

## IN MEMORIAM PROFESSOR H. J. LAM

At the age of 85, Herman Johannes Lam died at his house on the 15th of February, 1977. From 1933 to 1962 he was director of the Rijksherbarium and although the day of his retirement lies some 15 years behind us now, he is still remembered in our institute for his pleasant personal qualities. The Rijksherbarium as it is today we owe for a large part to his vision and work during the 29 years of his directorate. He broadened the basis of the institute's research but kept intact its specialization; he succeeded in obtaining valuable collections; he started a programme of botanical expeditions; he provided a home for the Flora Malesiana, to mention some of his accomplishments.

When he came to Leiden after a 14 years' career in the Herbarium at Buitenzorg (now Bogor, Indonesia) he found a small and rather sleepy institute. Through the years of poverty before and during the war, and through the years of prosperity afterwards, he transformed this into a large herbarium which was (and still is, I hope) very much alive and active in many fields.

In *Blumea* Supplement nr. 4 (1958) he was honored on occasion of his silver jubilee. The bibliography published in that volume reflects his main scientific interests. As the most important of these must be mentioned the phylogeny of the Cormophytes. He was very much impressed by Zimmermann's telome theory and, building forth on it, he wrote many papers in which he developed his thoughts on stachyosporry and phyllospory as essentially different lines of historical development within the Vascular Plants.

His doctor's thesis (1919) was, however, a taxonomic revision and a taxonomist he remained. In his years at Buitenzorg he did revisional work on the families *Burseraceae* and *Sapotaceae* and he maintained this interest also when in Leiden. Often in collaboration with others, students or staff-members of the Rijksherbarium, he published several generic revisions in both families. Especially for the difficult and elusive genus *Haplolobus* (*Burseraceae*) he kept a weakness ever since he published it in 1932.

Plant-geography was the third field of science in which Lam displayed great interest, especially the historical plant-geography of the Indo-Malesian-Pacific region. One of the statements accompanying his doctor's thesis (which are required in Dutch universities) was about Wegener's hypothesis of continental drift, published a few years before, and ever after Lam kept an interest in the history of the plant cover of the world as affected by changes in climate, land/sea distribution, and other factors. To New Guinea, his favorite country since he participated in a great expedition in 1920, he devoted several publications in which he paid attention to many aspects of the plant world of the island. Probably since New Guinea is on the border between Malesia and the Pacific he shifted his attention also to the latter region and he initiated the cartographical work on plants from the Pacific area. This initiative ultimately led to the publication of the serial work '*Pacific Plant Areas*'.

Lastly it must be mentioned that in conformance with his philosophically inclined character he turned to the theoretical aspects of morphology, plant-geography, evolution, and taxonomy, and wrote several papers in these fields.

The Rijksherbarium owes much to professor Lam, for so many years its director and mentor. We remember him in gratitude.

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