

value for researchers of the economic, political, religious and social history of ancient Indonesia. The book, I am sure, will also become a basic text for the teaching of ancient Indonesian and Southeast Asian history.

Djoko Soekiman, *Kebudayaan Indis; Dari zaman Kompeni sampai Revolusi*. Depok: Komunitas Bambu, 2011, 185 pp. ISBN 979-3731-974. Price: IDR 65,000 (soft cover).



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The Nieuwsblad van het Noorden (9-5-1957) stated that the term *Indisch* (Indies) refers to people who originate from the Dutch East Indies. Then they came back to the Netherlands to spend time for vacation or stay there permanently. In the Dutch East Indies the terms *Indis* was not dependent and used with other words, such as *Indische ambtenaren* (Indies officials) or in the abbreviation of the VOC (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie) – The

Dutch East Indies Company. *Indisch* referred to everything that related to the Dutch East Indies and it did not refer to people of mixed blood (natives and European/Dutch). The terms that were often used were *totok* (full blooded) and *Indo* (Indo-European), *blijvers* (stayers) and *trekkers* (sojourners).

Van der Kroef (1953) states that *Indos* belonged to the ranks of the paupers, who lived on the edge of the Indonesian *kampong* (village or native quarter). The *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indië* (1919) already referred the *Indo* to “the dangerous pauper element” or to “crude and rough [*Indo*] paupers, who are the scourge of the *kampong*” (Gouda 1995: 172).

Meanwhile the term *Indis* or be *Indis* was known in the Dutch East Indies but used derogatory (Bastiaans 1970: 86). The term *Indis* then has a neutral meaning after “the struggle” in the 1960’s and 1970’s among the Dutch society in the Netherlands. According to Bambang Purwanto (2004), the term *Indis* was known among Indonesian academic historian after Soekiman used it in 1996.

The word *Indis* originates from *Nederlandsch Indië* or the Dutch Indies. This name was used to differentiate it from the other Dutch colony called *Nederlandsch West Indië* (Dutch West Indies), which included Suriname and the Dutch Antilles (p. 4).

The first edition of this book was published in January 2000 by the

Yayasan Bentang Budaya, Yogyakarta under the title *Kebudayaan Indis dan gaya hidup masyarakat pendukungnya di Jawa, abad XVIII–medio abad XX* based on Soekiman's doctoral dissertation which he defended in 1996 at the Gadjah Mada University.

This book describes the lifestyle of a society called the Indies in the eighteenth century until the mid-twentieth century in Java. Soekiman charted at least three different forms of cultural manifestations of the Indies, namely their cultural system, their activities, and in the form of objects (artefacts).

By using Adolph S. Tomars' concept from *Class systems and the arts* (1964), Soekiman uses a decidedly sociological approach to explain that the Indies community created an Indies culture (p. 8). Meanwhile, Soekiman uses Clyd[e] Kluckhohn (1953) seven elements universal to cultural categories, such as religious systems and religious ceremonies, the social systems and organisation, the system of knowledge, language, art, the system of livelihood, the system of technology and equipment, as an importance reference to understand Indies culture.

The book consists of six chapters. The first chapter, "Awal kehadiran orang Belanda" (The early presence of the Dutch) deals with the arrival of the Dutch in the Archipelago in the sixteenth century. They (VOC) built *pakhuizen* (warehouses) in Bantam (Banten), Jepara (Central Java), Jayakarta (Jakarta) to store spices, and their prime commodity. Subsequently, they built bastions and one of them was in Batavia (p. 1).

In the second chapter, entitled "Masyarakat pendukung kebudayaan Indis" (The Indies culture supporting community), we find examples of Kluckhohn's seven universal categories of culture. Linguistically, we find *petjoek*, a creole language that originated from the *Indo*. It contains influences from Dutch, Javanese, and Betawi (p. 23). Concerning the system of technology and equipment, we find the typical Indies house (p. 29), furniture, clothing, kitchen appliances, and foods (pp. 30-32).

The lifestyle of the Indies' culture supported the community of VOC officials, Netherlands Indies government officials, private company officials and their descendants and is presented in the third chapter "Gaya hidup masyarakat Indis" (The lifestyle of the Indies). Soekiman uses both written and visual sources, such as travelers, scientists, and official' accounts, Dutch Indies literature (*Indische belletries*), sketches, and paintings to trace the lifestyle of the Indies. The work of Louis Couperus (1863-1923) *Stille kracht – The Hidden force* (1900) and the feuilletons of P.A. Daum (1850-1898) in the *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* (1885) provide valuable information about the lifestyle of the Indies (p. 73).

The interesting aspect in the third chapter concerns parts of houses, various decorative interior, decorative ornaments, and furniture. Here we find the influence of the Indies culture which was never found in the Netherlands, such as decorative door and window ornaments, doorsteps (pp. 75-76), *bijgebouwen* (outbuildings) for servants and slaves, etcetera (p. 79).

Another interesting aspect is the bathing habit in the Indies. For Dutchmen

who just arrived in the East Indies, bathing is a very interesting matter, because in their homeland bathing is a hassle, especially during winter. Dutchmen in Holland usually did not take a bath, but rather splashed water onto their bodies and then wiped themselves. All they then needed was to spray some perfume on their bodies, and that was all. So, when they arrived in this tropical country, they found that bathing was a must for them, especially if they did not want to smell bad.

During the VOC times, Dutchwomen, like Portuguese women, were “braver” than their men in terms of dealing with water. Dutchmen were “scared” of water, or reluctant to take a bath. Actually, there were pros and contras among Batavian Dutchmen themselves. Those who were accustomed to taking a bath felt uncomfortable when they did not do it. In those days, they used the word *wassen* (wash), rather than *baden* (bathe). The group that realized the importance of taking a bath issued a special regulation to all VOC soldiers, requiring them to take a bath every eight to ten days. However, many did not comply with this regulation. They did not want to take a bath. Consequently, another regulation was issued stipulating that VOC soldiers in Rijswijk should not be forced to take a bath once a week (p. 83).

The material culture (artefacts) as part of Indies culture is presented in the fourth chapter “Lingkungan permukiman masyarakat Eropa, Indis, dan Pribumi” (Settlement environment of the European, Indies, and natives community), and in the fifth chapter “Ragam hias rumah tinggal” (The various ornaments of house). Apart from his effort to trace the lifestyle of the Indies, here Soekiman uses both written and visual primary sources. He uses written sources like *Rapporten* (reports), *Missiven* (missives), *Memories van Overgave* (Memoranda for New Officials), *Reis beschrijvingen* (travelogues), *Daghregisters* (the official diary kept at VOC headquarters in Batavia), *Contracten* (contracts) and visual sources (paintings, photographs). Although they are valuable sources to describe the subjects dealt with in this chapter, the author states that we have to be careful using them and be critical. Soekiman gives painting as an example of visual source that contains element of subjectivity. According to him it is possible that painter put his personal views and thoughts in his work so that it is debatable (p. 98). It is an important advice to historians.

The book contains illustrations and maps which are very helpful to enrich our historical imagination. We will not find an analysis of the revolution period although it is stated in the title of the book, *Dari Zaman Kompeni sampai Revolusi* (from Company until the Revolution). The revolution period in Indonesian national history lasted from 1945 to 1950. I agree with Van der Kroef that after the Japanese occupation and the Indonesian revolution, the *Indo* group declined (Van der Kroef 1953: 484). During the Japanese occupation, most Indo-Europeans male and female were interned in Japanese prisoner camps until 1945 (Kousbroek 2005: 541). As the periods covered in this book do not include these periods (Japanese occupation and revolution), it would have been better if the title of this book would just end with the Japanese occupation in 1942.

The book concludes with a sixth chapter, entitled “Kesimpulan dan saran”

(Conclusion and suggestion) and ends in a bibliography and an index. The author suggests that we have to conserve the Indies-style buildings because they are priceless and we can use them as one of our tourist's main attractions (p. 168). Unfortunately, some of them have already been demolished. Now, we can only enjoy them through pictures and perhaps through this book.

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During our research, we often come across nice little details and fascinating information, or we conceive of an idea that might be worth exploring in more depth but we are unable to because we are now engaged in doing something else. We might not want to turn these things into larger articles because they might just fall out of the scope or our core interests or the idea would be lost in something bigger. So what to do? Usually, no journal wants to have very