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Familiar, yet different

Indische architecture and town planning

Pauline van Roosmalen beschrijft in dit artikel de ontwikkelingen die de *Indische* architectuur in Nederlands-Indië doormaakte vanaf de zeventiende eeuw. Centraal hierbij staan de uiteenlopende meningen van Nederlandse architecten over het wel of niet vasthouden aan de ‘vaderlandse’ architectuur in de kolonie.

Trade relations between European countries and Asia introduced Western culture to Asia and vice versa. But the interaction between merchants of the *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* and the local population of the archipelago now known as Indonesia involved more than the mere trade of spices, cloth and ceramics. From the moment the Dutch arrived in the early seventeenth century they also introduced Dutch architecture and town planning to this region. As a result many towns and villages in Indonesia today bear witness of the shared past of Indonesia and the Netherlands.

In the Netherlands awareness of and knowledge about this overseas heritage is limited to a very small group of specialists and (obviously) people who lived and worked in the colony. If, apart from this group, there is a notion of colonial building heritage in Indonesia the vision is often restricted to images of detached houses on stilts with overhanging roofs, galleries and whitewashed columns and walls in spacious and lush premises.¹ An image that applies to the nineteenth century but not to the early twentieth century when architecture and town planning underwent fundamental changes. This article describes the origin of this so-called *Indische* (‘Indian’) architecture and town planning, its founders, and its features.

The early days

The first buildings and towns that were built in the archipelago were hardly adjusted to local climatic conditions. Seventeenth century houses, offices,

1 To avoid the politically sensitive connotation of ‘colonial’ it was suggested at the end of the 1980’s to use ‘mutual’ or ‘shared’ instead.

warehouses and towns designed and used by the Dutch very much resembled those in patria. Canals and streets were laid in a preferably rectangular patterns. Warehouses and moderate houses were built on the waterfront, while grand houses and mansions with deep gardens overlooked the streets. During the eighteenth century this gradually changed as people increasingly tried to tailor the architecture of houses to the tropical climate. In order to achieve this engineers started to study local building constructions and materials, particularly those of the dwelling houses of prominent members of the indigenous population. Their findings resulted in some groundbreaking changes.

The first one was that rooms were no longer directly situated against the exterior walls but receded. The extra space surrounding a house that was thus created was subsequently turned into open-air galleries. These galleries, in combination with protruding roofs and awnings, protected the house from direct sunlight and rain. With terraced houses the edges of the roof would run parallel to the street. Thus rainwater would not stay behind in the intersection of roofs of adjacent houses and the eaves created shade. For technical reasons the exterior walls of the houses increasingly became whitewashed. Whitewash protected the brick walls against sun and rain and concealed irregularities of the walls. Furthermore brick walls were deemed unsuitable from an aesthetic point of view. A notion that continued well into the early twentieth century, as the following quote by an architect illustrates:

‘In de tropen is baksteenbouw eene irriterende verschijning, geeft het aanzien van het stapelwerk met kleine eenheden een nerveuze prikkeling [...]. De tropenatmosfeer vraagt niet het gebruik van materialen met fijne kleurnuanceeringen, daarom kan baksteen zonder meer in Indië nimmer toegepast worden gelijk in Holland met zijn dampige atmosfeer.’²

Another important adjustment was the introduction of natural ventilation. As the rooms were no longer internal but instead opened up to the galleries, natural ventilation was readily available. Another way to create an extra flow of air was the use of high pitched roofs with openings in the ridge. The departure from strictly Dutch building methods and styles gave way to what

- 2 ‘In the tropics bricks are an irritating feature, the appearance of a collection in small units causes nervous annoyance [...]. The atmosphere of the tropics does not ask for the application of material with little nuance in colour, that is why bricks can not be applied in India the way they are applied in Holland with its damp atmosphere.’ B.J.K. Cramer, ‘Indische Natuur- en baksteen’, *Bouwen* (1924) 165-169, there 169.



Ill. 1: Countryhouse of governor-general A. van der Parra, Batavia (ca. 1760). From: J. de Loos-Haaxman, *Johannes Rach en zijn werk* (Batavia 1928) 37.

became known as ‘colonial style’. (Ill.1) Buildings built in this style would follow the architectural mainstream in the motherland but add a colonial twist. The new style was applied until well into the nineteenth century.

Another feature of life in the Dutch East Indies was the spatial and social separation between Europeans and other ethnic groups that inhabited the archipelago, Indonesians (obviously) but also Chinese, Arabs, Indians and other Asians. Until the early twentieth century Chinese and Arabs by law were only allowed to settle in specially allotted areas, the so-called Chinese and Arab camps. These camps were a mixture of housing and commerce: the inhabitants usually lived above their shop. Though not likewise restricted to camps, Indonesians in general lived in neighbourhoods amongst themselves in the vicinity of Europeans.

Contemporary architecture and private enterprise

Following developments in Europe, things in the archipelago after the second half of the nineteenth century changed when in the aftermath of the industrial revolution new building materials were produced and a demand for new building types arose. The questions and challenges these changes posed to civil engineers and architects were daring and exiting. The adage



Ill. 2: Tweede Nederlandsche Handel Maatschappij 'de Factorij' in Batavia, (1931). Architect: A.P. Smits and C. van de Linde.

'to be of one's own time' nourished the architectural discourse throughout Europe and, although with some delay, the Dutch East Indies. The demand and search for a contemporary architectural style was partly inspired by the nondescript (characterless) nature of neo-classical architecture as a result of shallow, meaningless and sometimes incompetent application of pediments, columns, etcetera (Ill.2).

The introduction of steel and reinforced concrete enabled the construction of tall buildings and large, plain walls. Instead of the intricate play with details that for long dominated architectural design, the emphasis gradually shifted towards a play with volumes, space, shapes, and shades. Although architects were aware not everybody might appreciate contemporary architecture – 'Het zal ons moeilijk vallen te wennen aan de schoonheid van groote vlakken, aan de rust van enkele groote verhoudingen en aan het gemis van vormen, die uit den stelselmatigen opbouw voortspuiten' – it did not stop them from applying it.³ Far from it, more than anything it seemed to confirm the need for contemporary architecture and skilled architects. Thus in the Dutch East Indies, analogous to earlier developments in the Netherlands, architects in 1898 founded the *Vereeniging van Bouwkundigen in Nederlandsch-Indië*.

- 3 'It will be difficult for us to accustom ourselves to the beauty of large surface, the tranquillity of just a few large proportions and the lack of details that will result from a systematic construction.' V.H., 'Moderne materialen en hun invloed op de Bouwkunst', *Indisch Bouwkundig Tijdschrift* 4 (1912) 54-57, there 57.

The formation clearly stated two things: that architecture was a profession that required special skills and that architects were professionals in their own right.

Lack of artistic capacities of engineers and the consequently unsatisfactory level of architecture were not the only problems however. Another problem was the fact that engineers and architects who arrived in the Dutch East Indies were inexperienced, insufficient, almost uneducated, and too small in number for the vast archipelago.

‘Ook de hele tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw leerden Nederlandse ingenieurs letterlijk niets over land en volk in de koloniën, over de Indische bodem, tropische bouwmaterialen en bouwwijzen, werktuigen en transportmiddelen. Evenmin was de ingenieur voorbereid op een werkkring waarin hij veel méér te doen kreeg dan het ontwerpen en globaal superviseren van projecten. Zeker in afgelegen plaatsen in het binnenland moest hij zelf zorgen voor de vervaardiging van eenvoudige gereedschappen en werktuigen, het aanmaken van grondstoffen – bijvoorbeeld kalk en cement – en het dagelijks toezicht op de werkzaamheden.’⁴

The lack of working experience in combination with an almost complete lack of knowledge about climate, geology and culture proved difficult. First of all because it meant that expertise was mainly acquired through trial and error. Secondly it meant that newcomers could not immediately be entrusted with a lot of responsibilities i.e. work independently. And although the demand for adequately trained engineers was partly met when the Polytechnic in Delft appointed an extraordinary professor to educate junior engineers for service in the Dutch East Indies and the school opened a branch in Bandung in 1920, architects in the colony remained dependant of an education abroad until the end of the 1940s.

Not coincidentally the plea for good and contemporary architecture coincided with the growth of private enterprise after 1870, the year the trade monopoly of the *Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij* was abolished. Apart

- 4 ‘Nor during the second half of the nineteenth century did the Dutch engineers learn anything about country and people in the colonies, Indian soil, tropical building materials and building methods, tools and transport. Neither was the engineer prepared for a working environment that required much more of him than merely designing and roughly supervising projects. Particularly in remote inland settlements he had to take care of the manufacture of simple equipment and tools, the preparation of raw materials – for example like lime and mortar – and the daily inspection of activities.’: J.A.A. van Doorn, *De laatste eeuw van Indië. Ontwikkeling en ondergang van een koloniaal project* (Amsterdam 1994) 115.

from the fact that private entrepreneurs wanted their business and thus their offices to be visually recognisable – hence the demand for genuine architecture – the influx of these entrepreneurs generated fundamental social, economic, political, and physical changes in the archipelago. First of all because private entrepreneurs settled in the archipelago for a longer period of time than before – sometimes even for life. Secondly it were no longer only men who booked passage to the Dutch East Indies but women and children as well. Thirdly because many Indonesians left their native ground and moved to the towns to look for work.

These developments necessitated adjustments on a private and on a public level.

A whole new range of facilities and thus building types appeared. Apart from the customary dwelling houses, churches, hospitals and social clubs increasing numbers of schools, post-offices, shops, hotels, sports facilities, factories and stations were built. Steadily the outlook of towns and villages transformed. Buildings were enlarged sideways and up, space between buildings gradually diminished and sometimes even disappeared altogether, offices increasingly replaced housings, and infrastructure for transport and communication became essential. These changes combined with the influx of labourers and the shortage of housing in the centre, caused many Europeans to move away from the centres and settle on higher, healthier and wider grounds inland. A trend that already started in the early nineteenth century but accelerated on a large scale during the first decades of the early twentieth century (Ill.3).



Ill. 3: Semarang and extension plan *Heuvelterrein* (1917). Architect: H.Th. Karsten. From: A. Plate, 'Het uitbreidingsplan der Indische Gemeenten', *De Ingenieur* 16 (1918) 274-297, there 283.

Indische architecture

Good architecture was defined as architecture that was 'honest' and 'suitable'. In other words, it did not hide its construction behind fake walls, was in accordance with various circumstances (climate, society) and clearly expressed the function of a building (courthouse, factory, station, store, etcetera). Most buildings designed during the nineteenth century proved that civil engineers and the colony's most important building producer, the department of Public Works, were unable to meet these demands. The unsatisfactory architectural quality was not only a problem from a professional but also from a psychological point of view. In the words of the architect C.J.A. Gokkel:

'Als de groote handelsinstellingen, zooals de Factory, de Javasche Bank, de Handelsbank en dergelijke, die toch niet laten bouwen alleen voor het tegenwoordige geslacht, bij het scheppen van nieuwe gebouwen de hulp inriepen van mannen als de heer Moojen, dan zouden we ons, als we uit Europa kwamen, heel wat beter aanpassen bij het alhier bestaande dan thans.'⁵

In other words: good architecture would help Europeans to adjust to the circumstances in the colony.

The architect Gokkel referred to, P.A.J. Moojen, was the first independent architect in the Dutch East Indies who worked in a truly contemporary architectural style. Moojen's work as well as his position in the colony bear a resemblance to that of the well-known architect H.P. Berlage in the Netherlands. Like much of Berlage's work Moojen's designs were characterised by a sturdy design, exterior as well as exterior, and devoid of any classical stylistic device. Another distinguishing feature of his designs was the application of a 'double façade': arcades on ground level and a built-in gallery on the first floor. As the offices immediately opened onto these galleries natural ventilation was provided while simultaneously the 'outer' wall protected the offices from direct sunlight and rain. Because Moojen was the first architect to apply these features in the Dutch East Indies many of his contemporaries considered him the first modern '*Indische*' architect (Ill.4).

Moojen's work indeed echoed Berlage's view that architecture should

- 5 'When large trading companies, such as *de Factory*, the *Javasche Bank*, the *Handelsbank* et cetera, who do not build for the current generation only, in the process of creating new buildings would seek the assistance from men like mr Moojen, it would be much easier for us, Europeans, to tune in with what exists than we do at the moment.' C.J.A. Gokkel, 'Bouwkunst te Batavia', *Bouwkundig Weekblad* 2 (1907) 18-20, there 18.

be contemporary and in accordance with various circumstances. What this implied for the Dutch East Indies Berlage articulated very clearly in a letter from 1898 to the direction of a Dutch insurance company. In this letter, written upon the request to review the design for an office of the company in Surabaya but without any personal experience in the archipelago, he wrote:



Ill. 4: Building *Nederlands-Indische Kunstkring*, Batavia (1913). Architect: P.A.J. Moojen.

of the company in Surabaya but without any personal experience in the archipelago, he wrote:

‘De vraag kan dadelijk worden gesteld, of het wenschelijk is, het Indische type van huizen voor een gebouw als het bedoelde, te handhaven, of wel daarvan af te wijken. Voor mij is de keus niet twijfelachtig [...]. Het lijkt mij in het algemeen het meest gewenscht, de bouwwijze van Indië in hoofdkarakter te behouden, maar voor dit doel die architectuur eenigszins rijker te maken. De ontwerper is echter van eenen andere meening uitgegaan en heeft eenen zuiver Europeesche architectuur gegeven. Daarvoor bestond nu waarschijnlijk een goede reden, die ik dan ook gaarne aanneem, maar over deze soort Europeesche architectuur kan ik niet anders dan een afkeurend oordeel geven, omdat de gevel is die van een villa-achtig winkelhuisje in een kleine gemeente, ontworpen door een kleine architect. Het is deze architectuur die al onze mooie steden en stadjes heeft leelijk gemaakt.’⁶

As a result of Berlage’s remark the initial architect was dismissed and Ber-

- 6 ‘One can wonder whether it is desirable for this building to sustain the *Indische* type applied to houses or to deviate from this building type. As for myself there is not need to doubt [...]. In general it seems to me most desirable to maintain the building methods of India while improving its architecture. The designer however was of another opinion and applied an entirely European architecture. Although I am very willing to assume that for doing so he had a very good reason, I can not but reject this kind of European architecture because the façade resembles that of a villa-like shop house in a small community designed by a small architect. It is this architecture that has ruined our beautiful town and villages.’ The design Berlage criticized was by the architect M.J. Hulswit. Letter dated August 10 1898 by H.P. Berlage to the direction of the *De Algemeene Lijf- en Levensverzekeringsmaatschappij*. Municipal Archive Amsterdam, 580, inv.nr. 5342.

lage appointed.

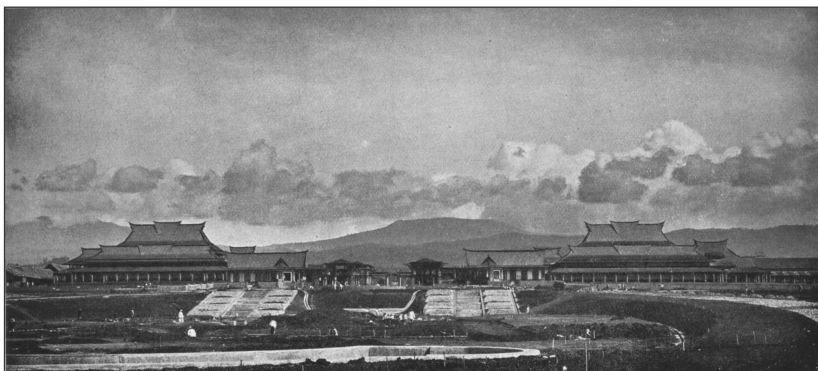
Berlage's design for the office in Surabaya undoubtedly inspired many architects in the colony. Not only Moojen but also S. Snuyf and J.F. van Hoytema, two architects who held leading positions during the 1910's at the Architecture bureau that was established in 1911 within the Department of Public Works.⁷ Buildings designed by Snuyf and Van Hoytema were of a similar robustness as the work of Moojen. Only a few years after Moojen, Snuyf and Van Hoytema set out to work in the colony, a new 'generation' of architects arrived. Three of them took the lead in the debate on suitable and contemporary *Indische* architecture that dominated the 1910's and 1920's: Henri Maclaine Pont, Casper Prosper Wolff Schoemaker, and Herman Thomas Karsten.

Three views

Maclaine Pont (Meester Cornelis 1884 - The Hague 1971) was an architect educated at the Polytechnic in Delft. After graduating from Delft Maclaine Pont returned to the Dutch East Indies and established a private architectural bureau in Semarang in 1909. Six years later his weak health temporarily forced him to return to Europe. In 1920 he made a second journey to the colony to complete his design for the Polytechnic in Bandung. Maclaine Pont very much advocated architecture that utilised local building constructions and materials, he had two reasons for this. The first was that by using local material architects could avoid the shortage of imported building material and the often unsatisfactory quality of locally produced 'western' material. The second was that the application of traditional materials and constructions enabled Indonesians to continue their tradition to build houses with the entire community. Apart from individual houses Maclaine Pont also thought indigenous architecture suitable for average and large projects. The buildings he designed were inspired by local techniques and stylistic elements were the auditoriums of the Polytechnic in Bandung, the archaeological museum in Trawulan (1929), and a catholic church in Pohsarang (1936) (Ill.5).

Totally at odds with Maclaine Pont's view was the take of Wolff Schoemaker (Banyu Biru 1882 - Bandung 1949). Wolff Schoemaker, who graduated

7 The creation of an Architecture Bureau within the department of Public works can be interpreted as a concealed recognition that architecture required special skills and/or that buildings designed by the department lacked architectural quality.



Ill. 5: Polytechnic, Bandung (1920). Architect: H. Maclaine Pont. From: *Gedenkboek van Nederlands-Indië 1898-1923* (Batavia, Weltevreden, Leiden 1923).

from the Royal Military Academy in Breda and joined the Engineering Corps in the Dutch East Indies as lieutenant, was not an architect by training but held strong views on architecture. Unlike Maclaine Pont he did not consider traditional indigenous buildings architecture, let alone suitable sources of inspiration for the development a contemporary, modern architecture in the archipelago.

‘Wij hebben hier in Indië geen eigenlijke inheemsche architectuur. Ik denk daarbij niet aan de resten van oude Hindoe bouwwerken, want die geven geen ruimtekunst, maar zuiver monumentale kunst. [...] Wij kunnen van de inlander niets overnemen.’⁸

Wolff Schoemaker also strongly opposed the application of indigenous elements in contemporary architecture if their meaning was not understood. Rather than creating a pastiche architecture that superficially used local elements, Wolff Schoemaker advocated the creation of a style that would meet technical, climatic and social demands by conscientiously using contemporary Western materials and designs. Among his best-known works are the building for the Annual Fair (1920), hotel Preanger (1929), and a mosque (1933) in Bandung, the observatory (1925) and villa Isola (1932) in Lembang, and the Koloniale Bank (1927) in Surabaya (Ill.6).

8 ‘In India we do not have a real indigenous architecture. Saying that, I do not refer to the remains of old Hindu buildings in mind, as they do not create spatial art, but pure monumental art (...). There is nothing we can adopt from the natives.’ From: *Verslag Volkshuisvestingscongres 1922* (Semarang 1922), there 35.



Ill. 6: Villa Isola, Bandung (1931). Architect: C.P. Wolff Schoemaker. From: R.P.G.A. Voskuil, *Bandoeng. Beeld van een stad* (Purmerend 1996) 165.

The third voice in the architectural debate was Thomas Karsten's (Amsterdam 1884 - Tjimahi 1945). After he finished his study in architecture in Delft, Karsten left the Netherlands in 1914 to take up the position of chef de bureau at Maclaine Pont's office. One of his first responsibilities was the design of an extension plan for Semarang (1916). After three years Karsten and two colleagues opened their own architectural and town planning bureau in 1917. Although Karsten frequently wrote on a wide variety of issues (architecture, town planning, culture, politics) he did not explicitly state his views on or preference for a particular kind of architecture other than that aesthetics were important and that given the function and nature of a building either western or indigenous materials and constructions could be applied. An approach that resulted in a stylistically varied oeuvre: the office for the *Nederlands-Indische Lijf- en Levensverzekerings Maatschappij* (1916), a small theatre Sobokartti (1930), and Pasar Johar (1933) in Semarang, and a pendopo (traditional Javanese open building) for the Mankunegoro palace in Solo (1923) (Ill.7).



Ill. 7: Office NILLMIJ (*Nederlandsch-Indische Levensverzekering en Lijfrente-Maatschappij van 1859*), Semarang (1916). Architect: H.Th. Karsten.

With regard to town planning Karsten's opinion was very outspoken. One remarkable point of view was his conviction that towns should not be divided along lines of ethnicity but of social standing. A principle that was eventually applied – after 1945.

Although the works and words of Karsten, Maclaine Pont, and to a lesser extent Wolff Schoemaker reflect the general arguments that dominated the discourse on *Indische* architecture, many more architects left a mark as well. In most major towns at least one or two architects designed truly *Indische* buildings. C. Citroen and W. Lemei in Surabaya, Liem Bwan Tjie in Semarang, A.F. Aalbers, F.W. Brinkman and G.W. Voorhoeve in Bandung, F.J. Blankenberg in Batavia, and J.M. Groenewegen in Medan. Among bureaus with a more national portfolio were the bureau of Hulwit and Fermont in Batavia and Ed. Cuypers in Amsterdam, and the Algemeen Ingenieurs- en Architectenbureau in Batavia.

Notwithstanding personal touches, *Indische* architecture was characterised by five features: the internal arrangement of space, sloping roofs with wooden shingles, white-washed facades, a horizontal articulation of the exterior through balconies, galleries or awnings, and due to the bright tropical sun an alternating interaction of light and shade, of white and black

surfaces. Stylistically the buildings were clearly influenced by contemporary developments in Western Europe and the United States of America, most noticeably *het Nieuwe Bouwen* (Modern Movement) and 'Art Deco'. As the following remark illustrates though, contemporary *Indische* architecture was not necessarily appreciated by everyone.

'Wanneer men die oude stadshuizen te Batavia bijvoorbeeld op het Koningsplein of Goenoeng Saharie eens vergelijkt met die keurige villatjes in de nieuwe stadsgedeelten, bijvoorbeeld in de wijk Nieuw-Gondangdia, dan moet men erkennen dat het bewonen van die ouderwetsche huizen voor de inwoners zelf, die niet vanaf de straat er naar kijken doch in de huizen zitten, heel wat prettiger is dan het bewonen van die in Hilversumschen stijl gebouwde villatjes. Ik weet niet, of men wel op den goeden weg is met in Indië langzamerhand den Europeeschen kant uit te gaan, en of de architecten wel verstandig doen met ter wille van de architectuur op te offeren het goede oude gebruik om de huizen zoo koel mogelijk en dus goed bewoonbaar te maken.'⁹

Two features that *Indische* architecture in general lacked were tall buildings and flat roofs. The rationale behind the latter was that due to the tropical climate flat roofs would deteriorate faster than sloping ones and that they hindered the use of natural ventilation. The reluctance to design tall buildings was caused by two considerations. Firstly because the absence of an outside area (garden) was deemed unsuitable for the tropics. Secondly because the abundance of space in the archipelago did not require to build up rather than sideways. In particular the second consideration would prove to be rather naïve. As the general population increased and more people moved to the towns it very soon became obvious that multi-storeyed housing was inevitable if everybody was to be accommodated without expanding the town way beyond what was physically acceptable.

- 9 'When one compares the old town houses in Batavia i.e. on the Koningsplein or Goenong Saharie with the neat little villas in the new areas, i.e. the neighbourhood Nieuw-Gondangdia, one can't but acknowledge that living in these old-fashioned houses for the inhabitants themselves, who do not look at it from the street but are inside the houses, is much more comfortable than living in one of these little villas built in *Hilversumsche* style. I am not sure whether it is good that in the Indies one gradually moves toward a more European approach, and whether it is wise of architects to sacrifice the good old practice to build houses that are as cool and thus as liveable as possible for the sake of architecture.' Remark by ir R.A. van Sandick, endorsed by ir A. Plate. A. Plate, 'Het uitbreidingsplan der Indische Gemeenten', *De Ingenieur* 16 (1918), 274-297, there 292.

Town planning

The increasing population in big and fairly big towns made improvement and extension inevitable. To conduct these developments was one of the priorities of the newly established municipalities.¹⁰ The first town where the improvement of the physical conditions was seriously considered was Semarang, one of the colony's main ports. Semarang was located on the north coast of Java on marshy land bordered by a river to the East and to the West, and a hilly area in the South. Due to a combination of high density building, housing shortage, insufficient or no fresh water supply, a humid climate, and loads of rats and mosquito's conditions in Semarang were insalubrious and outbreaks of cholera, the plague, and malaria frequent.

Confronted with the consequences of these conditions on a daily basis two town councillors, the physician W.T. de Vogel and his colleague H.F. Tillema a pharmacist, proposed to develop the southern hilly area. The first design for the area by K.P.D. de Bazel, another leading Dutch architect who was asked for advice, was not executed. It did however, function as a point of departure the plan Karsten designed ten years later. Karsten designed an extension plan that included one European (New Tjandi) and several Indonesian neighbourhoods ('kampungs'). The character of these two neighbourhoods was very different. The most obvious distinction was their location. Whereas the New Tjandi was located against the hill and thus offered beautiful views and cool air, the Indonesian kampungs were built at the foot of the hill and on the flat land between the existing town and the hill. The advantage of this arrangement was that the Indonesians were closer to the town centre and thus had to spend less money and time commuting. The second distinction was the scale. Although the new areas for both Europeans and Indonesians were almost equally large, the number of Indonesians to be accommodated in the new areas was much larger than the number of Europeans. The third and last obvious distinction was the design of the areas. Although this feature to a certain extent can be attributed to the different topography, the differences are nonetheless striking. The undulating, wide and green roads, panoramic views, parks, and extensive gardens of the European neighbourhood contrasted heavily

10 The establishment of municipalities resulted from the liberal policy that dominated the second half of the nineteenth century and the subsequent decentralisation of the central administration in Batavia. The decentralised administration was delegated to an initially limited, but gradually growing number of municipalities. Among the first municipalities to be established were Batavia, Bandung, Semarang, and Surabaya.

with the geometric network of relatively narrow streets and the fewer and less abundant parks and gardens of the kampungs. The European extension plan Menteng-New Gondangdia for Batavia by Moojen (1910) and Darmo for Surabaya by Maclaine Pont (1914) were designed along similar lines as New Tjandi: they were also situated at a considerable distance from the existing town, transected by wide avenues and lanes, divided in spacious plots, and lavishly provided with trees and plants.

Simultaneously with the development of these new European neighbourhoods municipalities also formulated and implemented building and alignment regulations to improve the conditions in and outlook of the existing town. Furthermore they developed special programmes to address the utterly unhygienic circumstances in the kampungs: the construction of water- and sewer systems, gutters, roads and, if the houses by and far did not meet technical and hygienic standards, new houses. Initially many projects for kampungs failed as they too much departed from Western standards and completely ignored Indonesian culture and habits. Through trial and error though, and eventually a growing interaction with the Indonesians kampung improvements projects gradually became successful.

An exceptional development that needs to be mentioned was the extension plan for Bandung from 1917. Unlike other extension plans, the Bandung plan was not designed to address a housing shortage in Bandung but to accommodate the central administration in Batavia. The scheme was a direct result of the decision of the governor-general to relocate all departments from the warm, unhealthy coastal town Batavia to the fresh and healthy mountain village Bandung.

The plan that would realise these intentions was designed by the *Algemeen Ingenieurs- en Architectenbureau (AIA)*. The entire plan was divided in different neighbourhoods with their own make-up: one for the central administration, one for education, one for medical science, and so on. Housing for executives, general staff and other people was provided according to a certain pattern. Large houses were situated on large plots along primary avenues. Smaller houses were situated on smaller plots along secondary streets. The heart of the plan was the north-south axis along which the departments were arranged. The orientation of the axis on the volcano Tangkuban Perahu lent the axis a focal point and an almost theatrical drama. Once executed, the plan would have transformed Bandung from a fairly insignificant provincial planters town into the colony's administrative capital residency and centre of learning.

Unfortunately the execution of the plan was interrupted when economic

crises hit the Dutch East Indies in the early twenties and thirties. An effort by the municipality in 1938 to execute a moderate version of the original plan was in vain. The outbreak of World War II in 1939 and the Japanese invasion of the Dutch East Indies in 1942 meant the end of this plan.

A new beginning

Notwithstanding the increasing and persistent plea for Indonesian independence that was increasingly heard since the beginning of the twentieth century, the humiliations Europeans and Eurasians suffered under Japanese rule, and finally the Indonesian declaration of Independence in August 1945, the Dutch administration resumed work in 1945. Likewise the architects that were still around – many of them died during encampment or left the country – started to plan and coordinate reconstruction works. By the end of 1946 several town and regional plans for North Celebes were ready. Two years later a plan for a new town south of Batavia was presented.

The continued efforts of the architects involved are illustrative of two things. Firstly that despite fundamental political changes their work continued. Secondly that as time goes by views and methods are adjusted. This is nowhere clearer than in the case of the New Kebajoran, the new town near Batavia. The plan for New Kebayoran was designed by Moh. Soesilo, a former employee of Karsten, and the civil engineer Jac.P. Thijsse. It was a very conscious attempt to combine prevailing contemporary planning principles and traditional Indonesian notions on the lay-out of settlements. Thus, for example, instead of being arranged by ethnicity the various neighbourhoods were grouped together according to their predominant function: housing, commercial, administrative, leisure and so on.

It is remarkable that it was a Dutch architect who criticised the western outlook of New Kebajoran and the absence of the characteristic (*Indische*) distinction between European and Indonesian neighbourhoods. The designers' attempt to create a modern Indonesian town based on Western and Eastern principles was apparently not immediately appreciated – or understood – by everybody. Soesilo countered the criticism by stating that in order to push Indonesian society and town planning upwards the pre-war *Indische* approach had to be abandoned and replaced by a modern, functional and social and Indonesian approach. The search for a contemporary Indonesian architecture and town planning style was about to commence.