

## HISTORICAL AND AESTHETICAL VALUE OF MANDE AT KERATON KASEPUHAN IN CIREBON

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### ABSTRACT

*Mande at the Keraton Kasepuhan in Cirebon is one aspect that is full of meaning in the cultural and historical context of West Java. This article explores the importance of Mande in Cirebon's Keraton Kasepuhan as a cultural heritage building that needs to be preserved, advancing architectural knowledge and making Mande buildings increasingly popular in the world. Mande depicts diverse cultural influences in its architecture, mixing Hindu and Chinese elements that give the structure a unique color. The name "Siti Inggil" which refers to high ground indicates Mande's higher geographical position in the palace complex. Mande depicts diverse cultural influences in its architecture, mixing Hindu and Chinese elements that give the structure a unique color. The name "Siti Inggil" which refers to high ground indicates Mande's higher geographical position in the palace complex. Mande is not only a physical building, but also plays an important role in the context of palace culture and ceremonies. It is a place where various cultural ceremonies take place, adding to the meaning and importance of Mande in preserving historical traditions. Mande is a true symbol of how unique Javanese culture has developed and interacted with other cultural influences. The cultural richness contained in Mande is living proof of Cirebon's long history and cultural heritage that is worth preserving. Overall, Mande is a valuable treasure that opens a window for us to understand the rich culture and history that make Cirebon a special place in Indonesia.*

**Keywords:** Cultural, historical, mande, cirebon

### 1. PREFACE

Keraton Kasepuhan, nestled in the heart of Cirebon, West Java, stands as a testament to Indonesia's rich cultural legacy. Dating back to the year 1447, this magnificent palace, initially named Majapahit Palace, is a living embodiment of the confluence of Javanese, Sundanese, and Islamic influences. Its architectural marvels and cultural significance have made it a jewel in Indonesia's historical crown.

At the heart of Keraton Kasepuhan lies Siti Inggil, an elevated complex comprising five awe-inspiring Mande buildings. These structures, crafted meticulously from teak wood, are not just architectural wonders but also bearers of profound cultural heritage. Adorned with intricate traditional ornaments, they stand tall without walls, whispering tales of the past to those who visit. These Mandes serve multiple functions, acting as the official residence of the palace government, a sacred space for royal ceremonies, and a hub for cultural and religious activities.

Within the hallowed halls of Keraton Kasepuhan, the echoes of West Java's traditional arts come alive. The palace has been a cradle for shadow puppetry, where intricately designed "Wayang Kulit" performances captivate audiences, unraveling age-old stories of heroes and legends. The resonating melodies of gamelan, the traditional Indonesian ensemble music, fill the air, accompanied by graceful dance forms that have been passed down through generations.

In 2009, UNESCO recognized the cultural significance of Keraton Kasepuhan, along with two other palaces in Cirebon, by bestowing upon them the prestigious title of World Cultural Heritage. This accolade underscored the palace's pivotal role in preserving the rich tapestry of culture and history that is intrinsic to West Java. As a World Cultural Heritage site, Keraton Kasepuhan stands as a beacon, guiding visitors from around the globe into the depths of West Java's heritage.

For tourists and scholars alike, Keraton Kasepuhan is not just a historical monument; it is a living chronicle of Indonesia's past, present, and future. Its corridors echo with the footsteps of generations, its walls reverberate with ancient wisdom, and its courtyards breathe life into the traditions that have shaped the identity of West Java. Each visit to Keraton Kasepuhan is a pilgrimage into the heart of Indonesia's cultural soul, where history, art, and spirituality converge, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts and minds of all who have the privilege to experience its magnificence.

Keraton Kasepuhan historical monument that towers majestically in the middle of Cirebon city, is a window into a rich cultural and historic past. Located in West Java, Indonesia, this palace is not just a beautiful and majestic building; it is an important symbol of Cirebon's unique Javanese identity and cultural heritage.

As one of the oldest palaces in this region, Keraton Kasepuhan keeps the secrets of the long history that shaped the Cirebon region and documents the cultural and political journey that has lasted for centuries. Through stunning architecture, beautiful traditional art, and the stories hidden within, this palace invites us to dig deeper into the history, culture, and traditions of the unique Javanese people of Cirebon.

This article will take us on a journey through time, exploring all the aspects that make Keraton Kasepuhan a valuable relic. From the beauty of the architecture to the role of the palace in people's lives, let's examine the stories contained behind these stone walls, which will help us better understand the rich culture of West Java that has been passed down from generation to generation.

Siti Inggil is located north of Cirebon's Keraton Kasepuhan and is surrounded by the red brick walls that are the hallmark of this complex. The name "Siti Inggil" means "lemah dhuwur" or high ground, according to its location on higher ground compared to the other complexes. This building was founded in 1529 during the reign of Sheikh Syarif Hidayatullah, also known as Sunan Gunung Jati.

Siti Inggil has unique architecture and mixes various cultural elements, such as the temple for a while from Hindu culture and pairs of ceramic plates from Chinese culture. The building is made of a pile of red bricks that are rubbed against each other. Inside Siti Inggil there are five buildings without walls and shingle roofs, arranged from west to east: (a) Mande Malang Semirang or Mande Jajar; (b) Mande Pengiring; (c) Mande Pendawa Lima; (d) Mande Semar Tinandu; (e) Mande Karesmen.

Each of these buildings has a certain role and meaning in the cultural and ceremonial context of the Keraton Kasepuhan, Cirebon. With architecture that reflects diverse cultural influences, Siti Inggil is an important part of this palace complex and provides insight into the cultural diversity that exists in the Cirebon region.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

In the realm of scholarly inquiry, the meticulous process of qualitative research unfolds as a multifaceted journey, one that is both art and science. In the context of the Keraton Kasepuhan, this research embarked on a methodological odyssey rooted in the depths of qualitative exploration. Delving into the annals of academic literature, researchers meticulously combed through journals and scholarly works, painstakingly extracting morsels of knowledge like precious gems waiting to be polished. These endeavors were not mere scholarly rituals; they were gateways into understanding the intricate tapestry of history, culture, and architecture woven within the walls of the Keraton Kasepuhan.

However, the pursuit of knowledge did not cease with the turning of pages. Beyond the confines of written texts, the researchers embarked on a tangible expedition, venturing into the heart of Cirebon to conduct firsthand observations. Armed with keen eyes and inquisitive minds, they meticulously surveyed the architectural marvels of the Keraton Kasepuhan. This involved a rigorous analysis stage, a pivotal juncture where the researchers identified and dissected the nuanced problems that lay before them. These challenges were not obstacles but rather stepping stones, guiding the researchers toward a profound comprehension of the subject matter.

As the research unfolded, it transitioned into the conclusion stage, a pivotal moment where the disparate pieces of the puzzle began to coalesce into a comprehensive picture. It was in this stage that the observations and data collected revealed themselves as more than just facts and figures. They were gateways into understanding the subtle intricacies of the Mande order at the Keraton Kasepuhan. Each difference noted, every similarity discerned, became a thread in the rich tapestry of this cultural phenomenon.

The conclusions drawn from this research were not mere academic exercises; they were profound insights into the core of the Mande-mande, shedding light on their unique attributes and historical significance. These findings, meticulously gleaned from both literature and direct observation, serve as a beacon for future scholars and enthusiasts, guiding them toward a deeper understanding of the cultural heritage encapsulated within the hallowed halls of the Keraton Kasepuhan.

In essence, this research was not just a scholarly endeavor; it was a tribute to the rich heritage of Indonesia, a testament to the enduring spirit of inquiry, and a celebration of the profound beauty found in the meticulous unraveling of historical mysteries. Through the lens of qualitative research, the Keraton Kasepuhan emerged not just as a physical structure but as a living chronicle, a repository of stories waiting to be discovered and shared a timeless testament to the vibrant cultural tapestry of Indonesia.

## **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

On the left side of the Keraton Kasepuhan there is a sturdy wall made of brick. This place is called Siti Inggil. This place is an elevated land which plays an important role in the layout and design of the Keraton Kasepuhan building. Siti Inggil has 2 gates and uses motifs in the style of Majapahit era architects. Siti Inggil is the core of the main architectural elements of the Keraton Kasepuhan. Siti Inggil's main function is as a gathering place for the royal family and their troops. This place is also used as a place for ceremonies, culture and a place for religious activities. The cultural meaning and rituals of using Siti Inggil are closely related to Javanese and Cirebon cultural traditions, namely the religious cultural ceremonies that are carried out.

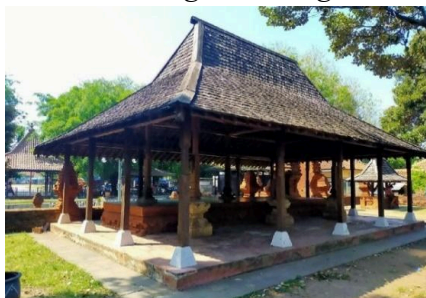
In the northern part of the Keraton Kasepuhan there is a building called Gapura Adi which has dimensions of 3.70 x 130 x 5 m and to the south it is called Gapura Benteng with dimensions of 4.50 x 9 m. At the gate of the fort there is a Candra Sakala with the words Kuta Beta Tinata Benteng which means 1451. In the Siti Inggil complex there are 5 buildings without walls, each of which has its own function, these buildings are called Mande. Mande is considered a symbol of Cirebon's rich cultural heritage which embodies the uniqueness of art and culture in the Cirebon region. The material used in this building is teak because this material is easy to obtain. This teak wood material is used as the core of the main structural material in the form of columns in each building (Mande). Roof tiles made from clay are shaped and fired. Meanwhile, the floor uses ceramic material because ceramic is durable.

### **Mande Malang Semirang**

The Mande Malang Semirang place was used as a residence for the king known as "sultan" and his family. This building has 6 column supports in the middle, where these supports depict the attributes of God. This column support has a characteristic ornamental motif in the form of flower carvings and water spinach motifs originating from the decoration of the West Java region Mande Malang Semirang.

### **Figure 1**

*Mande Malang Samirang*



### **Mande Pengiring**

The second Mande is the Pengiring Mande. This building was used as a place for the king's bodyguard/"sultan" and as a place for the king's soldiers and judges. This building has a stacked roof made of shingle material. It has 8 supporting columns in the middle of the building. To the south of Mande there are 2 stones called Lingga and Yoni, where the stones symbolize Adam and Eve and are a collection of historical objects.

### **Mande Pandawa Lima**

In the Mande Pandawa Lima Building, there are 5 supporting columns and each supporting column symbolizes a pillar of the Islamic religion. This place was inhabited by the king's bodyguards. The material used at the base of the building is brick. There are ornaments resembling wadanan motifs originating from China and roofs shaped like joglo roofs made from shingle material.

**Figure 2**  
*Mande Pengiring*



**Figure 3**  
*Mande Pandawa Lima*



### **Mande Semar Tinandu**

The Mande Semar Tinandu building has 2 supporting columns in the building. This supporting column symbolizes 2 beliefs in Islamic teachings. This place was inhabited by the royal government and the king's advisors. The material used at the base of the building is red brick and has a joglo roof made of shingle material.

### **Mande Karesmen**

The Mande Karesmen building is used for traditional musical instruments. This building is used for performances of the gamelan sekaten musical instrument, where performances of this musical instrument are played during Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha to this day. The material used at the base of the building is made of red brick and has ornaments resembling a wadasan motif. This building has 8 supporting columns and a foundation called an umpak foundation.

**Figure 4**  
*Mande Semar Tinandu*



**Figure 5**  
*Mande Karesmen*



#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Inside Siti Inggil there is a building called Mande. This building is a historical monument to the heritage and cultural identity of the city of Cirebon. Mande is not just a building but has the rich culture of West Java and hidden stories in it. From the results of the author's research, it is hoped that future researchers can develop scientific works regarding the Kasepuhan Palace and all the cultural elements contained therein in more detail so that readers of scientific works can develop and be original from more perfect research results.

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