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## Nusantara Aesthetics in Traditional Javanese House Interior Design: Adapting the Concept of Budi Pekerti for Homes based on Local Wisdom

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### **Abstract**

*For Javanese people, house construction is directed at maintaining a balance between residents and their environment. Adapting the concept of Aesthetic Values from Traditional Javanese Houses for interior design based on Indonesian culture aims to present an interior design that is homely, comfortable, spacious and in accordance with local wisdom. The aim of this research is to explore and develop the Indonesian aesthetic found in the interior design of traditional Javanese houses. This research utilizes a qualitative approach with an imperative method as a basis for producing interior designs that respect and adopt local cultural values. The results of this research reveal that the development of Nusantara Aesthetics in the interior design of traditional Javanese houses has an important role in creating spaces that not only focus on physical aspects, but also depict the cultural values, life philosophy and social ethics of Javanese society. Concepts such as aruh, gupuh, lungguh, and suguh reflect harmony in social interaction and guest reception, which is reflected in various architectural elements such as pendhapa, regol, and Paringgitan. By understanding and implementing this Nusantara Aesthetic, interior designers can create deeper spaces, embrace cultural richness, and respect local values in designing harmonious and meaningful residential environments.*

**Keywords:** *Archipelago Aesthetics, Interior Design, Traditional House, Java, Local Wisdom.*

### **1. Introduction**

The stories contained in Serat Centini deeply describe the philosophical values reflected in the life of Javanese society. Javanese culture is considered a noble culture, exuding a view of life that recognizes that life is only possible because of the power of Almighty God, known as the concept of urip mung sakdermo (Sutarto, 2006). Apart from that, the Javanese people's outlook on life is reflected in the understanding that life is only temporary (urip iku mung freean stopping by ngombe), teaching wisdom in living life with full awareness of the limitations of time (Sarsito, 2006).

These philosophical values are pervasive and form the basis for all aspects of the social and cultural life of Javanese society (Williams, 1991). Javanese cultural works, with full dedication, are produced to increase understanding of the meaning of life and life itself. Javanese people are directed to understand the purpose of life, the actions that must be taken to sustain life, and how to ultimately return to God Almighty (Sukarno, 2010). Overall, the philosophical values contained in the Serat Centini story enrich and are deeply rooted in the cultural heritage of the Javanese people, forming a meaningful and profound outlook on life (Varela, 2014).

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The specialness of the Javanese is reflected in their noble ideals related to the culture of peace. Javanese people view peace as the main foundation that can create a calm, safe and peaceful atmosphere in everyday life (Rianingrum et al., 2015). The principle of like *ayem serene* (peace) is not only a Javanese social philosophy, but also a deep inner manifestation for Javanese individuals. The principle of like *ayem serene*, which means peace and tranquility, is not only a social view, but also reflects the state of the heart and soul (Mulder, 1983), Javanese soul. Javanese society upholds the values of harmony and togetherness as the main basis for achieving a peaceful and peaceful atmosphere (Wiwoho & Sutopo, 2017).

One concept that is strongly held is the concept of *rukun*, which represents harmony and harmony in various aspects of life. By applying the concept of harmony, Javanese people believe that they can achieve a peaceful and harmonious life (Lestari et al., 2013). This concept not only includes relationships between individuals, but also involves harmony with nature, traditions, and cultural values (Setiawan, 2020). By upholding the principles of local wisdom, Javanese people design their lives to achieve peace, creating a harmonious and peaceful atmosphere for the entire community (Khairina et al., 2018).

Symbolism in Javanese culture is reflected in language, attitudes and cultural works, where the house has a central role as the only symbol that reflects the thoughts, desires and feelings of Javanese people (Syam, 2017). House, in the Javanese context, is known as *griya* or *dalem*, which contains a deep meaning which refers to Gunung Agung, interpreted as a large mountain which is considered a source of life by the Javanese people. Even the term "*dalem*", when interpreted in refined Javanese, has the meaning of a house or private residence (Utomo & Sudardi, 2016).

The connection between the meaning of home and a person's personal circumstances is very clear in Javanese culture. A house is not just a physical building that stands alone, but has a close relationship with its owner (Kim et al., 2014). This relationship includes social, cultural and economic aspects, creating a complex bond between the house and its owner (Tarigan et al., 2022). In a Javanese cultural perspective, a house not only fulfills the physical needs of its occupants, but also plays an important role in meeting spiritual needs. In this way, a house is not just a place to live, but rather becomes a concrete manifestation of the values, traditions and cultural identity attached to its owner (Chandra & Hidayatun, 2018).

Traditional Javanese houses are not just physical buildings, but are also an embodiment of the concept of life and a symbol of identity for the Javanese people (Prihatmaji et al., 2014). The decoration applied to buildings is a real manifestation of the Javanese cultural system which is rich in symbols and emblems, even in color schemes. Each decoration, with its diversity and richness of meaning, is a way for homeowners to express their existence and identity (Cahyono et al., 2017).

The Javanese cultural system which is full of symbols and emblems in home decoration not only functions decoratively, but also acts as a form of communication between the occupants of the house and their environment (Jazeri & Susanto, 2020). These decorations are not just ornaments, but rather symbolic expressions that reflect the views, hopes and life values of the home owner. With this concept, the presence of decoration in a traditional Javanese house becomes more than just a decorative element, but is truly integrated with the house itself (Irawanto et al., 2011). Traditional Javanese house decoration not only has aesthetic value, but also plays an important role in human relations of a religious and social nature. With each carefully selected decorative element, the homeowner was able to convey profound messages about spiritual beliefs, social values, and hopes for a harmonious life (Sunarti & Fadel, 2021).

The results of the study regarding *Nusantara Aesthetics* show in-depth efforts to explore local wisdom as a foundation for aesthetics. According to Forshee (2006), the shapes, forms and symbols that appear in Indonesian aesthetics are indeed diverse, but their spirit, soul and essence still show characteristics that are oriented towards mystical, magical, cosmic and religious aspects of culture. The importance of expressing local wisdom in Indonesian aesthetics results in an understanding that every aesthetic element not only has artistic value, but also encapsulates deep meanings involving spiritual and religious dimensions (Wuisang & Jones, 2011). The mystical and magical aspects, reflected in the forms and symbols, give an additional dimension to the Indonesian aesthetic, linking it closely to the beliefs and worldview of the local people (Cochrane, 2009).

This research aims to gain in-depth insight into the aesthetic aspects that characterize traditional Javanese houses and how these values can be applied and developed in the context of modern interior design. The benefits of this research involve contributing to further understanding of Indonesian aesthetics, particularly in the context of traditional Javanese house interior design. It is hoped that the research results can provide guidance for interior designers in creating spaces that combine the richness of local culture with the functional and aesthetic needs of the modern era, while strengthening the sustainability of the archipelago's cultural heritage.

## **2. Method**

This research adopts a qualitative approach using interpretive qualitative descriptive data analysis techniques. Data collection was carried out through interviews, document studies, and literature reviews (Gerring, 2017), with a focus on Indonesian aesthetics in traditional Javanese house interior design. Empirical data obtained from the field is essential to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the object of study, in line with the research objectives which reflect efforts to approach, understand and explain phenomena related to traditional Javanese houses (Yulianah, 2022). Written data comes from various sources, including books, journals, documents, as well as the results of previous research related to Indonesian aesthetics in traditional Javanese house interior design. An interpretive approach in data analysis will allow researchers to unravel and explain the complexity of the aesthetic values contained in traditional Javanese houses. Thus, it is hoped that this research will be able to provide an in-depth contribution to the understanding of Indonesian aesthetics, especially in the context of traditional Javanese house interior design.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

### **1. Semiotics of Traditional Javanese House Architecture**

Prosperity in the view of Javanese society is realized through comfort obtained from a sense of security and peace, especially in the home environment as the main place of residence and self-expression. Traditional Javanese houses, which are often filled with ornamentation, are a reflection of their owners and contain deep meaning (Robertson, 2012). Apart from being a place of activity, the house is also considered a symbol of stability and tranquility for its residents, reflecting inner goals. The importance of achieving peace lies in the balance between humans, the natural environment and the artificial environment, which is realized through the house as a symbol of harmony (Kim & Ju, 2016).

The philosophy of Javanese society emphasizes the role of humans as part of the microcosm which must pay attention to nature as part of the macrocosm (Gaffara et al., 2021). This awareness guides the choice of a good place, the direction the house faces, and the right time to start the construction process, illustrating a deep understanding of the harmonious relationship between humans and nature. In this perspective, the success of the construction process is considered a sign of perfection and brings prosperity to the home owner (Subiyantoro, 2011).

Javanese architecture is not only considered a physical structure that stands alone, but has become an integral part of the identity of Javanese society (Wiriyomartono, 2016). The house, in this perspective, is compared to parts of the human body, such as the head, body and legs, illustrating a holistic view of architectural structures (Kusno, 2014). The base and foundation are interpreted as the feet, while the walls, windows and doors are considered as the body, and the roof as the head.

This concept of personification is more than just an analogy, but is reflected in the house-making ceremony which is likened to the process of human birth. This ceremony is characterized by prayers offered to God and the ancestors, accompanied by offerings as a form of offering. Slaughtering animals in this ceremony is not only a ritual, but also a means of repelling danger which involves spiritual involvement and ancestral traditions (Wibowo & Murniatno, 1998).

With this view, the house is not only understood as a physical residence, but also as a living entity, has spirituality, and is closely related to the daily life of Javanese people. The personification of architecture as part of a human being reflects the depth of meaning and values inherent in the structure of a traditional Javanese house. The forms of traditional Javanese houses vary based on their use function (Widayat, 2004). Based on the shape of the building and the space contained within it, an overview of the social interaction activities and social stratification of Javanese people will be obtained (Wibowo & Murniatno, 1998). The classification of traditional Javanese house forms is as follows:

#### 1. Traditional house panggang pe

The traditional panggang pe house is an example of a very simple building. The design consists of one room with a rectangular shape, supported by 4 or 6 pillars as the main support structure. The roof of this house is characterized by a minimalist layout, which faces directly to the practical needs of the community. Even though it looks simple, traditional panggang pe houses have an important role in providing a functional residence for the community. This simple design concept reflects local wisdom in utilizing natural resources and creating houses that suit the needs and conditions of the surrounding environment (Hidayatun, 1999)

#### 2. Traditional village house

This traditional house displays a more structured and complex shape when compared to a traditional house, because it shows a clear division of space. The building has a rectangular plan with a roof covering both sides and has one peak point or wuwung. The basic design of this house involves a varying number of pillars, ranging from 4, 6, to 8, and so on, creating a more mature structural arrangement. This house is generally owned by people from the lower economic class, emphasizing the role of functionality and efficiency in the concept of traditional Javanese house design. With a more detailed structure, this house better meets space requirements, creating a more comfortable living environment that suits the social and economic conditions of the local community (Wibowo & Murniatno, 1998).

### 3. Limasan traditional house

Traditional Limasan houses feature a rectangular or rectangular floor plan, with roof ridges that tend to be lower than joglo houses. The name "limasan" itself has its origins in the word "limas-lasan," referring to the simple calculation of using a 5 meter long blandar and a 3 meter long molo (Idham, 2018). This house design creates more separate spaces and has a lower roof, reflecting attention to practical and functional factors in traditional Javanese architectural concepts. Limasan houses are often identified as houses belonging to people with middle economic needs and conditions, illustrating a more flexible design adaptation to the needs of people at that economic level.

### 4. Traditional joglo house

The joglo house is a very common form of building and is a characteristic that is widespread throughout Java. With a larger rectangular plan and the use of more abundant building materials, joglo houses have roofs that cover all four sides with high ridges. The main characteristic of this joglo building lies in the presence of four main pillars called saka guru, as well as the use of a tiered blandar known as blandar overlapping sari. This intercropping blandar, which extends upwards with increasing width, has a sunduk or sunduk kili at the upper end of the saka guru below the blandar. The function of this sunduk is to provide support and strengthening to the building structure, keeping the building stable and not changing position (Idham, 2018).

In making a traditional Javanese house, the spiritual aspect plays a major role, and the size of the building is determined very carefully, not just based on physical considerations alone. The physical form of the building is not the main priority, but rather the size of the building is determined based on the petungan system, using benchmark numbers believed by Javanese people as the basis for planning house construction (Priatmodjo, 2004). In determining the size of building elements, petungan uses physical units of measurement, such as feet, spans, cubits and fathoms, which are taken from the building owner. The use of physical units shows that the spatial elements in a traditional Javanese house are a reflection of the existence of the owner (Santosa, 2000).

This support system includes determining the length of the planer, the size of the parts of the house, and the number of ribs for the parts of the house. The length of the blandar and the number of usuk are calculated using consecutive numbers that have their respective names, such as 1 (sri), 2 (kitri), 3 (gana), 4 (liyu), and 5 (pokah) (Priatmodjo, 2004). The accuracy of counting the number of housing units is believed to influence aspects of the lives of the residents, including safety, happiness, luck and fortune, reflecting the deep relationship between the spiritual dimension and the physical structure of the building (Muktiono, 2018).

### 5. Archipelago Aesthetics Interior Design in Traditional Javanese Houses

The main characteristics of a traditional Javanese house include the layout and type of building that differentiate it. Traditional Javanese houses generally have characteristics that include a front door, a large yard, and a core building located in the middle, surrounded by supporting buildings (Muktiono, 2021). This layout creates a symbolic and functional design, with the core building acting as the center of daily life and activities, while the supporting buildings provide functional and aesthetic support. Traditional Javanese houses, as works of Javanese human culture, reflect the values, beliefs and lifestyle of the local community.

Malinowski's anthropological theory states that all cultural activities are intended to satisfy a series of human instinctual needs that are connected to their lives (Malinowski, 1923). Thus, a traditional Javanese house is not just a physical structure, but also a cultural form that reflects the needs and values of Javanese society. A well-organized layout and distinctive building type not only create a house as a place to live, but also as a center of life and cultural identity for the Javanese community.

The Indonesian aesthetics manifested in Traditional Javanese Houses refers to the belief that the house has a fundamental role in maintaining harmony. Through exploration of local wisdom, it was found that achieving harmony in building social life can be realized through the application of the principles of rukun-kurmat, which include the attitudes of gupuh, aruh, lungguh, and suguh.

#### a) Gupuh

Gupuh, in the context of Javanese culture, refers to the act of rushing and being full of enthusiasm when welcoming guests. Gupuh's attitude indicates a desire to quickly and enthusiastically welcome guests, often by going down or out of the house to greet them on the porch. This action reflects seriousness in paying respects to people who come to the house, indicating an attitude of respect and appreciation for their presence. Receiving guests with gupuh reflects the strong culture of politeness in Javanese society, where a person's behavior and language are considered an integral part of social etiquette and etiquette. Gupuh's attitude is an expression of local wisdom values which underlines the importance of respecting and welcoming guests in the home environment.

Polite behavior, which is included in the gupuh attitude, does not only include physical actions but also involves the use of polite language. Politeness in communication is considered an important aspect of good manners, emphasizing that a person's behavior and communication cannot be separated. In Javanese culture, these values are the basis for forming social relationships that are harmonious and full of mutual respect.

In the context of representing the gupuh attitude in a traditional Javanese house, the expression is reflected through the presence of an overhang on the core building. One of the striking characteristics of traditional Javanese houses is the presence of an overhang located at the front of the building. Emper is not only an architectural element, but also a symbol that reflects the attitudes and life orientation of the Javanese people. Javanese people pay very close attention to self-orientation and reflect it through various symbols, which are then applied in the architectural design of their homes.

The existence of masks in Javanese homes is a concrete representation of the nervous attitude in Javanese culture. Masks, which are ornaments or decorations placed in certain parts of the house, imply seriousness and enthusiasm in welcoming guests or visitors. This mask is a symbol of the commitment to give respect and a warm welcome to anyone who comes to the house. Thus, a traditional Javanese house is not only a physical structure, but also a real expression of the cultural values and attitudes of life of the people, especially in terms of attitude and meaningfulness in receiving guests.

#### b) Aruh

Aruh, in the Javanese cultural context, carries the meaning of greeting and involves the act of opening oneself through conversation. Aruh attitude emphasizes the importance of opening oneself so that guests feel comfortable and not awkward in conveying their intentions and goals



openly. In Javanese culture, aruh is not just the act of physically greeting, but also includes opening oneself to communicate with guests. This attitude is the basis for creating a friendly and pleasant atmosphere, where guests are invited to speak without hesitation or awkwardness.

Furthermore, the concept of influence describes a policy in communication, where the exchange of thoughts and views is valued. By understanding this attitude, Javanese culture teaches the importance of open dialogue that creates space for the exchange of ideas and concepts. The attitude of aruh is the basis for establishing close interpersonal relationships and full of mutual understanding, creating a foundation for Javanese society to build strong and harmonious social networks.

Aruh, as a form of politeness in Javanese culture, not only creates harmonious relationships between a person and others, but also builds respect in interpersonal interactions. An attitude of influence has a positive impact on building relationships, increasing self-confidence, and forming better communication skills for the individual. The correlation of the concept of aruh with the shape of the house in Javanese society can be found in the Javanese Traditional House, which has the characteristic of a small house at the front as a gate before entering the main house called regol.

Regol in a Traditional Javanese House is not just a physical building as a gate, but also reflects the concept of influence in an architectural context. As a building that functions as a gateway, regol displays a welcoming and friendly attitude that responds to guests from the start. With the presence of regol, the Javanese Traditional House creates an atmosphere that stimulates the spirit, inviting guests to feel welcome and appreciated from the moment they enter the home environment. This whole concept creates harmony not only in social relations, but also in the physical manifestation of the house as a symbol of togetherness and mutual respect in Javanese culture.

#### c) Lungguh

Lungguh, in the context of Javanese culture, reflects the attitude of inviting someone to immediately come in and sit down. The lungguh attitude is not just an act of physical invitation, but also includes ethics in communicating with other people. Javanese culture emphasizes the importance of sitting as an element of etiquette in communicating. Therefore, Javanese people always provide seats for people who come to the house as part of an effort to maintain regular etiquette in interacting with other people at home.

The humble attitude creates an atmosphere full of warmth and politeness in the house. The act of inviting you to immediately enter and sit down reflects the values of politeness in Javanese culture. The seating provided intentionally shows attention and respect for guests, and emphasizes the desire to create a comfortable and friendly communication space. Thus, the concept of lungguh not only forms ethics in communication, but also creates the basis for close social relationships and mutual respect in the context of traditional Javanese homes.

A representation of the Javanese's sincere attitude in providing seating, or lungguh, can be found in the design of Traditional Javanese Houses. One architectural element that reflects this solemnity is the pendhapa, in the form of an open space or omah ngarep, which is loosely designed to welcome the presence of other people. The pendhapa in a Traditional Javanese House is not only a physical structure, but also a symbol of an open and attentive attitude towards guests.

Open spaces such as pendhapa create a friendly and inviting environment, reflecting the desire to provide a comfortable place for anyone who comes. The loose, open design creates a relaxed

atmosphere, allowing for more intimate interactions between hosts and guests. The concept of omah ngarep as a reception space reflects Javanese culture which places importance on social relations and hospitality. Through the design of Traditional Javanese Houses depicting lungguh, Javanese people not only convey their sincerity in providing a place to sit, but also create an inspiring space to share experiences and build close relationships within their home environment.

#### d) Suguh

Suguh, in the context of Javanese culture, refers to the act of giving a simple treat or dish when there are guests. The concept of suguh for Javanese people reflects the friendly and generous attitude that grows in human relations. Javanese culture places a high value on the attitude of giving treats as an expression of warmth and friendliness in communicating with others. Javanese people feel that giving treats is a form of respect for guests who come to the house.

In Javanese culture, they call people who like to give treats "loma." This term refers to individuals who have a kind, generous attitude and enjoy providing treats to guests. Loma not only includes the aspect of providing food or drink, but also includes the willingness to share what one has with others. The loma attitude creates close social ties in Javanese society, where its existence is one of the cultural pillars that strengthens the values of solidarity and brotherhood. Thus, the concepts of suguh and loma not only create shared experiences in everyday life, but also become the foundation of warm and enduring relationships in Javanese society.

The Javanese tradition of welcoming guests does not only limit itself to serving food, but also involves entertainment aspects which are manifested in artistic performances. Therefore, in a traditional Javanese house, there is an important element called Paringgitan. Paringgitan is not only a place for performing arts, but also functions as a foyer and boundary space between Pendapa and Dalem Ageng in a traditional Javanese house.

Paringgitan occupies a strategic position behind the Pendapa, creating a harmonious relationship between the two main rooms in a Javanese house. As a terrace, Paringgitan provides a comfortable place for guests and family members to enjoy art performances. Its function as a boundary between the pendhapa room and the inner room emphasizes Paringgitan's role as a transition zone that connects the outside world and the world inside a traditional Javanese house.

As a semi-public building, Paringgitan also reflects the values of togetherness and intimacy in Javanese culture. This place is a place to welcome guests with warmth and provide an experience of traditional Javanese art. In this way, Paringgitan is not only a space for artistic performances, but also a symbol of the diversity of social and artistic activities implemented in the daily lives of Javanese people.

## 4. Conclusion

The traditional Javanese house is not only a physical structure, but also a deep expression of the cultural values, philosophy of life and manners of Javanese society. The Indonesian aesthetic which is manifested in the interior design of traditional Javanese houses includes principles such as aruh (greeting), gupuh (moving quickly to welcome guests), lungguh (inviting people to come in and sitting down), and suguh (giving treats or dishes). These concepts are reflected in various architectural and spatial elements, such as pendhapa, regol, and Paringgitan.



A traditional Javanese house is not only a place to live, but also a symbol of life and existence of the Javanese people. The interior and exterior design of this house reflects policies and ethics in social interaction, creating a warm and homely atmosphere for receiving guests. More than that, traditional Javanese houses are a place to actualize the noble values of Javanese culture which involve spirituality, harmony with nature, and respect for guests. As a rich cultural heritage, the development of Indonesian aesthetics in traditional Javanese house interior design has the potential to provide inspiration and guidance in designing residential spaces that combine tradition and modernity. Further research and in-depth understanding of the philosophy behind each element of a traditional Javanese house can make a significant contribution to preserving and respecting Indonesia's cultural heritage as well as enriching the overall architecture and interior design.

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