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## **Symbolic Values and Meanings in Lasem Batik Motives**

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### **Abstrack**

Every batik motive has an interesting philosophy, as well as the Lasem batik motive. The Lasem batik motive also contains an interesting philosophy. This study aims to analyze the value and symbolic meaning contained in Lasem batik motives. This study uses a qualitative method by describing the object under study and using a semiotic approach. The dominant motives of Lasem written batik are Hong Bird, Gunung Ringgit, Dragon, Seruni, Latohan, Kricakan, Brayo, Gurdha and Lokcan motives. The Hong Bird motive means noble beauty and intelligence and has the value of effort and hard work. The Gunung Ringgit motive means abundant fortune and has the value of effort and hard work. The Dragon motive means strength and beautiful hope and has a strength value. The Seruni motive means well-being in old age, happiness and longevity, and has a value of beauty and harmony. The Latohan motive is a symbolic form of the latohan plant and has a natural wealth value. The Kricakan motive is a symbolic form of the construction of the Anyer-Panarukan road and has the value of hard work. The Brayo motive is a symbolic form of the Brayo plant and has natural wealth values. The Gurdha motive means valor, protection and fortitude and has heroic value. The Lokcan motive means love for fellow human beings and has a value of love.

**Keywords:** Symbolic, Meaning, Arts, Batik, Lasem.

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## INTRODUCTION

Batik is a cultural heritage from Indonesian ancestors that still exists today. On October 2, 2009, the 20th meeting held in Abu Dhabi, batik has been recognized by UNESCO as a humanitarian heritage for non-material culture ( *Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity* ) or Intangible Cultural Heritage ( *Intangible World Culture Heritage* ). This recognition is not without reason. Batik Lasem is considered as something that reflects Indonesia because batik is very attached to Indonesia, there is also a symbolism value, and it is made with traditional techniques. After that, held commemoration of National Batik Day on October 2 which has \_ decided by President Number 33 of 2009 (Affan et al., 2019) .

According to Sugiarto and Binawati (2008), the word batik comes from the Javanese language, namely from the words *amba* and dot or *nitik*. *Amba* means to write or draw, and *nitik* or point means to make a point. Batik has long been known in Indonesia and has even been used throughout the world. Not only admired for its beautiful motives, batik also has meaning and philosophy in it. The motives on batik have their own characteristics in each region. These motives are an expression of each region.

Batik developed in various regions in Indonesia, especially in Java. These batiks can be found in Pekalongan, Surakarta, Yogyakarta, Cirebon, Lasem, Kudus, Ponorogo, Tuban, Banyumas, and others. These batiks have their own characteristics both in motives and colors that cannot be separated from the influence of time, environment and geographical location. These motives and colors have their own symbolic meanings that describe the identity of each region, and make batik not only visually appealing, but also full of symbolic value.

Lasem is an area in Rembang Regency. Lasem has quite a diverse culture. The majority of Lasem's population are Chinese and Javanese. Lasem people live with mutual

tolerance making them live very harmoniously. This is what causes the emergence of cultural acculturation in Lasem, one of which is architecture. The many Chinese buildings that stand in Lasem are enough to attract local and foreign tourists from Rembang Regency. These buildings can be found in the Dhuwur Wall area, which is in the Chinatown, to be precise, in Karangturi Village, then there are also in Dasun Village and Dorokandang Village.

Batik Lasem has existed since the 13th century. The development of Lasem batik is quite rapid, both in terms of motive renewal, as well as the batik production process. Batik Lasem has been widely produced and used as official clothing, school uniforms, and daily wear. There are several types of batik that are often used, namely written batik, stamped batik, and painted batik. In Lasem batik, the type of technique used is written batik. Until now, Lasem batik makers still maintain written batik techniques to maintain their quality and authenticity. This situation supports the progress and development of the batik business in Lasem, both in terms of motives and colors. After the recognition of batik as an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2009 in Abudabi, Lasem batik felt a breath of fresh air to rise again to develop Lasem batik. Many new motives can add variations to Lasem batik motives.

As well as researcher Yulianto (Yulianto et al., 2020) entitled "Shape and Meaning of Banyumasan Batik Motive: a Study in the Context of Finding Cultural Identity". This study explains that Banyumasan batik ornaments have variations and uniqueness. The iconic meaning of Banyumas batik reflects the natural environment, society and culture of Banyumas. Banyumas batik motives are interrelated and have a carrying capacity when used as a cultural identity for the Banyumas people.

Can concluded that contained in Banyumasan batik motives containing about reflection culture and public as well as describe environment nature. Whereas on study Yulia (Susilaningtyas et al., 2020)

entitled "Symbolic Meanings and Motive Values in Jetis Batik Motives: Ethnopedagogical Studies of Local Culture for Strengthening National Character Education", Jetis batik motives only Contains plant motives And animal, like garden sugarcane, flower Spinach, Shrimp and milkfish. The values contained in Jetis batik motive containing religious values, caring environment, work hard, independent, love peace, and independent.

Based on the background that has been described, it is known that Lasem batik has a blend of culture between Javanese culture and Chinese culture. Lasem batik motives are very diverse and have different philosophical meanings for each motive. There is three Lasem batik motive groups, namely flora motives, fauna motives, and other motives. The philosophical meaning of batik motives can be applied For life everyday. From this, the values contained in the motives that dominate Lasem batik need to be studied.

## METHODS

This research method uses a qualitative descriptive method with the aim of analyzing events, phenomena, social activities, beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and thoughts of both individuals and groups. This study uses an interdisciplinary approach that includes semiotics examining the meanings contained in the motives and colors of Lasem batik.

This research was conducted with the stages of observation, interviews and literature study, and documentation. In the first stage, namely the observation stage. The observation stage is used to observe the research target environment directly. The second stage is conducting interviews and literature study. Interviews and literature study stages were used to obtain valid data in the form of motives and colors that dominate Lasem batik, along with their meanings. Then the third stage is documentation. The documentation stage is used to provide evidence regarding matters related to research. In addition, researchers also

searched for documentation and archives obtained from Lasem batik makers.

Researchers also used data triangulation for the purpose of checking the validity of this research data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Batik

The word batik comes from the Javanese language, namely from the words *amba* and *point* or *nitik*. *Amba* means to write or draw, and *nitik* or *point* means to make a point (Binawati, Heni and Sugiharto, 2008) . Batik is related to making dots or dripping wax or what is called wax which is applied to mori cloth (Trixie, 2020) . According to Naam (Na'am, 2019; Sugiarto & Rohidi, 2022) , batik is the result of human thought in the form of motives filled with their cosmological symbols. Based on this understanding, it can be concluded that batik is writing or drawing dots that are applied using wax or wax onto mori cloth.

Technically, batik is divided into two, namely written batik and modern batik. The explanation is as follows.

#### Handmade batik

Written batik is batik that is still processed in the traditional way. Making batik uses quite complicated stages. The complexity can be found when writing batik wax on cloth, as well as the coloring process. Writing batik is done by scraping batik wax onto a cloth that has been patterned before, then scraping the batik wax using a canting. In the form of motives, motives on written batik can be different from motives made before or after because the results are direct hand scratches. Most hand-written batik is sold at quite high prices (Mandegani et al., 2018) .

#### Modern Batiks

Modern batik is batik with motives, production techniques, and functions that have been touched by modern culture. In modern batik there are three types of batik.

the first is that there is stamped batik, mixed batik, and batik motive textiles.

### **Batik**

Stamped batik is batik whose manufacturing process begins with preparation, achievement, coloring, pelorodan, then refinement. The disadvantages of stamped batik are the lack of freedom in expressing batik motives because the shape of the canting is limited. The motives also have the same shape.

### **Combination Batik**

Combination batik is batik that has a manufacturing process with a blend of written batik and stamped batik. The process of making combination batik begins with the preparatory stage, then continues with the patterning stage for large-sized motives, then proceeds with printing, printing, then coloring, followed by pelorodan, then to the final stage, namely refinement (Yusdiansyah & Hendar, 2022).

### **Batik Motive Textile**

Batik motive textiles are fabric processing using screen or printing tools either manually or using machines that produce printed fabrics with batik motives. Textiles with batik motives have more diverse motives and colors than written batik, stamped batik, and combination batik. Batik motive textiles also have a more affordable price compared to written batik (Setiawan et al., 2019).

### **Batik Lasem**

Lasem is a coastal area in Rembang Regency. Lasem has quite a diverse culture. The majority of Lasem's population are ethnic Muslims, Chinese and Javanese. The Lasem people live with mutual tolerance making them very harmonious. This is what causes cultural acculturation in Lasem, one of which is architecture. Many Chinese buildings stand in Lasem which attract local and foreign tourists. These buildings can be found in Chinatown areas in the villages of Dasun,

Karangturi and Dorokandang. Not only in the form of striking architecture, Lasem batik is also an attraction in this Chinatown area. There are batik production activities in this Chinatown area by employing indigenous people.

In ancient times, the batik worn by the aristocrats who lived in Lasem was only batik with the Majapahit batik pattern which was thought to be similar to some of the Yogyakarta and Surakarta Mataram batik motive designs, namely the gringsing and kawung motives which had soja or brownish and blue colors (Lion, 2010). At that time, the ruler of the Lasem area did not try to create a political identity as Lasem's identity. Until one day a captain and his wife came and decided to stay in Lasem. They teach batik and dancing to their daughters and indigenous youth (Haryono, 2019).

After the indigenous youths were introduced to the batik process, Campa style batik was introduced. Now, Lasem batik continues to grow. Batik Lasem became known for its characteristics in the 13th century. Batik Lasem has a characteristic bright color. The color is processed with noni root and produces a red color like chicken blood or often called *abang getih pitik*. Batik Lasem is a written batik art with a coastal style with a variety of motives and colors. The coloring of written batik uses natural materials as well as synthetic materials. Material natural Lasem batik obtained from root noni, leaves mango, turmeric, skin mangosteen, etc. Although colors the originate from material natural, colorful the looked contrast. However matter This Enough different with opinion (Prasetyo et al., 2018) that ingredients dye natural to produce batik shady color \_ And dark.

By living tolerantly, batik has a blend of Chinese and Javanese culture. The characteristics of Lasem batik are as follows.

### **Color**

In Lasem batik, there are color rules that make Lasem batik colors look beautiful. The color rules include the color of *sleeves* or motives with blue color on a cloth

background with a milky white base, *bang-bangan* or red with a milky white base, *bang biron* or red and blue with a milky white base, *bang bangan* or blackish purple motives. or purple and red with a milky white base, *irengan* or black motives with a white basis, three countries or motives with red, blue and brown colors, and four countries or motives with red, blue and brown colors. These colors are obtained from the acculturation of Chinese and Javanese culture. The distinctive color of Lasem batik is blood red or known as *brother getih pithik* which is interpreted in Indonesian as chicken blood which is influenced by Chinese culture. The red color is said to be difficult to imitate in other regions, or if it is processed in other regions it will produce a different color from the coloring processed in Lasem.

#### Motive

The motives of Lasem batik are very varied and unique. Dominant motives in Lasem batik with indigenous cultural adaptations include the broken stone or *Kricakan* motive, *Brayo* motive, *Latohan* motive, while the motives adapted from Chinese culture include the *Hong* or phoenix bird motive, *Dragon* or lion motive, *Lokcan* motive, *Mount Ringgit*, and *Chrysanthemum*. While the motive adapted from Javanese culture is the *gurdha* motive.

#### Value and Symbolic Meaning of Lasem Written Batik

The word symbol comes from the Greek word *symbolos*. *Symbolos* has a meaning that is as a sign or something that describes something. Symbols are meanings or meanings that are described or contained in certain symbols or codes (Ferudyn, 2013). Like the Lasem batik, which contains symbolic meanings in its motives and colors. It is often said that the identical color in Lasem's hand-written batik is red. The reasons and symbolic meanings of the colors and characteristic motives possessed by Lasem's written batik are as follows.

#### Color

The distinctive feature of Lasem's hand-written batik is the blood-red color of the chicken or it is called brother getih pitik. There are two reasons that make the color characteristic of Lasem batik. The first reason is the influence of Chinese culture where there is hope or belief that the batik wearer will be happy. The second reason is that when coloring, dyes originating from the Netherlands and Europe when mixed with local water (Lasem) turn a red color of chicken blood. The dominant colors in Lasem's written batik are *soga* or brown, and blue. The symbolic meaning of this *soga* color is that it means warmth. The color of *soga* or brownish color comes from Javanese culture, namely the culture of Surakarta and Yogyakarta (Cahyandari, 2013). The blue color comes from the Netherlands and Europe. The blue color is a symbol of the vastness of a calm sky.

#### Motive

The motives of Lasem batik are very diverse and unique. The dominant motives in batik are the *gurdha* motive, the broken stone or *Kricakan* motive, the *Brayo* motive, the *Latohan* motive, namely the *lok can* motive, the *Hong* or phoenix motive, the *Ringgit* Mountain motive, the *Dragon* or lion motive, and others. The symbolic meaning contained in each Lasem written batik motive is as follows.

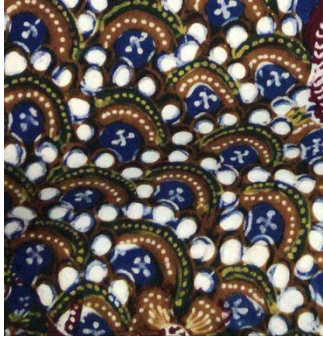
#### Hong Bird motive



**Figure 1.** Hong bird motive  
Source: Novia documentation

*Phoenix* motive is a symbol of noble beauty and intelligence. Has the value of effort and hard work.

### Ringgit Mountain motive



**Figure 2.** Ringgit Mountain Motive  
Source: Novia documentation

The Gunung Ringgit motive, as for the symbolic meaning in this motive, is the hope of an abundance of fortune as illustrated by the motive depicting coins stacked or lined up like a mountain. The Gunung Ringgit motive has a value of wealth and prosperity.

### Dragon or Lion motive



**Figure 3.** Dragon or Lion motive  
Source: Novia documentation

The dragon motive has a meaning as a beautiful symbol of strength and hope. The Naga or liong motive has the hope that someone who wears lasem batik with this motive will gain the strength to overcome and face the dangers that come their way, and have beautiful hopes for everyday life. The Dragon or Lion motive has a strength value.

### Seruni motive



**Figure 4.** Seruni motives  
Source: Novia documentation



**Figure 5.** Seruni motive from Sumbergirang Village  
Source: Novia documentation

Seruni motive is a picture of a daisy. The Seruni motive has several different forms according to the manufacturing village. The difference in the shape of the flower is an identity for each batik maker. As is the case with the Seruni motive from Babagan Village, which can be seen in Figure 4, the Seruni motive tends to have a flower crown with a pointed shape, while the batik made in Sumbergirang Village, which can be seen in Figure 5, tends to have a round shape. The Seruni motive means well-being in old age, happiness and longevity, and has a value of beauty and harmony.

### Latohan motive



**Figure 6.** Latohan motive  
Source: Novia documentation

The Latohan motive is a motive from the description of latoh sea plants as a description of the coast. The latoh plant can be found along the Lasem beach. The Latohan motive has a meaning as a symbol of natural wealth. The Latohan motive has a wealth value.

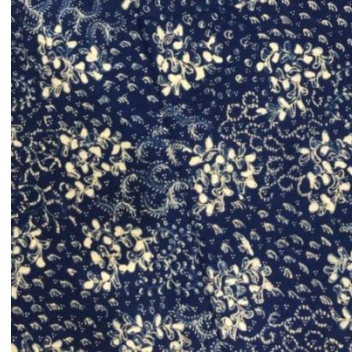
### Kricakan Motive



**Figure 7.** Kricakan motive  
Source: Novia documentation

The Kricakan motive is a motive as a picture of the memories when Deandels made the road. The Kricakan motive depicts that during the construction of the Anyer – Panarukan highway, many Lasem residents were asked to help in the construction of the road. The task of the Lasem residents is to break stones. As a result of the difficulty of the work carried out resulted in many victims who died. This incident was then used as the Kricakan motive to describe the incident at that time. Kricakan motive has a value of hard work.

### Brayo motive



**Figure 8.** Brayo motive  
Source: Novia documentation

The name of the Brayo motive comes from the Brayo plant. The Brayo plant is a type of mangrove tree that lives on the beach or river. Brayo's motive is a symbolic motive of the coastal area. The Brayo motive is a symbol of fertility, prosperity and happiness, especially for the northern coastal communities around Rembang. The Brayo motive has a wealth value.

### Gurdha motive



**Figure 9.** The motive of the Gurdha  
Source: Novia documentation

The Gurdha or Garuda motive has a meaning as a symbol of valor, protection, fortitude, and heroism. The Gurdha motive has the hope that someone who wears lasem batik with this motive will receive protection wherever he is. The Gurdha motive has a heroic value.

### Lokcan motive



**Figure 6.** Lokcan motives  
Source: Bear Heritage documentation

The Lokcan motive has a meaning as a symbol of love. The lok can motive has the hope that someone who wears lasem batik with this motive will always have a feeling of love in living life with other people. The Lokcan motive has a heroic value (Basiroen, 2020).

### CONCLUSION

Batik is a cultural heritage from Indonesian ancestors that still exists today. According to Sugiarto and Binawati (2008), batik comes from the Javanese language, namely from the words *amba* and *nitik* or *point*. *Amba* means writing or drawing, and *nitik* or *point* means writing or drawing.

Technically, batik is divided into two parts, namely traditional batik and modern batik. Traditional batik is batik that is processed in the traditional way, namely writing. Written batik has the longest process and has the most expensive price when compared to other batik. Modern batik is divided into three, namely stamped batik, combination batik, and textile *printing* batik. Stamped batik is batik that is printed using a stamp that already has a pattern. Stamped batik motives tend to be the same and less varied. Meanwhile, combination batik is a combination of written batik and stamped batik. In textile *printing*, batik is a fabric that is processed manually or using a machine by printing batik motives.

Batik develops in various regions in Indonesia, one of which is batik in Rembang

Regency. This batik is located in Lasem District. Lasem District itself is on the coast of the North Coast of Java. Batik Lasem is a batik that has a uniqueness that is quite different from other coastal batik. The uniqueness of Lasem batik lies in its motives and colors. Lasem batik has unique motives, where the motives in Lasem batik are acculturated motives from Javanese and Chinese culture. In terms of color, Lasem batik has an identity color, namely the red color of chicken blood or often called *brother getih pitik*. The blood red color of the chicken comes from the noni root. The uniqueness of the blood red color of the chicken if it is processed outside Lasem will produce a different red color.

Lasem batik has been around since the 13th century. Lasem batik motives are a blend of Javanese and Chinese motives. The dominant motives in Lasem's written batik are broken stone or *Kricakan*, *Brayo*, *Latohan*, *Hong* or *phoenix*, *Dragon* or *lion*, *lok can*, *Gurdha*, and *Mount Ringgit* motives.

The dominant colors in Lasem's written batik are red, *soga* and blue, and the dominant motives in Lasem's written batik are the *Hong* or *phoenix*, *Mount Ringgit*, *Dragon* or *lion*, *Latohan*, *Kricakan*, *Brayo*, *Gurdha* and *Lokcan* motives. The *Hong Bird* motive means noble beauty and intelligence and has the value of effort and hard work. The *Gunung Ringgit* motive means abundant fortune and has the value of effort and hard work. The *Dragon* motive means strength and beautiful hope and has a strength value. The *Seruni* motive means well-being in old age, happiness and longevity, and has a value of beauty and harmony. The *Latohan* motive is a symbolic form of the *Latohan* plant and has natural wealth values. The *Kricakan* motive is a symbolic form of the construction of the *Anyer-Panarukan* road and has the value of hard work. The *Brayo* motive is a symbolic form of the *Brayo* plant and has natural wealth values. The *Gurdha* motive means valor, protection, and heroism. The *Lokcan* motive means love for fellow human beings and has a value of love.



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