West Java's Increasing Involvement in Overseas Trade in the 13th-14th Centuries

by E. Edwards McKinnon

Lacking the grandiose classical monuments of Central and East Java, archaeologists have tended to pay relatively little attention to West Java, where, despite numerous megalithic remains and early evidence of Indianizing influences in the Citarum and Ciaruteun areas, little or no evidence of permanent architecture remains. However, a

number of important habitation sites such as Banten Girang and Kampung Muara in the Desa Ciaruteun Hiliar provide useful data for the reconstruction of former cultural and historical frameworks. In this paper I will review evidence from excavations at the above sites which, together with some personal observations, give an insight into the area's increasing involvement in overseas trade at a time when the Malay polities of southern Sumatra, which had once dominated trade in the Selat Melaka, the Riau archipelago and presumably the Selat Sunda, were suffering from political and economic pressure occasioned by the expansion of Chinese trade and Chinese shipping under the Southern Sung and the expansionist policies of the East Javanese kingdom of Singosari.²

Banten Girang is of interest as it sheds some light on the earlier history of Banten, of which little is known prior to the establishment of the Sultanate in the sixteenth century, and Muara Ciaruteun as it provides a link between the fifth century polity of Tarumanegara and the later kingdom of Pajajaran. Both Banten Girang situated on the Kali Banten and Muara Ciaruteun on the Cisidane are submontane sites situated some distance from the sea. As in other parts of Southeast Asia, river valleys in West Java played an important part both in communication and cultural diffusion. Both sites would appear to have been occupied for long periods, though whether occupation was continuous or intermittent is not known.

For foreign ceramics to appear at these inland sites there were, presumably, coastal settlements at which exchange was effected. As yet, however, no port site from this period such as Tuban in the Brantas delta of East Java has come to light in the Banten/Sunda region. There may have been settlements or ports near the mouth of the Citarum, east of Bekasi and the modern city of Jakarta, at the mouth of the Cisidane west of Jakarta, at the mouth of the Ciujung which flows into the Teluk Banten near Pontang, at Banten Lama and at Labuan on Teluk Lada on the eastern side of the Selat Sunda. Of these locations, three have yielded pre-Islamic archaeological remains.3

Historical sources attest Sunda's involvement in the pepper trade from at least the thirteenth century. The area was also known as a source of gold. It is possible that other commodities such as *damar* and rhinoceros horns were also available here.

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Banten Girang

The name Banten Girang derives from the Sundanese *girang* meaning upstream and is therefore equivalent to the Indonesian or Malay word *hulu* or *ulu*. It is some 13 km upstream from the old sixteenth century port of Banten or Bantam known as Banten Lama (Old Banten) (Mundardjito, Ambary & Djafar 1978, 1).

The site is situated on the southern boundary of the present day municipality of Serang some one to two hundred metres west of the main Serang/Pandegland/Labuan road. It covers approximately 10 hectares in extent being about 440 m overall from north to south and some 330 m from east to west. There are seven small houses within the confines of the settlement, all of which have been built within the past three or four years.

Due to annual cultivation for rice and vegetables and the unfortunate activities of local brickmakers, former cultural layers would appear to be greatly disturbed. Despite such disturbance, however, the site may yet yield much interesting archaeological evidence and provide a useful insight into the type of settlement which existed in island, submontane areas of West Java by the early second millennium A.D. It is. in essence, a fortified promontory (Mundardjito, Ambari & Djafar 1978,), protected on the east and north by the narrow defile created by the Kali Banten, on the west by a now eroded earthwork and on the south by an earthen rampart and ditch, immediately to the south of which is a further enclosure, presumably a later annex, also protected by a rampart and a ditch which sweeps round to terminate on the east bank of the river On the west bank of the river, but otherwise contiguous with the southern

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annex, is a further enclosed area protected by a double rampart and ditch. The site would therefore appear to comprise three separate sections; a nuclear area with two smaller annexes to the south and east. The defile of the Klai Banten provides strong protection to the nuclear area on the east and south but this natural defence has been strengthened by provision of a wide, deep ditch at two separate parts of the perimeter

A further interesting physical feature of the site is the existence of the so-called *Gua Banten*. This is not, as the name might suggest, a natural cave but a series of three rectangular chambers cut into the west bank of the Kali Banten at the foot of the bank. It is situated immediately to the north of a ford which affords access to the site from the eastern bank of the river. It is one of several similar rock cut chambers which are to be found on the west bank of the Kali Banten.

Historical Background

Local tradition ascribes a long history to Banten Girang. Prior to the establishment of the Sultanate in the early fifteenth century, it is said to have been the seat of local government⁸ and thus, presumably, the seat of a local chief. With the establishment of the Sultanate, Maulana Hasanuddin moved the seat of power to Banten Lama.

The recent discovery of no less than three broken quadrangular stone adzes, recovered as surface finds following seasonal cultivation just to the north and to the South of the centre of the site, suggests that Banten Girang has been inhabited for a considerable period, and certainly well before the advent of foreign trade ceramics in the area.

Ceramic Finds

Ambari reports a range of ceramic material dating from perhaps the tenth century up to the present (Ambari 1977, 10). More recent research in China and elsewhere suggests that some of the dating from the 1976 excavation should be reassessed. In particular, those sherds attributed to the Sung period (960-A.D.), and the apparent dearth of Yuan period (1280-1368 A.D.) material, would appear to relate more precisely to the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. There are also, in addition to the Vietnamese ceramics mentioned by Ambari, a number of sherds from the Thai Sawankhalok and Sukothai kilns.9

Among the more recent surface finds at Banten Girang are a number of sherds of some significance. Of these are examples of later Lung Ch'uan greenware, including a small two fish bowl and a slightly larger two fish bowl with a *swastika* impressed between the two fish:10

ch'ing pai vessels of thirteenth to fourteenth century provenance; white glazed wares, including the remains of large bowls with spurmarks on the interior and low, broad footrims and bases; and other fragments of heavy, utilitarian gray glazed bowls with a bare ring on the interior base indicative of a Yuan period provenance (Medley 1974, 88). 11 There are also sherds of large jars and basins of coarse stoneware.

Other Finds

In addition to the quadrangular stone adzes mentioned above, other artifacts recovered as surface finds include eight glass and two stone beads (one each of banded agate and carnelian), a Chinese copper coin (value one) of the She Tsung emperor (1068-1085) with the inscription Hsi Ning Yuan Pao datable to the years 1068-1077 and a small quantity of iron slag. A few fragmentary animal bones and teeth have also been revealed by landslips at the northern end of the site.

The coin of the Shen Tsung emperor may give us a *terminus* antequo for the commencement of the ceramic trade in Banten but it is not uncommon for such coins to remain in circulation for centuries. Consequently, very little weight can be given to a single coin. More accurate or scientific methods of dating are required. Although dating by ceramics is not entirely satisfactory, recent advances in ceramic knowledge do enable one to make reasonably accurate assessments of dating. 12

Muara Ciaruteun

Situated in broken country to the west of Bogor, the *kampung* or village of Muara Ciaruteun is set upon a steep-sided plateau between the rivers Ciaruteun and Cianten, both tributaries of the Cisadane, a Maura Ciaruteun first came to the attention of historians in the mid-19th century with the discovery of two inscriptions written in a form of Tamil Grantha script...

major river which rises on the slopes of the Gunung Gede and Gunung Pangrango and eventually enters the sea at Tanjung Pasir immediately west of the Teluk Jakarta. The plateau, some three to four hundred metres in length and about two hundred metres in width, is a veritable natural fortress. Access is limited. From the confluence of the Cianten and the Cisadane, a causeway leads up from the rivers' edge to the plateau. On each of the eastern and western sides, that is from the defile through which flows the Ciaruteun and the valley of the Cianten, two steep pathways lead up past easily defendable slopes to the plateau. At the southern end of the plateau, access from the adjoining high land is limited to a narrow neck of land now barely more than a metre wide in parts between two gullies which slope away to the Ciaruteun and the Cianten. There is thus a clearly marked natural boundary at the southern end of the site. Here and there, just below the plateau are the vestiges of a thick growth of bamboo which at one time may have provided an impenetrable barrier around the site, open only at the points which gave access to the settlement. 13

Archaeological evidence attests that the Muara Ciaruteun plateau has been inhabited from about the fifth century A.D. The site first came to the attention of historians in the mid nineteenth century with the discovery of two inscriptions written in a form of Tamil Grantha script eulogising a ruler named Purnavarman and his royal elephant.14 In 1971, Tesuh Asmar of the Museum Nasional, Jakarta carried out a survey of the area and undertook a limited excavation in the vicinity of the Kebon Kopi inscription. Asmar reported the existence of several megaliths and a stone incised with a curvilinear decoration not mentioned by Vogel. He also excavated sherds of earthenware and porcelain and fragments of coral and obsidian. The porcelain sherds, of Chinese origin, were estimated to date from the eleventh to sixteenth centuries. There were also sherds of Thai Sawankhalok vessels (Asmar 1971, 421).

Recent Ceramic Finds

My own observations would tend to confirm Teguh Asmar's assessment of the ceramic materials to be found at this site although I have seen only one sherd which could, perhaps, be dated as early as the eleventh century. The majority of sherds visible as surface finds in the fields of Muara Ciaruteun, like those of Banten Girang, appear to date from the late thirteenth or fourteenth centuries or later.

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also are sherds of late Lung Ch'uan greenware, principally bowls and large ceramic platters with moulded underglaze designs and a bare, unglazed ring on the base, a sherd from a potiche or covered jar with ribbed sides, the mouthrim of a small jar often seen with an under glaze design of a dragon around the belly or, more rarely, a floral design and other relatively sturdy fragments. There are also the remains of ch'ing pai vessels, including the spout of a small, delicate ewer, a potiche with a ribbed cover and a bowl with a floral design impressed under the glaze together with fragments of white and pale gray bowls fired on the rim, probably from kilns in Fukien. Here too are sherds of the same heavy, utilitarian gray glazed bowls with a bare ring on the interior which I first saw among the later material at Kota Cina and more recently at Banten Girang.

In addition to these remains are several other fragments of interest including a single fragment of a large, painted vessel of T'zu chou type displaying part of a black design over a white glaze, a sherd of pinkish buff earthenware with a bright green copper glaze and the neck of a small temmoku glaze jar. There are also a few sherds of green and brown glazed stonewares from kilns in Fukien and Kuantung and numerous fragments of large jars

and basins. One of the jar fragments has part of a moulded dragon on it and another displays an impressed "house mark" which is only partially legible. There are also fragments of blue-green glaze Sawankhalok basins and a body sherd of a Vietnamese blue and white vase datable to the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries.

Earlier Ceramics in Java and Sumatra

Earlier ceramics imported into West Java appear to be confined mainly to the eastern part of the province, to the area around Karawang. 16 In central Java, however, Chinese ceramics datable to the ninth or tenth centuries have been found in quantity at sites such as Prambanan and Borobudur and in East Java in Kediri (Adhyatman 1983). Similar material has been recovered at Bukit Seguntang and Talang Kikim near Palembang in South Sumatra and tenth to fourteenth century material in the Jambi area. 17

Conclusions

The appearance of sizable quantities of imported ceramics in the Banten and western part of Sunda from the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is surely of some

significance. If, as Chau Ju-kua indicates, West Java was in a state of turmoil in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries and rarely visited by foreign shipping, the recoveries at Banten Girang and Muara Ciaruteun suggest that both political stability and economic opportunity had improved, enabling foreign merchants to participate actively in trading. Such ceramics were probably shipped directly in Chinese bottoms.

Having aquired a taste for highfired foreign ceramics, both Banten and Sunda remained a vigorous market for imported stoneware and porcelain right up to modern times. Sites such as Banten Lama and Pasar Ikan (Old Batavia) are littered with sherds from the Ming and Ch'ing periods. This continuina taste is reflected in the development of a flourishing ceramic industry, based in Bandung, which produces modern reproductions of many of the earlier ceramic forms imported into Indonesia in past centuries.

Footnotes

1. As long ago as 1925, J. Ph. Vogel remarked "it is a remarkable fact — often commented upon — that, whereas the glorious monuments of Indo-Javanese architecture are found in Central Java, the earliest documents testifying of Indian influence belong to the Western part of the Island" (Vogel 1925, 15).

2. On the expansion of Chinese maritime interests, see, for example Jung-pang Lo (Lo 1955) and more recently Professor Wolters' comments upon indexes of change in the economic and political history of maritime Southeast Asia (Wolters 1982, 23).

3. Finds of rouletted earthenware, similar to early first millennium rouletted earthenware from Arikamedu on the southeast coast of India, in the Bekasi/Muara Citarum area (Walker and Santoso 1977) and the existence of the "Tugu" inscription near Bekasi (Vogel 1925) indicate early external contacts with this part of the Java coast. A nandi image was found at Karangantu, Banten Lama in 1906, "(Krom 1914) and a yoni base from the bank of the Labuan river at Labuan (Krom 1914). Ambari reports finding a few sherds of Sung/Yuan provenance at Banten Lama (Ambari 1977, 10).

Chau Ju-kua, writing in the year 1225, notes that: "In the kingdom of Sin-t'o (Sunda) there is a harbour for anchorage with a depth of sixty feet. Wherever one travels, by water or by land one meets with the peoples' dwellings all along

the shore." He goes on, ".... there is no regular government in this country, the people are given to brigandage, on which account foreign traders rarely go there." (Hirth and Rockhill, 1911, 70).

This comment may refer to any of the above locations, though it should be noted that parts of the Teluk Jakarta have a depth of about 20 fathoms. Whatever archaeological evidence that may remain for such an anchorage is presumably buried under the mud of coastal accretion and successive annual inundations. It would be interesting to be able to identify the coastline of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

4. Pepper (Piper nigrum L.) from Java was first mentioned by Chau Ch'u-fei in 1178 (Wheatley 1959, 100). Chau Ju-kua notes that "The pepper on the hills (of this country) (Sint'o) is small grained but heavy and superior to that of Ta-pan (Eastern Java). The country produces pumpkins, sugar cane, bottle grouds, beans and egg-plants" (Hirth and Rockhill 1911, 70).

The only remaining vestiges of the onceflourishing pepper trade which I have seen in West Java appear to be a few vines growing in the vicinity of Ciomas on the slopes of Gunung Karang, Kabupaten Serang. Pepper production in Serang in 1982-83 was only 2400 kg.

- 5. Faria y Souza, who visited Sunda in the early sixteenth century found gold at Merak on the Selat Sunda [quoted by Gerini (Gerini 1909, 452n)]. Van Bemmelen notes that there are numerous small sources of alluvial gold in the Sunda lands. There is, however, only one source which is exploitable on a modern, commercial basis (Van Bemmelen 1970, 133-135).
- 6. Damar, a Malay word applicable to a wide range of vegetable resins (Wheatley 1959, 92), some of which are still collected and marketed in Panten. The Javanese rhinoceros (Rhinoceros sondaicus) is now restricted to the nature reserve at Ujong Kulon in West Java but formerly must have roamed over a much more extended area, generally in the higher (mount-

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ain) elevations (Bastin 1973, 63, n324).

7. There are three rock cut chambers on the west bank at Kerundang about 2 km above Banten Girang and another known as Gua Tembaga further upstream.

8. The Encyclopaedie van Nederlands-Indie, Volume I, (1917), p. 167, gives the following information concerning Banten Girang:

"A village at a short distance, about 1,5 km, northeast of Serang* the present day capital of the Residency of Banten, where, it is said the capital of the country was formerly until that of Mnulana Hasanuddin was removed and the seat of the government moved to Bantam, for which reason it was named Banten Ilir (lower Banten) in contrast to Banten Girang (upper Banten).

*actually southeast.

9. I have not seen the ceramic material excavated in 1976 which is thought to include one sherd of the early to mid-tenth century. My remarks are based on observations of surface finds following cultivation and landslides along the bank of the Kali Banten which indicate a marked increase of imported ceramics at this time.

10. This particular variety of Lung Ch'uan greenware bowl appears to be rather rare. For the one published example of a similar, but smaller bowl dated to the thirteenth to four-teenth centuries, see: Southeast Asian Ceramic Society, Chinese Celadons and other Related Wares in Southeast Asia. Singapore: Arts Orientalis (1979), plate 107.

11. This heavy, grey glazed variety of utilitarian bowl is common among the later ceramics at Kota Cina in northeast Sumatra.

12. Discoveries such as the Sinan wreck which can be dated accurately to the period 1320 to 1330 (National Museum of Korea 1977) and work carried out in China have given ceramicists a much clearer picture of the development of Chinese ceramics during the T'ang, Sung and Yuan periods. On the latter, see Hughes-Stanton and Kerr, Kiln Sites of

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13. Live bamboo hedges, often consisting of thickly planted thorny bamboo, (aur duri) were commonly used to protect settlements in Sumatra. Remains of such defenses which, before the advent of firearms, were virtually impenetrable can still be seen around old villages in the Tanah Karo area of northeastern Sumatra, Bengkulu and perhaps elsewhere.

14. The Ciaruteun inscription, which lay originally in the bed of the river, has now been raised up to the plateau and housed in a specially constructed pavillion at Kampung Muara Ciarutuen. It is opportune here to clear up what appears to have been a longstanding art historical puzzle, namely that relating to the "spiders" carved into the stone below the footprints of Purnavarman (Vogel 1925, 22/24). The footprints are likened to those of Visnu. It seems clear to me that the spiderlike representations in front of the king's footprints and which are "linked to them by a thread" are intended as symbolic representations of Sri Laksmi the consort of Visnu who is often represented by a lotus (Indonesia: teratai). The flowers which each have ten petals, spring from beneath the feet of the god.

15. This is a base sherd of an olive-green glaze stoneware bowl with incised lotus leaf decoration on the exterior, a broad, low foot rim on which are traces of a kiln support and which has elongated \$purmarks on the interior base. I know of no direct comparison. It is similar in some respects to tenth or eleventh century sherds from Palembang but also has characteristics which suggest that it may date to the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries.

16. Professor Wolters has suggested that the toponym Ko-ying may have been located in the Karawang area (Wolters 1979, 29).

17. In 1979 I suggested that green glaze spurmarked sherds discovered at Bukit Seguntang near Palembang belonged to the T'ang period. This has now been confirmed (Wolters 1982, 23n14).

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The Mor Yao.... from page 27

black and sweet red glutinuous rice with banana was served to the Mor Yao and musicians, who danced and ate at the same time. As the music continued, the Mor Yao returned to the pa-rum to take up their swords and moved three times around the altar - dancing in slow style as before - to chase away uninvited evil spirits. This was repeated in turn with the miniature wooden horses, lances, halberds and guns; and then with the lit "tien lim", the "tien aad", and the umbrellas decorated with gold and silver paper

The senior Mor Yao sang, clapped her hands, jumped or danced according to whatever spirit happened to possess her.

In the next stage, small wooden fish and shrimps were "caught" using the "kradong" and "hae" (instruments used for fishing) and scattered around the altar in offering to the spirits.

The Mor Yao then went out of the pa-rum to the four large water jars beside which lay a small boat fashioned from a banana tree which contained an oar, black and red glutinous rice, and a small figure representing an evil spirit. The senior Mor Yao moved toward the boat with a knife and stabbed the intruding figure and boat before throwing them away from the area of the ceremony.

After this, everybody went to dance around the water jars in jubi-

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lation, splashing the purifying and cleansing water over each other and catching more fish and shrimps to offer to the spirits.

After the water had been finished and all the fish and shrimps had been offered, the Mor Yao returned to dance one last round at the altar, then came back to sit in front of their offerings inside the pa-rum, and, to the accompaniment of music, sang farewell to the spirits until the last notes of the kan died away. The ceremony was over

After the ceremony, the senior Mor Yao explained to the writer that she had not been conscious of being possessed by the spirits, but only of the sound of the kan and the rhythm of the krajabpii, without which it would not have been possible to perform the ceremony. There was a close interrelationship between the music, singing and movements of the Mor Yao in that the sound of the kan and krajabpii inspired and governed the movements of her body, while at the same time it might have been influenced by her singing, which might be loud or soft, fast or slow.

Throughout the ceremony, it was the intensity and movement of the music of the kan that was vital to each stage — the start of the ceremony, the paying of respects to the spirits, their invitation to the ceremony, the making of the holy water, the drinking of the whisky, the dancing, the chasing away of the evil spirits, the splashing of water, etc. The krajabpii followed the kan and set the rhythm and pace of the ceremony. Melody was not important and was essentially repetitive with minor variations.

In this way, the music of the kan and krajabpii is fundamental to the Mor Yao Ceremony to Honor the Benevolent Spirits — a ceremony which is important and essential to central beliefs and values of the people of Kudsim Kummai Village in the province of Kalasin.