



Historical Studies of 'Andhap Asor': Cultural Value in *Labang Mesem*' Gate Formation, Sumenep Palace, Madura

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ABSTRACT

Study the history important to remain us about the cultural value that has been built as moral-ethic from our ancient, until now. One of palace that is consist lot of ethical value, was The Sumenep Palace, Madura—which was built in 1781, designed by Chinese architect Lauw Pai Ngo. The gate, or in other words 'the entrance'—located at the front of the building complex, serves as access in and out of the palace area, which has its own meaning and impression. The *Labang Mesem*' Gate is the entrance to the Sumenep Palace; which has the value of acculturating Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist architectural styles as well as Javanese-Madurese, Chinese and European (Dutch) cultures. The *Labang Mesem*' gate—which has developed on Panembahan Sumolo era—has two types of entrance sizes which are still debate-able—therefore, through historical and descriptive studies, the research tries to reveal the meaning inside it. The research concluded that Tumenggung Ario Notokusumo, son of Bendoro Saud—or familiar called as Panembaham Sumolo—educate people with intangible cultural value about being humble soul—defined as '*Andhap Asor*, through formation of *Labang Mesem*' Gate—so that the world could build on harmonious life even on their diversity.

INTRODUCTION

Sumenep Palace is in Madura, precisely in Pajagalan village, Kota Sumenep district. In addition to being the residence of the dukes/kings, Sumenep Palace is a place to organize the government of the kingdom in its time. The construction of the palace was carried out over a long period of time and experienced a change of location several times starting from Batuputih to Pajagalan. In 1781, an architect of Chinese descent named Lauw Pia Ngo was given the trust to plan and build the Sumenep Palace. The influence of culture from Mataram, Java (Jepara), China, Europe as well as Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist architectural styles—are reflected in the shape of the building and the ornamentation. The process of cultural absorption takes place naturally, slowly and peacefully (Tugiyono et al., 2001 in Ratnasari et al., 2002).

The construction of the palace was built during the reign of Panembahan Notokusumo Asiruddin (1750-1811 AD) or known as Panembahan Sumolo who replaced the previous leaders Raden Ayu Dewi Resmana Tironegoro and R. Bendara Moh. Saud (1750-1762 AD). During his reign, Sumolo was a very cautious leader in his actions. He did not

want to violate Islamic religious norms, and always carried out deliberation in reaching consensus for the benefit of the people. His obedience to Islam was obtained because Panembahan Sumolo was educated and raised in a *pesantren* environment. The Great Mosque of Sumenep which was built in 1778-1787 AD is proof of Panembahan Sumolo's obedience to Islam. Panembahan Sumolo also has a high level of concern who always remembers his ancestors, he built the walls of the tombs of the kings (*Asta Tinggi*) by giving land as wages. We need to remember; and take an example that he is a historical actor not as only a Duke, but also an "Ulama" who holds the rank of *Waliyullah*—which will always be remembered in historical evidence, especially the history of the Sumenep government (Halimi, 2013).

The building of the Sumenep Palace consists of the main palace building: *Pendopo Agung*, *Taman Sare*, *Kamarata* (where the golden train is located), *Pancaniti* (where the Court is located), *Koneng Building*, *Gedong Negeri*, and the *Labang Mesem*' Gate. *Taman Sare* (Taman Sari) is located on the east side of *Pendopo Agung*, while *Gedong Negeri* is located on the south side of *Pendopo Agung*. To the west,

there is *Gedung Koneng* (Yellow Building) which was formerly used as the office of the Dutch VOC government. In front of the main palace building there is *Gedong Negeri*, while to the east of *Gedong Negeri* there is the main entrance of the palace known as the *Labang Mesem*' Gate. *Labang Mesem* is a very monumental gate, at the top there is an attic whose roof is stacked like a Chinese Pagoda while decorative forms such as the pillars of the *Parthenon building*, at that time the attic was used to monitor all activities in the palace environment.

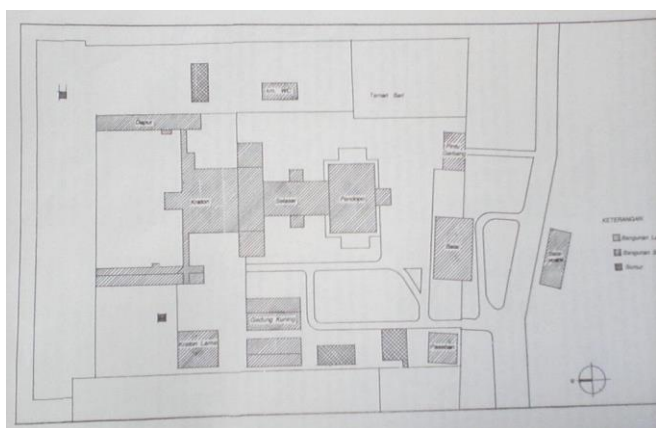


Figure 1. Map of the Sumenep Palace (Documentation of Eka Suryawulan F *Traditional Architecture of Madura, Sumenep Palace*, 2011)

According to Francis DK Ching in his book entitled *Architecture for Space and Order*, 'entrance' is the act of entering (*the act of entry*) a building, separating the perception of 'inside' and 'outside' with a high vertical plane functioning as a shelter provider, entrance marker, and welcoming guest. *Entrance* as part of the '*building façade that shown approachability to the guest*', according to Francis—is the physical form that is present at the level of a country, city, neighborhood and residential scale (Marlina, 2003).

Historical tracing in East Java found Candi Bentar which is a relic of architectural works of the Hindu-Buddhist period, which emerged during the Majapahit period, namely the Hindu-Islamic transition period. Candi Bentar, known as "the gate", serves as the entrance and exit to buildings that are considered sacred. The gate as an architectural work reflects the cultural characteristics of the human group it created (Musyawaroh, 2015). The study of ornaments and the interior architecture that has been doing by researcher in the Sumenep Palace, Madura during 2020-2021, shown that form of several ornamental and/or façade the building—has intangible meaning and constructed by acculturation of Madurese, Chinese and Dutch cultures (2007). Both of these studies show that the construction of the palace is influenced by Chinese, European (Dutch) culture and the influence of Islam and Hindu-Buddhist religion. Ornaments, in addition to being

intended as decorations also contain symbolic meanings regarding the view of life and beliefs of the maker. Although the two previous studies also discussed the *Labang Mesem*, there has been no study that has focused on the meaning of the shape of the *Labang Mesem*' gate. This study aims to describe the meaning of 'Andhap Asor' in the form of *Labang Mesem*' gate using descriptive historical method. Studying ethical value from the history, important to do for remains us that even world right now is on digitizing era—still, there is many cultural values that should be preservation and develop in our everyday life.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study using a historical and descriptive approach that focuses on the meaning contained in the form of the *Labang Mesem*' gate at the Sumenep Palace. The historical method is carried out by tracing the development period of the palace through the history of the leaders that occurred in the past. The approach is done by collecting library data, field surveys and interviews with resource persons in order to find out information about the establishment of the Sumenep Palace. Descriptive method is used to describe and explain the survey results obtained in the field. Observation, data collection, interviews with sources, analysis, then interpretation are the stages carried out R. Abdullah, the fifth descendant of Sultan Abdurrakhman (The 32nd King of Sumenep) as the resource person for this research.

Scope of Research

The scope of research is history of cultural acculturation in Sumenep—especially in the first regent of Sumenep Regency, Ario Adikoro Wiraraja (1269-1292) who was appointed by King Singasari (Kartanegara). At that time, Madura was an area under the auspices of the Singosari Kingdom, this resulted in Regent Ario and his descendants always oriented towards the kingdom in Java. The collapse of Kartanegara was the rise of Majapahit who succeeded in defeating the Chinese army (Tartar) with the help of the Madurese in 1293. Hindu and Buddhist beliefs that became the beliefs of the Sumenep people were replaced by Islam since the 13th Regent of Sumenep named Joko Tole (1415-1406) embraced Islam. Javanese culture has increasingly influenced Sumenep culture since RT Kanduran (16th regent) son of Raden Patah, King of Islam Demak and 21st Regent of Sumenep Prince Anggadipa who is the son of Jepara, Central Java. It is estimated that Jepara wood carvings and Islamic arts scattered on the North Coast of Java also spread to Sumenep so that now the Madurese carving pattern in Karduluk Sumenep is similar to the Jepara carving pattern (Murwandani, 2007).

The entry of Chinese culture is thought to have first occurred when the Tartar army arrived to fight Kertanegara which was finally crushed by Raden Wijaya

Majapahit's troops, then in the 15th century during Joko Tole's war against Dempo Awang. The 18th century was the third time China entered after the Dutch began to control Madura, at that time there was a rebellion and the Chinese who were in Batavia spread to areas controlled by the Company, this is where the Sumenep natives first married the Chinese. The settlement of the Chinese brought a lot of cultural influences from Sumenep, so, that cultural acculturation took place. Lauw Pia Ngo is an architect of Chinese descent who built the Sumenep Palace during the reign of Panembahan Sumolo.

According to the book *Tjaret Negera Songenep* in Murwandani (2007), the Dutch Company or VOC arrived in Sumenep during the reign of Raden Bugar (1648-1672), a friend of Raden Trunojoyo. Trunojoyo's broken struggle resulted in the subjugation of Pamekasan and Sumenep to the VOC for the second time during the reign of Panembahan Romo (Cokronegoro II). Then, there was a rebellion during the reign of Alza (1744-1749) led by Kyai Lesap from Bangkalan with the help of the Madurese. Kyai Lesap's reign only lasted for a year (1749-1750) which was then replaced by Raden Ayu Tirtonegoro. The power of the VOC lasted until the reign of Panembahan Sumolo, all forms of government, royal symbols to the form of building architecture were dominated by the Dutch Colonial.

In the study of design psychology theory, the perceptual process is concerned with obtaining specific knowledge about events at certain times that occur whenever a stimulus moves the senses. In this case, there is a process of knowing or recognizing objects with the help of the senses, influenced by experience, education, and the social environment in general (Dewi, 2017).

By using literatures also experience of the sense, we could identifies that The Sumenep Palace was built by Tumenggung Ario Notokusumo, adopted son of Raden Ayu Tirtonegoro (1750-1762) who married Bendoro Saud. Ratu Tirtonegoro is a descendant of Raden Bugar, while Bendoro Saud is a cleric who was named the Regent of Sumenep by the Company. Asiruddin, who holds the title Tumenggung Ario Notokusumo, known as Panembahan Sumolo, is the adopted son of Queen Tirtonegoro and the son of Bendoro Saud who succeeded his father as Regent (1762-1811).

The Pajagalan Palace or known as the Sumenep Palace was built to the east of the palace belonging to R. Ayu Tirtonegoro and Bendoro Saud in 1780 AD. The palace building consists of several buildings that have their respective functions, the construction of which is expanded and carried out in stages. The Pejagalan Palace (R. Ayu Tirtonegoro), Sumenep Palace, Sumenep Grand Mosque and Asta Tinggi Tomb were built during the Sumenep period under Dutch colonial rule (Murwandani, 2007). If the gate of the Sumenep Jamik Mosque is shaped like a giant wall of China with a roof made in Chinese style, the

gate of the Sumenep Palace is evidence of acculturation between Chinese and European (Dutch) cultures. Thus, the history plot—is the scope of the research, especially about *Labang Mesem'* gate, which is being an "entrance" that assume has its intangible value, a good ethical that must be preserved until now.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

The research described into several results; depicted by the historical studies that has been doing. The acculturation that has been happened on Sumenep Palace, make the research become complex study, because of identification the ornament and the meaning, should do carefully. To find the cultural value of *Labang Mesem'* Gate—then, the results divided into spesific explanation i.e.:

Raden Asiruddin (Prince Notokusumo I): Panembahan Sumolo Era

Raden Asiruddin is the 2nd son of Bendoro Saud from his marriage to Nyai Izza who has a lineage from Sunan Kudus. Pesantren life that was lived since childhood made Asirudin have a wise and humble attitude that was admired by the people of Sumenep. In addition to being the Duke of Sumenep, Asiruddin is also a leader who actively spreads Islam. His belief in His power made him someone who was not afraid of anything but God the Almighty, this was proven when the British troops arrived in Sumenep. He was not at all worried, for him death was the power of God not on a sword or a dagger, nor because of a firearm.

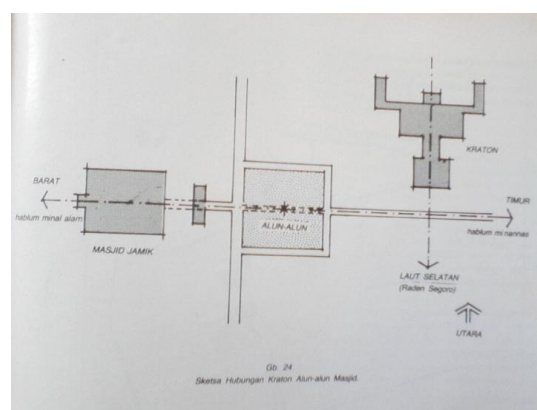


Figure 2. Site Plan of the Sumenep Palace which adheres to a symmetrical balance using the base of the axis or axis (Documentation of Eka Suryawulan F *Traditional Architecture of Madura, Sumenep Palace*, 2011)

During his reign, apart from the Keraton, he also built the Great Mosque of Sumenep and Asta Tinggi in the form of a stone fence around the tombs of the previous Sumenep Kings. The wall building looks neat and well arrange, even without soil as an adhesive. This proves his love for God

and his belief: that in life, there must be a balance between *Habluminallah* and *Habluminannas*. In 1811M, Assiruddin passed away, leaving behind three wives and nine sons and daughters.

The Meaning of Candi Bentar, East Java

Candi Bentar is an architectural work left by the end of the Majapahit era in the form of a gate or gate found in the East Java area. Candi Bentar in East Java identified during the Hindu period and during the Hindu-Islamic transition (Muyasyaroh, 2015). The shape of the temple building is like a temple which is split in two with the exact same shape and size on the right and left. The Candi Bentar building is also known as a gate, derived from the Sanskrit "Gopuram", which means the gate to the city. In Arabic the meaning of the gate is forgiveness, in other words the gate can be interpreted as the door of repentance. In East Java Candi Bentar was found in the tomb of Sunan Giri, Wringin Lawang Temple, Sendang Duwur and the gate of the city of Gresik. During the Islamic period, Candi Bentar was found in Islamic tombs as a form of acculturation and preservation of Hindu-Buddhist culture, only during the Islamic period it was not called a temple but was known as a gate.

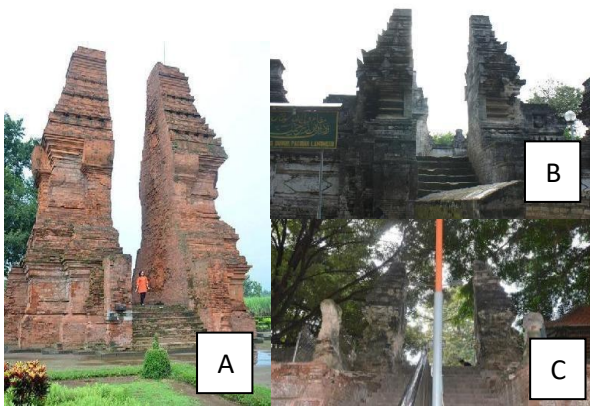


Figure 3. Bentar Bajang Ratu Temple (A); Bentar Sendang Duwur Temple (B); Gate of the Tomb of the Sunan Giri Mosque (C) (Documentation of Wardani, et al in Aesthetics of Ornamental Variety of Bentar and Paduraksa Temples in East Java)

In an architectural work, the gate reflects the culture of the creator; so that the cultural characteristics of the community can be recognized through the physicality of the building and the values contained in it. According to Muyasyaroh (2015), architecture is made by humans and for humans, so that the work produced is a reflection of human interests, its form is the integration of ideas, memories, and abilities possessed by humans. In fact, apart from being the exit and entrance to the sacred or holy place, it is also related to human creation. This is proven at

the gate in Sunan Giri's tomb, there are seven levels of stairs that must be passed.

The philosophy of seven levels contained in the teachings of *Serat Wirid Hidayat Jati* which teaches that humans come from God, and return to God which symbolizes the seven realms that humans must go through when they are born into the world. *Ahadiya, Wahda, Ayan Kharija, Spirit Realm, Mitsal Realm, Ajsam Realm, and Human Realm* are symbols of the seven levels which in the teachings of Hindu Shiva are known as *Niskala, Skala-Niskala*—while in the teachings of Mahayana Buddhism they are known as *Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Nirmanakaya*.

DISCUSSIONS

Studying history about Panembahan Sumolo' era and the meaning of Candi Bentar, then, lead us to identified the meaning of the *Labang Mesem'* and cultural value that has been built as an intangible moral-ethic. The Indonesian word for *Labang Mesem* is 'the door of a smile which is the entrance to the Sumenep Palace area'. It's intended to give a sign of the hospitality of the owner. This gate was built when the Dutch Company (VOC) was sill occupying the land of Madura. The meaning of the gate itself as a form or image of the host, as in Islamic teachings which teach that receiving guests must be in a happy state as a sign of honoring guests.



Figure 4. Front view of the Labang Mesem Gate (A); Rear view (from inside the palace) of Labang Mesem Gate (B) (Personal Documentation, 2021)

Viewed from the inside of the palace building, there are two small spaces on the right and left sides of the door which have a door with a height of about 140 cm, so to enter and exit, one must bow. Inside there is a small room that is used as a resting place for guards and there is also a niche or access to enter and exit on the inside measuring

approximately 150 cm, one of the niches there is a staircase leading to the second floor.

Ionic -style pillars imitating the shape of the *Parthenon*, while the tiered roof with sizes from large to small is like the shape of a Chinese Pagoda. Carved patterns or flora ornaments use white, green, red and golden yellow colors. Forest flower ornaments and plant forms of stars that symbolize divinity (Mahyudi Al Mudra in Kartini, 2014 in Widiatami, 2017). Although there is still seen from the inside of the palace (towards the exit of the palace) there is also an ornament in the form of a human head with a smiling expression located above the main gate. Ecology development possible to makes it easy to give birth to new innovations in technology-based learning (Fathoni et al., 2021)—though, in historical studies, we not only develop the ecology as physical object—but, we also preserve the intangible meaning of physical value that it shown. A visual language which can influence one's cognition and give shape indirectly for someone to perceive their world (Sears et al., 1994). Studying an intangible value—mostly, cultural value—bring possibility to development of media, be done for various levels—to preserve the value continuously (Ilmi et al., 2019).

The interview with R. Abdullah who is the fifth descendant of Sultan Abdurakhman (the thirty-second king of Sumenep), stated that the size of the small niche was made with the aim of reminding us especially members of the palace and the gatekeeper of *Labang Mesem* that life must be humble—or, in local terminology, humble person or humble soul—called as ‘andhap asor’.



Figure 5. Sitting cross-legged gesture (left) Anthropometric study sitting cross-legged (right) (Personal Documentation, 2021)

In addition, the low size is adjusted to the anthropometry of the guard when resting, sitting cross-legged on the ground. Based on anthropometric studies, the average height of humans while sitting cross-legged is 87.5 cm and a width of 75 cm, it is possible that these niches were made for guards when resting. The use of modernity of science and technology which has an impact on technological advances as a channel of cultural communication, can optimize the unique way images can be implemented globally (worldwide) in digitizing era.

Technology in different ways, can increase cognitive contact—immersiveness—between stimuli exposure and the audiences (Fitriati, 2019)—and that is historical studies using anthropometric doing.

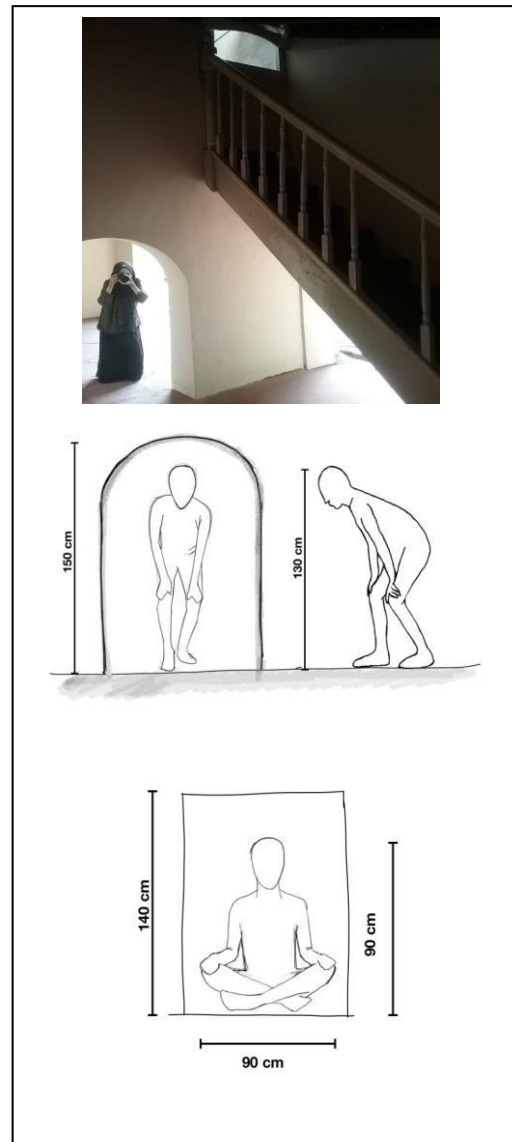


Figure 6. The inner recess of the gate which is the access to lt. 2 with a height of 150cm (Personal Documentation, 2021)

In this case, refers to behavioural perspective, differences in learning process of visual stimuli will affect the audience mindset, character, potential, and ability to solve or defining the message (Karimaliana et al., 2021). From the study that has been doing, it could be said that under the right and left parts of the gate are made based on the philosophy of Islamic religious—and it become implicit education that humans must have a humble soul (or personality) and attitude—or ‘andhap asor’. This intangible moral-ethic is reinforced by the presence of low pits and niches and can only be accessed by position body bent or cross-legged. This is in accordance with the statement of resource person R. Abdullah, who stated that Panembahan

Sumolo left a message through architectural buildings to remind people to have a humble spirit and attitude. Then, Labang Mesem' gate as an architectural building, not only reflecting the identity of the maker and owner, Panembahan Sumolo; but also develop intangible education about being people who has a love for God, kindhearted and be humble to the people, and has not forgotten the ancestors.

CONCLUSIONS

Results of the research can be concluded in several thesis: (1) Based on historical traces, the status of the Sumenep Palace during the reign was always under the auspices of the Javanese kingdoms, namely the Kertanegara and Majapahit kingdoms; and for approximately three centuries the Sumenep palace was under the shadow of the VOC (Dutch Company) power. This situation has impact to the formation of several architectural and ornament of the palace; (2) There is several formations of the building that is still keep the spirit of the ancestors and the owner of the palace—which is in the research, Panembahan Sumolo' era. Living in *pesantren'* life, has made Panembahan Sumolo become a leader who has religious vision, not only to the God, but also to humanity. The moral-ethic represents on Labang Mesem' gate; (3) The meaning of the monumental form of the Labang Masem gate illustrates that the gate is the result of acculturation of Hindu-Buddhist, Madurese, Chinese and European (Dutch) cultures—also the intangible spirit of Panembahan Sumolo about “being kind and humble”—which is in local terminology, called as ‘andhap asor’. Results of this thesis could be reinforcing that historical studies—through architectural façade or an ornamental interior and exterior—become some ways to strengthening moral-ethic based on cultural value, to develop human personality—mostly in digitizing era that has built diversity in every aspect of its daily and communication life.

Author's Contribution

All authors discussed the result and contributed to from the start to final manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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