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BORO BOEDOR AND MENDOET



WITH five hundred Buddhas in near neighborhood, one might expect a little of the atmosphere of Nirvana, and the looking at so many repetitions of one object might well produce the hypnotic stage akin to it. The cool, shady passagrahan at Boro Boedor affords as much of earthly quiet and absolute calm, as entire a retreat from the outer, modern world, as one could ever expect to find now in any land of the lotus. This government rest-house is maintained by the resident of Kedu, and every accommodation is provided for the pilgrim, at a fixed charge of six florins the day. The keeper of the passagrahan was a slow-spoken, lethargic, meditative old Hollander, with whom it was always afternoon. One half expected him to change from battek pajamas to yellow draperies, climb up on some vacant lotus pedestal, and, posing his fingers, drop away into eternal meditation, like his stony neighbors. Tropic life and isolation had reduced him to that mental stagnation, torpor, or depression so common with single Europeans in far Asia, isolated

from all social friction, active, human interests, and natural sympathies, and so far out of touch with the living, moving world of the nineteenth century. Life goes on in placidity, endless quiet, and routine at Boro Boedor. Visitors come rarely; they most often stop only for riz tavel, and drive on; and not a half-dozen American names appear in the visitors' book, the first entry in which is dated 1869.

I remember the first still, long lotus afternoon in the passagrahan's portico, when my companions napped, and not a sound broke the stillness save the slow, occasional rustle of palm-branches and the whistle of birds. In that damp, heated silence, where even the mental effort of recalling the attitude of Buddha elsewhere threw one into a bath of perspiration, there was exertion enough in tracing the courses and projections of the terraced temple with the eye. Even this easy rocking-chair study of the blackened ruins, empty niches, broken statues, and shattered and crumbling terraces, worked a spell. The dread genii by the doorway and the grotesque animals along the path seemed living monsters, the meditating statues even seemed to breathe, until some "chuck-chucking" lizard ran over them and dispelled the half-dream.

In those hazy, hypnotic hours of the long afternoon one could best believe the tradition that the temple rose in a night at miraculous bidding, and was not built by human hands; that it was built by the son of the Prince of Boro Boedor, as a condition to his receiving the daughter of the Prince of Mendoet for a wife. The suitor was to build it within a given time, and every detail was rigidly prescribed. The princess

came with her father to inspect the great work of art, with its miles of bas-reliefs and hundreds of statues fresh from the sculptor's chisel. "Without doubt these images are beautiful," she said coldly, "but they are dead. I can no more love you than they can love you"; and she turned and left her lover to brood in eternal sorrow and meditation upon that puzzle of all the centuries—the Eternal Feminine.

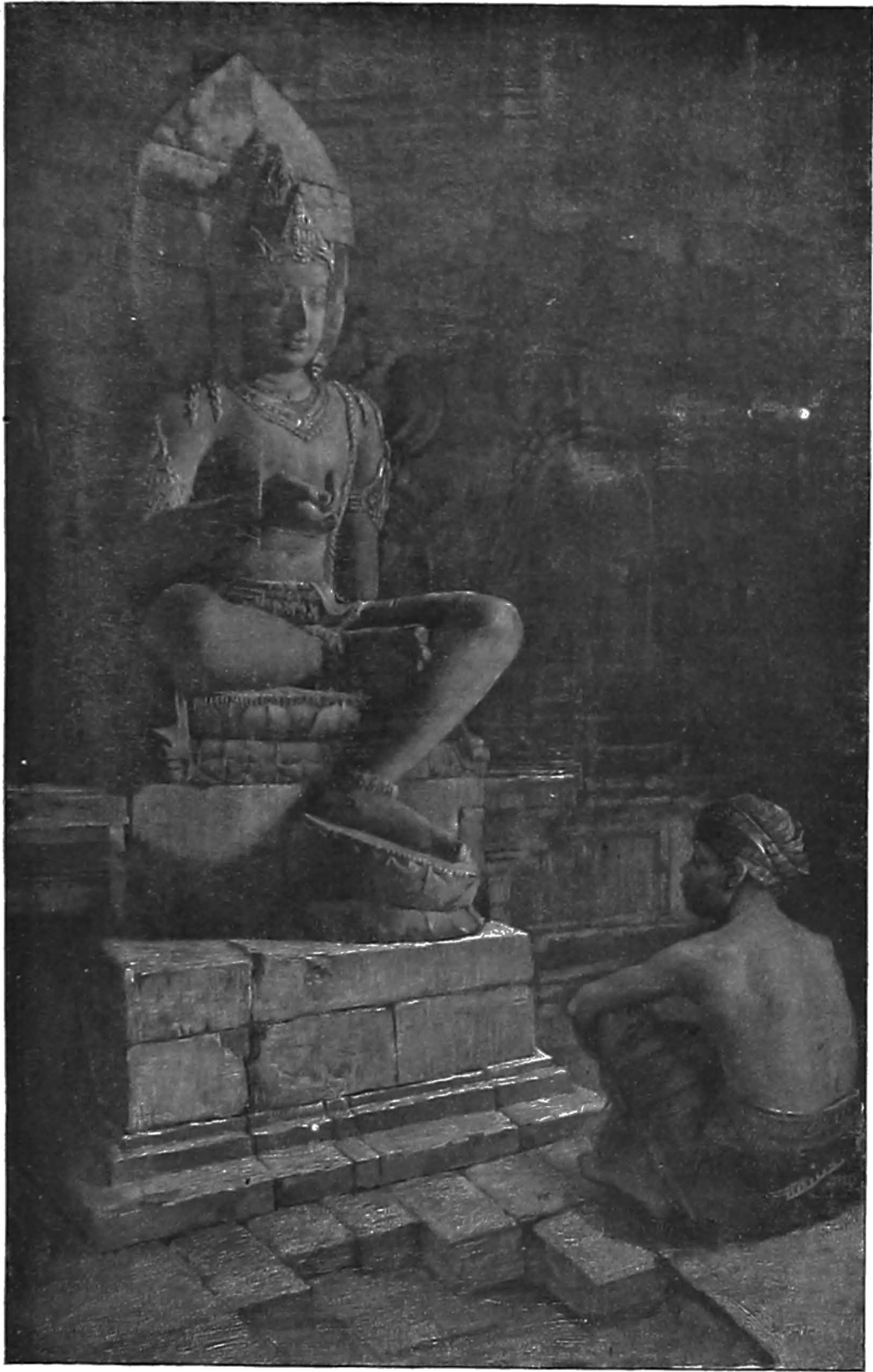
At last the shadows began to stretch; a cooler breath came; cocoanut-leaves began to rustle and lash with force, and the musical rhythm of distant, soft Malay voices broke the stillness that had been that of the Sleeping Beauty's enchanted castle. A boy crept out of a basket house in the palm-grove behind the passagrahan, and walked up a palm-tree with that deliberate ease and nonchalance that is not altogether human or two-footed, and makes one rub his eyes doubtingly at the unprepared sight. He carried a bunch of bamboo tubes at his belt, and when he reached the top of the smooth stem began letting down bamboo cups, fastening one at the base of each leaf-stalk to collect the sap.

Everywhere in Java we saw them collecting the sap of the true sugar-palm and the toddy-palm, that bear such gorgeous spathes of blossoms; but it is only in this region of Middle Java that sugar is made from the cocoa-palm. Each tree yields daily about two quarts of sap that reduce to three or four ounces of sugar. The common palm-sugar of the passers looks and tastes like other brown sugar, but this from cocoa-palms has a delicious, nutty fragrance and flavor, as unique as maple-sugar. We were not long in the land

before we learned to melt cocoa-palm sugar and pour it on grated ripe cocoanut, thus achieving a sweet supreme.

The level valley about Boro Boedor is tilled in such fine lines that it seems in perspective to have been etched or hatched with finer tools than plow and hoe. There is a little Malay temple surrounded by graves in a frangipani-grove near the great pyramid, where the ground is white with the fallen "blossoms of the dead," and the tree-trunks are decked with trails of white and palest pink orchids. The little kampong of Boro Boedor hides in a deep green grove—such a pretty, picturesque little lot of basket houses, such a carefully painted village in a painted grove,—the village of the Midway Plaisance, only more so,—such a set scene and ideal picture of Java, as ought to have wings and footlights, and be looked at to slow music. And there, in the early summer mornings, is a busy passer in a grove that presents more and more attractive pictures of Javanese life, as the people come from miles around to buy and to sell the necessaries and luxuries of their picturesque, primitive life, so near to nature's warmest heart.

All the neighborhood is full of beauty and interest, and there are smaller shrines at each side of Boro Boedor, where pilgrims in ancient times were supposed to make first and farewell prayers. One is called Chandi Pawon, or more commonly Dapor, the kitchen, because of its empty, smoke-blackened interior resulting from the incense of the centuries of living faith, and of the later centuries when superstitious habit, and not any surviving Buddhism, led the humble



THE RIGHT-HAND IMAGE AT MENDOET.

people to make offerings to the *recha*, the unknown, mysterious gods of the past.

Chandi Mendoet, two miles the other side of Boro Boedor, is an exquisite pyramidal temple in a green quadrangle of the forest, with a walled foss and bridges. Long lost and hidden in the jungle, it was accidentally discovered by the Dutch resident Hartman in 1835, and a space cleared about it. The natives had never known of or suspected its existence, but the investigators determined that this gem of Hindu art was erected between 750 and 800 A. D. The workmanship proves a continued progress in the arts employed at Boro Boedor, and the sculptures show that the popular faith was then passing through Jainism back to Brahmanism. The body of the temple is forty-five feet square as it stands on its walled platform, and rises to a height of seventy feet. A terrace, or raised processional path, around the temple walls is faced with bas-reliefs and ornamental stones, and great bas-reliefs decorate the upper walls. The square interior chapel is entered through a stepped arch or door, and the finest of the Mendoet bas-reliefs, commonly spoken of as the "Tree of Knowledge," is in this entrance-way. There Buddha sits beneath the bo-tree, the trunk of which supports a *pajong*, or state umbrella, teaching those who approach him and kneel with offerings and incense. These figures, as well as the angels overhead, the birds in the trees, and the lambs on their rocky shelf, listening to the great teacher, are worked out with a grace and skill beyond compare. Three colossal images are seated in the chapel, all with Buddha's attributes, and Brahmanic cords as well, and

the long Nepal ears of the Dhyani ones. They are variously explained as the Hindu trinity, as the Buddhist trinity, as Buddha and his disciples, and local legends try to explain them even more romantically. One literary pilgrim describes the central Adi Buddha as the statue of a beautiful young woman "counting her fingers," the mild, benign, and sweetly smiling faces of all three easily suggesting femininity.

One legend tells that this marvel of a temple was built by a rajah who, when once summoned to aid or save the goddess Durga, was followed by two of his wives. To rid himself of them, he tied one wife and nailed the other to a rock. Years afterward he built this temple in expiation, and put their images in it. An avenging rival, who had loved one of the women, at last found the rajah, killed him, turned him to stone, and condemned him to sit forever between his abused partners.

A legend related to Herr Brumund told that "once upon a time" the two-year-old daughter of the great Prince Dewa Kosoumi was stolen by a revengeful courtier. The broken-hearted father wandered all over the country seeking his daughter, but at the end of twelve years met and, forgetting his grief, demanded and married the most beautiful young girl he had ever seen. Soon after a child had been born to them, the revengeful courtier of years before told the prince that his beautiful wife was his own daughter. The priests assured Prince Dewa that no forgiveness was possible to one who had so offended the gods, and that his only course of expiation lay in shutting himself, with the mother and child, in a walled cell, and there ending

their days in penitence and prayer. As a last divine favor, he was told that the crime would be forgiven if within ten days he could construct a Boro Boedor. All the artists and workmen of the kingdom were summoned, and working with zeal and frenzy to save their ruler, completed the temple, with its hundreds of statues and its miles of carvings, within the fixed time. But it was then found that the pile was incomplete, lacking just one statue of the full number required. Prayers and appeals were useless, and the gods turned the prince, the mother, and the child to stone, and they sit in the cell at Mendoet as proof of the tale for all time.

With such interests we quite forgot the disagreeable episode in the steaming, provincial town beyond the mountains, and cared not for toelatings-kaart or assistant resident. Nothing from the outer world disturbed the peace of our Nirvana. No solitary horseman bringing reprieve was ever descried from the summit dagoba. No file of soldiers grounded arms and demanded us for Dutch dungeons. Life held every tropic charm, and Boro Boedor constituted an ideal world entirely our own. The sculptured galleries drew us to them at the beginning and end of every stroll, and demanded always another and another look. A thousand Mona Lisas smiled upon us with impassive, mysterious, inscrutable smiles, as they have smiled during all these twelve centuries, and often the realization, the atmosphere of antiquity was overpowering in sensation and weird effect.

Boro Boedor is most mysterious and impressive in the gray of dawn, in the unearthly light and stillness

of that eerie hour. Sunrise touches the old walls and statues to something of life; and sunset, when all the palms are silhouetted against skies of tenderest rose, and the warm light flushes the hoary gray pile, is the time when the green valley of Eden about the temple adds all of charm and poetic suggestion. Pitch-darkness so quickly follows the tropic sunset that when we left the upper platform of the temple in the last rose-light, we found the lamps lighted, and huge moths and beetles flying in and about the passagrahan's portico. Then lizards "chuck-chucked," and ran over the walls; and the invisible gecko, gasping, called, it seemed to me, "*Becky! Becky! Becky! Becky! Becky! Becky!*" and Rebecca answered never to those breathless, exhausted, appealing cries, always six times repeated, slowly over and over again, by the fatigued soul doomed to a lizard's form in its last incarnation. There was infinite mystery and witchery in the darkness and sounds of the tropic night—sudden calls of birds, and always the stiff rustling, rustling of the cocoa-palms, and the softer sounds of other trees, the shadows of which made inky blackness about the passagrahan; while out over the temple the open sky, full of huge, yellow, steadily glowing stars, shed radiance sufficient for one to distinguish the mass and lines of the great pyramid. Villagers came silently from out the darkness, stood motionless beside the grim stone images, and advanced slowly into the circle of light before the portico. They knelt with many homages, and laid out the cakes of palm-sugar, the baskets and sarongs, we had bought at their toy village. Others brought frangipani blossoms that they heaped in mounds at our feet. They

sat on their heels, and with muttered whispers watched us as we dined and went about our affairs on the raised platform of the portico, presenting to them a living drama of foreign life on that regularly built stage without footlights. One of the audience pierced a fresh cocoanut, drank the milk, and then rolling kanari and benzoin gum in corn-fiber, lighted the fragrant cigarette, and puffed the smoke into the cocoa-shell. "It is good for the stomach, and will keep off fever," they answered, when we asked about this incantation-like proceeding; and all took a turn at puffing into the shell and reinhaling the incense-clouds. The gentle little Javanese who provided better dinners for pasagrahan guests than any island hotel had offered us, came into the circle of light, with her mite of a brown baby sleeping in the slandang knotted across her shoulder. The old landlord could be heard as he came back far enough from his Nirvana to call for the boy to light a fresh pipe; and one felt a little of the gaze and presence of all the Dhyani Buddhas on the sculptured terraces in the strange atmosphere of such far-away tropic nights by the Boedor of Boro.

WHEN we came "gree-ing" back by those beautiful roads to Djokja, and drew up with a whirl at the portico of the Hotel Toegoe, the landlord of beaming countenance ran to meet us, greet us with effusion, and give us a handful of mail—long, official envelops with seals, and square envelops of social usage.

"Your passports are here. They came the next day. They are so chagrined that it was all a stupid mistake. The assistant resident at Buitenzorg tele-

graphed to the resident here to tell the three American ladies who were to arrive in Djokja that he had posted their passports, and to have every attention paid you. He wished to commend you and put you *en rapport* with the Djokja officials, that you might enjoy their courtesies. Then the telegraph operator changed the message so as not to have to send so many words on the wire, and he made them all think you were some very dangerous people whom they must arrest and send back. The assistant resident knew there was some mistake as soon as he saw you." (Did he?) "He is so chagrined. And it was all the telegraph operator's fault, and you must not blame our Djokja Residency."

Instead of mollifying, this rather irritated us the more, and the assistant resident's long, formal note was fuel to the flame.

"LADIES: This morning I telegraphed to the secretary-general what in heaven's name could be the reason you were not to go to Djokja. I got no answer from him, but received a letter from the chief of the telegraph, who had received a telegram from the telegraph office of Buitenzorg, to tell me there had been a mistake in the telegram. Instead of 'The permission is not given,' there should have been written, 'The papers of permission I have myself this moment posted. Do all you can in the matter,' etc. Perhaps you will have received them the moment you get this my letter.

"So I am so happy I did not insist upon your returning to Buitenzorg, and so sorry you had so long stay at Boro Boedor; and I hope you will forget the fatal mistake, and feel yourself at ease now," etc.

Evidently the little episode was confined to the

bureau of telegraphs entirely, the messages to the American consul, secretary-general, and Buitenzorg resident all suppressed before reaching them. Certainly this was no argument for the government ownership and control of telegraphs in the United States. There were regrets and social consolations offered, but no distinct apology; and we were quite in the mood for having the American consul demand apology, reparation, and indemnity, on pain of bombardment, as is the foreign custom in all Asia. Pacification by small courtesies did not pacify. Proffered presentation to native princes, visits to their bizarre palaces, and attendance at a great performance by the sultan's actors, dancers, musicians, and swordsmen, would hardly offset being arrested, brought up in an informal police-court, cross-questioned, bullied, and regularly ordered to Boro Boedor under parole. We would not remain tacitly to accept the olive-branch—not then. The profuse landlord was nonplussed that we did not humbly and gratefully accept these amenities.

“You will not go back to Buitenzorg now, with only such unhappy experience of Djokja! Every one is so chagrined, so anxious that you should forget the little contretemps. Surely you will stay now for the great *topeng* [lyric drama], and the wedding of Pakoe Alam's daughter!”

“No; we have our toelatings-kaarten, and we leave on the noon train.”

And then the landlord knew that we should have been locked up for other reasons, since sane folk are never in a hurry under the equator. They consider the thermometer, treat the zenith sun with respect, and do not trifle with the tropics.