

RESEARCH PAPER

Environmental Conservation Value of Various Wall Decorations at the Islamic Relics of Sunan Drajat's Tomb

Rikhma Fikriana Farrakin¹, **Ahmad Fauzan Hidayatullah¹**

¹ Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo, Semarang, Indonesia

 rikhma_fikriana_farrakin_2008086088@walisongo.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

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The Sunan Drajat Complex stands out as a location adorned with aesthetic decorations, unique to the island of Java. Revered as a wise figure in society, Sunan Drajat has seamlessly integrated into modern life, imparting teachings through art, notably the Sufism teachings of Catur Piwulang. This research aims to identify the principles of environmental conservation values reflected in the wall decorations of Sunan Drajat's tomb in Lamongan. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the study draws on the environmental preservation concept of Catur Piwulang, specifically "Wenehono Pangan Marang Wong Kang Keluwen." This concept emphasizes the importance of cherishing the treasures present in the universe, encompassing flora, fauna, and other abiotic elements like water, wind, and air, which are shared among individuals. The decorations on Sunan Drajat's tomb, including the gate of Lawang Agung, partition walls, main, and side doors, manifest the values of character education for environmental conservation. These values encompass caring, tolerance, justice, protection, preservation, and a profound love for the homeland.

ABSTRAK

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Kompleks Sunan Drajat merupakan salah satu lokasi ragam hias yang estetik antara ragam-ragam hias yang dapat ditemukan di Pulau Jawa. Sunan Drajat dianggap sebagai orang bijak di kalangan masyarakat karena telah beradaptasi dengan kehidupan modern dan mengajar melalui seni, salah satunya ajaran tasawuf catur piwulang. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui prinsip-prinsip nilai konservasi lingkungan yang tercermin pada hiasan dinding makam Sunan Drajat Lamongan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Nilai pelestarian lingkungan pada konsep catur piwulang "Wenehono Pangan Marang Wong Kang Keluwen" mengajarkan bahwa dengan selalu mengingat harta yang dinikmati dalam kehidupan alam semesta, termasuk flora dan fauna serta elemen abiotik lainnya seperti air, angin, dan udara juga milik individu lain. Hal ini dikorelasikan dengan ragam hias yang ada di makam Sunan Drajat (gapura lawang agung, dinding penyekat, pintu utama dan samping) menunjukkan nilai pendidikan karakter untuk konservasi lingkungan berupa peduli, toleran, adil, melindungi, merawat, melestarikan dan juga cinta tanah air.

INTRODUCTION

The appearance of ornaments in Indonesia cannot be separated from the history of Indonesian culture which was influenced by two important cultures: the Neolithic culture and the Dong-Son culture. What is interesting to note is that, in primitive ornaments (Sadah et al., 2018), the importance of the existence of ornaments is considered more important than the form or method of manufacture. The representation of ornaments originating from nature in art is idealized and adapted to human beauty standards. Ornamental nature is not a unique natural beauty, but distillation. According to Marpaung & Nur (2018), Distillation is the stylization of various natural forms into an artistic style in the form of ornamental art so that it becomes a decorative object while maintaining its original shape and characteristics.

Each regional culture has different cultural characteristics and characteristics caused by its background and environment in the form of ideas, concepts, behaviors, and artifacts when the culture takes place. As a result, each decoration in each region has a unique shape (Ramadhan & Ismurdiyahwati, 2022). The Sunan Drajat complex is one of the locations of the decorative motifs that have aesthetic potential among the various ornaments found on Java Island. Sunan Drajat, a *Waliyullah*, spread Islam on the north coast of Java Island, to be precise in the city of Lamongan, in the XIV and XV centuries M. The Sunan Drajat tomb complex which is currently used as a cultural heritage for religious tourism, recorded 2,869,770 visits in 2021 and 2022, according to BPS data. The high number of visits by members of the Muslim community, especially Nahdhiyin residents, is one of the factors for the high number of visits (Sadah et al., 2020).

Sunan Drajat is considered a wise man among the people because he has adapted to modern life and taught through art. In the *Muqoddimah* book, Ibn Khaldun's theory explains that humans cannot be separated from civilization, which is influenced by climate, environment, and nature. Sunan Drajat emphasized that the most famous teaching of Sufism is *Catur piwulang*, which is the basis of Islamic teachings. One of them reads "*Wenehono Pangan Marang Wong Kang Keluwen*" when living *catur piwulang*. Mason Djuad, one of the descendants of Sunan Drajat, interprets this to mean that if we don't help those in need, especially those who are hungry, it will be beneficial for those who come after us (Husna, 2022).

Catur piwulang focuses on literary works and semiotic theory about the meaning of signs. The signs created by Sunan Drajat are identified in this explanation as representing his cultural background. Everything it wants to represent has a name that starts with an icon, usually an ornament. The inclusion of Hindu elements in Sunan Drajat's decoration shows that Islamic values and environmental adaptation include the diversity of Javanese culture. Educating the public about the importance of protecting the environment is one of how the Sunan Drajat ornate complex is made to see its beauty. When acting and behaving, value is defined as something abstract that functions as a general rule. The need to conserve natural resources, whose quality is known to be

declining rapidly, gave rise to conservation itself. According to [Rachman \(2012\)](#), the effects of this degradation are concerning and will endanger humanity, especially those generations who will inherit the nature of this universe.

The reason for choosing to educate environmental conservation values is because the wall decoration of Sunan Drajat has several motifs ranging from flora and fauna, besides that research reports on this matter are also relatively small. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to find out the principles of environmental conservation values that are reflected in the wall decoration of the tomb of Sunan Drajat Lamongan.

METHOD

This research can be classified as descriptive qualitative research based on the characteristics of the data on the Sunan Drajat tomb complex in the written text on the Sunan Drajat site. This qualitative descriptive research aims to accurately describe the symptoms associated with the object in question and to achieve a natural perception of the object as a whole ([Sugiyono, 2010](#)). This research is called descriptive because it aims to describe the cultural values and signs found on the Sunan Drajat heritage site. Interviews, observation, documentation, transcription, and translation techniques are all data collection methods.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to semiotic theory by [Peirce \(1982\)](#), signs of meaning can be divided into three: symbols, indexes, and icons. The icon is a sign that is based on similarity while index is a group of signs that appear due to cause and effect; Moreover, the symbol is a sign system based on convention. Catur Piwulang is a collection of the four teachings of Sunan Drajat which are arranged into one complex which is located in front of the roof where Sunan Drajat died as his burial place.



Figure 1. Piwulang chess text board (authors' documentation)

It contains four guiding principles, namely giving knowledge, giving food, providing clothing, and providing protection for fellow living beings that must be obeyed throughout daily life. One of them is “*Wenhono Pangan Marang Wong Kang Keluwen*” which means: giving food to hungry people this is classified as an index sign ([Figure 1](#)).

The form of the symbol, on the other hand, functions as an invitation to consider the conditions around us. Sunan Drajat's lessons can be used to analyze the value of environmental preservation by always remembering some of the treasures that we enjoy in the life of the universe, including flora and fauna as well as other abiotic elements such as water, wind, and air also belonging to other individuals who are unable to provide for future generations. Wise advice makes it very clear that the environment must not be damaged, let alone destroyed because environmental needs are the forerunner of natural heritage and cultural heritage values.

The most quality food is the knowledge that will teach how humans can improve their standard of living by being equipped with their minds and minds, and that food is judged by material things. With the ability to cultivate land or grow crops, as well as religious knowledge and natural sciences, this universe can be used as a source of life (Nashihuddin, 1995).

Lawang Agung gate tomb complex of Sunan Drajat

The main gate of Sunan Drajat's tomb is *Lawang Agung* gate (Figure 2). On one side or the other, there is a wall known as the *pacak pager* which is blessed with various animating designs made to depict objects in the human heart as carvings of flower rings arranged to resemble domes, *gunungan*, and different creatures (Iksan, 2014). Overall, it can be said that the semiotic elements in the decoration of the *Lawang Agung* gate building function as a means of communication for those who see it.



Figure 2. Decorative variety at the *Lawang Agung* gate (authors' documentation)

Lung-lungan is a representation of the harmony of ornaments between “*Hablu minallah and hablu minnas.*” The types of decoration available include *isen-isen* motifs in the form of natural elements that describe the natural conditions that existed at that time. There are symbolic meanings derived from ornamental plant forms, such as food security, regeneration, shade, and beauty. When connected with the field of environmental conservation, the variety of ornamental flora exemplifies the responsibility of preserving food sources for a healthy environmental balance and by regenerating wisely so that these plants continue to play a beautiful role in protecting the lives of other living things. In addition, mountain-shaped decorations have conservation value and must

be protected as a perfect human symbol so they don't become extinct. damaged and used arbitrarily as a tourist attraction. Apart from that, water ornaments also have a conservation value, namely caring for each other so that they behave sensitively because it has an embedded value in optimizing natural resources so they don't run out. Based on the data, the morphological analysis of biotic and abiotic varieties of *Lawang Agung* gate are presented in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. Morphological analysis of biotic and abiotic varieties of *Lawang Agung* gate

Ornamental Variety Type	Form	Symbolic Elements
Flora	Vegetables (Cabbage)	Food Welfare
	Vegetables (Fern)	Food Welfare
	Trembesi Shoots	Young Regeneration
	Alocasia leaves	Shade of Life
	Tree of Life 3 (Bonsai)	Form of Beauty
	Peanut Seeds	Regeneration and food sources
Mountain (Meru)	Mountain	Represents the sum of unity, oneness, the abode of divine beings
Water	Water waves	The source of the civilization of life

Decorative wall insulation of Sunan Drajat's Tomb

The partition wall is made of wood panels which divide the partition wall into rectangular sections ([Figure 3](#)). A door can be found in the middle. Six panels, three above and three below, divide the wall to the left and right of the door. The decorations on the panels on the left and right are identical. One of them is decorated with wings, mountains, and plants, while the other five are openwork carvings with plant motifs ([Abbas, 1981](#)). The motif of this decorative plant in the form of tendrils and scrolls of a lotus flower in Javanese Islamic texts is used as the parable “The true spirit of *Idhofi*, the existence of the essence of Allah as a complicated word.”

When connected with the value of environmental conservation, the Lotus Flower needs to be intelligently processed into natural resources to find a logical solution because as a symbol of regeneration, renewal of life returns. While the decorative fauna with bird motifs has a high ecological value existence, it is necessary to instill the conservation value of tolerance and care for bird life to fly freely in nature so that deviant behavior is not created to appreciate changing patterns of social inequality. As for mounds of land and water ponds in the environment as elements of life and sources of life, they should not be exploited on a large scale, bearing in mind the conservation value of love for the motherland as an attitude of responsibility to continue to protect and save this earth from the climate crisis. Based on the data, the morphological analysis of biotic and abiotic varieties of decorative walls insulation are presented in [Table 2](#).



Figure 3. The decoration on the dividing wall of Sunan Drajat's tomb (authors' documentation)

Table 2. Morphological analysis of biotic and abiotic varieties of decorative walls insulation

Ornamental Variety Type	Form	Symbolic Elements
Flora	Tendrils Roll of the Lotus Flower	Self-regeneration / Rebirth
Fauna	Bird	Sublime ideals
Mountain	Mountains	Represents the sum of unity, oneness, the abode of divine beings
Mound	Soaring Land	Elements of life
Pool Or Lake	Water Lake	Source of life

Decoration on the main and side doors of Sunan Drajat's tomb

The decoration on the main and side doors of Sunan Drajat's tomb correlates with the spread of Islam in the northern coastal region. In the doorway, there are two lion statues stylized with tendrils motifs (Figure 4). The lion motif itself is symbolized as a guardian animal from evil influences or spirits. When it is related to the conservation value of the animal, the lion is now endangered, therefore it is necessary to instill a characterization of the value of conservation education to continue to protect it without having to kill it all out. The existence of a fair conservation value to be balanced certainly will not arbitrarily take the right to life just for pleasure. While the decoration is symbolized by the coastal Ocean and this boat as a source of life, the beginning of civilization to spread Islam by Raden Qosim by way of preaching to the surrounding community and by using boats to be ridden as a means of social life so that the world and

the hereafter prosper through the sea. The decoration in the shape of the Ocean is named Condro Sengkolo Memet, which means “*Segoro Ombak Pinanah Tunggal*” which indicates the year 1609 AD or 1531 Saka. As the beginning of development to give birth to a generation of leadership (Rosaliah, 2022). Based on the data, the morphological analysis of biotic and abiotic varieties of decorative walls insulation are presented in Table 3.



Figure 4. The decoration on the main and side doors of the Sunan Drajat tomb (authors' documentation)

Table 3. Morphological analysis of biotic and abiotic varieties of decorative doors

Ornamental Variety Type	Form	Symbolic Elements
Fauna	Lion animal	Guardian Animal
Water Ocean	Coast	The source of life for the beginning of civilization
Boat	Boat	Community life facilities

CONCLUSION

Catur Piwulang is a collection of four of Sunan Drajat's teachings arranged into one complex. One of them is “*Wenhono Pangan Marang Wong Kang Keluwen*” lessons learned on the value of preserving the environment by always remembering some of the treasures we enjoy in the life of the universe, including flora and fauna as well as abiotic elements Others such as water, wind, and air also belong to other individuals. This is correlated with the decoration in Sunan Drajat's grave. First, at the *Lawang Agung* gate, semiotically it is a means of communication for those who see it as a harmony of ornaments between “*Hablu Minallah wa Hablu Minnas.*” Second, on the insulation wall, there are 6 partitions, one of which is decorated with wings, mountains, and plants, while the other five are openwork carvings with plant motifs. Third, at the main and side doors, there are pairs of 2 lion statues and boat facilities that cross the coastal ocean. When connected with the value of environmental conservation, there is an educational value

characterization starting from caring, tolerant, just, protecting, caring for, preserving, and also loving the motherland.

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