

**COASTAL DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL HERITAGE:  
A CASE STUDY OF CIREBON, INDONESIA**

*(Pembangunan Wilayah Pantai dan Peninggalan Kultural: Studi Kasus Kota Cirebon)*

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**Abstract**

Cirebon is an important port city in the southwestern part of the Indonesia archipelago. It is located on the north coast of the most populous Indonesian Island of Java. Although it is in West Java province, it stands on the border of Central Java. This makes it an important cultural melting pot of the Sundanese and Javanese people respectively. Chinese immigrants also play an important role. As the second port of Jakarta, and one with an expanding export/production zone, it is important for the whole of West Java. It is also the point of export for a large number of agricultural commodities such as tea, rice, sugar, coffee, essential oil, teak and other products of the surrounding region (Anonymous, 1997). Development is occurring at a high rate with Indonesian and foreign investment increasing. Cirebon is an important transportation center for goods to and from Jakarta, as well as a transit town between west Java and Central Java, where trucks and buses pass by the busy major northern east-west highway.

Nevertheless, life in Cirebon retains much of its charm, with bicycle rickshaws (*becaks*) still plating its wide, tree lined streets. There are a number of special artistic and cultural features of the city, including its unique glass painting and special *batik* cloth. Both of these are characterized by motifs reflecting the traditions of the *kratons*, or former palaces of the sultanate of Cirebon, which reached its height in the fifteenth century. This old and almost forgotten sultanate contains four *kratons* or palaces, the refuge for still living lines of an ancient royal family. Symbols of a feudalistic and aristocratic past, the sultans have long since relinquished their traditional lifestyle behind the dusty palace walls (Lim & Gocher, 1990), although they still retain the respect of the citizens.

These culturally significant palaces, along with the historic and holly tomb of the city's founder, the royal family's burial sites and a number of interesting and important Chinese and Buddhist temples, are located in the coastal plain of the Java Sea. This area is dominated by the 3100-meter volcano, Mt. Ciremai, and its surrounding foothills.

These cultural resources are currently under-exploited, and this paper shows how they can be further utilized, along with the city's natural setting, to expand tourism in Cirebon by middle-class families from elsewhere on Java. This is particularly important now that the falling Indonesian currency has made travel to Singapore and other overseas tourist destinations, as well as visits to Bali, Lombok and other islands of Indonesia prohibitively expensive for this group.

**Abstrak**

*Cirebon adalah sebuah kota di Indonesia yang terletak di pantai utara Pulau Jawa. Meskipun secara administratif terletak di wilayah Jawa barat, lokasi kota ini yang berada pada perbatasan dengan wilayah Jawa Tengah menjadikan kota Cirebon sebagai satu titik pertemuan*

yang penting antara kebudayaan Sunda dan Jawa. Lebih lanjut, keberadaan masyarakat Cina di kota ini juga membuat Cirebon menjadi lebih unik. Sebagai kota pelabuhan kedua setelah Jakarta, serta salah satu dari pusat produksi ekspor, Cirebon mempunyai peranan yang penting bagi wilayah Jawa Barat. Kota ini juga merupakan titik ekspor banyak komoditi pertanian dari wilayah sekitarnya seperti teh, gula, kopi, kayu jati dan banyak produk lain. Cirebon juga merupakan pusat transportasi penting untuk barang-barang dari dan ke Jakarta, begitu pula sebagai kota transit antara Jawa Barat dan Jawa Tengah karena truk dan bus melewati jalur padat yang menghubungkan wilayah Jawa Barat bagian barat dan timur.

Walaupun demikian, kehidupan di Cirebon tetap berlangsung dengan kekhasannya yang menarik, antara lain masih melajunya becak di berbagai penggal jalan kota. Lebih lanjut, terdapat beberapa kegiatan kultural dan artistik di kota ini, termasuk lukisan kaca yang unik serta batik Cirebon yang khas. Keduanya dicirikan dengan motif yang menggambarkan tradisi kesultanan Cirebon, yang pernah mencapai puncak kejayaannya pada abad ke XV. Peninggalan Kesultanan Cirebon ini terutama dapat dilihat dari empat keraton serta kompleks perumahan untuk keluarga kesultanan. Peninggalan ini merefleksikan sistem masyarakat yang feodalistik serta keluarga aristokrat di masa silam.

Peninggalan berupa keraton yang mempunyai nilai kultural ini, beserta makam pendiri kota, makam keluarga kesultanan dan beberapa tempat peribadatan masyarakat Cina dan Budha, cukup menarik. Semuanya terletak di daratan pantai laut Jawa. Area ini didominasi oleh Gunung Ciremai serta perbukitan di sekitarnya. Saat ini sumber daya kultural ini belum dikembangkan. Tulisan ini ingin menunjukkan bahwa aset kultural tersebut serta aset alaminya dapat dikembangkan untuk meningkatkan jumlah wisatawan ke kota Cirebon, khususnya wisatawan dari pulau Jawa. Hal ini menjadi penting, terutama ketika kemampuan wisatawan dari Jawa untuk pergi ke Singapura, atau tujuan-tujuan wisata lain di luar Pulau Jawa seperti Bali dan Lombok menyusut lantaran krisis ekonomi.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Cirebon is a rapidly developing major city on the northern coast of Java, Indonesia, with an under-exploited cultural heritage. Surrounded by natural beauty only partially developed for tourism, the city offers many opportunities for family tourist development weaving together both natural and cultural values. This paper analyzes these opportunities. More specifically, this paper will:

1. make an inventory of the city's cultural sites;
2. make an inventory of the natural endowment and opportunities of the area surrounding the city; and
3. based on these two inventories, suggest ways to develop the area to maximize the synergy in the use of both sets of resources for middle class families from the provinces of West Java and Central Java mainly and East Java at-large.

Following this introductory section, Section 2 reviews the cultural and natural endowments of the city. Section 3 then discusses the middle class market and Javanese family values, while Section 4 proposes an approach to increase the appeal of the city as a tourist destination for this group by emphasizing its cultural and natural values as parts of an integrated concept. Section 5 concludes the paper.

## II. THE CULTURAL AND NATURAL ENDOWMENT OF THE CIREBON COASTAL REGION

### A. Background: Indonesia, Java and Cirebon

#### 1. Indonesia: a country to explore

Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country and a former Dutch colony, is situated in Southeast Asia. Its land mass is

an archipelago, but it is one divided into two unequal strings of islands: a southern chain containing the comparatively long and narrow islands of Sumatra, Java, Timor and others, and the northern chain of Borneo (Kalimantan), Celebes (Sulawesi), the Moluccas, and New Guinea. The country consists of a total of 13,667 islands and islets, about 6000 of which are inhabited, and stretches across some 5100 km of sea in the region of the equator.

Indonesia is the fourth most populous country in the world. According to a 1995 estimate, it has 201,447,000 inhabitants (Anonymous, 1977a.). Nearly three-fifths of the people live on Java and Madura, which makes those the most densely populated region of the country. Indonesia has many ethnic groups, the variety of which makes the country very rich in culture and traditions. The indigenous people of Indonesia are mostly of mixed Malaysian origin, and the most distinctive ethnic groups are the Javanese and the Sundanese, who live mainly on Java and Madura; the Balinese, on Bali; and the Bataks and Acehnese, on Sumatra. Other minority groups distributed throughout the islands include a number of related Malay groups, several million Chinese, and other Asian peoples. The Dutch who still live in Indonesia number fewer than 10,000 (Anonymous, 1997a)

## 2. Java: the dominant island

Indonesia is dominated both by Javanese culture and the sheer number of its inhabitants. The overwhelming majority of the people living on Java are either the Sundanese, who inhabit the extreme western part of the island, the Javanese, who inhabit the central part<sup>1</sup>, and the Madurese, who

<sup>1</sup> Javanese as a word has several meanings. In the broadest sense, it refers to all the inhabitants of the island of Java. This is the way it is used in this paper when referring to tourist families who might visit Cirebon. The word, however, also

inhabit the eastern part. By far, the largest part of the populations is Muslim, although there are significant numbers of Catholics and Protestants on Java and other islands. Bali, directly to the east of Java, is mostly Hindu.

## 3. Cirebon: historical development

Cirebon, which rose to prominence in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, had its origins in the small fishing village of Muara Jati, which later became a port in the Kingdom of Rajagaluh. This kingdom had its capital near the present day town of Ciamis. Later on, the harbor master, Ki Gedeng Tapa, relocated, founding a settlement at Lemahwungkuk, the site of present day Cirebon. This new area was named "caruban", meaning "mixture". This referred to the large number of foreign merchants and traders who were settling there. It became a melting pot traders and of different tribes and races. This small settlement grew to become modern day Cirebon. At that time, however, the ruler of the Pajajaran Kingdom appointed the harbor master as a chieftain with the title *Kuwu Cirebon*. Later on, he was succeeded by Walangsungsang, a son of Siliwangi, king of the Sundanese Pajajaran Kingdom, whose name was later changed to *Cakrabouni* (Lim & Gocher, 1990).

Around 1415, the great Muslim Chinese eunuch, Admiral Cheng Ho, visited the port of Muara Jati on one of his legendary expeditions as an envoy from Imperial China to induce local rulers to send tribute to the Ming Courth. He had 62 ships, which carried 28,000 men. It is believed that the chronicler Ma Huang stayed and married a local girl and

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refers to the ethnic group that has dominated Indonesian history and inhabits the central part of the island. Javanese is also the name of the language of this group. Cirebon, as a city on the border of the provinces of Central Java (ethnic Javanese) and Western Java (ethnic Sundanese), is inhabited by two cultural groups, and its residents speak a dialect of both languages.

began a small settlement of Chinese Muslims at Muara Jati. They built a lighthouse to mark the port (Lim & Gocher, 1990).

**B. The Kraton and Other Cultural Resources**

Syarif Hidayatullah (Gunung Jati), nephew of Prince *Cakrabouni*, was born in Egypt. He traveled through the Middle East, India and China before reaching the land of his Javanese mother to spread the word of Islam. He became the Sunan Gunung Jati after arriving in Cirebon in 1470. He was later appointed by the Nine Walis as a

messenger to spread Islam in Sundaland and to join his uncle *Cakrabouni* in Caruban. Having studied mysticism in Bagdad, he was the most respected person in the whole of Cirebon and the land of the Sundanese people. He could influence people with his mystic power, and that made him the most powerful and influential person in the region. He separated Cirebon from the Kingdom of Rajagaluh and built Cirebon's first *kraton* (palace), Pakungwati in Lemahwungkuk. Cirebon had already become a leading coastal town with a busy and well maintained harbor.

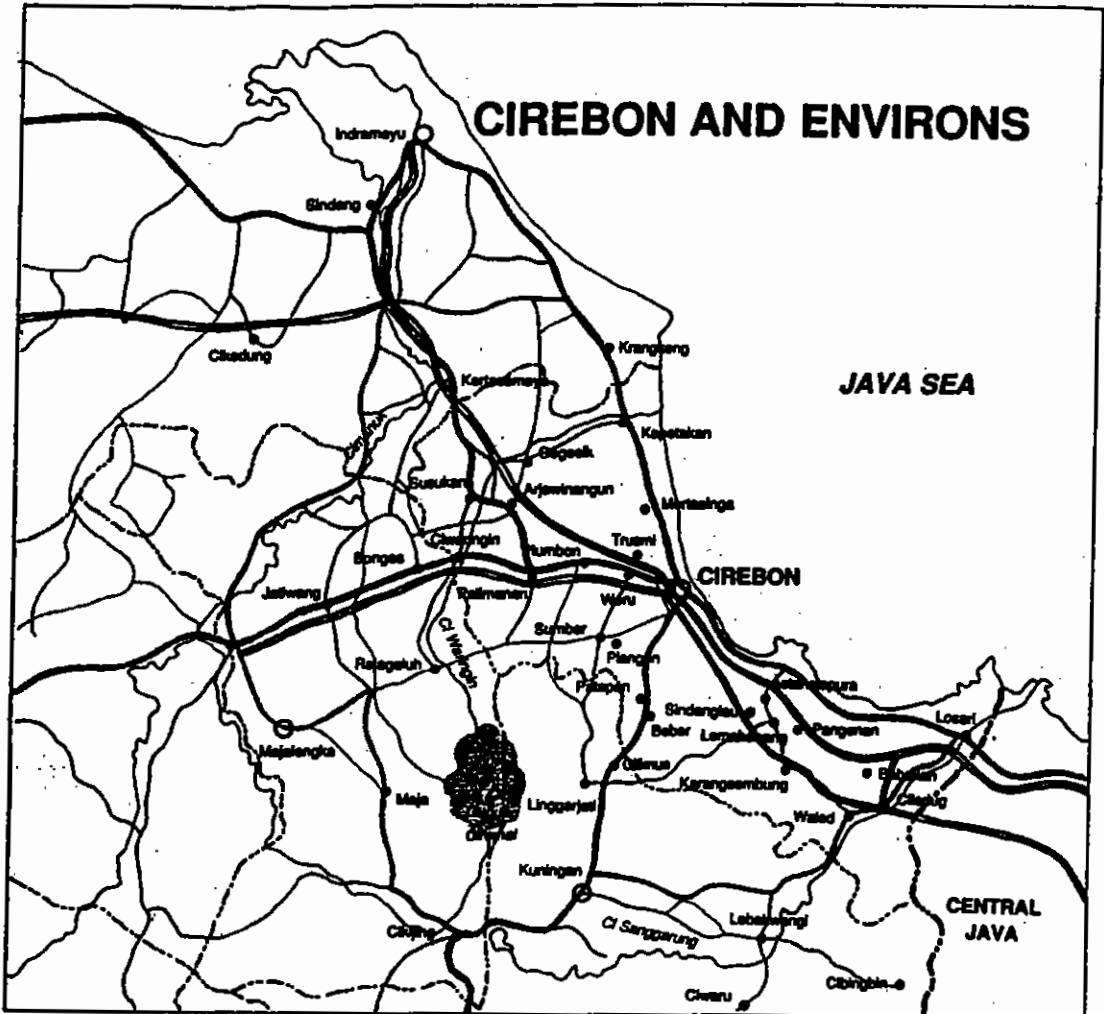


Figure 1. Map of Cirebon and Enviros

In 1475, however, Cirebon was conquered by Demak princes; and, in 1480, they began the construction of *Mesjid Agung* (the Agung mosque). It was known then as Sang Cipta Rasa, and it is one of the earliest Islamic structures in Java. The mosque was completed around the same time as the Great Mosque in Demak.

The Kingdom of Mataram, centered in the central Java city of Yogyakarta, soon started to expand its power to the coastal towns; and the port of Cirebon and its surrounding areas became a vassal of the kingdom. Mataram, under the ruler Sultan Agung, became the dominant power in Java. The Javanese cultural mix was further enriched by the spread of Islam in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. The coastal population and the aristocracy were the first elements to be influenced by the new culture. And, by the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the nominally Muslim Kingdom of Mataram had established control over the entire island (Suhartono, 1993).

By 1615, Mataram people had begun to settle in Cirebon, strengthening Mataram's cultural influence, while the intermarriage of the princes and princesses of the two kingdoms helped to increase Mataram's power. Javanese cultural influence had now become very strong in Cirebon and became the way of life of the Cirebonese people.

The last pieces of the complex of Kratons in Cirebon that form the cultural focus of this paper were built in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. One of them, the Klinteng Thiaw Kak Sie, is not strictly speaking a part of the Kraton complex, but because it is within walking distance, forms part of the resource from the tourist perspective. This building is actually a still functioning Buddhist temple, built by the Chinese in 1658. The last two Kratons, Kasepuhan and Kanoman, were built in 1678, and the former is built on the site of the earlier Pakungwati Kraton of the Hindu-Javanese regents.

In addition, the Sunyaragi Cape was built during the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, in another part of the city, as a pleasure garden for the royal family. The complex contained bathing pools, resting platforms and caves hidden behind curtains of falling water. It was an ideal setting for the Sultan and his wives to meditate. While the gardens no longer exist, the site has been renovated; and in the same location as Sunyaragi Cape, an open air stage has been built for local cultural performances and events, a number of which have been conducted by the author as master of ceremonies.

One of the highlights of such cultural performances is the dramatic *tari topeng* (masked dance), which is the most distinctive of Cirebon's performing arts. The dance is performed in spectacular, colorful costumes and with a unique headdress. The expensive wooden masks enhance the staccato, dramatic movements accompanied by Cirebon's ancient and classical, clashing *gamelan* music. Dances are still performed in villages preceding such an event. Dances are unisex; that is, they are performed by both women and men. The style of dance features rigidly controlled and staccato movements, each of which conveys a specific meaning. The color of each mask also represents a different human emotion or trait.

The Cirebonese have a traditional form of music, which is popular among the locals. It is called *tarling* because it makes use of both the *gitar* and *suling*. The *suling* is a soft-toned bamboo flute, which is a Sundanese traditional instrument. *Tarling* is a kind of mixture of Sundanese and Javanese music influenced by the guitar, which was introduced by the Portuguese. In some way *tarling* is better described as a modernized traditional music of the Cirebonese.

*Wayang golek*, the art of bringing traditional wooden puppets to life, and *wayang kulit* (shadow puppets) are other very popular forms of entertainment in Cirebon. A

*wayang golek* or *wayang kulit* performance takes place in a home or at a party on the occasion of a wedding, circumcision or other important event. It is normally accompanied by a gamelan ensemble. The stories portrayed include the *Hindu Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* epics. The masked dances, the wooden puppets and the shadow puppets are remnants of traditions from an earlier, mystical time, when the dances and *wayang* were performed as standard parts of certain rituals related to weddings, rice planting and harvesting, and were undertaken to control or appease the forces of nature.

As a coastal city, fishing is one of the main sources of income for the inhabitants, and the coastal people have a unique tradition called *nadran*. This festival is celebrated every year around December. The people stop working, and their boats are decorated with colorful flags, fruit, sugarcane, young coconut leaves, clothes and bottles. It is a holiday time for the fishermen. During this time, buffalo heads are taken out to the sea in small boats as offerings. The purpose of this festival is to thank God and ask for guidance.

Another cultural resource of Cirebon is found about six kilometers from the city. This is the traditional *batik*-making village of Trusmi. *Batik* is the world famous lost wax method of fabric printing indigenous to Indonesia. While all areas of the country have their own characteristic *batik*, Cirebon is famous for its special type. This little village, for example, was once the home of *panembahan* Trusmi, a student of Syeh Siti Jenar, head of mystical guild of artisans in Java. For many generations, Trusmi *batik* workers were men, who were members of a mysterious Islamic sect of artisans, specializing in the pictorial arts (Lim & Gocher, 1990.). They made their own designs, which reflected the philosophy of their guild, in strange and symbolic forms. They were also chosen as *batik* markers for the royalty of the Cirebon Kratons.

What is important to stress about the cultural resources of Cirebon is that they are completely authentic. There is no foreign tourism to speak of, and the family tourism advocated here (see Chapter 4) involves people with the same cultural background, who are interested in the fact that their own history and cultural values survive. Therefore, there is little danger of the culture being "bastardized" for the sake of tourists as is the case, for example, in the Bahamas (Palmer, 1995). That is, the conflicting demands of the preservation of the cultural heritage of, and the development of tourism in, the Western Isles (or Outer Hebrides) off the coast of Scotland (Macritchie, 1995) will not be the case in Cirebon. In both the Bahamas and the Western Isles, the tourists were basically foreign to the culture. That will not be the case with Javanese family tourism in Cirebon.

### C. Current Importance of Cirebon

Turning from the historical development of the city, which puts the *kratons* and other cultural resources within a framework for tourism, it is now useful to describe in brief the growing economic importance and development of the city. This is helpful because it indicates the opportunities for the further exploitation of the *kratons*, etc. It is important to note, for example, that the city is the fastest growing on Java. Its downtown real estate has been rising in value with the construction of shopping malls, hotels and office buildings. Green spaces have been disappearing, and the city center is becoming more dense. The economic impetus for this has been Cirebon's excellent port facilities and its proximity to both Jakarta and Bandung, as well as a major natural gas field of the national oil company, Pertamina. This has caused Cirebon to be seen as a second port for the Jakarta region and has led to the construction of a high-speed, modern highway linking the three cities. Excellent rail connections for Jakarta and Cirebon already

exist. Cirebon has hence been developed as a free port for the manufacture of export goods and a break of bulk center for the distribution of imports. Both domestic and foreign investment are increasing, and the number of non-Cirebonese middle-class and foreign residents connected to the economic boom has also been on the rise

#### **D. Natural Inventory: The Coastal Setting**

Cirebon is a major port, and like many such cities, it abuses the coastline. The harbor is polluted, and raw sewage is dumped into the sea. Cirebon has long been known as *Kota Udang*, or the "City of Shrimps", and many of the town's older buildings are decorated with the images of the shellfish. In addition, to the east of the city, highly polluting shrimp farming is prevalent along the coast. On the other hand, the coastline to the north-west of the city is mostly composed of relatively unspoiled and unpolluted white sand beaches. There is potential in this area for family hotels to be developed on a small scale.

Moreover, the natural beauty of the area just inland, but still in the coastal plain, is striking. Mt. Ciremai dominates the Cirebon landscape. The perfect shaped cone of this volcano provides a startlingly beautiful backdrop to Cirebon from almost every direction<sup>2</sup>. For those who are brave enough to want to climb the mountain, they can start their trip from the park at Linggarjati in the evening and hike all night long. Most climbers, however, start at sunrise and camp at the peak overnight to witness the sunrise. The path is quite scenic, with plenty of birds life along the way. A guide is recommended,

but many-especially groups of young people-climb without one.

The foothills of Mt. Ciremai are home to a number of small villages and interesting places to visit. There are two nice hotels and some bungalows to stay for a few days while exploring the area. Panoramic views, a large, freshwater swimming pool, a local golf course and useable tennis courts make for a relaxing trip, while the cool and fresh air of the highlands makes a welcome change from the brutal heat of the tropical city.

Sangkanhurip hot spring is located in a pleasant small valley not far away. It is a popular local tourist attraction, where the hot mineral baths provide relief from a variety of ailments. There is a nice freshwater fish restaurant that one cannot miss nearby. The setting of a pleasant open air verandah on wooden posts above a big pond, as well as the scenery, makes the local Sundanese food even tastier. There are also several nice hotels in the area equipped with tennis courts and a swimming pool. With just a little investment and some organization, these hotels along with the other elsewhere in the foothills of the volcano, could be marketed as family hotels like the "Paredores" in Puerto Rico. These are small country inns catering to local tourism that have been sporting up around the island to take advantage of unique scenery or environs, both of which are evident in Cirebon (Melendez, 1992).

Cigugur is also located in the foothills of Mt. Ciremai. This small town is famous for its crystal springs containing sacred white carp that are claimed by the locals to be 1,000 years old, although this is an exaggeration, however, the carp are a popular tourist attraction, and they are fed by many local residents and Javanese tourists so that they often grow to a length of one meter or more.

Another attraction is Cipary. About 650 meters above sea level, it is believed to have been a center of worship and burial, as well as a settlement, existing around the beginning of

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<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that the seacoast is not actually the dominant natural tourist attraction in the area to the Javanese. Instead, it is the volcano. This is quite different from that in Europe, where the coast would be more important, offering unique appeal (Duffield & Walker, 1979)

the Bronze Age. Several archeological discoveries have been made in this area, including sites containing remnants of an ancient megalithic civilization from the Bronze Age. Stone sarcophagi, single upright stone monoliths, coffins, axes, and other implements left *in situ* have remained undisturbed by humans (Lim & Gocher, 1990.). It is now developed as a recreation park, leaving the ancient relics undisturbed.

With these natural resources, it is obvious that Cirebon has a lot to offer in support of its cultural heritage. This beauty is largely enjoyed by the residents of the greater Cirebon region and families of West Java. There could be more visitors from Central Java, and also East Java at-large. At the moment people from these regions, especially from East Java, go to Bali and Lombok because these places are closer and already well established for tourism.

The Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture, Fuad Hassan, when addressing the recent International Conference on Cultural Tourism in Yogyakarta, said that "Nature and culture with their characteristics always have potential to provoke man's interest and curiosity for further exploration". (Hassan, 1992), and it is the author's belief that stressing the Javanese cultural attractions specified above, together with the natural ones around the city, will attract more Javanese families to Cirebon. This will bring substantial money into the city and provide jobs, while destroying neither the cultural nor the natural resources of the area. In order to illustrate why this is likely, it is necessary to discuss the family values of the Javanese middle class, which represents the target market.

### III. THE MIDDLE CLASS MARKET AND JAVANESE FAMILY VALUES

To assess the tourism potential for Javanese families of the *kratons* and other cultural sites in Cirebon, within their coastal setting, the cultural and family values of the Javanese must be understood. Family is very important for the Javanese. Family members have strong and close bonds with each other and value their relationships highly. The Javanese take the whole family on an outing or for a holiday. They like to be together as much as they can. This feeling of closeness can be seen in the way they go everywhere together as a large extended family, including grandparents and other relatives.

The emphasis placed on the family is an important aspect to be fully considered when considering targeting Javanese tourists. It is significant, for example, in developing accommodations and leisure facilities for which the designs should be oriented to large family groups. In order to analyze this tourist potential, moreover, two groups should be discussed. These are the inhabitants of the region surrounding Cirebon, who visit its cultural sites almost as infrequently as the rest of the inhabitants of Java, as well as those people living outside the region, but elsewhere on the island. These two groups are discussed below.

#### A. The Cirebonese

For the Cirebonese, the *kratons*, tombs and various art forms presented above are important historical and cultural symbols. They are proud of them in that they represent the past power and glory of their forefathers.



Nevertheless, they are not impressed by the royal titles of the inhabitants of the palaces, but consider them fellow citizens. This is, nonetheless, a bit simplistic. Actually, what is referred to here are the *urban* Cirebonese, or rather those of all classes living in the city itself. In the villages surrounding the municipality, but still considered part of Cirebon, the *kratons* are more important to the cultural identity of the inhabitants. They visit them at certain special times of the year and consider the Sultan's descendants as people worthy of special honor.

Nevertheless, a large number of urbanized Cirebonese and their rural brothers and sisters share certain traditional views towards the ancestors of the royal family. This concerns the pre-Islamic, mystical strand of Javanese culture, and it gives added importance to the *kratons* (see the discussion of Gunung Jati in Section II.A.3). The Cirebonese are a very superstitious people, and the influence of the Gunung Jati's magical power remains quite strong in their daily lives. This is important in understanding Indonesian Islam, because the religion never replaced Javanese or Sundanese traditions but was simply adopted in addition to them.

#### B. The Javanese

Here, the term Javanese refers to all of the Indonesia inhabitants of the island of Java, rather than to the Javanese ethnic and cultural group referred to above (see footnote 1). Because of its physical position as transit city linking Central and West Java provinces (see Section II.A.3), many Javanese frequently pass through Cirebon. Thus, everyone in Java knows Cirebon, and it is a frequent rest stop for those traveling the length of the island. The rest of Java's inhabitants are equally as superstitious as the Cirebonese, and, therefore, the *kratons*, tombs, etc. found there have importance for them as well. Visitors to the *kratons* and other site include many Indonesians who do not live in Cirebon. For

them, the main attraction is the tomb of the Gunung Jati and his Chinese wife. Thus, the site is important to Indonesian Chinese as well, who often visit it in conjunction with a visit to the Buddhist temple there. Consequently, if it were easier to visit both the tomb and the *kratons* between train changes in Cirebon, there should be more visitors to both.

### IV. PROPOSED APPROACH

#### A. Current Utilization of the Cultural Resources

While the basic argument of this paper is that the *kratons* and other historic sites of Cirebon are underused resources, this does not mean that they are not used at all. As has been previously noted, the *kratons* are inhabited. Moreover, festivals are sometimes held at them, and the occasional Indonesian or foreign tourist passes by. However, these are normally visiting because they have come to Cirebon as pilgrims to visit the tomb of the Gunung Jati, which is one of the holiest Muslim places on Java. Malaysians and people from Brunei also consider the place holy. Its most important use at present, however, is once a year at *Maulud*, the biggest annual Muslim festival, celebrating the Prophet Mohammed's birthday. Celebrated largely at *Kasepuhan* and *Kanoman Kratons*, it attracts visitors from all over Java, and even from overseas. There is an interrelationship between cultural aspects and tourism here, just as in the case of the tourist attractions in Bali. Tourists visit Bali because of its arts, culture and religious ceremonies (Bagus, 1992), and this is why people come to *Maulud* in Cirebon. On a daily basis, however, the citizens of Cirebon living both nearby and elsewhere in the city and its surroundings, do not pay a visit.

One of the biggest attractions in Cirebon is the *Panjang Jimat* ceremony. For this, all the heirlooms of the palaces are taken out and

displayed. This includes the sacred *Kres* (dagger) and blue and white Ming dynasty plates and trays, illustrated with Islamic verses from the *Koran*, for several days before, the grounds of the *kratons* fill with people, and hawkers abound selling food and toys. It is a very festive occasion, with mountains of rice consumed.

The ceremony is also interesting because it contains elements of pre-Islamic Javanese culture. In the ceremony, all daggers and other heirlooms are washed with special water, which has been prepared a few days earlier to have the smell of flowers. For the people from the villages, this ceremony is very important, and they collect the fomed water after it has been used because they believe it has magical power.

The *Panjang Jimat* ceremony and other traditional ceremonies will always be conducted at the Cirebon *Kratons*, even though they will not attract the attention of tourists. It is part of tradition and a way of life of the locals.

## B. Proposed Cultural Tourism

Given the history of Cirebon, its economic growth and development, the perspectives of the *kratons*, etc. held by a number of groups of possible users of its tourist potential, their cultural and religious significance and their current use, it is clear that they are an underutilized resource. In this section, how this potential might be better developed will be outlined. As a note of caution, these suggestions are very preliminary in nature and represent the views of the author, who has grown up in the city, without the benefit of detailed study. If these ideas were to be taken seriously at the municipal or regional level it would be useful to draw up an Action Plan for tourism in the area. This would include a so-called SWOT analysis to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats with regard to cultural tourism within the natural setting of

Cirebon (Anonymous, 1997b). Nevertheless, the author would like to stress the approach as that of preserving the cultural and natural heritage of the area for the Javanese themselves. Preservation here is not only meant in the sense of maintaining the cultural and natural heritage of Java, but also refers to the revitalization of old values in the present, modernizing society. The Javanese should enjoy their culture, but it should not become a "commodity" (Zeppel & Hall, 1991). For example, Cirebon is by no means the center of a poor region (see Section II.C), and there is no overriding economic need to cater to foreign tourists (Peterson & McCarthy, 1992)

In relation to this, Pearce (1995) has written about four sets of factors to consider in his discussion about measuring the spatial variations of tourism. Measurement *per se* is not the purpose of this paper, but Pearce's four sets of factors from useful analytical elements in considering the possible future family tourist development of , for example, the *Kratons*. This will be demonstrated below.

Pearce has identified accommodation, attraction, economic impact and the tourists themselves in his article. The tourists themselves have been discussed in detail above. What will now be done is to relate these tourists to the other three factors to identify directions the city government and tourism planners in Cirebon might consider.

### 1. The Cirebonese

The people in the greater Cirebon region require no accommodation. For them, the *kratons* could become an attraction, if they were developed for day trips. For example, one of the palaces could be restored to its former state and all treasures put on permanent display in it. In this sense, it would be a sort of museum demonstrating local history and culture. In contrast to an ordinary museum, however, Cirebon's unique art forms of glass painting and *batik*, both based on *kraton*-related motifs, and also wooden

masks, could be sold there, and their creation demonstrated. A restaurant could also be built featuring the local cuisine (e.g., Cirebon is widely known for its prawns) and offering traditional cultural performances of the forms of music, theater and dance discussed earlier in this paper.

These cultural events will help preserve the local culture, which has begun to fade under the influence of the western media (even Cirebon has satellite TV). Thus young people here have been influenced by what Dietvorst (1995) calls a shift from the "Gutenberg Generation" to the "MTV generation". In his words, "The former was educated with the printed word and with logical, sequential thinking, the later prefers crossing and fragmented stories (as in the soaps): no linear logic, no consistency, no separation between private and public, between commerce and arts, between illusion and reality". This cultural influence seems to be getting into the blood of the young people who live in the greater Cirebon area.

The economic impact of this development would have several dimensions. First, it would generate jobs, both temporary (e.g., artisans, painters, masons and other skilled tradesmen, as well as ordinary construction workers) and permanent (e.g., guards, waiters, guides, artists and musicians), and these would be for the Cirebon population at-large.

## 2. The Javanese

As was mentioned previously in Chapter IV, people from all over Java come to Cirebon during the *Maulud* festival. The attraction of the *kraton* is thus already there. The challenge is to make them more attractive so that more people will come, stay longer and find out that there are year round reasons to visit. Accommodation is also adequate, although Cirebon is currently experiencing the construction of a significant number of three and four star hotel rooms. These are of a high

standard and relatively cheap for European tourists. However, they are too costly for average Indonesian families. For them, there are a large number of affordable family hotels located at some distance from the *Kratons*. While this distance is not a problem in itself, finding enough space for a large family is not always so easy. With the increasing sophistication of the Indonesian consumer, advertising hotels and their rates, as well as developing a booking system through a centralized service, would be helpful. A tourist desk in the central train station would also be appreciated. In addition, an island wide advertising campaign in the various media focusing on the *kratons* and other cultural offerings of Cirebon could be useful.

The economic impact here begins to be significant. If the city becomes a tourist destination for the Javanese, it will experience economic expansion. The target group here is Javanese families. They will pay entrance fees to the *kratons*, eat in local restaurants, sleep in the city's hotels, buy its glass paintings and *batik*, purchase t-shirts and other tourist trinkets, listen to its music and view its cultural performances. They would also visit the area's other attractions, which include sand beaches, Linggarjati, a semi-rural resort area known for its lovely landscapes and climbing Mt. Ciremai, at 3100 meters, West Java's highest mountain. These natural attractions would generate further tourist expenditures.

## 3. A Note on foreign tourists

The authors believe that there is significant potential for developing the cultural resources of Cirebon for this group. While the average foreign tourist is less interested in the religious significance of the *kratons*, for example, as an attraction, there is appeal in the historical and cultural components. The culinary, architectural, musical, artistic, and theatrical aspects of its development would be of interest as they

would appear "genuine". Thus, cultural tourism is an important aspect for developing mutual familiarization amongst people of different socio-cultural backgrounds, and it will also eventually provide a basis of mutual understanding and respect amongst nations (Hassan, 1992). It can be seen even further that cultural tourism enhances insight into cultural pluralism as a manifestation of human existence.

Moreover, **accommodation** for foreign tourists is more than adequate, and the range of hotels fits any pocketbook. The choice ranges from local accommodation for backpackers to fully equipped four star hotels with swimming pools and air-conditioning for the well-offs.

Nevertheless, the *kraton* themselves are unlikely to attract large numbers of foreign tourists, with their generally large **economic impacts**, to Cirebon. The development of the neighboring tourist attractions to international tourist standards, however, might. The area around Cirebon has lovely sand beaches, but they are not particularly clean, and the water is polluted from both the harbor and domestic sewage. Good beaches are about a forty-five minute drive away. If some hotels were developed there at the standard of the best in the city, wealthier Javanese tourists, as well as international visitors, might find the area to be an attractive base for excursions to the sites of the area. Similarly, the rural vistas and the appeal of climbing Mt. Ciremai might be enhanced by improved accommodation and services.

It should be stressed, nonetheless, that tourist development in Cirebon's surroundings should remain balanced. That is, what Dietvorst (1966) calls the "accelerating" forces of modern society (e.g., mass foreign tourism) should not overwhelm the "inert" ones (e.g., the rural idyll) of the countryside, which attract the Javanese tourists to begin with.

## V. CONCLUSION

This paper has presented an analysis of the tourist potential of Cirebon, especially with regard to its *kratons*, within its natural surroundings for the target group of middle-class Javanese families. It has explained the history and culture of the city; looked at its *kratons*, temples and tombs as resources from the points of view of its target group; outlined the current uses of the palaces and other cultural resources, and offered some ideas for their further tourism development based on the sets of factors identified by Pearce (1995). As with any economic activity, tourism makes use of resources, the impact on which amounts to exploitation if the quantity and quality of those resources are degraded (Newby, 1994). This is true in both the cultural and environmental senses. The type of tourism recommended here, however, should minimize such negative effects. It is clear in the end, however, that there is significant scope here for the further development of these rich cultural and historical resources, along with their natural surroundings, within the context of a growing and modernizing city still proudly conscious of its past.

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