

## The Kingdom of Sriwijaya as a Form of Maritime Culture in Indonesia

Isrina Siregar<sup>1\*</sup>, Arueng Sy Pranata<sup>2</sup>, and Budi Purnomo<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>History Education, University of Jambi, Indonesia

\*correspondence email: isrinasiregal@unja.ac.id

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### Abstrak

Pengenalan terhadap budaya maritim kepada masyarakat perlu ditingkatkan dengan mengingat bahwa Indonesia sebagai negara kepulauan. Tujuan penelitian ini melihat budaya maritim Indonesia, dan bentuk budaya maritim yang ada pada zaman Sriwijaya. Metode penelitian yang digunakan, yaitu pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui studi literatur. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa faktor budaya terbentuk berasal dari adanya keterkaitan kondisi lingkungan dan pola kehidupan suatu kelompok atau bangsa tersebut. Sehingga, akan menghasilkan budaya yang beragam. Di Kerajaan Sriwijaya sendiri sebagai kerajaan maritim yang besar, ia meninggalkan beberapa budaya dan pengetahuan yang dapat kita pelajari mulai dari aturan pelayaran dan perdagangan, sistem pemerintahan, dan juga teknik perkapalan.

**Kata kunci:** kerajaan sriwijaya, budaya maritim, indonesia.

### Abstract

*The introduction of maritime culture to the community needs to be improved by remembering that Indonesia is an archipelagic country. The purpose of this study is to see how the Sriwijaya Kingdom is a form of maritime culture owned by Indonesia. In addition, the author tries to see what was formed by the Sriwijaya kingdom, which in its development is now a maritime culture for Indonesia. It is also known that Sriwijaya is a kingdom whose life is dominant in advancing the sea area compared to daratan. Having power in various strategic areas, it became a success that made the Sriwijaya kingdom a great kingdom and known as the ruler of the ocean. Meanwhile, the research method used, namely a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through literature studies. The results showed that cultural factors formed stemmed from the relationship between environmental conditions and the life patterns of a group or family. Thus, it will produce a diverse culture. In the Sriwijaya Kingdom itself as a large maritime kingdom, it left behind several cultures and knowledge that we can learn ranging from shipping and trade rules, government systems, and also shipping techniques.*

**Keywords:** of sriwijaya kingdom, maritime culture, indonesia.

### INTRODUCTION

A maritime country is a country that has a dominant sea area compared to the mainland and the number of islands in the country. Indonesia itself is a maritime country consisting of several islands and various maritime potentials (Budisantoso, 2006). Judging from its history, Indonesia has a large and advanced kingdom in the maritime field, and all aspects of its social

and economic life are very dependent on the sea. The kingdom was Sriwijaya which was located in South Sumatra.

One element of the state is a territory (Budiarjo, 1981). Soekarno said that three times we have a united country with an area covering the entire archipelago, namely Sriwijaya, Majapahit, and the Republic of Indonesia (Gumilang, 2013).

In large part, this writing discusses the Sriwijaya Kingdom as a form of Indonesian maritime culture. Culture comes from the word culture which comes from the results of the human mind which comes in response to the changes it receives in order to survive in new conditions, this understanding is in line with the opinion of Jenrald, G. & Robert (Sumarto, 2019), states that culture is a pattern of assumptions the basis that a particular group discovers through studying and understanding problems of external adaptation and internal integration.

In addition, it can be understood that culture and society are connected to each other. Where society becomes an object that studies until it reaches culture so that as long as there is a community that supports a culture, then of course culture will continue to develop. As an archipelagic nation, Indonesia has various cultures in it.

The challenges faced by the State of Indonesia as an island nation with vast sea space are experiencing accelerated development. What can be achieved by making Indonesia the axis of global cruise ships according to Peny's view (Djubedi, 2014). To become the world's maritime axis, Indonesia must be able to uphold justice and national jurisdiction; develop the maritime industry, fishing industry, and sea trade; exploit the potential of the sea and seabed for the happiness of the

Indonesian people; and continue to survive and support the function of the marine environment.

This is indeed the diversity of culture in Indonesia itself is influenced of them by the geographical conditions of Indonesia. For example, inland and coastal communities certainly have a striking culture both from an economic standpoint to patterns of social life. The culture that develops in coastal areas is known as maritime culture or maritime culture (Soekmono, 1973). Although it was only discovered through studies in the 20th century, the Sriwijaya kingdom kept various types of culture. Being a large kingdom, the Sriwijaya kingdom has various influences and powers in maintaining its power (Budisantoso, 2006).

It should be remembered that even though the Sriwijaya kingdom is relatively young in terms of its discoveries, Sriwijaya first became the largest maritime empire before the maritime kingdom. Sources about Sriwijaya are often found through records of foreign explorers who have stopped at ports controlled by Sriwijaya. Seeing the greatness of the Sriwijaya kingdom which was very well known at that time, made the author want to know and do a little research on the Sriwijaya kingdom from a cultural point of view. because usually as a large country, it must have a unique cultural development in it to study.

## METHOD

This research was conducted using qualitative methods while data collection techniques through literature studies. Qualitative research is research by collecting data in the form of interview scripts, field notes, personal documents, memo notes, and other official documents (Basrowi, 2008, p. 67). The research objective is to reveal the role of the Sriwijaya kingdom as a form of maritime affairs in Indonesia. The preparation of articles is sourced from various relevant information and data, such as journals or articles. Other sources are also used in research to be able to support the information that has been obtained.

Qualitative research methods seek to understand and interpret a condition according to the author's perspective based on the data obtained. Qualitative methods tend to pay attention to word power. The focus of qualitative research refers to the process of data analysis and the meaning of the results. Data analysis includes data reduction, data display, verification, and drawing conclusions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A maritime country is a country that has a dominant sea area compared to the mainland and the number of islands in the country. Indonesia itself is a maritime country consisting of several islands and various maritime potentials (Yulianti, 2014). Judging from its history, Indonesia

has a large and advanced kingdom in the maritime field, and all aspects of its social and economic life are very dependent on the sea. The kingdom was Sriwijaya which was located in South Sumatra.

### A. Explanation of Maritime Culture in Indonesia

Maritime culture consists of two words, namely "culture" and "maritime." Referring to the word culture is an idea or idea of initiative, work, and love which then develops into a culture that has a system of rules and life values in it to be emulated or followed by humans by learning (Siswanto, 2018). Followed by the word maritime, it will directly make us think about the sea. Actually, there are two popular words regarding the sea in Indonesia, namely the word "maritime" and "Bahari" both of which have something in common when discussing the sea.

Judging from the depth of the word, the word maritime is shown for an activity related to the past, from security, and trade-shipping, to trade using the sea. In addition, the word maritime sounds more like slang because it comes from Europeans with the word "mare", while maritime refers more to something that discusses the sea which was already known before the word maritime was introduced (Yunandar, 2004).

The deepening of the meaning of the sea refers more to past cultures that discuss the sea when viewed from its history. So based on some of the

explanations above, the use of the word nautical is more suitable for culture. Where the word nautical reflects a past life that is still developing today. Indonesia is becoming a maritime country. Since ancient times, the Indonesian people have been known by outsiders as superior sailors.

Throughout its history, Indonesia has made various voyages, such as the Makassar-Bugis tribe who have made regular trips to carry out trading activities through the Indian Ocean to the East coast of Africa and Madagascar. Indonesia's maritime culture can be seen from one of the Sriwijaya kingdoms which were one of the great kingdoms of its time, focusing on the sea which supports its daily activities (Zudhi, 2020). When referring to the concept of culture which consists of ideas, social systems, and cultural objects, the Sriwijaya kingdom is an example of the complex maritime culture of Indonesia.

#### **B. Relations of Sriwijaya as a Maritime Kingdom**

Sea-based kingdoms are also known as maritime empires. When viewed from the present, the kingdom can be interpreted as a country in which there is a system and policies that regulate the continuity of a kingdom. So looking at the definition of a maritime state or maritime empire, it is said that all activities, developments, and existence are based on the sea.

In Indonesia, there is one of the kingdoms of Sriwijaya which is the largest

maritime empire in terms of history. Being a maritime empire, making the Sriwijaya kingdom produce various maritime-based cultures. Maritime culture in the Sriwijaya kingdom can be seen from the royal regulations, the economy, and the activities of the inhabitants of the Sriwijaya kingdom which are recorded in Indonesian history.

The Sriwijaya Kingdom was a kingdom discovered by experts in the 19th century, making this kingdom a young kingdom. However, judging from the traces of this royal activity, it was established earlier than the Majapahit kingdom. Most of what tells information about Sriwijaya comes from foreign records and several inscription sources (Sholeh, 2017).

The knowledge of Sriwijaya as the name of a kingdom comes from a Chinese manuscript made in the 7th century, where the manuscript discusses the name of a kingdom in Namhan or the South Sea. From there there is the word She Li Fo She is a royal name, which is known as the Sriwijaya kingdom. Being a maritime empire, making the Sriwijaya kingdom connected with outsiders.

This is evidenced that the Sriwijaya kingdom became a center for Buddhist teachings, this happened because the Sriwijaya kingdom became a stopover for explorers who wanted to learn about Buddhism in India, one of those who had stopped at the Sriwijaya kingdom was an

explorer from China named Tsing, he lived and settled in the Sriwijaya Kingdom in 685-689.

Derived from Tsing's notes, who had stopped at the Sriwijaya Kingdom to translate Buddhist scriptures into Chinese, he witnessed that the Sriwijaya Kingdom developed and expanded its territory very briefly, compared to other kingdoms, namely the 24 years of the Sriwijaya Kingdom to show significant changes in its progress. One of them is in terms of expanding the area, especially in the surrounding ports which has a big impact in helping advance the economy, because the policy of expanding the area aims to prosper the people. As for the ports that were the target of the Sriwijaya kingdom, they had strategic locations. The Sriwijaya Kingdom was a great kingdom in its time.

It is said that Sriwijaya was able to spread his trade to foreign countries, namely parts of Asia, India, and China. In addition, the Sriwijaya kingdom became a long-lived kingdom (Yulianti, 2014). It is said to have a long life, it can survive for almost 6 centuries, of which the founding of Indonesia is still inferior to the Sriwijaya kingdom which is still less than 1 century. In addition to the continuous progress in the maritime field, the Sriwijaya kingdom seemed to have forgotten about the mainland, where the agricultural sector had an impact on this longevity kingdom, due to a lack of attention in the agricultural sector, the

decline in the population of Sriwijaya, which affected the arrival of migrants in the region. the Sriwijaya kingdom.

### **C. The Pattern of Life of the People of the Sriwijaya Kingdom**

As a large empire that influenced the Asian region and its surroundings, we cannot close our eyes to the discussion on how the pattern of society in the Sriwijaya kingdom. From the people too, we can see what cultural developments resulted from this Sriwijaya kingdom, and unforgettably the geographical area of the Sriwijaya kingdom also influenced the pattern of society.

Especially in coastal communities and inland. The characteristics of coastal and inland communities have different population developments. Where on the coast is a place for migrants from both within the country and abroad. Thus, developments and social patterns that exist on the coast tend to vary.

The Sriwijaya kingdom can be seen from various historical records, it was very obsessed with the sea area, which was used as the main source of its livelihood, which then had an impact on the territory of the Sriwijaya kingdom which tended to have little natural potential which relied on forests for agriculture (Yulianti, 2014). Various sources regarding Sriwijaya are always related to sea shipping and trade, so it is indeed suitable for the Sriwijaya kingdom to be a maritime kingdom.

However, from the many sources of community development, it was always closed to trade and shipping activities that dominated the Sriwijaya kingdom.

The people of Sriwijaya, who are known to many people, are a society called pirates, namely the guardians of the Sriwijaya territory from rogue foreign sailors. At the beginning of its development, there were several views and notes explaining a little about the life of the Sriwijaya people, where at first the people lived in floating houses on the waters of the Musi River or the sea which was controlled by the Sriwijaya kingdom (Pramartha, 2017). The people who live in floating houses, according to Sather in Nurrohim, are said to be the ancestors of the Sriwijaya people. As for society in its further development, floating houses became a means of avoiding the taxes levied by the Sriwijaya kingdom on its inhabitants. Because of that, it was the establishment of floating houses along the waters of the Sriwijaya kingdom as their place of residence.

#### **D. Inheritance of the Sriwijaya Emire for Us**

As the largest maritime country ever. The Sriwijaya Kingdom left various traces that can be used and preserved by us as Indonesians, especially in the maintenance of Indonesia's maritime territory. The characteristics of the trade and shipping arrangements of the Sriwijaya kingdom are very detailed and through the

experience that the Sriwijaya kingdom has had in its cooperation, it should be a reference in the current cooperation regulations. Even so, Indonesian marine regulations are still influenced by legal rules made by the Netherlands and international law, compared to customary law that applies in the Sriwijaya kingdom (Djubedi, 2014).

#### **1. Shipping and Trade Rules**

Maritime history becomes a collective memory. In shipping and trade activities, the Sriwijaya kingdom implemented a tax collection system for ships that stopped in its territory. That the Sriwijaya kingdom controlled coastal areas where the area had a strategic location for sailors and traders to stop temporarily on their way. The application of the rules for paying taxes for each stopover in the Sriwijaya region has something to do with cooperation between Sriwijaya and the Tang dynasty. Through cooperation with the Tang dynasty, the port of Sriwijaya was always busy (Yuhani).

As for the collaboration established by Sriwijaya with the Tang Dynasty, direct trade was not carried out by the Tang Dynasty in other countries in Southeast Asia. Realization of similarities between regulations, and security in shipping, today. Where at that time security in overseeing its territory from enemies was one of the most important things. Thus, the strength of the military-owned is a major concern. Likewise, during the

current Indonesian era, the security measures carried out were of the same type, namely holding defense in the Indonesian sea border area with Indonesian police and soldiers tasked with securing the territory of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia. Meanwhile, at that time, Sriwijaya used pirates to secure its maritime territory.

## **2. Government Structure of Sriwijaya**

The well-known rule of the Sriwijaya kingdom is "forced to hoard goods" which is still related to the previous discussion, namely forcing traders to stop at their ports. The existence of trading boats that stopped by, provided income for the wages of the nobles of the Sriwijaya Kingdom. The government structure in more detail regarding the kingdom of Sriwijaya has not been thoroughly identified. It is said that the system of government adopted by the Sriwijaya kingdom was to use violence, namely the existence of coercive actions against a group of people who opposed it. This is a reflection that it is true that the conquest of regional power was carried out by Sriwijaya in expanding its territory (Pramartha, 2017).

The harsh attitude of the ruler in an empire that prioritizes trade is something that is often encountered. Sriwijaya also, in this case, is said to be a maritime-business empire. Meanwhile, the wealth of the Sriwijaya kingdom was not only due to

being the ruler in traffic lanes by sea, but the Sriwijaya kingdom also had various industries that were in great demand at that time. For example, merchandise sold to China during a cooperative relationship, namely agarwood, ivory, tin, ebony, etc.

## **3. Shipbuilding Engineering of the Sriwijaya Kingdom**

As a large empire, developed in the maritime field. Sriwijaya had advanced capabilities in shipping at that time. In this case, the Sriwijaya kingdom is confident that it will establish a cooperative relationship with the Tang dynasty, to advance various other things. In fact, cooperation between the Tang and Sriwijaya dynasties regarding shipping and navigation techniques became a means of perpetuating the relationship between the two.

Seeing that as a kingdom that relies on maritime affairs, the Sriwijaya kingdom must be strong in having ships that support its activities. So that ships from Sriwijaya are known as ships that have high technology and are strong. The ships owned by Sriwijaya itself are recorded in Lun Po's notes (Yuhani, pp. 62-67) that Sriwijaya owned large ships that were used to trade through the Indian Ocean and in the South China Sea. The name of the ship that was recorded itself was named the head of the Malays. Where is the characteristic of this ship, it has a weight of 250-1000 tons. The length of the ship is 60 meters. With a capacity of 1000

people. With the development of shipping techniques, greater mobility, and shipbuilding could be realized.

## CONCLUSION

As a large empire that influenced the Asian region and its surroundings, we cannot close our eyes to the discussion on how the pattern of society in the Sriwijaya kingdom. From the people too, we can see what cultural developments resulted from this Sriwijaya kingdom, and unforgettably the geographical area of the Sriwijaya kingdom also influenced the pattern of society. The Sriwijaya Kingdom is the largest maritime empire in Indonesia, every trace of it will definitely be recorded by conducting studies on it in a continuous direction. It is said that the Sriwijaya kingdom is a maritime culture in Indonesia, as seen from the results and traces that the Sriwijaya kingdom has given us today. Starting from the existence of rules in his government regulations, he took advantage of the stopovers of traders, both from within and outside, to pay taxes on goods stockpiled in the territory of the Sriwijaya kingdom. As the largest maritime country ever. The Sriwijaya Kingdom left various traces that we as Indonesians can use and preserve, especially in the maintenance of Indonesia's maritime territory. The characteristics of the trade and shipping arrangements of the Sriwijaya kingdom are very detailed and through the

experience that the Sriwijaya kingdom has had in its cooperation, it should be a reference in the current cooperation regulations. Even so, Indonesia's maritime regulations were still influenced by legal rules made by the Netherlands and international law, compared to customary law in force in the Sriwijaya kingdom.

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