

# PROCEEDING

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CHINESE DIASPORA IN SOUTHEAST ASIA STUDIES

(Socio Cultural Research of the Chinese Diaspora in Southeast Asia)

November, 25<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> 2022



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Universitas Kristen Maranatha  
Bandung, Indonesia



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# Conference Chair's Foreword

*Dr. Christine Claudia Lukman, M.Ds., CIQaR*

It is an honor for the Center of Chinese Diaspora Studies of Universitas Kristen Maranatha as host the International Conference on Chinese Diaspora in Southeast Asia on 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> November 2022 in a webinar. The consortium of 8 Chinese study centers of various universities decided to expand the scope of study from the Indonesian region to a wider region, namely Southeast Asia. In accordance with the scope of the study area, the conference name became the International Conference on Chinese Southeast Asia Studies. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which has started to spread since 2020, the first conference can only be held in 2022.

Why was Southeast Asia chosen as the study area? Currently around 75% (or 45 million people) of the Chinese diaspora reside in Southeast Asia. Due to geographical proximity and trading ties, the Chinese diaspora has a long history in Southeast Asia timeline, which was the main destination of emigrants mostly origin from Southern Chinese provinces of Fujian and Guangdong. As immigrants, the Chinese diaspora experiences acculturation when encounter and adopted gradual acquisition of the characteristics and some norms of new culture from the people in the country they live in, as well as some communities still maintaining the traditional culture by passing it on to their descendants. The fast development of digital technology that creates of a borderless world is another cultural challenge today. Cultural encounters are no longer dependent on territorial aspects but can occur globally. The Chinese diaspora community is also facing this current inevitable cultural challenge. What is the right cultural strategy so that Chinese culture can survive without losing its identity? Can we learn from past best practices about choosing the right strategy to deal with today's situation?

The papers in this proceeding are the results of scholarly research in exploring various possible cultural strategies, from the history of experiments, to ensure the sustainability of Chinese culture as a living culture without losing its identity.

On this occasion, we would like to thank the Chancellor of Maranatha Christian University, the steering committee from various universities and institutions, keynote speakers, all committee members, and the conference participants who have made the conference and its proceedings possible.

# ICCDSAS Editorial's Foreword

*Dr. Krismanto Kusbiantoro, S.T., M.T., CIQaR*

The need to share and discuss Chinese studies gathers scholars and academicians in an international conference forum. Several leading universities in Indonesia, China, Japan, and Malaysia have formed a joint consortium to organize this prestigious forum. Talking about Chineseness is always interesting. Not only because of the long history of migration of Chinese people out of China to various places, but also because of cultural interactions with a very wide spectrum of significance. Starting from the Chinese culture that was accepted, absorbed, and even adopted by the local community, to the Chinese culture that was considered foreign by the local community. All of these are interesting materials to study and discuss in scientific forums.

The universities joining the consortium are even wider with the inclusion of Tarumanegara University, University of Indonesia, Soegijapranata Catholic University, and Rikkyo University in Japan as consortium members. This conference is a prestigious scientific forum that brings together academics, humanists, students, and the Chinese community to discuss and share knowledge about Chineseness.

The consortium saw the need to broaden the scope of the study so that it was no longer limited to Indonesia, but within the Southeast Asian region. Due to geographical proximity and trading ties, the Chinese diaspora has a long history in Southeast Asia, which was the main destination of emigrants from Southern Chinese. Currently, a significant number of around 75% (or 45 million people) of the Chinese diaspora reside in Southeast Asia.

The presence of Chinese immigrants with their own culture to the Southeast Asian region is confronted with local people with their respective cultures. This is when they experience an encounter that is not merely a physical encounter, but also a cultural one. The cultural encounter that occurs opens many possibilities for the existence of cultures in a very broad spectrum: the most constructive possibility is the emergence of a new culture as a result of the interaction of the two cultures, and the most destructive possibility is the loss of one of the cultural elements. In this process, we are familiar with various terms such as adaptation, acculturation, inculturation, enculturation and so on. This cultural meeting strategy and approach is something interesting to look at as a historical fact, as well as a projective cultural strategy in the future.

As immigrants, the Chinese Diaspora experiences acculturation when encounter and adopted gradual acquisition of the characteristics and some norms of new culture from the people in the country they live in, as well as some communities still maintaining the traditional culture by passing it on to their descendants. The interaction between the two approaches affects the adaptation strategy chosen by them, whether in the form of assimilation into major ethno-cultural groups, or integration within larger society. These distinction strategies involved two dimensions, based on orientations towards one's own group, and those towards other groups.

The first dimension is a relative preference for having blended mixed with the larger society. The second is rendered as a relative preference for maintaining one's heritage culture and identity, together along other ethno-cultural groups. This formulation is presented for both the ethno-cultural groups and the larger society.

The fast development of digital technology that creates of a borderless world is another cultural challenge today. Cultural encounters are no longer dependent on territorial aspects but can occur globally. The Chinese diaspora community is also facing this current inevitable cultural challenge. What is the right cultural strategy so that Chinese culture can survive without losing its identity? Can we learn from past best practices about choosing the right strategy to deal with today's situation?

This conference aims to explore various possible cultural strategies, from history of various cultural experiments, to ensure the sustainability of Chinese culture as a living culture without losing its identity. The object of study in the articles discussed in this conference is Chinese culture which has interacted with the local Southeast Asian context, both tangible and intangible, in a time perspective, both as history and as a projection of the future.

This conference collects various articles related to the topics raised from various groups of writers. there are Chinese humanists, researchers, teachers, as well as students, both doctoral students and undergraduate students. The topics raised were very diverse, ranging from topics related to religion, language, cultural identity, performance culture, culinary to popular cultures that are common in everyday life. This conference brings awareness about the value of Chinese culture living in Southeast Asia as an integral part of local culture, while inviting all conference participants to work together to preserve and strive for the continuation of this culture through new cultural strategies that can overcome the challenges of the times.



# Keynote Speakers

**Didi Kwartanada**

*Tionghoa Diaspora Researcher, Indonesia*

**Prof. Esther Harijanti Kuntjara, M.A., Ph.D.**

*Universitas Kristen Petra, Indonesia*

**Dr. Ganewati Wuryandari, M.A.**

*BRIN, Indonesia*

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*Universitas Kristen Maranatha, Indonesia*

**Nurni W. Wuryandari Ph.D.**

*Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia*

**Dr. Rahadjeng Pulungsari**

*Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia*

**Prof. Ir. Roesdiman Soegiarso Ph.D.,**

*Universitas Tarumanagara, Indonesia*

**Prof. Satoshi Masutani Ph.D.**

*Rikkyo University, Japan*

**Tsuda Koji, Ph.D.**

*The University of Tokyo, Japan*

**Prof. Dr. Azizi Bahauddin**

*School of Housing, Building and Planning, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia*

**Prof. Dr. Danny Wong Tze Ken**

*University of Malaya, Malaysia*

**Prof. Nie Dening, Ph.D.**

*Xiamen University, People Republic of China*

# **PROCEEDING PAPERS**



# Day 1

## Keynote Speakers

**Dr. Krismanto Kusbiantoro, S.T., M.T., CiQaR**  
*Universitas Kristen Maranatha, Indonesia*  
Adapt of Perish: Learning from the Old Chinatown Jamblang

**Prof. Dr. Danny Wong Tze Ken**  
*University of Malaya, Malaysia*  
Dialect Identity and the Study of the Chinese in Malaysia

**Tsuda Koji, Ph.D.**  
*The University of Tokyo, Japan*  
Finding the “Missing Link”: Organization Process of Batavia’s Chinese Community under the Japanese Military Rule

**Prof. Ir. Roesdiman Soegiarso Ph.D.,**  
*Universitas Tarumanagara, Indonesia*  
The Opportunities and Challenges of Tionghoa in West Sumatera

**Dr. Rahadjeng Pulungsari**  
*Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia*  
Dominant Ideology through Cultural Articulation of Chinese Diaspora Films in Indonesia in 2015-2021

## Research Papers

Irena Vanessa Gunawan, Yudita Royandi, Veren Gabriella, Melisa Natalia  
“Study of changes in the function of space in Thio Tjoe Teng’s shop and residential building Indramayu City

Kai Kwong Loh  
The Cemetery of Lo Fangbo and Luo Clan Cohesion in Southeast Asia

Olivia, Toetik Koesbardiati  
Sea Goddess Mazu Ritual at Tjoe Tik Kiong (Cide Gong) Pasuruan Temple after Covid 19

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The Phenomenon Chinese Culinary Centers in Jakarta

Monica Hartanti  
Aesthetic and Authentic Chinese Culinary Dissemination Through Film Delicacies Destiny

Joseph W. W. Chan  
China and ASEAN on Maritime Silk Road - Past, Present and Future



# Representation of the Chinese Diaspora in Southeast Asia in Toni Masdiono's Comics

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*Abstract: Toni Masdiono is a comic creator with excellent illustration quality and has been active in the Southeast Asia region through seminars and workshops. Initially, his comics featured western super heroes, but in recent years, also feature Chinese characters, namely in "Karimata 1890" (already published in 2019), and "Laosam 1892" (to be published soon). The two comics show the interaction between Chinese Diaspora with the Nusantara (Indonesia) local people in a historical context. Through his perception as a Peranakan Chinese who is very familiar with Javanese culture, Masdiono constructs and represents the Chinese Diaspora in both comics. This is interesting to study because the representation of the Chinese Diaspora figures will shape the perception of the readers who are the younger generation from various ethnic groups in Indonesia. The data collection method was carried out by conducting in-depth interviews with Masdiono to find out his perception of the existence of the Chinese Diaspora in Southeast Asia, and a focus group discussion is conducted with young participants to know their perception of the representation of the Chinese Diaspora figures in Masdiono's comics. Visual data is obtained from comic books that have been published, and will be published. The theory that supports this research is Stuart Hall's theory of representation which is the ability to describe or imagine. Representation is important because culture is always shaped through meaning and language (verbal and visual), so language is a symbolic or representation form. The analysis is carried out using a semiotic method that involves the encoding process by Masdiono and decoding by the comic readers. The result shows that Masdiono and his readers share the same perception of the representation of the Chinese Diaspora in Southeast Asia in the past.*

*Keywords: Chinese Diaspora, representation, comic*

## INTRODUCTION

Toni Masdiono was born in Malang on March 25, 1961 to Peranakan Chinese parents. His father is of Chinese and Javanese descent, while his mother is Peranakan Chinese who has a Dutch grandmother. Masdiono said that as a child he and his family lived in the Chinatown area of Malang, but they felt uncomfortable because they could not speak Mandarin. Feeling alienated, they moved to Jalan Merbabu Malang, which is not a Chinatown area. Masdiono studied at Catholic elementary, junior high, and high school, whose students from various ethnicities. Masdiono said that the New Order's (Orde Baru) repressive policies towards Chinese culture and ethnicity in Indonesia from 1966 to 1998 caused him to become alienated from Chinese culture. What is more serious for Masdiono is the fading of his ethnic identity as a Chinese person (interview with Toni Masdiono on July 19, 2022).

Since childhood, Masdiono has been familiar with various ethnic groups and has an interest in Javanese culture, especially wayang kulit. On the other hand, Masdiono is also very fond of comics, so he collects various comics from within and outside Indonesia. From 1980 to 1987 Masdiono studied at the Faculty of Fine Art and Design, Bandung Institute of Technology, undergraduate level with a major in Graphic Art. After graduating Masdiono did not work in the field of Graphic Art, but in Graphic Design by creating logos, brochures, illustrations for magazines and novel covers, as well as comics.

Initially Masdiono made Western-style superhero comics. Sometimes he creates comics in which the characters were Westerners and Indonesian natives, but since 2018 Masdiono has begun to include Chinese characters in comics along with the emergence of awareness of his ethnicity as Indonesian-Chinese since 2010. Masdiono said that since that year he has begun to study various Chinatowns and their culture which was once 'forbidden' in the New Order Era (email letter dated October 31, 2022).

The first comic is "Karimata 1890" which tells the story of the conflict between pirates in the Karimata Strait led by a woman named Malla, and a group of mercenaries led by a woman named Inang. Malla's followers are Anta, Rati, Tampu, and Karta who are all residents of the Karimata Strait area; while the followers of Inang are Ghita (from Java), Wang (from China), Seruni (from Persia), Tian Loong (from China), and Basri (from Java). Inang is the 'mistress' of Janssens (an admiral whose office is in Batavia). She was assigned by his lover to find Malla and destroy his pirate group. In this comic, Masdiono only shows 2 figures of the Chinese Diaspora as supporters of Inang (the antagonist). In the second comic, "Laosam 1892" Masdiono tells the story of a friction between two groups of opium traders in Lasem. The first group was led by Babah Auwyang who was also a spice trader, while the second group was led by Babah Lim. Babah Auwyang has lived in Lasem since he was born, even his ancestor was one of the heroes in the Yellow War in Lasem (1750). Babah Lim is a newcomer who inherited the house from his grandmother in Lasem. In this comic, Masdiono features more Chinese characters, both as protagonists and antagonists, along with their supporters. One Chinese character from "Karimata 1890", namely Wang, also appears in "Laosam 1892", but with an



even greater name, Wang the Tiger. Masdiono admitted that through the comic “Laosam 1892” he gives a more significant and comprehensive portion to his Chinese characters. Laosam is the Chinese term for Lasem in the past.

Masdiono tried to construct the representation of the Chinese in the two comics through narratives in the form of visual and verbal texts. The representation of Chinese ethnicity that Masdiono wants to convey to his readers is constructed through an encoding process that uses visual and verbal signs. Chinese characters are visually depicted through dots, lines, shapes, forms, and tones of black and white; as well as verbal descriptions through words in English. According to Masdiono, the use of English is because these two comics are intended for the younger generation in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, who come from the middle and upper middle class. This study aims to reveal the Chinese representation in the two comics, as well as to compare the encoding used by Masdiono to construct the Chinese representation with the decoding performed by the younger generation as their perception of the Chinese representation constructed by Masdiono.

## METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative research method. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with Masdiono to reveal his perception of the existence of the Chinese Diaspora in Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia. Focus group discussion of 12 participants who are students from Class D Final Project Research Methods (odd semester 2022-2023) Visual Communication Design, Faculty of Art and Design, Maranatha Christian University, Bandung aged between 22 to 25 years who come from ethnic groups Chinese, Sundanese and Menado. Focus group discussions were conducted to find out their perceptions of the representation of the Chinese Diaspora in Toni Masdiono's two comics, namely “Karimata 1890” (already published) and “Laosam 1892” (to be published soon). The visual data comes from the two comics.

Since it involves the perception of the representation of the Chinese Diaspora, the theoretical basis is the representation theory of Stuart Hall which is defined as the ability to describe or imagine. Representation is significant because culture is always shaped through meaning and language (verbal and visual language), thus language becomes a symbolic form or representation. Regarding the analytical method, the semiotic theory is used in conducting textual analysis of the encoding process through visual and verbal signs by Masdiono and decoding of visual and verbal signs by comic readers (discussion participants). The process of encoding meaning is carried out by Masdiono through the use of signs and their combination, while on the other hand, in the process of encoding, which is the interpretation of the reader in reconstructing meaning.

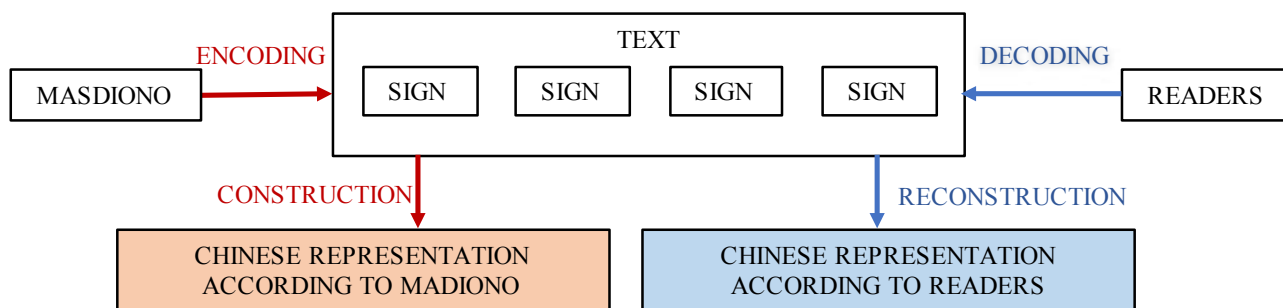


Figure 1: Schematic of encoding and decoding process in presenting Chinese people  
(source: Christine Claudia Lukman)

## Representation and Textual Semiotics

Representation, according to Adiprabowo (2014: 106) citing Barker (2004: 9), is the way the world is socially constructed and represented to members of a cultural group and by the cultural group itself. Representation and meaning are attached to various media such as sounds, inscriptions, objects, images, and so on. Stuart Hall (2005: 18-20) as quoted by Aprinta (2011: 16) describes representation as the ability to describe or imagine. There are two concepts of representation, namely mental representation and language representation. Mental representation is a conceptual map, which is the concept of something in our minds that is abstract. Language representation plays a role in the construction of meaning because it translates (encoding) abstract concepts from mental representations into language so that humans can connect concepts and ideas with certain signs and symbols (decoding). The relationship between an object with mental concepts and language is the essence of the production of meaning through language. Thus, representation is the result of a relation of (1) something, (2) mental concepts, and (3) language.

In cultural studies, representation as a product of the relation of these three things becomes a significant concept because culture is always formed through meaning, and language is a symbolic form (form of representation). That's why culture is always mediated by language that is shared with members of a cultural group. From this point of view, Hall shows the importance of representation as a means of communication and social interaction, even Hall considers

representation as a basic communication need that is necessary for humans to interact. Furthermore, Hall (1997: 15) suggests three forms of approach to representation of meaning through language, namely (1) reflective, (2) intentional, and (3) constructionist. Reflective representation is the use of language or various symbols that reflect meaning. Intentional representation is the use of language or symbols to express what you want to convey with a specific purpose. Constructionist representation is meaning in and through language. Especially for constructionist representation, Hall makes two approaches to study it, namely through a semiotic approach and a discourse approach. This thinking stems from the encoding and decoding concepts used by Hall in media studies. Encoding is the way information is packaged by the speaker (producing information), while decoding is how information is consumed or reconstructed (Storey, 2006: 11-12).

Hall (1997: 20-21) states that representation is often related to politics, but we need to remember that representation politics is different from 'identity politics'. Identity politics is part of representation politics, but representation politics need not be part of identity politics. Identity politics often exploits racial issues in the context of practical politics used by the majority group to intimidate minorities, on the other hand, representation politics is used by minority groups to provide space for their culture. Therefore, the difference is based on its purpose: identity politics is to gain political power while representation politics is to give space to the culture of minority groups.

In connection to the media, representation which means the 're-presentation' of an event that occurred previously serves to mediate, and to replay it. The concept of representation is often used to describe the relationship between media texts and reality because it is an important practice in shaping meaning. Thus, although media production can be fictitious, incomplete and narrow, the representation has the potential to give viewers a picture of a particular society (Anwar, Situmorang, Sabiruddin, 2018: 366). Textual semiotics studies texts in various forms and levels. Text is seen as a 'product of language use' which consists of a collection and combination of signs (in the form of verbal and visual signs) that can convey a message. Through social conventions, signs have social meanings and values, therefore Saussure states that signs are an inseparable unity from the signifier side to explain 'form' or 'expression', and the signified side to explain the concept or meaning. On the other hand, Peirce classified signs into three types, namely index, icon, and symbol. The index is a sign whose relationship between the signifier and the signified is causal, for example people crying is an index of their sad feelings. An icon is a sign whose relationship between the signifier and the signified has a resemblance or resemblance. A symbol is a sign whose relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary (Herliyani, Rediasa, 2013: 288).

Text analysis operates on two levels. At the first level, an individual sign analysis is carried out that includes the type of sign, as well as the meaning of the sign individually. At the second level, an analysis of a collection of signs is carried out which is combined to form a text that has denotative and connotative meanings (Utoyo, Setawan, 2018: 2). The text consists of various combinations of signs used by the communicator (encoding) to construct a representation, on the other hand the text is interpreted by the communicant (decoding) in reconstructing the representation. The representation constructed by the communicator may be different from that constructed by the communicant. According to Eco (1985) as quoted by Utoyo and Setawan (2018: 3), this occurs because a text is often interpreted by readers with different code backgrounds from the author.

### **The Arrival of the Chinese Diaspora in Indonesia**

In order for the discussion of the Chinese Diaspora in these two comics to be more specific, it is necessary to know about the period of arrival, and the pattern of migration. Lukman (2016: 89) citing Purcell (1997) states that the migration of the Chinese Diaspora occurred in 3 periods, namely (1) the kingdom period, (2) the early arrival of Europeans in Southeast Asia, and (3) the Dutch colonial period. The migration pattern written by Lukman (ibid), refers to Wang Gungwu (1995), consisting of huashang (the trade pattern), huagong (the coolie pattern), hoaqiau (the sojourner pattern), and huayi (the re-migrant pattern).

Huashang is the oldest pattern in the history of Chinese Diaspora migration motivated by the desire to trade which initially took place in various regions of China, and then continued in Southeast Asia around the 5th to 18th centuries AD. Huagong is the second pattern that occurs in Southeast Asia which has been controlled by Western colonialists who need labor in mining and plantations. These laborers or coolies come from poor families who migrate to improve economic conditions. Hoaqiau is a temporary stopover pattern based on the desire to spread the spirit of Chinese nationalism that wants to turn the empire into a republic by teachers, journalists, and other intellectuals, while the last pattern is huayi, which is the movement of Chinese Diaspora migrants from overseas countries to other overseas countries (Lukman 2016: 89; Hapsari, 2016: 256).

The period from 1800 to 1860 was marked by an increase in the number of Chinese in Indonesia due to migration in large numbers to Southeast Asia due to political chaos, famine, and the Taiping rebellion (1850) in Southern China against the Qing rulers (Coppel as quoted by Lukman, 2016: 90). Another mass migration occurred in the period 1860 to 1890 which reached 318 thousand people who later settled in Java (128,000 people); and on the east coast of Sumatra, Bangka and Belitung (190 thousand people).




## DISCUSSION

In his two comics, namely “Karimata 1890” and “Laosam 1892”, Masdiono represents the Chinese Diaspora, but there are some differences in quantity and socio-cultural context. In “Karimata 1890” only two Chinese Diaspora are shown who are hua yi (Chinese diaspora who wander from place to place outside China) who work as mercenaries. His names are Wang and Tian Loong. They can be categorized as Chinese Totok or Singkeh.

In “Laosam 1892”, with the setting of the city of Lasem in Central Java, many Chinese Peranakan figures (a community group resulting from marriages between Chinese men and Javanese women) are shown who have settled in Indonesia. It is estimated that their ancestors had settled in Java in the 18th century with the migration pattern of huashang from the middle class to trade. The terms Babah Auwayang, Babah Lim, and Babah Hen Lanng are commonly used to address Peranakan Chinese men. Apart from these three Chinese, there are also other Chinese, namely Wang the Tiger (who is also in the comic "Karimata 1890") who is a Totok Chinese with a huayi pattern; Bhan Teng is a Peranakan Chinese from the Benteng area in Tangerang, and Siau Peng or Gepeng is a Peranakan Chinese from Lasem. In this comic, Masdiono uses the term Babah for a Chinese Peranakan man from the upper middle social class, therefore Bhan Teng and Siau Peng are not called Babah because they are from a lower social class.

Table 1. will show the construction carried out by Masdiono to compose the text through visual and verbal signs on the one hand, and the reconstruction carried out by 13 focus group discussion participants to interpret the text. The representations prepared by Masdiono for the Chinese, represented by two figures, namely Wang and Tian Loong in Karimata “1890”, were interpreted by the discussion participants.

Table 1. Encoding and Decoding of Chinese Characters in “Karimata 1890”

ENCODING by Toni Masdiono	Chinese characters in “Karimata 1890” as the text	DECODING by Focus Group Discussion Participants
<p><b>Visual signs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- slanted eyes (index of Chinese ethnicity),</li> <li>- lips never smile (index of seriousness),</li> <li>- unshaven beard, matted hair (index of careless, and lower class),</li> <li>- headband (index of warrior).</li> </ul> <p><b>Verbal signs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- come from Asia (index of origin country),</li> <li>- have fighting skills (index of lifeskill),</li> <li>- mercenary (index of profession),</li> <li>- at the end of the story he and Tian Loong lost in the fight against Malla and her army, and realized that the pirates actually, a fisherman who trying to defend the Karimata Strait from Dutch domination (index of consciousness).</li> </ul> <p><b>Overall meaning:</b> An overseas man from China who works as a low-class mercenary in Karimata, who after a defeat realizes that his enemy is not a ruthless pirate but a fisherman who defends his territory from the Dutch.</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Figure 2: Wang (source: Masdiono, 2018)</p> <p>There is no specific description for Wang. Masdiono describes all of Inang's mercenaries as follows: “... she formed a band of adventures to aid her in the mission. The men in her team came from all around Asia, and were not warriors or assassins, but still many of them did possess outstanding fighting skills and had been known to work as mercenaries in the past.”</p>	<p><b>Interpretation of Wang's visual text:</b> serious, messy, shabby, has determination, actually has character and has charisma.</p> <p><b>Interpretation of Tian Loong visual text:</b> He was old, his eyes were cruel, angry and cold.</p> <p><b>Interpretation of verbal texts:</b> Wang and Tian Loong are supporters of the antagonist because they are mercenaries from the antagonist (Inang) who works for the Netherlands. Participants sympathized with Wang and Tian Loong because at the end of the story (with Inang and other followers) they realized that actually Malla (the protagonist) and his followers were fishermen that forced to become pirates to defend the Karimata Strait from Dutch domination. Participants stated that they could not give much assessment to these two figures because they were</p>

ENCODING by Toni Masdiono	Chinese characters in “Karimata 1890” as the text	DECODING by Focus Group Discussion Participants
<p><b>Visual sign:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- slanted eyes (index of Chinese ethnicity),</li> <li>- lips never smile (index of seriousness),</li> <li>- long mustache and beard, wrinkled face (index of old age),</li> <li>- long hair (index of free man),</li> <li>- headband (index of warrior).</li> </ul> <p><b>Verbal Signs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- identic with Wang because it is used for all Inang troops.</li> </ul> <p><b>Overall meaning:</b> Identic with Wang.</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Figure 3: Tian Loong (source: Masdiono, 2018)</p> </div> <p>There is no specific description for Tian Loong. Masdiono describes all of Inang's mercenaries as mentioned in Wang's section.</p> <p><b>The representation of the Chinese Diaspora constructed by Masdiono through Wang and Tian Loong and reconstructed by the discussion participants</b></p> <p>The representation of the Chinese Diaspora through the characters of Wang and Tian Loong which was constructed by Masdiono and reconstructed by the discussion participants has similarities based on the verbal and visual texts. These two people are considered as negative characters (supporting antagonists) because they are mercenaries from Inang (antagonists who work for the Netherlands).</p>	<p>only extras who did not show prominent actions, nor did they have a complete explanation of their background.</p>


From the table, it can be seen that the text construction to represent the Chinese Diaspora carried out by Masdiono and interpreted by the FGD participants has similarities, namely as adventurers and mercenaries. Most of the participants interpreted the representation of the Chinese Diaspora as formidable, cruel, and opportunist mercenaries. However, some of the other participants interpreted the two Chinese Diaspora as just ordinary people trying to survive by becoming mercenaries.

In Table 2. there are more Chinese Diaspora figures from the comic “Laosam 1892”. Similar to the previous table, this table also shows the construction that Masdiono did to compose the text through visual and verbal signs on the one hand, and the reconstruction carried out by 13 focus group discussion participants to interpret the text on the other. The



representations made by Masdiono for the Chinese Diaspora were represented by Babah Auwyang, Babah Lim, Wang the Tiger, Bhan Teng, Siau Peng, and Babah Hen Lang.

Tabel 2. *Encoding dan Decoding terhadap Tokoh Tionghoa dalam “Laosam 1892”*

Encoding by Masdiono	Chinese Characters in “Laosam 1892” as the text	Decoding by FGD Participants
<p>Visual sign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- white hair above the ears (index of old age),</li> <li>- serious gaze to the side (index of mindfulness),</li> <li>- neat appearance (index of self-care, high class).</li> </ul> <p>Verbal signs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Babah (index of Peranakan Chinese men),</li> <li>- 61 years old (index of old age),</li> <li>- spice traders in Lasem (index of profession),</li> <li>- his grandfather was one of the fighters in the Yellow War in Lasem (index of his ancestor’s heroism),</li> <li>- his wife has died (index of marital status i.e. widower),</li> <li>- his only son studied in the Netherlands (index of concern for his son education, and index of wealth),</li> <li>- opium business (at that time legal but detrimental to the user) in Central Java (an index of excessive business area).</li> </ul> <p>Overall meaning: A Peranakan Chinese who is a successful senior businessman from Lasem, comes from the descendants of a prominent person in Lasem, namely the Yellow War hero. He can concentrate on expanding his business because he doesn't have a wife anymore, and he doesn't have to take care of his only son because he is studying in the Netherlands.</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>Babah Auwyang or Oyang, age 61 years, a spice tycoon in the city of Lasem. His grandfather was one of the most notable Yellow War combatant ever seen in that small town. His wife has passed away and his only son is pursuing further education in the Netherlands. Beside spices, actually he is also the main player in opium business for the Central Java Region.</p> <p>Figure 4: Babah Auwyang (source: Masdiono, 2022)</p> <p>The representation of the Chinese Diaspora constructed by Masdiono through Babah Auwyang and reconstructed by the discussion participants</p> <p>The representations constructed by Masdiono and reconstructed by the participants were similar. Babah Auwyang is a representation of a Chinese person who has a background as a descendant of the Yellow War hero that is interpreted as a very positive thing by the participants. Therefore, all participants stated that Auwyang was the protagonist even though he was still in a gray area (not entirely good because he still runs the opium business).</p>	<p>Interpretation of Babah Auwyang's visual text: A mature man who has a strong character, experienced, wise, and quite handsome.</p> <p>Interpretation of Babah Auwyang's verbal text: Babah Auwyang is categorized as a protagonist because he is a descendant of a hero who fought against the Dutch. In addition, he sold commodities (spices and opium) which were legal in his time. Some participants stated that Babah Auwyang is a figure in the gray area because he does anything that has a good impact (including selling opium) for himself, especially in the financial sector, without considering the negative impact on society</p>

Encoding by Masdiono	Chinese Characters in “Laosam 1892” as the text	Decoding by FGD Participants
<p>Visual signs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- broad forehead due to balding (index of getting old)</li> <li>- slanted eyes (index of Chinese ethnicity),</li> <li>- looking down, while smoking cigarettes (index of looking down on others),</li> <li>- Neat appearance (index of self-care, and high class)</li> </ul> <p>Verbal signs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Babah (index of Peranakan Chinese men),</li> <li>- 47 years old (index of younger than Auwyang),</li> <li>- a young businessman who just recently live in Lasem (index of newcomer)</li> <li>- driven by ambition to dominate opium trade in Central Java (index of greed and competitive),</li> <li>- got support from Dutch Colonial Government in Batavia (index of colonial henchmen),</li> <li>- his father is a sugar tycoon from Pasuruan (index of rich family),</li> <li>- His grandmother from Lasem (index of ancestor origin),</li> <li>- Lim inherited the house in Lasem from his grandmother (index of house ownership in Lasem)</li> </ul> <p>Overall meaning: Ambitious Peranakan Chinese who conspired with the Dutch to dominate the opium business in Central Java.</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p data-bbox="675 600 948 869">Babah Lim, 47 years, a young businessman who had recently lived in Lasem and was driven by ambition to control the opium trade in Central Java, of course with the support of the Dutch in Batavia. Lim's father was a sugarcane tycoon in the Pasuruan region, but Lim's grandma was from Lasem, so when she passed away, she left Lim the family house in the peaceful city of Lasem.</p> <p data-bbox="703 884 919 931">Figure 5: Babah Lim (sumber: Masdiono, 2022)</p> </div> <p>The representation of the Chinese Diaspora constructed by Masdiono through the figure of Babah Lim and reconstructed by the discussion participants</p> <p>The representations constructed by Masdiono and reconstructed by the participants were similar. Babah Lim is a representation of the bad Chinese who were Dutch accomplices that wanted to get rid of Babah Auwyang. This was interpreted in such a negative way that all participants stated that Babah Lim was the antagonist.</p>	<p>Interpretation of Babah Lim's visual text: From the expression on his face it was obvious that he is a cunning, and arrogant rich man.</p> <p>Interpretation of Babah Lim's verbal text: An antagonist who is a newcomer to Lasem, but because he has economic support from his rich father, and political support from the Dutch Colonial Government, he feels he can control the Lasem people, and monopolize the opium trade in Central Java. Babah Lim was also considered by the participants as an antagonist because he had evil thoughts towards Babah Auwyang (the protagonist) and intended to control opium in Central Java by getting rid of Babah Auwyang.</p>
<p>Visual signs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- slanted eyes (index of Chinese ethnicity),</li> <li>- lips never smile (index of seriousness),</li> <li>- unshaven beard, matted hair (index of careless,</li> </ul>		<p>Interpretation of Wang the Tiger's visual text: Fierce, realizing that he is strong, confident (because of the bottom-up point of view).</p> <p>Interpretation of Wang the</p>

Encoding by Masdiono	Chinese Characters in “Laosam 1892” as the text	Decoding by FGD Participants
<p>and lower class), - headband (index of warrior).</p> <p>Verbal signs: - mercenary (index of professions), - 35 years old (index of young age), - comes from Hu Nan, China (index of country of origin), - nickname 'the Tiger' (index of courage), - wander to Southeast Asia because ordered by teacher to look for brother biological (index of motivation), - traveling from Champa, Malacca, Karimata, Java (index of long journey in Southeast Asia as a <i>huayi</i>), - in Lasem he sided with Babah Auwyang for being bullied by Babah Lim (index of partisanship).</p> <p>Overall meaning: A brave Chinese man who is willing to suffer in order to find his brother and obey his teacher's order.</p>	<div data-bbox="598 293 890 555" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="598 568 890 824">Wang the Tiger, 35 years, a warrior from Hunan-China, who traveled on the orders of his teacher for his elder brother who reportedly went to a country in the south. So Wang traveled to Champa, Malacca, then took a ship to Andalus before arriving in Java. He had stayed in Karimata for more than one year before continuing his voyage to Java with his 'sweetheart'.</p> <p data-bbox="630 831 858 882">Figure 6: Wang the Tiger (source: Masdiono, 2022)</p> <p data-bbox="576 909 903 1093">The representation of the Chinese Diaspora constructed by Masdiono through the character of Wang the Tiger and reconstructed by the discussion participants</p> <p data-bbox="576 1099 903 1547">The representations constructed by Masdiono and reconstructed by the participants were similar. They considered Wang to be a Chinese person who was quite sympathetic, knowing that his motivation for going to Indonesia was to find his older brother on the orders of his teacher. Participants can better understand the reason for being a mercenary is to survive on a mission to find his brother.</p>	<p>Tiger's verbal text: Wang is a hard worker but has not been able to find his brother yet, he still obeys his teacher's orders despite facing various challenges, defeats, and violence. He does anything to keep his life (including being a mercenary of the antagonist Inang in Karimata, and a follower of protagonist Auwyang in Laosam). Wang made the right decision in Lasem because he wanted to save his own life. A true adventurer, a person who has the determination to achieve his goal of finding his brother, so he doesn't want to give up.</p>
<p>Visual signs: - hat-covered face (index of hiding identity), - piercing eyes</p>		<p>Interpretation of Bhan Teng's visual text: Fierce, cruel, mysterious and ruthless.</p>

Encoding by Masdiono	Chinese Characters in "Laosam 1892" as the text	Decoding by FGD Participants
<p>(index of alert and serious), - lips curved to bottom (index of serious, angry, violent).</p> <p>Verbal signs: - 47 years old (index of middle age), - guards sent from Batavia (index of the 'thugs' of the Dutch East Indies Colonial Government), - comes from a small town to the west of Batavia, namely in Tangerang (an index of the origin of an area that is mostly inhabited by Peranakan Chinese).</p> <p>Overall meaning: Peranakan Chinese who worked as assassins who were very dangerous, worked in secret, and were Dutch accomplices in Batavia.</p>	<div data-bbox="667 286 965 846" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">  <p>Bhan Teng, 47 years, a bodyguard sent from Batavia after Lim reported that his assassins sent to kill Auwyang failed their job, even they got murdered. Bhan Teng himself came from the small city on the western side of Batavia called Tangerang. The Dutch had ambitions to seize the opium business from Auwyang and handed over it to the 'greedy' Lim, the Dutch doll.</p> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Figure 7: Bhan Teng (source: Masdiono, 2022)</p> <p>The representation of the Chinese Diaspora constructed by Masdiono through the figure of Bhan Teng and reconstructed by the discussion participants</p> <p>The representations constructed by Masdiono and reconstructed by the participants were similar. They saw Bhan Teng as a frightening Chinese, an antagonistic supporter assigned by the Dutch to help Babah Lim achieve his ambition to dominate the opium trade in Central Java.</p>	<p>Interpretation of Bhan Teng's verbal text: Bhan Teng is an evil character and cunning due to circumstances. If not alert, Auwyang could be harmed by him. He would do whatever the Dutch ordered in his mission to make Babah Lim the ruler of the opium trade in Central Java. He works clandestinely (secret, mysterious).</p>
<p>Visual signs: - glaring eyes (index of alertness), - the corners of the lips are curved downwards (index of seriousness, anger, cruelty), - headband (index of the warrior).</p> <p>Verbal signs: - Siau Peng (an index of a Chinese name meaning Little Peng), - commonly called Gepeng (an index of</p>	<div data-bbox="657 1512 954 1915" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">  <p>Siau Peng usually called Gepeng, 57 years, the right-hand of Babah Lim, who is cunning and ruthless.</p> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Figure 8: Siau Peng (source: Masdiono, 2022)</p>	<p>Interpretation of Siau Peng's visual text: Sneaky, ruthless, rundown, dirty, messy, low class.</p> <p>Interpretation of Siau Peng's verbal text: Siau Peng is Lim's confidant who is cunning and cruel to the protagonist and the rest of Lasem's community.</p>

Encoding by Masdiono	Chinese Characters in “Laosam 1892” as the text	Decoding by FGD Participants
<p>Peranakan Chinese nicknames, a skinny body),</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 57 years old (index of old age)</li> <li>- Lim's right hand (the index of his position is quite high)</li> <li>- cunning and cruel (index of his nature).</li> </ul> <p>Overall meaning: The cunning and ruthless Peranakan Chinese from Lasem are the guardians of the antagonist. Even though his body is small and thin, he is shrewd in carrying out his crimes.</p>	<p>The representation of the Chinese Diaspora constructed by Masdiono through the character of Siau Peng and reconstructed by the discussion participants</p> <p>The representations constructed by Masdiono and reconstructed by the participants were similar. They saw Siau Peng as a cruel, fearsome Chinese, supporting Babah Lim's antagonist to take control of Lasem and seize the opium business from Babah Auwyang.</p>	
<p>Visual signs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- bald head (index of old age),</li> <li>- fat (index of prosperous at that time),</li> <li>- facial expressions (index of fear race).</li> </ul> <p>Verbal signs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hen Lang (index of Chinese names),</li> <li>- Babah (index of Peranakan Chinese),</li> <li>- 60 years old (index of old age),</li> <li>- Sin Lang stall owner (index of business ownership),</li> <li>- has a wife who is a batik entrepreneur (index from Lasem as the center of batik production at that time)</li> <li>- has lodging behind his shop (index of side business).</li> </ul> <p>Overall meaning: Peranakan Chinese from Lasem who want to live in peace, run various businesses on a small scale, do not want to get involved in conflicts, but are often the objects of extortion by criminals. Stereotype depiction of the Chinese as economic actors, but weak and always afraid of facing extortionists.</p>	<div data-bbox="592 864 890 1272" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Figure 9: Babah Hen Lang (source: Masdiono, 2022)</p> <p>The representation of the Chinese Diaspora constructed by Masdiono through the figure of Babah Hen Lang and reconstructed by the discussion participants</p> <p>The representations constructed by Masdiono and reconstructed by the participants were similar. They see Babah Hen Lang as a diligent Chinese person, and good at doing business on a small scale. He is neutral because he does not side with Auwyang or Lim.</p>	<p>Interpretation of Hen Lang's visual text: He looks like a nice person, but with a weak character. He is rich but always afraid because he is often forced to give money to criminals.</p> <p>Interpretation of Hen Lang's verbal text: Hen Lang is a small businessman in Lasem who works to make ends meet. Economically he is also assisted by his wife's batik business. They enjoy old age and spend their free time with productive things. He was an ordinary and simple person who lived his life peacefully and was not involved in any crime.</p>

From the analysis in Table 1. and Table 2, there are various representation of Chinese Diaspora typologies. In "Karimata 1890" there is only 1 typology of the Chinese Diaspora represented through the characters Wang and Tian Loong, namely Chinese people who migrate from one place to another in search of a better life by doing various jobs to make a living, although sometimes not decent job.

In "Laosam 1892" there are several typologies of Diaspora representation, namely: (1) Peranakan Chinese who are diligent and good at doing business on a large scale, have a family background that upholds heroism and nationalism. However, he cannot be one hundred percent called a good person because he expanded his business to the opium trade which, although legal, is detrimental to society; (2) the Chinese Peranakans who were diligent and good at doing business on a large scale but cunning and cruel, were also puppets of the Dutch colonialists; (3) Totok Chinese who wander from one place to another with a specific purpose (to find a sibling) so that they do various jobs to make a living, without considering whether the work is good or bad; (4) Peranakan Chinese who work as paid thugs; and (5) Chinese Peranakans who are diligent and good at doing business on a small scale who do not want to be involved in conflict, but are often used as objects of extortion and violence.

The discussion participants stated that although in the comics there were Chinese people who were represented as negative characters such as the 'opium mafia' (Babah Auwyang, and Babah Lim) but they stated that it did not give a negative impression on Chinese people in Indonesia today, because the readers must have realized that the characters were fiction. They also say that the Chinese have always been represented as traders and not as 'mafia'. According to them, the more dominant representation of Chinese is perceived as coming from the stereotype as people who like to do business.

## RESULT

From the results of the discussion in the previous section, it can be seen that Masdiono represents several typologies of the Chinese Diaspora in the Dutch East Indies (currently Indonesia). Toni simply distinguishes between the Totok Chinese who wander from one area to another in the Southeast Asian region who can be referred to as *huayin*, and the Peranakan Chinese who live in Lasem (Laosam), Pasuruan, Tangerang who are descendants of the Chinese Diaspora who can serve as *huasangs* (traders) who had arrived in the Dutch East Indies before the mid-19th century. Masdiono explained that all the characters in the two comics (including the Chinese characters) were depicted in a gray area because in real life no one was extremely good, or bad. The Chinese representations constructed by Masdiono through visual and verbal texts consisting of various visual, verbal signs, and their combinations were interpreted almost the same by the discussion participants. Although their interpretation of the Chinese representation is almost the same as Masdiono's, the participants stated that they do not perceive it as a representation of the Chinese in Indonesia today, since most of whom work as businessmen. They argue that the representation of the Chinese as antagonists and his supporters will not cause negative perceptions if the reader realizes that it is only a story made for entertainment purposes only; in reality bad people can be of any ethnicity.

In the making of his comics, it appears that Masdiono did quite good historical research. The Karimata Strait is used as a setting in the story of pirate disputes because it is an area that is busy with trade and shipping activities so that it attracts pirate groups to commit piracy in the waters around Sumatra in the 18th century to the 19th century (Angga, 2022: 14). He also did historical research when he created the comic "Laosam 1892". This can be seen from the mention of the Yellow War hero to explain Babah Auwyang's ancestor. Daradjadi (2017: IX-X) stated that Lasem was one of the places where the Perang Sepanjang or Yellow War (1740-1743) was triggered by the massacre of 10,000 Chinese people in Batavia by the VOC in October 1740. The Yellow War was a coalition war between Chinese and Javanese troops against the VOC. Through his historical research, Masdiono also learned that in the 19th century in Lasem the Chinese traded opium (because it was forbidden to own agricultural land), and then batik (Lestari, Wiratama, 2018: 255). Masdiono explained in a conversation on October 31, 2022 that in his works, he always creates characters of different backgrounds and ethnicities, even though they are depicted as friends. The difference in status was deliberately not raised because Masdiono wanted to present a picture of a unified nation of Indonesia.

Although Masdiono has done quite a deep historical research, he does not describe a Chinese man whose forehead is bald and has a pigtail as a sign of the Qing Dynasty citizen. The representation of the Chinese Diaspora he wants to construct is the free and courageous men, not being the Han Chinese dominated by the Qing Dynasty. Thus, the representation is not an actual reality, but something that is imagined and influenced by the ideology of the maker.

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