

The History of Architecture, Culture, and Social Dynamics of Lasem Chinatown in the 20th Century

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Lasem Chinatown,
Architecture, Cultural
Acculturation, Social
Dynamics, 20th Century.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to reconstruct the historical development of Kampung Pecinan Lasem, one of the oldest Chinese settlements in Indonesia, throughout the twentieth century. Although Lasem has long been recognized as an important historical settlement, scholarly discussions have largely focused on Chinatowns in larger urban centers, leaving smaller historical communities such as Lasem relatively underexplored. This research therefore examines the transformation of Kampung Pecinan Lasem through three interconnected dimensions: architectural development, Chinese–Javanese cultural acculturation, and socio-economic dynamics. The study employs the historical method, which includes heuristics through field observations, interviews, and document studies, followed by source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The findings indicate that the development of Kampung Pecinan Lasem was strongly influenced by major political transitions in Indonesia, from the colonial period and Japanese occupation to the independence revolution and the New Order era. These changes shaped the transformation of architectural forms from traditional Chinese–Javanese structures into hybrid forms incorporating European and modern elements while maintaining symbolic cultural features. Cultural acculturation also occurred in everyday practices such as batik production, religious rituals, language use, and culinary traditions, resulting in the emergence of a distinctive local identity known as “Cina Lasem.” In addition, the settlement played an important socio-economic role as a center of trade and batik production that supported local economic networks involving both Chinese entrepreneurs and Javanese workers. These findings demonstrate that Kampung Pecinan Lasem represents a historically resilient cultural landscape where architectural hybridity, cultural interaction, and economic cooperation enabled the community to adapt to changing political and social conditions throughout the twentieth century.

DOI: [10.30595/rissej.v3i2.410](https://doi.org/10.30595/rissej.v3i2.410)

1. Introduction

Lasem is a coastal town located in Rembang Regency, Central Java, approximately 12 kilometers from the city of Rembang. Covering an area of 4,504 hectares, the settlement developed along the Great Post Road constructed during the administration of Daendels between 1808 and 1811. Historically, Lasem has functioned as an important meeting point of diverse cultural influences, including Chinese, Javanese, Dutch, and Majapahit traditions. Since at least the fifteenth century, the town has served as a multicultural center in which interactions among different ethnic communities shaped local social life. This long history of intercultural contact has contributed to the strong local discourse of “tolerance” frequently associated with the community of Lasem.

Historical references to Lasem appear in several classical sources, including the Nagarakertagama manuscript written in 1365, as well as Old Javanese texts such as Badrasanti (1479) and Pararaton (1600). In total, the name Lasem is mentioned in four classical Javanese literary works and in Chinese chronicles dating from 1304 to 1617. Lasem is also recorded in official Dutch colonial documents from the eighteenth century. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Lasem, together with the neighboring town of Juwana, became one of the most important centers of the opium trade on the island of Java (Sutrisno, 2018).

Lasem covers approximately 1,226 hectares and has a population of 24,065 people, of whom around 11 percent are of Chinese descent (Santoso, 2020). The town experiences a modest population inflow of about 0.4 percent, while annual out migration reaches approximately 0.8 percent. Only about 32.8 percent

of the land area is occupied by buildings, resulting in a population density of roughly 20 persons per hectare. Many houses are currently inhabited only by elderly residents or left vacant because younger generations migrate to larger cities for education and employment opportunities. Within the town, the Chinatown area represents the most densely populated settlement and is predominantly inhabited by residents of Chinese descent (Yubelta, 2021).

Chinatown settlements in Southeast Asia are commonly characterized by regular street patterns and continuous rows of shophouses that function simultaneously as residential and commercial spaces. These areas serve not only as places of residence but also as cultural environments in which Chinese communities maintain distinctive social practices and lifestyles within broader urban settings (Setiawan, 2017).

Lasem is often referred to as "Little China" because it preserves one of the oldest and most authentic Chinese settlements in Indonesia. Kampung Pecinan Lasem therefore functions as a "living museum" that documents the long historical process of interaction and acculturation between Chinese and Javanese communities (Lombard, 1996). The settlement contains a rich architectural heritage while simultaneously reflecting the social, economic, and political dynamics experienced by Chinese communities in the Indonesian archipelago, particularly during the twentieth century.

During the Japanese occupation from 1942 to 1945, Kampung Pecinan Lasem encountered new political and economic pressures. Many Chinese merchants were compelled to support Japanese military supply networks while the use of Chinese language and religious practices was restricted. Coppel (2008) notes that such policies created insecurity among Chinese residents across Indonesia, forcing many individuals to leave their homes to avoid violence. Nevertheless, the settlement remained an important community center. Religious institutions such as Hok Tek Bio Temple continued to provide social cohesion and spiritual support for residents.

Following Indonesia's independence in 1945, the Chinese community in Lasem experienced a period of political uncertainty. While several community members supported nationalist movements during the independence struggle, Chinese communities also faced suspicion and anti Chinese political sentiment in various regions.

The New Order government under President Soeharto between 1966 and 1998 represented one of the most challenging periods for Chinese communities in Indonesia. Assimilation policies implemented by the government restricted the public expression of Chinese cultural identity (Chessiagi et al., 2018). Cultural performances such as Barongsai, Taopekong worship, and Lunar New Year celebrations were prohibited from being displayed openly in public spaces (Jati, 2013). A report published by Human Rights Watch in 1998 also described the cultural isolation experienced by many Chinese communities during this period, as younger generations were often encouraged to abandon traditional practices in order to avoid discrimination. Despite these pressures, economic networks within the community allowed many family businesses to survive through informal trade systems (Arisandi, 2024).

The twentieth century was a period of instability in Indonesian history, marked by the transition from Dutch colonial rule to Japanese occupation, followed by the independence revolution and the New Order era. Each phase imposed distinct pressures on Chinese communities, including those in Lasem. Forced assimilation policies during the New Order period, for instance, temporarily isolated Chinese culture but did not completely erase Chinese identity (Heidhues, 2003). Amid these challenges, Kampung Pecinan Lasem demonstrated remarkable resilience, as its architecture, traditions, and social structures continued to evolve and adapt.

The Chinese community has demonstrated the ability to maintain its presence in a region without losing its cultural characteristics (Rudiansyah, 2021). To this day, Kampung Pecinan Lasem remains inhabited by Chinese residents and continues to sustain economic, religious, social, and cultural life. Contemporary businesses such as batik production, lodging and hospitality services, and retail shops have shown rapid economic growth in the area. This development indicates that the Chinatown district holds significant economic potential and value. Alongside these economic activities, the physical presence of Chinatown and its temples remains clearly visible. The area is well known for its architectural diversity, which reflects a fusion of Chinese, Dutch, and Javanese influences (Rudiansyah, 2021). In addition, regular religious activities and cultural attractions continue to take place, drawing attention from local residents and visitors from outside the city. These characteristics contribute to the uniqueness and attractiveness of Kampung Pecinan Lasem as a destination.

Despite its high historical significance, focused scholarly studies on Lasem remain relatively limited when compared with Chinatown settlements in larger cities such as Jakarta or Semarang (Setiawan, 2017). Existing research has generally emphasized architectural heritage or cultural tourism, while fewer studies have examined the interconnected historical processes that shaped the development of the settlement across architectural, cultural, and socio-economic dimensions. As a result, the historical transformation of

Kampung Pecinan Lasem as an integrated cultural landscape during the twentieth century has not been fully explored. Understanding this transformation is important because the settlement represents one of the few surviving Chinatown environments in Indonesia where traditional architecture, community life, and economic activity continue to coexist.

To address this gap, the present study reconstructs the historical development of Kampung Pecinan Lasem during the twentieth century by examining three interrelated aspects: (1) architectural development, (2) processes of Chinese–Javanese cultural acculturation, and (3) socio-economic dynamics of the community. Through historical analysis based on field observations, interviews, and documentary sources, this research seeks to contribute to Indonesian historiography by providing a more comprehensive understanding of how local Chinatown settlements adapted to political change, cultural interaction, and economic transformation over time.

2. Method

This study employs the historical research method, which consists of four main stages: heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The heuristic stage involved collecting primary and secondary historical sources related to the development of Kampung Pecinan Lasem. Primary data were obtained through field observations and oral history interviews with local residents and community leaders who possess knowledge of the history and cultural practices of the Chinatown area. Field observations were conducted to document architectural characteristics, settlement patterns, and cultural activities that continue to be practiced in the area.

Secondary data were collected through library research by examining books, academic journal articles, archival documents, and previous studies related to the history of Lasem and Chinese communities in Indonesia. One example of the literature consulted is the book *Akulturasi Lintas Zaman di Lasem: Perspektif Sejarah dan Budaya*, which provides historical insight into the cultural interaction between Chinese and Javanese communities.

After the data were collected, the next stage involved source criticism in order to evaluate the authenticity, credibility, and reliability of the historical materials. External criticism was applied to verify the originality and provenance of historical documents, while internal criticism was conducted to assess the consistency and credibility of the information contained within the sources.

The interpretation stage involved analyzing the collected evidence to identify patterns of architectural transformation, cultural acculturation, and socio-economic change in Kampung Pecinan Lasem throughout the twentieth century. The final stage, historiography, involved reconstructing these historical developments into a coherent narrative based on the verified historical evidence.

Nevertheless, this research has certain limitations. Oral historical sources depend on the recollections of informants, which may be influenced by personal memory or subjective interpretation. In addition, the availability of archival materials related specifically to the local history of Lasem remains limited. To reduce these limitations, the study applies source triangulation by comparing interview results, field observations, and documentary evidence.

3. Results and Discussion

a. Architectural Development in the 20th Century

The Lasem Chinatown area represents an ancient settlement that contains approximately 240 designated cultural heritage buildings, many of which are estimated to be more than 200 years old. Chinese settlements in Lasem have existed since the Majapahit period between 1294 and 1527 (Sudarwani, 2022). The architectural landscape of Kampung Pecinan Lasem therefore reflects a long historical process in which Chinese migrant traditions interacted with local architectural practices. The built environment illustrates a synthesis of Southern Chinese architectural traditions, which correspond to the regions of origin of many Chinese residents in Lasem, with Javanese coastal architectural forms and later Dutch colonial influences (Handinoto, 2015).

This hybrid architectural form represents more than a stylistic combination. It reflects a historical process of cultural negotiation in which immigrant Chinese communities adapted their architectural traditions to local social and environmental contexts while maintaining symbolic markers of ethnic identity. Chinese architectural influence is visible in distinctive elements such as curved roof ridges with pointed ends resembling swallow tails, as well as Chinese character carvings located beneath the roof ridge. These elements function not only as decorative features but also as cultural symbols that express the identity and heritage of the Chinese community.

At the same time, the integration of Javanese vernacular architecture can be observed in the spatial organization of residential compounds. Many houses adopt symmetrical layouts and incorporate

architectural features such as the pendopo, characterized by a wide open terrace at the front of the building. Interior decorative elements, including gamelan instruments displayed within the house, further indicate the willingness of residents to integrate with local cultural traditions and avoid social separation from the surrounding community.

One distinctive architectural feature of houses in the Lasem Chinatown area is the presence of exceptionally high perimeter walls. According to local Chinese residents, these walls were historically associated with competition within the batik industry. The walls functioned as protective boundaries that prevented competitors from observing batik production processes inside residential compounds. During the peak period of the Lasem batik industry, which lasted for nearly a century, this spatial separation also reflected the economic structure of production. A Dutch report from the 1930s documented labor violations in several batik factories in Lasem and Rembang, noting that many batik workers worked long hours in enclosed spaces isolated from the outside environment.

During the twentieth century, the architectural landscape of Kampung Pecinan Lasem gradually transformed in response to modernization, urban development, and colonial influence. In the early decades of the century, many houses began to incorporate European architectural elements, resulting in eclectic building styles that combined classical Chinese forms with modern design features such as large glass windows and sliding doors. These modifications reflected changing lifestyle patterns as well as the influence of colonial urban architecture.

Between the 1920s and the 1940s, particularly during the late colonial period and the years surrounding Indonesian independence, many commercial buildings were renovated using concrete and steel structures that replaced traditional timber construction. These materials improved resistance to fire and environmental conditions while allowing the construction of larger commercial spaces. Nevertheless, cultural architectural elements were generally preserved, including simplified roof ridges and symbolic ornaments. In some buildings, Art Deco influences also appeared in the form of geometric lines and restrained decorative motifs, reflecting broader architectural trends that spread across Indonesia during the early twentieth century (Handinoto, 2010).

Architectural ornamentation in Lasem Chinatown also carries symbolic meaning derived from Chinese cultural traditions. For example, some residential gates contain lotus flower carvings, which symbolize purity, resilience, sincerity, and spiritual awareness (Rahmadani, 2023). Other decorative motifs include winding patterns originating from the Chou Dynasty between 1122 and 256 BC, which symbolize rainfall and agricultural prosperity, as well as beetle shaped motifs known as shou that represent longevity (Pratiwo, 2010). These ornaments were often believed to provide protection against negative spiritual influences and misfortune.

Despite its historical significance, many heritage buildings in Kampung Pecinan Lasem currently face preservation challenges. A considerable number of houses have experienced physical deterioration due to aging structures and limited maintenance. In some cases, historic buildings are no longer inhabited because younger generations have migrated to larger cities for education and employment opportunities. As a result, many remaining residents are elderly individuals, while some houses have been converted into storage facilities, vehicle garages, or swallow bird houses. There are also reports indicating that certain architectural components have been removed and sold as antique materials (Purwanto, 2018).

These developments illustrate that the architectural landscape of Kampung Pecinan Lasem is not static but continues to evolve in response to social, economic, and demographic change. The transformation of residential compounds, commercial buildings, and architectural ornamentation reflects the community's ongoing efforts to adapt to modernization while maintaining elements of cultural heritage.

b. Chinese-Javanese Cultural Acculturation in Lasem

Indonesian history has been significantly shaped by the presence of Chinese communities that have interacted with local societies across political, economic, and cultural domains. Throughout different historical periods, including the era of kingdoms, colonial rule, and the modern nation state, Chinese communities in Indonesia developed complex relationships with indigenous populations. In intercultural interactions, individuals often adjust their communicative behavior as a response to social expectations and cultural acceptance (Dewi, 2017). Over time, these interactions facilitated the emergence of cultural adaptation processes within Chinese communities living in Indonesia.

The process of cultural acculturation can be understood as a social phenomenon that occurs when a group encounters elements of another culture and gradually integrates certain aspects of that culture without losing its own cultural identity. Koentjaraningrat (1990) defines acculturation as a process in which cultural elements from different societies come into contact and are incorporated into existing cultural systems. In this context, acculturation does not eliminate the original cultural identity but instead produces

new hybrid cultural forms. From the perspective of intercultural adaptation theory, this process resembles what Berry et al. (1999) describe as cultural integration, in which minority communities maintain aspects of their heritage culture while simultaneously participating in the wider social environment.

In Lasem, the interaction between Chinese migrants and local Javanese communities represents a historical example of such cultural integration. Since at least the eighteenth century, Chinese traders who arrived in the region to engage in the spice and textile trade began to establish permanent settlements. Many of these migrants married local Javanese women, which led to the emergence of Peranakan communities that combined elements of Chinese and Javanese cultural traditions. These families commonly adopted the Javanese language in everyday communication while continuing to practice ancestral Chinese rituals and customs.

Architectural forms in Kampung Pecinan Lasem also reflect this process of cultural acculturation. Many residential buildings combine Chinese architectural ornaments with spatial layouts that resemble Javanese joglo structures. Religious life similarly illustrates cultural interaction, as traditional Chinese beliefs such as Taoism and Confucianism coexist with local spiritual traditions. In certain ritual practices, ancestral worship is accompanied by elements of local belief systems that developed through long term interaction with the surrounding community.

Lasem also possesses a rich cultural heritage that continues to be developed as part of cultural tourism initiatives. Several historical sites preserve ancient Chinese buildings that function as heritage tourism destinations. These include Little China Heritage of Lasem, Cu An Kiong Temple, Awang Ombo, Kampung Tiongkok Kecil Lasem, the tomb of Oei Ing Kiat, and the Oei House. The development of these heritage sites demonstrates how cultural acculturation has produced a distinctive historical landscape that attracts visitors while preserving local identity.

Cultural interaction is also visible in the field of performing arts. Javanese performing arts historically developed through cultural encounters among Javanese aristocrats and various foreign communities, including Europeans, Arabs, Malays, and Chinese. Among these groups, Chinese communities played a notable role in supporting and participating in Javanese artistic traditions. Chinese elite families often invited *sinden* singers and organized *klonengan* performances for entertainment. Some wealthy Chinese households even owned gamelan ensembles tuned to *slendro* or *pelog* scales.

Kapitein Tan Tiang Tjhing played an important role in introducing gamelan music into Chinese community celebrations. Since that time, gamelan performances have been incorporated into various Chinese festivities. In some cases, Chinese residents commissioned gamelan instruments from Surakarta craftsmen. One surviving gamelan set purchased by Lie Hwan Tjiang in 1919 is currently owned by Subagyo, also known as Boen Hong. The instruments are decorated with bird carvings known as *hong*, demonstrating the combination of Chinese symbolic motifs with Javanese musical traditions.

Another indicator of acculturation can be observed in naming practices. Many Chinese individuals in Lasem adopted Javanese name elements that shared phonetic similarities with Chinese names. However, these adaptations did not fully eliminate Chinese identity. Instead, the meanings of these names were often adjusted to align with Chinese cultural interpretations (Widodo and Supana, 2015). Through this process, a hybrid cultural identity gradually emerged within the community.

This hybrid identity became increasingly visible during the twentieth century. The Hokkien language used by Chinese residents blended with the local Lasem Javanese dialect, while cultural celebrations such as Lunar New Year incorporated local communal traditions. These celebrations often involved shared meals, fireworks, and community gatherings that included both Chinese and Javanese residents. In this sense, Kampung Pecinan Lasem developed as a social environment where cultural exchange occurred through everyday interaction and mutual participation in social life (Heidhues, 2003).

One of the most significant outcomes of Chinese–Javanese cultural interaction in Lasem is the development of Lasem batik. The motifs and production techniques of Lasem batik reflect artistic influences from Chinese culture, the Champa region, and Javanese coastal traditions (Nurhajarini, 2015). Historically, batik production was a common household activity in Lasem, and many families passed down batik making skills across generations. For women in particular, the ability to produce batik was considered an important cultural skill that reflected respect for ancestral heritage.

Historical narratives often attribute the introduction of batik techniques in Lasem to Bi Nang Un, a Chinese merchant who arrived in the region with his wife Na Li Ni. According to local accounts, Na Li Ni introduced batik making techniques that later evolved into distinctive Lasem batik motifs. These include motifs such as the *hong* bird, liong dragon, chrysanthemum flowers, and *banji* patterns, often produced in the characteristic “chicken blood red” color associated with Lasem batik (Maghfiroh, 2020).

By 1931, approximately 120 Chinese batik traders were recorded in Lasem, particularly in the villages of Soditan, Gambiran, Karangturi, Babagan, and Gedongmulyo (Hidayat, 2022). Chinese

entrepreneurs typically managed the commercial aspects of the industry, while many local Javanese residents worked as artisans and laborers in the production process. Over time, however, many Chinese batik entrepreneurs sent their children to pursue education in larger cities, resulting in limited generational continuity in the batik industry.

Interethnic marriages and everyday social interactions further strengthened relationships between Chinese and Javanese communities in Lasem. Cultural celebrations such as Lunar New Year, Cap Go Meh, Peh Cun, and the Mak Co Thian Siang Sing Bo procession at Cu Ang Kiong Temple are celebrated in inclusive ways that involve participation from both communities (Purwaningsih, 2018). In addition, the Chinese community has adopted certain Javanese communal traditions such as tahlilan and slametan, organizing shared meals that emphasize social solidarity.

At present, several cultural figures continue to play important roles in preserving this tradition of cultural interaction. Individuals such as Sigit Witjaksono and Gandor Sugiharto are actively involved in promoting cultural harmony within the community. Heritage organizations such as Fokmas have also been established to support cultural preservation efforts. The development of Kampung Pecinan Lasem as a cultural tourism area further demonstrates the potential of this heritage landscape to promote cultural understanding while maintaining community participation.

c. Socio-Economic Impacts of the Existence of Kampung Pecinan

Kampung Pecinan has long played an important role in shaping the socio-economic life of Lasem and its surrounding areas. Historically, the settlement functioned as a center of trade that facilitated the exchange of commodities such as textiles, spices, and sugar. These commercial activities contributed to the growth of the local economy and strengthened Lasem's position as a regional trading hub along the northern coast of Java. Since at least the nineteenth century, Kampung Pecinan has served as one of the primary economic centers of the town, a role that continued to evolve throughout the twentieth century.

The development of the batik industry represented one of the most significant economic contributions of the Chinese community in Lasem. Chinese entrepreneurs, supported by capital resources and extensive trade networks, played a key role in organizing the batik production system. They controlled the upstream supply chain, including the import of mori cloth and dye materials, as well as the marketing and distribution of batik products to various cities across the Dutch East Indies and later Indonesia. At the same time, large numbers of local Javanese residents participated in the production process as artisans and laborers, performing tasks such as waxing, dyeing, and finishing batik cloth. This economic relationship created a form of interdependence between Chinese entrepreneurs and Javanese workers. Setiawan (2017) argues that this relationship extended beyond a simple employer-labor dynamic and developed into a more complex system of mutual economic cooperation that contributed to social stability within the community.

Historically, Lasem experienced a steady increase in its Chinese population, particularly from the thirteenth century onward. Many migrants originated from different regions of southern China and possessed specialized economic skills. Hokkien migrants were widely known for their expertise in trade, while Hakka migrants were more commonly engaged in agricultural activities. Other groups such as the Teochew specialized in livestock trading, and Cantonese migrants were often associated with industrial skills (Kumalasari, 2020). The diversity of these occupational backgrounds contributed to the development of a dynamic local economic structure within the settlement.

As economic activity expanded, large Chinese style residential buildings began to appear in Lasem, particularly those belonging to wealthy merchants and community leaders who held important economic and administrative roles. Despite their economic prominence, relationships between Chinese residents and indigenous communities generally remained harmonious. Local residents often viewed Chinese traders as diligent and skilled entrepreneurs, which encouraged economic collaboration between the two groups.

In contemporary conditions, Kampung Pecinan Lasem has also been promoted as a cultural tourism destination. However, field findings indicate that tourism development has not yet produced substantial economic benefits for most local residents. Several businesses that initially emerged to support tourism activities, such as food stalls and small souvenir shops, have experienced declining activity due to the relatively inconsistent number of visitors. As a result, many local businesses continue to rely primarily on local consumers rather than tourism related income.

Interviews with residents suggest that tourism initiatives in Kampung Pecinan Lasem have not been implemented consistently. The absence of regularly organized cultural events and supporting tourist infrastructure has limited the area's ability to attract sustained visitor interest. Consequently, many residents perceive the tourism village program as a temporary initiative that has not yet generated long term economic improvement for the community.

Despite these challenges, Kampung Pecinan still maintains an active local economic system supported by trade and service activities. The growth of traditional markets, restaurants, transportation services, and logistics networks continues to generate economic opportunities within the area. In many cases, the characteristic ruko or shophouse buildings serve dual functions as residential spaces and commercial enterprises, allowing households to sustain their livelihoods while contributing to local employment opportunities (Hamidah, 2015).

From a broader sociological perspective, the resilience of economic activities in Kampung Pecinan Lasem can also be understood through the concept of social capital. Strong networks of kinship, trust, and community cooperation within the Chinese community have enabled businesses to survive periods of political and economic uncertainty, including the assimilation policies implemented during the New Order era. These informal networks facilitated access to resources, credit, and trade connections, allowing economic activities to continue despite structural limitations.

Overall, the socio-economic history of Kampung Pecinan Lasem demonstrates how economic cooperation between Chinese and Javanese communities contributed to the formation of a local economic ecosystem. While historical trade and batik production played a central role in shaping the town's economic development, contemporary challenges such as tourism management and heritage preservation continue to influence the economic future of the settlement.

4. Conclusion

Lasem has long functioned as an important coastal settlement that served as a gateway for maritime trade and migration in northern Java. The presence of Chinese communities in this region developed alongside the expansion of trade networks that connected Lasem with other economic centers in the Indonesian archipelago. Over time, these migrant communities established settlements that later became known as Kampung Pecinan. The economic role of Chinese communities in Lasem strengthened particularly during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through activities such as batik production, trade in daily commodities, and government granted monopolies including timber exploitation, salt purchasing, and the opium trade. These activities contributed significantly to the economic development of Lasem and its surrounding areas.

This study examined the historical development of Kampung Pecinan Lasem throughout the twentieth century by focusing on three interrelated dimensions: architectural transformation, processes of Chinese–Javanese cultural acculturation, and socio-economic dynamics. The findings demonstrate that the architectural landscape of the settlement evolved through a process of cultural interaction in which Chinese architectural traditions were combined with Javanese spatial arrangements and later influenced by colonial and modern architectural styles. These architectural forms reflect not only aesthetic adaptation but also the historical experiences of the community in responding to social and political changes.

Cultural acculturation between Chinese and Javanese communities also developed through everyday social interaction, intermarriage, and shared economic activities. This process produced hybrid cultural expressions that can be observed in batik motifs, language use, religious practices, and cultural celebrations. Lasem batik, for example, represents a distinctive outcome of cultural interaction, combining Chinese symbolic motifs such as lok can, dragons, and butterflies with coastal Javanese batik patterns including parang, gringsing, and sekar jagad. These cultural expressions illustrate how acculturation enabled both communities to maintain their cultural identities while simultaneously creating shared traditions.

From a socio-economic perspective, Kampung Pecinan functioned as a dynamic economic center in which Chinese entrepreneurs and Javanese workers developed interconnected economic networks, particularly through the batik industry and regional trade activities. Although contemporary tourism initiatives have attempted to promote the area as a cultural heritage destination, the economic benefits for local residents remain limited due to inconsistent tourism management and infrastructure challenges.

Overall, the historical development of Kampung Pecinan Lasem demonstrates the resilience of a multicultural community that continuously adapted to political change, economic transformation, and social interaction throughout the twentieth century. The settlement represents an important example of how architectural heritage, cultural acculturation, and economic cooperation shaped the identity of a local Chinatown environment in Indonesia.

Nevertheless, this study has certain limitations. The research relies primarily on oral historical accounts, field observations, and available documentary sources, while archival materials specifically related to the local history of Lasem remain relatively limited. Future research may expand this study by conducting comparative analysis with other Chinatown settlements in Indonesia or by applying spatial and heritage conservation approaches to support the preservation of historical architecture in Kampung Pecinan Lasem.

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