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The Functions of The Gate of Wali Loram Kulon Mosque in Kudus Regency

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Abstract

One of the architectural relics in Kudus beside the Menara Kudus Mosque, there is the Gate of Wali Loram Kulon Mosque. The gate implicitly functions as a religious, social and cultural center for the Loram community. This study aims to describe the function of Wali Mosque gate for the Loram Kulon community in Kudus Regency. This research studied the individual functions, social functions and physical functions. This study used descriptive qualitative method. Meanwhile, data analysis used observation, interviews and documentation. The results of this study indicate that the Loram Kulon community around Wali Loram Mosque is a religious community. It was proven by the belief in carrying out the Shari'a, traditions and customs as well as social and cultural life. Harmony and tolerance are the results of the gate function. There are three traditions that exist and lead to the gate of Wali Loram Kulon Mosque in Kudus. They are *Sego Kepel* or rice ball tradition, *Nganten Mubeng Gapuro*, and *Ampyang Maulid* tradition. People believe that bad things will happen if they do not carry out the traditions. Therefore, the inheritance of cultural values can certainly be structured and transmitted at least through the local schools in Loram Kulon village, Kudus Regency to convey the local wisdom continuously.

Keywords: mosque gate, functions, culture

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INTRODUCTION

One of the main relics as well as a milestone in the cultural spread of Islam is the Menara Kudus Mosque. As a historical monument, it is not only beautiful and elegant, but also a culture sign and da'wah strategy of Sunan Kudus. The unique shape reflects the spirit of acculturation of Islam and Hindu culture. In Rohidi(2000:9), aesthetic expression is one of the human needs, which is classified as an integrative need. This integrative need arises because of the human's impulse, which intrinsically always wants to reflect on human's existence as moral, intelligent, and feeling creatures.

Instead of the gate inside the Menara Kudus Mosque, this study will discuss about the gate of Wali Loram Mosque in Kulon Wetan. The Paduraksa Gate or better known as the Wali Mosque Gate is located in the Loram Kulon Kulon Village, Jati District. It is 1,500 cm and 148 cm in length and 553 cm in height. The architectural form of this gate has similar characteristic with the gate of Menara Kudus Mosque. The establishment of this gate was carried out after the construction of the Kudus Tower. The materials for this gate consist of red bricks and teak wood.

This building is a relic of 1596/1597. Its present condition is still well maintained and managed by the foundation. This gate was first built by Sungging Badar Duwung and the Sultan Hadirin at the request of Sunan Kudus. The name *Hadirin* in Arabic is *isim Fa'il*, which means "to come". Sungging Badar Duwung or Tji Wie Gwan is known as the forerunner of Jepara carving art. He also has participated in the construction of the mosque in Loram Kulon Kudus and the Menara Kudus Mosque.

In ancient times, the people of Loram Kulon were embracing Hinduism and Buddhism strongly. Therefore, they built a gate with the intention of honoring the people who still embraced Hinduism and Buddhism. This strategy was able to attract the sympathy of the people of Loram Kulon because Sultan Hadirin never forced his will, especially when it was

related to religion. In the beginning of Islam spread in Indonesia, it was still contained with the nuance of Hindu-Buddhist teachings, particularly the values with no contradictions. However, the Javanese people seemed to agree and accommodated their shift of Hindu-Buddhist to the teachings of Islam. They also tried to make Javanese Islam in terms of culture. Hence, it was the origin of Kejawen Islam (Sukatman, 2009:159 in Sindung Haryanto, 2013:26).

Without Sufism, Islam will never be the "Religion of Java". Sufism, which is stoic towards Javanese traditions and modifies them under Islamic concept, is in fact followed by leaders in the northern coastal communities of Java, including in Kudus (Mas'ud in Said, 2011:17). Seeing from the shape of Wali Mosque gate, it is easy to conclude that it has involved the process of cultural acculturation and religious tolerance. In addition, this gate is also an interesting historical documentation and researcher has considered this as an interesting material to be studied deeper.

The gate of Loram Kulon Mosque also has many meanings for the surrounding community as it involves in the journey of the community surrounds it, especially regarding the religious values and excellent tolerance. These meanings can be seen from the existing art products, namely the gate of the Loram Kulon Kudus Mosque, which is a requirement for cultural acculturation. Islam comes with peace by continuing to use the previous products with the inclusion of Islamic norms. The aesthetic form of Wali Loram Kulon Mosque gate and the meanings contained it provide an interesting symbol to be studied deeper. The socio-cultural life that exists in its society is also very interesting to study. The strong synergy between Loram Kulon Mosque gate and its surrounding community makes this problem worthy to be studied.

As the era changes into technological and sophisticated era, sometimes there are many changes in life and society. However, cultural conservation must exist and it can be conducted by introducing traditions and culture

to the nation's future generations. Starting from an early age in order to make cultural literacy be well maintained. In Budihardjo (1989: 10), the values, norms, and beliefs that apply in society become cultural knowledge for every member of supporting community. The cultural knowledge obtained through the education process since childhood is a model for understanding and classifying the symptoms experienced by humans and the basis for acting. In other words, culture is an abstract knowledge that functions as a frame of reference that can only be seen through its various expressions and manifestations.

A mosque is a place of worship and a means of spreading da'wah for Islam. Ethics of Javanese life in social interaction is regulated through the principles of harmony and respect in maintaining the life harmony. The awareness of Javanese existence as individual and social beings can be seen from the moral system in their daily life. Javanese people really appreciate differences.

Magnis-Suseno (1991:40) stated that harmonious and respect as an effort to maintain harmony in life is a "principle of conflict prevention". It means that Javanese people are very open in accepting a change as social interaction results that are undertaken in order to maintain harmony. The most frequent changes are in the value system, especially in cultural products, while the norms embodied in behavior are relatively unchanged, so that external values that are considered good and appropriate are used as a source of Javanese cultural enrichment (Paina Partana, 201:322).

According to Mulder in Haryanto (2013:29), he concluded that Islam in Java is Islam that absorbs local traditions. This opinion is certainly very realistic if we look at the development of Islam in the Kudus Regency. For example, the prohibition of slaughtering cows by Sunan Kudus because cows are considered as respected animals in Hinduism. This tradition can still be found today and it is based on the religious tolerance factor.

Before Islam was spread by Sunan Kudus, the majority residents in Kudus

Regency were Hindus. In Hinduism, cows are highly respected and sacred animals. Therefore, Sunan Kudus ordered Kudus people not to slaughter cows in order to not offend the Hinduism feeling, honor and belief. As we know that the cow is highly respected by Buddhists/Hindus. It was said that Sunan Kudus once tied (Javanese: *nyancang*) a cow around the mosque grounds; and after that crowds of people came; Sunan Kudus then preached with his tactics and methods, which made many of them embraced Islam in the end (Solichin Salam, 1986:15). This proves that the Islam grows and comes by absorbing the spirit of religious acculturation in Kudus Regency.

According to Koentjaraningrat, (1974:12-13), religious systems and ceremonies are elements of universal culture that are the most difficult to change and to be influenced by other cultures. Before the arrival of Islam, Javanese people already had various kinds of traditional ceremonies related to their beliefs, such as Animism, Dynamism, Hinduism and Buddhism.

According to Bratawijaya (Haryanto, 2013: 34), various traditional ceremonies in Javanese society reflect that all plans, actions, and deeds have been regulated by ancestral values. These values are a manifestation that Javanese people are very careful in carrying out work physically and mentally.

Art is an integrative element that binds and unites the different guidelines for acting into a design that is whole, comprehensive as well as operational and it can be accepted as something valuable. The position of art becomes an integrator that reflects the configuration of certain design (Suparlan, 1987 in Rohidi, 2000:9).

The identity of art, in fact, is a distinctive symbol system that is used as a reference for values by someone and it enables others to sort them into a certain group.

The embodiment of artistic identity becomes real because of the manifestation in the form of artworks. In the process of realizing artistic identity, there is a set of attributes

consisting of various signs and symbols expressed in visual form (visual arts), movement (dance art), roles (drama art), words (literary art), and also buildings (architecture).

The function of the gate of Wali Mosque in Loram Kulon for the life of the Loram community in Kudus Regency is not only as a cultural heritage, but it is also for the aesthetics and outlook of the community's life in particular and Kudus in general. It is strengthened by Mukarovsk (2015:283-303), who stated that function occupies an important place in the lives of individuals and society as a whole.

METHODS

This study was qualitative and the researchers involved in the field for a period of time. Qualitative study as research procedure produces descriptive data related to values, behavior, and events about the gate of Wali Loram Kulon Kudus Mosque. The data, then, was analyzed descriptively and interpretively.

The function approach of art used the theory from Edmund Burke Feldman to dig for information of the local culture around the mosque gate of Wali Loram Kulon Kudus. According to Feldman, the function of art can be implemented in the case of mosque gate of Wali Loram Kulon in Kudus Regency. This study also considered aesthetical theory and thinking concept to study the aesthetical theory from Feldman, particularly when it was related to the structure and the function of art. According to Feldman, the structure of art form includes: (1) visual element discussing about lines, forms, and colors; (2) organizational element discussing about the unity, balance, rhythm, and proportion; (3) feeling element discussing about empathy, psychic distance, collaboration and founder, and artwork perception (Feldman, 1967: 219).

Related to the function of art, Edmund Burke Feldman stated that art has personal function, social function, and physical function. The personal function means that the artwork can have a role as a personal

expression satisfaction, such as revealing love, death, or spiritual feeling. The social function is related to the potency of artwork in fulfilling the social needs, such as communicating ideological ideas or portraying the social situation. The physical function is related to the physical benefits of artwork in humans' lives, such as a place for living or daily needs tools (Junaedi, 2013: 40).

From an aesthetic perspective, the main function of an artwork is to evoke an aesthetic experience. Aesthetic experiences are personal. However, artworks can be designed to evoke the aesthetic experience of a community. In other words, artworks can have a social function. The physical function that exists in artworks is not an obstacle to evoke an aesthetic experience. For example, a chair that has a function as a seat can still offer beauty. The meaning contained in the artworks affects the appearance of aesthetic experience. Someone who understands the meaning of a painting will be able to appreciate or feel the meaning of the work better. Aesthetic theories and concepts of thought can be used as references to study the art products.

First, this theory studied the problem on the personal function of the Wali Loram Kulon Mosque gate. Secondly, the social function would focus on the Loram Kulon community condition, particularly related to the point of view, religion, job, and so on. Thirdly, the physical function of the gate includes the form, pattern, types, materials, and ornament of the gate architecture.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Individual Functions of Wali Loram Kulon Mosque Gate in Kudus Regency

A mosque is a place of worship and a means of spreading da'wah for Islam. According to Afroh (the head and caretaker of Loram ulon Mosque), the majority of Loram Kulon community were Hindus, so Sultan Hadirin as the husband of Kalinyamat Queen or the son-in-law of Sunan Kudus was assigned to Islamize the Loram Kulon community.

Therefore, Wali Mosque was built in order to facilitate the process of Islamic da'wah. Sunan Hadirin is known by Loram Kuon community as the first founder and spreader of Islam in the village.

Later, in order to spread and attract the attention of Hindus community, a gate was built. According to Afroh, the word *pura* is changed into the word *gapura* (gate). Furthermore, the term *gapura* is taken from Arabic *gofuro*, which means a place of forgiveness. The construction of the gate was intended to attract the community's attention during the Islamization. In the current time the individual function of the gate is a valuable heritage, particularly in the terms of the view of living inside society and from the artwork aspect of the gate, which it becomes a tourist attraction or the person who wants to study about its history and culture.

The Social Functions of Wali Loram Kulon Mosque Gate in Kudus Regency



Figure 1. The gate of Wali Loram Kulon Mosque in Kudus

Source: Writer's documentation

The ethics of Javanese life in social interaction is regulated through the principles of harmony and respect in maintaining the harmony of life. The awareness of the existence of Javanese as individual and social beings can be seen through the moral system in the daily life. Javanese people really appreciate differences.

Magnis-Suseno(1991:40) stated that harmonious and respect as an effort to maintain harmony in life is a "principle of conflict prevention". It means that Javanese people are very open in accepting a change as social interaction results that are undertaken in order to maintain harmony. The most frequent changes are in the value system, especially in cultural products, while the norms embodied in behavior are relatively unchanged, so that external values that are considered good and appropriate are used as a source of Javanese cultural enrichment (Paina Partana, 201:322).

According to Mulder in Haryanto (2013:29), he concluded that Islam in Java is Islam that absorbs local traditions. This opinion is certainly very realistic if we look at the development of Islam in the Kudus Regency. For example, the prohibition of slaughtering cows by Sunan Kudus because cows are considered as respected animals in Hinduism. This tradition can still be found today and it is based on the religious tolerance factor.

Before Islam was spread by Sunan Kudus, the majority residents in Kudus Regency were Hindus. In Hinduism, cows are highly respected and sacred animals. Therefore, Sunan Kudus prohibited Kudus people to slaughter cows in order not to offend the Hinduism feeling, honor and belief. As we know that the cow is highly respected by Buddhists/Hindus. It was said that Sunan Kudus once tied (Javanese: *nyancang*) a cow around the mosque grounds; and after that crowds of people came; Sunan Kudus then preached with his tactics and methods, which made many of them embraced Islam in the end (Solichin Salam, 1986:15). This proves that the Islam grows and comes by absorbing the spirit of religious acculturation in Kudus Regency.



Figure 2. The gate of Wali Loram Kulon Mosque in Kudus

Source: Writer's documentation

According to Koentjaraningrat, (1974:12-13), religious systems and ceremonies are elements of universal culture that are the most difficult to change and to be influenced by other cultures. Before the arrival of Islam, Javanese people already had various kinds of traditional ceremonies related to their beliefs, such as Animism, Dynamism, Hinduism and Buddhism.

The tradition of prohibiting the cow slaughter is an evidence of the religious communities tolerance initiated by Kanjeng Sunan Kudus, which is still maintained until today. According to Bratawijaya (Haryanto, 2013: 34), various traditional ceremonies in Javanese society reflect that all plans, actions, and deeds have been regulated by ancestral values. These values are a manifestation that Javanese people are very careful in carrying out work physically and mentally.

Art is an integrative element that binds and unites the different guidelines for acting into a design that is whole, comprehensive as well as operational and it can be accepted as something valuable. The position of art becomes an integrator that reflects the configuration of certain design (Suparlan, 1987 in Rohidi, 2000:9).

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process of realizing artistic identity, there is a set of attributes consisting of various signs and symbols expressed in visual form (visual arts), movement (dance art), roles (drama art), words (literary art), and also buildings (architecture).

The responses come from Loram Kulon community to the tradition rooted in the gate of Wali Mosque is divided into three responses, namely public response to the belief, different professions, and age differences; in which the whole responses take care of each other and preserve existing traditions.

Several traditions emerged and were based on the gate of the Wali Loram Kulon Mosque in Kudus. These traditions later became a socio-cultural function in the life of Loram Kulon community in Kudus regency. These traditions shape the interesting identity of local arts as culture and way of life of Loram Kulon community in particular and Kudus in general. The following is the culture that occurs and is entrenched.

Penganten Mubeng Gapuro Tradition (Bride Walks Around the Gate)



Figure 3. Traditional Figure Prays for the Bride and Groom

Source: Writer's documentation

Sulasman and Gumilar (2013: 170) stated that a form of human expression in order to express their will or thoughts is through ceremonies. Through the ceremony, the values of life and culture owned by the community will be discovered. The community's view of life and their relationship with the surrounding environment will also be found. The same thing

happened in the life of the Javanese community.

The tradition of the bride and groom walking around the Wali Mosque gate is one of the traditions that was born from the architecture of the gate itself. The local community still maintains and implements this tradition. The compliance with the tradition of the Wali Mosque gate is in a form of every bride and groom is required to go around the gate. The local people of Loram Kulon village believe that a couple is prohibited to walk around the mosque gate before they are in an official status of marriage.



Figure 4. Traditional Figure Prays for the Bride and Groom

Source: Writer's documentation

The bridal tradition is only carried out by the descendants of the village of Loram Kulon, and for the newcomers, there is no such requirement. When there is a couple of bride getting married and one of the bride is a descendant of Loram Kulon village, then the couple must carry out the carnival tradition at the Wali Mosque gate (Ambarwati, 2011:56).

The *Nganten Mubeng Gapuro* tradition is still being carried out until now because it has become customary law that is not written, but it must be implemented. The community believes that if there are some people who violate these rules, they will get *balak* or repercussions. It can be seen from some researches on the field, which reveals that there is a bad experience after being negligent in implementing this tradition.

This is in accordance with the opinion described by Skorupski. According to

Skorupski (1976:59-60), the uncertainty will naturally decrease when people believe that magic "works". In this case, concrete evidence or a firm statement in the form of a postulate is not needed. Religious rituals are more expressive than instrumental. The criteria of scientific logic cannot be applied to religious logic. In addition, the system of thought in it is basically part of the social life mode, which reminds us that in order to understand the phenomena, it requires an understanding towards the community activities as a whole.



Figure 5. A documentation of the writer with the bride

Source: Writer's documentation

In line with the idea by Santoso (Haryanto, 2013: 72), one of the characteristics of Javanese people is that they like to express things indirectly, as revealed in the proverb: *wong Jawa nggone pseudo, sinamun ing samudana, sasadone ingadu manis*. It means that Javanese people tend to be covert, full of symbols, and like to convey disguised words. Everyone who comes (guests) is always accepted with a friendly face.

Sego kepel tradition (Rice Ball Tradition)



Figure 6. *Sego Kepel* Covered with Banana Leaves

Source: Writer's documentation

Another tradition created from the gate architecture of Wali Mosque is *Sego Kepel* tradition or rice ball tradition. The rice ball consists of 2 packs. The first pack is for the rice and the second pack is for the side dish, which is through cooking process of *botok*. In the past, the wrap used teak leaves, but now it uses banana leaves as the teak leaves are difficult to find.



Figure 7. Rice and Side Dishes on *Sego kepel*

Source: Writer's documentation

Whenever there is an event in the village, the community will certainly make *sego kepel* as a form of their gratitude. In addition, the local community also believes if they don't follow this tradition, they will get *balak* or repercussions. *Sego kepel* sent to the mosque usually amounts to 7 packs and another 7 packs are added to be placed in the tomb of Sheikh Abdurrahman Tuan Sang Sang. According to Haryanto (2013: 72), *slametan* or thanksgiving ceremony has two dimensions, namely it is historical as an expression of gratitude and teleological as a hope for better conditions.

This *sego kepel* is intended for all people without any restrictions. The mosque caretakers or elders will always accept and pray for people who send *sego kepel* to the mosque. Afterwards, *sego kepel* given will be placed on the porch of the mosque. The public can take the rice ball to eat. As it has been explained above, *sego kepel* or rice ball given always amounts to seven, namely seven packs of *botok* or side dish and seven packs of rice. Number seven in Javanese is *pitu*, it means *pitulung* or in Indonesian is help. *Pitulung* (help), *pitutur* (advice), and *pituduh* (guidance) in living life.



Figure 8. The Traditional Leaders Pray for the People's Wishes

Source: Writer's documentation

The Tradition of Ampyang Maulid Carnival and Opening the Middle Door of Wali Mosque Gate

The Ampyang Maulid Carnival Tradition in Loram Kulon Kudus is a form of prayer, gratitude, and community joy in commemorating the birth of the Prophet Muhammad. The tradition, which had stopped during the Japanese colonial period, always attracts the attention of hundreds of residents every time it is held. Its spectators are from both local residents and outside the area. They usually come in droves to witness the carnival and hope for the blessings and intercession of the Prophet Muhammad.

This tradition is carried out by serving various types of food in containers in the form of mosques, musala, and traditional houses decorated with "ampyang", a type of traditional food. It is then paraded around the village starting from the Wali at-Taqlwa Mosque.

Besides the carnival, this tradition is also accompanied by various art performances such as drum bands, Pencak Silat, and so on. It is commemorated annually on the 12th of Rabiul Awal, and the center door of Wali Mosque Gate is also opened on that day.

During the tradition, the community has such a good interaction, whether it is intentionally or not. The interaction itself is a reciprocal relationship among individuals. It aims to grow the brotherhood and get to know each other.

According to Azizatun Nisak (2016), the Loram tradition is a strategy by Sultan Haḍirin to invite Loram community to convert to Islam. Sultan Haḍirin, as the son-in-law of Sunan Kudus, was asked by his father-in-law to spread Islam in the south of Kudus, Loram Kulon village. In spreading Islam, mosques and gates were built as a strategy. The gate was built in 1596/1597 by Sultan Haḍirin and Tjie Wie Gwan. The building has resembled a temple in Bali. On the other hand, it serves as a tactic or strategy and attraction for Loram community, which majority of whom were still Hindu and Buddhist.

Currently, the gate of Wali Mosque is not only seen from the aesthetic point of view, but it is also as a cultural heritage that must be preserved. As a cultural heritage, the Ampyang Maulid tradition is also an annual agenda in Rabi'ul Awal month to commemorate the birth of Prophet Muhammad. All traditions have developed and are still being carried out until now.

Physical Functions of Wali Loram Kulon Mosque Gate in Kudus Regency



Figure 9. Front View of The Gate of Wali Loram Mosque which is still closed

Source: Writer's documentation

According to Langer in Sumardjo (2000:66), art is an expression of feelings that is known as the feelings of all mankind and not his own. It is the general truth of human feelings that the artists have to reach and discover even though they can make it based on their personal feelings experience. Langer further mentioned that there are three principles of art, namely: art expression, creation and form. The form is definitely an end in the artistic process in terms of physical functions.

The physical gate of Wali Mosque indirectly has provided reinforcement or an architectural description of the relics of the past. Physical functions in buildings are very important to be maintained and preserved. If we compare the gate of Menara Kudus and Wali Mosque, it can be said that the visuals of Wali Mosque gate is simpler and highly minimal decoration or ornaments.

According to Apotsos (2016:4), architectural form is a documentary record of the history of events, influences, and interruptions that shape the culture of society. Architecture is basically three-dimensional working through past and present narratives. Besides being located in front of the mosque, the location of the gate is very important to attract the people to come. Therefore, the wider community can see and appreciate the form of the work from the material, manufacture and aesthetics. The invisible physical function is to unite differences into one conclusion towards a

positive direction, as a spirit of love for history, binding, embracing all circles, and religious beliefs of the Loram Kulon Kulon community in Kudus Regency.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussions that have been obtained through observational data, interviews and documentation that researchers have conducted regarding the aesthetic form of the symbolic meaning and function of the gate of Wali Loram Kulon Mosque in Kudus Regency, several conclusions can be drawn. First, in terms of the aesthetic form, the gate has undergone several improvements in the context of restoring and structuring object areas.

Second, in terms of the shape of the gate, it looks simpler and there are no decorations or ornaments attached to the gate. Third, the study of symbolic meaning of the gate architecture is very deep and closely attached to the local community. This is based on several traditional findings produced from the gate of Wali Loram Kulon Mosque. They include the *Nganten Mubeng Gapuro*, *Sego Kepel* or rice ball, and *Ampyang Maulid* carnival tradition. All of those traditions are rooted in the object of research. Therefore, the existing meanings and symbols become norms and habits that must be followed and carried out because people believe that if they do not carry out these activities, it will bring a bad impact for their survival.

The three functions of the gate to the social and cultural life of the surrounding community are as a way of life in behavior and religion because it is through this gate that people are taught about history. Other values are religious tolerance, social life, devoting community, a society that does not forget about the ancestral traditions. Considering the architectural heritage of the gate is not only a historical monument, but it also reflects the value of mutual respect for one another's cultures. The last function is tourism, which occurred because of the collaboration between the village government and the Kudus Regency

government. Therefore, the local community could get the economic benefits.

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