The Chinese Clan Associations in Padang:
A package of the ethnic tradition and the social-culture
change in the era of globalization

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Abstract. A fascinating activity related to the Chinese New Year in Padang is the “Kio” (the
god statue procession) which is conducted a few days before the closing of the Chinese Lunar
New Year (the “Cap Go Meh”). This research describes how the Chinese clan associations in
Padang together cooperate in conducting the “Kio” statue procession during the “Cap Go
Meh.” The Chinese in Padang is unique because almost 99% of them cannot speak Chinese.
But uniquely, they still celebrate the Chinese traditions and in this research, the “Kio” statue
procession.

This writing will analyze the Chinese clan associations activity that is closely related to
the Chinese culture routinely conducted at the “Cap Go Meh.” At that day, many shows will
be organized, such as the Lion and Dragon dance, and the “Kio” statue procession. On “Cap
Go Meh” 2016, a few of the Chinese clan associations conducted the “Kio” parade on the
same day.

The goal of this research is to describe the social-culture change and the role of the
Chinese clan associations in packaging the traditions in the era of globalization.

1. Introduction

The Chinese clan association is an organization that accepts the people with the same surname as its
member [1] and [2]. Ch’ng [3] states that the overseas Chinese in South East Asia is bound by the
social relationships which begin from the own family relationship then widened to the non-family
kinship based on the same surname, same home town, or same dialect.

The development of political situation changed especially after the G-30S (Gerakan 30S or the
Movement of September 30, 1965) PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia or Indonesian Communist Party)
with the issue of Inpres (Presidential Instruction) No. 14 in 1967 on Religion, Belief and Chinese
Traditions, which banned all activities. For example, many celebrations related to the Chinese
festivals such as the Chinese New Year, the Cap Go Meh, and many cultural shows like the Lion
Dance and the Dragon Dance were also banned, including many activities related to the Chinese
organization like the Chinese clan association. All the names related to the Chinese must be changed
to Indonesian names. During that era, the Chinese must use Indonesian names for their (Chinese)
names or organization names. This also included the Chinese characters. This prohibition took place
for about 30 years of the New Order regime under the late President Soeharto, who was ousted on
May 21, 1998 [4][5]. It was under the late President Abdurrahman Wahid (popularly known as “Gus Dur”), after his inauguration on October 29, 1999, that the Chinese felt the fresh breeze. The Reformation period brought changes to the Chinese clan condition because, after 30 years of banning, the Chinese people are allowed to celebrate the Chinese festivals and traditions grandly and openly in public. In his era, the Keppres (Presidential Decree) No. 6 in 2000 replaced the Inpres No. 14, 1967. That Presidential Decree also legally accepted the Konghucu as one of the formal religions in Indonesia. Then the Ministry of Religion Decree No. 13 in 2001 acknowledged the Chinese New Year as unofficial holiday in Indonesia. Another pleasing development also took place during the era of President Megawati Soekarnoputri, where the Chinese New Year was accepted as the formal holiday in Indonesia starting the year 2003 [4][5]. The Chinese clan activities that were inactive for about 30 years, begin to be active after the repeal of the Inpres No. 14, 1967. Likewise, the Chinese clan associations in their new forms resurge with the founding of some new associations or reenacting the existing associations in the forms of clan foundations or family associations, not only in the capital city but also to provincial area and district region. Those organizations begin to present and participate in many meetings, locally, nationally or internationally [4][5][6].

In many overseas Chinese societies in the world we can find the Chinese clan associations [1][7][8][9]. Nowadays in Indonesia, many terms are used for the associations, such as the clan association, surname “kongsi,” family clan foundation, family clan ancestral house, and surname organization [1][10][11]. In the beginning, these associations had a social functions to help conduct the ancestral pray, to help the members who were in need, to celebrate the traditional Chinese festivals such as the Chinese New Year, the Qing Ming festival, the Zhong Yuan festival, etc.[11] and to settle the disputes among their members. Those associations held a vital role in the life of Chinese overseas. They also served as the intermediary between the migrant people with their home towns in Mainland China. When there was a disaster or political crisis in Mainland China, the associations would gather the fund to be sent there [1]. One of the Chinese clan associations’ activities is to celebrate the Chinese festival, and for this research, it is the Cap Go Meh that becomes an inseparable part of the Chinese New Year [12][13]. The Chinese New Year is celebrated with many accompanying shows such as the Lion Dance, the Dragon Dance, the “Kio” parade, the Chinese traditional clothing show, etc. along with many social activities such as the bazaar, the discount market, and the free health social activities. Cap Go Meh is the 15th day after the Chinese New Year. One of the intriguing activities related to Cap Go Meh in Padang is the “Kio” parade ritual of Protector God. In this research, I will discuss how the same day “Kio” procession took place during the Cap Go Meh in 2016 (or the Chinese New Year of 2567, related to the Confucius birth), which was never done before by the Chinese associations in Padang. During this event, we can see how a tradition is preserved, changed then packaged as activity for public consumption in the global era.

2. Research Method

The social relationships began from the family and widened to the non-family ties related to the same family surname, same home town or same dialect. This non-family relationship network is just like a big family. It consists of four principles, that is the kinship, the domicile, the dialect, and the businesses or skills and grouped in voluntary organizations or associations. The following table shows the Chinese overseas types organization such as: 1. The Clan Association, 2. Huiguan or “Hui Kuan,” 3. The dialect Association, and 4. Gilda (Professional Association) [3].
Table 1. The Chinese overseas associations.

| Types                     | The Unification Principle      | Example            |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. The Clan Association   | Kinship based on family name   | The Lee clan association |
| 2. Huiguan or “Hui Kuan”  | Domicile or Home Town          | See-Yap Association |
| 3. The dialect Association| Dialect                        | Fujian Association |
| 4. Gilda (Professional Association) | Skills               | The Goldsmith Association |

Sources: Ch’ng [3]

This table gives an example of the types of the Chinese overseas voluntary organizations (it can be called association), that appear in South East Asia in general and also in Indonesia to anticipate many interaction needs outside the kinship bind to face the unpredictable economic and politic situations post the World War-II. Until now those voluntary associations are still active and become part of the interaction circle in the social relationship, built in the business world and other social activity that become part of the “guanxi.” The study on the Chinese overseas associations have been discussed by Freedman [7], Willmot [8], Tan [9], See [10], Makmur [11], Liu [14] and Chan [15]. Liu [14] and Chan [15] in their writings showed how globalization implied the Chinese overseas in Singapore so that the associations as if belonging to the two worlds, that is traditional and modern one.

This research uses the qualitative research method. The data gathering is conducted using the interview technique and completed with an observation of the environment and many activities performed by the informants in their social activities. The structured interview and in-depth interview were conducted to the informants to get the description of the Chinese clan associations and their activities, not only their social activities but also how they interact each other. The data gathering conducted in this research related to the primary and secondary data. The key data is the field data gathered from the in-depth interview and participant observation with the informants. The main data comes from the author’s direct observation to many social activities, such as the activity related to the Chinese festival, especially the “Kio” parade at the Cap Go Meh which becomes the focus of this research. The secondary data is obtained from the report or newspaper, magazine, etc. or the research report from many institutes that conduct research on the Chinese clan associations. Other secondary data is the “Kio” parade documented in the video.

The research on the activities and the role of Chinese clan associations are used to get insight and enrich the data on the Chinese clan associations through observation of the many Chinese clan associations in Padang where the author also attended the Lion Dance competition in West Sumatera on July 24, 2016, at HTT (Hok Tek Tong or Himpunan Tjinta Teman). The participants were many Lion (“Barongsai”) and Dragon dances from a large number of social associations in Padang, including the Chinese clan association. The winner (of the competition) would attend the PON (Pekan Olahraga Nasional or National Sports Championship) XIX/2016 on September 2016 in West Java.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. The Chinese Clan Associations in Padang
There were some Chinese organizations in Padang at the end of 19th century based on dialects or origins in Mainland China. The Chinese in West Sumatera originated from the dialect group, such as Fujian/Hokkien, Guangdong/Kwangtung, Hakka, etc. The associations based on kinship were formed based on the same family surname and known as the clan association. From those dialect groups, the
Chinese in Padang founded the clan association according to kinship, not the skills or the hometown, because the Chinese people in Padang are not too many [16][17].

The Chinese clan associations (or “Jie She Kongsi”) in Padang, is also known as the family organization or “kongsi marga.” There are eight Clan Associations in Padang, that is: 1. The Lie-Kwee Clan Association (Long See Tong), 2. The Lim Clan Association (Kioe Liong Tong), 3. The Tjoa-Kwa Clan Association (Tjee Jang Tong), 4. The Gho Clan Association (Jan Leng Tong), 5. The Oei Clan Association (Kang Ha Tong), 6. The Tan Clan Association (Eng Chuan Tong), 7. The Ong Clan Association, and 8. The Kho Clan Association [16][17][18][19]. Based on observation, the Chinese people in Padang consist of many family clans, but because of the minimum number of people there, only seven surnames have the association and meeting hall. The Chinese people in Padang founded only seven family clan associations during the colonial era. The latter, the Kho Clan Association was founded after the Reform era, and as of now, it still does not have its own meeting hall. For administrative purpose, it still uses an office belongs to one of its Board of Trustees. After the enactment of the Clan Association, they begin to form cooperation from the people with the same family name in Padang and with the same clan associations in other regions, locally and internationally. Then, the cooperation is also established in the social and cultural fields with other surname associations (the “Jie She Kongsi”) in Padang. The regular meetings between those clan associations are conducted once every three months. Since 2006, the family name organizations in Padang have cooperated in celebrating the Chinese New Year [6]. Every year the clan associations in its turn become the coordinator for the New Year celebration. They have the full support from Himpunan Bersatu Teguh (HBT,”Heng Beng Tong”) social association, “Himpunan Tjinta Teman (HTT/”Hok Tek Tong”) social foundation, The Saint Joseph Catholic and Funeral social association, the Buddha Warman Vihara, the Maitreya Vihara, the See Hin Kiong Temple, and the Padang Regional Government. For example, for the Chinese New Year 2013, it was the Tjoa-Kwa Clan Association chosen as the coordinator. The Li-Kwee Clan Association took turn in 2016.

According to my informant, the Chinese clan associations in Padang are also known as “Kongsi Kecil” because the members of these associations consist of the people with the certain family name, such as the Lie Clan, the Tan Clan, etc. In addition to the “Kongsi Kecil,” there are two social and cultural association in Padang, that is HBT/”Heng Beng Tong” and HTT/”Hok Tek Tong”, which members consist of the people with variety of family names [20]. Those two associations are known as “Kongsi Besar.” So in essence, all members of the Chinese clan associations are also the members of those two social and cultural organizations. Even though there are two social and cultural foundations in Padang, that is HBT and HTT, and eight Chinese clan associations (“Jie She Kongsi”), but there are only three associations with the “Kio,” that is the HTT, the Lie-Kwee Clan Association, and the Lim Clan Association. Just recently, the Tjoa-Kwa Clan Association is in the process of preparing the “Kio.” In the Board of Trustees structure, both the “Kongsi Besar” and “Kongsi Kecil” still uses terms of address according to the Chinese kinship terminology [12]. They address the Chief by the term “Dage” (or Toako in Hokkien) or Big Brother, Vice Chief-I (“Jige” or “Jieko” or the 2nd Brother), and Vice Chief-II (“Sage” or “Shako” or the 3rd Brother), or the Board of Trustees emeritus (“Lao Toako” for big brother emeritus), “Lao Jieko” for the ex Vice Chief-I and “Lao Shako” for the ex Vice Chief-II). Every member of the association calls one another by the term “hiati” which means “brother.” This shows how intimate the relationship in the association of that big or small organization.

3.2. The “Kio” or “Protector God” Parade
The “Kio” or “Protector God” procession is one of the many activities conducted during the Chinese New Year. The Cap Go Meh or the lampion festival is not only celebrated in Indonesia, but also in its neighboring countries, such as Malaysia and Singapore. The Cap Go Meh festival in Indonesia varies. One of those varieties is a ritual for the “Kio” parade. This procession is the ritual for past sin or mistake cleaning. The ritual “Kio” parade is one of the many festivals during the Chinese New Year,
that is the lampion festival, the Lion Dance, the Dragon Dance, etc. to show the joy of welcoming the new year and as gratitude towards all the blessings received during the past year.

“Kio” is a Chinese sedan-chair, carrying a statue of Protector God and during the “Kio” ritual, the Chinese dooly will be occupied by the Protector God of the Chinese clan association that celebrates it. Every participating “Kio” during the procession, will be carried and paraded by the member of the related Chinese clan association. There are about 8 to 12 man of the clan member who will carry the “Kio.” According to the tradition, the “Kio” parade will be brought in its turn, not simultaneously. For example, during the “Kio” procession in 2009, the “Kio” from the Lie-Kwee Clan Association appeared first with the Lion and Dragon dance. After that, they were followed by the “Kio” from Lim Clan Association and finally during the Cap Go Meh, the “Kio” from the HTT social association appeared.

The parade during the Chinese New Year also found in many places in Indonesia and its neighboring countries, such as Malaysia and Singapore. According to the observation and literature study, the parades during the Cap Go Meh appear in many varieties with additional attractions with the goal to attract tourism. In Malaysia and Singapore, the procession is known as the “Chingay” parade and managed professionally by the government [21] [22]. The “Kio” parade which similar with the one in Padang, is also found in Malaysia, especially in Johor Baru (New Johor). The “Kio” there is a parade with Chinese sedan-chair to carry Guan-Yin, that is the goddess of compassion, mercy, and kindness or other gods and related to the birthday of the gods. The parade is conducted by the old temples there so that the society gets the blessing from the gods [22].

In many parts of Indonesia, there are found other activities related to the Chinese New Year and Cap Go Meh, like in Singkawang, Jakarta and many regions of Java Island, that also perform the ritual of gods parade, combined with many other unique attractions, such as the Tatung parade in Singakawang. The Tatung is a show on the people’s invulnerability who appear in a trance and carried on the Chinese sedan-chair completed with sharp swords. The Tatung appears with Chinese gods costumes and with the Tatung from Dayak and Malay people and also the female Tatung. The Cap Go Meh in Singkawang has begun to be celebrated openly and grandly since 2001 and since 2009 the government stated it as one of the significant festivals in national tourism calendar, especially because of its uniqueness [23]. The Cap Go Meh celebration in 2017 in Cirebon was also celebrated grandly with the Chinese cultural parade using the unity and oneness theme. This year celebration showed a parade of 15 gods, that is the Guan-Yin goddess, the Hok Tek Ceng Sin god, the Tian Sang Seng Bo goddess, the Kwan Te Kun god, etc, [24][25]. The cultural parade “Gotong Toa Pekong” or “carrying the Great Ancestor” in Jakarta has been a tradition for a long time ago with the goal to save the city from disaster. Nowadays, the procession is done for the sake of safety, welfare, and preservation for the Chinese culture and becomes a crucial moment to promote the Old City region in Jakarta for tourism [25]. Bogor also celebrates the Cap Go Meh grandly. The Cap Go Meh in 2015 was conducted using a national unity culture theme. During that festival, there were many also art attractions from many areas surrounding Bogor. There was also the parade for the gods in Chinese tradition to celebrate the Cap Go Meh [26].

The “Kio” parade in Padang had also become a tradition since a very long time ago, and it was banned (temporarily) after the G-30S PKI. The Cap Go Meh as the closing ceremony of the Chinese New Year in 2008 (or 2559 related to the Confucius birthday) was conducted grandly because on that year; the tradition to carry the “Kio” was again conducted after the banning of around 30 years and almost forgotten [27].

3.3. The preparation stages for the “Kio” Parade
According to the tradition, there are phases needed to prepare before conducting the “Kio” parade. Stage-1 is to get permission from the Protector Gods for their time to attend the procession. The board of the clan association and its Chief (“Toako”) have the praying ceremony ritual using the incense stick (“hio”) with the help of “pwa pwee.” Pwa pwee is a pair of seashell like, but now formed by wood and is used to predict and communicate with the other world to get the “Yes”,

...
It is during the closing of the Chinese New Year celebration, that is the Cap Go Meh, we will see the "Kio" parade. It is during the Cap Go Meh, some rituals have been conducted a week before, including the cleaning up of the equipment to be used. The cleaning of "Kio" is the prerequisite of the parade. The member of the clan association in-charge to clean and decorate the "Kio" must be in the state of purity. During his duty, he cannot eat meat ("ciak cay"). Then the location to clean and decorate the "Kio" should be sacred. On the day of the parade, the activity in the association building is started by the praying ritual by tossing the "pwa pwee" by the Chief using the incense sticks (the "hio") followed by the boards and other members that are in-charge on that special day. After that every gods’ statues and "hio" (the place to put the incense sticks) are brought down to the basement and arranged inside the "Kio" followed by the sound of traditional Chinese drum. The gods’ statues are bound with red ribbon inside the "Kio" so that it won’t fall down during the parade due to the strong shake along the journey. Every "Kio" parade will start by visiting a temple to give respect and then proceeding by visiting the other clan associations and "kongsi besar" to say hello. The temple and other associations’ boards would welcome the "Kio" guest and both sides would pay respect one another.

The Lim association’ Protector God is the goddess Thian Sang Sing Bo or well known as Ma Co Po. This goddess is also famous as the sea goddess, who protect the sailors or fishermen, or the protector for the Chinese in the southern region and immigrant in South-East Asia. The Protector God for the Lie-Kwee clan association is the god Li Cheng with his two sons, that is Bok Cia and Lo Cia and the god Kwee Seng Ong, while the god for the HTT association is Hok Tek Ceng Sin or familiar as the earth god [12] [24].

3.4. Packaging the tradition in the era of globalization

It is during the closing of the Chinese New Year celebration, that is the Cap Go Meh, we will see the “Kio” parade. The ceremony formally began at 4 pm, started by the Lion Dance, the Dragon Dance attractions and with the “Kio” parade as the top attraction. The “Kio” parade will circle the Pondok region, from the Kelenteng Street, to Batang Arau, Pulau Karam, Pondok and Niaga Street. The simultaneous procession of the “Kio” took place the very first time in Padang by the mutual consensus [29] [30]. Of course, this would happen after the affirmation from the Protector Gods through the “pwa pwee” ceremony by each of the association, according to my informant.

One of the key roles of the clan associations is to maintain the tradition and to adjust itself accordingly to be ready to face the globalization to survive. The “Kio” parade is one of the traditions that almost forgotten and now re-enacted since the Cap Go Meh in the year 2008 after being banned for around 30 years due to the government rule that prohibited every activity related to the Chinese. Every stage to prepare the “Kio” parade is still performed using the old tradition [27] [31]. But there are some changes in the meaning of the Cap Go Meh ceremony not only locally but also internationally. Like in Singapore, the Cap Go Meh ceremony is followed by the “Chingay” parade since the year 2000 to be a part of the tourism promotional campaign to face the era of globalization [21]. In Malaysia, especially in Johor Baru, the “Chingay” procession has become an old tradition since 140 years ago, and becomes one of the many great celebrations in that country [22]. The Cap Go Meh in Indonesia such as in Singkawang, Bogor, Jakarta, Cirebon, etc. have also become the cultural parades that involve the local attractions from many local cultures performed to participate in tourism promotional campaign and have been part of the national tourism calendar [23] [26] [32]. The clan associations in Padang as the association in-charge for the Cap Go Meh and the “Kio” parade internally have also changed while still trying to maintain the tradition in the era of globalization [34][35][36]. There are many changes in the surname associations, among others is the acceptance of female as a member. For example, the Tan clan association has women members in female Tan surname association (“Ko So Ci Mei Hwee”) [6].

Appadurai [32] states his globalization view from the cultural insight. He sees the world as a system which interacts, interaction from a new arrangement and intensity. The key problem in the
global interactions is the culture shock between cultural homogenization and heterogenization. The common argument appears is that the homogenization which is the link to the Americanization or commodity. To understand the global culture, Appadurai suggests five crucial dimensions to see and understand the global culture in-depth. Those five dimensions are “ethnoscape,” “technoscape,” “financescape,” “mediascape,” and “ideoscape.” “Ethnoscape” is a people landscape who contribute to the friction or changes to the world, for example, the tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, and diaspora. They are the important features that influence a nation’s politics to a certain degree. “Technoscape,” a global technology configuration that moves across the national boundaries. For example, exporting workers to other countries. “Financescape,” capital movement from a region and country. “Mediascape,” on production and information distribution. The use of newspaper, magazine, television, film production and internet to be made available to many people around the world. Ideoscape, related to the ideology of the countries to maintain or to get power. These scapes become that foundation to understand how the globalization takes place. The grouping into different scapes shows that there are different movement and flow, where many cultural aspects move beyond the national boundaries. The consequence of this flow may change the cultural values, and community inheritance in global scope as the globalization progresses.

With the progress of globalization like what has been discussed by Appadurai, there are many changes in the old cultural values in the role and function of the clan association [34][35][36]. On the other hand, like what was discussed by Liu [14] and Chan [15], besides the changes of cultural values, there are still old values that are maintained in the clan associations to perform their activities. Liu [14] and Chan [15] concludes that in the era of globalization, the Chinese voluntary organizations, including the clan associations, as if inside two worlds, that is the traditional and modern world.

4. Conclusion

The on-site observation shows that after the reformation era, the Chinese clan associations or the surname “kongsi” in Padang reenact many activities related to the Chinese traditions like the Chinese New Year, the Cap Go Meh, etc. In this research, I will discuss how the clan associations role reenacts the almost forgotten traditions for about 30 years, that is the “Kio” parade during the Cap Go Meh. With those associations’ willingness to cooperate, the “Kio” parade ritual came alive in 2008. At the 2016 “Cap Go Meh”, the clan associations made a commitment with the approval of their Protector Gods through the “pwa pwee” ritual, to do the “kio” parade on the same day.

Just like the Cap Go Meh festival in many places in Indonesia and also in Singapore and Malaysia, nowadays especially in the era of globalization, there are many changes to the meaning and tradition of the celebration. The celebration now not only belongs to the Chinese culture but it also has developed to belong to the public, and perform for the national tourism. The “Kio” parade in Padang describes one of the roles of the clan associations in managing and packaging the tradition in the era of globalization.

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