



– VORTRÄGE AUSWÄRTIGER GELEHRTER –

**Auf Einladung des Instituts für Ethnologie
der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität**

spricht

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zum Thema

**Mission to Mataram: VOC court journeys in Java as a
source of socio-cultural information**

**am Donnerstag, den 24. Oktober 2013, 10.00 Uhr
Institut für Ethnologie,
Stadtstraße 21, Raum STU 105 (2.10)**

Zu diesem Vortrag sind alle Interessierten herzlich eingeladen.

Mission to Mataram: VOC court journeys in Java as a source of socio-cultural information

Dr. Roy Jordaan*

‘Court journey’ (*hofreis*) is the common designation for the ambassadorial visits by high-ranking officials of the United East India Company (*VOC*, 1602-1792) to paramount rulers in different parts of Asia such the Shah of Persia, the King of Kandy (Ceylon), the King of Siam, the Emperor of China, the Tokugawa rulers in Japan, and the ‘Emperor’ (*Susuhunan*) of Mataram in Java. This lecture will focus on VOC missions to Mataram.

To participate in Asian trade and to obtain provisions for the crews of its ships the VOC needed the formal permission of the ruler of Mataram to open offices in ports along the north coast of Java. The foundation of Batavia as permanent headquarters for VOC’s Asian trade proved a formidable obstacle to peaceful relations with Sultan Agung of Mataram. Successive rulers of Mataram steered a more diplomatic course. They made their formal acceptance of the Dutch presence at Batavia conditional upon regular VOC court journeys to Mataram, thereby attempting to treat the court journeys as if they were traditional tribute-bearing missions by indigenous vassal kings. The VOC, on the other hand, tried hard to avoid regular court attendances (also for financial reasons) and moreover represented their court journeys as trade-facilitating ambassadorial visits rather than as tribute-bearing missions. In the course of time, VOC directors in Batavia and Semarang were able not only to make the court journeys instrumental to their own political interest, but also to become themselves the recipients of Javanese and Madurese tribute-bearing missions.

Until now VOC court journeys to Mataram have largely been the object of political and economic historical research with some recognition for their function as a source of socio-cultural information such as about royal kinship, court life, political intrigues, and about crime and punishment. In this lecture attention will be drawn to the analysis of court journeys for other scholarly pursuits such as in the field of archaeology, art history, ethnography and literature.

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