



4. The ghostly apparition of Miss Sara Specx

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<<Dirk Teeuwen
Painting by Gerrit van
Honthorst 1625, detail>>
(Public domain, Wikipedia, see pict.
3 below)



Introduction

Walk into the Town Hall, walk into its main hall. You see rooms left and right from here as well as rooms in front of you.

Famous prisoners were kept in custody in the Town Hall. In 1626 Miss Sara Specx was here, imprisoned for one night only. Also Untung Surapati 1675, Pieter Erbevvelt 1722 and Prince Dipo Negoro 1830 (in a decent room). Even officials of the Dutch East-India Company VOC have been thrown into the dungeons, f.e. governor Pieter Vuijst in 1732. In 1740 many Chinese were imprisoned, mostly victims of riots, victims of a cowardly weak Dutch colonial government then. Punishments ordered by the Dutch East-India Company, VOC, as well as most of the punishments ordered by the Municipality of Batavia were done near the VOC Batavia Castle. Nevertheless, once in a while, VOC punishments were carried out in front of the Batavia Town Hall, if there were good reasons to do so. In the year of 1629 there were such reasons, because Miss Sara Specx seduced openly young Mr Pieter Cortenhoeff in the residence of the Governor-General. She did so - seducing Mr Pieter Cortenhoeff, we mean - more than once.

The ghostly apparition of Miss Sara Specx

Dream a little dream

Are you a male and are you a dreamer sometimes? I ask you: close your eyes. You are in the 17th century now and your mind's eye sees the Town Hall Square, night is falling. Your attention is drawn by a nice and desirable young woman appearing in the twilight. She is so beautiful! She passes by most gracefully. She is so lovely slender, so sweet, so tender, of course you sigh, when she is passing by. The voluptuous curves of her deliciously heaving beauty surpass, as it seems, your most romantic dreams.

Keep your eyes closed: your mind's eye sees that this breathtaking beauty runs into the arms of her sweetheart, one

young, spooky, Mr Pieter Cortenhoeff, right in the centre of the square. She kisses and hugs her love most passionately. Then, in tears, our luscious belle breaks away. Her dazzling elegance is swallowed up by the darkness. Open your eyes. This lady from your imagination, the beautiful one you are still dreaming of now, most certainly is the ghost of Miss Sara Specx. She died in 1639. After her death (!!honest, honour bright!!) she is haunting around in Old Batavia during twilight in pursuit of happiness. She even appears in the mind of sensitive gentlemen during the day, whenever they have the audacity to close their eyes. Don't worry, it happened to the author also and he is still alive and kicking.

My urgent advice

Have a look at the pictures. Then, take a deep breath, do it again. I advise you to walk into the Town Hall Café to regain self-control while enjoying colonial coffee and cake.

Pictures



1. A view of Jakarta's Town Hall Square in 2002
Photo Dirk Teeuwen, Holland



2. Town Hall Square in 1927, all these colonial buildings are still there.
Vries, J.J. de: *Jaarboek van Batavia en Omstreken 1927; Batavia-Weltevreden 1927* (by Kolff&Cy),
page 553 (Library Dirk Teeuwen, Holland)

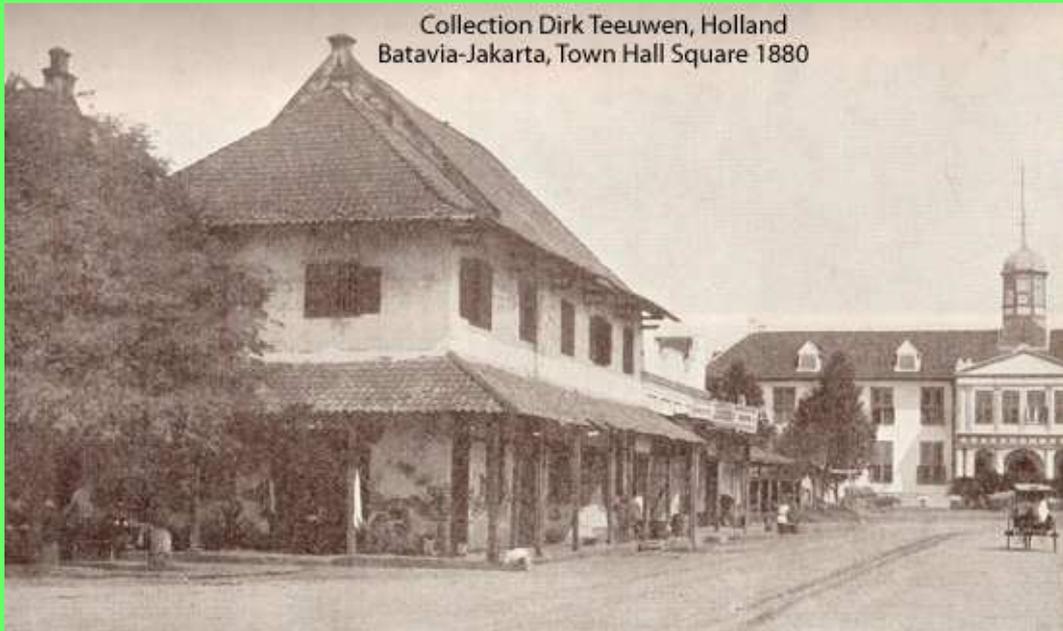


3. Sensual temptation, from "The procuress", a painting by the Dutchman Gerrit van Honthorst, 1625 (In the public domain)

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gerard_van_Honthorst - The procuress](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gerard_van_Honthorst_-_The_procuress)



4. "The procuress" by Gerrit van Honthorst 1625 (Public domain)
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gerard_van_Honthorst_-_The_procuress
Original painting in the Central Museum in Utrecht Holland
<http://centraalmuseum.nl/>

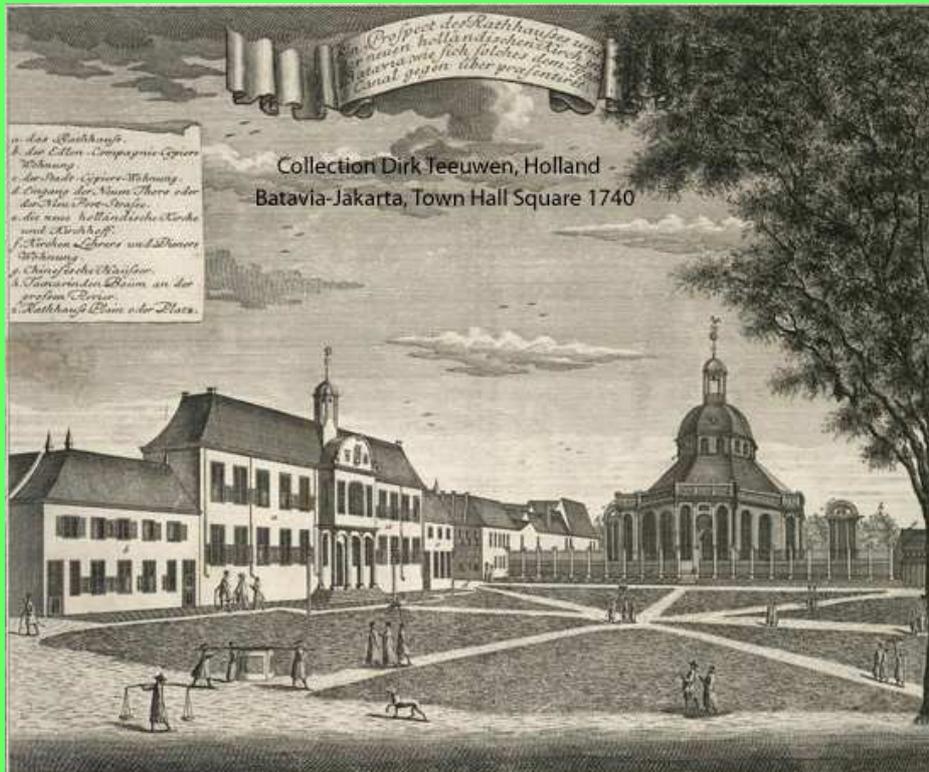


5. Town Hall Square seen from the north (Jalan Cengkeh, Cengkeh Road) in 1880, the house left was part of a small Chinese neighbourhood, shops on the ground floor and living on the upper floor.

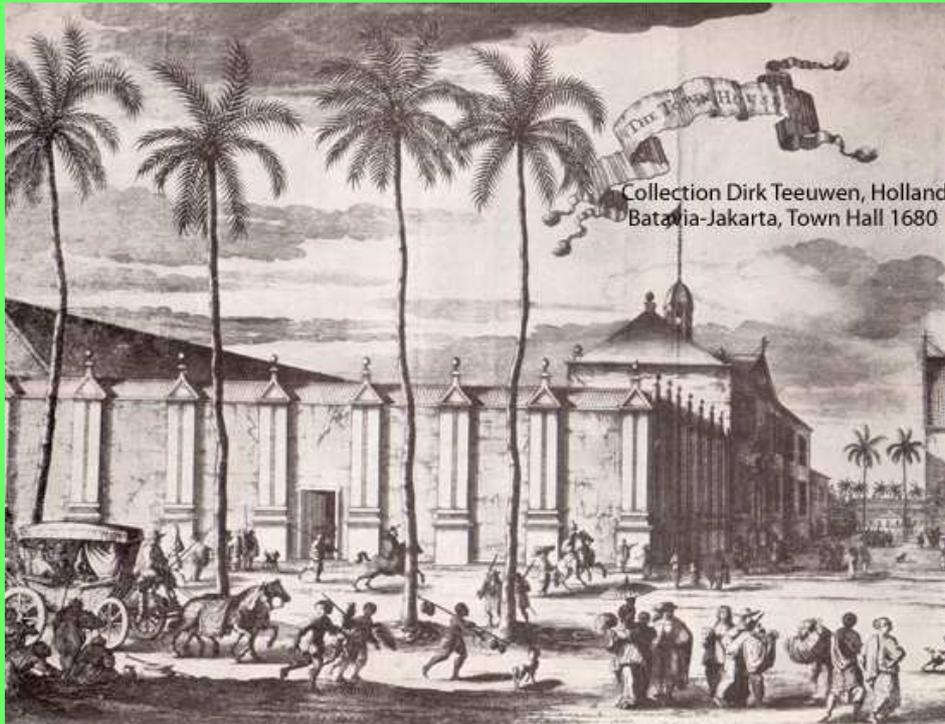
Haan, dr. F. de: Oud Batavia Gedenkboek Vol III, Platenalbum; Batavia 1923 (by Kolff&Cy), A12
(Library Dirk Teeuwen, Holland)



6. Town Hall Square in 1770
 Loos-Haaxman, J. de: *Johannes Rach en zijn werk, 1770; Batavia 1928 (by Kolff&Cy), pict. 31*
 (Library Dirk Teeuwen, Holland)



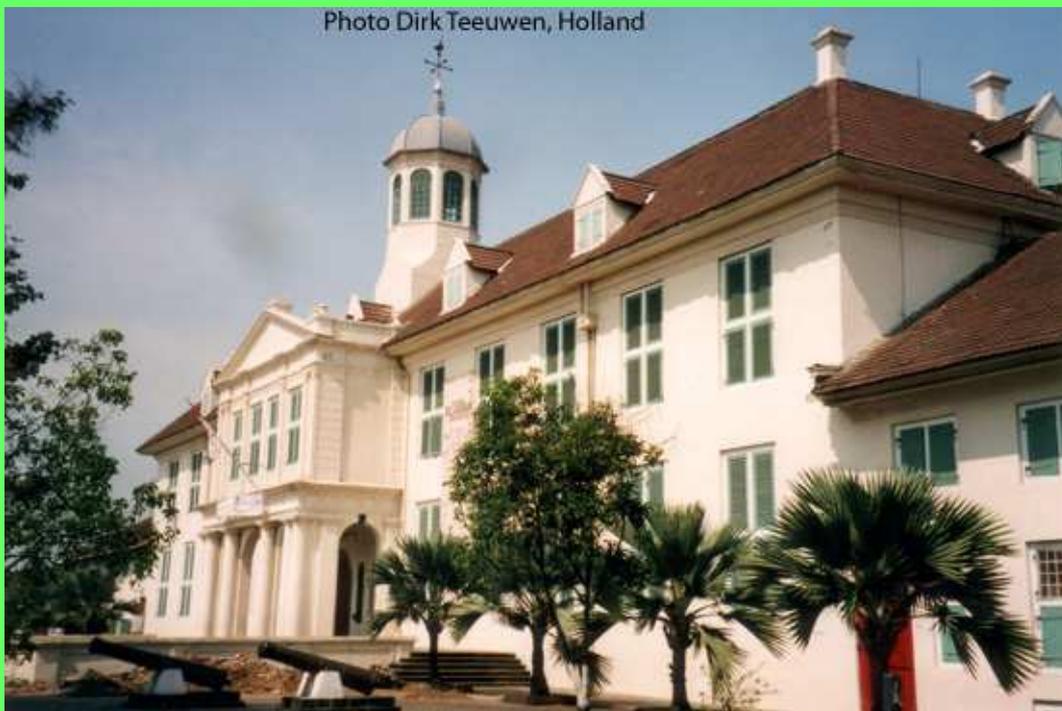
7. Town Hall Square in 1740
 Heydt, J.W.: *Allerneuester Geographisch- und Topographischer Schau-Platz von Africa und Ost-Indien; Willhermsdorf Bavaria 1744, page 10*
 In: Feith, Esq. P.R.: *Catalogus boeken en prenten van de stad Batavia; Batavia 1937, page 31*
 (Library Dirk Teeuwen, Holland {Feith})



8. The Batavia Town Hall in 1680

Nieuhof, J.: Gedenkwaardige Zee en Lantreise door de voornaamste Landschappen van West en Oost Indien, Vol. II; Amsterdam 1682, page 198

In: Feith, Esq. P.R.: Catalogus boeken en prenten van de stad Batavia; Batavia 1937, page 30 (Library Dirk Teeuwen, Holland {Feith})



9. Batavia Town Hall, Jakarta 2006

Photo Dirk Teeuwen, Holland

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