dutch one.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps Yang and Chen had been simply awarded honorary titles.<sup>11</sup> The main text reads:

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9. Huang Jingguan's biography also appears in Wang Dahai, *Haidao yizhi*, pp. 47-49.

10. Cf. Hoetink, "Chineesche officieren te Batavia onder de Compagnie," pp. 8-9; Franke, Salmon and Siu (eds.), *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Indonesia Yindunixiya huawen mingke huibian*, II, 1, pp. 115-116.

11. The text of the inscription was first published by Hibino Takeo 日比野丈夫, "Jakaruta no gyûrôsari gichôhi ni tsuite ジャカルタの牛郎沙里义冢碑について" (About the stele of Gunung Sari in Jakarta), *Nampô bunka* 南方文化 (The Tenri Bulletin of South Asian Studies), June 1974, pp. 41-55. At that time, the stele was embedded in a wall, and its lower part was buried in the earth, so that several characters were missing in each line. Since it has been relocated in the temple courtyard, all the characters are visible, but some are blurred beyond recognition. Moreover, the inscription was recently repainted, sometimes awkwardly. Our gratitude to Mau Chuanhui 毛传慧 who helped us to decipher some characters.

### Wall narrative of the Construction Project of the Collective Cemetery of Gunung Sari

Since we have been trading in Batavia, four cemeteries have been erected.<sup>12</sup> We have buried skeletons for one hundred years.<sup>13</sup> The number of inhumed carcasses [is not less than] ten thousand. This generous action which consisted of gathering the dead bodies and burying them was due to our Chinese forefathers. When [in the past] the people saw an opportunity for doing the right, they did it; as for us, how could we not to accomplish our own duty? The current captain has the heart to rescue the living and is preoccupied to relieve the dead, he endorses the [...] sufferings of others, and accomplishes achievements benefiting [the population].

He assembled like-minded people who in great number promptly took part in the project. Each contributed [...] in order to develop the cemetery of Gunung Sari. Thereupon we can close the tombs, and select lucky spots for the graves. During the cold waves of moonlight nights there are no more souls roaming the paths. When strange birds are weeping in the autumn wind, they reveal that the spirits of the dead have no place to return. Thanks to the support of all the travelers they have escaped the physical sufferings of floods,<sup>14</sup> this is great. Together we plan to celebrate the event and have engraved the names of the donors on a tablet. This is a great action. On the one hand, it equates those of the past by its excellence, and on the other, it brings relief to the deceased. Isn't like the achievements of our forebears who founded four cemeteries? We implore the gods so that this action will not fall into oblivion. Hence this brief outline to inform the future generations so that they may know the origin of this praise.

[The text is appended by a list of 74 Chinese who contributed money for the purchase of the plot of land; each name is followed by the amount of his donation]

Great Qing, Qianlong 26, year *xinsi*, autumn, 8th month.  
Composed by the monk Gan Jiang on an auspicious day.

12. If we except the first burial ground mentioned by de Haan, with the purchases of 1650, 1660/1668, 1696, 1728, and 1746, we reach the figure of five cemeteries.

13. The chronology of cemetery purchases given above shows that the Chinese had been burying their dead for more than one hundred years.

14. Presumably an allusion to the formation of swamps and mires between tombs during the rainy season.

## 倡建牛郎沙里義塚壁記

義塚之建，販吧以來，四定厥基矣。掩骼已經百年，埋髑[奚][啻]萬骨。此我唐先世瘞旅之盛事也。在[昔]人既見義而必為，於吾儕豈當仁而獨讓。現任列位甲百丹濟明為心，賑幽在念，口飢溺，由己之痛，行立建，及人之方[眾]。鳩同志，劬勳勝參，各捐口口口口，復建牛郎沙里，於是馬鬣可封，牛眠是卜。寒潮衝夜月，不作歧路之魂。怪鳥泣秋風，鳴有無家之鬼。免水潦之肌淪髓浹，成旅襯之地厚天高。僉謀告慶，勒石紀名，此盛事也。上以媲美前徽，下而垂澤枯骨，豈不與先世四定厥基之舉，共尸祝於不朽哉，故為略而敘之，以昭後人，知歌頌之所由來云爾。峨峰陳立義謹議。

甲百丹林諱緝官捐金壹千文  
 雷珍蘭林諱健官捐金陸百文  
 雷珍蘭許諱弘良捐金陸百文  
 雷珍蘭林諱釵官捐金肆百文  
 唐恩官 許燦官 陳順官 上各捐金叁百文  
 雷珍蘭戴諱牟官 甲百丹楊諱璇官 雷珍蘭陳諱靜官  
 劉廉使 戴潺官 上各捐金貳佰文  
 武直迷陳諱巧郎 戴旺蘭 鄭尚勳 陳國使 林森官 蔡陽官  
 黃恆官 陳敬官 陳讚官 連金生 連木生 上各捐金壹佰伍拾文  
 甘卓官捐金壹佰壹拾文  
 甲百丹黃諱井官 朱紹官 盧郎官 謝華珍 陳褒官 鄒來官 蔡鎮官  
 雍茂官 陳雙秋 盧甫官 蔣勳官 林廣官 林賢官 陳籍生  
 魏漢官 郭挺官 鄒岱官 黃芳官 王倚郎 魏瑞官 郭榔官 莊蔚官  
 黃詣官 林祥官 上各捐金壹百文  
 林亞官 捐金陸拾文  
 武直迷林口椿舍 陳預官 余[施]官 吳隨官 李桓公 雍養官  
 林理官 楊性官 王乾官 林英官 上各捐金伍拾文  
 林光官 王編官 以上各捐金叁拾貳文貳  
 王嘉官 黃傅官 蔣元官 吳鉢官 許蓬萊 郭錫官 陳訓官 黃州官  
 楊木官 林亨官 盧爻官 王課官 上各捐金叁拾文  
 蔡貴官 吳倪官 林施官 王好官 雍科官 陳貞官 陳漸官 夔翦壽  
 上各捐金貳拾伍文  
 林德郎 黃文官 上俱捐金貳拾文  
 武直迷施諱華官 捐金壹拾文

昔大清乾隆貳拾陸年歲次辛巳秋八月 穀旦立石零頂僧干江敘書