

Taman Fatahillah: an encounter and a lasting colonial memory

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Jakarta Kota: from Stadhuisplein* to Lapangan Balai Kota

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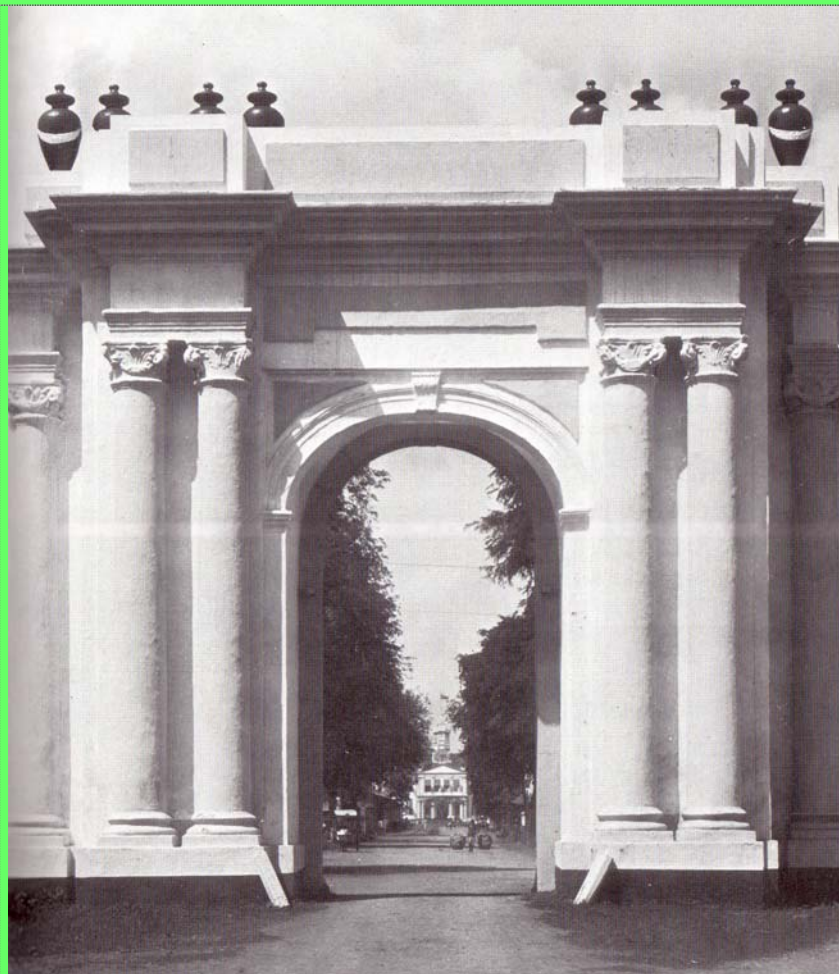
18 pages!

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* Town Hall Square

* Balai Kota / Stadhuis means Town Hall.

Indonesian names before the slash / then names in Dutch.



P.1. Balai Kota seen from the Amsterdam Gate of the V.O.C.-castle in 1935 (1)

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P. 2. Taman Fatahillah in 1990, photo Yori Anwar, Java Books Jakarta (6)

1. Introduction

Taman Fatahillah (2), paved with cobblestones in colonial style, is the centre of V.O.C.-Batavia (3). This part of Jakarta still shows a Dutch heritage from the seventeenth and eighteenth century. The V.O.C., Dutch East-India Company, captured Jayakarta in 1619 (4) and was in power from 1619 until 1795. In 1795 the V.O.C. went bankrupt. The Dutch government took over the assets and liabilities of the company as well as power in the colonial areas.

Jakarta Kota was a typical Dutch town with a castle, canals, windmills, stepped gables, moats and defensive walls. From 1790 until 1820 the greater part of the old city has been demolished and canals has been filled up (5). Building-materials from V.O.C.-Batavia have been used to develop a new centre around Medan Merdeka / Koningsplein and Lapangan Banteng / Waterlooplein.

Picture 1 shows a wonderful survey of Taman Fatahillah. In this part of our photo-gallery I (DT) shall explain some main points about the locations marked clockwise in this photograph:

- A. Balai Kota / V.O.C.- Stadhuis (Town Hall);
- B. Musium Wayang / Oudheidkundig Museum Batavia (hardly visible at right);
- C. Café Batavia (invisible);
- D. Jl Cengkeh / Prinsenstraat (running to the area of the former V.O.C.-castle);
- E. the former Post- and Telegraph-office built around 1920;
- F. left, Jl Pos Kota Lada / Postkantoorweg, in the V.O.C.-period called Tijgersgracht, Saluran Harimau or Tiger Canal in English (at left, invisible, the Court of Justice / Musium Keramik),
- G 1,G 2. the Boeien (in Dutch), a police- and arrest-station during the V.O.C.-era, G 1 is now Café Stadhuis.

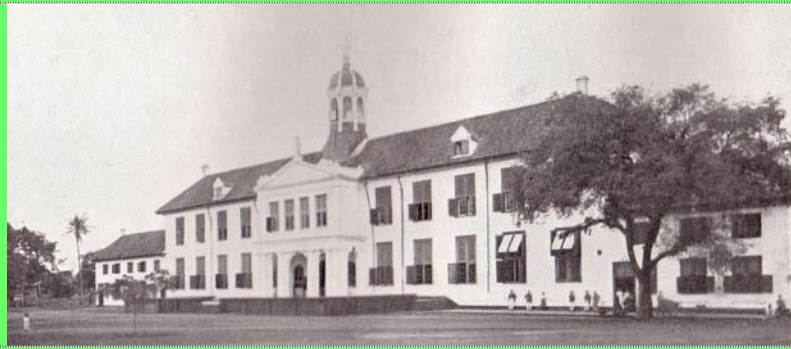


P. 3. Balai Kota 1886
Mark the presence of two dormer-windows only.

Notes

1. This last remain of the castle was demolished in 1956 to facilitate the traffic.
2. Fatahillah was a military official from the sultanate of Banten who captured Sunda Kelapa. The rename of the place was Jayakarta. Jayakarta became Batavia in 1619 (until 1950). Taman Fatahillah means Fatahillah Square.
3. Stadhuisplein (Dutch) means Town Hall Square, Stadhuisplein in Dutch (2) or Town Hall Square.
4. The Dutch ruined Jayakarta completely and made an drastic end of the English influence in this region.
5. The canals were gradually filled up because of the spread of malaria.
6. (P.2) Both lower parts of the building, at the left (the eastern wing, marked G1,p.2, as well as at the right side (the western wing, G2), served as prison-quarters and police-stations. The wardens lived in the upper floors. The lower part, left, is situated next to Jl Kantor Pos Kota / Postkantoorstraat / Tijgersgracht. The lower part, right, is situated next to Jl Pintu Besar Utara / Binnen Nieuwpoortstraat.

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**P.4.
Balai
Kota
approx.
1905**

**Two
dormer-
windows!
See
picture 1.**



**5. Larking
about in the
backyard of
Balai Kota
in 2002**

**The flower
of Jakarta's
youth
enjoying an
educational
school-
outing in
their own
way.**

Pictures

1. Buitengeweg, p. 11
2. Postcard collection DT, photo Yori Anwar, Java Books Jakarta
3. M. T. H. Perelaer, p. 90/91
4. H. Colijn, p. 54
5. Photo DT, 2002

2. Looking around from the steps of Balai Kota



**P.1. Balai Kota
1921**

Let us take a walk around Fatahillah Square. Being one of the hottest places on earth I (DT) suggest to stroll to the steps of Balai Kota and have a look around Taman Fatahillah. Right in front of us, to the north, we look into Jalan Cengkeh / Prinsenstraat. At the other end of Jl Cengkeh there is a neglected piece of land (1). It was the location of the V.O.C.-castle (2).

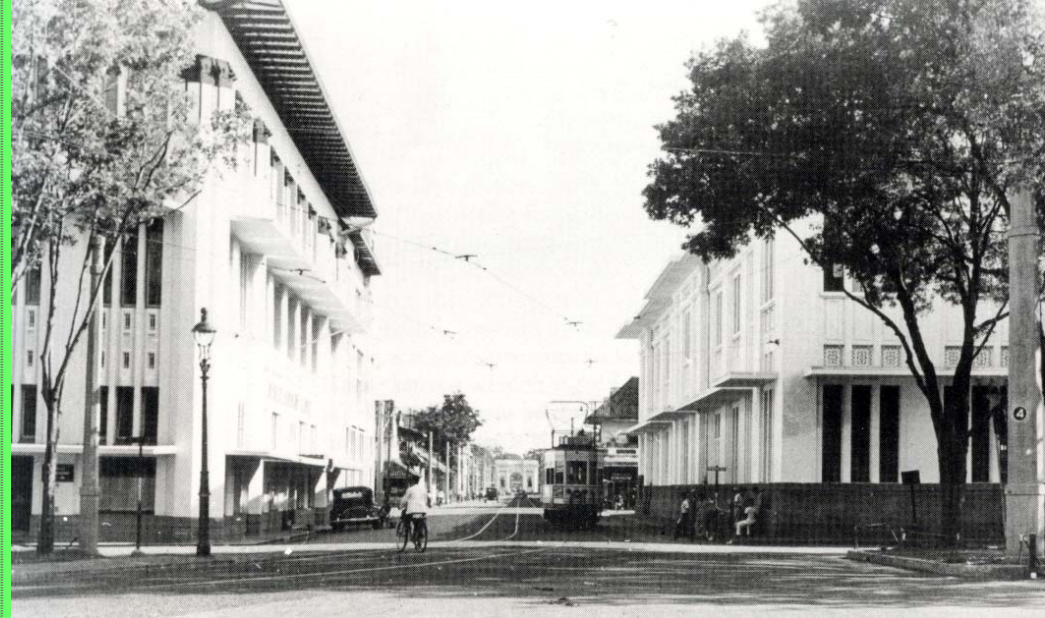


**P.2. Taman
Fatahillah to
the north,
1998**

**Mark the
water pump
with the
cupola and
the cannon
Si Jagur.
The cannon
Si Jagur
stands
between the
Post Office
(right) and
Asuransi
Jasa
Indonesia.**

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The southern corners of Jl Cenkeh are characterized by office-buildings from the twenties, last century. The small structure with the cupola in the middle is an old well. It was used as a water pump in the olden days (3). The cannon behind the water pump, called Si Jagur (4) and regarded as a symbol of fertility (5), is from Portuguese origin. It was brought here after the conquest of Malakka by the Dutch in 1641. The gun is a sexual symbol (5). Sterile women offer flowers and sit down on top of the cannon for a while in the hope of gaining children.



P.3.

**Jn
Cengkeh in
1937**

**Mark the
Amsterdam
Gate in the
north.**



**P.4. Jl
Cengkeh in
1885**

**Mark the
steam-
tram
hewing its
way to the
Amsterdam
Gate (at the
left) and to
Balai Kota
(at the
right).
Traffic had
to keep left
in colonial
times.**

See P.5.

One can see the same office-buildings on picture 3. On picture 4 we have a view of the p.3-location in the year of 1885. The house, at the right, next to the steam tram to Balai Kota is a Chinese building. Picture 5 shows the same building in those days (1885). The house was very old, maybe from approx. the year 1700. Around that year many Chinese lived in the residential blok Taman Fatahillah, Jl Kantor Pos, Jl Timur and Jl Cengkeh. (6) In 1920 a post office, picture 6, took the place of these historical monuments. The Chinese house and the house of the neighbours at the right side were demolished.



P.5. A view of Balai Kota in 1885 from the corner of Jl Besar Timur / Leeuwinnegracht.

The big house on the left was a Chinese dwelling and shop.



P.6. The post office in Kota in 1937

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Notes

1. The compound was neglected for centuries: from approx. 1790 until now.
2. The V.O.C.-castle has been demolished from approx. 1790-1820.
3. From 1736.
4. Si Jagur means The Fertility.
5. De Haan, from his explanation at the bottom of picture A 11 in his book "Oud-Batavia" part 3.

Pictures

1. Balbian Verster, picture XXXVIII
2. Photo DT
3. Municipality of Batavia, p. 59
4. E. Breton de Nijs, Tempo Doeloe; Amsterdam 1961 p. 66
5. De Haan, part 3, picture A 11
6. Municipality of Batavia, p. 159

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3. Balai Seni Rupa (Fine Arts Museum), Café Batavia and Musium Wayang



**P. 1.
Musium
Keramik
1927**

The fine architecture of Balai Seni Rupa, known as Musium Keramik, is a classicist styled building from 1870 (1). Before World War II this imposing monument was Court of Justice. Before 1870 Balai Kota offered accomodation to this court. The museum (2) houses paintings (3), a collection of old Chinese ceramics, modern ceramics and Indonesian terracotta's. Some of the ceramics are gifts from the late Vice-President Adam Malik.



P. 2. Musium Keramik 1996

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**P. 3.
Café
Batavia
in 2000**



P. 4. Meant for the rich and famous, but trendy in a beautiful way: Café Batavia in 2000

Café Batavia, at the corner of Taman Fatahillah and Jl Pintu Besar Utara is one of the oldest buildings in this square. The house was erected in the first half of the nineteenth century. A renovation took place after World War II. The restaurant and bar were converted into a 1950s style. It is a place for the rich and famous.

The Café is worth a visit! The interior is very trendy, even the toilets are. Bands are playing almost every evening. The restaurant is expensive and so is the bar. Enjoying lunch gives you the feeling that you are eating up not only your food but your family capital as well.

If you not rich, and you are famous in your dreams only, Café Stadhuis (4) at the other side of the square is a good alternative. And a wonderful hideaway for a daydream, supposed that daydreaming is your hobby. To be honest, nostalgic daydreaming in Café Stadhuis is one of my most favourite activities. So, don't feel shy.

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P. 5. Musium Wayang 1996



P. 6. Musium Wayang in 2000

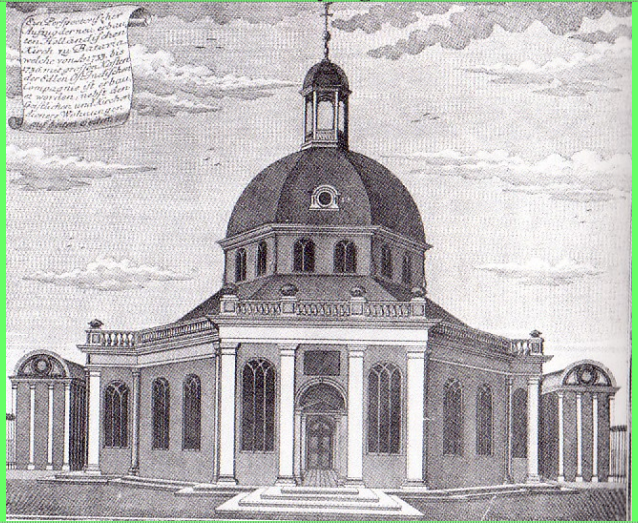


P. 7. Mortuary monument of Jan Pieterszoon Coen (1589-1627) in Musium Wayang
Coen was the fourth Governor-General of the V.O.C. He was in function from 1619-1623 and
from 1627-1629.

P. 8. The Dutch Church (location Musium Wayang) 1682



P. 9. The New Dutch Church, building period 1733-1736 (location Musium Wayang)



From the steps of the Town Hall we see Musium Wayang at the left side (5). From 1939 until 1942 the building was the seat of the Historical Museum of Batavia (6). Musium Wayang stands on the ground of two churches (see pictures 8 and 9). What is left of the collection of the Historical Museum can be found in Balai Kota. The Dutch Church / Oude Hollandsche Kerk (1639-1732) was replaced by the New Dutch Church / Nieuwe Hollandsche Kerk (1736-1808). A wooden replica of the New Dutch Church (7) is showed in the Church Room of Balai Kota.

Musium Wayang is long and narrow. Somewhere in the middle of the building there are memorial courts of V.O.C.-officials. Among them Jan Pietersz. Coen. Many tombstones have been transferred to Tanah Abang European Cemetery.

I mention one other memorial court: the one, among many more, of Gustaaf Willem Baron van Imhoff, Governor-General from 1743 until 1750 (8). As an V.O.C.-official he was one the civil servants to be hold responsible for the murder of many innocent and loyal Chinese in Batavia in 1740. Nevertheless Van Imhoff, as a Governor-General, took many initiatives. He ordered to build a new hospital in Batavia, a grammar school, a seminary for protestant clergymen and a navy school. He was interested in architecture.

Notes

1. Building period 1866-1870
2. Since 1976.
3. Paintings by Raden Saleh among many others.
4. The "Boeien": G1 in picture 2 of the Introduction.
5. Jl Pintu Besar Utara / Binnen Nieuwpoortstraat
6. The front of the museum is from 1912, the backside from 1939.
7. Made in the Dutch period.
8. Van Imhoff lived 1705-1750.

Pictures

- P.1. De Vries, p. 144
- P.2. Mann p. 45
- P.3. Photo DT
- P.4. Photo DT
- P.5. Mann, p. 58
- P.6. Photo DT
- P.7. Photo DT
- P.8. Nieuhof, part 2 p. 222-223
- P.9. Heydt, drawing XIX

4. From Stadhuis to Balai Kota



P. 1. Second Town Hall in 1682



P. 2. Original version of the third Town Hall 1726

The old, bell-towered, Town Hall is an architectural reminder of the Netherlands-Indies. The first Balai Kota, Town Hall was built in 1620. There are no drawings of this construction, as far as I (DT) know. In 1626 the first hall collapsed because of the miserable construction of its foundation. The second accomodation, built in 1627, was replaced by the present one in 1710 (1). In the seventeenth century the Ciliwung has been canalized. The second stadhuis was built on a filled up bend of this river. History repeated itself: the foundation appeared to be defective. To reduce expenses during the building period the government of that time economized on the number of piles.

The main-building of this Historical Museum of Jakarta consists of two storeys with a striking facade. This fine example of Dutch architecture makes a sober but practical impression. The Town Hall served many purposes: register's office, church, prison, administration of justice. Only the city government and its jurisdiction were situated here. The administration of justice by the the V.O.C. took place isolated in the castle at the northern end of Jl Cengkeh / Prinsenstraat.

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P. 3. Third Town Hall in 1776, two dormer-windows



P. 4. Town Hall in 1911, two dormer-windows



P. 5. Town Hall in 1922, four dormer-windows

The museum contains a lot of colonial memorabilia. There are rooms fit up with beautiful V.O.C.-furniture and V.O.C.-weapons. Upstairs, the conference rooms of the Bench of Magistrates and the Council of Justice are fine examples of furnished colonial meeting rooms. There is much more: carved screens, paintings, stone tablets, old carriages and memorial stones. There is an interesting backyard.

In the entrance hall there is a carved staircase. In the rooms at the left we find weapons, engravings, photographs and furniture. The rooms at the right are devoted to prehistory and to the Hindu-period.

Upstairs there are the mentioned conference rooms (18th century), a church room , rooms with oil-paintings of the Governors-General.

In the backyard we find the memorial stone of Pieter Erbevvelt. He was tried because of treason and was, together with seventeen followers, most cruelly put to death. He has been quartered by horses in 1722. On the stone one can read in Javanese and Dutch: “As a detestable memory of the traitor Pieter Erbevvelt nobody shall now or ever be allowed to build, to carpenter, to lay bricks or to plant in this place”(the site of his home and garden, the original location of the stone DT). But as always! Man proposes, God disposes!! On the spot, Jl Pangeran Jayakarta / Jacatraweg, one can find a Toyota garage nowadays.

They were not executed in front of the Town Hall, but in the fore-court of the castle. This was done for security reasons. The government was afraid of mutiny of the population because of rumours about the innocence of Erbervelt and about corruption within the V.O.C.-organization.

The most important V.O.C.-bureaucracies in this building were those of the Bench of Magistrates (2) / Schepenen and the Counsel of Justice/ Raad van Justitie (3). The president of the Bench of Magistrates was commander of the militia / schutterij. (4)

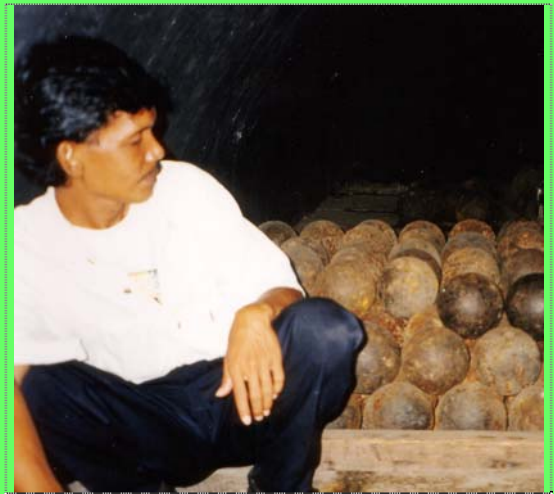
The Bench of Magistrates had normally to deal with all civil law cases and had to apply the law (5). It could impose capital punishment. Capital punishment was carried out on the Town Hall Square. Sometimes however, in case of civil commotion, the fore-court of the castle and the so-called gallows- or hanging-ground outside the castle near the Java-Sea were used for this purpose.

Justice was administered cruel. Torture, to extort confessions, was normal. Execution of prisoners was a sickening happening. It has no sense to illustrate this treatise with examples of such performances. Justice was cruel in Europe and in the V.O.C.-territories as well. But there was no special administration of justice in the East-Indies. Administration of justice was applied everywhere in the European way. Javanese sovereigns did not yield to the Dutch in cruelty to their subjects..



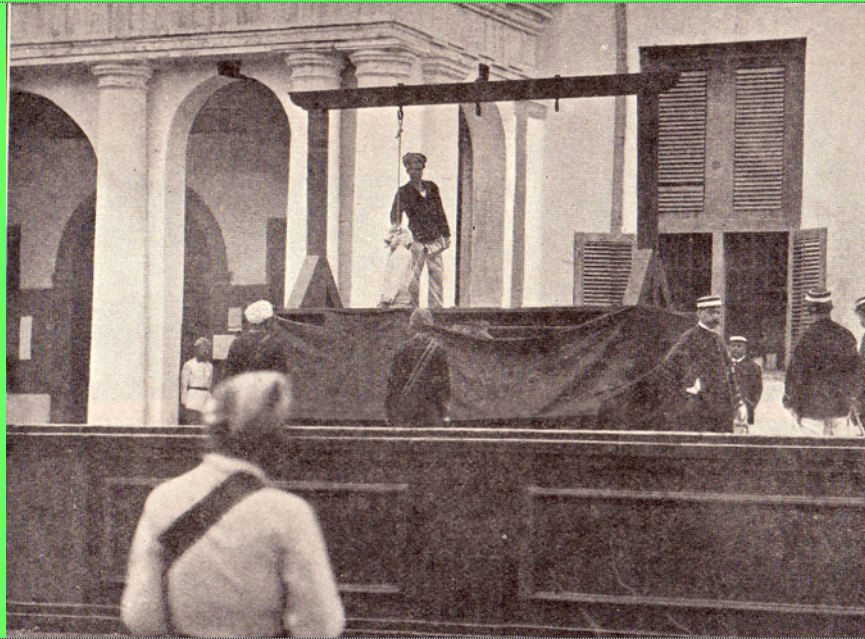
P. 7. Iron balls, a close-up

The most terrible cells where those in the basement of the Town Hall. In front of the building (under the steps) as well as at the backside. Standing or sitting in the ground water was inevitable in these prisons. All kind of prisoners, European, Javanese or Chinese were kept in custody in those horrifying places until their execution, flagellation etc. The basement was still in use in 1856.



**P. 6. The dungeons at the backside
The ceiling is low. The iron balls to chain the convicts are still present.**

The last death penalty was carried out by hanging the Chinese Cu Bun Chiang in 1896. He was the strangler of two native Javanese women. Before being hanged he was allowed to smoke a cigar on the scaffold in front of the public. Because he did so quite calm, his audience had to wait one mortal hour.



**P. 8.
Scaffold
in front
of the
Town
Hall in
1896**

**Chiang
hangs in
the white
sack, the
hangman
holds the
rope.**

Notes

1. Building period 1706-1710
2. Officials to administer justice
3. Officials to authorized to hear judicial cases until 1808. The Court held its meetings in the castle at first, later in the eastern wing of the Town Hall, that is : the eastern part of the central building. From 1870 the Court was accommodated in, what is now, Musium Keramik.
4. The militia assembled in the Town Hall from 1620 until 1815.
5. It had jurisdiction except in the castle area, that meant: not over the subordinates of the V.O.C.



P. 9. The backyard of Balai Kota (with Mercurius) in 2000

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P. 10. Dungeons under the steps, in front of Balai Kota

Pictures

1. Nieuhof, part 2 p. 200-201
2. Valentijn, p. 300
3. De Vries, p. 14
4. Colijn, p. 54
5. Balbian Verster, p. 12
6. Photo DT
7. Photo DT
8. Van Maurik, p. 182
9. Photo DT
10. Photo DT
11. Photo DT

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P. 11. Wooden tablet in the entrance hall of Balai Kota *

* It says: "The construction of the town hall was started after the demolition of the old one 23-1-1707 under the government of Governor-General Joan van Hoorn and was finished under the government of Governor-General Abraham van Riebeeck 10-7-1710."

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17. Maurik, Justus van: Indrukken van een totok; Amsterdam 1897, library DT
18. Postcard Collection Dirk Teeuwen
19. Photographs by Dirk Teeuwen

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