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THE DUTCH IN THE EAST INDIES AND THEIR WORK
IN THE XXTH CENTURY

讨论集

A SYMPOSIUM EDITED BY

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EAST-INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE

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*"Behold and consider what a good courage may accomplish!...
Great things can be done in the Indies".*

Jan Pietersz. Coen

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PREFACE

Mercantile considerations prompted the Dutch, three and a half centuries ago, to follow in the wake of the Portuguese and seek the sea route to the Indies.

Mercantile considerations again decided the form of the risky enterprise: local trading companies at first, soon to be replaced by the one United East Indian Company, enjoying a monopolistic charter granted by the States General of the United Provinces, in the same way as had been done by the Portuguese and British for their companies.

Mercantile considerations once more decided the attitude of the East Indian Company toward the indigenous population of the archipelago: it seemed sufficient to establish safe trading factories, and for the rest the less contact with the population the better. But sure enough, the nation that showed itself sufficiently powerful with armed force to oust other white competitors, repeatedly was sued for help in the mutual quarrels of the native Princes, and so gradually it established its authority, at first chiefly on Java, later also on the Outer Islands.

The charter granted to the East Indian Company secured for it the monopoly of trade. That monopoly made it strong, but it also was the cause of its decline and fall. By the end of the 18th century the State had no choice but to take over the entire concern with all its goods and chattels. From that time on interference with the internal affairs of the Indian peoples went ever further, though the principle of leaving the native population as much as possible under its own chiefs was always respected. The mutual relationship was dominated by the conception that colonies existed for the benefit of the home-country. There was one purse and whatever was saved out there was spent at home. Small wonder then that the temptation was strong to save as much as possible out there. For centuries this point of view was quite frankly admitted everywhere in the world. Only very slowly did another conception arise. The western powers began to seek a moral justification for the possession of colonies. They averred that it consisted in holding themselves responsible for the development of the peoples living under their rule.

With this changed view the relationship between the Indies and the Netherlands also has been completely altered. At the turn of the century this moral vocation toward the population as a new guiding principle in colonial policy was recognised officially in a Speech from the Throne by Her Majesty the Queen. At first the accomplishment of that task was sought in action for the benefit of the population, but gradually it was realised that this method could not yield good results. Then came the slogans: "Cooperation with the population", "Education for self-activity", "Opening up for the world market of all treasures that modern technique can wrest from the Indian soil with the cooperation of all the forces of all the population groups."

Meanwhile the unparalleled worldwide depression made international tendencies felt, while on the other hand common interests linked the different social groups in the Indies closer together.

What point in this development had been reached when the fury of war was unleashed on this land of peace and quiet is told in this book. It is not written in the spirit of self-glorification. On the contrary, no attempt is made to gloss over the fact that errors have been committed and our policy often was no more than a groping in the dark. But, in fulfillment of the prophetic words written by the Governor-General Jan Pietersz. Coen in 1628: "Great things can be done in the Indies", the authors of this book believe that "great things", indeed, have been done. They admit at the same time that in many respects Coen's words still retain their value as a stimulant and that in some cases a beginning toward their realisation has scarcely been made.

As indicated by the subtitle the full accent lies on the Dutch East Indies in the 20th century, that is to say on the work of the present generation. In view of the limited scope no attempt was made to be complete. A choice had to be made from a multitude of subjects and each of these could only be treated cursorily so as to give some understanding of the problems current in the richly varied life of the Dutch East Indies. A further abridgment was necessary in this English edition, some chapters being omitted altogether.

The story which this book tells closes on May 10th 1940, the fatal date on which the enemy, without even a declaration of war, attacked Holland with overwhelming force. At that moment contact with the Indies was interrupted. Nevertheless the book expresses the confidence that in future more "great things" will be done in the Indies and that they will be done by the Dutch. May the Mission Interrupted become a Mission Fulfilled!

W. H. VAN HELSDINGEN

NOTE BY THE ENGLISH EDITOR

In preparing this English version of a book about the Dutch East Indies originally written for the Dutch public, a severe abridgment was necessary. Of the 38 original authors, each of whom was fully competent in his own field, the contributions of only 26 could be selected for translation. Moreover, the first chapter was specially written for this edition by a new contributor and the 14th was entirely recast by one of the two original authors.

Though faithfully rendering the meaning, this translation nowhere slavishly followed the text, but freely condensed or revised wherever it seemed desirable. Since conditions did not permit to secure the authors' approval for these alterations, I alone am responsible for the English text of their contributions. I should add that all through the work of translation, — undertaken under the strange circumstances of wartime when my normal scholastic activities were suspended, — I was greatly assisted by my wife, without whose aid, indeed, it could never have been accomplished. Any barbarisms that remain are my own.

J. J. L. DUYVENDAK

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CHAPTER I

Land and people

"...The magnificent empire of Insulinde encircling the equator like a girdle of emeralds", thus runs the immortal phrase of a Dutch poet, as true as it is beautiful. What a girdle indeed! If one could lift it and fit it in the same shape across the face of Europe, the most western tip pinned down on the westcoast of Ireland, the eastern border of Dutch New-Guinea would be located east of the Crimea, the most northern point somewhere in the Baltic between Germany and Sweden, the most southern point in Albania. In other words: the East Indian Archipelago covers one sixth part of the circumference of the globe and the Netherlands form the largest equatorial power in the world!

To be sure, the major part of this section of the globe consists of water, but nevertheless the islands, composing the "girdle", cover considerable areas. There are five major ones: Sumatra, as large as Germany (in 1937), Java, somewhat smaller than England, somewhat larger than Greece and a good deal larger than Cuba, Borneo, the Dutch part of which nearly equals France, Celebes, about one and a half times the size of Java, and New-Guinea, the Dutch western half of which is just as big as the Republic of Paraguay, much larger therefore than Poland or Finland, Norway or Italy. Then come a dozen islands varying in size between one seventh to one half of the area of the Netherlands. Among them are important ones such as the tin-islands Banka and Billiton and beautiful Bali, "the last paradise on earth". Lesser islands may be counted by the score, small ones by the hundred and the number of minute islands, reefs and rocks runs into tens or hundreds of thousands.

The lay-out of this region is most curious. If the islands form a bridge between Asia and Australia, the seas and straits open up numerous passages

between the Pacific and the Indian Ocean. The elongated southern peninsula of Further India enters like a wedge into the archipelago with which in former geological periods it no doubt was joined. The depth of the seas between this peninsula, Cochin-China, Sumatra, Java and Borneo, that is to say the South-China Sea, the Java Sea and the Straits of Malacca in only a few places is a little more than 100 meters. This gigantic "Sunda plateau" is as it were a partial subterranean continuation of Asia. New-Guinea and the Aru Islands with Australia are situated on a similar plateau; the seas of this "Sahul plateau", the Arafura Sea and the Gulf of Carpentaria also reach a depth of more than 100 m. at a few places only. The situation is quite different in the relatively narrow region between these two plateaux. There, around grotesquely shaped islands one finds very deep water: the Straits of Makassar between Borneo and Celebes reaches a depth of 3000 m., the Sea of Celebes to the north of that island reaches 5500 m., the Sea of Flores in the south 5140 m. The small Sea of Sawu in the Archipelago of Timor has depths above 3000 m., the Sea of the Moluccas between Celebes and Halmahera of 4800 m., the small Sea of Seran (Ceram), south of that island, reaches 5750 m., and the Sea of Banda reaches the greatest depth in the Archipelago, viz. 7440 m. South-west of Sumatra and south of Java the borders of the Sunda plateau are also soon reached. The islands parallel to Sumatra are separated from the main island by depths of 600 to 2000 m.

In many respects the archipelago is the transition zone between Asia and Australia, the influence of the former continent reaching in general further than that of the latter, as is shown especially by the fauna and flora. To mention only the former, on the large islands in the west, though no longer everywhere, one finds numerous mammals also known on the neighbouring continent: tigers, elephants, rhinoceroses, many species of monkeys, deer, wild cattle, wild goats. New-Guinea and the other islands in the east on the other hand have far fewer and quite different mammals, lacking entirely in the west, but characteristic for Australia, such as opossums and duckbills. Common to both groups are only pigs, and some species of rodents and bats. The interjacent islands form a typical transition zone: tigers, elephants and rhinoceroses are lacking, more and more western mammals disappear as one goes further east, while forms of the Australian fauna begin to occur. On these islands one finds in the centre a remarkable number of mammals

not found elsewhere, as on Celebes such curious animals as the hogdeer (*Babirusa Alfurus*) and the dwarf buffalo (*Anoa depressicornis*). For other animals than mammals similar phenomena occur.

A glance at a map of South-eastern Asia and Australia shows at once the importance of the Archipelago with relation to traffic. Very old centres of civilisation such as India proper and China being separated on land by extremely difficult belts of mountains or deserts, traffic naturally chose the waterway leading through the Straits of Malacca round the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula, that is to say by or through the Archipelago. Centuries or milleniums before the beginning of this extremely important movement of navigation and commerce with all that it entailed for the cultural and social development, migrations took place in a direction vertical to this traffic. In one wave after another the ancestors of the present Indonesian population poured into the Archipelago. Not everywhere did they expel entirely the older inhabitants. On the large islands between the sleek-headed, lightbrown Indonesians are found remnants of other races, among which, as one goes east, more and more fuzzy-haired people appear who, on New-Guinea, as Papuans form the main stock of the population. With the exception of these numerically unimportant groups the entire population is descended from people whose land of origin lay near the point where China, Thibet, Nearer and Further India meet. From there they descended the large rivers of Further India in order to reach the islands of the Archipelago by sea. In anthropological respect therefore this also forms a transition zone, though the Asiatic element conquered here the Australian one to an even greater extent than in other fields: here the former was the giver, the latter the recipient.

The most important waves of newcomers were that of the people of the Stonecutters, Proto-Malays or Proto-Indonesians that must have arrived between 1500—1000 B.C. and that of the Coastal Malays, coming later. To the first belong chiefly the tribes now living in the mountains; the latter are settled at present in the lowlands near the coast. Many of them still are excellent sailors; the descendants of the Proto-Malays however generally hate the sea and everything connected with it. This may be a result of the treatment they received on the part of the Coastal Malays.

If we turn our thoughts to later periods, centuries after the beginning of traffic through the Straits of Malacca between China and India proper, we

find navigation carrying the valuable products of the Archipelago, chiefly spice, to the West and bringing fertilising cultural influences in return.

The first mention of the Archipelago in European writings is probably in the *Periplus tēs Erythras Thalassēs*, a Greek treatise of the first century A.D. In any case it is certain that the famous geographer Ptolemy in the second half of the second century A.D. mentions products of Sumatra with the region of origin. Navigation also carried to these islands Hinduism and Buddhism and later Islam.

All these religions were introduced by inhabitants of India, coming as traders but, because of their higher level of civilisation, also gaining great influence as priests and even establishing dynasties. Hindu states were founded especially on Java and Sumatra and even today in the Javanese aristocracy their descent from Aryan ancestors is noticeable. Islam was introduced from the fourteenth century on by people from North-west India, the Gujerats, also arriving in the Archipelago as traders. The Arabs proper came much later. Though no Gujerat dynasties have been founded some Arab ones have. The further expansion of Islam however was due to the Indonesians themselves. The fact that the acceptance of a world religion made him who professed it, instead of a "despised heathen" the equal of millions of co-religionists, was a powerful factor in the spread of Islam that gradually replaced Hinduism nearly everywhere and pushed heathenism back to remote corners. Against all these gifts from Asia, Australia had nothing to offer. It was the Light from the West that dominated.

At the beginning of the 16th century the Europeans appeared, whose arrival meant a revolution for the Southern-Asiatic world. First it was the Portuguese who began to sail the old route through the Straits of Malacca, then people from North-western Europe, chiefly the Dutch, who transferred the traffic to the Sunda Straits between Java and Sumatra. They kept to this even after Sir Stamford Raffles had founded the great emporium of Singapore, until the opening of the Suez Canal gave the victory to the Straits of Malacca. In the 19th century ships in ever greater numbers pressed through those straits on their way to Eastern Asia. But in that same century traffic with other regions also developed; not only the communications between the islands became more frequent, but those with Australia began, where in the last century and a half a white population had settled. If

one sails from Australia to Eastern Asia there is the necessity, if one goes to Southern Asia at least, the possibility of passing through the Archipelago. On the north-eastern side, towards the Pacific, it is very open. The islands lying there are however too unimportant to attract much navigation. There was a certain amount of traffic with the westcoast of America that will doubtless increase considerably in the future. Finally the twenties of this century developed air-traffic in which the Archipelago soon became an important junction, especially for the lines from the west and the north to Australia.

Girdle of emeralds, the poet said. Emerald green is indeed the dominating colour of all the islands, for the Archipelago has an equatorial climate, knowing neither the aridity nor the scorching heat nor the cold nights of deserts. The climate is very even; the maximum temperature of 35° registered at Batavia is only one degree higher than the highest temperature registered in Holland. This is low as compared to temperatures of 52° occurring in the Sahara, the Persian desert or in Australia. The minimum temperature at Batavia was 18° . The average annual temperature there is very constant, being $26,2^{\circ}$ and neither the average of the warmest nor that of the coolest month varies more than one degree from this temperature. The difference of temperature between day and night is also slight. Yet this temperature, though actually not very high, is hard to bear because of the high degree of humidity, not less than 83 % at Batavia. It is a real hothouse atmosphere. For this reason and also on account of the regularity of the climate the skin is extremely sensitive to small differences of temperature. Especially in the rainy season, just before the showers pour down in the afternoon, on days when there is no refreshing sea-breeze, one has the impression of an intense heat. In the absence of the rain, the hothouse atmosphere at night is very disagreeable. No wonder therefore that Europeans in a position to do so like to spend their weekends in the hills in order to "get a cold nose". For there it is not only much cooler but the variations between day and night temperatures are also much greater. This outweighs the disadvantage that the degree of humidity is even greater than in the plains.

As regular as the temperature are the winds. There are two winds which, more than the difference in temperature, divide the year into seasons, viz. the west and east monsoon, both not strong but very constant winds. The

average velocity is very small; at Batavia for instance it is less than one meter per second, while in Western Europe it is 5,5 m. The nights are nearly always perfectly calm. The quietness of the tropical night, only disturbed by the whirr of innumerable insects, always deeply impresses the European. Tropical night storms are rare, occurring almost without exception only locally in the hills. The difference between the two monsoon winds is, that the west monsoon, blowing from the Asiatic mountains across wide seas, brings rain, in contrast with the east monsoon originating in arid Australia. The former therefore, prevailing from the end of November to May, causes the rainy season, the latter the dry season. The turn of the monsoons between these two periods is characterised by very oppressive heat and violent thunderstorms which indeed are not rare throughout the year. There are considerable local variations in the rainfall. In the hills it increases rapidly: Buitenzorg, at an altitude of 250 m. and only 60 km. from Batavia, shows an annual average of 4614 mm. against Batavia 1999 mm. The rainfall decreases the further one goes south-east. Though in the west it is possible to distinguish between a wet and dry season, this does not mean that in the latter there is no rainfall at all. This is different in East-Java and the Lesser Sunda Islands. The nearer one approaches Australia, the more one feels the influence of the dry east monsoon. In the furthest south-east for months there may be no rainfall at all. At Kupang on Timor for example in the dry season from May to November there was only 50 mm. downfall, against 772 mm. at Batavia and 1934 at Buitenzorg.

In a tropical downpour the volume of water is enormous; at Buitenzorg 2,5 cm. per minute were measured. Such a shower however never lasts long; even in the rainy season there are many hours of sunshine.

The region dominated by Asiatic climatic influences is also much greater than that where Australian influences prevail. In this respect the Spice-islands and New-Guinea agree with the west; it is only the south-east that suffers from the heat and dryness of Australia.

In far and away the largest part of the Archipelago the rainfall is so abundant that in the landscape unchanged by the hand of man endless tropical forests are predominant. Traversing the plains of East Sumatra, Borneo or New-Guinea in an aeroplane, for hours on end one passes over limitless green masses, from the air looking for all the world not so much

like emeralds but, less poetically, like kale. The monotony of this landscape is only broken by the rivers. Naturally they are not very long, but owing to the abundant tropical rainfall they carry large quantities of water in spite of the rapid evaporation. They are therefore very wide and clearly discernible from the air, also because their banks with their fields and villages clearly betray the traces of human labour.

On approaching an untouched territory like East-Sumatra from the sea, one first beholds the very remarkable zone of coastal forests, the home of mangroves and rhizophores, whose strange appearance is caused by the air-roots clinging to the muddy soil. Such a region of swampy mud is not passable; the most one can do is to penetrate into the numerous creeks on flatbottomed barges. On shore one enters into the tropical virginal forest, dank and dark, not, as tenderfoots may think, full of palmtrees, but filled with a very great variety of evergreen foliage trees. The forest is far less homogeneous than the European forest. It is dominated by gigantic trees such as the various species of ficus, of which on Java alone 60 to 70 species are known, reaching a height of 60 m., under which a multitude of smaller trees are found, in their turn rising above almost impenetrable undergrowth, the whole being covered and entwined by various kinds of ratan, parasites etc. A sojourn in this dark domain where the sunlight practically never enters is far from agreeable. A protracted stay brings on a melancholy mood. Rarely is the eye struck by flowers, but if at all, it may be by a gigantic tree whose crown has become one flaming red bouquet or by gorgeous orchids. Of the animal world, apart from innumerable insects, one is chiefly aware of the bloodsucker whose presence is detestable indeed. From time to time one hears the cry of monkeys among whom there are orang-utans and gibbons, or the croaking of the hornbill or other birds. The enchanting warble of our singing birds is entirely absent. Numerous tracks only betray the presence of far more mammals than one suspects at first.

In the forest mountains tree ferns and numerous epiphytes, especially foliaceous mosses and lichens are characteristic. Here and there, chiefly in the south-east of the Archipelago, in the mountains there are fairly homogeneous forests of casuary trees resembling fir trees; the soil underneath these trees is not covered by undergrowth. On Java there are teak forests carefully kept in good shape because of the valuable timber; in the dry

season they lose their foliage. A Westerner's attention is also particularly arrested by fairly homogeneous forests of bamboos, a gigantic grass species.

Only in the extreme south-east of the Archipelago it is no longer forests that are predominant in the natural landscape, but savannahs with graceful acacia trees or even small grass steppes. Yet even here it is not dry enough to prevent green being the dominant colour during the larger part of the year. In the middle of the Australian winter the south-east wind passing over the mountains of the Lesser Sunda Islands is so dry that in certain regions on the northern slopes the cactus seems to be the principal vegetation. But no sooner do the rains come with the west monsoon than the green carpet of vegetation recovers and the wealth of flowers is more striking here than elsewhere. It is then seen that the island of Flores is rightly so named.

An examination of the structure of the islands shows everywhere a skeleton of mountain chains, on Java largely dating from the Tertiary Period. Elsewhere there is also much old slate and limestone. As is the case everywhere else in the world the limestone formations are very freakish and fantastic, now projecting in sharp corners, now rounded off in soft curves with caves and rivers disappearing underground, and sometimes with globe-shaped hills to which a mountainous region in southern central Java owes the name of Gunung Sèwu "The Thousand Mountains". Most limestone mountains are raised coral reefs. Living coral-reefs near the coasts also occur in several places especially as shoal-reefs and beach-reefs. In the bays of the Spice-islands the latter form particularly fine "sea-gardens", marvellous in their wealth of colours and fauna.

A strong contrast to these "Neptunic" forms is presented by the volcanic rock. Volcanoes are very numerous. They occur in many forms, from pure cones to completely shattered mountain-wrecks. Some craters have a diameter of only a few dozen meters; others, as for example that of the Tengger in East Java with a diameter of 17 km, are large enough to contain entire plantations. Their degree of activity also varies greatly; some of them have not been known to be active in historical times, others have violent eruptions at long intervals, others again are always active, their top being crowned by a corona of smoke; some, finally, are in the solfatar or fumarol stage. In general the volcanoes are situated in long rows, beginning in western Further India and running via the Andaman and Nicobar Islands through the longitu-