

東印度群島巴達維亞城四個荷蘭人的閒談

East India Chat

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East India Chat 這一篇諷刺文章是在 1663 年印刷的。¹諷刺文章是 17 世紀時民間流行的劇本（和官方的文件比較起來的話，這種小冊子的內容是呈現現實的另一面）。一是因為它是在 1663 年印刷的，屬於歷史文獻，不過內容卻是虛構的，這可以說是一種以文學描寫現實的創作。一般來說，這一種諷刺文章，是在大事件結束了以後才寫的。由於其批評的特色，作者常不願具名，並在街道上散布。

這篇 24 頁的手稿是 1663 年寫的，但作者和出版地點不詳。流瓦登市省立弗里斯蘭圖書館所典藏的哈伯茲馬（Halbertsma）全集當中，也列入一篇上述這種虛構的諷刺性文章。²它的標題是「東印度群島巴達維亞城四個荷蘭人的閒談」（*East India Chat*）。文本中第一個角色是商人。第二位是軍官。其次是船員。最後是一位教義問答的老師。如詳加閱讀，可發現它包含 A 和 B，兩個份量和長度相當的部分，但僅僅 A 部分呈現這四個荷蘭人的對話。B 部分則是閻和赫立（Jan and Gerrit）這兩個荷蘭人教師的對話；他們都曾在福爾摩莎教過書。³

當時，荷蘭人剛被驅逐出臺灣不久。雖然其內容不太討論臺灣，但是批評東印度公司裡一些不太正直的貿易做法，也就是說，有私下秘密的走私貿易。為甚麼呢？因為東印度公司獨占貿易專賣權，因此其員工，就是商務員、士兵、船員、教士都不可以偷偷賺錢。另一方面，他們都知道他們的老伴也偷偷賺錢（就像他

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¹ *Oost-Indisch-praetjen, Voorgevallen in Batavia Tusschen vier Nederlanders. Den eenen een Koopman, d'ander een Krijghs-Officier, den derden een Stuyrman, en den vierden of den laetsten een Krankebesoecker. Gedrukt in't Jaer onses Heeren, Anno 1663.*

² 這裡並非此文本唯一的收藏處。至少還有另外一份保存於荷蘭萊頓市的荷蘭皇家東南亞暨加勒比海研究中心圖書館。

³ 第二部分的標題為 *Formosaense Regeringh, Onder Nicolaes Verburgh, Gewesen Gouverneur in Tayoan, en over Formosa. Met een Appendix van dierghelijcke Stof, of Samen-Spraeck tusschen Jan ende Gerrit beyde Schoolmeesters, d'eene in Soulang en d'ander in Favorlang een wijle tijds geresideert hebbende, behelsende, den verleden Stant aldaer.* 尼可拉·福伯（Nicolaes Verburgh）任內的福爾摩莎政府。福伯曾擔任大員及福爾摩莎總督。附錄當中為 Jan 及 Gerrit 兩位學校教師的對話。他們曾在台灣住一段時間，一個在蕭壠（今台南佳里一帶），另一個在法弗蘭（今雲林虎尾一帶）。

們一樣)。因此，內容中提到的四位主角，互相批評對方：五十步笑百步的意思。

接下來是巴達維亞城四個荷蘭人對話的翻譯，也就是「東印度群島巴達維亞城四個荷蘭人的閒談」的第一部分，已改寫成現代英文。文末註解有提到特定的荷蘭語表達方式以及對話當中的一些名詞，不過並沒有像本文一樣提供詳細的歷史背景註釋，而且把該對話視為荷蘭東印度公司時期歷史顯影的範例。此外，還有一點值得注意，這段翻譯首次出現，是在 2004 年台灣國際廣播公司 (RTI) 所發行的「福爾摩莎荷蘭時期的故事」 (*Tales of Dutch Formosa*)。⁴

East India Chat

in BATAVIA,

between four

DUTCHMEN

**The first of which is a Merchant, another a Military Officer,
the third a Ship Mate, and the last one a Catechist.⁵**

Printed in 1663

Time: 1663

Place: Batavia

MERCHANT: So, friends, being as we're all gathered here, so sober, with only tobacco, and no liquor, Mom, arrack, towack, not even a little beer; surely it will end

⁴ Heylen, Ann. 2004. "East India Chat." In Scott, Szabo, Heylen (賀安娟) (eds.), *Tales of Dutch Formosa. A Radio Docudrama in Four Episodes and Zeelandia*, (福爾摩莎荷蘭時期的故事——紀錄劇情廣播劇四集) pp. 258-272. Taipei: Radio Taiwan International (RTI). (台灣國際廣播公司) (book + cd-rom)

⁵ The style used here for the title and text preceding the dialogue is a close approximation of the style used in the original.

badly.⁶

OFFICER: Ay, what can we do; our means are not as great as our ideas. It's easy to count the pay of a poor soldier, but playing merchant turns out fine, so let us consider inviting some more of your kind to make our conversation merrier.

MATE: For sure, what you say is true; I also agree that it may entertain me for an hour or so.

CATECHIST: If we vote on it, I'll follow the majority.

MERCHANT: I do believe, Reverend, you won't say no to this. That's because you catechists not only tend to the needs of the sick, you also tend to a need for the bottle.⁷

CATECHIST: How can we expect this to have a good ending if we begin by pointing out each other's weaknesses?

MERCHANT: The soldier started first, so it seems that we have to finish the round.

OFFICER: I will speak the truth openly and frankly, provided it remains confidential and none of us will get angry about it.

MERCHANT: Fine with me, give it a try, but prepare yourself for a return blow.

MATE: I'll listen, and by turns take a shot as well.

CATECHIST: No matter what will come out of this, I'll play along, because I also may be getting a slap in the face. But be careful, I am one of the clergy and you are not.

MERCHANT: We'll leave religion unscathed, but the clergy will take a hit.

CATECHIST: Your kind should know that when you pick on one clergyman, you take on the whole lot, and that's a big number to deal with.⁸

MERCHANT: I do know that, and the government here and in Holland has been

⁶ *Mom* was a brandname for a Dutch beer brewed in Brunswijk. *Arrack* and *towack* are alcoholic spirits distilled from several plant extracts or rice. *Towack* is also known as "palmwine."

⁷ This is a pun on the Dutch words: *(d)ranke-* and *(k)ranke-besoecker*. The 17th century Dutch term for catechist is *krankebesoecker*, which translates as "comforter of the sick." *Drankebesoecker* literally means "one who tends to a need for the bottle."

⁸ This Dutch expression can be literally translated as: "When we clergy slaughter pigs, and pull one on the ear, all the others start screaming and it takes quite some effort to silence them."

sorely tried on it. Some important officials, if they were still alive and could speak, would surely bear witness. Later, we'll talk about them, but in the meantime, let the military officer untangle the clew⁹ that he made of the merchants. What do you say, sir? Now it is your turn.

OFFICER: Well, I stand by what I said. The merchants flip a coin and show it to us themselves. We know that such tactics earn them office and services, and in return gets them a salary and rewards in kind; we also see that they look after their own interests. When they come back from faraway places, they are loaded. They show off what they have and consume prodigiously, even back home, in particular the ones that frequent Surat¹⁰, the Persian coast, and the North.¹¹ The authorities get bamboozled even though they watch them with sharp eyes.

MATE: Yes, yes, my friend, to have is to have, but to get is the art. One cannot make a peasant understand how the nobleman earns his living. You people may fight over some little scrap, go for it with the sword, take it away from the soldiers, compete for it over beer or arrack, even take it out of the rations of the ordinary folk, because these poor devils moan and groan all the time. But they, and I mean the merchants, are smart enough to get money in a different way, simply because nobody notices it. As I happen to be the person who sails these people to and fro, I have heard them boasting of their doings and have made note of it.

MERCHANT: You are right on that one, mate, but you go too far. When it comes to merchants like us, what matters is that even if we engage in petty trade, you folks and the boatmen also benefit from it.

OFFICER: There's nothing wrong with what we do, and even if we step over the line, don't take it too seriously. You people ought to know that our officers need to stack away more than other folks. When stationed in a remote and barren places, that which we can grab and scrape together is barely enough to make a living.

MERCHANT: What do you say, clergyman? Petty trade may or may not go on amongst your ranks, since you only sail from one place to another to do your haggling? You clergy don't put that much in your pockets, do you?

OFFICER: They seem like holy people, but don't give yourself any illusions; they are

⁹ The Dutch word *kluwen* can be translated into the archaic English word "clew," or "ball of yarn."

¹⁰ Surat, located in the Indian province of Gurajat, was a great maritime center that harbored an important community of merchants. With its seaport, Surat became the center of not only Dutch but also English operations in the Arabian Seas region.

¹¹ "The North" refers to Bengal here.

the smartest traders in all of India. I do not believe there to be one place in the region where they don't have correspondents who load and unload the goods that they take on their voyages. Take note of it wherever you go: in the homes of the vicars and clergymen you can find all kinds of wares they have acquired, which often are not available anywhere else in the city.

MATE: No one knows this better than I do, because I have even delivered them goods several times.

CATECHIST: Alright mate, just be quiet. All of you folks are tradesmen, so you and your boatmen had better watch out for the one in control of the goods, especially the chief merchant of the castle; this Goens is the most haughty, opinionated greedy gut of India. Yes, all the local chiefs, wherever they are, play business partners with him, and together with the free burghers – such as Kempen and his chaps – they manage to incite and bribe the court at will. On one occasion, he even managed to buy a load of quicksilver from Mr. Maatzuyker at the Company wholesale price, such that within a few days' time he made a profit of 4,000 rixdollars. He then invited them as his guests, and that van Gent was so drunk that he did not even squawk, because if he had squawked, he might have been caught. But Goens, being married to Miss Kalandrin, could get away with it. Moreover, they promoted him first to treasurer-general, and afterwards to director in Surat. This way, his people know which way the wind is blowing. Even though the collectors of the import and export taxes were quite able to point out the outrageous costs, namely the 50,000 rixdollars that the government, and subsequently the Company, had shorted them, yet they did not dare to prosecute, in deference to the Company. Time shall tell what the Company lawyer in Amsterdam, to whom I understand the evidence has been sent, is to conclude.

MERCHANT: Mate, how does this sound in your ears? Is that why the old ship captains stay home and no longer set sail?

MATE: Yes, my friend, it seems that we have been fooled. However, it is quite common practice. It would be better if the merchants stopped at that, which would be acceptable for the Company, but they steal too, and that's going too far. It would also be better for her if they inflated the budget with things that are not really a part of shipping needs. And they ought to re-engage the old contractors for the goods that need to be shipped to and fro, and award them about the same price as before, provided that be an honest bargain. In Surat the annual sum for this amounts to about 25 to 30 thousand guilders and even more, but the spending and purchasing of goods should not be more expensive than that. Besides, Pieter Symonszoon is well aware of

the fact that some of the commodities stored in the warehouses are often sold at a bargain price and that Moorish and heathen tradesmen are hired to trade these goods to other private buyers. What do you think, sir? Is that not a way to get rich?

CATECHIST: Yes, mate, those Moorish caps are known to us. The Company employees, as well as some others in India, were well aware of how a certain party got hold of the goods and continued daily in their roguish dealings. They'd better take care of things in a way that this buffoon Caron, and hogs such as Pieter Symonszoon van Teylinghen, Joost Dirckszoon Broeckhorst, and others have done. Verburen, Cumens van Gent, van der Meyde, Verbeeck, and other griffins are still in India, and they may expect to be pardoned. However, I don't want to see Pelgrim Crab van Goens and Coyett escape their ordeal.

MATE: It seems that in India, theft and petty trade are fully interrelated, and that almost no one is exempt. It is believed in India that, even among the administrators, things are not as they ought to be, so why shouldn't the new arrivals follow in the footsteps of their superiors? In turn, these superiors increasingly vex their employees by implementing absurd laws, forcing them to make a move and return to the fatherland as the only means of freeing themselves from this kind of slavery. In addition, the story goes that these are the ones who arrive home with the most goods, and are most respected. Yes, they even ask for the hand of the administrators' daughters in marriage, as did Sery and his relative Pieter Symonszoon. All this, whilst the old, loyal employees are not respected, as if they had never even served the Company. Yet, the old sea dogs are also the ones who show no pity for the East-Indian sailors who are now being ruled by that know-nothing butcher Schagen, who has twice been sent home for uselessness and incompetence.

OFFICER: Yes, things are going a lot better here! Ay, think about it! Steur – the fool – and Caesar, Verbeeck, and Sterthemius, these know-nothings are the Company's scum, and especially that van der Meyde in Ceylon. Nowadays who isn't like shit, seeking only to feed his own insatiable appetite, and so stingily using any means to serve the God of Greed? I do not want to spare Verbeeck either. During his term in office in Amboyna, he became so notorious for his dirty tricks and involvement in the Company's trade monopoly that almost all of India speaks about it. His incompetence has made it impossible to carry out the matters of the Company, and yet he remains Extraordinary Council of India and even dares to write to the fatherland to apply for the title Ordinaris Council of India. Meanwhile, his son-in-law, the outstanding and unsurpassed Sir Arnold de Vlamingh van Oudshoorn, testifies that Verbeeck is not worthy of the rice the Company feeds him; he is merely a fawning parasite.

MATE: All right, merchant, take note of it, because the things that are spoken of here, concern mostly your people.

MERCHANT: Likewise, Jan Thyssen, one of your kind and even the patron saint in these matters, cannot be left out of the picture. He is a man who can make war on his own and kill for it, as has been the case in Ceylon. Because of this, he was kicked out of his government, and yet he managed, just like this Arent Barentszoon – another one like him in Malacca – to use big bribes to gain favors from the highest authority in Batavia. But his mother-in-law, an angel of mercy for the poor soldiers and sailors, knew how to set things straight. As such, sir, you cannot say that your close brothers do not belong somewhere in our conversation.

CATECHIST: Does this not agree with my saying that no such examples can be heard about with regard to our ecclesiastics?

MERCHANT: Listen, clergyman, if Formosa could speak, what kind of worthy stories would come to light about what the clergy did over there? I dare not say much about those folks, but they are hypocrites. Ask Miss Mendoucks about it; she will fill you in with the details and then you'll know how, in the name of holiness, her people engaged in scandalous haggling and petty trade, and how they tyrannized their fellow brothers. Note that some of the congregation in Batavia just did not want to dance to their tune, especially men like Lindius and Tesschemaecker. As for Roman, Lord, forgive him for he knows not what he does.

CATECHIST: Yes, my friend, generally speaking the ecclesiastics are privileged, and why should they not be in these far away countries, when they notice that all around them do lead enjoyable lives? That the authorities treat them favorably does not matter. Look, they are not popes or priests. Sure, they are bound by order, but on expiry of their time of duty, they are free to live as they like. Should the authorities tie to them a vow as tight as one of the holy commandments, they would throw India into confusion, and at the same time hightail it out of there and go any way they saw fit. But for you it is something different – you folks cannot but abide by it. Otherwise you would be immediately deported and someone else would be appointed in your place. These new appointees would at once seek Mr. Hulft or some other person to whom they'd be completely subordinate, as Mr. Hulft was a wealthy man, highly esteemed in Amsterdam and deliberately sent over by the Directors Seventeen to come here and deliver Governor-General Carel Reyniersen from his liquor problem. But things turned out differently, and he was appointed director general, whilst secret commissions (as was believed in India) were rummaging around to set matters

straight again. Had that man lived, how he would have reformed matters in India!

MERCHANT: These were the right means to chase the officials of both higher and lower echelons from India. However, General Maetzuycker's Jesuit-like political tricks almost had that one take to his heels.

OFFICER: "Almost" is not good enough. In any case, I cannot see where this would hurt us since we are not accustomed to much better anyway.

MATE: I, for sure, would be hurt. Things would turn out far worse than they are now. I'd say (like General van der Lijn once said to the Authorities): "I'd rather serve the heathens and Turks than the Company."

CATECHIST: There's no reason to complain too much these days about close supervision in India. It only happens to those who are either in or out of favor with the government. But the way things are going now, so I've heard, when the return fleet from Batavia to the fatherland anchors on Sundae Street, if there is any suspicion amongst the chieftains and free burghers that they have valuable contraband goods, these will be, in a manner of speaking, forcibly seized, and in case one discovers that these goods are worth more than two months' salary as stipulated in the *artikul-document*¹², then the whole lot will be confiscated. Or, when the fleet docks, a moment won't be wasted for the administrators in their pleasure craft to go aboard the ships and relieve them of their illegal cargo. This is the way the devil may serve the Company, and the ones who meet their peril will be exiled by the orders of the Seventeen to Rosen-Gain or Mauritius.

OFFICER: You had better believe it, my friend. Over there, the rules are so strict and rigorous, there won't be much to smuggle. Yes, they might even do strip-searches for contraband.

MERCHANT: Ay, friends, but it won't come to that, and should it, then so be it. The other chaps in India will find a better way to invest theirs, and send their money or goods over with the English, as has happened before.

CATECHIST: Let's hope that they won't end up like the sailor Bult, as well as Assenburgh and the others, who got almost nothing in return.

MATE: Before long we'll hear how these self-seeking and self-centered ones like Goens, Bogaert, Pelgrim, and other hypocritical employees have fared.

¹² The *artikul-document* refers to the curtailments on private trade.

MERCHANT: One has heard about how the administrators have done business with the Fockers¹³, and in so doing, made friends with some of them.

CATECHIST: Yes, things aren't like they used to be. When the Company made big profits, its officials were not that particular. But now with so many welfare cases like their squealing widows and widowers, some extra compensation must be made.

MATE: I have heard it said, and have also seen it with my own eyes when we employees in India were freer to do one thing or another, as you know what I mean. In those days, the Company was better off than now; that's why they are vexed.

MERCHANT: Yes, it was freer then, you may say that. Back when they all came from the fatherland they were more encouraged. These days, the Company does not engage her older employees; she sends out new ones, whose ineptitude or incompetence makes a mess of Company matters.

OFFICER: How is that? Maybe the Company imagines that the old employees know too much, and make her too fat, as is the case in the fatherland.

MERCHANT: They may imagine whatever they want, but they should remember this: thin lice, no matter how skinny, bite more than fat ones. I also say that an old, experienced employee is worth more to the Company than the new ones who come over for the first time. Who wouldn't take pleasure in serving the Company, when instead of being promoted, they merely have to climb over people and grab the positions of the chief merchants who really earned their titles. Between those and the newly appointed ones, (the ones that the head merchant does not want to give in to), only a few have managed without a lot of effort. Consequently, Company matters have become akin to those of a brothel.

CATECHIST: These and other impertinent matters will break the Company, and at this stage, I believe that most of the participants are unaware of it.

MATE: Just let the Company fret about it. The elder employees who have returned to the fatherland will cooperate with other merchants or potentates, for instance the English or the Danish, in frequenting the Indian ports, because there are enough profits to go around.

OFFICER: But the Company shall be first, even if this requires taking up arms.

¹³ *Fockers* most likely refers to the Fuggers, a wealthy family.

CATECHIST: Yes, arms, but Dutch countrymen won't go to war over the East-India Company again, especially not with the English. It has already cost too much money and blood as it is.

MERCHANT: The Company would do better to open free trade in India, because she stands to gain a lot by that. But do you really believe she will?

MATE: No, I don't believe the Company will. On the contrary, the English or any other wealthy potentates may do so in order to lure the Indian trade into their countries.

CATECHIST: I hope they won't end up like the two ships from Genoa... remember?

MERCHANT: Yes, unfortunate things happened then, but in case the Company would start a similar venture, things would be different, and the ones in charge of the Company would make the company see through different eyes.

OFFICER: I don't really care how it comes to pass as long as there are profits to go around.

MATE: The same goes for me – as long as there is some reason for sailing, even if it be plundering.

MERCHANT: I agree, people trade everywhere, and I'll always come out on top. Now, I ought to say something about the state of affairs of the Company, so you can draw some conclusions about her rise and imminent downfall, but I cannot speak for the people, especially the administrators. That's why I shall leave it at that.

CATECHIST: Let's turn it over to God; He'll see to it that we won't despair.

MERCHANT: Well, friends. I say *tabee*.¹⁴ It is time for me to part and go to the office.

OFFICER: And I am going to take over the watch, and check out how the Soljers Family is doing. *Tabee, banje, banje*.¹⁵

MATE: My hour also has run out. I believe that the mates are waiting for me with the boat to sail out to the big ship. Fare thee well!

¹⁴ *Tabee* is the Dutch usage of the Malay expression *tabé* (*tabik*) for "goodbye."

¹⁵ *Tabee, banje, banje* is the Dutch usage of Malay expression *tabé* (*tabik*) *banyak, banyak*, meaning "bye-bye, many times."

CATECHIST: May the Lord be with you, and I thank you for the mostly good companionship. I enjoyed our merry conversation, which at first seemed rather discomforting, but nevertheless finished in a peaceful manner, such that I may add in conclusion:

**Tired of the House of Wealth, he rails;
And to the East-Indies, he sails.**