Council and President of the Bench and:

One gold or silver button might adorn the clothing of former governors, secretaries to Batavia’s government, all justices, and directors of subsidiary posts, and these dignitaries could also wear shirts and camisoles made of silk. None below the rank of junior merchant could wear golden shoe buckles.\(^{48}\)

The Company did not employ women, but regulated the value and type of jewelry and dress materials they could wear. Chinese were forbidden to "Europeanize" by changing their dress.\(^{66}\) Another ruling stipulated that no one was allowed to change his ethnic attire to the Malay dress, on the grounds that some people guilty of a crime or in trouble with creditors pursuing them for debt sought refuge in a different ethnic neighborhood (Malay neighborhoods being popular) and dressed accordingly.\(^{67}\)

The Klings (Muslims from Coromandel) and Gentives (non-Muslim Indians) wore a long tunic reaching to the knees, tied around the waist with a cummerbund, which the Muslims closed on the right and the Hindus on the left. Their breeches were wide at the top and narrow at the bottom, with cuffs trimmed with fringes. Of course, they wore a turban. Often their garments appeared to be of the finest cotton or silk, the turban of muslin—all Indian cloth.\(^{68}\)

The coarser cloth worn by ordinary people, included the brightly colored chintz *tapis* from the Coromandel coast, which were very popular with the pepper growers behind Banten.\(^{69}\) That people were identified by their clothing was also apparent when in 1771 a Ceram messenger could identify to the Dutch the foreigners who disregarded the trade monopoly

\(^{48}\) Jean Gelman Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia*: 66-7


\(^{68}\) F. de Haan, *Oud Batavia*, vol 1: 486-7; F. de Haan, "everyday Life in Batavia" in M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofsz et al., *Dutch Authors on Asian history*: 171

\(^{69}\) Coen cited in Om Prakash, *The Dutch Factories in India 1617-1623*: 217, 250
there, indicating their origin by their clothing.\textsuperscript{70}

\textit{Life Cycle Ceremonies}

There is strong evidence from both historical and ethnographic sources to support the proposition that a sizeable portion of the imported cloth was never converted into clothing but kept for other areas of use-value. These textiles were consumed, circulated, or exchanged in multiple spheres of value, following changing commodity paths. In the following sections that refer mainly to eastern Indonesia, the function of cloth in life cycle and court ceremonies, in the world of trading and social transactions, and in a few other related uses, will be discussed.

The work of anthropologists and art historians in Indonesia tends to support the generalizations that, 1) life cycle ceremonies in Indonesia have a significant social function covering a whole range of ritual high-points from birth, transition to adulthood, marriage, and death; and 2) that these passages in life are recognized as times of exchange, in which "the ceremonies often centered on the moment when textiles are transferred."\textsuperscript{71} James Fox, writing about Roti, Ndao, and Savu, pithily summed up the centrality of cloth in the life cycle: "Cloth swaddles the newly born, wraps and heals the sick, embraces and unites bride and groom, encloses the wedding bed and, in the end, enshrouds the dead."\textsuperscript{72}

Both statements express the idea that ceremonies held on the occasion of a life cycle event involve cloths and center around cloths. Given the nature of available sources for the period covered by this study, particularly for the 17th and 18th centuries, it is not surprising that information about the

\textsuperscript{70} VOC 3329 (1771): 217

\textsuperscript{71} M. Gittinger, Splendid Symbols: 20

\textsuperscript{72} James J. Fox, "Roti, Ndao, and Savu" in Mary Hunt Kahlenberg ed., Textile Traditions of Indonesia: 97
use of cloth in life cycle events was sparse and irregular. The observed uses of cloth in other areas of social life, not related to the life cycle, were greater. This differential incidence, it seems, was not due to the absence of cloth in life cycle ceremonies in earlier centuries, but to the selectivity of the Dutch reporters who, with the exception of Valentijn, were less interested in recording the intimate, private events of families and communities than in the public happenings in the market place and the courts. The information which is available confirms that cloth consumption in life cycle ceremonies added substantially to the overall demand for cloth commodities and currencies.

Young children did not need much cloth. More often than not they went naked.\textsuperscript{73} However, there were instances when special chintz tapi for children were acquired, imported by the VOC.\textsuperscript{74} When children grew to be 10 to 12 years old, rites were held to celebrate the transition from childhood to adulthood. In Ambon the first menstruation of a girl was celebrated among the women when a cloth, the cemar kain, the cleansing cloth, was given. Boys, in certain tribal areas, who were accepted into adulthood were given a cidako, or g-string, to wear.\textsuperscript{75} The color, design, material, and manner of carrying the new cloth was meaningful in the cultural environment in which the new adult resided. The new cloth signified the young person's change of status to the adult world.\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{73} A. Reid, Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, vol 1: 86

\textsuperscript{74} VOC 11207 (1691): 46-7. The two sizes described as chintz cloths for children were 2.10 x 0.80 and 3.60 x 0.90 meters. There were also tapi sarassa, and tapi telpocan in children's sizes, 360 pieces packed in one bale.

\textsuperscript{75} G.J. Knaap, Kruidnagelen en Christenen: 74

\textsuperscript{76} In the ethnographic present, for example, a cloth given to a circumcised boy in Kodi, west Sumba, had a finishing border that was said to make the young adult responsible and "strong" in contrast to his aimlessly wondering younger siblings, in D.C. Geinaert-Martin, "The Snake's Skin: Traditional Ikat in Kodi" in G.Völger and K. v. Welck eds., Indonesian Textiles Symposium: 41
Marriage Exchange

The single most important cultural realm in which wealth was exchanged was in marriage. Marriages altered the relationships between two families, realigned feuding families, and received and incorporated foreigners. A major characteristic of east Indonesian society, as described by a number of anthropologists, is a tendency to different forms of dual organization in which a community or portion of it is symbolically divided into segments which engage in a continuing series of social exchanges, including marriage. The segmentation most commonly discussed is between bridegivers and bridetakers in marriage ceremonies in which the transfer of cloth is at the center of the wedding ritual. Typically, cloth was included in the set of "female" gifts that bridegivers give to bridetakers, in contrast to the "male" gifts of metals, weapons, and more practical items that the groom's people gave back to the bride's people. The use of cloths, in addition to its real economic value as in modern terminology "bridewealth," carried as well deep symbolic values. Cloth stands for the fertility of women, weaving being identified as a female role. Women's fecundity, potency and hence economic value in society were embodied in the cloth they wove.

A person who had many daughters was considered lucky, because it was a common custom to "sell" off the girls in a family to the highest bidder. Thus to most Europeans the system of bridewealth appeared as a system of brideprice. A girl who was pregnant or had a child, but for whom the bridewealth offered was considered too small, remained in the house of her

---


79 François Valentijn, Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien, vol 3: 244 where the practice is mentioned for Bali around 1700
parents. The bridewealth in the Philippines consisted often of parcels of land or money. However, in a marriage between slaves a piece of cloth was exchanged. A number of beliefs and practices testifying to the close link between weaving, women and social value have been reported in the history of Indonesia and the Philippines. For example, the rhythmic sound of little bells or bamboo clappers attached to the loom symbolized the industriousness of a good wife or marriageable maiden.

In most of island Southeast Asia, where divorce was very common and slaves were frequently bought and sold, it does not seem to have been unusual to put a value on a girl who could make a good wife. For example, a slave with a special skill such as weaving or needlework, brought a higher price and was judged more valuable than one who had no skills. Paying a bridewealth for a future wife was a way of showing gratitude to the parents who had brought her into the world, given her care, raised her well and would suffer a loss when she left. In turn, parents who were proud of their daughter and valued her presence in the house showed their love for her by putting a high value on her, that is, selling her dear. The expression, "buying and selling" a wife, frequently found in the literature, was by no means degrading in this context, just as Reid informs us that divorce carried little social stigma.

There is mention of cloth involved in bridewealth payments in

---

80 "San Augustin on Filipinos" in BRPI, vol 40 (1725): 221. San Augustin wrote this in the Philippines after 40 years of missionary work.


82 E. Casillo, "Arts and Peoples of the Southern Philippines" in G. Casal et al., The People and Art of the Philippines: 130-1

83 François Valentijn, Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien, vol 3: 243

84 A. Reid, Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce: 151-58. A similar concept of bridewealth settling a debt as a recompense for taking away a person as a resource was given for the Pacific islands by Nicholas Thomas, Entangled Objects: 67
northern Maluku in the later part of the 17th century.\textsuperscript{85} It seems that bridewealth payments involving foreign cloth occurred among wealthy and royal families in the 16th and 17th centuries, not among commoners as it came to be in the 19th and 20th centuries. Among the Chinese cloth always appears to have played a role in wedding ceremonies. For a Chinese girl in Ambon these consisted of beautiful silks with gold embroidery, and cotton fabrics.\textsuperscript{86} In the bedroom of a Chinese couple on their wedding night all the costly textiles of silk and gold were displayed along the walls.\textsuperscript{87}

Imported textiles, particularly the so-called \textit{patola} which gained the generic status of "expensive, ceremonial cloth," figured prominently in many marriage exchanges. Magellan's diarist Pigafetta, who visited the Spice Islands in 1521, wrote the following interesting observation. Note that in this account, foreign cloth moved from the bridetakers to the bridegivers. Cloth clearly stands out as a currency used to purchase brides in the island world east of Java.

The king of Bachian gave our king [a local temporary ally of the Spaniards] five hundred \textit{patols}, because the latter was giving his daughter to wife to the former's brother. The said \textit{patols} are cloth of gold and silk manufactured in China [sic], and are highly esteemed among them. Whenever one of those people dies the other members of his family clothe themselves in those cloths in order to show him more honor.\textsuperscript{88}

Of particular interest is the role the trade cloths came to play in exchanges between foreigners and the local population. Modern ethnographic literature shows that foreign objects including cloth became incorporated in the bridewealth to be paid by the bridetakers, while in most

\textsuperscript{85} Robertus Padtbrugge, "Beschrijving der Zeden en Gewoonten van de Bewoners der Minahassa" in BKI, vol 13: 320

\textsuperscript{86} François Valentijn, \textit{Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien}, vol 2: 163

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid: 277

\textsuperscript{88} Antonio Pigafetta, "Primo Viaggio Intorno al Mondo" in BRPI, vol 34: 59
cases the bridegivers continued to contribute locally produced textiles. In tracing the historical development of this reversal in the flow of cloth in marriage exchanges, it is necessary to look back at cloth that came from abroad in earlier times.

The process began before the VOC period, when trade between India, China and western Indonesia increased because of larger demand for the raw products that Indonesia supplied in abundance, such as drugs, resins, aromatic woods and spices. Foreign traders settled in coastal trading towns to obtain these valuable Indonesian products, bartering for them with foreign goods, particularly textiles. There are several mentions of Dutch officers and personnel of lower rank participating in temporary relationships with women for the duration of their stay. Their gifts often included a piece of Indian cloth. Through marriage alliances with local women and the payments of gifts, partly in cloths, foreigners obtained legitimacy for their commercial, religious, and political establishments. Woven cloth after gold, silver and iron was the medium *par excellence* for establishing these relationships between people ashore and people on ships.

Other transactions included exchanges of necessities for foreign objects. For example, some tobacco was exchanged for a *vadem* (1.70 meters) of *tancoulos*, a red *betille* cloth, by a sailor in 1688. These were not calculated exchanges like barter, but a gift for services: provision of food, a place to rest ashore, to have washing or sewing done. Sometimes the gift was small, like an empty Dutch bottle, or a needle. Reciprocity was expected, but a money value was not always specified.

Long distance peddlars and traders, in contrast to women stall-traders in market places, were men. Masculinity became associated with long


90 VOC 1483 (1688), No. M, Brouwer: 18, 25; VOC 1727 (1706): 292-3, 299-300. 323

91 VOC 1483 (1688): 51
distance trade because of men’s access to traded valuables. Historically, men (Chinese, Arabs, Indians, and later Europeans) came ashore with their cargo containing foreign cloths. They married local women and established themselves, some permanently, others temporarily. This was also the case in Austronesian societies in general—men were the seafarers for thousands of years before the Europeans. The mythic pattern of seafaring, in-marrying male is found from Madagascar to Hawaii.92

The association of textiles of foreign origin with men would gradually have extended to Indonesian men. The Indonesian men were the builders and navigators of boats. They voyaged from the hinterlands to the coasts and from small coastal bays to nearby trading towns where their locally produced surplus could be bartered for necessities and luxuries.

It appears that the contacts they established stimulated a growing demand for the exotic cloths which men and women everywhere in the islands appreciated. Some men would have begun to do business in trading the foreign cloths, stopping off in places along the shores and river banks on their return voyage. The increasing import to Southeast Asia of Indian and other foreign cloth stimulated men and women to dress the best they could especially at ceremonies. To include foreign cloth as bridewealth seems a natural consequence augmenting the demand for them to increase.

In 1605 a factor of the English Company in Banten observed that men and women wore cloth from Coromandel. It seems that although the women could dye and weave themselves, they preferred to buy the imported cloth to clothe their families:

Also there commeth from thence [Coromandel] many sorts of white callicoes, which they themselves doe both die, paint, and guild, according to the fashions of that countrey. Likewise they can weave a kind of striped stuffe, both of cotton and rinds of trees; but by meanes of their laysinesse there is very little of that wome.93

92 Georg Schurhammer, Francis Xavier, vol 3: 57-60 where the this process is described for Java.

93 Sir William Foster ed., An Exact Discourse: 172 fn 1
The increase of trade at the end of the 16th century and easy access to imported cloth from India in trading towns like Banten probably decreased the cloth production of local women who had easy access to the imported cloth. These changes must have had deep economic ramifications over and above their theoretical significance for ceremonial marriage exchanges. The sizeable imports by the VOC might have, consciously or not, also affected the Indonesian life cycle exchanges.

The demand for women as wives and as workers is a widespread phenomenon. The flow of bridewealth had always been a stimulant to productivity and consumption. Women usually did not travel and were expected to take care of home and children: they also provided cloth that they could weave themselves. Their cloth had value in the community, among other reasons, because they could control the supply by their own industriousness, whereas men could not control imported textiles. The women provided a guarantee that cloth would always be available for the ceremonial occasions that demanded it. This residual female power provided continuity with the traditional view of women’s value in society and possibly explains why women, particularly outside the coastal port towns, continued to weave cloth. It also throws light on the symbolic significance attached to the exclusive use of traditionally woven cloth in certain ceremonials in recent times.\(^4\)

Men took pride in the fine cloths that their women wove or provided.\(^5\) There was satisfaction for the women in the men’s appreciation of their cloth-making skills. When more and more women became acquainted with foreign cloth, naturally they attempted to absorb and incorporate selected designs, patterns, motifs, or hues and other details that appealed to them into their own cloth production. Bühler illustrates with examples the influence of the patola designs as cloth decoration by the island

\(^4\) Barnes, Ruth "Patola in Southern Lembata" in Indonesian Textiles: 13

\(^5\) A. Reid, Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, vol 1: 85, 89
women. Possibly this process took place along the lines of controlled clan structures and title systems. The women would have been stimulated to make cloths that were considered "prestigious" or more attractive. There were restrictions on which women were allowed to weave prestige cloths. It would only be human for these women to compete with each other in a preoccupation that they practiced. One's name (nama) as a skilled or fine weaver was at stake, especially for those women in the court or those generally known for their extraordinary skill.

The foregoing discussion of the persistence of residual power of women as weavers, the rising incidence of adaptation, imitation, and incorporation of foreign textile motifs and designs, together provide the larger context for understanding how the textile world of Indonesia was reshaped before and during the years of active VOC involvement in Indonesia's economy. The development of patola inspired designs and chintz patterns in Indonesian textile traditions is the continuing manifestation of these earlier processes. The development of batik is a special case because the technique of batik decorating, unlike ikat, is post-loom and seem to have involved initially the use of imported undecorated Indian cloths (quotation above).

While it is true that the process described above is somewhat speculative and not yet thoroughly grounded in historical investigation, it cannot be gainsaid that foreign textiles did influence the contents of the traditional bridewealth. Ethnic communities varied in the ways that they incorporated the foreign trade cloths: some groups incorporated them as the exchange cloths that men offered as bridewealth, other groups incorporated the patterns and designs of the trade cloths into the weaving used for ceremony. Much could be learned from a diachronic study of cloth


98 Ruth Barnes, "Patola in Southern Lembata": 13, 16 and T. van Dijk and N. de Jonge, "Bastas in Barbar. Imported Asian Textiles in a South-east Moluccan Culture": 29 both in Gisela Völger and Karin v. Welck eds. Indonesian Textiles; Jos Platenkamp, De
designs and patterns.

In some places imported cloths were not used as central ritual items but were evident as part of the paraphernalia surrounding ceremonies. They were displayed as symbols of the wealth of an individual or the community, used as hangings, panoplies, or folded and piled up high to demonstrate accumulated wealth. All these alternative uses of cloth surrounding life-cycle ceremonies further support the argument that in Indonesia there was a huge demand which explained the continuing consumption of textiles supplied from overseas by the VOC.

The importance of these and similar reports lies not only in the confirmation of the widespread custom that bridegivers typically offered textiles to bridetakers, but also in the fact that textiles were tied to the whole system of wealth, prestige, influence, and power.\(^99\)

**Death Ceremonies**

The uses of cloth surrounding the rites of passage related to death and burial have a special relevance to consumption and demand. Cloth was buried with the person, in effect removing the commodity from active circulation, and thereby creating a continuing demand for replacement from local weavers and cloth traders. Indian cloth was widely used in such

\(^99\) For example, in the 1850s among the Chinese in Java large quantities of cloth and clothing items were exchanged in a wedding ceremony. It was reported that the day before the wedding, the family of the groom or bride takers brought the wedding gifts, placing them on four trays per table. The number of tables and the value of the gifts depended on the status and wealth of the families involved and were the result of sometimes lengthy negotiations which had taken place a long time before the wedding day. The number of tables expected in an upper class family was 24, in a middle class 16, and in a lower class family arbitrary. In the case described for an upper class family, eight tables out of twenty-four were covered with cloth or clothing, items valued at several thousand guilders. Aquasie Boachie, "Mededeelingen over de Chinezen op het eiland Java" in BKI vol 4: 286-7. At present this custom still prevails in Halmahera as was seen in Jos Platenkamp's video (100 minutes) Tobelo Marriage.
ceremonies, creating additional demand. In pre-Islamic Makassar a Portuguese description from 1544 attests:

The custom of these people was that when a person died they kept him in the house for three months in a great arc of wood . . . and they put in it all the rich cloths, patola, and other fine white cloths, and gold, according to the status which each possessed . . .

In rites of passage related to death, not only were the dead honored by the bestowal of textiles, but those who attended the ceremonies also added to the consumption by dressing in a manner benefiting the occasion. For example, in a Chinese funeral in Ambon around 1700, all members of the family wore a prescribed grayish cloth like a sack, open at the bottom and the top, pulled over the head and hanging down to the knees. When, a few years later in 1709, a Muslim leader died in the same locality, 120 imams followed in the procession in long white caftans and turbans while other members in the funeral train wore white mourning bands, veils and bows on their sabres. With regard to the dead body, Muslim adat prescribed that the corpse be ritually washed and wrapped in an odd number of normally white cloths. Colored cloth was allowed, but not red. Those who fell in battle were buried in their blood-stained clothes. The amount of cloth

100 Paiva, cited in Helen and Anthony Reid, South Sulawesi: 6; A report by Antonio Marta for 16th century Ambon mentions the same custom. Hubert Jacobs ed., Documenta Malucensia, vol 2: 266
101 François Valentijn, Oud en Nieuw Oost Indië, vol 2: 285
102 H.J. de Graaf, De geschiedenis van Ambon en de Zuid-Molukken: 105-6
103 ENI, vol 3: 222
104 B. Lewis, Ch. Pellat, and J. Schacht, The Encyclopaedia of Islam, vol 2: 442. In India the Muslims were discouraged from wearing silk. It was thought to interfere in worship when the individual was expected to be in a state of submission to God. There was tension among the Indian Muslim groups concerning the wearing of silk. Some rulers dismissed it while on other occasions it was permitted. The situation was partly solved when weavers made a "cotton-silk mix called mashru (permitted silk) which spread all over India since it helped the less orthodox to look fine while conforming to the law." C.A. Bayly, "The origins of swadeshi" in Arjun Appadurai ed., The social life of things: 290
that was consumed depended on what the family could afford and on its status.

Combes, a Spanish missionary, writing in the mid 1600's on Magindanao and Sulu, which were then within the sphere of Dutch trading activities, was astounded by the generous quantities of cloth displayed in funerals, where the deceased were treated as royalty.

In the shroud alone, they clothe the dead person in a hundred brazas of fine muslin, which serves him as a shift. Over that they place rich patolas which are pieces of cloth of gold, or of silk alone, worked very beautifully, and of great value, pious generosity endeavoring to give him the best and to clothe him in the finest and most precious garments. It is a law, established by immemorial custom, that the children and near relatives each clothe the deceased in a piece of gauze or of sinampuli (another fabric of equal estimation) arranging it with such loops and knots they find space for it all.... There is no one so poor or so wretched that he does not own a piece (of cloth) eight brazas long, which is reserved for his burial.105

It is possible that under the influence of Islam, burial cloth was kept simple in accordance with the teaching of the Quran, verse VII, 26 "We have revealed unto you clothing to conceal your shame, and finery, but the garment of piety, that is best." It appears that Muslims in Indonesia and the Philippines frequently used uncolored cloths for burial.106

In Magindanao in 1699 the beloved Sultan Barahaman passed away two weeks after the Sultan's eldest son, the raja muda, had succumbed to a disease. The brother of the Sultan distributed 500 pieces of Indian trade cloths valued at £1,327.50 to the people who came to pay their respects at the

---

105 Francisco Combes, "The natives of the southern islands" in BRPI, vol 40: 165-6

106 J.C.M. Radermacher, "Korte beschrijving van het eiland Celebes" in VKBG, vol 4 (1786): 209; Alit Veldhuisen-Djajasoebrata, Bloemen van het heelal: 32 writing for the last part of the 19th century.

In both the Philippines and Indonesia, there existed a tradition, predating the VOC period, to hire wailing and chanting women to cry and chant for the duration of the mourning period. Sometimes that lasted one day, sometimes one month depending on the importance and wealth of the dead person and the family. In Banda in 1690 the wailing women were paid with a cloth woven with gold thread that was imported from Makassar. François Valentijn, Verhandelingen der Zee-Horenkens en Zeegewassen in en omtrent Amboina, vol 3, part 2: 40
funeral. In 1850 in Java, the dress code for mourners in a Chinese family still called for unbleached cotton. It was the custom to cover the face of a deceased Chinese person with a satin cloth. The corpse was dressed in a quantity of cloth commensurate with the wealth of the family and the age of the deceased. If it was affordable, the ideal was to dress the corpse in nine layers of double silk shirt-coats.

The use of cloth in burials is a continuing motif in Indonesian culture. It was practiced before the Dutch came and continues to this day in modern Indonesia. Kielstra wrote about the burial customs of the people in west Sumatra in 1750 that "they wrap their dead in so many pieces of white cloth that when they die they need more cloth than they wear during their lifetime." Writing about Sumba, Gittinger noted the "excesses of the Sumbanese" in their use of textiles as funeral gifts.

Above all, the rich man collected textiles against the day of his own funeral when huge numbers of cloths would be required as gifts and still more to wrap the corpse into a gigantic, formless bundle. The wrappings would be buried with the dead man so that they could accompany him to the afterlife.

If the deceased was a woman, often her loom and other implements were laid beside her. From the perspective of the total stock of available

107 VOC 1637 (1700): 270-81

108 A. Boachie, "Mededeelingen over de Chinezen op het eiland Java" in BKI, vol 4: 291


110 M. Gittinger, Splendid Symbols: 21

111 Antonio de Morga "Relation of the Philippine Islands and of their natives, antiquity, customs, and government" in Mauro Garcia ed., Readings in Philippine Prehistory: 305; Pedro Chirino, The Philippines in 1600: 326-9. In the ethnographic present the Toba Batak bury in a secondary burial rite with the bones of ancestors a ritual cloth, the ulos, in order to wish them lasting prosperity and well-being in the afterlife. Lea Bolle, "De tugu van de Toba Batak: een graf also monument en baken" in
cloth in the archipelago, these funerary textiles were totally consumed, just as others were completely worn out on the bodies of the living. All had to be replaced to further fuel importation and production, and thus add another cycle to the consumption of cloth as commodity and currency.

**Power and Communication**

In the sections above, different perspectives were given on the use of cloth: as a commodity in inter-island trade and local market exchanges, as money in special cases, on the body as a garment and social marker, and as content and accent at life-cycle ceremonies. One additional perspective needs to be added to complete the picture of the use of cloth: its role in power relations and in communications, such as gift exchanges. When people bartered or traded cloth in a market situation in its broadest terms, the exchanges were matched, meaning the value of the goods balanced the value of the cloths. There was no hierarchical relationship per se between buyer and seller: cloth was almost socially neutral.\(^{112}\)

It sometimes happened, though, that such a transaction between two equals had not been completed and the case would end up in the courtroom. In the late 1600s, in Saway in the province of Ambon, two cases being arbitrated involved the barter of a slave for cloth. A Papuan female slave had been sold for cloth at an equivalent of 15 Rixd., but the cloth had not been received, while in another case three gongs, cloths, and fifteen porcelain plates had been paid, but the slave had not been delivered.\(^{113}\)

Barter, gifts, and reciprocal services between representatives of the Company and local rulers were sometimes conducted on a level of equality,

---

\(^{112}\) J. Fox, "Roti, Ndao, and Savu" in M. Hunt Kahlenberg ed., Textile Traditions of Indonesia: 97

\(^{113}\) François Valentijn, Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën, vol 2: 212-14
but could also be conducted hierarchically, in response to demands of local power relations when important personages were involved, as exemplified in the records of historical alliances between the Company and the local authorities. In the case of Magindanao the transactions were frequently conducted from the Dutch perspective as among equals, trading cloth for rice, cloth and iron for a boat, or cloth for cicir (wax) and caret (tortoise shell). However, there were also instances where the Sultan acted superior to the VOC employees and demanded greater gifts of cloths valued from f1,200 to f1,500, or he let the Dutch wait for a long time before permitting them to trade. In desperation English and Dutch traders would bribe officials with, for example, fine muslin cloth in order to advance their trade.

A clear case of hierarchical relationships between ruler and subjects is the collection of tribute. A Ternatan chronicle of the early 17th century described the tribute that was paid to the Sultan of Ternate when the war fleet of Admiral Kichil Ali went on a campaign to assist the Sultanate of Bone against the Sultan of Goa. Although the figures might be overstated, the intended thrust was to indicate considerable wealth of which much consisted of cloths. Returning a roundabout way, the Admiral collected tribute from Buton, Flores, Sulawesi's east coast, Banggai, and Sula Islands:

The sum of this tribute to triumph must have amounted to at least 1,000 sarongs, 10 shiploads of bolts of cloth, a considerable amount of grass plaitings in the form of mats, pillows and tatumbu and 22 war vessels. It was judged a priceless war booty, reflecting not only Ternate's power in the early 17th century, but also the recognized value of cloth to a court that had acquired sophistication and adopted foreign styles of dress for which cloth had to be imported.

Other uses of cloth as currency were expressed in the payment of fines

---

114 R. Laarhoven, "The Dutch-English Rivalry over the Maguindano Sultanate" in Solidarity, No 110: 4-5

115 VOC 1483, No M (1688): 18, 20

and rewards. For example, people from Bonoa, Kelang, and Assahudi, in the Ambon region, had been pirating people from the shores of the surrounding islands. The slave raiders were subjects of the Sultan of Ternate, so the Sultan's intervention in the matter had been sought, but lacking support and action from those quarters, the harassed people in Ambon invited the Dutch to help them request the return of the kidnapped individuals. A hongi or fleet of local vessels, korakoras, was organized in which the Dutch joined. When the hongi arrived in Bonoa, they found that some of the pirated persons were no longer alive or present. Through the mediation of the appointed leader, the Captain Hitu, the Bonoans in restitution were made to pay 100 patola for the loss of an orangkaya, and for every ordinary person lost, 60 patola in addition to a fine of 1800 patola.  

It is still common in Sumatra to pay fines in cloth.  

In Ambon payments in cloth were made to dancing girls, dressed in chintz and colorful silks in Ambon. After they finished dancing it was the custom for an older woman to reward them with a silk cloth or an uti uti as if to say "thank you and do not tire yourself any longer." The orangkaya Guliguli from Ceram once brought back nine shipwrecked slaves who had drifted ashore holding on to a piece of wood. He had taken care of them for six weeks and delivered them back to the Perkenier owner in Neira, Banda Province. The orangkaya was gratefully rewarded with a variety of fine cloths. 

Gift giving was another social function of cloth which the Dutch adapted in their operations. The daily journals of the Company are witness

\[117\] F.de Haan, "Rumphius en Valentijn als geschiedschrijvers van Ambon" in Rumphius gedenkboek 1702-1902: 24  


\[119\] François Valentijn, Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien, vol 2: 173. The girls wore regularly a blouse of "apple blossom" (vol 2: 72) writes Valentijn. He means cloth that was dyed using kasumba dye (vol 2: 373).  

\[120\] François Valentyn, Verhandeling der Zee-horenkens: 27
to the expenditures of gifts to rulers and authorities which consisted, for a
large part, of textiles. During 177 years of bookkeeping, the Company spent
a total of f19,166,128 on gifts in Asia.\textsuperscript{121} Many thousands of pieces of cloth
would have been given away annually. One year in Ambon in the 18th
century 30 pieces of fine, painted chintz with small flowers; 20 pieces of
checked chelasses; and 40 pieces of fine, red cambaya were presented to
chiefs.\textsuperscript{122} Some lists of gifts of cloths are rather impressive. In 1700 to the
King of Bone was sent:

1 piece gold Persian
15 ells Dutch velvet aurora
1 gold alegia
1 silver alegia
1 gold taats (unknown textile)
10 fine chintz
10 pieces sarassas
6 pieces muris
6 pieces cassa Bengal
6 malmals
6 adatis\textsuperscript{123}

In addition, there were bottles of rosewater, elaborately decorated guns
and pistols, and lacquered shields. Similar assortments of textiles and
rosewater were also presented to the wives of the late Raja Palaka. The
Council in Batavia regularly requested exquisite European cloths or unusual
clothing items to be sent from the Netherlands in order to smooth relations
with the rulers in Asia in places where they maintained a factory or
ambassador. The Dutch would bring foreign, made-in-Holland, curiosities as
presents to a ruler. The European gifts were perceived as very valuable and
reciprocated with valuable Asian gifts. The Company calculated that it made
profits in these gift exchanges.\textsuperscript{124} For example, the King of Jacarta wanted

\textsuperscript{121} J.P. de Korte, De Jaarlijkse Financi"ele Verantwoording in de VOC: Bijlage 11A
\textsuperscript{122} VOC 3439 (1776) part 1: 162; 3595 (1781) part 2: 327-8
\textsuperscript{123} Fran~ois Valentijn, Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien, vol 3: 172
\textsuperscript{124} H.T. Colenbrander ed., Jan Pietersz. Coen, Bescheiden vol 1 (1614): 54 After a
request for goods was written down the author continues ". . . to sell and to give away
because in the Indies gifts need to be presented, thus, if these showpieces were here, a
good amount of money could be saved (soo me te vercoopen also verschenken dewijle in
100 red woollen hoykeskens, known also as dreumelde hats that were worn by sailors and hung down on their shoulders. Also fine camelot, laken in several hues, and knitting needles were requested in 1614. The items were relatively cheap in the Netherlands, but were perceived in Java as a valuable gift.

In 1657 a gift to Raja Longnan of Bali included 6 ells carmosin red laken, 4 committers, 4 sarassa gobars, and 3 patola of 8 asta, while a similar gift to Raja Calerang included the same cloths but fewer of them, namely 3, 4, 4, and 2 respectively. This indicates that the Raja Calerang was of a lower rank than Raja Longnan. The quantities and types of textiles very clearly showed the mutual relationships and statuses between the giver and the receiver or among several receivers if there were many. In Magindanao where slaves were valued highly and a policy existed that no slaves could be sold or exported without the sultan’s permission, Dutch merchants brought two young slaves as a present, but dressed them up in Indian salpicados, distar, and belts.

The value of the gifts was calculated both by the giver and the receiver and a counter gift carefully evaluated. VOC personnel were notorious for being stingy. The Dutch resented the English and some others for being more liberal in that respect. Luxurious gifts of gold-woven pieces of clothing and an axe decorated with precious stones valued at 30,000 rupias or f120,000 were presented to the Sultan of Aceh by the son of the Mughal in Deli. Such a luxury would have been unthinkable for the Dutch. The

---

Indien schenckagien gedaen moeten werden, soo soud men nochtans, dese frayheden hebbende, dickwijls een goet stuck gels daermede besparen)."


127 VOC 1483 (1687): 8

128 Realia, vol 1 (1643-1800): 437-8

129 Dagh-register Batavia (1641): 206
presents that the VOC Governor in Japan was obliged to present in audience to the shogun every year were considered an extravagance and grudgingly given. The presents underwent thorough scrutiny before being approved by the bongioisen, representatives from Edo. As a rule the crown prince was given a gift worth half of what the shogun received.\textsuperscript{130} The valuable Japanese kimonos which the Dutch received in return were sometimes given again to royal personages in other courts in Asia.\textsuperscript{131}

A set of rules mandated which gifts were suitable for whom under certain circumstances. Other than the Susuhunan in Java, no one was allowed to receive a Persian horse.\textsuperscript{132} It was appropriate for the Governor-General to give 20 pieces of the finest Indian tapi sarassa and patola as a wedding present to the Princess and Prince of Jambi in 1675.\textsuperscript{133} On one occasion in 1648 the Chinese presented the Governor-General with Indian cloth. It may seem strange that the Chinese presented the Company with Indian rather than Chinese textiles, but reportedly the Indian cloths were held in much higher esteem.\textsuperscript{134}

Gifts often had an underlying message. Sometimes this was expressed in many ways: by the color of a wrapping, the motifs painted or printed on the cloth as in batik in Java, a saying of the prophet embroidered in Arabic script along the edge of the cloth in Mindanao. A keris not properly wrapped up invited revenge. Some readings of a textile gift were wrongly interpreted. An unfortunate Portuguese gave the King of Borneo (Brunei) a tapestry that

\textsuperscript{130} A.C.J. Vermeulen ed., The Deshima Dagregisters, vol 1 (1681): 10. Confirming the seriousness of expenses that gift giving entailed for the Company is the long list of 110 pages in which Pieter van Dam showed to the Company's Directors how much was spent on the extravagance in Japan. If that had not been an issue, it would not have been treated so extensively. F.W. Stapel ed., Pieter van Dam, Beschrijvinge, vol 2, part 1: 554-664

\textsuperscript{131} H.T. Colenbrander ed., Dagh-register Batavia, (1636): 91

\textsuperscript{132} Realia, vol 1 (1658): 442, (1710): 437

\textsuperscript{133} W.Ph. Coolhaas ed., Generale Missiven, vol 5 (1675): 84

\textsuperscript{134} Dagh-register Batavia, (1648): 149
had figures of men on it; the King was convinced that those men would kill him in the night. Thus, both the tapestry and the bringers of the gift were removed.135

Among the textiles that the Company presented to rulers were red and white betille, taken mostly red but also in a variety of other hues, silk distars, sarassa gobar, committer, tape sarassa, silk patola, kain gulung, red damask, satin, red and white parcalle, Mataram gobar, betille Ternatan, alegia, velvets, fine blue bafta, parcalle and muri, Persian gold and silk cloths, Japanese kimono, alcatif, and armosins. It goes without saying that a Mataram gobar was not presented in Ternate, and a betille Ternatan was not given to the shogun, for example. All these textiles were worthy of a ruler, although the majority would be given away again to wives, minor rulers, state officials and other deserving persons. Textiles circulated from commodity to currency, and back to commodity status. Such a switch could sometimes offend. Once the King of Tanjur in Coromandel offered three cloths of honor to the Governor-General in Batavia; the cloths never reached Batavia, but were sold immediately as if it was a commodity, which was not well appreciated.136

If a ruler or chief received gifts or a message from another high person through the representative who was sent on the mission, the receiver would reward the messenger or representative with cloths. Sarapada, who came as an emissary to the Governor-General, received not only cloths for himself but also black bafta for the crew that took him on his mission.137 In western Indonesia the power of cloth was demonstrated in the giving of a sarong of a particular local kind to all envoys, courtiers and visitors to the court of Aceh which they were obliged to wear. A Gujarati ship commander in audience with the Sultan of Aceh in 1603 was helped into wearing "a red silk jacket, a coloured headcloth with gold embroidery, a yellow sarong embroidered with

135 Manuel de Faria y Sousa, The History of the Discovery and Conquest of India by the Portuguese, vol 1: 308

136 Realia, vol 1 (1764): 333

137 Dagh-register Batavia, (1636): 207-8
gold, a belt with Arabic letters in gold, a kris with its guard in gold encrusted with precious stones and its hilt of black coral.\textsuperscript{138}

The circulation of local and imported cloth sketched above in ceremonies (other than funerals) and rituals of exchange, has an important implication for trade: these cloths were not destroyed or worn out. However, while they could be counted as part of the total stock of textiles, in practice they were withdrawn from normal circulation because they were hidden away as clan treasures and family inheritances.

In eastern Indonesia precious cloths that were used for special occasions such as at a festive dance or at a reception of important visitors, were stored in the house in handwoven baskets, chests, or containers of palm and pandanus leaves (kabilas) with decorations of nipa and white-cut pieces of shell. These tutombos (containers) were about 60-90 long x 1-30 wide x 30-90 centimeters high.\textsuperscript{139} The ruler’s cloths, clothing, and jewelry stored as treasure were cared for by the patoribili among the Latowa (Sulawesi). These persons were not allowed to let other persons into the room and were responsible for anything that disappeared.\textsuperscript{140} Everywhere in Indonesia imported cloths were found among the treasures.

The net effect of this withdrawal was to maintain the demand for replacements and additional imports. When treated as ceremonial objects and prestige items, textiles became subject to the effects of status-driven accumulation, which impacted the overall trade in textiles. By definition, accumulation, as in collecting treasure, results in effective withdrawal of items from circulation so that the net effect is scarcity and therefore stronger demand and more trade.

\textsuperscript{138} Frederick de Houtman, "Le 'Spraeck ende Woord-boek" as cited in Anthony Reid, \textit{Age of Commerce}, vol 2: 238


\textsuperscript{140} G.K. Niemann, "De Latowa" in BKI, vol 32 (1884): 222;
Although textiles are commodities ultimately expressed in the value of metals for the Dutch, who had a Europe-centered mental set, in the mind of the Indonesians there is a residual and irreducible value in cloth that could not be equated with money. This is because cloth has a fundamental connection with the socio-cultural fabric of Asian village life and court ceremonies. Cloth enters into the symbolic universe of social exchange between men and women, between groups, between rulers and subjects. Unlike precious metals changing hands in bazaars, cloth touches the body and soul of people.
CHAPTER 3

INDONESIAN PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY

The Indonesian Capacity for Cloth Production

It is important to address the production side of textiles in Indonesia to understand the long tradition in it of Indonesian women. The following section looks at the widespread cultivation of cotton, and indicates the quantities that the Indonesians could produce for the Company over and above that for their own consumption. The regions that were climatically not suited to grow cotton imported skeins from the islands that grew, spun, dyed and traded it. Only two small areas of Indonesia yielded a crudely spun silk in the 17th century, but many women knew how to weave and work with the imported silk thread from China.

Gold leaf and gold thread were essential in embellishing the cloth to make it appear rich. A notion of the quantity of gold thread that was absorbed and a few details about the little known history of gold leaf and thread will be presented. Dyeing threads and decorating finished cloth was well practiced in 1600. The technical knowledge the women applied to dyeing thread was still puzzling textile experts to the beginning of this century.

In showing below the complexity of what is involved in the elements of cloth production it is hoped that the capacities of the Indonesian women weavers and dyers to produce exquisite products will be appreciated and valued. Dutch sources of the VOC period do not reveal information about the loom. In the last chapter of this study it will become apparent that the innate weaving and dyeing skills of the island women contributed to reenergizing local commerce and provided society with the cloth for which there was an insatiable demand.

The issue of local production capacities will be discussed against the continuing Dutch search for profitability at the expense of local producers.
and traders. The profitability equation was sufficiently maintained until the trade balance kept by the central bookkeeping office in Batavia started to show a deficit: four years in the 1670s, three successive years (1685-7) in the 1680s, and again from 1690 onwards until at least 1780 except for one gainful year in 1691.\(^1\) The offices in all the eastern Indonesian provinces, Batavia, Melaka, and Ceylon were financial burdens to the Company during those years of negative flow.\(^2\)

Dutch monopolistic policies to control the export of spices which will be discussed in the next chapter and the import of textiles were bound to be challenged by both local and other foreign traders. A persistent challenge was the contraband importation of Indian textiles to be sold outside Company auspices, a "smuggling" trade through Batavia, Banten, Makassar and many minor ports and beaches beyond Dutch surveillance or reach. The more serious challenge, however, came from local producers who always had the capacity to grow their own cotton and dye materials, produce their own yarns, and organize their village women weavers and dyers. The smuggling and weaving capacity of the Indonesian women was delineated by the Dutch in Makassar in 1679:

---

\(^1\) F.W. Stapel ed., Pieter van Dam, Beschrijvinge, vol 3: 346-7 which concerns the inter-Asiatic trade; G.C. Klerk de Reus, Geschichtlicher Ueberblick: Beilage VIII shows the profits and deficits of the VOC in Asia: i.e. the shipments with goods that arrived from the Netherlands added to the profits made in Asia, less the costs of the return goods to the Netherlands and expenses incurred in Asia to maintain the VOC establishment. The Asian deficits began in 1724 and did not recover but increased gradually reaching 90 million in 1780.

\(^2\) G.C. Klerk de Reus, Geschichtlicher Ueberblick: Beilage XI. F.W. Stapel in a footnote to the results in Pieter van Dam, Beschrijvinge, vol 3: 347 gives as the reason the diminishing buying power of the Indonesians and the increasing competition of the English and the French. This viewpoint shared by many other historians, was partly true. Indonesian society was becoming more strongly polarized because the Dutch favored dealing with the regents and Chinese captains who became petty rulers among their people. The volume of wealth was thus shared among the many petty rulers who represented a very small middle class, while the large majority stayed poor because of the heavy burdens laid upon them by the petty rulers who had to deliver to the Dutch if they wanted to keep their positions.
There is little commerce [for the Company] in Makassar because the avenues for import by the Buginese and other small merchants are too many to prevent, but more so because these people know how to clothe themselves and above all as rich as they desire because almost all women are able to spin and weave, be it of silk, fibre, cotton, gold thread and also from the bark and leaves of certain trees, so much so that it is astonishing; and which they have applied increasingly for some years now.  

Ironically the Dutch were unwitting collaborators in the resurgence of Indonesian productive capacity in textiles as well as in related industries that required land, labor, and political organization. In their effort to find alternative profit centers to supplement Indonesian spices and Indian textiles, the Company’s Council members began to encourage the growing of cotton and indigo, components essential to the production of textiles. The main rationale for this, however, was not to supply local weavers; in fact, the Dutch tried to buy out locally produced yarns in order to discourage local weaving. Cotton and indigo were cultivated for export to Europe. The Company also was instrumental in the importation of Chinese silk and gold thread, the latter being in great demand as a value-added embellishment to locally woven cloth used and sold in Indonesia.

After the Dutch concluded a contract with the ruler of the Javanese State, the *susuhunan*, also known as Sultan Amangkurat I, as a reward for Dutch assistance in recovering the ruler’s power against his dynastic enemies in 1678, the Company gained tremendous power over Javanese trade, productive land, and productive manpower through chiefs in the coastal towns and in the Priangan district, which was awarded to the Dutch in the treaty. This treaty was a pivotal event in Dutch-Indonesian relations, for it opened up significant possibilities for expanded Dutch involvement in agricultural production outside traditional spices. The plan for an agricultural scheme had been conceived a few years earlier in an essay by

---

Peter van Hoom on the benefits that could be expected from colonies. In addition to cotton and indigo, the Dutch began to encourage the forced cultivation of coffee and other minor products, a significant precursor to the "cultivation system" in post-VOC, colonial Indonesia.

In the textile trade it is important to distinguish trade in finished fabrics from trade in raw materials that go into the manufacture of cloth. In a discussion on local production and trade, we need to separately consider such weaving and decorating ingredients as cotton and silk yarns, gold thread and gold leaf, indigo and other dyes. Some of these materials were traded vigorously, both locally and overseas. It is necessary to analyze Dutch attempts to manipulate Indonesian productive capacity, always with the Company's profitability equation in mind. The Dutch began to intervene and participate in the production and trade of these ingredients in the last decade of the 17th century, after they became aware of the decreasing sales of Indian cloths. The declining sales of trade cloth in Indonesia and its consequences will be discussed in Chapter 8 and 10. While the textile trade of the Dutch was declining they were threatened by the Indonesian capacity for textile production. One of their control measures was to set up a system of quotas to be met by Java's governmental units, especially for cotton and somewhat later also for indigo. Although the Dutch captured part of Java's productive capacity, they could not break the vigor with which local initiative was developing and promoting substitutes for the Indian imports.

Unfortunately, Dutch sources say very little about local cloth production in Indonesia during the VOC period. Much more information is

---

4 J.K.J. de Jonge, Opkomst, vol 6 (1675): 130-146. The establishment of "colonies" was seen also as a solution to solve a problem with the burgers in Batavia who could not make a living because they too were handicapped by the monopolies in trade. Colonies had been mentioned earlier by Coen and van Diemen, but in the context of building Dutch enclaves with Dutch or European immigrants. P. van Hoom expanded the concept to include, among others, occupation of land, the way the Spaniards gave haciendas to Spanish Old World and New World immigrants in the Philippines.

available in the literature of the 19th and 20th centuries than from that of the two preceding centuries. Because the Dutch, busy establishing themselves in the islands, overlooked the value of Indonesian trade cloths and ignored existing patterns of trade in those fabrics, they began to seriously confront local textile production only when it challenged their sales of Indian imports.

_Cotton in Indonesia_

More than a dozen species of the genus _Gossypium_, the cotton tree or shrub, of the _Malvaceae_ family, are found in Indonesia. Through trade contacts many other species were introduced. For example, the Dutch introduced the _Gossypium religiosum_ from America, locally known as _kapas panjang_. This variety had a superior long staple, but the growth and development of the plant took longer, which did not suit the Javanese because it occupied valuable rice land. Cotton could be traded in the market as raw cotton, i.e. the fluff of the blossom of the cotton scrub with seeds in it, or cleaned, with the seeds removed. It sold throughout the archipelago and was delivered to the Dutch as skeins of spun yarn.

Some of the qualities of cotton that made a difference in the spun yarn were the colors of the floss: reddish (_kapas mera_), yellowish, or white blending into greenish-grey. Other qualities of cotton that added value to the thread

---

6 The remotest and main species in Asia were the _Gossypium herbaceum_ and _Gossypium arboreum_. Edward Hyams, Plants in the Service of Man: 101. Details about Indonesia's _Gossypium_ species can be found in, for example, F.A.W. Miquel, _Flora van Nederlandsch Indië_, vol 1: 162-4; G.J. Filet, _Plantkundig Woordenboek voor Nederlandsch-Indië_: 148-9

7 P.J. Veth, _Java, Geographisch, Ethnologisch, Historisch_, vol 1: 539. After the rice harvest, during the dry season, the Javanese planted cotton as an annual on the _sawah_ beds. The perennial species were on the _tegal_ fields. R.E. Elson, "Aspects of Peasant Life in Early 19th century Java" in D. Chandler and M.C. Ricklefs, _Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Indonesia_: 60-1
were the fineness\(^8\) and hairiness of the fiber, the capacity to absorb moisture, the elasticity, the sheen, and the length of the staple which could range from about two to seven centimeters. For the people in Java the annual varieties (\textit{G. herbaceum}) were most convenient, because they could be intercropped with rice.\(^9\) Local names like \textit{kapas bengala, kapas jawa, kapas bali, kapas palembang} (from China), \textit{kapas pulu laut} (from Barbados) may reflect the history or the place of origin of a particular species.

The major cotton-growing areas in Indonesia exporting for local or international markets were southern Sumatra, the Sumatran west coast from Padang to Indrapura, Java, Bali, Lombok, Sumbawa, Flores, Buton, Salayer, Mangarai, southern Sulawesi, and Ternate.\(^10\)

The lands of Mataram where the \textit{susuhunan} ruled in central-east Java had produced cotton for a very long time. The Javanese customarily paid their ruler tribute in the form of cotton yarn (\textit{panyumpleng} in Mataram), believed to be from the first ripe seeds, which produced the finest thread.\(^11\)

\(^8\) The thickness varies from 1/150 to 1/30 millimeter. Cotton does not grow on clay or poor red soils. The climate has to be dry and warm. In Java, planting was done in May and harvesting four months later. B.H. Paerels, "\textit{Katoen}" in C.J.J. van Hall & C. van de Koppel eds., \textit{De Landbouw in de Indische Archipel}, vol 3: ??? BLISS 4A3tj/H174d =call #

\(^9\) Cotton needs the right amount of rain in the growing period and dry weather after that. The pods and seeds can be utilized for making fodder and oil. Whether that was done in the 17th century is not known, but oil from the seed was produced by the end of the 18th century, after 1784, when Makassar was ordered to send the \textit{kapas} seed to Batavia. I.H. Burkil, \textit{A Dictionary of the Economic Products of the Malay Peninsula}, vol 1: 1120-1125; J.D. Hooker, \textit{The Flora of British India}, part 1: 346-7


Indigo and coarse woven cloth including *slendangs* were also given in tribute.\(^{12}\) The Dutch explored the possibility of buying yarn from the Javanese as early as 1617-18, having seen samples of quality skeins in Japara and Pasaruan, to send them to India when there was a shortage of cotton there.

There had been a Dutch prohibition on the growing of cotton in the hinterlands of Batavia because priority was given to use the land for rice cultivation. Rice was always in short supply to the Dutch. In 1664 this was changed when the intercropping of cotton and rice was also encouraged in the Tangaran and Krawang.\(^{13}\) By allowing cotton production to increase, they simultaneously spurred the revival of weaving as a home industry in these regions. In 1678 during his campaign through Kediri, a Dutch army commander noticed the intercropping of rice with cotton in the lands of Mataram, and the cultivation of flourishing indigo fields.\(^{14}\) This was duly reported in Batavia, setting in motion a chain of reactions aimed at developing a cultivation system.

Some four years earlier a letter from the government in Batavia reached the Directorate in the Netherlands outlining significant policy directions. This document, known as: "Preparatory considerations and advice concerning the Dutch colonies in the Indies," was a blueprint for what was to come. A solution was needed to address a growing deficit, a decrease in sales of Indian cloths, and an increase in local textile production. The management of the Company in Batavia recommended finding other sources of profits by developing Pieter van Hoorn’s idea about colonies because


\(^{13}\) J.K.J. de Jonge, *Opkomst*, vol 6 (1666): 101-2. The cotton growers from central Java were brought to Batavia’s hinterland to start the plantations. W.Ph. Coolhaas ed., *Generale Missiven*, vol 3 (1664): 470. The demand for cotton grew in the Netherlands. Surat could not supply enough and the price jumped from f0.30 in 1626 to f0.50 per pound in 1686, F.W. Stapel ed., *Beschrijvinge*, vol 2, part 3: 102, 104.

\(^{14}\) J.F.J. de Jonge, *Opkomst*, vol 8 (1678): CXXXIII
Colonies mean to bring people in who are put to work, plant and cultivate the lands which are already under cultivation or can be made ready for it."15

How this concept became linked with the sales of the Company's Indian cotton will be become clearer later in this chapter.

Local textile and other industries had been rekindled already in central Java, Banten, Sumatra, and around Makassar at the instigation of the ruling families in those regions. Each region had its own reasons for reacting in this way to the Dutch.16 After 1673 the sales of Indian cloths in Batavia, which served a large area of Java and a few surrounding localities off Java, took a downward turn.17 The decline of cloth sales in Java will be discussed in Chapter 10. Dutch officials gave three main reasons, namely, 1) the increase in weaving by Javanese women and 2) the large competing import of Indian cloths through Banten, which was still a free harbor throughout the 1670s, and the poverty of the Javanese who had fought so many wars.18

The Dutch intercepted the competing Indian cloth trade conducted by other foreign traders with the Javanese residents. It closed a treaty with a troubled Javanese State of Mataram in 1678 that promised many commercial advantages19 and conquered Banten in 1680.

Discouraging local weaving by buying up the supply of cotton yarn, the Company hoped to contain the expansion of both contraband trade and local production and redirect the population to buying Indian cloths from the

15 J.K.J. de Jonge, Opkomst, vol 6 (1675): 130
16 J.K.J. de Jonge, De Opkomst, vol 6 (1659): 83
18 W.Ph Coolhaas, Generale Missiven, vol 4 (1684): 673
19 M.C. Ricklefs, War, Culture and Economy in Java 1677-1726: 35-6
The Company bought the cotton skeins for cash from the regents and rulers, including red-dyed yarn, actually stimulating the production for as long as the rulers found markets to sell to. In 1698 the Dutch allowed Chinese to settle along trading routes in Java, for example between Samarang and Kartasura, to collect provisions and cotton yarn on their behalf.

Throughout the VOC period most of the bales of cotton the Dutch shipped to the Netherlands came from the export regions in India, especially Surat. Increasing prices of Indian cotton thread in the 1680s, followed by political disturbances in India after 1700, induced the Company to export Javanese cotton to the Netherlands. Much, if not most, of the cotton was collected from Krawang and Ceribon. In 1697 the Javanese were supplying all the cotton that was needed to fill the demand for the Netherlands. The Company circulated samples of four grades of cotton in the Priangan with the prices that would be paid for the skeins of cotton thread. At the end of the 17th century and early in the 18th century, the Company paid prices that ranged from 18 rixd. per pikul (125 pounds) in the early period, to 36 rixd. for first-grade cotton and 25 rixd. for second grade. These prices had been raised to stimulate production for export to Europe. When the cotton production in Surat increased in the middle of the 18th century, the price in the archipelago was decreased.

In 1733 a contract was closed with the susuhunan for delivery of 300 pikuls per season. The susuhunan forced upland and inland village groups to deliver 250 pounds of cotton yarn to him annually. Subsequently, for making

---

20 J.K.J. de Jonge, Opkomst, vol 6 (1676): 161-3


22 W.Ph. Coolhaas ed., Generale Missiven, vol 6 (1698): 44


24 Realia, vol 1 (1745) and ((1747): 222
these demands on his people, he was much disliked.\textsuperscript{25} In 1706 the VOC closed contracts with the Princes of Ceribon stipulating that every bit of cotton from the Krawang and Priangan lands had to be delivered to the Company. The prices the VOC paid to the Javanese were lower than prices they had paid in India before the 1680s inflation. An edict in 1747 restricted the local trade in cotton yarn exported from Java so that the cotton would come to the Company and not be shipped to markets in the archipelago from the coastal towns. Peddlars were forbidden to go inland to buy up the yarn and bring it to the coast. Consequently the cultivation of cotton outside Java also increased to meet local demand.

No edict had specifically prohibited the inter-island trade in cotton yarn in 1747.\textsuperscript{26} Because cotton yarn slipped through the coastal towns to the other islands, another edict in 1757 also curtailed the inter-island trade in raw cotton everywhere in Dutch territories.\textsuperscript{27} The initiative did not come from Batavia, but from the Directorate in the Netherlands. They had noticed that there was a great demand for cotton within the Indonesian archipelago itself and wrote to the Council in Batavia that the cotton trade was to be made a monopoly of the Company.\textsuperscript{28} It meant that the export of cotton from Ceribon, Makassar, Lesser Sundas, and other areas of Java was not allowed to Amboina, Ternate and Banda. Nine years later the trade in cotton yarn was also prohibited to the free traders in Java, and the monopoly on cotton yarn

\textsuperscript{25} W. Ph. Coolhaas ed., Generale Missiven, vol 8 (1726): 43. When Governor-General Imhoff travelled through Java he raised the price to respectively 40 and 30 rixd. of which one third had to be the highest quality. If more high-quality cotton thread was delivered the price would be 50 rixd. Private deliveries could also be made to the Company. G.W. van Imhoff, "Reis van den Gouverneur-Generaal van Imhoff, over Java in het jaar 1746," BKI, vol 1: 302. Later similar arrangements were made with the Sultan of Banten for 140,000 to 155,000 skeins of spun thread annually. J. de Rovere van Breugel, "Bantam in 1786," BKI, vol 5: 122 ftn. 1; Ibid "Beschrijving van Bantam en de Lampongs," BKI, vol 5: 346.

\textsuperscript{26} Realia, vol 2 (1747): 57

\textsuperscript{27} J.A. Chijs, Plakaatboek, 14 June (1757): 217

\textsuperscript{28} VOC (1758): 10, 77
enforced. The Company wanted to monopolize the export to Maluku.29

In Java the cotton deliveries to the Company had to be made in July or August.30 Between 1701 and 1741 the average value of the cotton the VOC shipped annually from the east coast was f66,843.31 This amounted to 6,000 and 7,000 pounds. Ceribon delivered about twice as much as the coast of east Java.32

One bale in Java weighed 125 pounds, equivalent to one pikul; in India the weight of a bale had varied from 120 to 150 pounds depending on where the cotton yarn was produced.33 The packaging costs were set at £2.45 per bale. That included sewing thread and cloth wrapper, gunny, sorting of the cotton, and labor to pack it and take it aboard ship.34 The Company wanted skeins of a certain size in circumference, to fit the warps of the buyers of the cotton thread, and of a single yarn, so that the skeins would not need to be rewound. The cotton came in four grades, labelled A to D. It was exported by the Company to Europe, Japan, China, the Cape of Good Hope, India and to Maluku. Some cotton was woven into cloth, sometimes mixed with other fibers or used for fishing nets. There were years during the 18th century when only 150 bales were shipped to the Netherlands; in other years, up to 1,400 bales were sent, depending on the harvest and quality that was delivered. An average of 40 bales per year were exported to Japan from Java; to Maluku a similar quantity. For China, India and the Cape, the figures are

29 Realia, vol 1 (1757): 222
31 Luc Nagtegaal, Rijden op een Hollandse Tijger: 173
32 W.Ph. Coolhaas ed., Generale Missiven, vol 5: (1707) 509, (1709) 638; vol 7: (1715) 195-6, (1716) 212, (1719) 410; vol 9: (1730) 192, (1731), 219, (1733) 517, (1734) 620-1; (1736) 798, 799
33 VOC 11207: 47, 50
34 J.A. Chijs, Plakaatboek, vol 7(1754): 644
not clear, but shipments were not very large.\textsuperscript{35} Between 1745 and 1780 an average of 125 bales were obtained through the Company’s delivery system.\textsuperscript{36} The rest was sold on a private basis to the Company. When the cotton harvest in India failed Java cotton was even occasionally shipped to Coromandel where it sold with only 9% profit. However, in Canton in 1735 the profit was 87%.\textsuperscript{37} By 1795, the export of cotton thread from Java to the Netherlands was diminishing. The cotton for the cheap mechanically produced yarn in the European cotton mills came from America.\textsuperscript{38}

In summary, the Company had begun to stimulate cotton growing in Java to replace it for the increasingly more expensive Surat thread. By the end of the 17th century Java served the demand for Europe. When the cotton export from Surat supplemented by cotton purchased in Bengal to Europe increased, the cotton cultivated in Java was exported to other Asian ports such as Japan, Tonkin, and to Maluku. However, the people in Java had grown cotton interspersed with rice before the Dutch began seriously to encourage them to deliver to the Company against payment. Increasing


\textsuperscript{36} F. de Haan, Priangan, vol 3: 920-2. De Haan’s figures are close to what the archives indicate. For example, VOC 2944 figures from (1758): 2149-50 gives for indigo 3,781 pounds and for cotton delivery 9,726.5 pounds. De Haan gives resp. vol 3: 921, 30 and 78 pikul or 3,750 and 9,750 pounds.

\textsuperscript{37} W. Ph. Coolhaas ed., Generale Missiven, vol 5 (1699): 81, 110, 207; vol 9 (1735): 719

\textsuperscript{38} Realla, vol 1 (1795): 223; E.C. Godee Molsbergen, Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch Indië, vol 4: 381 The government in Batavia encountered a problem in the 18th century, because of the restrictions to its trading territory. It did not enjoy the freedom to look for new markets globally when a product that had been dependent on Europe for its sales decreased in demand. Thus, when cotton was made cheaper in Europe, Batavia could not immediately look elsewhere. Once in 1745 Governor General Van Imhoff in 1745 had sent ships to Mexico via the Pacific. This was “unlawful” and met with much controversy.
Company pressure to increase deliveries and the contract with the *sushunan* made cotton a commodity with a higher value than it had been perceived by the Javanese before the Company began its campaign. Parallel to this development the Javanese began to increase production themselves for trade purposes. When production reached levels where the Company saw that profits could be made by monopolizing the export of it, it issued edicts first in 1747 that forbade the peddlers to collect from Java’s hinterlands and ten years later to stop the Chinese and free traders from taking cotton as cargo to on inter-island trade expeditions. At the same time it ordered the Preanger and areas around Batavia to diminish its cotton cultivation in order not to be oversupplied.  

**Silk in Indonesia**

The technology of producing silk is very complex. The Chinese had a long tradition of silk production and continuous trade. Their mastery at raising the worms, reeling the fine yarn, and weaving it into silk had gained them a reputation around the globe. When the VOC attempted to begin silk cultivation in Java, it encountered many difficulties and its attempts were unsuccessful.

Unlike cotton, a plant product, silk is an animal product, formed from the gluey fluids secreted by the moths of the family *Bombycidae* when it is in the caterpillar stage. The cocoon of the best silk comes from the domesticated *Bombyx mori* (Linneas), a univoltine, which evolved into many subspecies. The *Bombyx* silkworms were the favorite breed of the Chinese. Univoltines required a temperate climate; a temperature over 70 was injurious to them.  

The word used in Southeast Asia for silk came from Sanskrit, *sutra*. However, the raw silk the Indonesian weavers used came from China and

---

39 *Realia*, vol 1 (1767): 223

not India. Chinese silk was elastic, soft, strong, very white, and gave unusual luster. The women in China skillfully reeled the thread evenly and prepared it just right; not sticky, but also not too slippery, so that the skeins were easy to handle.\textsuperscript{41} Chinese raw silk was preferred everywhere. Its quality could not be surpassed; even in 1823 a silk expert was prompted to say that the raw silk from Bengal was "in its infancy as far as quality" was concerned.\textsuperscript{42} In the Chinese process of unwinding the cocoon, the right temperature of the water and the air was pertinent to the good quality of the thread. The water should not be too hot or the thread would lose its sheen, while the air had to be dry or the thread would break. The ends of 12, 15, 20, or 25 cocoons, still bobbing in hot water, were taken to be reeled and to form one thread. The number of cocoons reeled regulated the thickness of the thread and ultimately the heaviness of the woven silk textile. It explains why the silk textiles were sold by weight because it indicated the heaviness of the thread that was used as opposed to buying a silk textile by length and width measures. The fineness of the thread was one of the determinants in the quality of the woven silk cloth.

A coarse silk was also produced, but this was spun from a multivoltine wild silkworm, mostly in India and to a lesser extent in China. The thread of the wild silkworm was often referred to by the name of the people or the place where the cocoons were gathered, or by the name of the tree on which it fed. In general the silk of the wild silkworm is called \textit{tasar} or \textit{tusser} (\textit{Antheraea mylitta}) in the sources. Actually the term "tussah" silk cloth did not necessarily indicate that threads of one of the numerous wild silkworms were used in the weaving; sometimes it referred to cotton cloth with a little tussah silk woven in for nuance. The main attribute was the coarseness of

\textsuperscript{41} F.W. Stapel ed., Pieter van Dam, Beschrijvinge, vol 2, part 2: 67-8; I.H. Burkill, A Dictionary of the Economic Products of the Malay Peninsula, vol 2: 2063-4. In Bengal, where the silk industry flourished in the period of the European companies, the reeling of silk was improved only under the guidance of European silk experts. Tapan Raychaudhuri and Irfan Habib, The Cambridge Economic History of India, vol 1: 293

\textsuperscript{42} Natalie Rothstein, "Silk in European and American Trade before 1783. A commodity of commerce or a frivolous luxury?" in Textiles in Trade: 2
the silk thread that was seen, for example, in a stripe. A silk thread from the eri or eria insect, a multivoltine that fed on the castor oil bean, showed qualities of being very white, stronger, more durable, and easier to reel than the thread of the Bombyx mori, but it did not display an equal softness and sheen. Thus, Chinese and Indian silk each had their own qualities, both of which were in great demand in the international market.

Tangled cocoons not suitable for reeling were used for wadding. Many wadded chintz blankets found their way to Indonesia, especially from Coromandel in the 17th century.43

By raw silk was meant the silk filaments that were not degummed. The thread was not twisted, cleaned, or dyed.44 Raw silk was widely traded by the Dutch and the Chinese.

The Indonesians bought the raw silk from the Chinese. Before dyeing or twisting the thread they boiled it in water with a strong lye, the ash of burned rice straw, in order to clean it and prepare it to absorb dye. Raw silk came bundled as a little pillow or bantal of almost one pound in weight. Each bantal contained 15 skeins.45 A bale of Chinese raw silk weighed approximately 50 katis (62.5 pounds).46


44 In Dutch sources raw silk is "ruwe zijde", twisted silk "getwernde" or "gereede" zijde. Cocoons gathered in India and China in the wild (sometimes from the oak tree) were usually pierced resulting from moths, pushing their way out of the cocoon when the pupal metamorphosed, thus breaking the interior continuous filaments. In India it was thought to be associated with the Hindu religion, which prohibited the killing of animal life and could not permit boiling the domesticated silk cocoon. The broken silk thread was called "florette" or floss silk. This could not be reeled, but was spun, giving a weaker thread which was often used for embroidery.

45 J.E. Jasper, and Mas Pirngadie, De Nederlandsche Kunstnijverheid in Nederlandsch Indië, vol 2: 20-1. In India one kati (1.25 pound) of raw silk contained 20 skeins.

46 VOC 11207: 14, 61. In India the weights were different. A weight measure of man which amounted to 67.5 pounds was used for raw silk. One bale weighed 2 man or 151.75 pounds. F.W. Stapel ed., Pieter van Dam, Beschrijvinge, vol 1, Part 2: 93; In Persia one bale weighed 80 pounds. H. Terpstra, De Opkomst der Westerkwartieren van de Oost-Indische Compagnie: 163
In addition to all the qualitative differences in silk mentioned above there was also a seasonal factor that marked the name or "band" of silk and, by implication, the grade. The "band" of the silk indicated one of several harvests in the annual cycle of the multivoltines. Bands could be from two to five harvests. The first harvest was always the best and largest in quality, the second less so, the third even worse, depending on the rainfall. Weather conditions also influenced the outcome of the fourth "band", which might be good, while the last "band" was the worst and considered unimportant. Even with the univoltines the beginning and the end of the harvest made a difference in the quality of the thread.

In the Indian process of reeling silk thread three distinct parts were recognized and kept separate: the cabessa, barriga, and pee or the "head", "belly" and "foot", from first to third quality respectively. If a certain technique in reeling the silk was used to fluff the thread in order to weave it into velvet cloth, the silk was referred to as poil or pool silk.

It goes without saying that making the right choice from these many varieties would have an impact on the work of the weaver, embroiderer, or dyer. For example, the warp threads of a silk textile had to be of a higher

---

48 K. Glamann, Dutch-Asiatic Trade, 1620-1740: 124
49 The embroidery was done initially with thick needles that broke easily. Barkcloth was sewn with locally produced needles of bamboo or iron. N. Adriani and Alb.C. Kruyt, Geklopte Boomschors als Kleedingstof: 11. Local thread was coarse, which made sewing a tedious task. Traditionally therefore clothing did not have any sewing on it. This was a phenomenon of contemporary times. Embroidery did not develop until thread became thinner and stronger. So did the needles. Th. Pigeaud, "Javaanse Beschavingsgeschiedenis" in KITLV, ms H717a en b: 311. Iron needles and sewing thread had been imported as early as 1600 by the Chinese and the Dutch, often by the thousands. H.T. Colenbrander ed., Jan Pietersz. Coen, Bescheiden, vol 5 ((1617): 255, (1620): 564; J.F.K. de Jonge, Opkomst, vol 2: 335; Knitting needles were also introduced by the Dutch, H.T. Colenbrander ed., Jan Pietersz. Coen, Bescheiden vol 1 (1614); 38; Illustrations of beautifully worked bone, copper, and bamboo needles can be found in H.H. Juynboll, Borneo, catalogues, vol 2: 55; Needles of gold were used at the courts in Sulawesi as early as the 1660s. Cornelus Speelman, "Notitie dienende voor een corten tijt ...." in KITLV, ms H 802: 67
quality than the weft because they took the strain of the loom in weaving.\textsuperscript{50}

Although they valued silk, the Indonesians did not voluntarily take to silk production, except for northern Sumatra and a small area in southern Sulawesi. In the 17th century the Makassarese wove fine silk textiles embellished with gold thread (see Appendix D).\textsuperscript{51} In Indonesia the silk sarong woven in Mandar in southern Sulawesi had a reputation of being so fine that a folded tube skirt could fit in a pocket.\textsuperscript{52} Indonesians, however, imported many pikuls of raw silk skeins and large numbers of silk cloths from the Chinese traders who came to barter Indonesian pepper and products from the sea and the forest. The Company did not interfere in these exchanges because it frequently collected import and export duties from the Chinese traders and was itself, like the Indonesians, a buyer of the Chinese silk products. We may therefore assume that information about aspects of the silk obtained by the Company from the Chinese would also apply to the silk obtained by the Indonesians.

Indonesians were aware of the labor and specialized skills that the production of raw silk required. Indications are that they knew that their environment was not exceedingly suitable for silk cultivation even though mulberry trees, and possibly silkworms\textsuperscript{53}, were indigenous to the country. The high temperatures and humid air could make the thread break easily in the process of reeling; the breeding of the worms and their care were an intensive, day and night occupation.\textsuperscript{54} This meant that income from other commercial activities, agriculture or craft had to be postponed or altogether given up. Also the land assigned to mulberry planting could be used for

\textsuperscript{50} Natalie Rothstein, "Silk in European and American Trade before 1783", Textiles in Trade: 1

\textsuperscript{51} KITLV ms H802: 65, Appendix D

\textsuperscript{52} Personal communication of Greg Acceaoi, 7-3-89

\textsuperscript{53} A. Reid, Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450-1680, vol 1: 92

\textsuperscript{54} A very detailed description from 1700 or earlier in Tonkin has been recorded in F.W. Stapel ed., Pieter van Dam, Beschrijvinge, vol 2, part 1: 363-4
more profitable crops such as rice. It does not seem to have been cost effective for the Indonesians to engage in silk cultivation as long as they could easily barter for their supplies with the Chinese.\textsuperscript{55} As Chinese silk became progressively more available and cheap through trade—as Chinese trade bans were lifted after 1567 and again after 1684—Indonesian production declined, especially in Aceh.\textsuperscript{56}

The observation that it was impractical and unprofitable for Indonesians to produce their own raw silk is confirmed by the dismal attempts of the VOC to cultivate silk, first in the middle of the 17th century in Java and Taiwan, and again later in Java between 1725 and 1763.\textsuperscript{57} When Governor-General Zwaardekroon retired in 1725, he devoted much time and effort to the raising of silkworms on his property in Java. The silkworms were imported from Cambodia. He was given support for the project by the Directorate in the Netherlands. A reward of 800 rixd. was announced in June, 1729 for the first delivery of 1,000 pounds of cocoons from the Jakarta lands.\textsuperscript{58} In 1730 only five pounds of silk grown and spun in Java were exported, valued at f30.\textsuperscript{59} However, the attempt to cultivate silk continued to be taken seriously, possibly because of the ex-Governor-General's interest.

The Company sold land to promote the growth of mulberry trees and raising

\textsuperscript{55}In 1735 some Dutchmen concluded that Java was unsuited for silk cultivation because of the air, soil, and attitude of the people towards it. W.Ph. Coolhaas ed., Generale Missiven, vol 9: 670

\textsuperscript{56} J. van Goor, ed. Generale Missiven, vol 9 (1730): 201. In 1730, for example, 11% of the cargo of a Chinese junk consisted of silk items.

\textsuperscript{57} F.W. Stapel, ed. Pieter van Dam, Beschrijvinge, vol 2, part 2: 30; W.Ph. Coolhaas, ed. Generale Missiven, vol 3 (1657): 121. The attempts to cultivate silk in Java and Taiwan in the middle of the 17th century were connected with the difficulties that silk cultivation encountered in Vietnam (Tonkin) at that time. Silkworms died massively, the mulberry trees did not grow well and many harvests failed because of too much rain and floods. P.W. Klein, "De Tonkinees-Japanske zijdehandel van de Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie en het inter-Aziatische verkeer in de 17e eeuw" in W. Frijhoff & M. Hiemstra eds., Bewogen en Bewegen: 164-5

\textsuperscript{58} Realia, vol 3 (1729): 405

\textsuperscript{59} J. van Goor, ed. Generale Missiven, vol 9: 92
of silkworms. The Captain of the Chinese was encouraged to have the areas between the graves in the Chinese cemetery planted with mulberry. Fifty slaves were hired to reel the cocoons for which a big shed was built.\textsuperscript{60} The cocoons had to be reeled according to the Bengal way.\textsuperscript{61} This meant that the different qualities discussed above had to be distinguished, which traditionally had not been a practice in Indonesia. The reward was never claimed, because between 1731 and 1735 only 770 pounds of raw silk was shipped to Europe.\textsuperscript{62}

The project, started with such optimism, ended in failure. The Company withdrew its claim on silk production in 1756 and left it to private individuals.\textsuperscript{63} The Dutch had not bothered to ponder why the Javanese had not produced silk in commercial quantities earlier. The people from Jakarta, Ceribon and Tagal in Java were not the only ones who had been drawn into the project. Similar projects in Ceylon, Timor, and the Cape of Good Hope were unsuccessful.\textsuperscript{64}

The failure of the Dutch shows the complexities involved in the production of silk. Without Indonesian interest, cooperation and expertise available the Dutch were unsuccessful in their attempt to set up a silk business that they anticipated to become very profitable. They dealt in large quantities of raw silk in their inter-Asiatic trade, exporting annually from Bengal over 100,000 pounds to Japan in the 17th century and approximately a same average quantity to Europe. Around the turn of the 18th century the export to Europe increased to over 200,000 pounds while that to Japan decreased to several 10,000s. In addition the Dutch exported in the 17th century hundreds

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{60}] Realia, vol 3 (1729): 405; J. de Goor, ed. Generale Missiven, vol 9: 66, 199, 343, 781
\item[\textsuperscript{61}] Realia, vol 2 (1759): 61
\item[\textsuperscript{62}] F. de Haan, Priangan, vol 1: 238-42
\item[\textsuperscript{63}] Realia, vol 1 (1756): 264
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
of bales of 100 pounds each, of raw silk from Persia and Tonkin to Europe and Japan. Keeping the profitability equation in mind the Dutch attempt to produce silk in Java is explainable.

The Indonesian woman buying her bantals of silk thread from the Chinese had to be a skillful weaver and knowledgeable about the qualities of silk to know what kind of thread she needed, keeping in mind the future use of the cloth she was to weave.

Chinese society displayed skills and refinement in silk production accumulated over a period of several thousand of years. For the Indonesian women it was not cost effective to produce her own silk—a labor intensive activity. Land was valuable and rice production more profitable. A silk garment was a luxury and showed refinement, but in a hot climate not a practical garment and less durable than cotton, hence she restricted her self to weave fine silk cloths, but did not cultivate the worms.

Gold Thread in Indonesia

The Indonesians highly valued gold decorated cloths, even the smallest stripe of gold thread in the kepala of a cloth was much appreciate. Gold thread and gold leaf greatly enhanced the beauty and the price of the Indian trade textiles. In the 17th century orders were sent regularly to Coromandel specifying, for example, that fine black salalu, or kain gulong should be supplemented with gold thread in the kepala. Because of the fineness and high quality of the cloth and the weight of the gold elaborations, the salalu and gulong were rolled and not folded; in some gulongs the whole badan or body of the cloth was filled with gold stripes.

Javanese textile connoisseurs refused to buy gulong woven of an

---

65 K. Glamann, Dutch Asiatic Trade 1620-1740: 114-130; Om Prakash, The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal 1630-1720: 126 Table 5.1 to Japan, 198-9 Table 7.3 to the Netherlands.

66 S.D. Goitein, "Two Arabic Textiles" in JESHO, vol 19, no 2: 222

inferior quality cotton with gold kepala. They considered the combination of a poor-quality cloth with a gold kepala a mismatch. The weavers in Coromandel regularly had a problem with a quantity of gold thread insufficient to satisfy the demand for woven gold kepala for the Indonesians. It was in the interest of the Company to ship gold thread from Batavia to Coromandel to sell to the Indian weavers, even though the profits were small. To sustain the Indonesian demand and satisfy the clientele the Company needed to provide the cloths that were most wanted—cloths that showed much gold.

A more compelling reason for the Company’s determination to supply specialty cloths was that the Indonesians were willing to pay very high prices if the cloth had some gold in it. The profits for the Company were accordingly much larger than for cloths without any gold embellishment.

The gold thread which supplied Coromandel as well as Indonesia came from China. It was traded in paper packages. Both Indonesian and Dutch dealers bought these in Batavia or Makassar from traders on Chinese junks. The Company sold them in Puleacat, Masulipatnam, and Arakan. Coromandel was also supplied by the VOC factory in Taiwan. For example,
21,280 packages (36 chests) were sent from Taiwan to the Coromandel coast in 1643. Taiwan imported the gold-thread packages from Hokchiu (Fuzhou) on the Min River, a little north of Amoy. One *ceer* (weight measure) of gold thread weighed 9.03 ounce. The gold thread in one package was 56 ells, or 38 meters long. In Batavia the selling price per package in 1643 was £2.20. In 1653 the VOC bought 550 packages at £2.03 per package from the Chinese. In 1620 the English had sold 10,000 packages in Aceh for £1.25 per package. The difference in price might reflect a difference in quality. By the end of the 17th century the Company discontinued its trade in gold thread because, they explained, plenty was imported by other traders. The commodity was no longer profitable to the Company. It sold the last stock for a loss. A shipment to the Netherlands had also been unsuccessful and was returned.

During the 17th century gold thread had sold particularly well to all places in Sumatra, as well as Banten, Bali, the Java north-east coast, and Banjermasin. The export of gold thread to Maluku was much less and in some areas relatively rare. The Chinese traded the gold thread around the archipelago. In 1657 one Chinese junk sold 348 chests and another junk 120 chests, altogether more than a quarter of a million packages of gold thread.

---

72 H.T. Colenbrander ed., *Dagh-Register, Batavia*, (1643-44): 259

73 One *ceer* is normally 10 ounces. VOC 11207: 13, 50

74 VOC 10396 (1653): 188-9; H.T. Colenbrander ed., *Dagh-Register, Batavia*, (1643-44): 259


76 F.W. Stapel ed., *Pieter van Dam, Beschrijvinge*, vol 2, part 2: 170

77 Ibid, vol 1, part 2: 136; vol 2, part 2: 170

78 To Banten were sold over 4,000 packages annually in the 1630s, to Andragiri, 500; Aceh, 12,000; Palembang, a few hundred; Japarra, 1,200; Jortan, a few hundred; Kendal, 1,200; Bali, 2,400; Banjermassin, 1,750; Tegal, 600. H.T. Colenbrander ed., *Dagh-Register, Batavia*, (1634): 454; (1636): 29, 34, 95, 121, 126, 153, 217; (1637): 47, 71, 87, 86, 107, 110, 116, 143, 248, 249.

79 *Dagh-Register, Batavia*, (1657): 100, 113, 131
In 1786 the Chinese junk from Amoy brought 250 chests or approximately 150,000 papers of gold thread to Makassar. Within one year, 113,000 papers were exported again to the surrounding islands.\textsuperscript{80} There is not enough information to show fluctuations of the quantities of gold thread and leaf imported by the Chinese.

The Dutch described gold leaf in different terms. In 1636 Batavia sent 165,000 pieces of gold leaf, \textit{papieren van geslagen goud} to Banten, and one year later Gresik imported 30,000 "prada", the Javanese term for gold, but also used by the Dutch. In 1657 Batavia imported 5,000 gold leaves, \textit{chinese goud papieren}. It is not clear if from these three descriptions of gold leaf if exactly the same product was meant.\textsuperscript{81} One suspects there were grades in quality. The Company did not record the export of gold leaf to Coromandel, which meant that it was not used there on the trade textiles for Indonesia. The Indonesians applied the \textit{prada} themselves to the imported cloth, just as they used foreign cloth to decorate local bark and woven cloth, or embroidered and embellished other imported cloths. There was enough demand for gold thread and gold leaf in the 17th century for its absence to be noticed in the Company records of the 18th century. In the 18th century the sale of gold thread and leaf in Indonesia was left to the Chinese.

The technique of applying gold leaf embellishment was similar in India and Indonesia: the desired pattern was stamped or brushed with glue on a piece of cloth; the pattern was then covered with the gold or silver leaf, which naturally adhered to the glue. When the glue had dried, the remaining unglued particles were brushed off.\textsuperscript{82}

It could not be established however, whether the process of making

\textsuperscript{80} H.A. Sutherland and David S. Bree, "The Harbormaster's Specification": 15

\textsuperscript{81} Dagh-Register, Batavia, (1636): 29, 34, 56, 121, 126, 153, 175; (1637): 127

\textsuperscript{82} Robyn Maxwell, Textiles of Southeast Asia: 182; J. Forbes Watson, The Textile Manufactures and Costumes of the People of India: 19
gold thread in Indonesia was similar in Indian and China. European gold and silver thread was also used in Indonesia and sold by weight per pound or part thereof. A little was sold in Amboina in 1737 and 1747.

Analysis of gold artifacts from the Kota Cina site in northeastern Sumatra indicated the presence of Chinese manufacturers who produced, then traded gold leaf. The gold was presumably delivered by the indigenous population in Sumatra. Similar gold production by Chinese is believed to have taken place in western Borneo, as evidenced by data from the Santubong site. Veltman, an army captain who was stationed in Aceh for more than a decade at the end of the 19th century, made a study of the silk cultivation and weaving there. He claimed that gold thread, *kasab*, was locally produced in northern Sumatra and used as supplementary thread in the weaving and in embroidery on ceremonial cloth.

---

83 J.B Bhushan, *The Costumes and Textiles of India*: 53-4  One account of the process in India showed that the production of gold or silver thread took three steps. First beaten wire from an alloy of silver and gold was drawn in successive steps through holes in a steel plate until the wire was as fine as hair. Then two or three fine threads were simultaneously, but separately, drawn by a worker using the left hand through a steel plate with holes onto a highly polished anvil while with the right hand the worker rapidly and firmly beat the wires flat with an equally highly polished steel hammer. Each thread was wound on a reel. Finally the flattened wire of one reel was attached to a slightly twisted silk thread at the bottom of a spindle. The silk thread that comes to the spindle over a polished steel hook suspended from the ceiling was brought into rapid winding motion by the worker who held the flattened wire that came from a reel behind him and guided it upwards to cover the silk thread that was in twisting motion. The foiled wire wound itself around the thread through the motion of the turning spindle. This dexterous manipulation was stopped once it reached the worker's height and fastened in the notch of a shank attached to the spindle. This third step was then repeated over and over again to make up designated lengths which were subsequently sold for couching or weaving.

84 VOC 2379: 1354-63; 836-7


86 Th. J. Veltman wrote a treatise on the "de Atjehsche Zijdeindustrie" ed., Fischer: 26-7. Silver and gold threads, *kasab*, were always used in the weaving of silk textiles in Aceh. "In earlier times this thread was selfmade, at present [around 1900] no longer unless it is necessary for furl (krawang) work. . . . The production is so costly, that in woven cloths nowadays no longer selfmade silver and gold thread is observed and can only be found in very old, expensive fabrics." The necessary metal thread was imported from Weissenburg in Germany and sold in the *keude* in little parcels of 66
The women in Aceh embroidered with gold in 1602. Rich textiles heavy with gold were a way to display wealth. Veltman remarked that the women who wove them cared more for the amount of gold they put into the cloths than for the skill with which they wove them. At the end of the 18th century they were quite often crudely done. The Javanese gold-woven cloth was coarser and less sumptuous than that of the Malay women.

The import of gold thread by the Chinese in large quantities seem to indicate that the Indonesians could not make the thread themselves competitively. However, that gold thread was very important in Indonesia is demonstrated by the large export quantities in Batavia and Makassar and the request for gold kepala in many types of cloth imported from India. Information concerning the gold thread trade is scarce.

Again in the case of gold thread the Company’s profitablility equation played a role in the demise of this trade. Competing Indian and European traders did not have the overhead the Company carried. They could buy the thread from the Chinese in the harbors where they collectively traded, for example in Aceh, Makassar and Banten until the last quarter of the 17th century and after that in Manila and on the south China coast. When the Company could not make minimum profits of 60 or 70% it left the trade to others who were satisfied with a smaller gain.

The Indonesian women in Sumatra, Java, Makassar and surrounding islands frequently embellished their cloth with gold judging from the more than 100,000 packages that could be sold annually.

---

strings: eight small packages weighing one katoel or 0.62 kg. There are three qualities: silver thread "500 fine" which cost £7.50 to £8.00 per package; another quality of silver or gold thread at a market value of £3.20 per package in 1904; and a third of lesser quality, which was actually copper wire that was gilded or silvered, which cost £1.50 per package. A sample of the first quality was described as "wrapped in a paper enhanced with the picture of one rixdollar on which is printed in golden lettering: '1/8 cally Silver-Thread 12/8 on Silk manufactured in Germany. Ingevoerd door de Atjehsche Handelsmaatschappij Koeta Radja'."

87 B. Leigh, Hands of Time: 26, 29-30

88 John Crawford, History of the Indian Archipelago, vol 1: 182
The Dutch saw also an opportunity in maximizing profits by utilizing the island people's capacity to make dyes and deliver either dyewoods or prepared indigo. For the Indonesian women the preparation of dyes had been a very long tradition.

They used mineral pigments and organic dyes from animal and vegetable sources to color thread or cloth. The ingredients involved in the dye processes were also sold inter-island and overseas. For example, people north of Baros in Singkel, Sumatra brought sappan wood for dyeing to Aceh where it was sold locally and to Muslim traders who took it to all regions in India. Southern Borneo exported *myrabolan* to Gresik for the batik industry and Timor sent *curcuma* (turmeric) to Java, where it was used although the yellow dye made from it is fugitive. The Javanese and Makassarese shipped indigo to Banten, Palembang, the Sumatra west coast, Johor, Banjermasin, and other places.

The Indians and Indonesians used vegetable dye processes that had evolved over a long period of time. These were unique and among the most complex in the world. Rumphiuss, a botanist, who lived in Ambon at the end of the 17th century, described, for example, one complicated vegetable dye process used with the red-orange flowers of the safflower, *carthamus*

---

89 H. Kroeskamp, "De Westkust en Minangkabau (1665-1668)"; 155

90 B. Schrieke, Indonesian Sociological Studies: 29; Realia, (1731): 345 In 1685 6,240 pounds *curcuma* in 47 bags at £7.24 per bag were shipped to the Netherlands in F.W. Stapel ed., Pieter van Dam, Beschrijvinge, vol 2, part 2: 77.

91 J.K.J. de Jonge, Opkomst, vol 8 (1705): 138

92 Nobuko Kajitani, "Traditional Dyes in Indonesia" in M. Gittinger ed., Indonesian Textiles, 1979 Proceedings: 305; J.L.Larsen, A. Bühler, B. Solyom and G. Solyom et al., The Dyer's Art: ikat, batik, plangi: 5-12. These conclusions were reached by two totally different research approaches. Kajitani from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, studied the organic chemical compounds of Indonesian textiles and Larsen et al. based their conclusion on descriptions of the uses of plants in George-Evehard Rumphius's *Herbarium Amboinense*, which were written in Ambon province at the end of the 17th century.
tinctorius, in Sundanese called kesumba. Two dyes were extracted from the kesumba, a red color, carthamin, and a yellow fugitive dye. After the yellow dye was removed from the flowers by spreading them on the dye-cloth and sprinkling them with water until the water ceased to show any yellow, they were crushed in a bowl of china or pottery, and covered with the ash of various peels, sticks and leaves, or with alkaline earth obtained from Cambodja or Siam. They further added a number of substances, cut in very small pieces (leaves, roots, spices, etc.) which increased the chemical reaction. The dye was then well kneaded and passed through two sieves with fresh water or, even better rain water. In this way they obtained clear red liquor, which was mixed in a bowl with acid lemon juice.93

The cloth, previously tinted yellow slightly from the yellow substance that was removed from the kesumba on the cloth, was then dipped in the red liquid. After the cloth was worn, it was washed in the juice of young coconuts and lemon to keep it from fading.

It was common in Indonesia and India to use dung, urine, ashes, certain barks, twigs and leaves that contained soluble aluminum or other chemicals that would act as mordants, fastening the red and yellow dyes, a usage that puzzled Europeans until early in this century.94 The knowledge of how to obtain certain colorants varied from village to village and were kept closely guarded secrets.95 Dye ingredients, such as the kesumba flowers, were available in the pasar.96 Kesumba was grown in Sinkel near Kediri and

93 A. Bühler, "Primitive Dyeing Methods" in Ciba Review, No 68: 2490

94 R. Haller, "The Chemistry and technique of Turkey Red Dyeing" in Ciba Review, No 39: 1417-8

95 J. Mallat, The Philippines: 316-8

96 François Valentijn, Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien, vol 2: 373 lists kasumba as an import from Java to Ambon which he called apple blossom
in other places in Java and Indonesia.97

Some other natural dyes that Indonesia produced were indigo (blue), turmeric (yellow), annatto (red/yellow), sappanwood and lac (red or brown), catechu, papaya and gambir (brown or black). Depending on the mordant that was used, the colorant from the same plant matter could vary. For example, the alkaline dye from sappan wood applied with inorganic aluminum gave red, but with iron, brown.98 Shavings of the sappan wood were boiled to extract the dye. During the 16th and 17th centuries sappan wood was exported from Bima and Sumbawa in large quantities by the Chinese and the Company.99 By 1702 Bima was practically devoid of sappan trees and only Sumbawa could offer supplies.100

The art historian Bühler observed variations in the technical processes of dyeing between western and eastern Indonesia. He thought eastern Indonesia was less advanced in the ways oil, temperature, and the Turkish red dye-processing method were applied for coloring yarn. He attributed the difference to the degree of contact dyers had with the world outside.101

The most important dye the Indonesians used was Indigofera tinctoria. The name indigo was applied to the plant as well as to the dyestuff. The

97 J.K.J. de Jonge, Opkomst, vol 7 (1679): 231 Kesumba was also called the bastard saffron (crocus sativus). Saffron itself was very expensive which made wearing clothes dyed with saffron a status symbol. If worn against the skin saffron was believed to have medicinal value in Tokugawa Japan and earlier. Valerie Foley, "The Jinbaori" in Textiles in Daily Life: 92

98 N. Kajitani, "Traditional Dyes in Indonesia" in M. Gittinger ed. Indonesian Textiles: 311. See Kajitani’s dye chart for many more details concerning the fastness of the colorant to light or water, results on selected fibers, other agents that are needed, parts of the plant being used and their latin names.

99 Dagh-register Batavia (1641): 309; A. Reid, Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, vol 2: 12

100 W.Ph. Coolhaas ed., Generale Missiven, vol 6 (1702): 195

101 A. Bühler, "Turkey Red Dyeing in South and South East Asia" in Ciba Review, No 39: 1424-5
preparation of the dye was traditionally a woman’s task. The Indonesians successfully planted cuttings of a native indigo variety of *Indigofera* for many centuries. In Buton, and perhaps in other islands, indigo grew profusely, but the inhabitants did not always use it.

In Java, where indigo was commonly prepared, the fermentation method, described for Coromandel by H. Adriaan Rheede van Drakesteyn (see Appendix C), was known, but the Indonesians did not dry the indigo. Some of the wet Javanese indigo was tested in Coromandel in 1690-1. It was good dye, but for one pound of Coromandel dry indigo, thirty-six pounds of the wet Javanese indigo was needed. The Javanese altered the preparations for export under the influence of foreign indigo experts who were employed by the Company and later the Dutch Government. Rumphius’ description of the preparation of indigo, which he identified as a Chinese method, appears to be an Indian method. The Javanese indigo was, in lay terms, known as wet indigo, the same as the indigo prepared in Kerek, Java north coast, nowadays. Banten was well known for the production of wet indigo during the VOC period. Wet indigo was kept in jars that were breakable and expensive, not practical for the Company, which had to ship them to the Netherlands.

When the Dutch tried initially to transport the wet or paste-like indigo in the 17th century from Java to the Netherlands, it had hardened to rock,

---
102 In Java, where much of the production took place for export by the Dutch and use in batik in the 19th century, men also became involved. A. Bühler, "Notes" in *Ciba Review*, No. 68 (1948): 2509


105 Musée de Marseille, *Sublime Indigo*: 176. F. de Haan, *Priangan*, vol 2: 238, ftn.4 thinks Rumphius copied the information from existing source material of the VOC and that it was an Indian method.

106 Rens Heringa, "Dye Process and Life Sequence" in M. Gittinger ed., *To Speak with Cloth*: 115

107 Luc Nagtegaal, *Rijden op een Hollandse Tijger*: 177
making it useless. The experts the Company sent into the field taught the Javanese to produce little solid cakes (see the illustration on the next page). In 1760 it was regulated that the solid pieces had to be shaped as a "cookie", not as a "cork."\textsuperscript{108} They were packed in wooden chests of prescribed sizes and shapes. At the end of the 18th century the solid cakes were marked with a VOC stamp which indicated the year of production.

In the 17th century the Dutch had imported indigo from India because it was cheaper and thirty times stronger than the European woad used for blue dying.\textsuperscript{109} Until approximately 1700 the best solid indigo cakes had come from Surat, the well known indigo from Bayana, Sarkhej, Mewat, and Khurja. From these places between 1620 and 1660 a total of 4,975,000 pounds reached the Netherlands at an average price of approximately f1.08 per pound.\textsuperscript{110} The Company also exported indigo from Coromandel which was cheaper, but the dye was found not to be as powerful in the way it gave off color as those from Bayana or Sarkhej.\textsuperscript{111} Indigo from the north of Coromandel was considered to give the best blue dye from the coast.\textsuperscript{112} In 1617 guidelines had been issued to the merchants in India for the purchase of indigo, but they claimed they could not do the buying. They needed experts

\textsuperscript{108} \textit{Realia}, vol 1 (1760): 114

\textsuperscript{109} C.J. van Lookeren Campagne, \textit{Indigo}: 9 From the last quarter of the 16th century, dyers in many places in Europe were prohibited from using indigo, in order to protect the woad industry in which hundreds of people were employed. Woad had been threatened by Portuguese import of \textit{nila} (Sanskrit for indigo) from India. No restriction existed in Holland.

\textsuperscript{110} H.W. van Santen, "De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in Gujarat en Hindustan, 1620-1660": 148, computed from Table 16. Surat exported 12% more than was ordered.

\textsuperscript{111} VOC 10396 (1652) The price in Surat was f1.24 and in Coromandel f0.52 per pound; VOC 10810 (1703) the price in Coromandel was f1.20; VOC 10823 (1733) it was f1.36 The export of indigo from Coromandel continued until 1762, when it ceased. \textit{Realia}, vol 1 (1762): 331

\textsuperscript{112} S. Arasaratnam, \textit{Merchants, Companies and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast}: 51-55
INDIGO
to judge the quality. Thus, the Company always employed indigo experts. Ultimately, the quality of indigo was judged by the number of cloths that could be dyed from a given quantity of dyestuff. When indigo production in Surat diminished, the Company put pressure on Java to compensate for the lack.

That there was much experimentation with indigo in Indonesia is evidenced by the many replacements of the dominant species of indigo plants that occurred over a period of 250 years. The Dutch introduced the *Indigofera tinctoria* from India in the 1690s. This species was successively replaced with *Indigofera suffruticosa*, *Indigofera arrecta*, *Indigofera guatemalensis*, and *Indigofera longeracemosa*. Two of the more important types, the *Indigofera tinctoria* and the *Indigo suffruticosa* were respectively distributed to the Indonesians as seeds, and as plantcuttings.

Dutch indigo experts had intermittently been teaching in the 17th century in Java, but in the 1690s the Company in Batavia intensified its requests for help from India. The Indian indigo makers were not eager to

---

113 F.W. Stapel ed., Pieter van Dam, Beschrijvinge, vol 1, part 2: 119-26 In India indigo came in a solid form in the shape of a squarish cake. Quality indigo should be brown-violet in color, of fine material, like ground wheat. If pressed in the hand, it should break. The mixture should be pure, without sand or gum inside or outside. It should feel light in the hand. If it was heavier, it had been mixed with other materials. To test that, one should throw the solid piece of indigo into a bowl of water. If the indigo floated, it was acceptable, although a good variety sometimes sank too. Philippus Baldaeus, *Nauwkeurige Beschryvinge van Malabar en Choromandel, derzelver aangrenzende Ryken, en het machtige Eyland Ceylon*, vol 3: 659 gave similar tests.

114 F.W. Stapel ed., Pieter van Dam, Beschrijvinge, vol 2, part 2: 201-5 For example, in the latter part of the 17th century 560 pieces of *Salempore* were dyed using 480 pounds of good indigo that had cost between £225 and £400. From a lesser quality 480 pounds of indigo only 344 pieces of *Salempore* were dyed, and 216 pieces from a still worse quality. The price of the indigo was not necessarily an indicator of its quality. From Surat in 1697 there exists an extensive account about the preparation, buying and trade in indigo by Matth. van Heck in Pieter van Dam, Beschrijvinge vol 2, part 3: 73-93. Two valuable letters with indigo instructions from 1705 in Tegenapatnam and 1765 in Japara are printed in F. de Haan, *Priangan*, vol 2: 236-41, 596-606.

115 T. Raychaudhuri and Irfan Habib The Cambridge Economic History of India vol 1: 402-3

116 Loan Oei ed., *Indigo*: 15-6
move, so the Dutch trained some of their soldiers in India and sent them to Java with knowledgeable slaves. Sometimes these "experts" came from Coromandel, others from Surat. There was no uniformity in the details of the preparation of the dye, but as long as the results were satisfactory, those employed continued to propagate their methods. At first there was little success in increasing the yield. One reason was that the experts used methods that were labor intensive and costly, but another reason was the meager monetary reward paid to the regents. Once the Company started to pay a reasonable price for the production and preparation of indigo, the quantities increased.  

The intensification of indigo preparation paralleled the increasing attention given to cotton cultivation, noted above. When the Dutch intervened in the local trade of the Javanese after 1678, they also planted the seeds for the colonization of Priangan and of greater Java. Jacob Couper, who spoke, read and wrote Javanese fluently, became the mediating spokesman for the Company, and in 1684 he proclaimed the rules which were repeatedly reinforced:

All Priangan regents and inhabitants have to diligently and seriously cultivate the land and deliver annually all the cotton thread, pepper, and indigo that is produced to the Company in Ceribon for set prices of cash. Especially the thread [has to be spun] as fine as possible and the indigo [has to be] planted and delivered in increasing quantities, the volume to total one kati per year for every man in all districts.

These Company-initiated quotas and restrictions marked the beginning of the so-called contingencies, tributes paid in kind, that were levied in Priangan. Forced deliveries of products that the Company stipulated meant

---


118 E.C. Godee Molsbergen, Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch Indië, vol 4: 44

119 F. de Haan, Priangan, vol 2: 250
that the Javanese were obliged to grow and deliver them at a fixed price. In 1708 Batavia sent the emissary Cnoll to Kartasura with the request that the payments for the Company's army stationed there were to be made in indigo, cotton and pepper. The head tax that was expected as payment in other places in Java was also demanded in the form of products favored by the Company. Some regents in Java were more cooperative than others and started to take the production into their own hands. Samarang apparently showed greater initiative in this regard than Krawang and Priangan, which were forced to cooperate and deliver their produce to Ceribon. If the delivery was not forthcoming, a money fine was charged. Every year from 1700 onwards the Dutch in Batavia sent inspectors to the indigo fields to list the quantities that could be expected to arrive by July and August, and remind the regents of their obligations to the Company. They also checked that the regents were not extracting the products from the people without payments. For the lowest quality of indigo the Company paid f0.30 per pound; after 1760 this price was raised to f0.45 and f1.60 for top quality. In 1730 Java produced more indigo for export than Coromandel. For 35 years between 1745 and 1780 the delivery from the Priangan alone averaged 4,250 pounds. A similar quantity was delivered from Java's northeast coast. In addition, there were deliveries from regents who privately engaged in indigo production. In the 1733-34 bookyear the Company bought from the Javanese a total of 20,942 pounds, valued at f29,775. In 1711 an indigo program was launched in Makassar, Ambon and Buru. Experts, among whom were Javanese, were sent to those areas.

120 Ibid, vol 1: 805
121 F. de Haan, Priangan, vol 2, Bijlage XVII: 193-219
122 Realia, vol 2 (1761): 61, vol 3 (1760): 91
123 W.Ph. Coolhaas ed., Generale Missiven, vol 9 (1730): 204
124 F. de Haan, Priangan, vol 3: 921-2; Luc Nagtegaal, Rijden op een Hollandse Tijger: 179
125 VOC 10823 (1733) account "Indigo Javas."
too. Earlier, indigo preparation had been unsuccessfully tried in the Cape of Good Hope, Banda and Makassar.\textsuperscript{126} Production under the auspices of the Company outside Java was small compared to Java. Ambon contributed a few hundred pounds irregularly; however, it delivered thousands of pounds of yellow and red dye wood to the Company.\textsuperscript{127}

There are two main points to be made from the examination of textile related products. For Indonesians the production of cloth and dyeing them was a very old handicraft. They often cultivated dye stuffs in the gardens next to their houses. Under the influence of the Dutch they became aware of the value of indigo and cotton as articles for which there was a market in very distant places. The Dutch interfered with the ecology in especially Java by introducing numerous new species of cotton and changing the way indigo was traditionally prepared besides the cutting down of forests. The quality control of the Dutch caused new species of cotton and indigo plants to be introduced, again changing the ecosystem. The cultivation system increased in magnitude in the 19th century, but had a precedent in the deliveries of cotton since 1678 and indigo since the turn of the 18th century.


\textsuperscript{127} VOC 2283 set 2, (1733): 106 A total of 3353 pounds of red and yellow dye wood were shipped to Batavia.
CHAPTER 4

FOUNDATION OF DUTCH ECONOMIC EMPIRE

Establishment of the VOC in the Netherlands

In the 16th century Portugal supplied the Netherlands with Asian products, but between 1591 and 1602 none were received.¹ A shortage of pepper and spice supplies combined with high prices because of the scarcity, motivated the Dutch to attempt sailing directly to the Indies—first by a northern route and a few years later successfully around southern Africa.

The first expedition of four ships was fitted out by a group of Amsterdam merchants, bewindhebbers (directors-in-charge), who invested £290,000. Bewindhebbers paid with private money and deposits received from participants who also wanted a share in the enterprise.² The enterprise was called a company. Such a company usually dissolved after the expedition was over and the profits were divided. The Dutch had been financing many such companies for enterprises in Europe. A new company would be formed for the next enterprise.³ For the second fleet of eight ships in 1597, 18 bewindhebbers brought together an operating capital of £768,466. The success of the fleet generated more interest and more citizens began to invest in the ventures.

¹ F.S. Gaastra, De Geschiedenis van de VOC: 10-1

² The participants enjoyed a proportional part of the profit, but had no decision making authority which lay entirely with the bewindhebbers. The names of the participants were only known to the bewindhebber, to whom the investment share had been made. The latter were not responsible for an accounting to the participants. J.P. de Korte, De Jaarlijkse Financiële Verantwoording in de VOC: 3

³ J.R. Bruijn, F.S. Gaastra and I. Schöffer, Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th Centuries, vol 1: 3
Between 1596 and 1601, 15 companies were formed. Because of competition in Indonesia for the pepper and spices among traders of these companies, the buying price increased. The higher imports in Europe made the market prices drop, consequently lowering the profit margins for the investors. To make the enterprises more viable and lucrative the governing body, the Staten Generaal of the recently formed Dutch republic (1579), urged on by the High Councillor, moved to bring the bewindhebbers of the trading towns together to collaborate instead of compete. Success was achieved when a charter was granted to the United East India Company on March 20, 1602. It gave the monopoly of trade to the east to the United Company or VOC (Verenigde Nederlandse Geoctroyeerde Oostindische Compagnie).

Initially one household in every 200 in the nation held shares in the VOC. The stock of the Company offered in 1602 amounted to almost 6.5 million guilders, equal to 3% of the national product and more than 0.5% of the nation’s wealth. This capital was accumulated through the bewindhebbers of major trading towns: the Chambers of commerce of Amsterdam (f3,674,915), Zeeland (f1,300,000), Delft (f469,400), Rotterdam (f173,000), Hoorn (f266,868) and Enkhuizen (f540,000). In Amsterdam in 1700 four households out of every hundred were shareholders in the Company.

Continued capitalization of the Company’s trade gave it advantages over and above other trading Companies. Domestic and foreign currency in the Netherlands fluctuated in terms of silver. Bank accounts denominated in banco guilders provided money expressed in an account of constant silver value, not gold. There was no policy stimulating the accumulation of stocks of precious metal. A partial explanation is that the country "had a two-currency system, one of book money of uniform metallic value for substantial commercial transactions, the banco florin, and another consisting of numerous coins of fluctuating value for the rest, particularly for wage payments and

---

4 F.S. Gaastra (1982), Geschiedenis van de VOC: 16., Table I
5 R. Goldsmith, Premodern Financial Systems: 220
6 J.P. de Korte, Financiële Verantwoording: 2
retail trade." The bookkeeping of the VOC was also in *banco florin*.

The organization of the Company was based on pre-VOC models of trading expeditions. Each Chamber consisted of a stipulated number of *bewindhebbers* with their participants. From among the *bewindhebbers* representatives were chosen for the meetings by the Board of seventeen directors, the *Heren XVII*, referred to in this thesis as the directorate. The input of capital for the outfitting of fleets (*equipage*), the division of return goods and profits, and the representation on the board followed proportions prescribed by the charter: Amsterdam 50%, eight *bewindhebbers*; Zeeland 25%, four-; and each of the other four Chambers 6.25% and one *bewindhebber* each on the board. To make up the *Heren XVII*, one extra director-at-large was selected rotating from amongst the smaller Chambers.\(^8\)

Two major differences characterized the newly formed Company from the former pre-companies. The initial capital investment was not returned to *bewindhebbers* and participants after each voyage, but was carried over to the next voyage. In addition, shareholders could not personally be held responsible for any losses that the Company incurred. Most years during the Company's existence (1602-1795), the shareholders received dividends in cash and sometimes in kind. In the early 1670s, the Company's equity was valued at f40 million, equal to 20% of the national product and 5% of the national wealth. These high values seem to stem from the inflated prices of the shares of the Company which had risen to 400% of their face value by 1640 and 650% at their highest price in the early 1670s.\(^9\) Most wealthy Dutchmen had invested about 12% of their estate in the Company. The distribution of wealth was very skewed to the top wealth group. In 1675 seven eighths of all wealth based on assessed value belonged to 20% of the population, and more than 90% based on the market value.\(^10\) The accumulation of wealth by

\(^7\) R. Goldsmith, *Premodern Financial Systems*: 212
\(^8\) J.P. de Korte, *Financiële Verantwoording*: 4
\(^10\) Ibid: 209
the *renteniers* (people who lived off their capital), seems to have had an adverse affect on the economy. Present research shows that from the 1670s the GNP ceased growing until 1760, suggesting a decrease in income velocity of money and resulting in economic stagnation in the country. The charter of the VOC was initially issued for 21 years, but subsequently went through seven renewals. This was not an automatic affair and could take many years of debate and negotiation before it was finalized.\(^{11}\)

**Establishment of the VOC in Asia**

The foundation for the Company in Asia was laid only in 1609 when the *Staten-Generaal* approved the appointment of a Governor-General who would reside in the east and function as the highest authority over the VOC possessions and ships, and chair the Council of the Indies. The embodiment of Company rule was finally realized in 1619 when a decision was made to establish the headquarters in Batavia. For a fleeting moment Aceh had come up as a possible place for the VOC to centralize its administration, but two fleet commanders, Verhoef and Matelief, agreed in 1607 on Ja'karta as a cheaper and more suitable place to conduct trade when some warring factions made Banten insecure and dangerous.\(^{12}\) The Dutch were to remain in Batavia for more than three centuries. In the eyes of the Asian rulers the Governor-General appeared like a sovereign. He was assisted by ordinary members of the Council (Raad van Indië) and could not take important

---

\(^{11}\) J.R. Bruijn, et al., *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping: 6-8*; J.P. de Korte, *Financiële Verantwoording: 4-8*. Strong opposition against the renewal of the charter came from the wool and linen manufacturers in the Netherlands. The import of cotton cloth, twined silk thread, and silks were in conflict with their interests and therefore periodically restricted. To ban these imports altogether was not a solution because they would encourage smuggling from competing markets in France, England and Denmark. The VOC also committed itself to annual wool purchases for £200,000 from the Dutch manufacturers for export to Asia. F.W. Stapel ed., *Pieter van Dam, Beschrijvinge*, vol 1, part 1: 56-9

decisions without consulting them. The second most important person in the
VOC structure was the Director-General, who was in charge of all commerce
in Asia. The six Council members (between 1617-1650 nine) were given
different tasks such as heading the department of justice, of shipping, of
bookkeeping, of defense, the orphanage, etc. They and visiting governors
and senior merchants from branch offices had voting power when they
attended Council meetings. The Council also included a number of extra-
ordinary Council members in advisory capacities; usually career men, who
had advisory votes.

Important branch offices (Ambon, Banda, Ternate, Coromandel, etc.)
were managed by a governor assisted by a secunde of the rank of a senior
merchant, a military commander, an accountant, and a fiscal and lower
personnel. In subordinate offices where the Dutch had no supreme rights, a
Director (not a bewindhebber) had the highest authority such as in Bengal,
Surat or Japan. Smaller outposts and settlements were administered by lower
ranking officials.

An enormous bureaucracy was built up while the Company expanded.
The communities of employees and ex-Company personnel consisted of
multi-ethnic Europeans and Asians. The total number of people employed by
the Company changed as follows:

in the year:  1625  -  4,500 employees
            1688  -  11,500
            1700  -  18,000
            1753  -  25,000
            1780  -  18,500\(^{13}\)

Not included are the approximate 10,000 sailors and ship's officers that were
employed on VOC vessels in Asia around 1700 and the fleets that sailed
between Asia and Europe.

\(^{13}\)F.S. Gaastra (1982), Geschiedenis van de VOC: 79-82
The Pattern of the VOC Economy in Asia

The Dutch preferred initially to avoid the places where the Portuguese were located and set up their posts where they saw business opportunities and they did not have to deal directly with people of "that hated nation" from whom they learned, nevertheless, a few things.14 War between the Netherlands and Spain since 1568 included Portugal since 1580. The entanglement of the Dutch States-General in political turmoils with other European powers, first the Spanish and later the English and the French, influenced the directives given to the Company commanders and authorities in Batavia. The war with Spain ended in Europe in 1648, but it was announced in Asia in 1650. However, political quarrels and wars in Europe were a lasting impediment in the conduct of peaceful trade in Asia.

When the Company's first fleet sailed out in 1602, the instructions from the directorate indicated the importance of making accurate observations about trade goods, especially cloths, that were being traded from one port to another. It ordered "to call in at Jurtan [near Gresik] and Bali in order to provide for a large quantity of cotton textiles, rice, and other things that are of use in the islands, because one can barter better with these goods for cloves, nuts, and mace than with reals-of-eight."15 The instructions show that the VOC directors had become cognizant of the importance of cloths in the spice trade, as pointed out in the first chapter. As soon as the Company opened offices in India where the preferred textiles were produced, and trade in the Indian cloths increased, the Company ignored the locally produced textiles from Madura, Bali and the lesser Sunda islands that had helped supply at least 15% of the cloths needed for the spice trade in the pre-VOC period. Larger profits on the sale of Indian cloths than on locally produced cloths was a decisive factor for the Company to neglect the trade and

14 J.K.J de Jonge, Opkomst, vol 1 (1598): 222-6 and vol 2 with journals describing the first settlements and conquests

production of local cloth.

During the first two decades offices were established in dozens of ports from Persia to Japan; VOC ships sailed the coasts from these trading establishments. Trade was conducted out of the ships, from a simple house with storage place, or from large forts in which they lived.

After a period of about ten years of exploration and evaluation of the commercial and political situation in the east, the VOC directorate developed a two-pronged strategy.

Firstly, they aimed to keep all trading zones important to the quest for spices free from European competitors and smugglers (the VOC saw no wrong in forcing the local parties to comply). In order to fulfil this first ambition, the Iberians needed to be dislodged from crucial trading zones in the spice islands and undermined elsewhere. All other foreign traders also had to be kept at bay. The VOC regarded other Europeans as more threatening competitors than the Asian traders, because they shared the same markets to buy and sell in the same trade goods. The English, Danish, and French traded predominantly from the Indian coasts and for the greater part of the 17th century were a major obstacle in Banten and Makassar, port cities in which they obtained supplies of pepper and fine spices brought from other parts of the archipelago. Here the linkage between trade and politics is abundantly clear. The aim of first dislodging the Iberians by force and harming them elsewhere explains why the Dutch succeeded initially in establishing themselves in Maluku and Java. In the second half of the 17th century also the other European, Hindu and Muslim traders were excluded from the Indonesian archipelago.

The second prong of VOC strategy was to develop an international network of trade in Asia for products suitable for the European market. This twin program had been expanded in 1607. The directorate ordered that while goods were being purchased for the return fleet, trade for profit should be conducted simultaneously from place to place within Asia on the ships

16 A. de Booy ed., De Derde Reis van de V.O.C. naar Oost-Indië, vol 1: 12
destined to stay in the east. Thus the advocacy for Dutch participation in the inter-Asiatic trade was articulated in the Netherlands by the directorate much earlier than in Batavia by the Director-General of the VOC, Jan Pieterszoon Coen. Coen has usually been credited with the promotion of inter-Asiatic trade, but actually he was an energetic implementer of earlier directives. The profits gained from the inter-Asiatic trade would subsequently cover the expenses of the VOC and following Coen’s optimistic reasoning, even pay for the return goods.

Coen was quick to grasp the complexity of the three way exchange system in which the Company was involved: spices, species, and textiles. He envisioned in 1619 the Company actively manipulating all three key ingredients:

- cloth from Gujarat (obtained against spices, other goods, and rials) to be exchanged against pepper and gold on the coast of Sumatra; cloth from Coromandel (obtained against spices, Chinese goods and gold, and rials) to be exchanged against pepper at Bantam; sandalwood, pepper, and rials to be exchanged against Chinese gold and goods, the latter also being used in exchange for silver from Japan. Finally, rials of eight could be obtained at Arabia against spices and other sundry items.

This overview excludes imports from Europe to Asia. It is true that Europe did not produce tradegoods the Asians were interested in, but a continuous flow of silver and a few products, investments in the outlay for ships, personnel and cargo from the Netherlands to the east paid for most of the return goods and operating expenses. The VOC was never able to buy its return goods from the profits made in the inter-Asiatic trade. The amount of profit that was made in the Asian trade of the VOC is unknown. A study of

---

17 F.W. Stapel ed., Pieter van Dam, Beschrijvinge, vol 1, part 1: 587. The seed for Dutch involvement in inter-Asiatic trade was planted in these instructions. Jan Pietersz Coen only heralded it somewhat louder fifteen years later.


19 Om Prakash, Economy of Bengal 1630-1720: 16
the inter-Asiatic trade is being undertaken by Jacobs. Her preliminary investigation shows that precious metals as commodities carried the highest value, while textiles came second.²⁰

Hendrik Brouwer, head of the Japan office and founder of the office in Siam, noted in 1612 the crucial role Coromandel cloths played: "without the textiles of Coromandel, commerce is dead in the Moluccas".²¹ This perception was not unique, however, to the Dutch, for the Portuguese, who had earlier enjoyed the cloth-for-spice trade, used an even more graphic metaphor for Paleacat (Coromandel) referring to it repeatedly as the *chave de Sul*, the key to the Southeast Asian region. The Portuguese, therefore, believed that if they succeeded in expelling the Dutch from Paleacat and the Coromandel coast, "their [Dutch] ability to procure Indonesian spices would decline precipitously. Without spice cargoes for Europe, the Dutch Company in its entirety would be hard put to justify its existence."²²

Within two decades of its establishment the Company had, affirming Portuguese fears, become settled in Paleacat and other textile producing places along the Indian coasts. Because the VOC used aggressive measures at first and maintained policies that aimed at controlling trade and commodities, it was able to build up a network of branch offices where it could bring the Indian textiles to the market: the eastern provinces,²³ Java, Sumatra, Melaka, Siam, and Japan. After the 1680s a major structural change took place in the VOC's inter-Asiatic trade when Europe became the major market for the Indian textiles and the Asian region came second in terms of the quantities of

²⁰ E.M. Jacobs, "Van nood, deugd en handelspolitiek. Inter-Aziatische handel en scheepvaart van de VOC in de tweede helft van de achttiende eeuw: een verkenning", doctoraal scriptie Rijksuniversiteit Leiden: Appendix B. In 1751-2 precious metals comprised 35.7% and textiles 12.8%; in 1771-2 these were resp. 24.5% and 15.25%

²¹ G.D. Winius & M.P.M. Vink, The Merchant-Warrior Pacified: 13

²² Sanjay Subrahamnyam, Improvising Empire 201

²³ In VOC sources often reference was made to "the eastern provinces" by which was meant all the main branches in Makassar, Timor, Ambon, Banda, Ternate and their subsidiary offices, stations and posts.
textiles sold. The combination of two large textile markets required an expanding supply of metals to pay for the trade cloths, shifting the structure of the inter-Asiatic trade pattern. A large infusion of metals from the Netherlands changed the Company's character from a multilateral corporation to a carrying trader in the 18th century.

The success of the VOC in achieving dominance in the archipelago for a long time was due not solely to financial strength and superior force, but also to the use of diplomatic and psychological strategies in dealing with local rulers. The Dutch bought the commodities they wanted wherever they could find the lowest price for them. In 1622 the VOC in Asia had 83 vessels at its disposal for the inter-Asiatic trade. This number and the tonnage of the ships increased drastically. In the eighteenth century more than 60% of the ships in the annual fleets participated in the inter-Asiatic trade before returning to Europe. The Company operated additionally numerous smaller vessels that sailed between the branch offices and each office owned still smaller craft for daily use. The Company's centralized government in Batavia, where all communication and goods flowed, enjoyed a "bird's-eye" view of prices for the trade commodities in all major ports in Asia. No other trading group possessed this advantage.

Spices and Textiles: Eastern Indonesia

Ambon was selected as a specific case study for this thesis. The first conquest took place in Ambon when Commander Van der Haghen occupied Fort Victoria in 1605. The Dutch renewed an earlier contract with the people of this developing clove island for the delivery of the cloves to them with the exclusion of other foreign traders. Makian, a small island west of Halmahera,

---

24 See Chapter 4 and 5; Els Jacobs, Letter of May 3, 1989


26 E.M. Jacobs, "Van Nood, Deugd en Handelspolitiek": 7
had been the only producer of cloves earlier. The Dutch also closed contracts with local chiefs and rulers in Banda in 1602 and Ternate in 1607. Dutch monopolistic policies restricted the cultivation of cloves to the province of Ambon once that was put under the Company's dominance in 1655. The Dutch conquered Banda in the early 1620s and gave the nutmeg gardens to Dutch settlers, the *perkeniers*.

The production of cloves more than doubled in the course of the 17th century. It was brought back to earlier proportions early in the 18th century, but increased again in the course of the 18th century, never to reach the height of the period from 1688 to 1712 again.\(^{27}\) Whereas cloves were the major article exported by the VOC from Ambon, its largest import consisted of Indian cloth. Knaap informs us that the Company could not maintain the high prices it demanded for the Indian textiles and repeatedly reduced them a little. The profit that was made from the sale of Indian cloths between 1689 and 1691 varied between 60 - 90% depending on the type of cloth. Most popular were the textiles from Surat of which were sold: 2,600 short small *bafta* at £2.67 per piece and 2,400 chintz at £2.71; from Coromandel: 2,300 *guinees* at £12.93, 2,000 brown-blue *salempore* at £7.84, and 1,000 bleached *salempore* at £7.28 per piece. 50% or more of the total sales were sold in the Company store in Kota Ambon.\(^{28}\)

The amount of locally produced cloths imported from Buton, Salayer, or Java is not known, but the Company considered that they competed with its own cloth sales. The competition was especially felt after 1625 when trade with Makassar increased which lasted until 1642. At the end of the 17th century the competition of imported local cloth was such that it harmed the Company's sales. However, it was decided that the import could not be stopped because the Company was not able to provide the people in Ambon with cloth as cheap as that from Buton. During the second half of the 17th

\(^{27}\) See Chapter 8; G.J. Knaap, *Kruidnagelen en Christenen*: Table 16, 235

\(^{28}\) G.J. Knaap, *Kruidnagelen en Christenen*: 224-5
century more than 200 bales of Indian cloths were imported annually in Ambon, that is close to 25,000 pieces.29 The production of nutmeg and mace had reached its highest peak in around 1620 and declined after that.30 The battle against the illegal cultivation and trade of cloves and nutmeg outside the designated places in Ambon and Banda lasted throughout the Company's existence. The many hongi (fleets of korakoras, local war vessels and men supplied by villages under Dutch control) expeditions in Maluku had as purpose to extirpate spice trees outside the areas designated by the VOC for spice production.

Although the Dutch had discovered31 that spices were bartered for textiles, they insisted on substituting cash for the traditional medium of cloth. Undoubtedly there were occasions when textiles were distributed by them for the collection of spices in the earlier years of the Company, but in general and as a system under Company rule, the people who harvested and delivered the cloves and nutmeg to the Company were paid with cash, initially with reals-of-eight and later with Dutch currency, mostly silver rixdollars, some gold ducats and other smaller five- and ten-cent coins (payementen). The Dutch only paid with textiles if they were short of coinage or needed to sell the textiles, especially after an abundant harvest. When supplies of money and textiles ran out, the Company gave notes of credit which were paid up after a supply ship from Batavia arrived.32

It was the intention of the Company to pay the people in Maluku with money for the spices so that they could buy the Company's textiles and

29 Ibid: 220-1

30 Anthony Reid, Age of Commerce, vol 2: 14, fig. 3

31 See sections "Little did they know" and "Dutch Discovery" in Chapter 1

32 Three Letters from Coen to Ambon and Banda, 3 Nov, 1615 in H.T. Colenbrander ed. Jan Pietersz. Coen Bescheiden, vol 2: 20, 22, 50; G.J. Knaap, Kruidnagelen en Christenen: 225-7, 254. Knaap presents an excellent explanation of the monetization of the economy and calculates that the net income from the cloves for the province of Ambon, to which the production had been restricted, was between 1656 and 1696 an annual average of f 180,000.— at 55 rixdollars per bahar of 550 Dutch pounds.
The Company wanted to make the largest possible profits on the sales of these products, while buying the spices wholesale as cheap as possible. The Company also paid its personnel in textiles and specie. In Ambon 977 personnel were stationed in 1685, by 1781 there were 1,611. For the whole of Maluku which also included two other branch offices in Ternate and Banda comprising approximately 2,000 to 3,000 Company servants, their salaries were paid half in cash and half in textiles. Living allowance was paid in cash during the first few decades of the VOC period, but this was unsatisfactory and the Company created communal eating areas under their supervision.

The people in the provinces of Banda, Ambon and Ternate did not grow sufficient food. They had to import sago, rice, vegetables, other goods, and slaves to supplement the local labor pool. The Javanese, Makassarese and small traders from the islands between Halmahera and New Guinea supplied these things in large quantities to meet the needs of the Ambonese and Bandanese people. The suppliers of sago from Ceram, Aru and Kei islands also customarily bartered for cloths in Banda and Ambon. Therefore, the spice producers needed more cloths than just for their own use to supply other textile consumers.

In order to meet the demand for food crops the Company had encouraged local Chinese and burgers (ex-VOC employees) to grow food crops when they found themselves short. However, there often was a deficiency and the Dutch had to rely on the harbors of the Javanese state of Mataram, or when these were closed on Siam, Pegu, Arakan, Bengal, and other places in Asia. With the increasing monopolization of Maluku the VOC needed to supply cloths and rice. The Company could not always obtain

---

33 H.T. Colenbrander ed., Jan Pietersz. Coen, Bescheiden, vol 1: 7-8 For example, the VOC bought rice in Japara in 1614 at 15 reals-of-eight per last. If they had to buy the rice wholesale in the Maluku from traders from Java or Makassar they had to pay 40 to 50 reals-of-eight. The sales price of one last of rice in the Maluku amounted between 100 and 120 reals-of-eight

34 VOC 3595 (1781): 304-5; F.W. Stapel, Pieter van Dam, Beschryvingen, vol 2, part 1: 134;
enough rice and food supplies which is why it had to tolerate a minimum of local trade.\textsuperscript{35} It sent annually cloth, rice and provisions from Batavia to the Maluku in order to keep traders from outside the Maluku region as much as possible at a distance and prevent those based in Maluku from having an excuse to trade to Makassar or Java for rice which from the Company's point of view increased the chance for "smuggling".\textsuperscript{36} Maluku resident traders, however, tried to either smuggle spices out of the Dutch-controlled areas, or to buy cloths from non-Dutch traders, usually Bugis, Javanese and Malays. They avoided buying from the Company. People preferred to sell one kati of cloves for 1/4 real-of-eight to the Makassarese than receive 2 reals-of-eight from the Company. Dislike for the Company was widespread.\textsuperscript{37}

The Company subsequently employed a strategy to cut out these middlemen in the spice trade who travelled from places in Java, Sulawesi and Melaka to the spice islands. Initially the Company had used these middlemen to buy exchange goods to buy spices, but as soon as the Dutch ships came in sight prices rose. The Dutch had soon realized that it was cheaper to obtain the cloth in India and rice in ports where it was cheapest than to buy it locally in Indonesia.

The Company was a large, capitalized institution whose comparative advantage lay in large scale transactions. It naturally met with much competition and opposition in its attempt to establish a spice monopoly. In 1614 the Englishman Jordain attempted to buy cloves, but the Dutch were able to avert the sale on the strength of the contract. They fined the people who wanted to sell to the Englishman 500 rixdollars. In the same year a junk from China arrived in Ternate. After all the goods were sold it left with 35,000 reals-of-eight in cash.\textsuperscript{38} Money injected into the Maluku economy by the Company was being drained by foreign traders. The cloth was not

\textsuperscript{35} M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofsz, Asian Trade: 195

\textsuperscript{36} W. Ph. Coolhaas ed., Generale Missiven, vol 1 (1617): 77

\textsuperscript{37} H.T. Colenbrander ed., Jan Pietersz Coen, Bescheiden, vol 1 (1616): 218

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid: 82
selling fast enough and in 1617 the VOC complained that the cloth sales were declining because of the large numbers of cloths the Portuguese brought to Java and Makassar from where it was carried by Coromandel and Indonesian middlemen traders to the people in the Spice Islands.\textsuperscript{39} The prices of these middlemen were lower than the selling prices of the Company.

A logical means to increase the sales of the cloths was to impose a monopoly in Indian cloths as well as a spice monopoly on the people in the Maluku region. The instructions from the VOC directorate in 1617 allowed all local traders to do business in rice, sago, oil, salt, animals and "also in cloth in the Maluku region on the condition that these cloths were bought from the Company at a reasonable price and from no one else."\textsuperscript{40} Local traders could barter the cloths for spices, but under no circumstance were the traders allowed to transport the spices outside the islands from whence they originated or to sell the spices to foreigners other than the VOC. The consequences of breaking the prohibition were loss of life and goods.\textsuperscript{41} With two monopoly products in place the Company could dictate the prices: buy the spices cheap, and sell the Indian cloths dear. It goes without saying that suppressing the free trade of the Maluku people created tensions. The people resented the means the Dutch used and tried to undermine the spice and textile monopoly whenever they could.\textsuperscript{42}

\textit{Pepper and Textiles: Western Indonesia}

There were two other spices of importance: pepper and cinnamon.

\textsuperscript{39} W.Ph. Coolhaas ed., Generale Missiven, vol 1 (1617): 77

\textsuperscript{40} P. Myer, Verzameling van Instructien, Ordonnancien en Reglementen voor de Regering van Nederlandsch Indie: 41 art.63

\textsuperscript{41} J.A. van der Chijs, Plakaatboek, vol 1 (1617): 47

\textsuperscript{42} W. Ph. Coolhaas ed., Generale Missiven, vol 1 (1618): 87-90 For example, it was noted in 1617-8 that fewer and fewer cloves were for sale. The list of ten points of grievances the people in the Maluku had against the Dutch way of dealing and trading with them was reported by council member Laurence Reael.
The cinnamon was found in Ceylon, where the Portuguese were settled. The Dutch dislodged them and monopolized the trade in cinnamon from 1656 onwards. In 1670 the Dutch also imposed monopolistic controls on Ceylon's export of areca nuts and the import of textiles from the ports in Madurai and Travencore and the southern Coromandel coasts.\(^{43}\) The textile import had been quite substantial. All the monopolistic measures seemed to have affected the local economy in Ceylon so adversely that even peasants and peddlars, people who handled only small amounts of money, could not find the coins to make their transactions.\(^{44}\) The price of textiles rose too. The Muslim traders on the southern Indian coast, where the Dutch also had imposed strict trade controls, circumvented them. They landed with the contraband cloth (mostly coarse types) in the quieter bays of Ceylon and returned with the areca nuts. The south Indian merchant castes (Chetties) and Chulias also joined the contraband trade. By the 18th century the economy in the northern part of Ceylon started to turn around. The Chetties and Malabar Muslims settled in ghettos in Colombo because they controlled the retail trade. Jaffna prospered too, as did a few pockets here and there in the southern part of Ceylon. To what extent that involved the cloth trade is not apparent. The Dutch in Ceylon did not trade via Batavia. The directorate in the Netherlands had dealt with Ceylon directly since 1660. It seemed counter productive to send the cinnamon from Ceylon and the pepper from the Malabar coast, which too was channelled through Colombo, on the return fleet via Batavia, because the longer transportation time would only harm the quality of the products. This argument was put forward by Governor van Goens who made Colombo the rival city of Batavia in the structure of the Company.\(^{45}\)

---


\(^{44}\) S. Arasaratnam, "Elements of Social and Economic Change in Dutch maritime Ceylon (Sri Lanka) 1658-1796" in IESHR, vol 22, (1985) No 1: 51

\(^{45}\) F.S. Gaastra (1982), De Geschiedenis van de VOC: 101
In addition to the Malabar coast, pepper was cultivated in Sumatra, west Java, Borneo and the Malay peninsula.

Patani, on the east coast of the Malay peninsula, was the collection point for export to China of pepper from Ligor, Jambi, Indragiri, Kampar, Pahang, Kedah and Johor.\(^{46}\) Large quantities of pepper were initially obtained there by the VOC. In 1602 the ships' cargoes amounted to 5,300 bahar or 2,014,000 pounds at 30 reals-of-eight per bahar. It appears that at least an average of 1,000 bahar was shipped out annually until 1622.\(^{47}\) The Dutch paid mostly with silver added by European wares that included Dutch laken at a value of f4,454 in 1602, and a year later at f2,123.\(^{48}\) Patani imported sarassa (chintz) from Coromandel, cassa mera (red muslin) from Bengal and multi-colored cindai (chintz) from Surat, of which the yellow ones were most popular. Embroidered silk textiles from China were available in Patani that were in demand in Maluku, but not appreciated in the Netherlands. In 1610 the Dutch employed 18 Chinese who made stitched armosin colored blankets and pillows for the Dutch, but that branch of trade never developed and the Patani office was closed in 1622.

The Company did not conduct much trade in Borneo. In 1600 there were two major kingdoms, Brunei and Banjermasin, and some minor ones. Initially the Company traded with Banjermasin Indian cloths for pepper, and occasionally money payments were made.\(^{49}\) It had a monopoly contract for the pepper, but never for the Indian cloth. Some cloth was traded for gold in Sambas. In Kotawaringa and Sukadana cloth and picis had been traded for rice, axes, knives and diamonds. When the VOC representatives and staff were massacred in Banjermasin and Sukadana in 1638, the trade relationship

\(^{46}\) H. Terpstra, De Factorij der Oostindische Compagnie te Patani:152

\(^{47}\) Ibid: 8, 11, 155-8. One bahar in Patani was 380 pounds.

\(^{48}\) Ibid: 15-6

\(^{49}\) L.C.D. van Dijk, Neerland's vroegste Betrekkingen met Borneo, Den Solo-Archipel, Cambodja, Siam en Cochin-China: 9, 10-1, 19, 29, 43.
ceased and the pepper trade was left to the Chinese. After 1660 the VOC returned, but the trade never amounted to much.

A trade monopoly in textiles and spices could not be imposed on the western Indonesian regions as it had been in Maluku. It would have been too costly and at the expense of the inter-Asiatic trade for which the naval fleet was needed. The western Indonesian cities and towns bartered for textiles but were also accustomed to trade with currencies, more than in eastern Indonesia. It was to the advantage of the Dutch to use both barter and currency. If the buying price for pepper was high or if there was scarcity of cloths and the selling price for textiles was high, with profits of 100% to 200% it was in the interest of the Company to barter textiles for pepper.

In Batavia the Dutch could control the trade using Dutch coins. For example, in 1630 traders from Sumatra’s west coast, Palembang and Banjarmasin brought close to 600,000 pounds (3,960 pikul) of pepper to Batavia which the Company bought from them with Dutch rixdollars at 7.5 rixd. per pikul. These Dutch rixdollars were not used in Sumatra and Banjarmasin, so the traders needed to spend them in Batavia by investing them in Indian cloth, which was exactly what the Dutch had planned. They sold the textiles to the pepper merchants at 100% profit. In 1630 the import duty was 5% on the pepper and the export duty 5% for the textiles, making a total profit of 17,820 rixd. or f44,550. In 1651 the Company bought 84,536 pikul pepper of which 40,864 pikul in Batavia and 43,672 pikul via offices in Sumatra, Malabar, Malaka, and Makassar. Most of the pepper was purchased with Indian textiles. Noteworthy is the fact that the profit on the sales of textiles in Batavia was 15% to 20% higher than in the outlying offices.

---

50 Ibid: 108, 122
52 J.K.J. de Jonge, Opkomst, vol5 (1631): 183-4
53 W.Ph. Coolhaas ed., Generale Missiven, vol 2 (1651): 466. The pepper of this year was divided into 56,371 pikul on the return fleet, 17,078 pikul to Taiwan, and the remainder to the inter-Asiatic trade.
During the 17th century the Company secured deliveries of pepper wherever possible through contracts and treaties with independent local rulers, which were only effective when the VOC could enforce them. For example, in 1684, only after a major war, an agreement was signed with the Sultan of Banten, who had become a vassal of the Company, whereby all the pepper from Banten’s domain, Lampung and Silebar (on Sumatra’s southwest coast) would be delivered only to the Company and likewise the delivery of white and chintz cloth was made a prerogative of the VOC.\(^{54}\)

In Palembang the VOC closed a contract with the Pangeran in 1641 for the delivery of pepper. The pepper was loaded aboard ship and the payment promptly made in either cash or cloth for a set price.

The VOC concluded a contract with Jambi as well, structured along the same lines as that with Palembang in 1643. However, there existed discrepancies in the prices paid for the pepper in Jambi and Palembang which caused jealousies and attempts to smuggle from one place to the other.\(^{55}\) A new contract with Jambi in 1681 stated that pepper should be delivered only to the Company and not to other traders. The price for the pepper was settled at 4 rixd. per pikul if the payment was with Mexican reals-of-eight and 4 1/2 rixd. if it was to be made with textiles.

Two years later, after Banten fell and the competition between and VOC with foreign traders was much reduced in the Java Sea, the Company dominated the trade in pepper, Indian cloth and opium. It could thus control the prices in the Java Sea. The Company’s authority was immediately reflected in lower prices for pepper in Jambi. In 1683 the VOC paid only 3 rixd. in cash or 3 1/2 rixd. with textiles, respectively, for one pikul of pepper. In addition the Company stipulated that the payment for the pepper had to be accepted for two-thirds in textiles.\(^{56}\) No Indian textiles were allowed to

\(^{54}\) J.K.J. de Jonge, de Opkomst, vol 7 (1659): 401 “Rules and articles drawn up, agreed upon and signed on the date underneath between Johannes Camphuys, Gouverneur Generaal, . . . and Paducca Siri Sultan Abdul Cahir Abu Nasar . . .”


\(^{56}\) F.W. Stapel ed., Pieter van Dam, Beschrijvinge, vol 2, part 1: 310
be imported, except by the VOC. Those caught breaking the new rules would lose their possessions, which were to be divided between the Company and the local ruler.

The Company traded to the western coast of Sumatra a much larger proportion of Indian textiles than silver currency; some Chinese silks, raw silk and gold thread were also included in the shipments. The latter items were also traded in Jambi and Palembang by the Chinese. The Dutch could not trade freely on the west coast of Sumatra until after the 1660s when they had concluded a peace treaty with the Queen of Aceh. The Dutch used a price list of textiles in payment of each bahar or 3 pikuls of pepper. It was agreed in the treaty that the authorities in Aceh be compensated with one piece of cloth for every bale of textiles that the Company sold on the West Coast, and that the people who fetched water for the Dutch would receive three small cloths. The Queen of Aceh, seven title holders, and twenty mantris were to be annually awarded one silk patolu and one bafta from Broach, western India, in addition to a stipulated payment in money for the pepper.

A few years after the treaty, some Sumatran trading towns, Inderapura, Painan, Padang, Tiku, Barus, and the rulers of the Sepuluh Buah Bandar, broke their alliances with Aceh and sought the protection of the Dutch. This gave the Dutch the monopoly rights in these places on pepper and cloths; no import or export duties were expected. The Dutch negotiated a compensation for the loss of the produce of these towns with the Acehnese

57 J.E. Heeres, Corpus Diplomaticum, vol 1 (1660): 528-32; F.W. Stapel ed., Pieter van Dam, Beschryvinge, vol 2, part 1: 290 The first price list had been established in 1649. One bahar (3 pikul or 360 pounds) pepper cost eight to nine rixd. thus, the textile equivalent must represent the same value which could be either: 3 pieces (ps) bleached guinees, or 6 ps broad black ordinary bafta, 8 ps narrow of the same, 16 ps half ones of the same, 8 ps blue or white betille of 32 asta (14.72 meter), 6 ps committers, 36 ps cannekins, 20 ps narronconders, 9 blankets, 18 dongris, 20 chiavonis, 17 tape sarassa, 7 bleached ordinary or blue salem pore, 12 red karikams, 20 kangans, 28 blue boulangs, 17 ni quanias, 12 red chelas, 13 white parcalle, 12 Surat broad chintz, 20 tapi cindai (C), 36 asmanis, 5 bleached murti with gold kepala, 2 fine black narrow bafta from Broach (S), 3 red of the same, or 3 ells crimson red laken. Also cotton thread, salt, iron, steel, and a few other trade goods were bartered for one bahar pepper or for gold. The prices on the list for 1649 were a little higher than for 1660.
elites. The agreement also included gifts (salimut) of cotton and silk textiles for the local headmen. The new arrangement accelerated Dutch interest in the gold from Minangkabau. After 1665 the precious metal became the main reason for Dutch presence on the West Coast. The gold and pepper of west Sumatra continued to be bartered for textiles throughout the VOC period.

From the interior of Sumatra, the Minangkabau brought their gold, pepper, and other forest products to people they met down the mountains on the west or the east coast of Sumatra. In 1674 Melaka Malay Muslims went inland to trade with the Minangkabau through the Inderagiri River. Also the Chinese from Jambi and Palembang went inland to barter imported and locally woven cloth for pepper with the Minangkabau.

Choice textiles often went to the coastal people in Java, Sumatra or larger towns in the archipelago, who were also the first buyers of the Indian cloths when they arrived, and gradually, but in lesser amounts, the trade goods including the Indian textiles were dispersed to subsequent buyers inland or further away from dominant groups. Regardless of the quality and

---

58 The panglima and four title holders in Padang received each one silk cindai and a bafta, (the panglima and two orangkayas a black broad bafta from Broach, the judges an ordinary bafta) and the four mantris one of either: the black broad bafta or the silk cindai. The ranking in awarding cloth was always very clear. The Dutch did not know the fine details of these appropriations, but were always assisted by an attendant of the royal household in choosing the gifts or in the decisions on the appropriate awards, as in the cases here for Aceh and Padang's trade agreements. F.W. Stapel ed., Pieter van Dam, Beschr vinge, vol 2, part 1: 291; J.E. Heeres ed., Corpus Diplomaticum, vol 2: 166-7, 447 a similar agreement closed with Pariaman in 1671; again the social hierarchy is apparent in the awards of cloths: fine bafta from Broach and silk cindai. Other differences apparent in this agreement are the silk patolu awarded to Aceh, but silk cindai to the West Coast rulers. The length of the cloth is also an identification of rank. They varied here from 7, 5, to 4 asta (1 asta = approx. 0.46 meter)

59 H. Kroeskamp, De Westkust en Minangkabau (1665-1689): 43


types of textile, the Indian textiles reached all areas in the archipelago, from coastal town to the remotest valley, lake side, or mountain top in central Sulawesi or Borneo and on isolated islands, wherever people lived and exchanged goods. The Dutch, and before them also the Portuguese and Javanese traders, sold the better quality Indian cloths to the Javanese and royal families in littoral states. Cloths of lesser quality trickled down to the lower class people and to regions further away in the hinterland or to the lesser Maluku islands.62

The Javanese were very particular in the buying of tapi cindai, sarassa, and kain gulung; they wanted the textile well woven, with designs that they appreciated, and skillfully hand drawn, in fast dyes. If their demands were not satisfied they preferred to use something else altogether. The people who could afford it did not mind spending their money on a good cloth. The lesser varieties, such as coarse tapis, were sold to the poor.63 It was in the interest of the Company to cater to everyone and control the quality. Experience had taught it that only a profit of 80% could be made on an inferior-quality type of cloth, while the same type of cloth in a better quality, sometimes secured through another merchant, could yield 400% profit.64 Understanding this, the Company tried to obtain the best quality textiles for its fine spices and pepper trade in the Maluku, Java and Sumatra when they began the trade.

By the end of the first decade the VOC leadership perceived that profitability for the Company and the stockholders in the Netherlands depended on full participation in the inter-Asiatic trade. This meant responding to the demand of the spice producers for imported textiles from India, and to the demand of the cloth producers for precious metals supplied from Europe which were later supplemented from sources in Japan and


63 H.T. Colenbrander ed., Jan Pietersz Coen, Bescheiden, vol 2 (1617): 293-4

64 Ibid, vol 1 (1614): 64, vol 3 (1622): 210
Persia. Realizing the critical linkage between spices, species and textiles, the Dutch consequently focused their naval, financial, and diplomatic strategies on securing the sources of textiles in Coromandel, Surat, and Bengal, the subject of the next chapter.
CHAPTER 5

INDIA:
SPICES, SPECIES, AND TEXTILES

When the Dutch came to participate in the pre-existing trade pattern, they based themselves in contrast to the Portuguese, not in India close to the sources for textiles and pepper, but in Indonesia, closer to the more valuable fine spices, the new growth area of pepper, and the big markets of China and Japan. Because of the linkage between Indonesian spices and Indian textiles, they eventually were forced to secure the supply of textiles in India by establishing factories in Coromandel, Surat, and Bengal.

Securing the Textiles at their Sources: Coromandel

Large communities of Chinese, Gujarati, Coromandel Muslims, Arabs, Malays and other islanders were found in Aceh in 1600. The Chinese imported a multitude of trade wares among which were raw silk, silk textiles, and gold thread. Silk textiles were very prestigious items suitable for royals, notables and other selected personages. The esteem with which silk textiles were generally regarded may be seen at the traditional presentation made by the Gujarati traders who came in audience to the Sultan of Aceh and customarily offered seven pieces of silk kain cindai.1 Afterwards the Sultan allowed them to trade the more common cottons like asmanis, bafta, beiramee, cannakins, corroots, dongris, doty, cotton thread, coarse chintz, quilts, and several other types of textiles in his town. The Klings, who came from Coromandel, brought different types of textiles from those of Gujarat, namely, blue salempore, fine chintz, striped cottons and many more; the Bengalis brought alegia, malmal and cambaya cloth to Aceh.

1 A multi-colored silk cloth, perhaps similar to the silk patola, but distinct from it. A.K. Dasgupta "Aceh in Indonesian Trade and Politics, 1600-1641" PhD dissertation, Cornell University: 114
The Dutch had found Aceh to be a significant harbor in 1600 and were quick to contract with the Sultan for pepper. The Dutch were back in 1605 with a small vessel, named Delft, the same ship that continued to the Coromandel coast and whose officers laid the foundation for a remarkable trade in Indian textiles.

The Delft made successful contacts in Masulipatnam. The chief merchant left a few of his men behind there, while he returned to Banten with 122 bales of cloth. The Delft came back the following year with an other chief merchant and a textile expert, Dirk van Leeuwen who was contracted for one year. They visited many textile production places and opened a factory in Paleacat, just north of Madras. A residence was opened temporarily in Petapul, also known as Nizāmpatnam, where cloths of a particular red (chay) color, much liked in Indonesia, were procured. The Dutch were given permission from the Governor of Petapul to purchase certain types of chintz made to their specification.

Textile expert van Leeuwen was asked to stay a little longer to instruct his successor in the intricacies of textiles and to pass on the knowledge of how to purchase them. A second expert, Marcelis, who spoke the Tamil language, was regularly sent to travel inland to collect information about the wages of the weavers, dyers, bleachers and washers. He learned the prices of finished products, and also of the raw materials that were used in the production of the cloths. Marcelis was to compare those prices and judge

---

2 F.W. Stapel ed., Pieter van Dam, Beschrijvinge, vol 2, part 1: 260

3 The miraculous red color referred to is produced with a dye from the chay-root, of the madder family. It was found on the island Tambreve in the river of Petapul. The district governor held it as a monopoly. He did not always want to give permission to sell the dye because he had it used for dyeing the cloth of his soldiers and sold it to the King in Persia who had the same use for it. M.E. van Opstall ed., De Reis van de Vloot van Pieter Willemesz Verhoeff naar Azie 1607-1612, vol 1: 73; J.K.J. de Jonge, Opkomst, vol 3: 282. "Discours door Lodewyck Isacss ....wegen den standt van de custe van Coromandel - 5 Nov. 1608;" Appendix B, "The Painting of Chintz" explains the use of this special dye.

their fairness when he gave his orders. He next proceeded with setting up workplaces with weavers and painters for the Company in south Coromandel and taught the artisans, with the use of samples, to make even better painted chintz than in Petapuli at much lower cost.\(^5\)

The procedures that Marcelis and van Leeuwen instituted could not be maintained when the quantity of the textiles that had to be ordered increased significantly; soon local brokers were brought in.

In north Coromandel the Dutch seemed to have contracted mainly with Muslim brokers, probably of the same group that purchased Indonesian spices from the Dutch.\(^6\) In 1608 the first batch of the popular chintz of a special red color, *sarassa*, was shipped by the Dutch to Indonesia, some to Aceh, others to Banten. The production increased every year according to the orders that came in from Batavia. Samples of the cloth to be produced were included.\(^7\) A plain cloth of smooth and fine thread was ideal for making chintz. Often *parcalle* or *muri* was used. The lengthy process of dyeing cloth in eleven steps to make chintz has been described by Gittinger in *Master Dyers to the World* with illustrations based on a French manuscript from 1734. In summary the process included 1) repeated soaking in a myrabolan solution and drawing the patterns with iron and alum mordants, 2) boiling the cloth in a chay root solution which combines with iron and alum to produce respectively black and red, 3) bleaching in a dung bath to remove the myrabolan and mordants, 4) and 5) applying wax to the areas to remain untouched by the indigo dye, 6) blue dyeing with indigo and later the removing of the wax in hot water, 7) re-application of alum mordant in the

---

\(^5\) Ibid: 90, 141; VOC 1055 "Instructie" (1610): 2

\(^6\) S. Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*: 107, 135; J.J. Brennig, "The Textile Trade of the Seventeenth Century", PhD dissertation: 126 The Muslims traded and used spices in food preparation if they could afford it, and for medicinal purposes.

\(^7\) Om Prakash, *The Dutch Factories in India 1617-1623*: 21-2, 29, 30, 36-42, 46, 48-51, 53-6, etc. There are thousands of examples of these specifications. A study of these orders in the letters from Banten, after 1619 from Batavia, to the offices in India could reveal much more about the textiles themselves than will be reflected in this study. It would take much time to do a detailed analysis of them, but contribute greatly to the history of the textiles themselves.
motif areas, 8) the addition of extra mordants and dyes to vary colors, 9) boiling the cloth once more in a chay root solution to develop the red, blue, purple and yellow, 10) further bleaching and washing, 11) the application of yellow dye over blue to make green. The yellow being fugitive, would leave the leaves more blue than green. A very similar description was already known from a Dutch Commissioner in the 1680s (see the translation in Appendix C) predating this popular French one by almost 50 years. The last two paragraphs of the translation show the economic potential and value that specialized knowledge of textile manufacture could have when a way was discovered how to apply the chintz process on silk cloth. The report also includes a description of the way indigo was made in Coromandel. In 1610 one ship brought to Banten 292 bales of cloths of which 151 contained the sarassa, from the workplace in Tirupapaliyur, west of Negapatnam, 39 bales with Gujarat textiles, 72 bales of indigo and 24 bales of cotton thread.

In 1617 contracts were executed between the Company and the Indian brokers for more than 900 bales, almost 180,000 pieces of cloths, at a total amount of £222,300.— entirely for the Indonesian market:

Paleacat: 50 bales gulong of 5 meters; 170 bales gulong of 4 meters; 6 bales arissiodes; 5 bales red malay pattas; 10 bales tapi sarassa, 4 bales sarassa ley de Cochin, 2 bales sarassa telepocan

Masulipatnam: 200 bales tapi, 50 bales tapi cindai, 4 bales shirts and trousers, 7 bales betille, 10 bales plbloulang, 4 bales red parcalles, 15 bales white parcalles, 15 bales salempore

Tirupapaliyur: 15 bales chelas, 15 bales taffachelas, 300 bales balaches, 25 bales gulong, 10 bales madafons

During the next six years between 180,00 and 200,000 pieces of textiles

---

8 M. Gittinger, Master Dyers to the World: 24-5

9 The latter two were destined for the Netherlands. H. Terpstra, "De Vestiging aan de Kust van Koromandel" PhD dissertation: 143-4

10 Om Prakash, The Dutch Factories in India 1617-1623: 36-38
were imported.\textsuperscript{11} The numerical data will be further discussed in Chapter 8. 

Because of unsettled political situations in and around the kingdom of Golconda, the trading companies "had to wage a continuous struggle against the illegitimate demands and restrictive measures of the local authorities or buy their favors through expensive presents."\textsuperscript{12} Through a series of \textit{cowls} (contracts) given to the Dutch by the kings of Golconda and Karnatica, the VOC became a privileged semi-autonomous corporation. The \textit{cowls} allowed them to privately own several places granted to them, lease villages with workers very cheaply, receive part of the import and export duties of the traders in the Company's domains, transport textiles from distant places 250 miles inland in Golconda to Masulipatnam tax free and other smaller local tax exemptions.\textsuperscript{13} The opportunity to explore distant markets helped expand the varieties of textiles, which were an attraction to buyers in the archipelago.\textsuperscript{14}

The Dutch were mostly granted free import and export of goods in places under the kings of Karnatica and Golconda.\textsuperscript{15} In some places they paid duty, but less than the tax charged in general to Indian traders of 2-3\% in the seaports along the coast.\textsuperscript{16} Textiles were taxed inland, at the town gate, sometimes by weight, but also per piece or per \textit{pacheri,} that is per two cloths. For example, for white cloth and \textit{parcalle} a tax payment of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} Ibid: 265-7, 290-1
\item \textsuperscript{12} T. Raychaudhuri, Jan Company in Coromandel: 8
\item \textsuperscript{13} F.W. Stapel, ed. Pieter van Dam, Beschrijvinge, vol 2, part 2: 225-46
\item \textsuperscript{14} VOC 1055, "Acoort gemaeckt bij den Capiteyn Arent Martsen ... ende den doorlughtighe hoochgeboren Coninck genaempt Vincay Pata Raya Alou ... April A’ 1610": 2-3
\item \textsuperscript{15} F.W. Stapel ed., Pieter van Dam, Beschrijvinge, vol 2, part 2: 225-46; W.H. Moreland, Relations of Golconda in the Early Seventeenth Century: 52 states that the Dutch paid 2\% import duty in goods, and 2\% export duty in cash.
\item \textsuperscript{16} S. Arasaratnam, Merchants Companies and Commerce: 324
\end{itemize}
respectively 1 and 2 cash per *pacheri* was required.\(^{17}\) There were a myriad of other small taxes for goods being transported from the coastal town inland or from the cloth producing villages to the port towns. The Indian merchants who paid those taxes incorporated the charges in their negotiations and dealings with the European Companies making the *cowls* look a farce.\(^{18}\)

The establishment of factories on the southern Coromandel coast was comparatively easier under the Hindu administration of the wealthy empire of Vijayanagar even though it was crumbling into semi-autonomous feudalities. The Dutch were able to enter into contracts greatly to their advantage with local authorities in Paleacat in 1610. The latter and the king were interested in developing foreign trade relations, which would bring them additional income as well as a regular supply of curiosities from east and west.\(^{19}\)

When in 1613 the building of Fort Geldria in Paleacat was completed, it was declared the official headquarters of the Company on the Coromandel coast. It continued in the status of "government" and appropriately was headed by a Governor. In 1690 the headquarters on the coast were moved much further south to Negapatnam. The Company had gained relative power and control through its dominance at sea, as demonstrated, for example, in 1628 when the naval ships blockaded Masulipatnam because of the commercial manipulations by the governor.\(^{20}\) During the civil wars in the Karnatic, Fort Geldria in Paleacat sometimes offered security and employment for fleeing weavers and textile workers.

Between 1640 and 1660 the activities of the VOC on the Coromandel coast expanded; new factories were established in Bimilipatnam, north of

---

\(^{17}\) Ibid: 326

\(^{18}\) Ibid: 328

\(^{19}\) Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company*: 10-27

\(^{20}\) W.Ph.Coolhaas ed., *Generale Missiven*, vol 2 (1651): 477 The unfair commercial manipulations as the Dutch perceived it consisted in the Governor of Masulipatnam monopolizing the production of textiles in high demand and selling them to the trading companies for high prices—practices the Dutch also employed.
Masulipatnam; further inland; and in the far south: Tanjore, Madura, Karikal, and Coilpatnam.

While operating from Ceylon and southern India the Company found an alternative production center for textiles in Madura.\textsuperscript{21} Here the textiles were cheaper, but limited in the varieties that could be produced. An advantage was that the area was outside the centers of textile procurement for other Europeans.

In the years before 1600 the Portuguese in Melaka annually received ships loaded with cloths from Coromandel.\textsuperscript{22} These textiles found their way in part to the Maluku region for the barter trade in spices, a small quantity was shipped to the Portuguese in Macao, and another portion to western Indonesia for the pepper. The Portuguese in Melaka merely followed trade patterns set earlier by the Chinese, Malays and Javanese. The Indian Muslims who used to maintain the supply link between Melaka and Coromandel lost most of their trade as a result of Portuguese competition.\textsuperscript{23} They shifted their trade to Aceh, Pahang, Kedah, Patani and Banten which collectively were much more important than Melaka.

After the Dutch conquest of Melaka from the Portuguese in 1641 combined with the Company's attempts at monopolizing the cloth trade to the archipelago, many Gujarati, Bengalis, and Coromandel traders intensified their trade to Persia and the Red Sea.\textsuperscript{24} All the merchants who sailed from the Indian coasts to the east invariably traded textiles and were perceived as competitors by the VOC. The Dutch felt threatened by the Indians, who

\textsuperscript{21} Arasaratnam, Merchants, Companies and Commerce: 79-80. Chank shells were used for beetling the cloth

\textsuperscript{22} T. Raychaudhuri, Jan Company in Coromandel: 6

\textsuperscript{23} J.J. Brennig, "The Textile Trade of Seventeenth Century Northern Coromandel", PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison: 13. Brennig claims that the Klings used to export two million yards of textile from Paleacat, but were displaced by the Portuguese

\textsuperscript{24} Hans W. van Santen, "De Verenigde Oost-indische Compagnie in Gujarat en Hindustan, 1620-1660", PhD dissertation, University of Leiden: chapter 2, 51-78
could sell their textiles at a much lower price because of lower overheads. The Dutch tried to control the export by issuing passes to Indians who wanted to trade in Southeast Asia. It was for their own protection, so the Dutch claimed, because conditions at sea were uncertain. The Indian Muslim and Hindu traders largely ignored the Dutch requirements and frequently obtained passes from the English, Danes, and Portuguese. They also joined partnerships with Armenian traders who were spreading their diaspora eastwards and westwards in the second half of the 17th century. The Armenians freighted and traded goods to Manila, Syriam, Mergui, and Ayutthaya. They joined with the Portuguese in these ventures and also freighted goods for the English and the French to ports in the archipelago.

As Dutch trading practices evolved, they identified three types of control: 1) trade which the company enjoyed as an outcome of its own conquest, exercising its own jurisdiction, as e.g. in Ceylon, Negapatnam, Batavia, and Maluku; 2) trade by virtue of exclusive contracts, giving the Company monopolistic rights on the local production such as Cochin and Cannanore on the Malabar coast, ports on Sumatra’s west coast, Banten, Palembang, etc. and 3) trade by virtue of treaties, by which the Company did not occupy any special position at all and found itself only one among many, as in Siam, Tonkin, Gujarat, and Bengal.

The Muslim trade in Aceh was declining after 1668 as a consequence of the treaty concluded between the VOC and the Queen, the VOC’s prizing the pepper-producing west coast of Sumatra, and tin-producing Perak, away from Aceh. The Dutch forced the Indians out of the trade by seizing

---


27 George D. Winius and M. P.M. Vink, The Merchant-Warrior Pacified: 10-11

28 This treaty was concluded after Jacob Keyser and Balthasar Bort were sent to Aceh. According to the contract only the people from Aceh and the Company could trade on the Sumatran west coast. All other foreign traders were excluded: those from
Makassar (1667-9); they refused them passes to Melaka from 1676 onwards, and subsequently closed Banten to the Indian traders as well as other foreign traders in 1682, thus keeping the competition out of both the spice-exporting areas and the cloth-consuming coasts around the Java Sea. The Coromandel traders were forced to refocus their attention westward and intensify their search along the coasts of Bengal Gulf, from Arakan and Pegu to Kedah, stopping in the Southeast Asian harbors on the "upper coasts" of the Malay peninsula.\textsuperscript{29} The same scramble for alternative markets was followed by competing Europeans like the English, Danes, French, and Portuguese.\textsuperscript{30}

The overall picture of the Dutch East India Company's involvement on the Coromandel Coast shows that priority was given to driving up the production of textiles, to obtaining them as cheaply as possible, and to monopolizing the Indonesian markets for the sale of these textiles. The information we have analyzed confirms that, as Arasaratnam suggests, the forceful intrusion of the Dutch into the trade and the harmful effects of their aggressive policies were "... a major factor" in weakening the Indian merchants. The same observations were confirmed by Winius and Vink who characterized the period between 1600 and 1680 for India as a "monopolistic phase."\textsuperscript{31}

The main exports of Coromandel had traditionally consisted of textiles, woven on the handloom in many hundreds of villages and towns. An

\textsuperscript{29} S. Arasaratnam, Merchants, Companies and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast 1650-1740: 118-34; Ibid, "The Coromandel-Southeast Asia Trade 1650-1740" in JAH, vol 18 (1984), No 2: 118-33


\textsuperscript{31} S. Arasaratnam, Merchants, Companies and Commerce: 355; George D. Winius and Marcus P.M. Vink, The Merchant-Warrior Pacified: Part one, 7-40
average weaver household produced 1500 meters of cloth per year. Their own consumption was about 7.50 meters per person. It appears that weavers were, in general, categorized as fine cloth and coarse cloth weavers in Golconda. Weaver households specialized in a certain type of cloth; some identified themselves as muri weavers, others as kain gulong weavers. In general weavers were able to weave several types of cloth, but either chose the one that was most convenient or profitable to them, like a farmer choosing the crop he grows, or responding to the demand for a certain type. A weaver's labor was compensated with a steady income that did not increase much over time. If a weaver wanted to earn a higher income he could produce more pieces by weaving looser, using less yarn at the cost of quality. Sometimes a weaver was subcontracted by another weaver, who bought the finished pieces that met a certain standard. When production expanded additional weavers were attracted from the agricultural sector.\textsuperscript{32} These weaving villages could be found at a distance up to 400 kilometers from the coast.\textsuperscript{33} Many were located close to the major rivers and their tributaries because they needed plenty of fresh, flowing water for washing off the wax from the dyed cloths. Caustic sand was utilized for bleaching cloth.\textsuperscript{34} The textiles were transported from the village by bullock or small boat to the market towns. The agents and brokers of the Company were responsible for collection and supervision of the cloth production until it reached the warehouse.\textsuperscript{35}

In 1634 the Dutch Governor of Paleacat travelled himself to Masulipatnam to sell spices and to order textiles according to samples of specified length, width and quality that Batavia had ordered. That season the

\textsuperscript{32} J.J. Brennig, "The textile Trade of Seventeenth Century Northern Coromandel" PhD dissertation (1975): 245, 249, 256-7, 259, 264, 271

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid: 142,table 6; S. Arasaratnam, Merchants, Companies and Commerce: 48-59 including a map on page 50 . There were many weavers further inland, but the sources do not reflect that they participated in production for export.

\textsuperscript{34} W.Ph. Coolhaas ed., Generale Missiven, vol 3 (1668): 659, 691

\textsuperscript{35} W.Ph. Coolhaas ed., Generale Missiven, vol 7 (1719): 451
cotton supplies had been very low. There was little available and what was procurable was expensive. Business had therefore slowed down, preventing the Governor from selling the spices; moreover, he found the weavers unwilling to weave according to the demands of the Company because they said that it was easier to weave according to their own specifications. If the Governor insisted on the stipulated size and quality he would have to pay an exorbitant price.\textsuperscript{36} Significantly, over 100 hundred years later the same complaint was being made.\textsuperscript{37}

Because the quantities of textiles which the Company traded greatly increased between the 1620s and 1650, problems with procurement increased too.\textsuperscript{38} In 1659 Governor Pit of VOC headquarters invited a small group of Indian merchants to form an association for the procurement of one type of cloth, the \textit{betille ternate} or Ternate cloth. As members in this association the merchants did not need to compete against each other as they had done in the past, because they were assured that as a group they were given the control over supplying the VOC with \textit{betille ternatan} cloth. The experiment turned out a success; the quality of the cloth improved and the specifications were better met. Another group was formed with the same purpose and assigned to secure the \textit{muri} cloth.\textsuperscript{39} From this initial formation of associations the joint-stock companies in Coromandel evolved.\textsuperscript{40} This way of procuring cloths was beneficial to all parties concerned and was still continued in the 18th century, although the associations became fewer and

\textsuperscript{36} Dagh-Register, Batavia, vol 2 (August, 1634): 362

\textsuperscript{37} Inferior quality \textit{Guinees} cloth was being bought up without discrimination by the Persians, Muslims, and Hindus. The weavers were not willing to make the better quality and specified size for the Company, because it took longer and gave them comparatively small profits. VOC 2944 (1759): 2165

\textsuperscript{38} See Chapter Four "The Import of Textiles" section for figures.

\textsuperscript{39} J.J. Brennig, "The Textile Trade of Seventeenth Century Coromandel": 90-2

\textsuperscript{40} J.J.Brennig, "Chief Merchants and European Enclaves of 17th Century Coromandel" in \textit{MAS}, vol 11 (1977), No 3: 321-3
less productive.\textsuperscript{41}

The larger part of the cloths the VOC procured consisted of everyday types of material, "cloth, that can be used by everyone" (goet, \textit{daer yedereen mede gedient is}) and a few of the very best quality or expensive types.\textsuperscript{42} Rarely were the Indian textiles made into clothing. The Company bought the pieces as they came from the loom, with very little finishing.

Several types of cloths consisted of multiple tapi size parts still connected with a filler of woven or unworked warp threads which had to be cut. For example, 4 fotas connected to make up one piece of marados or eight dongris to make one guinees.\textsuperscript{43} The rumals and other squares of cloth frequently came in about 10 connected pieces.\textsuperscript{44} One section in Chapter 7 discusses the delineation of an Indian piece of cloth. The following list shows the types of Indian textiles from Coromandel that were sold for a short or long time during the VOC period in Indonesia. Details on the cloths and the lengths of time they were traded by the Company can be found in Textile

\textsuperscript{41} The process of a joint-stock company started after the VOC in Coromandel received the order for that season's textiles from Batavia; subsequently the price, quantities, time of deliveries, etc. were negotiated between the top VOC officials and the shareholders, legalized by the signing of written contracts. After the order was fulfilled and the season was over, the association was dissolved and accounts settled. The process was extensively described and one sample contract translated in S. Arasaratnam, "Indian Merchants and Their Trading Methods (circa 1700)" in IESHR, vol 3 (1966), no 1: 85-95. The word the Dutch used to refer to the set-up of these "companies" had many resemblances to the "reederij" (the outfitting of a ship for one voyage) in pre-VOC times in the Netherlands. The legal agreements and flow of procedures for a "company" or "reederij", the outfitting of a ship in the 16th century in the Netherlands in which several contractors participated, is very similar to these associations described by W.M.F. Mansvelt, "Rechtsvorm en Geldelijk Beheer bij de Oost-Indische Compagnie", PhD dissertation University of Amsterdam, (1922): 18-36.


\textsuperscript{43} VOC 11207 (1685): 35

\textsuperscript{44} Production centers in Gujarat received woven unfinished cloths, gessies, from markets in Awadh, situated east of Agra in Hindustan after 1632, which they would prepare further. Guzzies or Gessies, a simple type of cloth, were torn to size and dyed, bleached, printed, etc. in order to make up cannekins, ardius, bafta, asmanis and chintz. Hans W. van Santen, "De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in Gujarat en Hindustan, 1620-1660" PhD dissertation, University of Leiden, (1982): 177
Appendix A and B.45

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrisiodes</th>
<th>Chintz</th>
<th>Kain gulong</th>
<th>Rumal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bafta</td>
<td>Cindai</td>
<td>Kangan</td>
<td>Sailcloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balaches</td>
<td>Committer</td>
<td>Longi</td>
<td>Salalu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedcover</td>
<td>Dongris</td>
<td>Madafon</td>
<td>Salempore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betille</td>
<td>Doty</td>
<td>Madop</td>
<td>Salpicados</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanket</td>
<td>Dragam</td>
<td>Muri</td>
<td>Sarassa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulang</td>
<td>Flagcloth</td>
<td>Negrocloth</td>
<td>Saratte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandam</td>
<td>Gingam</td>
<td>Niquanias</td>
<td>Sestines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambaya</td>
<td>Gobar</td>
<td>Palampore</td>
<td>Taffachelas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catche</td>
<td>Guinees</td>
<td>Parcalle</td>
<td>Tapi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chavonis</td>
<td>Gunny</td>
<td>Patta</td>
<td>Tarclo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelas</td>
<td>Kain</td>
<td>Poleng</td>
<td>Telpocan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rambutin</td>
<td>Turias</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Securing the Textiles at their Sources: Surat

Aceh was also the jumping off port for Dutch exploration in Surat. Two Dutchmen boarded a Gujarati ship therein 1602, but were murdered by the Portuguese one year after arrival in Surat.46 It was difficult for Europeans to penetrate the markets in Surat and Cambay, because the Portuguese had settled in those places and were backed up by military and naval ships from Goa. Another attempt was made in 1605, but the Dutch factor committed suicide after two years of harassment and having his trade goods taken by Mughal authorities on the instigation of the Portuguese.47

The main trade goods the Gujarati imported from Aceh had always been pepper, Malukan spices, and raw silk from China and Aceh. Those skeins of silk supplied five silk-weaving and eleven cotton-weaving towns in Gujarat. In India a notable portion of the raw silk was woven in with cotton as mixed

---

45 The list does not claim to be 100% inclusive for Indonesia. Many other textiles, not on the list, were also procured in Coromandel serving other markets such as Persia, Siam, Japan or Europe.

46 Hans. W. van Santen, "De verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in Gujarat en Hindustan, 1620-1660": 8

47 Om Prakash, The Dutch Factories in India 1617-1623: 14
fabrics. Silk made the textile stronger and increased the value considerably. Mixed silk was also the attire of Muslim men. Surat and Ahmedabad were the only two towns that produced both silk and cotton textiles. Other places like Patan, Cambay, and Bulsar specialized in silk only. The cotton-weaving centers were supported by numerous villages.

One of the textiles that is thought to have left the largest imprint on Southeast Asian textile designs is the silk *patolu*, the wedding sari of Gujarat, produced in Cambay and Patan. The shortest description of its unusual technique of a double ikat is quoted from A.B. Gupte in *Indian Art at Delhi*:

> It is woven with warps and wefts which have been separately tied and dyed by the *Bandhana* or knot-dyeing process. The dyer takes a small bundle of the warp after it has been dyed in the lightest colour, and draws in pencil across it some lines at measured distances, according to the design to be produced. His wife then ties the silk, along the spaces marked, tightly round with cotton thread, through which the dye will not penetrate. The yarn is then dyed with the next darker colour found upon the warp, and the process repeated until the darkest colour is reached. The weft is then treated in the same way, being so tied and dyed that, in the loom, when it crosses the warp, each of its colours may exactly come in contact with the same colour in the warp. The little bundles of warp have next to be arranged in the loom by the weaver, who then takes the little bundles of weft one at a time, using each in its own place through the design.

There existed distinct *patolu* patterns in Cambay and Patan. In Cambay a diaper (repeated figures, as diamonds or lozenges) pattern in white lines that form meshes, flattened in the warp with three flowers on dark-green stems in a maroon field is characteristic. The sprays lie on their side in

---

48 W.H. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*: 172

49 George Watt, *Indian Art at Delhi*: 255. A cloth like *Doria* for example, consisted of three parts cotton and two parts silk twisted warp threads, the weft was all cotton, but the silk-cotton weft gave a striped effect to the textile. Hossain Hameeda, *The Company Weavers of Bengal*: 41

50 V.A. Janaki, *The Commerce of Cambay from the Earliest Period to the Nineteenth Century*: 52, 74. The twelve cotton-weaving centers in the 17th century were: Ahmedabad, Dholka, Mehmedabad, Nadiad, Cambay, Baroda, Dabhoi, Broach, Surat, Narsari, Gandevi, and Bulsar.

51 George Watt, ed. *Indian Art at Delhi*: 257, catalogue to an exhibit in Delhi in 1903
the length of the cloth. The borders are broader at the end than along the sides. The patterns in the ends are vertical. In the side border-strips the patterns are drawn out lengthwise.

The Patan patolu has no diaper, but the field is filled with repetitions of elephants, flowering shrubs, human figures, birds, all of which are placed with the feet inward towards the center of the cloth. The color of the field is dark blue/green with patterns in red, white, yellow. The patolu sari for Surat has usually a green border and a dark red field.

In 1615, ten years after the Dutch had sent the last ill-fated merchant to Gujarat, they resumed attempts to establish themselves in Surat. This time there were some good reasons to do so. In the first place the English had come to trade in Surat in 1612, weakening the Portuguese influence with the local traders. In the second place, the VOC closed its base in Aceh in 1616 and needed to go to the source of the cloths the Gujarati traded in Aceh.

In Surat the VOC was one trader among many. The Company received a firman, a right to trade, in 1618 from the Mughal prince and by the 1620s had established factories in Broach, Baroda, Ahmadabad, and Agra which were supervised from Surat. At different times VOC agents also lived in other places such as Cambay and Sind.

The Dutch tried to do what they had done everywhere, to penetrate existing trade networks; in this case from Surat to Persia and Arabia, and secondly, the spice link from Surat to the archipelago. The Gujarati had brought cloth to Java, Melaka and Sumatra for at least two centuries and like the Arabs and Persians returned with spices. Indonesians had come to rely on a supply of certain types of Gujarati cloths; these were particularly favored in Sumatra.52

Since the 1570s Surat was the major harbor for the Mughal government and although a few authorities sent ships, overall there existed only

occasional involvement in commerce.\textsuperscript{53} The Mughals welcomed competition between the different trading groups, pitting one against another, so that there would be a balance and no foreign trading group would exert superiority over another. In general the Mughal government kept its distance from maritime commerce or, in Ashin Das Gupta's words, kept a "continual aloofness" to it.\textsuperscript{54}

As a central staple place for goods that were shipped from Batavia to Persia and Arabia, Surat was just as important to the VOC, as it was for the collection and export of cloths from the hinterland and Agra. Surat's centralized location as harbor and administrative center was ideal for it to become a VOC sub-base for trade in the western Indian Ocean, as Batavia was for the whole operation in Asia.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{53} M.N. Pearson, Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat: 178 pp. The relationship between the Gujarati and the Mughal government comes to light when Pearson looks at the question of why the Gujarati merchants and rulers behaved the way they did in the face of the Portuguese challenge. He proposed that the Gujarati were a land-based people who adopted maritime trade in pursuit of expanding their trading network. This direction was accentuated during the period of Portuguese contact. The Gujarati were an autonomous group with a minimal backing from the Moghul government.

\textsuperscript{54} Ashin das Gupta, Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat c.1700 - 1750: 90. There was an incident in 1647 when the VOC did not want to give passes to the Indian merchants for trade to Aceh and even banned traffic to that port. The local governor of Surat connived with the merchants in Surat to prevent the Dutch from loading their ships. The Dutch factory also was attacked and plundered. In this case the two opposing parties (Dutch vs local merchants backed by the Moghul Governor of Surat) sought the mediation of the Moghul court. The Company was trying to keep a monopoly on the trade of tin by controlling and directing the trade routes of the Indian traders through a system of passes. The Dutch failed utterly and enormous quantities of textiles were exchanged for tin in ports in Aceh, Perak, even in Kedah and Bangeri although the Company had exclusive contracts on the tin there, and later Johore.

Through a naval blockade of Surat's harbor and a strategic plan to pirate richly laden Gujarati trade vessels for a while in order to show superior maritime power, the Dutch wanted to negotiate concessions. They were successful in the sense that they received a firman confirming the stipulation that the Gujarati merchants needed to obtain a pass to trade eastward in the Malay archipelago; however, the firman was largely ignored. Hans W. van Santen, "De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in Gujarat en Hindustan": 20-4. The Gujarati merchants continued to buy tin in Aceh and bring cloths to the archipelago until Makassar and Banten were cut from the inter-Asian trade network and only lesser harbors on the periphery of the Dutch monopolized sphere were accessible to them.

\textsuperscript{55} George D. Winius and M.P.M. Vink, The Merchant-Warrior Pacified: 61
Surat functioned also as a gathering place for small traders of the city's hinterland, who took the sea route to western Asia if the land route was obstructed or too expensive. Wealthy Muslims who were making a pilgrimage to Mecca stopped over in Surat. In order to have a secure passage these commuters made use of English and Dutch ships as a means of transport, out of fear of the Portuguese enemies who made the waters in the Persian Gulf unsafe. When the Dutch tried to open up a trade in Indian textiles they naturally met with opposition from merchants in Ahmedabad trading to Persia. The Company nevertheless succeeded in seizing a modest share that amounted in the 1640s to about 10% (60 to 80 thousand pieces of cloths) of what the Indians brought to Mocha (Red Sea). The VOC also opened an office in Bandar Abbas (Camron) in Persia. The textile trade increased in the second half of the 17th century. In 1656 the VOC order from Persia amounted to 160,000 pieces of cloths from Surat, 49,000 pieces of cloths from Coromandel, and 30 rolls of Dutch laken from Batavia. The VOC traded spices to western Asia too, but in limited quantities so that it would not endanger the sales in Europe.

The Dutch commerce from Surat and Malabar with Arabia and Persia was driven by the need for currency: in Cairo alone there arrived yearly 200 to 300 thousand reals-of-eight and 16 to 20 thousand Venetian ducats which were exchanged for Malabar pepper, Indonesian spices, Indian indigo and

---

56 In 1634 the difference in cost between the overland route and the sea route was 7% of the buying price of the goods in favor of the land route. This could change in uncertain times. There seemed a tendency for traders to increase the use of the sea route during the rest of the 17th century. Hans W. van Santen, "De Verenigde Oost-indische Compagnie in Gujarat en Hindustan": 64

57 Hans W. van Santen, "De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in Gujarat en Hindustan": 56-7. The profits the company made on the cloth trade to Persia were always below expectations. In 1638 30% for cloth from Agra and 17% for cloth from Ahmedabad; in 1642, 40%; in 1651 only 4%, and in 1659 8%. These might have increased later in the 17th century.

58 Ibid: 68

cottons, and goods from China. To support the ambitious plan of subsidizing the return cargoes to Europe with profits from Asia, Coen in the 1620s suggested that the varieties of coins and precious metals that entered Persia and Arabia from the west should be secured. The Company succeeded in acquiring silver from Mocha and Bandar Abbas amounting to an average of 300 and 500 thousand guilders per year between 1640 and 1660 and gold from Bandar Abbas between 1688 and the 1720s at a value of maximum one million guilders per year. The metal supply from western Asia was not as significant as the metal exports from Japan, but when Japan closed off the export of silver in 1668 and lowered the content of the gold in the *kubang* at the end of the century, Persia's silver and gold exports respectively were timely and profitable.

The Dutch started a factory on the Malabar coast in 1647 in order to buy pepper and also cardamon for export to Persia, and areca for export to Surat. The Company offered opium, cotton, tin, and spices in exchange. After Cochin changed hands from the Portuguese to the Company in 1663, the Dutch signed contracts with rulers and nobles for the exclusive rights to the pepper. However, the contract system failed because the Dutch could not prevent pepper from being "smuggled" as they saw it, over land to other outlets. Only part of the pepper reached the Company warehouses. The pepper did not belong to those with whom the contracts were concluded, but to the merchants who bought it from the people who cultivated the pepper. Naturally they tried to sell to the highest bidder. The failing pepper monopoly had made Malabar a financial burden to the Company since the middle of the 1680s. Maritime commerce slowed down for all trading parties along the Malabar coast after troubles arose in the Persian Gulf. Closing the

---

60 H.T. Colenbrander ed., Jan Pietersz Coen Levensbeschrijving: 95  
61 F. S. Gaastra, De Geschiedenis van de VOC: 126  
62 J. Van Lohuizen, The Dutch East India Company and Mysore: 11  
63 Ashin Das Gupta, Malabar in Asian Trade: 14
office in Cochin was an option, but to the Dutch it was equated with surrendering the pepper to the competition. The entry of the EIC (English East India Company) further complicated matters for the VOC. The EIC had been the reason for the VOC presence and high expenditures, but the latter had been to no avail. The EIC moved into some of the Dutch possessions on the coast in 1695.

In order to cover the annual losses of this VOC branch office, the Commander for the Malabar coast, Gollenesse, put forward a plan in 1736 explaining why the VOC should monopolize the cloth trade that was carried on along the coast by a number of small traders. Dutch passes could control these traders who sailed from southern Travencore with 50,000 to 60,000 pieces of cloth. The customs records at Cochin showed that this trade had increased considerably lately and been a source of revenue. The attempt entangled the Dutch in hostilities with Travencore in 1741 in which the VOC lost out.

The Company, which was used to wholesale dealing, was not flexible enough to change its style and status. No employees were willing to live in the remote production areas to deal with the intermediary traders to buy more efficiently. When sellers of the cloths needed certain currencies because of their dealings with other trading groups (possibly to buy supplies), the Dutch could not always provide the right coinage because they lacked access to local traders with the correct information. Any hope for Dutch profits on the Malabar coast vanished when the Mysore kingdom exerted a trade monopoly north of Cochin. Travencore also was able to break away from the pass system of the Dutch and improve harbor facilities. Dutch unwillingness to acculturate to local trading practices proved their undoing. Das Gupta has accurately observed that the Dutch "could be in Asian trade but not of it." In 1759 the plan by Commander Gollenesse of a cloth sales monopoly on the Malabar coast was aborted.64

64 Ibid: 82-3