A Study of Historical Transformation of North Coastal Cities in Java
Case study: Banten and Cirebon, West Java - Indonesia

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Abstract
Before Islam religion was accepted by the local rulers and inhabitants, Javanese cities and settlements were created according to Hindu-Buddhist cosmology as described in Negarakertagama about Majapahit palace and cities of Bali Island. This planning concept drastically changed from ritual-oriented to commerce-oriented as soon as the local rulers accepted Islam in the 15th century as growth of international commerce.

In order to support this supposition, urban pattern of the North coastal cities before and after islamization must be argued. Among the cities, Cirebon and Banten are taken as case study as they played an important role in the process of islamization and still exist after experience of several transformations. Main sources of the research are local chronicles and traveler’s account.

Keywords: Java; north coastal cities; Cirebon; Banten; historical transformation; urban pattern

1. Introduction
Javanese city is characterized by Alun-alun, a large open square combined with a great mosque on the west side and a market within. This study is aimed at exploring the development process of the Alun-Alun based urban pattern through case study of North Coastal cities, where probably such urban pattern was first developed.

Before Islam religion was accepted by the local rulers and inhabitants, Javanese cities and settlements were built according to Hindu-Buddhist cosmology as described in Negarakertagama about Majapahit palace and cities of Bali Island. This planning concept drastically changed from ritual-oriented to commerce-oriented when the local rulers accepted Islam in the 15th century followed the growth of international commerce at the same time.

There are some studies about history of Java, which has also mentioned about this transformation such as Rijklefs, Milone, or Wiryomartono. However, most of them, excluded Wiryomartono, are carried-out the subject as a social and cultural study. The morphological study of Wiryomartono was still compressed and sometimes oversimplified, although he mentioned not to perceive his book as a final work.

2. The City of Cirebon before the Inception of Islam
Portray regarding Cirebon before 18th century is still uncertain, although some earliest remains from 16th century do persist. The problem is that these remains are not intact - some parts have been modified - therefore, to observe these remains should be very carefully to avoid improper conclusion and perception of the subject. Concerning these factors, the reconstruction of Cirebon city at this period primarily based on the description of chronicles and traveler’s account such as Tome Pires’s Suma Oriental and a local chronicle Purwaka Tjaruban Nagari. However, since these sorts of sources sometimes do not exhibit the actual fact, the 1719 Dutch map - the oldest Dutch map about Cirebon city - is also used to confirm the explanation of those account and chronicle about the condition of the city.

Referring to the Purwaka Caruban Nagari, there were some rivers flowed from the sea through the city and along these rivers most of the activity within the city had been carried out. These rivers were still drawn on the 1719 map. Therefore, the geography condition of the city probably had not undergone any changes by 1719. The urban elements which were noted on the map’s legend also coincided with the description of Cirebon early settlement according to the Purwaka Caruban Nagari, particularly on the area known as LemahWungkuk area nowadays (See fig. 2).

The same toponym ‘LemahWungkuk’ between the present name as one of area in Cirebon and the name which known as the location of Cirebon early settlement has drawn more attention to find out if there is any relationship between them. On the Dutch map, in the area which is known as LemahWungkuk area nowadays was located a court, a Paseban, a yard for the cockfighting game, and a market. Further to the East and the North, there were open spaces very near to the river, probably
functioned as ports.

The interesting part from that urban pattern is that it resembles the typical urban composition of Balinese settlement². On the map, it also appeared that the court and the other urban elements were separated by a junction. In the Balinese village, the junction is recognized as 'Pempatan Agung' or the sacred crossroad.

This similarity probably was not unincidence. According to the chronicle, before the inception of Islam, Cirebon was a Hindu area and was also carried out a same manner with in Bali. Thus, it is possible that before 16th century, the form of Cirebon early settlement had resembled Balinese village. Nonetheless, in the absence of more positive evidence this subject must remain a matter of conjecture (See fig. 3).

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Fig. 1. The Location of Cirebon and Banten in 16th Century

Fig. 2. The Location of the Early Settlement of Cirebon According to Purwaka Tjaruban Ngar and 1719 Dutch Map
3. The Unifying of Sacred and Market City

The establishment of Islamic states in Demak and other North coastal cities in the 16th century transformed the urban patterns which had prevailed in the previous era.

Before that, not only in Java, most of states in the Malaya Peninsula and Indochina had two places which represented their two main activities. These two places, which called as the sacred city and the market city by McGee, represented the division of function in a state. The first one played role as a capital and the political center and the second one as the economic center. Majapahit was one of the prominent states in Java that used the concept (Trowulan as the sacred city and Tuban as Majapahit’s market city).

As described by Ma Huan in Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan that in the 14th century there were already Muslim communities in Java North coastal cities. Most of them were traders from Arab, India or China. Some accounts from Chinese traders that had been compiled and translated by Groeneveldt mentioned about the existence of these Muslim traders as well.

In the coast, the Muslim community also got stronger and bigger accompanying the growth of trading activities. By the fall of Majapahit in the 15th century, these coastal cities arose as independent regional centers. These regional centers, however, were still in an informal alliance of Muslim community with Demak as the center.

This political change created a different urban pattern of the states from before the 16th century. As a place which the activity mainly focused on mercantile activities, the character in the coastal area is less formal than its counterpart the capital city. However, due to the change, the formal manner also took place within the city. The coastal city eventually facilitated both of the two division of function – the market and sacred city – in one place (See fig. 4).

In the local chronicle, when Cirebon transformed to the Islamic kingdom, the first ruler - Sunan Gunung Jati - built a new court at the southern part of the old court in the Lemawungkuk area (this court developed to Kanoman palace in 1677). This court, which was also recognized as Pakungwati palace and later on developed into Kasepuhan palace, became the political center of the Islamic state Cirebon onward (See fig. 5).

The establishment of this new political center had made Cirebon develop as a market city and sacred city altogether. The old area of Lemawungkuk functioned as a center of Cirebon mercantile activities and the Pakungwati palace was Cirebon religious and political center.

4. The Urban Pattern of Banten

The history of Banten is different from Cirebon. Cirebon was a Hindu-Buddhist state which transformed into an Islamic state, but Banten was established as an Islamic state from the origin. Before 1527, the area belonged to a regional center of Hindu-Buddhist state Padjadjaran, Banten Girang but it was defeated by the army of Cirebon and Demak. After the fall of this regional center, Fatahilah, the leader of this army (according to Djajanigrat) established a new Islamic state in the coast.

The development of Banten mostly was described in the account of De eerste schipvaart and tweede schipvaart and Tome Pires ‘Suma Oriental’ which provided illustrations and maps of the city. Some Chinese accounts also mentioned condition of Chinese trader in Banten.
A crossroad in the old part of Cirebon city.

The Great Mosque

The square

The palace

Kasepuhan Palace (This palace built on the structure of Pakungwati palace)

Kanoman Palace (the palace was built on old structure of Cirebon early settlement)

The remain of Pakungwati palace
(It is resided within Kasepuhan palace complex)

Rivers on the 1719 Dutch Map (Now these rivers are roads)

The remain of Pakungwati palace
(It is resided within Kasepuhan palace complex)

Kasepuhan Palace (This palace built on the structure of Pakungwati palace)

Fig. 4. The Establishment of New Political Center at the Southern Part of Cirebon Old City. (Right) The Position of the New and the Old City Center

Fig. 5. The Position of Remain of Pakungwati Palace, Kanoman Palace, and Kasepuhan Palace on the 1918 Dutch Map
During their golden era from 1618 - 1624, the city of Banten was already encircled with a stone wall. More detail illustration was taken from a map in Valentijn's book “Oud en Nieuw Oost Indien” and the Dutch account. It was mentioned that the city had three markets; the first one was located at the eastern area named Karangantu, the second one was located near the Alun-Alun called Temangungan market, and the last one was in the Chinese quarter at the western part of the city. The biggest market was the one that located in the East (See fig. 6 and fig. 7).

The court was located at the center of the city. There were two main roads intersection at the Alun-alun - in front of the court - that divided the city into four sections. The great mosque was located at the western part of the Alun-alun.5

Though, the golden era of this city was very short compared with its counterpart Cirebon, but if referred to what was described by Houtman and what was shown by Valentijn’s map, Banten was probably the most prosperous Islamic state in the Javanese history.
5. The Indies City

By the establishment of new Batavia in 1800, there were two types of urban pattern developed in Java. The local urban pattern which traditionally descended from Hindu-Buddhist period and the European urban pattern like that engaged in Batavia.

A new development of urban planning in Javanese city was taken place in the end of 19th century. After the Java war period was over and the demise of VOC in 1800 a new era began. The Netherlands Government promulgated a new policy called *culturstelsel* which objectively to enhance the social condition in this colony land and the economy of Dutch country. The policy had encouraged many private enterprises to carry out their business in Java. The wave of migration of Dutch people reached its peak after the open of Suez Canal. The open of this canal had made the travelling time from Java to Netherlands much shorter.

According to 1918 map of Cirebon, this change clearly was shown. In the 1719 map the Dutch area only was around their fort in the coast, by 1918 the Dutch settlement and facilities were already almost surrounded the whole city of Cirebon.

The river was vanished and replaced with roads. The river probably was pilled-up when the project of Daendel’s post road was carried out - considered the path of Grootepostweg in Cirebon coincided with the pattern of the old rivers (See fig. 5 and fig. 9).

There were three railway stations for carrying commodities from the hinterland or to the other prominent Dutch port, Semarang. The first station was located near the old city area, the second one was in the Dutch settlement area, and the last one was at the Cirebon harbor.

Started in the end of 19th century, many Dutch facilities such houses or governmental building combined the local style with the European’s and assembled it into a new architecture styled which called the Indies style. Nonetheless, it seems that this hybridization movement not only in a house scale but also in terms of a city, like that of took place in Cirebon, - an Indies city (See fig. 10 and fig. 11).

By this time, compared with the urban pattern in weltevreden area of Batavia, Dutch attempted to engage different approach of urban planning in Cirebon. They did not eliminate the old urban pattern and created a new pattern but they copied and built a contending pattern in another part of the city. Bagoes P. Wiryomartono argued that this action was a political policy of Dutch government for diminishing the power of local authority and to get sympathy from the local people.
Some of Dutch facilities after Cirebon became a municipality city of the Dutch Government in Java. These new developments had expanded the area of the city.
6. Conclusion
The historical transformation and development which took place in Cirebon and Banten can be concluded as follows:

1. From the description about Banten and Cirebon in this paper, there were some characteristics of Javanese coastal cities in Islamic reign period that can be noticed as follows:

- The city was always consisted of two areas; the port and the court area.
- In the Port area, market was the prominent place where not only trading activities took place but also a place for social and cultural activities between local inhabitant and foreign traders and settlers.
- The Court area was a place where the religious and political activity took place. Since these functions did not exist within coastal cities in the prior era, the pattern seems to be referred to a pattern of a polical center in Hindu-Buddhist state. Nevertheless, the mosque as a religious facility possessed higher hierarchy than the palace; different from what was applied in the previous era.

2. The shape of Cirebon city in the early of 20th century was another type of Dutch colonial city in Java. The Dutch attempted to create a new approach for their settlement that can be more fit with the climate, the culture and the surrounding environment. Different with Batavia that they changed all the local structure, in Cirebon the Dutch developed the city by utilizing the existing structure as part of the city. Therefore, Cirebon in the early of the 20th century was not a city for military action, but a prominent city of commerce.

Notes

1. Tome Pires also mentioned that Cirebon had an important port in north coast java, particularly for repairing and building a ship. (Cortesau 1990:183)
2. An illustration of a typical Balinese village of Eko Budihardjo ‘Architectural conservation in Bali’ drawn a court, a paseban, a yard and a market in a similar composition with that of in Cirebon. (Budihardjo 1995:22-23)
3. Ma Huan 1997:92-93
4. Groeneveldt 1960:56
5. According to de Rovere van Breugel “Beschrijving”, Eerste Schipvaart and Tweede Schipvaart, there were three markets open daily in Banten. The first one was called Tumenggung market (pasar Tumenggung); this market opened from nine’o clock until midday. It was located close to the great mosque and to the bridge linking the upper and lower towns. The Kapalembangan market (pasar kapalembangan) was located in the Chinese quarter. This market was a retail market for the supply of provisions to the local inhabitants. The Kapalembangan market opened as soon as the Tumenggung market closed. Banten's third and the largest market was called the great market (pasar gedè); it opened in the early morning and close on nine o’clock. This market was located near to the mouth of Karangantu River.
6. According to Staatsblad no. 122/1906 de gemeente Cheribon, in 1906, Cirebon became the capital of Cirebon municipality.

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