

New series on port cities: Meet your tour guides

Two adventurous Dutch journalists have been travelling the world exploring great port cities. ZACHARY JOHN introduces them.

Dutch journalists Aafke Steenhuis and Jan Joost Teunissen have started writing a book on port cities. To gather information and images for their book, they travelled to at least 22 ports in five continents.

The couple have been married for 51 years. Ms Steenhuis, 74, was born in Groningen, a Dutch port city. She has always loved the sea and has always lived close to it. Today, Ms Steenhuis and Mr Teunissen, 72, live in a house on a **dyke** along Amsterdam's waterfront.

In 1973, the couple worked on their first book together. It was about the South American country of Chile, where rich people controlled most of the land, making it hard for poor farmers to survive. The couple were living in Chile at the time.

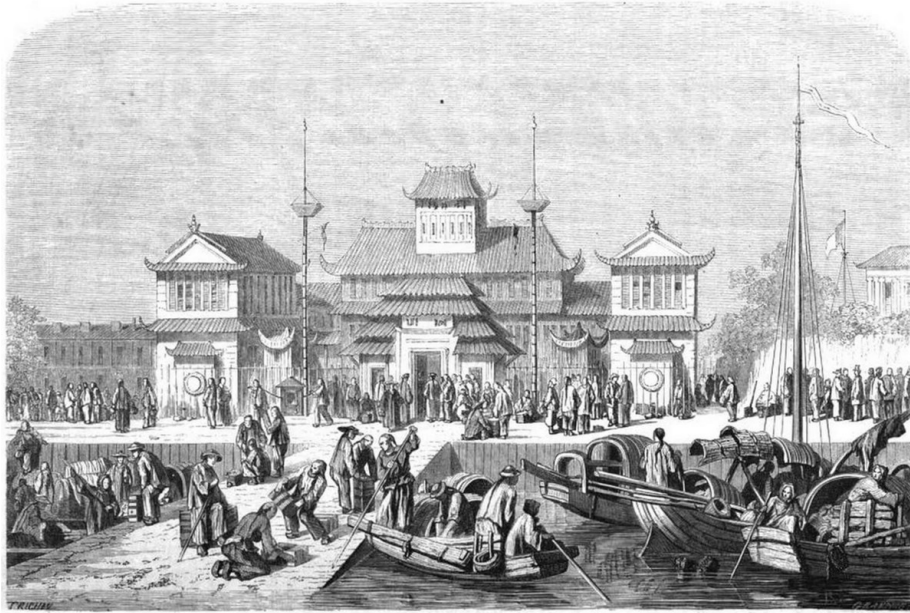
As their careers progressed, Ms Steenhuis focused more on literature and Mr Teunissen on economics. They wrote many books and articles in their separate fields.



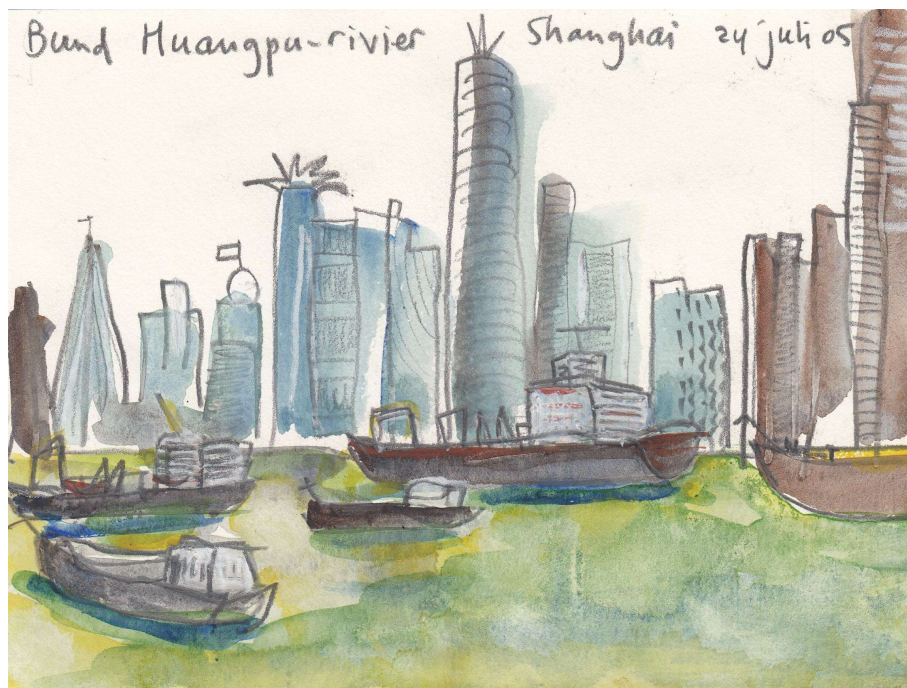
Dutch journalists Aafke Steenhuis and Jan Joost Teunissen.

In 2013, the couple decided to write another book together. It is titled *The Big Rough Sea – World Ports and Globalisation*. Their latest project began in Chile, where their careers began 40 years earlier. Other ports they have visited include Los Angeles, New York, London, Barcelona, Piraeus, Capetown, Hong Kong, and of course Singapore.

As part of their research, Mr Teunissen and Ms Steenhuis have taken pictures, made sketches, and met many people.



Bustling Shanghai in 1860. From a French travel book, by Pierre Eugène Grandsire



Modern Shanghai, painted by Aafke Steenhuis.



Ms Steenhuis working on her painting in Shanghai.
[Photo: Jan Joost Teunissen]

When we think of international travel, we usually picture aeroplanes. However, 90 percent of the world's cargo is still transported on ships. This makes port cities extremely important.

By studying port cities, Mr Teunissen and Ms Steenhuis believe they will discover how globalisation affects the world. Globalisation has many benefits. Many of the good things we enjoy, from our food to our toys, come through our port. But, it also creates problems, such as pollution.

Mr Teunissen and Ms Steenhuis hope to find out how globalisation can be less of a burden on the environment and people.

Read about Shanghai in the first part of our Port Cities series, in the print edition of our May issue.

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VOCAB BUILDER

dyke (say "daik"; noun) = thick wall to prevent the sea from coming in.