

# Foreword

It is generally not appreciated that the Dutch period in Ceylon (1656-1796) left in its wake such a rich legacy: the Roman-Dutch Law; botanical innovations, irrigation and canal systems, furniture, impressive buildings such as forts, churches, and the former orphanage in Colombo, now home to the Dutch Period Museum. This legacy extends to the descendants of the Dutch community - traders and burghers - who continue to play an active role, both socially and professionally, throughout Sri Lankan life.

Much has been written about the Dutch period in Ceylon; but to create a visual impression of life as it was, words are not enough. Images are needed. Fortunately, not all the Dutch community of the VOC were soldiers, traders or administrators. There were also artists working to create a visual record of the exotic environment and the society in which they lived.

The work of these artists drew the attention of Dr Raj de Silva, who in 1985, published the very interesting collection called *Early Prints of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) 1800-1900*. The Netherlands-Sri Lanka Foundation has encouraged him in his efforts with the present publication, and the Foundation for Cultural History of the Netherlands Overseas (CNO) was responsible for bringing him into contact with Drs Mieke Beumer. Their joint effort has resulted in a carefully documented, unique collection of book illustrations, drawings and paintings.

I congratulate the authors on their handsome and authoritative publication, and wish them success. The book will no doubt be widely acclaimed.

E Jongens

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Board Member, CNO