

Madame Kartini

Pioneer of Female Education
In Indonesia

impressed upon reading her writings which all showed the inner turbulence of her young heart and her fighting spirit for the emancipation of her people and nation; writings which are quite intelligent critical and mature for her age. One cannot help being impressed also by her style of writing which is smooth lively and beautiful.

Kartini wrote her letter sitting on the floor on a low writing-desk under the light of an oil lamp and surrounded by her brothers and sisters. Near her she had a mat and a little pillow to lie on for a rest before continuing to write again.

Their burning ideal for progress among their womenfolk spurred the three sisters towards acquiring skills which could afterwards be applied. However not all of their wishes met with approval from their parents.

One of their concrete steps towards improving a situation which they did not consider fair was to mobilize wood handicraft workers of Jepara. When the three sisters visited the village of Blakang Gunung Kartini was very much impressed by the beautiful woodcarvings produced by the handicraft workers there who however did not get proper compensation for their skills. With the agreement of Regent Sosroningrat, the woodcarvers were called to assemble and arrangements were made for the marketing of their products of art in Semarang and Batavia.

Meanwhile in implementation of the ideal of Kartini and her sisters to provide education for women a school for young girls was set up at Jepara in 1903, with a system of education which was different from that of colonial schools. The school was open four days in a week and its curriculum covered reading writing draw-

ing handicraft cooking and lessons important for household mothers and for good character development.

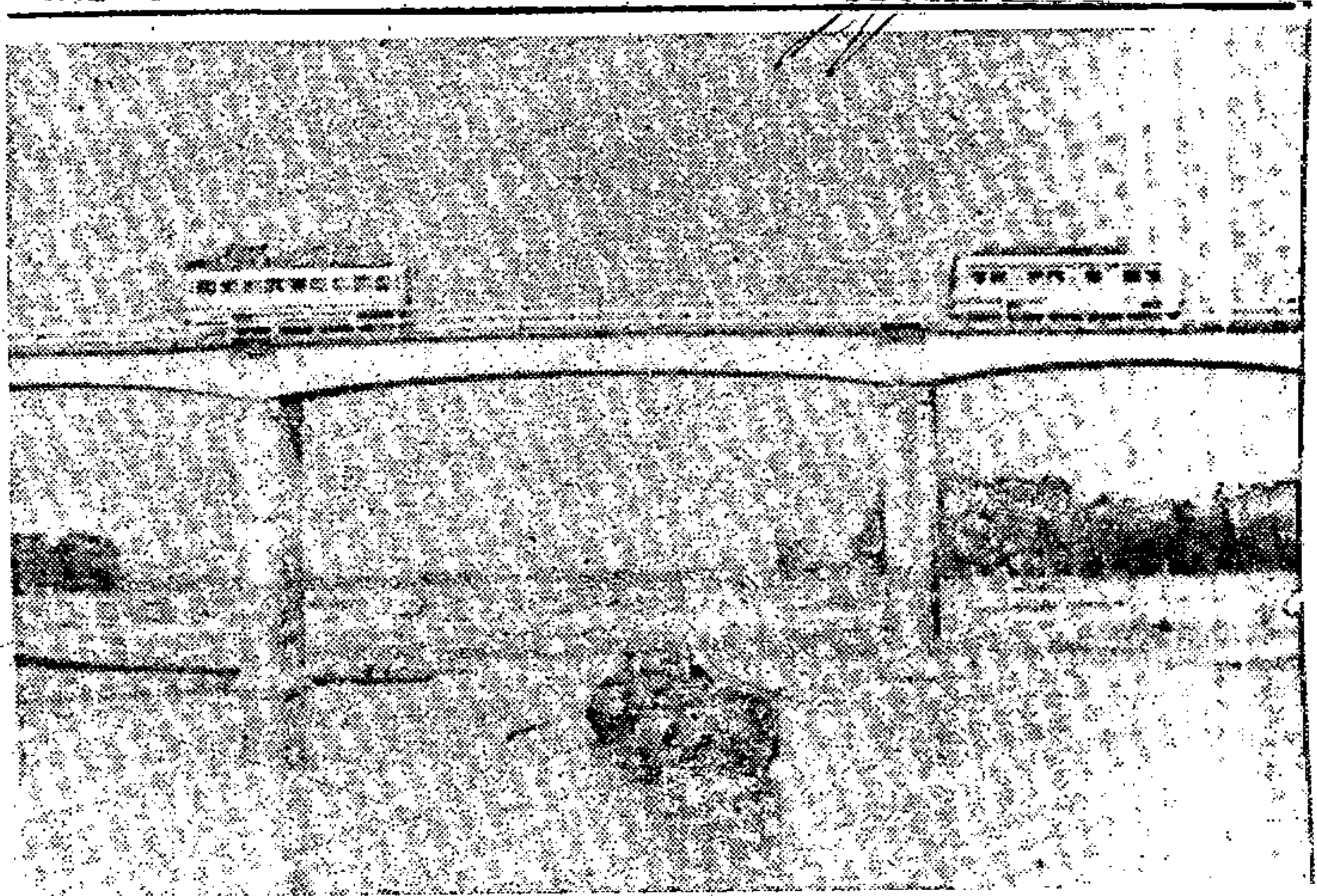
In 1903 Kartini asked for her parent's permission to study in Batavia, but despite the consent given by the Dutch/colonial government her wish could not be fulfilled. In that year Kartini accepted a marriage proposal from the Regent of Rembang R.M.A.A. Djojo Hadiningrat (although she knew that Regent Djojo Hadiningrat was a widower had many children and concubines). She gave her acceptance on a condition which was later approved by the Regent namely that Kartini would be allowed to set up a school in the regency of Rembang.

Upon arrival in Rembang as

the official wife of Regent Djojo Hadiningrat Kartini immediately set up a small school with children of the Djojo hadiningrat family as the pupils.

Kartini however did not live long enough to see the results of her efforts because on 17 September 1904 four days after giving birth to her only son she died at the age of 25. She died young but her short life was full of dedication and love for her womenfolk and her nation.

Now at the centenary of her birth the ideas she propounded are still of significance to be recalled and appreciated. However amidst all the progress achieved by Indonesian women Kartini and her ideals will continue to stir the heart of every Indonesian woman.



Two ways.. —OBSERVER