



# From Sukabumi to Amsterdam 1883 the Spreading Sundanese Culture Through Parakan Salak Tea Plantation Exposition

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**Abstract.** The tea plantation in the Parakansalak Sukabumi region dispatched workers to Amsterdam in 1883 to participate in De Internationale Koloniale en Uitvoerhandel Tentoonstelling. The Sundanese ethnicity, which was the local culture of the colony's region, was highlighted by the plantation owner, Mr Holle, in order to sell the tea product. Presentations of Sundanese culture may include gamelan, dancing performances, or social history excursions. Europeans observed colonial residents engaging in music and dance, as well as going about their daily lives in village society. This essay employs a qualitative technique with literature studies and focuses on situational analysis to investigate the activities of the Sundanese people through the Parakansalak tea plantation group in Amsterdam in 1883 to describe the existence of the Sundanese society. This study exposed Sundanese culture during the Exposition activity to determine the consequences of the Sundanese population's presence in Amsterdam, Europe. The results obtained were the astonishment of the European community who saw the culture of the colonized nation. The first impression, Europeans see a group of Sundanese people who practice low and primitive culture. Still, it united people of different religions, ethnicities, and skins to fundraising for the Mount Krakatoa disaster in the Dutch East Indies.

**Keywords:** Amsterdam · Exposition · Parakansalak · Sundanese

## 1 Introduction

The colonizers get to a place in Nusantara's territory in the 17th century cohesive to the 'magnet' of sumptuous spices in the European marketplace. One of these colonizers was a Dutch merchant company that 'forage' for herbs through Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC), founded in 1602. VOC purchased spice commodities at subtraction prices and conversely sold them at significantly additional prices.

The vantage from the trade was the price for expenditure on their war fleet contrary to the pirates. Consequently, VOC transformed into a 'horrible' company inasmuch as its war-robust fleet safeguarded their trading acclivity.

The monarchy in the Nusantara testifies to the robustness of the VOC's war fleet. Accordingly, They recapitulated their merit in forming a coalition or cooperating with

the Dutch trading company. Moreover, furthermore definite their kingdoms will arise preponderantly and be respected by other domains.

Indigenous kingdoms emphasized concession from the VOC to sustain opposition or battle with other domains, and some invoked fruitfulness in the warfare of succession and acquired the royal throne. The established collaboration was about the Nusantara entering the gap of a needle extension in the colonialism era. The dependence of the indigenous kingdom on the Dutch effective it easier for the VOC to intervene in the royal authority, including the fraud 'divide' strategy amongst the indigenous rulers that tend not to cohere. Over time, the Nusantara territory began known as the Dutch East Indies because it was under the rule of the Dutch kingdom.

The VOC acclivity was free to espouse their trading offices in the Dutch East Indies and establish fortifications with extraterritorial rights. Notwithstanding they realized it or refused, the natives or indigenous kings could not enter without a license. In the end, they would come into contravention and be distracted by a VOC war fleet armed with machine guns and cannons.

The VOC established territory and controlled spice trade in two centuries (nutmeg, paprika, cloves, and cinnamon). However, the VOC's financial issues caused it to become bankrupt, which sparked official corruption and the vast, lavish war. The VOC dissolved on December 31, 1799, and all of its assets became property of the Dutch empire [1]. The Dutch East Indies became the new name for the VOC region that belonged to the Netherlands. In the end, the Dutch East Indies authority had total control over Java Island.

When the Dutch East Indies were under control, they developed contemporary plantations focused on producing plants deemed diva-worthy for the European market. The diva plant had to be grown, harvested, and squired by the original colony farmers, the Dutch East Indies, for a pitiful sum well below market prices. The framework was *cultuurstelsel* (forced cultivation).

The sultan, regents, and low heads of the nobility were given control of surveillance via the *cultuurstelsel* system, and they bound the local peasants to serve them. Liberal thinkers in the Amsterdam parliament, however, opposed the *cultuurstelsel*, which pushed for a change in colony governance [2]. The Agrarian Law, which allowed private investors to invest in plantations in the Dutch East Indies, and Article 128 of the Regulations of 1854 governing the establishment of a school for Bumiputra were passed as a result of this criticism. By being required to lease plantation land for 75 years, the private sector increases profits for the Dutch East Indies government (*erfpach*). The revenue increased to f.f. 165.486.24 [2, 3].

Privately administered plantations indite successful, wealthy, and personable planters. They administer the plantation employees from the natives more prudent and humanely. Things are distinct when the government administers plantations by implementing the *cultuurstelsel* method. Praise aimed at the attainment of the planters, such as Suiker Lord (Sugar Noble), Thee Jonkers van Preanger (Priangan Tea Prince), Koffie Baronnen (King of Coffee), Kina Boeren (Lord of Kina), and Tubaks Boeren (Lord of Tobacco Gardens) [4].

Van der Huchts, Ardriaan Walrafen Holle, Rudolf E. Kerkhoven, Karel Albert Rudolf Boscha, and Karel Frderick Holle are the proprietors of the privately run plantation in

Priangan [5, 4]. They are plantation administrators who initiate their service record as labor administration by being on duty at the Sukabumi Parakansalak Tea Plantation. The owners of private plantations in Priangan indite a significant role in thriving the Dutch East Indies, especially in Bandung, dole funds to establish educational and scientific facilities.

This paper attempts to investigate the promotion of the Parakansalak tea plantation in its commerce affairs, exploring the exoticism of the socio-cultural life of the colonized people. It is a unique attraction considering that the exposure of regional cultural entities to the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) in the international world transpired during the Dutch occupation. It means that in advance of Indonesia achieved independence, and the international community had already appreciated the socio-cultural entities of the Sundanese people through art and cultural performances by the Parakansalak tea plantation troupe in Amsterdam in 1883.

## 2 Results

### 2.1 A.W. Holle, the Owner of Parakansalak Plantation, Loved the Sundanese Culture

The involvement of Sundanese culture in trade momentum at De Internationale Koloniale en Uitvoerhandel Tentoonstelling in Amsterdam in 1883 constituted with the background of Ardriaan Walraven Holle, which was associated with Sundanese cultural entities. The connexion Ardriaan with a Sundanese culture was espoused when he took up residence in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) for the first time in 1844 [6]. At that time, he was 12 years old.

On August 25, 1832, Holle was born in the Netherlands [6]. He lives with Williem van der Hucht, his mother's older brother, who founded the Parakansalak tea plantation business, in the Dutch East Indies [6]. In the end, A. W. Holle appears as the testator who spent the majority of his life running the plantation. He was taught management skills by his uncle, van der Hucht, and then eventually took on the responsibilities of both a manager and a plantation owner. [6].

During his abode at Parakansalak on the slopes of Mount Salak on the verge of the Sukabumi region, A. W. Holle incarnated as a part of the Sundanese people's life in the Priangan realm. A. W. Holle arises up in a Dutch family. Nevertheless, every day, he has corresponded in the social sphere of plantation workers, most of whom have Sundanese cultural backgrounds. Due to his constructive interactions with the neighbourhood, Holle ascended to the position of plantation manager who was "near" to the native workers. His ability to perform Sundanese gamelan, especially the rebab instrument, is evidence of his close ties to Sundanese culture. The Dutch written report notes it as follows:

Adriaan Walraven was interested in gamelan music, which he plays as practice. In particular, Holle is good at playing the rebab, a two-stringed gamelan instrument, actively [7] (Fig. 1).

According to additional information, AW Holle and his brother Karel Frederik Holle wrote books for education in the Dutch East Indies, particularly in the Priangan school. These books were printed in the Netherlands and were titled *Kitab Pangadjaran Basa Soenda* (1849/1850) and *Tjarita Koera-koera djeung Monjet* (1851) [9]. Haryoto Kunto,



**Fig. 1.** A.W. Holle sat on a chair and played the rebab among tea plantation workers played gamelan (KITLV)

in the book *Semberbak Bunga di Bandung Raya* (1986), depicts the personage of this tea plantation owner who takes a humanist approach to his employees and loves Sundanese culture very much. Every day he always wears traditional Sundanese clothes [4].

Unsurprisingly, A.W. Holle used a Sundanese cultural figure as a promotional icon to sell tea plantation output in the European market. Holle's strategy is to indite experiences and the beauty of interacting with the colony's culture, which is personable between Eastern and Western cultures. Although the cultural entity reflected is only a complement to the promotion of the tea it sells. Accordingly, the sale and promotion of tea became more enthralled. Unmitigated A.W. Holle brought indigenous employees on the Parakansalak plantation who provide gamelan with dancers to Europe; as part of the promotion of plantation products.

## 2.2 Parakansalak Tea Plantation at Expo Amsterdam

The Amsterdam exhibition in 1883 was the initiative of entrepreneur Edouard Agostini, a French businessman who collaborated with the Dutch kingdom. The orientation of this exposition was the international market, and notable commodities from the colony's district [8]. *De Internationale Koloniale en Uitvoerhandel Tentoonstelling*, which took place in Amsterdam on May 1, 1883, was attended by the kings and queens of the Netherlands. Twenty countries did take part.

The 60 villagers that made up the plantation's workforce were delegated by the Parakansalak tea plantation. They also sent tigers, horses, and buffalo to fill the display corner, which operates from May to October for six months [8]. The Parakansalak tea plantation troupe provided a realistic portrayal of the sociocultural life of the Sundanese people from the Dutch colony throughout the show.

Parakansalak tea plantation indites a realistic impression by establishing a Sundanese village at the exposition venue (called *kampong*) to abide for people/families from the Parakansalak tea plantation [10]. Parakansalak tea workers reside their daily lives at the event as though they were still in their hometown (Sukabumi).

The difference was that their place of origin was in the middle of a paradoxical concrete structure designed in the manner of a European town and constructed of wood

and bamboo. Unusually, all of their regular activities have evolved into an intriguing display for guests at the Amsterdam fair (Figs. 2 and 3).

This paradox evince the Parakansalak troupe arise unique and remarkable for exhibition visitors. The acclivity of the villagers from the Parakansalak Troup as reported by the Dutch who cited: making headbands, weaving cloth, and plowing the fields [8].

The Rijks Museum facilitated an extensive field for the territory of Kampong. In addition, the Dutch East Indies colonial government construct a building called Pendhapa. The name constitutes the designation of the building in Java. However, the building did not reflect the pendhapa in Java. At that time, the perspective of the Dutch had a taste for European and Middle Eastern buildings designed by William Ary Stortebeker. Terwen wrote the reasons for the differences in the physical form of the pendhapa in the following quote:

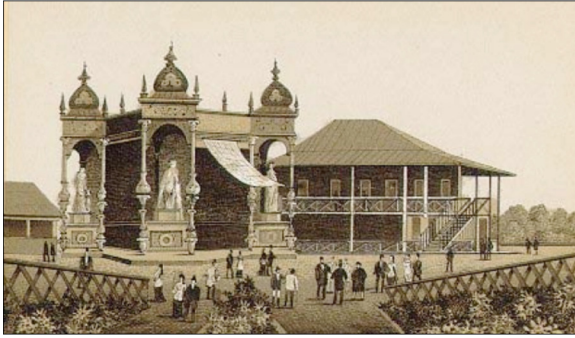
The background of these unIndian forms lies in the organizers in the Indies' opinion. No architectural form is suitable for a representative exhibition building: the house's original construction is too poor, and the compact form of the ancient Hindu temple is not ideal for use in the exhibition hall. Therefore, architectural firms from the Islamic



**Fig. 2.** The community at De Internationale Koloniale en Uitvoerhandel Tentoonstelling in Amsterdam in 1883, as well as the activities of the Sundanese residents there. (KITLV).



**Fig. 3.** Kampong in Amsterdam 1883 (KITLV)



**Fig. 4.** There is Pendopo architecture in the style of structures from the Middle East (KITLV)

world follow the best, all the more so because one can refer to the fact that the secular constructions of the Islamic world are the best [8] (Fig. 4).

### 2.3 Gamelan Parakansalak in Amsterdam 1883

The pendhapa at the exhibition occupation with acclivity in the evening whilst the Salak Parakan tea workers present gamelan accompanied some dances. De Lange, who had regard gamelan performances from a troupe of musicians from the Mangkunegaran castle in Arnhem in the antecedent four years, appreciate the player's gamelan that was steadfastly not competent. Nevertheless, it was evident inasmuch as the musicians were laborers in the Parakansalak plantation in Priangan or did not thoroughly dedicate themselves as professional gamelan musicians [8].

The identities of the dancer and gamelan performer are given in the Dutch article, and their images are captured on camera. The artist was a Sundanese from the plantation Troupe of Parakansalak. One Javanese, Sonto Taroeno, a puppeteer from Surakarta, was the only one the plantation hired.

Amsa and Eno, two dancers, are from Cicurug Sukabumi, while Semani are from Buitenzorg (Bogor). A violin player named Sidin Ahoem led the ensemble from Parakansalak, along with musicians named Rimboe, Wadi, Ansissin, Empang, Saminan, Jamam, Maih, Ueta, Andut, Salir, and Elor [8] (Figs. 5 and 6).

Daniil Veth expressed his preference for the Dutch king to hear the Wilhelmus song performed by a Dutch East Indies (colonial land) native at the exhibition's launch. The diatonic-scaled Wilhelmus, the Dutch national anthem, is accompanied by Gamelan Parakansalak [8, 11].

Surprisingly, the Parakansalak gamelan, which has a pentatonic scale, accompanies the diatonic scale song. These were two scales with distinct pitch scales. Musicians may anticipate tonal limitations in the Parakansalak gamelan by replacing missing notes with notes on the gamelan, with tones that represent or give the impression of harmonious music.

The cross-cultural dynamism performed by musicians from Parakansalak is the sensuous aspect of the gamelan acclivity in combination with the diatonic scale song. The





**Fig. 5.** Gamelan performance from the Parakansalak tea plantation Troupe in the Pendhapa



**Fig. 6.** Gamelan Parakansalak personnel in Amsterdam 1883

possibility of their musical collaboration marks the first time Indonesian artists who are far from their hometowns have collaborated.

The use of gamelan in concert in the shape of modern musical compositions serve as reminders of the events that occurred in the past and reflect them in the present. According to many musicians today, the blending of gamelan with foreign music is a “contemporary” phenomenon that they pioneered. Given their ignorance, this claim was understandable, especially in light of the history of the Parakansalak gamelan, which carved “gold ink” as the accompaniment to Wilhelmus song, performed in front of the Dutch king before Indonesia gained independence, and a great deal earlier than the Indonesian composers who claimed it was created.

#### **2.4 Fundraising for the Eruption of Mount Krakatoa by the Parakansalak Troupe in Leiden 1883**

On August 27, 1883, De Internationale Koloniale en Uitvoerhandel Tentoonstelling was occurring in Amsterdam at the same time that Mount Krakatoa erupted. Fire, rocks, and mud slamming the land occupied by humans caused 36,000 fatalities and devastation; the coastline of West Java and East Sumatra was destroyed by the devastating tsunami

that was unleashed as a result of the volcanic eruption in the Sunda Strait. The Studenten gezelschap India Orientalis raises funds in the Stadsgehoorzaal (city auditorium) in Leiden after the Dutch government announces the news through radiotelegraph in Amsterdam. 16 members of the Parakansalak plantation group traveled to Amsterdam for the show and engaged in performing arts to raise funds [8].

Using gamelan that was already on hand at the Ethnographisch Museum, the Parakansalak troupe played at the charity. The exhibition, which ran all night till six in the morning, featured wayang golék, topéng dance, and angklung performances by the Parakansalak Troupe.

Algemeen Handelsblad, a liberal daily newspaper in the Netherlands, complained that the Krakatoa volcanic charity performance went from dusk to morning for too long given the magnitude of the audience in Europe. Reviews include: One person commented: “It is silly, equating the show in Holland within the Netherlands Indies.” I said, “It was foolish to imply that the broadcast in Holland would be even worse than one on Java”.

The fundraising committee anticipated negative opinions that questioned the show’s success. For Europeans who disagreed with original performances from the Dutch East Indies (Performing Art from the Parakansalak Plantation) to still make donations to the Dutch East Indies’ relief efforts in the wake of the Krakatoa disaster, the committee set up a music chapel. [8].

According to press accounts of the charity performance, the Parakansalak Troupe from the exhibition site in Amsterdam took part in a fundraising occasion in Leiden. The critique addresses the artist’s artistic work:

The puppeteer (Koens Toekang rebab) Sidin from Priangan performs Negri Siloeman in Wayang Karaesjil (golèq) in Leiden. Wayang Purwa by foreman Pgnijagan from Surakarta, Sonto Taroeno.

Journalists wrote mask dance performances predicated on their European ‘glasses’, namely a form of pantomime (pantomime) that tumultuous the Leiden public, where dancers from the Amsterdam exhibition (Parakansalak) appear in that section [8]. Other reviews about dancers Amsa and Eno from the Salak Parakan troupe are as follows:

(After the break, we got acquainted with the angkloeng and tjongkakof dikon performances. While the angkloeng music was playing, Amsa and Eno, two exhibition ronggèng, played a dakon game) [8] (Figs. 7 and 8).

During the charity event, the entire Dutch audience is entertained with gamelan music and dances from the Dutch East Indies colony. The Parakansalak Troupe’s stay in Leiden, Holland, helped introduce its performing talents to a wider audience abroad. Been able to raise a sizable sum of money for charity in response to Mount Krakatoa’s devastation.

After the charity concert, newspaper reviews took a 180-degree turn. They wrote:

The journalist ended his story with the hope: ‘The payoff for the victims in the Indies was probably quite large, we have no doubts about it, as the audience filled the theatre [8].

The Parakansalak Troupe, which performed gamelan and traditional performing arts, warped Europeans’ perceptions of the beauty of colonial cultures and art.





**Fig. 7.** Dakon game that performance by Amsa and Eno (KITLV)



**Fig. 8.** The Angkloeng performance (KITLV)

## 2.5 The International Community's Response to the Parakansalak Troupe

The existence of the Parakansalak plantation in 1883 was not just a promotion of the Priangan tea commodity. More than that, for six months, the socio-cultural acclivity of the village society indite the content of appreciation in the exhibition. A historical event that occurred considering that the cultural entity of the colony had not yet become a marketable commodity. Unlike the case of tea commodities in the international market.

The exhibition's success rate indicator comes from the European community's substantial interest in appreciating the culture of the colonized peoples, which was still intensive due to the ethnocentric perception in Europe in the 19th century [12]. Ethnocentric causes European society appreciated colonized culture as inexpensive, barbarian, and primitive, so it was no surprise that colonization was legitimate and approved by Europeans who were said to have a superior culture.

The Parakansalak group first encountered the influence of ethnocentrism in Europe through the rejection remarks that adorn many newspapers at the beginning of their arrival in Amsterdam. By gradually introducing the cultural substance of the colonies, the

colonial administration of the Dutch East Indies got around this. One of them elaborates on Eastern and Western cultural entities in the pendhapa building, which combines Middle Eastern and European architectural designs and acts as the focal point for the Dutch East Indies colony exposition. The pendhapa building's similarities to the locus, a venue for performing arts that is open (without walls), supported by poles on the roof, and has no walls, are noteworthy.

Similar to how they were regularly seen in the Dutch East Indies, traditional villages can be seen not far from the pendhapa. Straw served as the foundation for the roof while wood and bamboo served as the building materials. The settlements can be examples of archaic and outdated buildings from the colony's territories. However, the six-month period gave the European populace enough time to fully appreciate the situational culture of the conquered people.

Whether they like it or not, sooner or later, they get used to this cultural contrast. Some excursion attendees even took part in making clothes, creating headbands, and using buffalo to plow the fields. At the pendhapa area, they also dance with the rongg ng while being accompanied by gamelan from Parakansalak.

F.W. Van Eeden, director of the Colonial Museum in Haarlem, wrote an extremely well-read piece for *Nieuws van den Dag*. For Europeans, the Troupe of Parakansalak events and the culture on show at the international exhibition are a great opportunity to get to know the Dutch East Indies population's character, who emerged pristinely, and he did not simply talk about knowledge and insights about the colonial world.

Eeden encourages viewers to look at the exhibit's objects and writes poetically about the inhabitants of the Dutch East Indies, as shown by the passage that follows:

Observe how the delicate colours, despite being drab, are so calming to the sight when compared to aniline paints in Europe, which are "harsh," "screaming," and "acute" to the eye. The colors are derived from natural plant materials, including sapphire wood, Mangkudu tree roots, curcuma, yellow from curcuma, indigo blue, and Bast soybean chocolate. The color red comes from stocklak, which is a tree trunk that has been hardened by parasitic shellac lice. These are the colors of nature, and they may be seen in their landscapes and ornamentation, which always complies with natural laws and restricts the use of unusual hues to small areas.

At the show, Eeden's expression of the realm in the sociocultural acclivity of the village society—the plantation workers from Parakansalak—glimmers in a synthesis of the language of Western development in opposition to native primitivism from the colonies. Eeden made the comment that people in Europe today don't care about the environment. The hamlet residents serve as both the human protagonists and the servants in the paradox. Additionally, owing to machine tools and simple jobs that can be completed by pressing a button, Europeans live privileged lives [8].

In summary, the village community sight is breathtaking and represents (trademarks) a country. According to Eeden, that is what the European identity lacks: "Our national character no longer expresses who we are, but rather a very flawed perception of our orientation toward Italy, Rome, and Greece. True barbarians, we Europeans are" [8].

The Parakansalak gamelan's presence during the exposition was a trailblazer in changing how Europeans view indigenous cultures (colonial lands). Progress, Western culture, and Western music are viewed as having been superior at the period by modern

standards. Contrarily, gamelan music was considered to be of inferior quality by the sons of the earth since it was monotonous and made people drowsy [11]. There is a growing stereotype that gamelan playing is grounded, or simply “down to earth” [11]. In other words, it’s the same as going back to the Stone Age and playing stupid music.

At that time, only one’s composer was impressed by the existence of the Parakansalak gamelan. Daniel De Lange was the man’s name. De Lange, however, made a comment regarding the *onderschikten* (bottommost) concert of gamelan performances. When *Wilhelmus*, the Dutch national anthem, was accompanied by gamelan, a basic level of appreciation of the sociocultural life of the colonized people was demonstrated. Lange suggests in his assessment that the gamelan from Parakansalak be shelved and replaced with the *saléndro* gamelan kept in the Leiden Museum [8]. Contrary to De Lange’s assertion, it does not address the issue of false notes that vary in size from the diatonic scale. Because of the dissimilar pitch intervals, neither *pélog* nor *saléndro* will correspond to the notes on the diatonic scale. De Lange’s criticism at least demonstrates the interest of Dutch musicians who value the Parakansalak gamelan performances in Amsterdam and Leiden.

### 3 Conclusion

De Internationale Koloniale en Uitvoerhandel Tentoonstelling Amsterdam 1883 provided the Parakansalak tea plantation company with the push to present an image (identity) of the existence of the Indonesian nation before the international audience. By portraying the colony as an entity with unusual and natural values and high value, this plantation group was able to counter the sly remarks about the colony’s cultural backwardness during the exhibition. The colony’s cultural activities, represented through performing arts, gamelan, and *kampong*, allowed European society to see the colony for what it was. They then flocked to show an interest in undertaking research on the sociocultural activities of the colony’s inhabitants.

The Parakansalak troupe’s participation in De Internationale Koloniale en Uitvoerhandel Tentoonstelling event during the Krakatoa explosion disaster was exhilarating. It turns out that all countries, ethnicities, colonial groups, and colonized people can collaborate to accomplish one goal, namely to raise money through performing arts acts from the colonized areas to support mankind who is struggling as a result of disasters. It is the epitome of *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), which Bung Karno adopted as the motto of the State of Indonesia in 1945 and which has since been universally embraced around the world.

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