

K O N F E R E N Z E N

International Conference on North Sumatra in Hamburg from November 25-27, 1981

The proposal for an interdisciplinary symposium on related cultures and societies in a specific area in Sumatra, on their interaction with their natural environment and their responses to challenges coming from the outside world was accepted at a meeting of the Southeast Asia Council of the German Association for Asian Studies in 1978. When Professor Lode F. Brakel, the newly appointed Director of the Seminar für Indonesische und Südseesprachen at the University of Hamburg in 1979 agreed to organize the conference, it was decided that it should focus on North Sumatra: Brakel himself and some of his German colleagues were actively engaged in research on North Sumatra; there was the long tradition of good connections between Germany and the region - to mention only the Christianization of the Batak peoples by the Rhenish Missionary Society since the 1860's. The major reason for the selection of North Sumatra was, however, that this area with its closely related and yet distinct cultures and societies seemed to be best suited to follow the recommendations of the Southeast Asia Council, mentioned above.

A grant from the Stiftung Volkswagenwerk and a subvention from the Hochschulamt, the office for science and research of the city-state of Hamburg, facilitated the invitation of well-known experts on North Sumatra from various countries and academic disciplines such as ethnologists, linguists, geographers, historians, political scientists, sociologists, musicologists and missiologists. At first the organizers considered a smaller symposium of about 20 participants. In the course of time the number of those indicating their interest in the conference grew continuously. When Professor Brakel became seriously ill and died (June 1981) the preparations suffered a severe set-back. His assistant, Dr. Rainer Carle, together with the staff and students of the Seminar decided, however, to continue with the preparations, so that the international conference on Culture and Societies of North Sumatra could finally be opened as scheduled by the President of the University of Hamburg, Dr. P. Fischer-Apelt, on November 25, 1981.

During the three-day conference the following papers were presented and discussed:

- E.M. Bruner (Urbana, USA)
Migration Theory and the Segmented Self
- U. Wolfram-Seifert (Hamburg)
The Urban of Medan - Growth, Development, and Planning
- U. Scholz (Padang/Giessen)
The Influence of Natural Conditions on Peasant Agriculture in Sumatra
- T.A. Ridwan (Medan)
Language and Culture (With Particular Stress on the Languages in North Sumatra)
- H.G. Tarigan (Bandung)
Karo Batak Kinship Terminology
- W. Marschall (Bern)
Indonesian Culture History as seen from Nias
- J.P. Pardede (Padangsidempuan)
The Question of Christianity, Islam, and the Batak Culture in North Sumatra
- R.G. Coleman (New York)
Pakpak Batak Marriage as a Cultural Performance
- R. Kipp (Gambier, USA)
Karo Batak Rice Rituals Then and Now
- H. Slaats / K. Portier (Nijmegen)
Land and Inheritance in the Karo Batak Village Community
- W. Clauss (Bielefeld)
Economic and Social Change among the Simalungun Bataks
- S.A. Niessen (Leiden)
The Dynamic Fissioning Principle of the Toba Batak Marga System
- S. Situmorang (Jakarta)
The Si Singamangaraja Institution in Old Batak Belief and Society of the Toba Batak
- C.E. Cunningham (Urbana)
Celebrating a Batak National Hero: The 1979 Events for Si Singamangaraja XII

- L. Schreiner (Wuppertal)
Nommensen: Reasons for a New Approach
- W. Franke (Kuala Lumpur / Hamburg)
Chinese Settlement in North Sumatra as seen from
Epigraphic Evidence
- A.J. S. Reid (Canberra)
Sumatra as a Historical Entity (1938-1948)
- M. van Langenberg (Sydney)
The Political Impact of Radical Nationalism in Modern
North Sumatra
- B.H. Harahap (Jakarta)
Political Trends in South Tapanuli: Results of the Gen-
eral Elections in 1955, 1971, and 1977
- B. Dahm (Kiel)
Adat Between Revival and Retreat? Discrepancies noted
during recent Research in South Tapanuli
- T. Sembiring (Medan)
Lagu Kateneng-Kateneng "Mengungsi". A Karo Batak
Classical Song about the Struggle for Independence
- M.J. Kartomi (Melbourne)
West Coast North Sumatra Music as Part of a Pan-
Coastal Sumatran Music
- L. Manik (Yogyakarta)
Die rituelle Gondang-Musik der Toba-Batak (mit Bei-
spielen)
- A. Simon (Berlin)
Social and Religious Implications in Music and Dance of
the Batak Culture
- J.P. Barbier (Geneva)
The Batak Megalithic Culture

Among the forty or so participants of the symposium were more experts on Indonesian and North Sumatran cultures and societies, such as William E. Liddle (Columbus, Ohio), Sartono Kartodirdjo (Yogyakarta), or, from German universities, H.D. Evers (Bielefeld), B. Nothofer (Frankfurt), H. Uhlig (Giessen), and W. Wagner (Bremen). The discussion of the papers, therefore, was knowledgeable and suggestive, although, in general, limited due to the lack of time.

Besides the papers, which were read in the plenum, there was a workshop on lexicography with contributions by E. Saragih (Pematang Siantar), and T.R. Manik (Medan). In the evenings there was little time for leisure. On the first evening historical films in traditional Batak dances were shown: the Claire Holt and Peters Mares collection in Stockholm and those from the Dutch authority on Batak Culture, Dr. Peter Voorhoeve; on the second evening the guests were received by the President of the University of Hamburg; the last evening was devoted to a discussion of future research on Indonesian cultures and societies, and the possibility of having a follow-up conference on North Sumatra in Indonesia. The Representative of the Indonesian Research Council (LIPI) H.W. Tampubolon (Jakarta), gave an outline of Indonesian government policy with regard to foreign research in Indonesia and to scientific cooperation with Indonesian Institutes. Professor T.A. Ridwan, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts of the University of North Sumatra, Medan, was later elected to preside over a preparation committee for a follow-up conference in North Sumatra in 1984, and was asked to establish the necessary contacts with local and central Indonesian authorities.

Participants of the symposium finally expressed their gratitude to the organizers for a successful conference, and in particular to Dr. Carle, who indicated his willingness to edit the conference papers in the series (Schriftenreihe) of the Seminar für Indonesische und Südseesprachen at the University of Hamburg.

Prof.Dr. Bernhard Dahm, Kiel

"Crisis Region Indochina:
Perspectives and Possible Solutions"

Tagung der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
am 16./17. November 1981 in Bonn

Die Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung veranstaltete im Rahmen ihres Forschungsprogrammes "Südostasien" ein zweiteiliges Seminar, das sich schwerpunktmäßig mit der Krisenregion "Indochina" befaßte. Das erste Expertengespräch fand vom 4. bis 6. März 1981 in Jakarta unter dem Thema "Crisis Region Indochina: Causes and Effects" statt. 27 Wissenschaftler vor allem aus der südostasiatischen Region nahmen daran teil.