

# Exhibition traces German-Indonesian friendship



Cipta Loka Caraka

Castle of Batavia by Johann Wolfgang Heydt

JAKARTA (JP): Indonesians owe much to the famous German ethnologist and medical doctor Adolf Bastian (1826-1905), who introduced the name Indonesia to the rest of the world through his extensive research on the archipelago in the 19th century.

Bastian's five-volume work titled *Indonesia or the Islands of the Malay Archipelago* spread the name Indonesia to the outside world. Eventually, Indonesia became the official name of the nation, then known alternatively as East India, Insulinde and Nusantara.

Many other Germans made great contributions in boosting Indonesia and Germany's relationship in the fields of art, literature, science, technology and business.

But a lot of Indonesians and Germans are of the opinion that the relationship between the two nations only began a few years ago, really hitting its stride during the presidency of German-educated B.J. Habibie

between 1998 and 1999.

As a matter of fact, the relationship started in 1506 when a representative of the famous Augsburg trading house Welser, Balthasar, Sprenger undertook a journey to India and afterward wrote a book in which the Malakka and the Banda islands were for the first time mentioned in the German language in a 1509 book titled *Merfahrt* (Journey Across the Sea).

The centuries-old relationship between the two countries is traced in a special exhibition titled *Spuren einer Freundschaft-Deutsch-Indonesische* (Tracing the Friendship between Germany and Indonesia) at the National Archives Building on Jl. Gajah Mada, Central Jakarta. The exhibition runs from Feb. 16 to the end of the month.

The exhibit, scheduled to be officially opened by Vice President Megawati Soekarnoputri on Feb. 15, aims to trace the German-Indonesian relationship from its beginnings up through the 19th and early 20th century.

This is achieved thanks to the meticulous efforts of Ibu Tamalia Alisyahbana, head of the National Archives, and German Ambassador to Indonesia Dr. Heinrich Seeman, whose work made this exhibition possible.

The idea for the event was put forward by the ambassador, who was eager to explore the history of the German-Indonesian relationship.

Dr. Seeman, a law school graduate, is well-known as the author of books on Nepal, Japan and Indonesia. His first book on Indonesia is titled *From Goethe to Emil Nolde - Indonesia's Place in German Literature, Science and Art*.

The exhibition will put on display numerous stuffs that serve as testament to the historically tight bond between the two countries.

## Reports

One of the first items is an illustration of the Indonesian town of Banten, which was



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### Franz Wilhelm Junghuhn

printed in 1597 by Georg Keller of Frankfurt.

The first records of Indonesia by outsiders were written by German scholars, soldiers and travelers visiting the archipelago from the 16th to the 19th centuries. Their reports were made in the forms of letters, documents, cartography, maps and engravings.

The exhibition will also show the crucial contributions made to Indonesia by German scientists such as Eberhard Rumphuis and Friedrich von Wurmb, whose collections of art and books constitute the basis of today's National Museum and National Library collections.

Another important scientist was Caspar Georg Karl Reinwardt, who founded the Botanical Park in Bogor, one of the most extensive botanical parks in the world. His successors, Karl Ludwig von Blume and Justus K. Habkarl, followed his lead and made similar contributions to the country.

Phillipp Franz von Siebold

also played a significant role. Siebold was a specialist on Japan who came to Java at the request of the Dutch during the 1820s and introduced tea plantations to the island.

Siebold was also responsible for a half-forgotten, though important episode in the history of Indonesian art. He ordered a Dresden photographer to document the famous Borobudur Temple in Central Java in 1843. He also documented the art collection of the Batavian Society for Arts and Science in 1845.

The most prominent person appearing in the exhibition, however, is Franz Wilhelm Junghuhn (1809-1864), the first planter of the quinine plantations on Java. Junghuhn also published a number of seminal books on Java and Sumatra, including *Topographic and Scientific Voyages through Java, Batak Country in Sumatra*. These books were vital in telling the outside world about Indonesia and its islands.

There were also several

famous names from German literature who were in one way or another linked with Indonesia.

These names include Friedrich Schiller, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who was made an honorary member of the Batavia Society for Arts and Science in 1827, Adalbert Chamisso, Heinrich von Kleist and Theodor Fontane.

In the field of art, the father of modern Indonesian painting, Raden Saleh Sjarif Bustaman, in the 19th century and Walter Spies in the 20th century are the two most important figures linking Indonesian and German art.

Raden Saleh lived in Dresden and Gotha for many years, and German painter Walter Spies influenced modern Balinese painting, sculptor, music and dance.

The German influence on architecture in Indonesia is also vivid. The residence of Duke Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach (1792-1862) is one such example. The residence, located on Jl. Pejambon (then known as Duke's Lane) in Central Jakarta, is now called Gedung Pancasila and belongs to the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Toko Merah in Central Jakarta, now the office of state-owned PT Dharma Niaga, was

the residence of German-born Dutch governor General Baron von Imhoff (1705-1751).

Another stunning example of German influence on local architecture is former painter Raden Saleh's mansion, now Cikini Hospital in Central Jakarta. Few people know that the building was modeled after the German castle Callenberg.

Many of the painter's works in German museums and private collections were influenced by the years in which Raden Saleh lived and worked in Germany. His architectural heritage in Germany is a small mosque in the vineyards above the valley of Muglitz near Maxen.

The exhibition also looks at early activities in the field of

industry and trade. To assume that German economic relations with the archipelago began only after World War II would neglect the roots which go far deeper than that.

Siemens, just to mention one name, started its activities in Indonesia as far back as 1855, and Mercedes delivered its first car to Java in 1896. The original railroad laid down by Krupp dates back to 1876 and was discovered by a German engineer during repair work in Semarang, Central Java.

There are many other items and documentations displayed at the exhibition. Visiting this exhibit, one can feel the historically close ties between Germany and Indonesia. (raw)

# ART AGENDA



Balai Budaya

*Nuansa Flora di Bukit Kapur*, (Floral Nuance on a Limestone Hill), by Sutaji displayed at Balai Budaya in Jakarta from March 6 through March 17.

**Photo Exhibition:** *Peneliti & Fotografer* (Researchers & Photographers), at the French Cultural Center (CCF) on Jl. Wijaya I/48, South Jakarta; Phone 720-8133; from March 9 to March 31.

This exhibition puts on display part of the collection of IRD Indigo Base. This Paris-based organization, established in March 1995, has collected 10,000 photographs of various subjects, particularly the relationship between humans and the environment in developing countries.

IRD Indigo Base has developed into one of the world's most comprehensive data banks for photos and docu-

ments which can be used by people in diverse disciplines for study and research.

The exhibition will display 100 selected photographs portraying human and environmental conditions in countries in Asia, Oceania, Latin America and Africa.

**Indonesia-Japan Painting Exhibition:** *Dialogue* at the Japan Cultural Center, Japan Foundation, Summitmas I Building, second floor, Jl. Jend. Sudirman Kav. 61-62, South Jakarta; Phone (021) 520-1266; from March 15 to March 25.

This joint exhibition features a number of well-known Indonesian and Japanese

artists, including Indonesia's Rudolf G. Usman, Elisha, Sulebar M. Soekarman and Nunung WS, and Japan's Kohzo Matsuda, Tetsuo Ohnari, Haruyo Nakanishi and Kazuyuki Uno.

The Indonesian artists featured in this exhibition displayed their works in 1997 at an exhibition titled *Asia Wind Now* in Tokyo, Japan.

During their stay in Japan, they established a relationship with a number of Japanese artists. Their friendship resulted in *Dialogue*, which aims at building communications between the two countries and their cultures. (raw)