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## **The Fundamental and Philosophical Values of Javanese Culture in the Decorative Art of *Wuwungan* in Kudus Traditional House**

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### **Abstract**

The study aims to analyse the fundamental and philosophical values of Javanese culture in the decorative art of *Wuwungan* in Kudus traditional house. Over time, the development of traditional house in Kudus is also influenced by the European, Persian, Gujarat, and Chinese cultures as reflected in the ornaments of the decorative art of the *wuwung* (rooftop) in Kudus traditional houses. The decorative art also symbolizes the social and economic status of the people in Kudus. The decorative art of *wuwung* on the rooftop of the traditional house in Kudus Central Java has philosophical values. Instead of using the clear and transparent glass, they use white glass to symbolize the purity and sincerity when we have a religious service to God the Almighty. The decorative art of *wuwung* Kudus has become a cultural characteristic of Kudus people. It has some philosophical values to guide the learning and the adoption of *local genius* in order that the Javanese people uphold highly good manners. Such those noble values lead to the improved belief to the great power of God the Almighty.

**Keywords:** Javanese Culture, Decorative Art, *Wuwungan*, Traditional House

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisa nilai-nilai fundamental dan filosofis dari budaya Jawa dalam seni dekoratif *Wuwungan* di rumah adat Kudus. Seiring waktu, perkembangan rumah tradisional di Kudus juga dipengaruhi oleh budaya Eropa, Persia, Gujarat, dan Cina sebagaimana tercermin dalam ornamen seni dekoratif *wuwung* (atap) di rumah-rumah tradisional Kudus. Seni dekoratif juga melambangkan status sosial dan ekonomi masyarakat di Kudus. Seni dekoratif *wuwung* di atap rumah tradisional di Kudus Jawa Tengah memiliki nilai filosofis. Alih-alih menggunakan kaca bening dan transparan, mereka menggunakan kaca putih untuk melambangkan kemurnian dan ketulusan ketika kita memiliki layanan keagamaan kepada Allah SWT. Seni dekoratif *wuwung* Kudus telah menjadi ciri budaya masyarakat Kudus. Ini memiliki beberapa nilai filosofis untuk memandu pembelajaran dan adopsi kejeniusan lokal agar orang Jawa menjunjung tinggi perilaku yang sangat baik. Nilai-nilai luhur semacam itu mengarah pada peningkatan kepercayaan pada kekuatan besar Allah Yang Mahakuasa.

**Kata Kunci:** Budaya Jawa, Seni Dekoratif, *Wuwungan*, Rumah Tradisional

## INTRODUCTION

In Javanese tradition, the development of a house is inseparable from the ornament or decoration of the rooftop. Many houses in Demak Central Java have such ornaments as a series of terracotta or earthenware in the shapes of popular puppet figures. Or else, the ornaments take the shape of *gunungan* (mountain) surrounded by various kinds of plants. Because the terracotta or earthenware are ornamented with glass mosaics, in the midday they will reflect a glowing shine (Soekiman, 2000:261).

*Wuwungan* Kudus is very unique and exclusively has some fundamental values which are absent in other regions of Java. The decorative art of *wuwungan* takes the shape of *sulur-sulur*. In the central part of the top there is a *wuwungan rojo* and a *pengapit* ornamented with some glass mosaics. Therefore, they look like a *gunungan* (mountain) or a royal crown. On the four sides towards the top of the pillars of *blandar penuwun* there is another decorative art known as *wuwungan jengger* or *wuwungan cekak*. At the *wuwungan jengger* there is no glass mosaics. It is locked with the *wuwungan bulusan* at the lowest side. The corners of the 4 sides are not ornamented with glass mosaics either. Therefore, the fragmented triangular clear glass is only applied as the ornament of the top of the *blandar penuwun*.

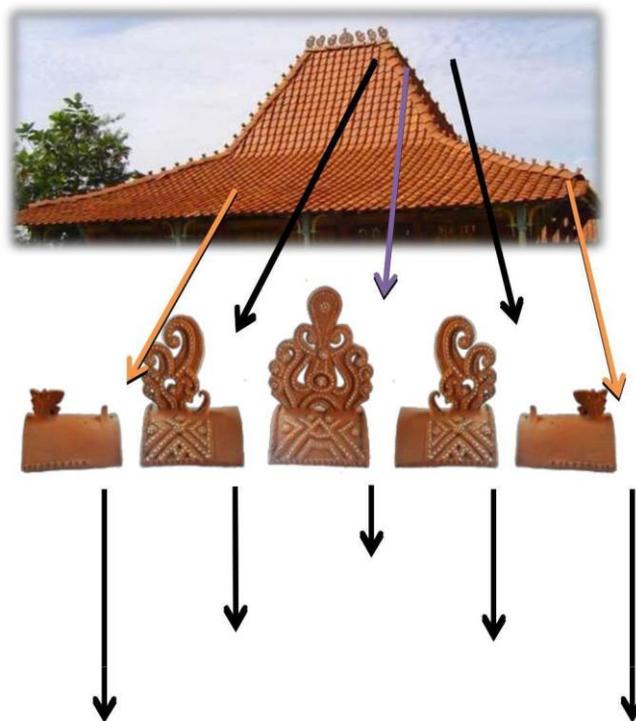
The development of a building is not independent of external influences. Instead, the development is influenced by foreign and past cultures. In addition, it is also influenced by the contemporary culture due to the acculturation process. Javanese culture is open to the influence of other cultures. It assimilates with other cultures through an acculturation process. However, Javanese culture reserves its *local genius*. The life of Javanese people is full of implicit values or *sanepa* (figurative speech or symbol). They adopt them as the *pepiling* (reminder) and lessons for the next generation through the creation of art works.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The shapes of the decorative art of *wuwungan* in Kudus Central Java is inseparable from the existence of previous cultural elements. Hindu religion also influenced the innovation of the overlapping roof shapes that resemble a mount (Meru). Later, the shape was developed by applying the carving popularly practiced in Jepara. The idea of carving likely referred to the carving in the graves behind the Kudus tower. The application of the overlapping roof model was closely associated with the brilliant aesthetic inspiration of Wali Songo who based the development on the psychology of Javanese people. In the memory of Javanese people, they still remember the glory time of Hindu Majapahit. The shape of Joglo, which is the typology of Majapahit palace, with the roof looking like a mount, is the roof model used in the development of mosques and graves. The palace in Islamic era, including the development of mosques and graves is also oriented to the concept of mount, meru, or arga that represents high places. Therefore, palace has a building named *siti hinggil*, which means a holy high place on which the king receives the *pisowanan* (call on) of the people.

The concept of residential building development in the region of Kudus results from the acculturation of the local people and the immigrants. Such an

acculturation has led to the creation of strong building arts to represent the social status of the people. It signifies the upper economic status. Therefore, they build more luxurious houses than the houses of the common people. Accordingly, they need some craft art attributes to show off their prosperity. The specificity of decorative art of *wuwungan* in the region of Kudus, which is absent in other regions has uniquely characterized their culture. They put *wuwung rojo* at the rooftop in the middle and on the left and right of *wuwung rojo* they applied the *wuwung pengapit* in the shape of *sulur/suluran* ornamented with glass mosaics.



Picture. The Decorative Arta Of Wuwungan In Kudus Traditional House (Sumber, Suharson, 2018)

The puppet art in Javanese culture has been integrated and manifested in the aesthetic life visualized in the shapes of artistic ornaments such as the decorative art of *wuwung*. The shapes of *mahkutho*, *gelung supit urang*, and *gunungan* have inspired the creation of decorative art for the people of Kudus Central Java. They create the decorative art of *wuwungan* in that place although some people say that the idea of the creation of *wuwung* Kudus derive from the shape of tobacco leaves. They add glass mosaics on the sketched drawing to artistically decorate the *wuwungan*. This creation is expected to express such impression of beauty and grandiosity.

In their daily life, Javanese people have meaningful messages in the form of *sanepa*. They use the artistic works as a *pepiling* and teaching for the next generation (Herusatoto: 2001). Essentially, the decorative art of *wuwung* Kudus has some philosophical values to be followed by the next generation of Javanese society. In this case, the people learn the concept of aesthetics and ethics in the social life in their attempt to maintain ideal human relationship with God. Javanese

people believe in supernatural power that will always provide humans with the fundamental power. Such a power is invisible, yet it is perceived to be real.

The philosophical values of the Kudus traditional houses are maintained in the development of Javanese Joglo houses decorated with the artistic *wuwung* in the shape of royal *crown* ornamented with the glass mosaics. When we observe further, the decorative art serves more than just an ornament. As is the case of a shirt, a house also has some accessories to beautify the appearance. Ornaments in Javanese culture is intended to result in pleasure for the owner. In addition, it is also improving the beauty and religiosity. It describes the beautiful and comfortable paradise. The decorative art of *wuwung* symbolizes the holy mount replicated in the shape of the house's rooftop. Metaphorically, it is the highest point of the earth. However, it is also the "imaginary" point of the beginning and the end of creation. Life starts from and ends to this point. Such is the case of the puppet story in which we usually find a *gunungan* (mount) representing the beginning and end of the leather puppet show.

Instead of using the clear and transparent glass mosaics, they used the white glass to imply the sincerity and purity in the religious service to God the Almighty. Human life begins from earth and ends in earth as well. It has been stipulated in the holy Quran that humans are created from a clot of soil. Such this belief is manifested when they develop a house. Therefore, they use earthen roof tiles and rooftops to remind humans about their existence in the world. It contains a highly philosophical value and has influenced Javanese people's mindset and behavior. It is implied that the highest wisdom, which is the highest philosophical value, is knowledge about God the Absolute in His relationship with humans. That is the core of *Mystical Philosophy* (Dharsono, 2017:184).

### CONCLUSION

The traditional house of Kudus refers to the previous shapes of house. Hindu and Islamic cultures have influenced the development of the traditional house. Over time, the development of traditional house in Kudus is also influenced by the European, Persian, Gujarat, and Chinese cultures as reflected in the ornaments of the decorative art of the *wuwung* (rooftop) in Kudus traditional houses. The decorative art also symbolizes the social and economic status of the people in Kudus.

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