

Ornamental Art of Kalasan Temple in The Perspective of Art Philosophy

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The beauty of Kalasan Temple façade can be seen from its variety of decorations known as the pearls of Central Java art in the 8th century AD. The artwork manifests in the aesthetics and artistic value of Kala-Makara, leaf tendrils (purnakalasa), paper paste, apsara-apsari figures. The purpose of this writing is to gain knowledge and insight about the decorative artistic expressions carved on the temples. The method used is qualitative research observing its form, content and meaning. The analysis uses contextual analysis, which is to look at the relationship between ornaments and their context by basing on the motion of lines, the shape of art objects, and rhythmic compositions. The discussion will use aesthetic theory, artistic value and symbol theory to be able to explain the form of beauty in the decorative art of Kalasan Temple. The result shows that the selection of ornamental art ornaments is combined with the right proportions, symmetry in the arrangement and precise processing to produce artistic expression in achieving transcendent ideas.

Keywords: ornamental art, pearls of central java art, Kalasan temple.

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INTRODUCTION

Ornamental art in the form of decorative reliefs carved on the temple grows and develops in line with the religious activities of the supporting community. The temple building became a landmark in the 8th century AD as a temple of worship during the Ancient Mataram Kingdom (hereinafter referred to as the Mataram Kingdom). The existence of the Mataram Kingdom in the 8th-10th centuries AD was in the central part of Java with a concentration of temple findings in the Kedu (Magelang Regency- Temanggung Regency) and Prambanan (Sleman Regency) areas. The large-scale and magnificent temple buildings around Magelang and around Sleman include Borobudur Temple, Mendut Temple, Pawon Temple, Ngawen Temple, Prambanan Temple, Sewu Temple, Plaosan Temple, Sojiwan Temple, Sari Temple and Kalasan Temple to be the splendour of the Mataram Kingdom.

The temple as a sacred place is in a different space from the residential room. It describes the temple as a centre of worship of the Hindu-Buddhist community as a transcendent profane space. The space with the temple becomes a sacred place where people believe they can make contact or closeness to God and in that sacred space there is emotional power (Danesi, 2004: 323-325). The splendour of the temple is not only realized by the magnificent building, but also the variety of ornamental arts that complement the sacredness of a sacred building. Ornamental art is sculpted on a temple driven by spiritual needs. [Soedarso \(2006: 67\)](#) said that sculptures in temples are traditional works of art in Indonesia that do not recognize novelty. This means that the ornamental motifs carved on temples, both Hindu and Buddhist, have similarities, but the expressions and methods of implementation are different. There is an art that prioritizes the depth of content and the technicality of cultivating towards the perfection of form leading to a form that is detailed, complicated, and expresses beauty.

Temples in Borobudur area and Prambanan area were built for ritual needs, for example Kalasan Temple as a Buddhist temple. As a sacred building, Kalasan Temple is equipped with a variety of ornamental arts, such as variations of Kala-Makara decoration, and a variety of ornamental motifs of flora and fauna distilled to form leaf tendrils (*kalpalata*), coil tendrils which are leaf tendrils growing from a vase (*purnakalasa*), paper pasted in the form of *padma* flower, and heaven (*kayangan*) creatures (*apsara-apsari*) figures on the niches of the temple walls. [Soedarso \(2006: 129\)](#) argues that

various elements of markers of various ornamental arts are arranged regularly to describe an expression that forms unity, balance, and rhythm.

The ornamental art at Kalasan Temple is a decorative decoration created by detailed and intricate cultivation with *bajralepa* media to produce meaningful works of art. The distinctive and beautiful variety of ornamental art of Kalasan Temple appears as the term "pearl of Central Java art" of the 8th-10th centuries AD ([Bernet-Kempers, 195:34-35](#)). This certainly needs an explanation to trace and narrate the philosophy of beauty of a Hindu-Buddhist work of art at that time. This means that in the theory of beauty mentioned the definition of beauty tells people to recognize, while the theory of beauty explains how to understand it ([Dharsono, 2007: 7-10](#)). By basing on the theory of beauty, what is a problem is to trace the special characteristics that show the decorative art of the Kalasan temple to be beautiful or considered aesthetically valuable.

The rationale of Hindu-Buddhist art in creating works of art is based on the properties of spirituality. [Wirjosuparto \(1956:1-10\)](#) argues that Hindu-Buddhist art is suggestive, that is, it hints at the meaning associated with Godliness. Thus, the issue of aesthetics and artistic value has its own measure. [Soedarso \(2006\)](#) assumes that society including artists (*cilpin*) is close and interacts with nature, but that closeness does not cause admiration for external forms, but rather in the nature that exists within them. In other words, people know mountains, birds, *padma* flowers but are not sculpted *visioplastically* but *ideoplastically* (transcendent values). Then the question arises how the expression of spirituality is visualized in the ornamental art of Kalasan Temple? This is important to examine because through these sculptures it can be understood that the embodiment of artworks is not only the creativity of artists but the ability to transform ideal forms that produce aesthetically characteristic visual effects and become the cultural identity of the Mataram people of the 8th century AD.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed qualitative with observations on the form, content and meaning of the various decorative arts carved on Kalasan Temple. The primary data was field observations from examining decorative arts at several temples in Central Java. Secondary data was from literatures that discuss architecture and the aesthetics of philosophical art. Data processing and analysis uses contextual analysis, namely looking at the

relationship between ornaments and their context based on the line movements, forms of art objects, and rhythmic compositions. In the discussion, aesthetic theory and symbol theory used to explain the form of beauty in the decorative art of Kalasan Temple.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Kalasan Temple Architecture

In the 8th-10th centuries AD, the Central Java and Yogyakarta regions were the territory of the Mataram Kingdom with its relics in the form of magnificent temples, both with Hindu and Buddhist backgrounds, including Borobudur Temple, Mendut Temple, Ngawen Temple, Prambanan Temple, Sewu Temple, Plaosan Temple, Sojiwan Temple, Ijo Temple, and Kalasan Temple.



Figure 1. Kalasan Temple
(Source: Bernet Kempers., 1954; BPCB Kemendikbud DIY)

Kalasan Temple located in Tirtomartani village, Kalasan district, Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta is a Buddhist temple left by the Mataram Kingdom in the 8th century AD. The name Kalasan is based on inscriptions found around the temple dating to 778 AD which mentions the construction of a sacred building in Kalasa village for the goddess Tara by Sri Maharaja Tejahpurnapanna Panamkarana. The purpose was to erect buildings for the priests, as well as to give gifts of Kalasa village land to the sangga (Poesponegoro, 2009: 143; Abdullah, 2010: 175). In addition to Kalasan Temple, Rakai Panangaran mentioned in the Kelurak Inscription of 782 AD built a series of royal temples, named Sewu Temple for Buddhist rituals with Manjusri figures, and Plaosan Temple which is also thought to have been built during the reign of Rakai Panangaran. There is still another inscription dated 792 AD related to the construction of a monastery on the hill of Ratu Boko, named *Abayagiriwihara*. A number of magnificent temples built in the Prambanan area are often interpreted as the area in the 8th-10th centuries

AD as the territory of the Mataram Kingdom (Wirasanti, 2015: 345-346).

Kalasan Temple is a temple building with a square plan with performers on each side measuring approximately 20m² standing on a shelf measuring 45 m². The result of the construction of the temple roof is in the form of an octagonal prism, tiered and at each corner there is a stupa with the top of the roof estimated to be a large stupa. The results of the reconstruction on paper show that Kalasan Temple is a magnificent temple (the reconstruction results are estimated to be 4.60 meters high) with 52 stupas surrounding the temple grounds. However, the restoration activities in 1927 have not been able to be restored intact because many stones have been lost, especially the roof of the temple, which until now has not been able to be restored. Some of the components of the temple stones today are still arranged in a row on the fence of the temple courtyard.

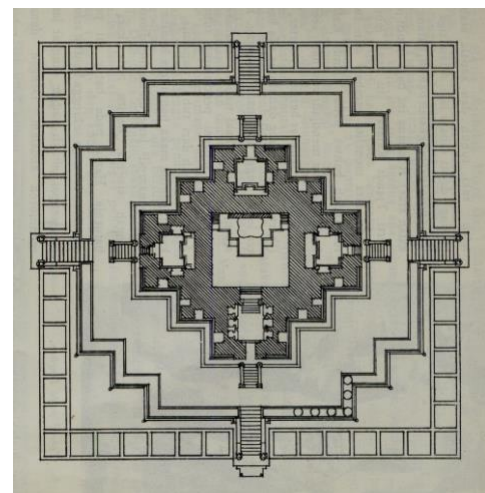
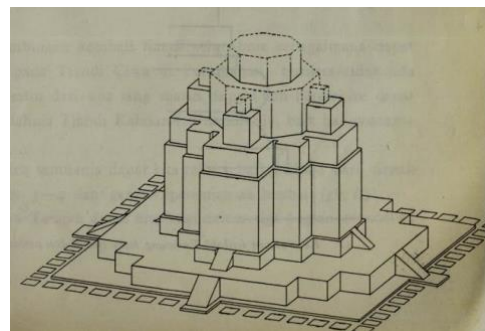


Figure 2. Floor Plan and Architecture of Kalasan Temple
(Source: Bernet Kempers, 1954)

The temple is a replica of the mountain (*Meru*). In Hindu-Buddhist mythology, Mount *Mahameru* is a mountain located in the centre of the cosmos and is the axis of the world. It is explained that the mountain stands from the bottom of the earth towering into space, and its volcanic activity holds so many mysteries that the assumption of the

mountain as a sacred place arises. Besides being widely believed to be the place of ancestral spirits, in Hindu-Buddhist myths the top of the mountain as heaven (*kayangan*), the "palace" where the deity lives. In other words, the temple as a replica of Mount *Mahameru* and its context are interpreted as a symbol of the universe. In Hindu-Buddhist cosmology, the universe consists of three levels i.e., the underworld (*bhurloka*) of the human world, the middle world (*bhuharloka*) of the human world that has attained chastity, the upper world (*swarloka*) of the human world that has been freed from worldly ties. The image of the temple as a symbol of the universe is reflected in the parts of the temple vertically consisting of legs, body, and roof (Holt, 1967: 55-57; Hardiati, 1998: 6-7; Soekmono, 2014: 14-16; [Dharsono, 2007: 56-57](#); [Wirasanti, 2015: 366-367](#)).

To complete the image of the mountain as a sacred space, the temple is decorated with a variety of ornamental arts that are in harmony with the image of the heaven (*kayangan*) mountain. Temples with Hindu or Buddhist backgrounds have similarities in choosing ornaments, such as *padma* ornamental art, leaf tendrils and *Kala-Makara* decoration. This is because there are similarities in understanding Mount *Meru* as a cosmic mountain concept in both the conception of Hinduism and Buddhism. This means that followers of Hindu and Buddhist beliefs alike understand the symbolic meaning of Mount *Mahameru* which depicts mount *kayangan*.

Although Kalasan Temple is no longer intact, especially on the roof of the temple, the beauty of ornamental art ornaments seems to dominate the outer walls of the temple building. From a number of ornaments carved on the temple, Kala ornaments are sculpted in various variations, composed in various forms combined with Makara, blended with *kayangan* figures, complemented by leaf tendrils. Kala-Makara ornaments and other ornaments seem to be unified, balanced, in harmony, harmoniously representing something *ideoplastic* in nature. The Kala-Makara series is sculpted repeatedly, regularly in the doorways and niches of the outer walls of the temple.

The carvings are carved intricately and in detail in a *bajrapela* medium, a layer or "ancient cement", which serves to coat the temple stone so as to allow water not to enter and minimize the growth of microorganisms on the temple stone. The mineral

composition of *bajralepa* is very hard with colours varying from blue, bright, to golden, making the colour of the temple more beautiful and brilliant in the past. In addition, this *bajralepa* is also useful in making the relief smoother (Wahyuni, 2020: 36).

This reinforces the argument that the presence of sparkling ornamental art with a sparkling layer of *bajralepa* is a necessity not only of spiritual, luxury, grandeur, but also of the will (*karsa*) aspect of determining the form of ornamental art whose character is adapted to the function of the sacred building as a temple.

Related to the architectural form of Kalasan Temple with character, Rahadian ([2018: 70-77](#)) provides an explanation based on architectural properties. The architectural characteristics appear to be that the design of the temple is built with a volumetric approach (massive) that reinforces the expression of sturdiness and stability as a representation of heavenly (transcendent) concepts. This volumetric expression is related to the use of the material used, that is andesite stone—a massive, heavy, and volume effective material. Understanding the temple space is not only in the inner room of the temple but also the outer room or wall of the temple. The aesthetic processing of the temple is dominated using a three/tripartite division composition system, the foot-body-roof. This composition system shows the existence of an aspect of repeating its elements and forms unity and order.

Citing Rahadian's opinion (2018) the aspect of looping in elements of ornate art, especially *jènggèr* Kala which forms a triangle, shows the concept of hierarchy which ritually describes a procession towards something high, the heavenly realm. Philosophically, the triangular shape refers to the concept of a mountain which is depicted in the form of a tendril of stalks and leaves that twist to roll up further up to the top. This is in the Hindu-Buddhist concept of cosmology that tree markers and mountain markers are interpreted as symbols of the axis of the cosmos, trees, and mountains as the connection of the human world with the rich world. In heaven's life there are markers of heaven creatures carrying musical instruments. [Sumardjo \(2016\)](#) explained that the Kala form of the upper world symbol is cantered together with the mythic creature in the form of Makara the symbol of the underworld; both complement each other as antagonistic elements in the cosmos.



Figure 3: *Kala* and *Makara* Kalasan Temple
(Source: Bernet-Kempers, 1954)

The phenomenon of repetition of ornamental art on the niches of the temple walls, can be seen in the panel plane on the right and left of the Kala decoration carved with tendrils of plants called coil tendrils, because of their circular shape, the circumference extends to the right and left to the upper frame of the temple body. The arrangement of the niches on the side of the outer wall of the temple is designed symmetrically, balanced to form a harmonious unity creating an expression called "beautiful" manifesting into a magnificent Kalasan Temple building. In giving definitions related to the so-called beautiful, both Aristotle and Plato both affirm the existence of unity and harmony. As for the characteristics of beauty, both in nature and in works of art according to Aristotle is a unity or wholeness that can describe the perfection of form, the balance between elements in a professional way. So art is essentially taste, that is, the mood of the atmosphere of an aesthetic experience in the form of emotions that are evoked beautifully and artistically. Creativity in choosing ornamental art is not an unfamiliar theme but is intuitively perceived as something that has been known before and has become a tradition. Although the art object has been carved into the temple, there are aspects that show the degree of renewal: the cultivation and expression of the art displayed. The more total in displaying the update, the more authentic the sculpture artwork is ([Sumardjo, 2016: 84-275](#), [Wirawan, 2023: 230-236](#)).

Interpreting the Ornamental Art of Kalasan Temple

The definition of art boundaries has been widely reviewed and written, and continues to develop resulting in a number of definitions, in this paper the notion of art was chosen to understand the ornamental art of Kalasan Temple. The definition of art is summarized according to [Soedarso \(2006: 70-71\)](#) as follows : 1) the product of beauty, or something that must be beautiful, 2) its presence is not only a means to meet basic human needs, 3) it is an activity that intentionally leads its public to obtain certain psychological effects, 4) it is the expression and communication of emotions, 6) its presence shows regularity. Furthermore, it is explained that the writing in the *Everyman Encyclopedia* states that art is everything that people do, not at the instigation of their basic needs, but rather what is done solely because of the will of luxury, enjoyment, or the impulse of spiritual needs. Ki Hajar Dewantara also wrote his opinion that art is all human deeds that arise from feelings and are beautiful, to the point of being able to move the soul of human feelings. The sense of beauty transmitted in the artist is contagious to the person who sees it.

Thus, art is a means of communication of human feelings and this definition is in line with Leo Tolstoy's definition of art known as the transfer of feeling ([Tolstoy, 1960: 50-51](#); Dewantara, 1962: 330; [Soedarso, 2006: 68-69](#)). From some of these definitions, it can be summarized that the limitations of art are the work of man who communicates his inner experiences, and these inner experiences are presented interestingly so as to stimulate the emergence of inner experiences in other human beings who live. Thus, Soedarso argues that art is all sorts of beauty of human creation, obviously there is a close relationship between art and beauty.

In observing temple architecture and its relationship with the variety of ornamental art can be started by understanding the concept of beauty and cannot be separated from its philosophy. In other words, in studying ornamental art in temples, you have to trace the basics of Hindu-Buddhist art philosophy. The philosophy of art (aesthetics) is often referred to as the philosophy of beauty, a term that describes the problem of beauty, that metaphorically beauty is one of the transcendental properties of being. Axiological beauty is seen as one of the types of values that have to do with feelings and sensitivity ([Wiryosuparto, 1956: 5](#); [Wiryani, 1987: 132-133](#)).

The temple as a sacred place becomes a place to carry out religious rituals. The sacredness of a sacred building is complemented by ornaments of

ornamental art. Art is essentially contextual, because art is a matter of value, and value is always related to concrete reality, and the concrete is in a certain time and place. So all art objects can be ascertained to be related to the cultural values of the supporting communities.

This is based on the idea of art being an easy-to-understand medium of communication, so some religions use artwork to disseminate their religious teachings. Artwork is created to convey certain messages. The artwork carved into the temple building is a marker that can provide a sacred atmosphere (Soekmono, 1986: 228; Santiko, 1987: 68). In other words ornamental art was created with the intention of expressing certain values of a mystical cultural nature, and mythic logic is the logic of the unity of the cosmos (van Peursen, 1989: 16-18; Sumardjo, 2016: 320-324). Furthermore, it is explained that the mythic way of thinking is different from the ontological modern way of thinking. In mythic culture man feels himself besieged by the surrounding supernatural forces and for that man is at one with the natural environment, aligning himself with the entire cosmos system to achieve the salvation of well-being. In the mythic realm of the mind there is a myth, that is, a story that gives a certain guideline and direction to a society. The essence of the mythic attitude of life that this life exists, and is full of power and power that surrounds man. Human behavior is guided by myths and that even those myths provide knowledge about the world. (Peursen, 1988: 24-25; Soedarso, 2006: 32-33).

The supporting community of Kalasan Temple is a community in an environment that is Hindu and Buddhist based on a way of thinking following the order of unity of the cosmos. People with Hindu-Buddhist religion embody all the results of their culture including temple buildings. A temple is a building for rituals. Therefore, in its construction there are rules that are partly similar to the rules in the book of *Vastusastra* as well as *Cilpasastra*. Among them are the requirements about a suitable location to build a temple, close to water sources in the form of rivers, lakes, or it can also be a man-made one such as *petirtaan* or *jambangan* if there is no river.

But about ornamental art, in some manuscripts does not give provisions regarding the requirements that must be engraved on the temple. Thus, an artist demonstrates an independent artistic ability that is not associated with an outside culture (Indian culture) but the work can fulfill its function as a religious object according to its supporting society. The

creative power of the local community in producing this artwork proves that the identity of the people at that time was not influenced by foreign cultures (Indian culture). The identity of the distinctive Kalasan Temple artwork was sculpted with *ngrawit* so that the term "pearl of Central Java art" appeared (Bernet-Kempers, 1954: 34-35).

Starting from the foot of Kalasan Temple, there is a marker of ornamental variety in the form of *padma* flowers that come out of the *jambangan* called Purna-kalasa or Purna-kumba symbolizing eternity, prosperity. The repetition of the after-life depiction with the tendrils of the plant is carved with a panel field at the foot of the temple. On the body of the temple are engraved with paper pasted ornamental patterns and there are niches with *kala makara* ornaments, there are *asanas* (seats) for statues, but some of the statues are no longer found, while reliefs of heaven creatures (*apsara-apsari*) on the north and south walls can still be observed. The splendor of the temple can be observed when entering the temple chamber (*garbhagrha*) there is a throne with a fairly large size has a *lapik* and *backrest* (stela) *asana* whose right and left side is flanked by an ornamental pattern known as *vyala* which is a combined ornament of several mythological animals, in the *Cilpasastra* script known variations of *vyala*: *simhavyala* (lion), *sardulavyala* (tiger), *gajavyala* (elephant), *mahishavyala* (buffalo), *asvavyala* (horse) (Bernet-Kempers, 1954: 62-63; Dhaky, 1965: 16-18; Sholah, 2021: 30-35) and in Kalasan Temple the stela is sculpted *simgavyala*. But since the beginning of the restoration, the main statue in the chamber of Kalasan temple does not exist. In Brandes's account (1906: 165-167) the throne that sits on a pedestal with a size of 2.5 meters, it is estimated that the size of the statue is about six meters. This can be matched with the statue at Mendut Temple.

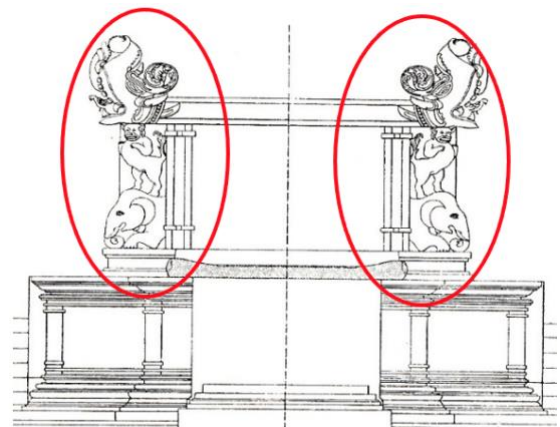


Figure 4: Vyala Ornamental Art at Kalasan Temple (Source: Bernet-Kempers, 1954)

Another characteristic of beauty is seen in the technique of sculpting and combining the types of ornamental varieties of Kala and Makara flanked by the right and left with tendrils of leaves and flowers, *jambangan* combined with leaf tendrils that spread adorning the flat and vertical planes on the walls of the temple to produce meaningful forms of artwork. Kala is interpreted as a ranger and is often referred to as *Banaspati* as a symbol of the king of the forest (Bernet-Kempers, 1959: 21-25). The kala decoration in India is known as *kirtimukha* with a face in the form of a lion, so it is also called *Simhamukha*. Kala in Sanskrit means monster and in Old Javanese *Kala* is a creepy figure. Kala's ornament in the form of a giant head is fierce with bulging eyes, grinning mouth (Kramrisch, 1946: 322-325; Basudewa, 2015: 177-180).

Mythological animal *makara* is often identified as a combination of several animals, in the front part in the form of an elephant-like animal with a trunk, in its mouth there is a lion, on the tail like a dragon. Makara is not only centered together with Kala, but is often placed at the end of the stairs. In addition, Makara is also realized as a *jaladwara* with holes for waterways that function to drain water from temple buildings (Rahadian, 2018: 62-65).



Figure 5: Makara Kalasan Temple
(Source: Bernet Kempers, 1954)

The expression of Kala-Makara ornamental art at Kalasan Temple is marked by several ornaments that are arranged in detail and *ngrawit* has distinctive characteristics, different from other temples. The difference with other temples, the decoration on the Kalasan Temple Kala appears to be part of the *jènggèr* carved with the towering roof of the temple to form a triangle that represents the symbol of the environment of mount *kayangan*. The mountain as a picture of nature whose nature is transcendental becomes a cosmos mystic symbol. The shape of the mountain is similar to a temple, and the temple as a sacred space there is a boundary in the form of a door,

on the threshold of the carved door Kala-Makara means as a guard to enter the sacred room

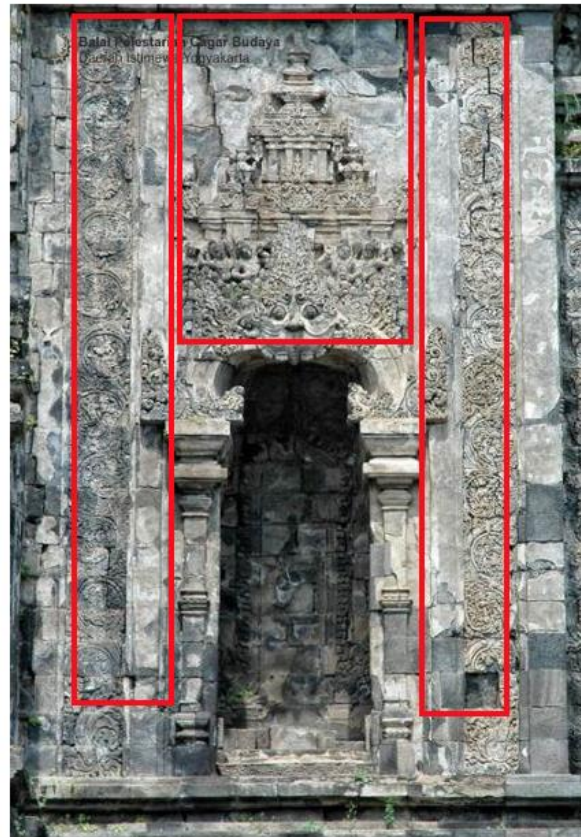


Figure 6: Ornamental Art of Kalasan Temple

(Source:

<http://kebudayaan.kemdikbud.go.id/bpcbyogyakarta/wp-content/uploads/sites/37/2020/10/3>)

The ornamental variety of tendrils of leaves and flowers is related to the concept of cosmogony (Hinduism), that is, the process of creation and opposition of the universe derived from the seed. These seeds are in the water, so the tendrils of the leaves are described as growing out of the *jambangan*. These tendrils are described as branching, circular circumferences analogous to continuous branching in the process of life, from the birth of one to the birth of another (Nizam, 2018: 1-5).

As an art devoted to religion, ornamental artworks in temples represent the transcendental properties of being. Wiryosuparto (1956: 5-6) argues that because Hindu-Buddhist art is closely related to religion, it is suggestive, meaning that there are impressions and messages related to Godliness.

In the history of Hindu-Buddhist art there are a number of aesthetic elements that are universal and become works of art that have characteristics (Wiryosuparto (1956: 12-13). The characteristics of

the ornamental art of Kalasan Temple can be traced to the expression of its beauty through:

Line motion

Lines as a medium in fine art have an important role in describing something representatively, as a symbol whose presence is a symbol of information that forms a pattern. Sculpted lines have power that requires understanding (Dharsono, 2007: 70-71).

The mention of line movement is associated with the Hindu-Buddhist philosophical outlook of life which always moves meekly and lasts continuously like the rhythm of the music of tranquility. The form of the line is quite dominant in shaping the aesthetics in the decorative art of the temple, which is seen in the decoration of lotus flower tendrils that are circular to the right and left towering through the boundaries of the horizontal pleats (*pelipit*) and flanking the niche with *Kala-Makara* decoration. Patterns with the motif of plant tendrils that come out of *jambangan* (*kumba*) forming a matching bouquet represent balance and regularity.



Figure 7: Coiled tendrils padma flower of Kalasan Temple (Source: Bernet Kempers, 1954)

The motion of the line that manifests in the tendrils is related to the symbol of the tree of life. Bosch

(1948, 117-119; Wicaksana, 2017: 159-161) explains that life is symbolized as a tree, symbolically depicted in the form of aquatic plants, the red lotus (*padma*). In Buddhism the lotus is interpreted as a symbol of the purity of speech and mind. The symbol is based on the fact that the lotus flower grows from muddy water, and the mud is a symbol of attachment to worldly passions, while the lotus with its erect stalks with petals that do not absorb water is a symbol of Buddhism that forbids its adherents from being absorbed into worldly lusts. In its mythology the universe emerged from a golden lotus that came out of cosmic water. This flower is depicted as 1000 leaves and from that leaf is interpreted as the uterine mouth of the universe that gave birth to the entire contents of the earth (Zimmer, 1974: 90-91).

In plants, the most important part is that the root is denoted in a spherical shape (weevil) called *mula* or *padmamula*, sometimes its form is not a weevil but a *jambangan*. The beginning is depicted with creeping tendrils. *Jambangan*, water, and plants are markers that form relationships in a unified concept of fertility.



Figure 8: Relief of Plant Tendrils Coming Out of *Jambangan* (Source: Bernet Kempers, 1954)

Forms of art objects

It is explained that the consequences of meek line motion also create objects that also look flexible. It is also apparent in depicting reliefs of *apsara* (heaven figures) carved on the walls of the temple with a movement of starting lines. Comparing the depiction of reliefs or statues of Hindu-Buddhist figures with statues from the West will seem different. Western artists create sculptures with the concept of beauty shown by a stocky body, muscles appearing strong.



Figure 9: Apsara at Kalasan Temple
(Source : Bernet-Kempers, 1954)

The art form of Kalasan Temple can be determined by the nature of the material or medium to realize the value of art and based on the material each ornamental art will show its advantages. The material or medium used in the decorative art of Kalasan Temple is *bajralepa*. The results of Wahyuni's research in a discussion (19/10/2020) stated that *bajralepa* is composed of the minerals kaolin (from bricks), calcite (from limestone), silica (from sand), and chalcopyrite. As for Kaolin, it is like clay, whereas chalcopyrite according to him is a rare mineral composed of copper, iron, and sulfur. The color varies, from blue, silver, to golden. This very hard mineral also makes the color of the temple more beautiful and brilliant.

The beauty of the form of architectural art objects of Kalasan Temple including ornamental art is based

on basic geometric shapes: squares, circles, and triangles that manifest on elements of meander lines, spirals, curls, arches. This geometric composition is a picture of heavenly and earthly realms. In Hindu-Buddhism, the square and triangular shapes are symbolic of a static, stable, and eternal heavenly nature, while the circle symbolizes the earthly. In Buddhism life is like a wheel and symbolizes a wheel that is constantly rotating, so a circle is interpreted as something that moves around there is no beginning and no end, a process of life that goes on is transcendental.

Rhythmic composition

It is explained that rhythmic composition can be achieved by uniting or arranging the relationships of separate components into one unit resulting in the concept of beauty based on the principle of harmony or harmony. In Kalasan Temple, the harmony of beauty can be seen from the way different elements are arranged, for example plants, heaven creatures, and mythological animals combined side by side to produce a harmonious combination. So there is a harmony of geometric lines and there is a balance in the arrangement between the ornaments facing each other giving rise to the form of a combination of fierce elements (on Kala's face), meek (on plant tendrils), and heaven figures with their musical instruments. The meaning of the composition is in harmony with the philosophy of Hindu-Buddhist beliefs regarding living in the world. Living in their sight is an eternal life that never stops, living in the world is only part of the eternal life of Brahman. Brahman is the supreme ruler in Hindu (Buddhist) divinity. Brahman is eternal, intangible, transcendent, infinite, beginningless and never lasting, mastering all forms, space and time, the energy of the universe and all its contents (Libert, 1976: 46; [Donder, 2007: 25-27](#)).

From the characteristics of the ornamental art of Kalasan Temple, it can be seen that there is repetition and regularity in choosing and displaying ornaments that are then arranged together. In such works of art [Sumardjo \(2016\)](#) calls art a cosmos, art is a form that contains order in wholeness. In this regularity, there is a structural value, the ways in which elements in ornamental art are arranged and arranged by the artist to give a certain meaning and effect or impression. Accuracy (in choosing ornaments), wholeness, and directness play an important role in realizing ornamental art. It is this structure of the artwork that gives the satisfaction of beauty in the form of a full-round wholeness, a perfect world. From the rules of the Kalasan Temple artwork emerged aesthetics and artistic value. The main value of art is the value of beauty and

aesthetics: the value in harmony, contrast, or brilliance in form.

CONCLUSION

Kalasan Temple in its architectural typology is often grouped in a towering monumental building type resembling a tower, and its grandeur is supported by its variety of *ngrawit*, unique and characteristic decorations that have come to be called "pearls of Central Java art".

The artwork at Kalasan Temple can be interpreted as an effort to realize ideas about things that are transcendental to God by choosing and determining ornaments that have a sacred meaning. It can be traced from plant tendrils, figures and mythological animals, combined with the right proportions, symmetry in their arrangement and placement to artistic manifestation. The cultivation aspect plays an important role so as to produce good art. The value of the quality of sculpture is traced through the relationship of meaningful values, there is a unity to produce the structure of the cosmos.

Based on this, it can be understood that the nature of art are the beauty in the way of its disclosure and cultivation that is able to provide a certain meaning and effect to the supporting community. So studying the philosophy of art about beauty is an effort to live and interpret that the artwork in temple architecture gives an artistic feel that is full of religious values and produces masterpieces with spiritual nuances. In the end, observing ornamental art in temples in addition to seeing the value of beauty, there is another aspect that is interesting to pay attention to - how humans interpret the philosophical nature of the variety of temple ornamental art with the aim of being able to understand an expression in achieving transcendence.

Observing the architectural artworks of the temple and its variety of decorations, it seems that each temple displays unique and interesting artworks. The chosen theme adorns the same temple, for example, the theme of *padma* flowers with stalks that embodied in tendrils, but the expression, creation and cultivation of each temple show uniqueness, peculiarity. Diversity in realizing works of art is a sign that the artist's creativity is able to express the feelings of the supporting community, and not the subjective feelings of the artist. Based on the expression, the principle of art, which is the aspect of the artist's character in creating the design of the space structure and finally manifested in a concrete form can also be observed.

The creative ability of the artist (*cilpin*) of the 9th century AD proved his agility in generating new ideas from a previously known tradition. The ornamental artwork of Kalasan Temple is indeed similar to pre-existing artworks, but its renewed aspect makes the art have charm. Thus, the architecture of the temple and its ornamental variety are buildings with the character of the Archipelago (Indonesia) which represents the religious life of the supporting community. This argument needs to continue to be supplemented in subsequent studies to truly prove that there was no Indianization or Hindunization of the culture of the Archipelago in the 9th century AD. The similarity of themes and cultural forms between Indonesia and India does not always have to be translated into the influence of Indian culture on Indonesia. The ornamental art style and architecture of temples (temples) between Indonesia and India show significant differences, this proves that both Indonesian and Indian people with the same religious background (Hindu-Buddhist) each grew and developed with distinctive characters and different interests.

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