Outside the Marketplace? Culture, Power and Identity in
the Case of Ang Hien Hoo, Malang

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In one of the city festival in Malang, East Java in 2006 the Javanese wayang orang theatre organized by a Chinese burial association Ang Hien Hoo (called Panca Budhi since mid 1960s) played one of the most dramatic scene in an episode called “Birth of Setyaki”: the little protagonist prince Setyaki was about to be devoured by a tiger. Instead of a tiger, however, a Chinese barongsay (lion dance) player from the En Ang Kiong temple stepped into the scene. The audience cheered.

The ex director of the burial association, a dentist and an army colonel Ong Tjong Bing, remembered the scene as one of new experiment to revive the wayang orang legacy bequeathed from the older generation of Chinese players for today’s audience. As he reminisced of the paths the association had gone through, Ong Tjong Bing reflected on the internal turmoils as well as the external challenges, through which the organization had to undergo in order to survive.

The case I am presenting to you in this paper, about a burial association founded in 1914 by the name of Ang Hien Hoo in Malang, with its originally all-Chinese wayang orang group famous in the 1950s and its present legacy, is not a case of a mere “multicultural” or “hybrid” mix-match between a Javanese and Chinese performing arts tradition. Instead, the wayang and lion dance encounter in the “Birth of Setyaki” signifies the complicated process, by which the Chinese

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1 Wayang means shadow, and the first wayang art in Java used shadow puppet. The wayang orang is an form of traditional theatre, by which human dancers imitate the movement of the shadow puppet. The story is usually based on the Mahabharata, and sometimes Ramayana. One play can last for three to four hours, staging one particular sequence or part of the Mahabharata story, with many variations. The play is delivered in archaic Javanese dialogue, most of it sung in a melodious chant. In the middle of the play is a comic relief, much awaited by the audience, consisting of clowns’ making social political commentaries in colloquial language. Originally the wayang theatre was performed in the palaces of the Javanese kings in Surakarta and Yogyakarta, but eventually the theatre became popular entertainment, especially in central and east Java. See Soedarsono (1984) Wayang Wong: Yogyakarta, Gadjah Mada University Press.
Indonesians negotiated with historical forces – political, economical and cultural -- in constructing their identities through the arena of arts and culture.

The spread of Chinese voluntary organizations amongst Chinese diaspora has been discussed by Pearce (2005), and the way Chinese diaspora partake engage in performing Arts in host countries have been examined from its cross-cultural dimension (Um, 2005). My paper will relate to the ongoing discussion about the space created by burial association as a voluntary organization in creating this engagement with local, and not Chinese performing arts. As the socio-cultural dimension of the Chinese diaspora in Indonesia is much intertwined with political forces, a great proportion of the paper will be spent in situating the cultural praxis within the historical context. Although the discussion of globalization and the marketplace will not be central in the paper, the case study of the amateur performing art in Indonesia begs the question of how this out-of-the market position should be theorized.

The paper will start by comparing three historical documents, the Ang Hien Hoo anniversary books of the 1935, 1940 and 1960, to map the evolvement of Ang Hien Hoo since its inception in 1910 as a burial association, which perpetuated the myth of the Chinese anti-Qing dynasty secret societies, to an Indonesian national body which promotes social welfare and traditional performing arts. The second part of the paper looks at way the organization strategized to cope with the changing political regimes, and the way the association and the wayang orang section have to deal with the new cultural politics. Mapping the continuity as well as disruption in the history of the organization, the paper argues that the burial association and its various cultural section serve as a civic space for the diverse population of Chinese living in Malang from the early 20th century to the present to negotiate their positions as citizens as well as to deal with their internal cultural differences in the face of the changing times. By attaching themselves to local performing arts tradition, the Chinese positions themselves culturally in a non-essentializing way as patrons of local traditional arts, negotiating with the larger power structures of politics and the market place.

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3 The role of the Chinese as patronage of the wayang orang theatre was noted by Sunjayadi (unpublished paper), quoting Go Tik Swan (2008:9) in identifying a Chinese businessman by the name of Gan Kam, “who turned the aristocratic arts into a popular form” (http://staff.ui.ac.id/internal/070603001/publikasi/PeranKaumTionghoadalamTurismeKolonialdiHindiaBelanda.PDF)
Hong Boen associations as a civic space for a heterogeneous population

This section will examine Ang Hien Hoo as a hong boen association as well as a civic space for accommodating cultural diversity of the Chinese, and its increasing role to be the patron of the traditional arts. My data is derived mostly from the three Ang Hien Hoo anniversary books, the 25th (in 1935), the 30th (in 1940) and the 50th (in 1960). The anniversary books were published by a special committee, which in the first 2 books invited contributors, not only from its own members, but also from members of other ‘sister organizations’ (zister vereineeging) from all over Java. The anniversary books described the event of the celebration, and most importantly the history of Ang Hien Hoo and hong boen organizations in general.

It was apparent from the three books that at the turn of 20th century hong boen or burial associations in Java served as social centers to organize not only burial needs, but also economic, social and cultural affairs of the growing Chinese migrants in the cities in Java. By 1930s burial associations had spread up in big cities in Java (Batavia, Bandung, Surabaya, Pasuruan, Jember, Semarang, Jember, Solo, Yogyakarta, Pemalang, Madiun), necessitating a need to form a federation.

The hong boen organization examined in this paper, Ang Hien Hoo (or the Panca Budhi association) was formally registered in 1910 (with initial informal group called Tian Tee Hwee set up as early as 1903) on the Kwietang Street (or latter called Pertukangan Street) in the Chinatown area in Malang. In the 25th anniversary book of the organization published in 1935 one reason highlighted for the founding of the association was to unite a growingly dispersed Chinese diaspora in the city. One major division mentioned was the gap between the newly migrant Chinese who adhered to the language and culture of originating homeland (called totok), and the migrants who had settled down from generations, intermarried and culturally assimilated to local cultures, known as the peranakan: 4

The Chinese in Malang and East Java originated mostly from Southern China, with Hokkien as the dominant group, the Teo Chew and Cantonese in smaller number. Each ethnic group spoke in their own dialect and had their own club houses. Before 1920s, most of them lived in China town, but as the city was expanded based on class (socio-economic) mapping, the Chinese spread to all parts of the city. In 1950s, after the Dutch vacated the city, the rich Chinese occupied the elite residential area in Malang, originally owned by the Dutch. The Chinese were also divided by their education. In 1905 the Chinese opened the Malang branch of Tiong Hwa Hwee Kwan Chinese School. In 1909, the Dutch founded the HCS, the Dutch Chinese school. With the growth of Catholic schools, many

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4 The two terms, totok and peranakan were a sociological construct used for in-group and out-group identification used widely amongst the Chinese communities before the New Order assimilation policy of the Chinese in 1965. By the 1998, when the New Order collapsed, the two terms were no longer relevant as all Chinese had adopted Indonesian as their language. However, the trace of the divide still resonated today in some degrees. See further discussion of these two terms in its historical context (Twang, 1997) as well as its (ir)relevance in 21st century Indonesia (Hoon, 2008).

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peranakan Chinese are like water and oil, so it is the responsibility that our leaders have fortunately taken up to find a ‘uniting bond’ to secure the harmony of our people, who have been so dispersed.”  

The importance of uniting the Chinese was emphasized again in the 30th anniversary book, this time referring to the dichotomy of “the conservative” (kaoem kolot) and “the modern” (kaum modern):

It is a pity that today there is this unfortunate condition, that the conservative and modern do not want to work hand in hand. In fact, the conservative is so hard minded, refusing to listen, while the modern do not care less and tend to ignore them."  

The writers of the 1935 anniversary book cited “democratic principle” as the basis for forming the association, as it tried to be inclusive of the rich and the poor, as well as the totok and peranakan.

The principle of democracy was taken up as the basis of the foundation of Ang Hin Hoo, whereby the association opens its door for all Chinese, without considering their background, whether they are poor or rich, totok or peranakan, as long as they behave well, they can be a member.

From the essays collected in the three anniversary books published from 1935-1960s, we can imagine that such effort in unifying the ‘dispersed’ Chinese must have been challenging. The Chinese were not only separated by their cultural upbringing (totok or peranakan), but also by the younger Chinese generation were brought up in the Dutch educational system. See more detailed discussion of this educational context of the Chinese diaspora in Malang in my paper, “Transiting in Malang: Chinese Indonesians (1940-1960) (forthcoming)

6 “keroekoenannja bangsa terpentjar disana sini; banjak golongan jang terdiri dari satoe bangsa saling hidoep boeact kepentinganja sendiri, dan berbareng itu antara kalangan Tionghoa totok dan pranakan hidoepnja sebagai aer dan minjak, maka ada menjadi satoe kwadjiban jang soekoeerlah boeact pemimpin kita di itoe masa bisa dapatken ‘tali persatoeanc’ boeact mengikat pada keroekoenannja bangsa kita jang soeda terpentjar” (Suma Tjoe Sing, L, 1935: 1, my translation).

7 “Sayang ini waktuo masih ada katjiwa, jaitoe antara kaoem kolot dan modern satoe sama lain masih belon maoe bergandengan tangan, malah sikolot tinggal koekoeh serta tida mau mengindahken, dan simodern tida maoe perdoeli serta soeka membinkangken” (Liem Thiam Kwie, Ong Tijing Poen, Kwee Liang Djie, 1940: 64, my translation)

8 “Krana lahirnja Ang Hin Hoo ada mengambil dasar ‘democratie’ dimana itoe perkoempoelan memboeka pintoenja boeact berbagi-bagi golongan Tionghoa xonder pandeng soeal kaja dan miskin, totok dan pranakan asal berkloakan baek bisa ditrima mendjadi anggotanja” (Suma Tjoe Sing, L 1935: 1, my translation)
language (Dutch, Malay, Chinese languages), by education (Dutch or Chinese schools), by their class and residential area, by religion (many adopted Christianity).

The heterogeneity of the Chinese population could be seen from their cultural expression, the rich and diverse cultural references (Chinese, Dutch, Malay, Javanese) and variety of their choice of arts, which could be traced from the three anniversary books of 1935, 1940 and 1960. It is important to note that the Ang Hien Hoo as a hong boen association has been from the start very closely located and related to the En Ang Kong temple. They shared many resources together, including personnel for running various programs. The closeness to the temple and the nature of Ang Hien Hoo as a burial association underlines the centrality of Chinese customs and rituals. The 25th anniversary ceremony, for example, began by a parade of carrying the statues of the Five Elders from the En Ang Kiong temple, followed by the lion dance troupe through the China town streets to the office of the Ang Hien Hoo to be reinstalled for prayers.

The legend of the Five Shaolin Elders (called Ngo-Chow in Hokkien), whose statues were always put in a special altar in the Ang Hien Hoo offices, was a foundational narrative, which has been passed on from one generation to another up to the present. The anniversary books traced the origin of hong boen associations to the persecution of the Shaolin temple priests during the Qing dynasty in 18th century China. The five elders who survived the burning of the temple and persecution were considered to be the founding fathers of the secret societies under the guise of burial association, spreading not only in China but also in Southeast Asia. The history of the five elders was seen as an expression of people’s resistance against the reign of the Manchus, and connected to the overthrow of the Qing dynasty and the birth of nationalist movement by the founding father Sun Yat Sen. Closely associated with the legend of the five elders, Chinese martial arts (called kunthao) were centerpiece in the celebration of the 1935 and 1940 anniversary celebrations. Besides the lion dance troupes, Ang Hien Hoo celebrations included Chinese music Yangkhiem band (Chinese traditional music) and for the first two

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9 Most Chinese settlers in Malang by 1930s had moved out of China town area to settle down to different area of the city, which was designed by Dutch architect John Karsten based on socio-economic division (Handinoto, 1996). See the description of the city development in Van Schaick (1996). I have written on this class-and milieu based division in my unpublished article “Transiting in Malang: Chinese Indonesian (1940-1960)”

10 After 1945 there was further political and ideological division between those who were pro Taiwan or pro PRC. After Indonesian independence, the division was based on those who chose to be Indonesian citizens, PRC citizens, and those who became stateless due to their choice of supporting the Taiwanese government (which was not acknowledged by Indonesia) or their inability to procure documents in order to register as Indonesian citizens. In the 1960s the Chinese Indonesians were split in their differing cultural strategy in establishing their cultural identity, either through cultural assimilation or political integration of citizens with Chinese cultural identity.

anniversary, Chinese choir of the Malang Chinese boyscout organization (Hua Chiao Tsing Nien Hui, abbreviated as HCTNH).

Although discussion about Chinese philosophy, and the importance of “Eastern spirit with authentic Chinese essence” (soemangat katimoeran mendekakin keteolalan Tonghoa) reiterated in the collected articles of the anniversary books of 1935 and 1940, the themes were expressed in Malay, replete in Dutch vocabulary and idioms, quoting references from English literature and philosophy. An example from a quote below betrayed the Dutch educated milieu of the contributing writer, in contradiction with his denunciation of Western influence: (Dutch and English words put in bold):

Kaloe bangsa itu berwatek slaafscha (memboedak) tentoelah kunst akan bersifat slaafscha djoega, baek slaafscha dalam arti tjoema meniroe (copyeeren) atawa verstard (teriket), jaoitoe tida berani mengadakan perobahan baroe, kerna terprentah oleh sleur (aliran kebiasaan). Maka itoe, perloe sekali kita, bangsa Tionghoa, djangan selaloe meniroe sadja pada kunst Barat (diprentah oleh cultuur Barat), hingga kahilangan “garis hidoep dan menjadi speel bal (bal-bal), boektinya siotjia-siotjia kita sode pande ‘dansa’ memperliatken pahanja depan oemoem, sifat atawa kesoekaan mana, soeda terang bertentangan dengan kita poenja kodrat. Tida salah kaloe Twain bilang

West is West, and East is east,
The Twain ‘Il never meet.

Barat ada barat, timoer ada timoer,
Doea-doea tida bisa bertjampoer (Lio Lo Tjia in L Suma Tjoe Sing, 1935: 34)

This quote is a telling example of first of all the influence of the Western/Dutch educated milieu in the Chinese diaspora in Java. The writer reprimanded the East for “swallowing” Western influence, while at the same time inscribed the West in the very text itself. The quote also gives us the context of the leisure activities of Dutch educated elite in urban centers of East Java, including Malang. Ball room dancing and musical band were favorite pastime amongst the ‘modern’ Chinese youth. The writer above was eager to distanced the Ang Hien Hoo from the modern ‘fad’ amongst the growing population of students in Malang. In the 1930s Malang had grown to be an educational center, a favorite place for Chinese parents from neighboring cities to send their children to the growing number of boarding schools developed by the Catholic orders. Then there were already 50 primary to secondary schools, including the
Chinese, the Dutch Chinese schools and a variety of other schools, including Catholic and Islamic schools, Montessori and the Muhammadiyah schools. The essays in the 1935 and 1940 anniversary book also suggests that there was a pool of highly educated intellectuals. Besides a reference to Mark Twain above, there was a discussion of Rudolph Steiner system of education, and a comparison between the Chinese hongboen with freemasonry, citing an English reference.

Another strong cultural reference shown in the three anniversary books is the grounding of the hong boen in Malay culture and language. Apart from a few opening pages written in Chinese characters in the first two anniversary books (1935 and 1940), the rest of the books were written in Malay. It can be assumed that most of the speeches in the anniversary celebrations were delivered in Malay, as the report on the 25th anniversary specifically mentioned if some text was read in Mandarin, such as “a statement of Dr. Sun [Yat Sen] was read in Kuo Yu [Mandarin].”12 (L. Suma Tjoe Sing, 1935: 4). The fact that there was a new generation of Malay speaking Chinese in 1935 could be detected from the way many writers in the 25th anniversary books addressed “those who read in Malay”:

If so far the name of “Ang Sioe Tjwan” is alien in the Malay readership, this is not surprising, because books written in Malay rarely published about the biography of “Ang Sioe Tjwan” (Han Kang Hoen in L. Suma Tjoe Sing, 1935: 36).13

A number of authors from the 1935 and the 1940 anniversary books, like Han Kang Hoen quoted above, served as a bilingual cultural translator, passing on stories of Chinese leaders, legends, and philosophies, quoting passages from Chinese texts (in latin), then translated it into Malay.

The articles collected in the anniversary books also showed the extent to which the Chinese society in Java was grounded in local context. Writers were keen in following political movement of other groups. One writer compared Ang Hien Hoo with the Syarikat Islam (L. Suma Tjoe Sing, 1935: 19).14 Another urged the organization to be as successful as another organization called IEV (?). References to Mahabarata story or characters suggests familiarity with the Javanese wayang orang or wayang kulit tradition, which popularized the stories for the wider public. One example is the comparison of treacherous and unreliable political elites amongst the Chinese in Indonesia to “Dorna”, the consultant of the Kurawa family who devises various sly strategies in defeating the Pandawa family (Suma Tjoe Sing, L, 1935, p. ).

12 "dibatjahken testament Dr. Sun dalam bahasa Kuoyu” (4)

13 Laloe sampe sebegitoe djaoe itoe nama “Ang Sioe Tjwan” masih terasing dikalangan pembatjahan melajoe, ini poen tida moesti diboeat heran, oleh kerna boekoe-boekoe jaang tertiitak dalem bahasa melajoe; djarang sekali menjitak tentang riwajat pengidoepannja “Ang Sioe Tjwan” (Han Kang Hoen, in Suma Tjoe Sing, L, 1935: 36).

14 Kaloe tida kliroe, perkoempoelan Ang Hin Hoo didiriken ampir bebarengan dengen lahirnya perkoempoelan “Sarekat Islam” yang terpinpin oleh Almarhoem toean HOS Tjokroaminoto (Sie Tjoe Tik in Suma Tjoe Sing, L, 1935: 19, my translation).
It was not only the Peranakan or culturally assimilated Chinese which embraced the local language and culture. The newly migrated Chinese traders who resided in the Chinatown area were fluent in East Javanese colloquial language as means for communicating with their costumers and as lingua franca to communicate with the Indian, Arabs residing in the market center area. The En Ang Kiong temple in Malang was always known to have one of the oldest gamelan set. The po-te-hi or the Chinese puppet shows, performed during Chinese festivals in the temple were delivered in mixed languages of Hokkien and the colloquial East Javanese dialect.

It is not surprising, therefore to discover that the gamelan was a part of the Ang Hien Hoo anniversary celebration. In 1935, the gamelan music was not in the center of the celebration, but was played as a background music even from the day before the anniversary party:

One day before the Jubileum night a number of members and administrative staff were sitting enjoying themselves while listening to the gamelan orchestra, which was contributed by Mr. Liem Hok Tjien, one of the member of Ang Hien Hoo, Malang.15

The quote above also explained the unstructured yet grounded connection between the function of Ang Hien Hoo as a burial association and its expanding role as the patron of arts and culture. Hong boen association was considered central in Chinese diaspora society as suggested by the title of the essay written by a well known Malang journalist Pouw Kioe An for the 1940th anniversary book, "Hidoep boeat Mati?" (To live in order to die?) (Pouw Koe An in Liem Thiam Kwie, Ong Tjing Poon, Kwee Liang Dji, 1940: 54-55). First of all, the “proper” ritual and respect to the dead is important for the Chinese, but as Pouw Kioe An and the earlier quotes suggested, the organization was intended to be a meeting place for Chinese citizens to discuss their social and economic welfare. As a social organization, Ang Hien Hoo served as a meeting place was soon filled with the variety of arts and cultural expression of its members. Special divisions could be formed to accommodate the members’ interest in sports or in music, or dance. As the membership fee was intended for burial services, additional cost of these sports and cultural division were usually borne by the participants. These additional divisions were thus functioning like amateur clubs. During anniversary celebrations musical or arts performance by these different sections were considered as personal or group “contribution”. Members of Ang Hien Hoo were also active in other organizations, and they would mobilize support from other organizations, such as the Chinese boyscout (HCNTH), which always participated to guard the parade and to contribute their Chinese choirs. These hobby clubs did not function merely as a hobby club, but as a ‘social’ means to do fundraising activities for Ang Hien Hoo. In this way

15 “Satoe hari dimoeka maleman Jubileum bebrapa leden dan bestuurs sama berdoedok seneng-seneng sambil dengerin satoe gamelan soembangan dari soedara Liem Hok Tjien, lid Ang Hien Hoo – Malang” (Suma Tjoe Sing, L, 1935: 3, my translation)
the organization could give charity funds during natural disasters and perform its role as social organization for the wider public.

The sports, arts and cultural division of Ang Hien Hoo, thus expanded, narrowed down or shifted according to the members’ interest. In 1935, one member contributed the performance of a gamelan orchestra, which did not appear in the 1940 celebration. From 1935 to 1940, the drama (toneel) division of Ang Hien Hoo was formed and staged performance in Surabaya. During this period members were keen in organizing “excursion” trips to Madura, Dieng plateau, the Gambir Bazaar, and night festivals to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Surakarta.

The 1950s-1960s witnessed the expansion of Ang Hien Hoo’s division to include chess, badminton and billiard pools, gamelan (and wayang orang), Yangkhiem/Pat Iem and choir. The wayang orang division, which was started in 1950s, attracted large membership from diverse background, from elite businessmen and their families to shop attendants and workers. The fascination for this Javanese art was attributed by its members as nostalgia for an art which was close to their childhood upbringing. There were various waves of migration of Chinese from the neighboring villages and cities in East Java to Malang during the Japanese occupation, and during the Dutch military assault in 1947, and in 1959, when foreign nationals of Chinese background were not allowed to do business in rural area. They remembered their exposure to gamelan and wayang orang in their childhood in the villages, and were keen in expressing themselves in this art. The Javanese dance and wayang orang theatre instructor was hired from Yogyakarta, and participants practiced regularly in the auditorium of the Ang Hien Hoo office, or in the private house and yard of one member. Ex members interviewed today remembered the difficulty in memorizing archaic Javanese language and songs in the dialogues. As it performed for various fundraising activities and festivals in other cities in Java, this all-Chinese gamelan and wayang orang theatre group became well-known nationally and the name Ang Hien Hoo was better known for its wayang orang group than for its burial association.

In the 50th celebration of Ang Hien Hoo in 1960, the gamelan, which was in the periphery in the 1930 celebration and the Javanese wayang orang theatre now occupied the center of attention. Right after the speeches, two opening numbers were given to a wayang orang tableau and the enactment of a short scene. The 1960 anniversary book also mentioned the success of Ang Hien Hoo from the wayang orang performance held at the State Palace in Jakarta, and in many other places for fund raising activities for victims of accidents, building schools, and “gifts for the war

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16. What was mentioned in the 1940 book was the theatre activities of the Ang Hien Hoo group, performing for sister organization in Surabaya. The title is in Chinese “Ong Oen Hwan Lian Kee”. It was not clear, whether the play was performed in Mandarin or other languages.

17. Sari Endahwarni, Jakarta, 10 July 2010, interview; Ermawati, telephone interview, 9 July 2010.
fronts”. 18 A special praise is directed to the wayang orang division, which “recently has progressed in such a way, that give good name not only to the Ang Hien Hoo association, but also the name of the Indonesian citizens from the Chinese descent in Indonesia.”19 The 50th anniversary celebration, for example, still present the Jangkhiem music as in the previous celebrations, but instead of Chinese martial arts and Chinese choir, there were the Sumatran Serampang 12 dance and comedy in East Javanese and Malay (dagelan).

The three anniversary books give evidence of the plurality of cultural references and choices of arts and leisure activities amongst the Chinese in Malang, East Java. As a social organization which adopted the principle of democracy and inclusiveness (amongst the Chinese), Ang Hien Hoo had shown attempt to embrace the cultural diversity of its members, and to be open to the views of the sister organizations from all over Java. The close proximity between the Ang Hien Hoo burial association to the Chinese En Ang Kiong temple guarantees the continuous link with the Chinese arts, ritual and customs. However, as shown in the 1960 anniversary book, Ang Hien Hoo as a burial association had expanded to play a role as patron of the national (read Indonesian) arts and culture.

Navigating the currents of political forces and cultural politics

The nationalistic development of Ang Hie Hoo was necessitated by the changing political currents of the time. This section will discuss the way Ang Hien Hoo navigated along the currents of political forces and different regimes of cultural politics. When Ang Hien Hoo celebrated its 25th ad 30th anniversaries in 1935 and 1940, the Chinese in Malang were both citizens of the Dutch Indies and members of Chinese diaspora, who kept themselves abreast about any social and political changes in the mainland China. The organization aimed at both giving support to the social causes in the mainland China as well as in the country they were residing:

The reason behind the Chinese organizations are to advance the cause of our people and country: 1) to support Khik Bing, Pakhwatkoen, the war in Shanghay, the flood, famine and other needs of our people; 2) other needs that we have here, to help the poor, the jobless and our representatives in the parliaments.20


19 Bagian seni Wayang Orang, ternyata di hari-hari yang terakhir ini, telah memperoleh kemadjuan begitupula, sehingga mengharumkan bukan sadja nama perkumpulan Ang Hien Hoo, djuga pun nama Warga Negara Indonesia keturunan Tionghoa di Indonesia” (Tan Ping Tjiat in Tjan Tan Soen, 1960, p.12)

20 Maksud berdirinya perkumpulan Tionghoa "goena memadjoeken goena negri dan bangsa kita : 1) comite-comite menoenjang Khik Bing, Pakhwatkoen, Perang di Shanghai, Bahaja bandjir dan bahaja kelaparan dan laen-lane goena
It was to be expected that they started the 25th and 30th anniversary parties by singing the “national anthem” *Tien Hsia Wei Kung* 21 and reading Dr. Sun Yat Sen’s statement in Mandarin. On the 30th anniversary, besides the singing of the national anthem, the audience paid homage to the “Tangkuochi” or national flag, and to the pictures of Chiang Kei Sek, Dr. Sun Yat Sen and President Lin Sen. This was the era of nationalist government of China before the establishment of the PRC in 1945. Also present in the celebration of 1940 were a number of PID (*Politieke Inlichtingen Dienst*) or Dutch Intelligence Service, as the Dutch was always watchful of Chinese nationalistic movements. It is in this context that we should read a pro-Dutch article written in the 1940 anniversary book. The article expressed concern about the German occupation of the Netherlands on May 10, 1940 which endangered the Dutch royal family, and professed loyalty to the colonial government:

> All subjects in good and willing heart must fulfill the responsibility to uphold the safety of the Netherlands Kingdom, its colony and government! 22

In 1942, however, when Japanese occupation began, Ang Hien Hoo started a new page of history. All Chinese individuals and their organization were lumped into one Japanese formed body called the Kyoku Shinkai. Ang Hien Hoo’s infrastructure and inventory were confiscated and placed under this new body. There was difficult negotiation with the Japanese authority to keep the hearse as the burial association could not function without it. All other activities were to be coordinated under the Japanese formed body. The Chinese Ang Hien Hoo activists had to abide by this policy, but they strategically nominated Hang Kan Hoen, one respected Chinese businessman, who was also among Ang Hien Hoo leading activists (his writings were published in the 25th anniversary book, and he served as the chair of the organizing committee of the 50th anniversary celebration).

When Indonesia proclaimed its independence, Ang Hien Hoo resumed its old name, status and regained its possessions. Soon, however, the organization had to adjust with the new nation state. On 4 December of 1958, under the leadership of Siauw Giok Bie, Ang Hien Hoo was formally registered as a national (Indonesian) social organization for burial needs of its members. Members who were not registered as Indonesian citizens (either the citizens of PRC or stateless) still had their full rights as members, but were classified as ‘extraordinary’ or honorary members.

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21 This was actually not a national anthem, but a nationalistic song deriving from one of the Chinese classical text, *Li Gi*, which underlines the democratic ideal of the Chinese society.

22 Semoea orang dari golongan jang baek, dengen perasa’an soetji serta ichlas bersedia hendak penoehken kewadjiban terhadep dan oentoek keslametannja Keradja’an Nederland, djidjaan dan permerentahanmja! (L.T.K in Liem Thiam Kwie, Ong Tjing Poen, Kwee Liang Dji, 1940: 48, my translation)
The 50th anniversary celebration as usual started with the singing of a national anthem, but now instead of a Chinese song, the Indonesian national anthem, “Indonesia Raya” was sung. In place of the PID, the mayor of Malang and the commandant of the military regiment of Malang were present in the celebration. In his speech the Mayor of Malang congratulated that Ang Hien Hoo survived the turmoil of the second world war and the revolution, especially that “in the tornado of democratic liberalism before our Highest Commander the President issued a decree to return to the 1945 constitution, in which there were politicization of everything, it is amazing that Ang Hien Hoo kept loyal to its principle of doing social work.” The praise was phrased almost as an implicit “threat” that if in the past Ang Hien Hoo “had tried to deviously depart from its principle of doing social work, maybe Ang Hien Hoo would have now remained a memory.” The mayor then reminded Ang Hien Hoo to remain faithful to “Pantjasila” and a slogan abbreviated as USDEK, introduced by President Sukarno in 1960. (Undang-undang Dasar 1945, Sosialisme Indonesia, Demokrasi, Ekonomi Terpimpin, and Kepribadian Indonesia, or the Constitution of 1945, Indonesian socialism, Democracy, Guided Economy and Indonesian Character).

In the cultural politics of Indonesia in the 1960s, with Sukarno’s anti West propaganda, Ang Hien Hoo’s artistic choice of the Javanese wayang orang and the Sumatran Serampang 12 were favorable. During this period, Sukarno specifically targeted what he called “the nguk-ngik-ngok music, and “rock-‘n-roll-rock-‘n-roll and ala cha-cha-cha dances”, thus reiterating what the writer in 1935 Ang Hien Hoo anniversary book had complained against the Western influences. Koes Ploes, the Indonesian musical band which was popular as “the Beatles of Indonesia” was banned, so was the bell-bottom fashion of the youth in 1960s. To replace the ballroom dance popular amongst the Chinese elite in the 1950s, there was the traditional lenso (Menadonese courting dance) and the newly invented pergaulan dance. The Sumatran Seramampang 12 was also popularized by many dance workshops springing up in the 1960s.

The cultural politics of the 1960s was to creatively form the “Indonesian character”, a modernist reformulation of Indonesian traditional performing arts and music. Indonesian school children memorized songs from various islands, from Papua to Acehnese. It is within this cultural politics, that Ang Hien Hoo wayang orang group catapulted at the national level. The preservation of Chinese music and arts in Ang Hien Hoo’s activities did not oppose Soekarno’s cultural politics, as China was considered an Asian friendly ally. This was also the time, when

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24 This slogan, usually abbreviated as MANIPOL USDEK (or the Political Manifesto – USDEK) was introduced in 1960, following President Sukarno’s independence day speech on 17th August 1959.
Soekarno was launching the NASAKOM policy of integrating nationalism, religion and communism. In his battle against ‘Western imperialism’ Sukarno made good rapport with the communist PRC.

The political crisis on September 30th, 1965, however, turned the table over. The discovery of the murder of the 7 army general in a deserted well in the outskirt of Jakarta by the rising General Soeharto served as an impetus for communist cleansing hysteria all over the country, which killed around 500,000 people, civilians as well as military. In 1966 General Suharto took over the government from the ailing Sukarno, and the anti-communist regime called the New Order began.

The impact of the crisis to the arts and cultural scene was grave. Any artist of performing arts who once participated in event sponsor by the leftist organization was interrogated, tortured, jailed without trial, or killed. Organizations, which was considered to have leftist leaning were banned, the leaders and members detained. One organization, which was founded and supported by Chinese Indonesians who advocated on citizenship rights, BAPERKI, was banned. Siauw Giok Bie, the director of Ang Hien Hoo, who was also a leader of the East Java branch of BAPERKI, was detained. The organization faced a critical stage.

With the communist cleansing the political ties with the PRC was severed. In the effort to save Chinese Indonesian from being linked to the communist China, a number of Chinese Indonesian activists suggested the assimilation policy. The military regime took it up and on this ground banned Chinese language and culture from public display, and urged the Chinese to change their names into non-Chinese sounding names. With this racial cultural politics, Ang Hien Hoo could no longer put the Chinese music and performing arts into public display. At the same time, the wayang orang activities died down just like other cultural activities of the larger society in the wake of the 1965 political trauma.

The Ang Hien Hoo burial organization survived the 1965, amidst continuing insecurity against allegation of its ties with the banned BAPERKI and ‘the communist infiltration’ – a loaded watch word of the New Order regime. Its name was changed into Yayasan Panca Budhi. In order to save the organization, a Chinese Indonesian dentist from the military, Col. Ong Tjong Bing, was nominated as director from 1980 - …. Throughout the 32 years of the New Order era, the burial association continued to operate, but the cultural section revived only in the latter part of the New Order, and after the reformasi movement toppled down the Soeharto government. When President Abdurrahman Wahid lifted the ban against Chinese language and culture in 2000, lion and dragon dances from Chinese temples all over Indonesia, including the En Ang Kiong temple, returned to the public space. With China rose as a new emerging economy in the 21st century, the En Ang Kiong’s mandarin classes attracted students from wider population from non Chinese background. After President Megawati declared the Chinese New Year as one of national holidays, celebration of Chinese arts and culture entered into the marketplace. Everything Chinese is for sale.
It is within this new cultural politics, that the wayang orang section of Ang Hien Hoo, now called Wayang Orang Panca Budhi is revived. By now most of the ex senior wayang orang players have passed away, the younger generation are in their fifties, and a great number of them have left Malang. Interviewed separately, most ex players are still keen in the wayang orang art, although they do not think they could have the time and energy to take it up again. Sintadewi, a widowed mother of three in Malang, has a different opinion. She was an ardent fan of Ang Hien Hoo when she was mole and she is convinced to revive the tradition. She chaired the wayang orang section since the 1990s and has recruited her son, daughter and granddaughter to join the wayang orang group. She collected accessories for the wayang orang theatre in her house and as they accumulated, rents her collection not only for the Panca Budi performance, but also for other wayang orang groups in Malang.

Sintadewi’s effort in reviving the wayang orang tradition, which she loves, is not without difficulty, especially in financial terms. In the new decentralized cultural politics in Indonesia, however, each region is looking for their authentic cultural roots and identity, and Javanese wayang orang is not considered as unique for Malang in East Java, as compared to the Malang mask dance, ludruk or ketoprak. The wayang orang is considered as belonging more to the central Java. Thus local government sponsorship is not much to be expected. With the revival of Chineseness, the barongsay or lion dance or the Chinese music and traditional dances are more in demand. With rising capital from China, it is easier to find sponsorship for Chinese arts and dances than for a wayang orang group. The ingenuity of inviting the lion dance troupe of the En Ang Kiong temple to replace the “tiger” in the performance of the Panca Budi wayang orang group is an ingenious creativity to connect to this new energy from the Chinese revivalism.

The creative devise is not without grounds, not only because the Ang Hien Hoo (or Panca Budi) burial association has always been linked to the En Ang Kiong temple, but their arts and cultural expression have always been interlocked. The En Ang Kiong temple which houses its own gamelan orchestra is often the ‘borrowed site’ for the Ang Hien Hoo players to practice. On the other hand, the Ang Hien Hoo monkey troops and other wayang orang characters are always an integral of the parade ritual to carry the temple gods during the temple anniversaries. In the past, Ang Hien Hoo anniversary parties and the procession of the Ang Hien Hoo five elders also started in the temple and were accompanied by the temple lion dance. This close link between the barongsay and the ketek ogleng (the monkey troops in the wayang orang group) signifies the symbiosis between the Chinese heritage in Indonesia and the local performing arts, like the case of the gambang kromong and the tanjidoor in Betawi.

**Ang Hien Hoo Wayang Orang Group as amateur club outside the market place**

Being a non-profit organization, the burial association left the patronage of the arts to the initiatives and support of its members, and the society at large. In this way the patronage
operates outside the capital in the form of leisure or hobby clubs, mobilized in the event of charity and fundraising activities. Supported by fans and lovers of the arts, who happen to have the means to support it, the patronage is dependent on social network and the ability to mobilize such a network to promote the arts.  

This patronage system of the amateur art is different from the professional management of other Javanese performing arts discussed by Perlman (1999), in which professional traditional artists were paid by their patron or direct customers. The engagement of this amateur group with the market is in selling tickets for the general public, which is done, again through social networking instead of a professional event organizer (Tickets are generally distributed by members and friends). The problem of this system of engaging with the “public” is that people might buy the tickets to help out friends, and not because they would like to attend the performance. Tickets might be sold but audience cannot be secured.  

Remaining outside the capital gives a space for more flexible civic engagement. At the same time, it also creates insecurity in terms of financing and organizational matters. While openness and flexibility in accommodating initiatives is one source of Ang Hien Hoo’s resilience in surviving the social and political changes, creative expansion of interest can cause organizational problem. In 1950s and in 2000s the expansion of special interest divisions of the Ang Hien Hoo organizations posed management problem to the unity of the association, as each division had to rely on their own efforts in procuring and managing funds for their activities. In 1958 the problem became so complicated that the association had to form a special committee to solve administrative confusion in managing these activities.

Although the speech of the Mayor of Malang in the 1960 indicated support of such art, the state – meaning the central as well as local government – has not played a role in supporting the group. It is different from the case of other local performing arts, such as the Topeng Malang, or the Ludruk, which are considered to be ‘authentic’ local cultural expressions, and therefore requiring the protection of local government to preserve cultural legacy. The stereotype of the Chinese as occupying economically advantageous position, makes it less opportunity for the group to access government funding. During the 1950s, at the hey-day of the Ang Hien Hoo wayang orang group, President Sukarno did invite them to play at the palace. However, the performance was dedicated as a charity or fundraising activity to help disaster victims, and

Players are never paid for the performance. In fact, they contributed in paying for the fee of the instructors. During special rehearsals for performance and the performance, meals are provided and the artists will be given a small souvenier as a token of appreciation. The chair of the division will do special fundraising to cover all the cost. Today the cost of performance can reach up to USD 2,000, and tickets ranged from USD $5 to $ 30. In the past, during the anniversary celebration of the Ang Hien Hoo burial association, performance were considered as contribution (thus not being funded by the burial association).

What often happens in this system is that it heavily relies on the family and friends of the amateur dancers both for financial support as well as for being the loyal audience for the art.
therefore was more an act of civic engagement of the group, and not a state patronage. It is interesting to compare this with the amateur Chinese opera tradition in Singapore, which was prioritized from the professional ones to receive Singaporean state patronage (Lee, 2007).  

It is interesting to note that in Singapore, according to Lee, “the fact that amateurs can afford a leisure pursuit of music reinforces class distinctions, and their socioeconomic power serves to legitimize the art form” (Lee, 2007: 413). In Ang Hien Hoo case, the Javanese traditional art form serves more as a cultural space, through which members, from elite as well as poor backgrounds find a cultural home to unite. In this cultural space, the economic contribution of the rich makes up for the participation of the poor. Although leisure is a luxury, the Chinese from the lower middle class background does make time to participate in this traditional arts for recreation and cultural needs – especially for Chinese migrants from rural East Javanese areas in the early 20th century up to the 1970s.

The Ang Hien Hoo wayang orang division is just one among the many cases of Chinese patronage of local traditional arts. Chinese patronage of the keroncong music can be traced from the use of Gesang’s composition by Fred Young through his Bintang Surabaya theatre group. In the 19th century Tan Khoen Soei in Kediri was one of the most important publisher of Javanese scripts, and as early as 18th century the Chinese has written Chinese legends and stories in Javanese using Javanese scripts. The way the peranakan Chinese develop Batik industries and East Javanese culinary tradition has been widely discussed.

How will this patronage of traditional arts fare in the future? The patronage seems to be related to generation of Chinese, which are now in their fifties and above. Sintadewi, the present chair of the Panca Budi wayang orang division is not optimistic. “I do not know what to do with all these collection of wayang orang accessories in the future”, she said, not sure whether the future generation would keep up the arts. Mrs. Tirtoutomo, a Chinese Indonesian philanthropist who sponsored monthly performance of short version of wayang kulit (shadow puppet)/wayang orang at her Griya Tirtadi auditorium in Jakarta from 2008-2010, discontinued the program due to the high cost. She tried to raise public awareness of the importance of sponsorship by inviting contribution for each performance, but the gesture did not attract much support. Now she is shifting her attention to preservation of traditional houses, which she found more lasting, and drew more support from the businesses. Elly Hong Tjwan, who has been raising funds and promoting Keroncong music, however, will not give up. Keroncong music has been her soul since she was young. She is mobilizing her network among the elite businesses for yet another

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28 It is interesting to notice that in Singapore the Chinese amateur opera groups still operate within “linguistically defined” groups, just like the initial Cantonese opera club house in Malang in the early 20th century. Like the Singaporean Chinese club houses, Ang Hien Hoo did and still “serves both as a training space as well as a locus for social activities” (Lee, 2007: 402). In contrast, however Ang Hien Hoo serves as the meeting place of Chinese migrants from all background.
fund raising. These women are in their sixties. They were not sure that the younger generation would follow suit.

These traditional arts philanthropists do not follow the scholarly debate between those who favors conservation or those who believes that art will evolve according to the needs of the time. They were not purist who wants to preserve the arts in its “original forms” as they do not consider themselves expert or do they consider themselves to have cultural ownership of the arts. They were only eager to see that what they consider beautiful and meaningful can continue to live in the future. Whether the amateurish way in maintaining this art can work in the increasingly globalized era, where arts is commodified as part of “creative industries” is still to be seen.

**Conclusion**

As a burial association, Ang Hien Hoo in its 100 years has managed to create a meeting place for the diverse Chinese population in Malang and accommodate their heterogeneous cultural interests and expressions. Throughout the time the organization has tried to maintain a link, albeit problematic and fractured, with an imagined Chinese origin, as it grounds itself and engages with the continuously changing socio-political and cultural forces of the local environment. In upholding the ‘democratic’ principle to support the needs of the members, the burial association had at times expanded its role from performing a routine burial service to be patron of sports and arts, including Chinese and local traditional arts.

The fact that the Ang Hien Hoo wayang division survived both the internal hassle as well as the external challenges also suggests that it must have supported by a certain ‘public’ or audience or supporters who subscribes to their activities. Like the case of other arts, this public fluctuates from time to time, especially at times when the choice of the arts was or was not in line with the cultural politics of the time. During the 1950s and 1960s the Ang Hien Hoo all Chinese wayang orang crew reached its peak of popularity, although it was certainly not the only one of its kind. After the reformasi, the public dwindles for various reasons, one of which was the decline of traditional arts in general in facing the popularity of new globalized popular culture. Another reason is the surge of regionalism, the search for the authentic and original art to represent each region.

Within the present cultural politics, in which the Chinese arts are represented in the public discourse by distinctly red and gold Chinese characters; each region competes in finding their authentic arts; and the Nation-States jealously guard the ownership of songs and dances, such cross-boundary and fluid exchanges and adoption of arts tend to be forgotten. It is critical to

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29 In the 1950s and 1960s, there were various Chinese wayang orang groups in Central and East Java. They regularly joined festivals, such as one held in Surakarta in mid 1950s.
intervene against such regressive cultural politics by foregrounding an alternative praxis such as exemplified by the Ang Hien Hoo, which still continues to the present.

It is in this position of belonging neither here nor there, that the Ang Hien Hoo wayang orang division asserts itself in a non-essentializing way within the parochial cultural politics of the decentralization era. Without giving up the arts, which is close to their heart, the Chinese patrons of the And Hien Hoo wayang orang division negotiates with the pressure of the market (read: what the audience demand) by ingenious compromises, such as collaborating with the En Ang Kiong’s lion dance. (One can compare this with the compromises of the artists of traditional performing arts have to make by introducing campur sari in their performances).

The mixing of the Chinese lion dance to the wayang orang play also signifies the close interconnection between the Chinese temple in Malang as well as in other places with local performing arts, as the temple festivities in the past has always incorporated local music and performing arts. It is important to note here that compared to the other choice of arts, which the Chinese in Malang has embraced, such as the modern dance and theatre, it is the wayang orang group – located at the heart of the China town area – which in the 1950s and 1960s managed to draw Chinese population from all backgrounds, the Chinese or the Dutch educated, the peranakan and the totok, the poor and the rich. There is a different from of inclusiveness in the present day Panca Budhi wayang orang division. Compared to the 1950s, when the division was first established, the present wayang orang division of the Panca Budhi is not solely for the burial association family members, but for the general public, attracting more participants from the non-Chinese background.

The basis of Ang Hien Hoo’s amateur art in the past was the need of a particular diaspora communities, which is no longer relevant in today’s globalized market place, with individualized consumption of arts as commodities. However, the urban space in 21st century Indonesia still allows some possibilities for a different kind of more inclusive communitarian space to support this amateurish, leisure time art to exist. These venues are among others the city festivals. Still in line with competing regionalism, city festivals are celebrated more in a multicultural, and less essentialist way. The nature of this new civic space in its relation to the civil society, the state, and the marketplace in its multicultural context still needs to be theorized, but such space promises new possibility for the amateur art to survive.

A new generation of young people from Malang, from diverse ethnic background has shown genuine interest in recovering the heterogeneous cultural legacy of Malang. Dwi Budi Cahyono, head of the Malang Arts Council, worked to preserve not only old building and archives, but also to engage with new enterprising young people in mobilizing local cultural resources of the city. In the same line, a free lance writer, Dukut Widodo in 2004 published the two volumes of Malang Tempoe Doeloe books in a playful, colloquial Malang dialect, digging the contribution of the Chinese, the Arabic, the Indian and Malang literati in building the cultural and intellectual milieu of Malang, without subscribing to the racial stereotyping.
Competing with Jember, a small city to the south of Malang, which has found a unique annual fashion parade as its trademark, Malang now holds its annual festival, called Malang *Tempoe Doeloe* or Malang Return. For a whole week the Ijen boulevard, one of the most well known elite residential area since the colonial times, is changed into a historical period of the past. The Malang Return, or the past in the present form, is a kind of multicultural bazaar, where business, charity and civic engagement are occurring hand in hand. The Panca budi *wayang orang* division contributes to this new urban civic space by showing that traditional arts are free to be owned by anybody regardless of race and cultural background. Within these annual festivals, the Panca Budi *wayang orang* group will continue to perform (as an unpaid contribution) with its new creative experimentation. Down southeast in the Chinatown area, the En An Kiong temple in July 2010 celebrated its 185 years anniversary. Behind the lion dance, the Ang Hien Hoo *wayang orang* monkeys joined the procession of the temple Gods.

The history of Ang Hien Hoo, now in its 100 year of age, has shown how the Chinese in Indonesia has been resilient in the face of power, negotiating identity politics with cultural adaptability, flexibility and openness in partaking and sharing the traditional arts, which they love. Time changes. New cultural expressions will emerge in the future, and new initiatives and ways of cross-boundary collaboration will be found.

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