

# INVENTORY ON MOTIF OF TRADITIONAL BATIK *TULIS* *GEDHOG* OF KEREK COMMUNITY, TUBAN SUB DISTRICT, EAST JAVA

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**Abstract:** Kerek, in Tuban Sub District, East Java is an area of typical field farmer community which has a tradition on making traditional weaving fabric named *gedhog*, which thereafter decorated uses batik *tulis* technique. Every sheet of the fabric has its uniqueness of which distinguishes the fabric with fabric from other areas of Indonesia. Looking at to its characteristic, this fabric of Kerek community apparently is a cultural artifact represents value and meaning towards the culture through its visualization it is shown. The aesthetics shown on the batik fabric specifically relate closely to the community's knowledge on cosmological and aesthetical concepts. Therefore, through art and design disciplines approach, by using visual morphology method, meanings contained in a sheet of fabric will be explained through a set of studies on its visual elements such as: motif, decorations, composition, and color. Data collection focuses on visual material, and object. Thus, it is expected that this inventory will be able to classify traditional motif on batik *tulis gedhog* along with the meaning contained in it, to enable future motif development to refer to the original motif on this classification, that has been long clinging among Kerek community.

*Keywords:* *Gedhogan, Inventory, Kerek District, Motif, Batik*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian traditional fabric is not merely an ordinary textile, it is created upon spiritual needs. There are differences between traditional and non-traditional batik. One of them is that traditional fabric or custom (*adati*) fabric is made to fulfill rituals needs of several groups of people, while non-traditional fabric is made upon clothes commodity needs. In addition, traditional fabric has a strong philosophy value which is strongly attached with the origin of the fabric. And in the making technique, traditional fabric requires high craftsmanship based on generation-to-generation-tradition.

Kerek District, the last area in Java and which is still believed that the community is still making traditional fabric as a preservation of their tradition also faces cultural transformation issues. The making process starts from making thread manually, then it is woven until it becomes a sheet of fabric which is not merely for industrial purpose but also for specific purposes such as to show social status, identity of a particular group of people, and to be a part of life cycle such as maternity, marriage, and death. Nowadays, those processes slowly experience adjustments on its raw material selection, colouring material, function, and motif visualization. There are now numbers of motifs development which is popular among Kerek community. It is a good direction of transformation, however, it is essential to know how those motifs were initially created, especially pertaining to the values and philosophy that shaped the motifs. So that, it is urgent to perform inventory on motif of batik of Kerek community, which does not show merely its visualization, but also the meaning contained in it.

In a sheet of Kerek traditional fabric, there are various deep meanings contained in it as an idea, which is shaped through a very long process, as well as a manifestation of spiritual attitude of Kerek community. This fabric plays an important role in the community's life and they live side by side along with the meaning contained in the fabric.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

According to Heringa (2010), it is mentioned that textile develops in Kerek has a close relationship with the so called "Life Cycle" of the community.

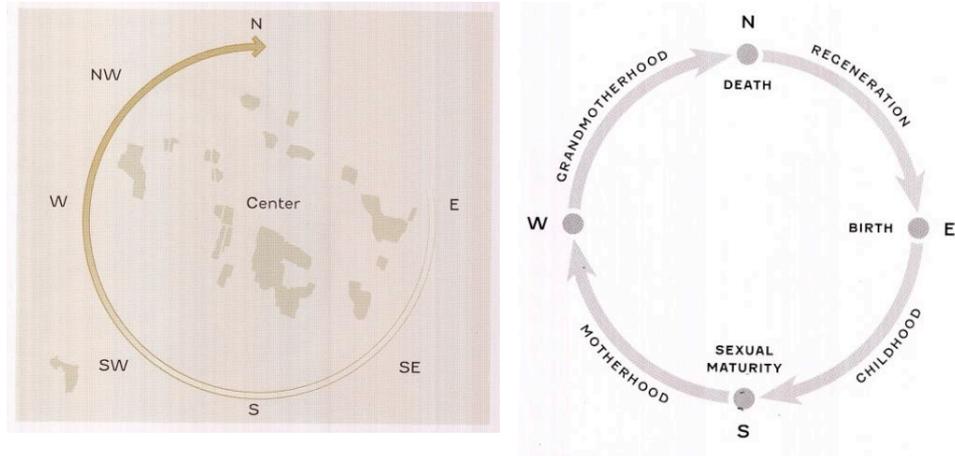


Figure 1 "Life Cycle" Path for Kerek Community  
Source: Heringa, "Ninik Towok's Spinning Wheel", 2010

This concept, as known also by some parts of traditional community in Indonesia is a cosmological order named '*macapat*'. Suggested by (Heringa, 2010:141) by referring to a research of (Ossenburggen, 1979) that *macapat* is a basic concept in governing a village with a central village point surrounded by other villages on the north, west, east and south. This concept, he says, is not based on compass, but based on local compass perception. It remains unknown how the preception emerged and grew.

Looking at to its characteristic, this fabric of Kerek community apparently is a cultural artifact represents value and meaning towards the culture through its visualization it is shown.

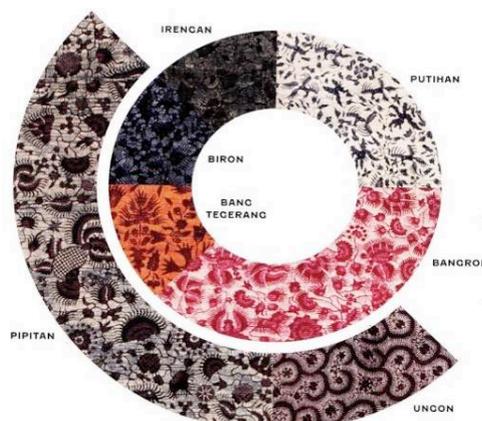


Figure 2 Textile and Cosmological Concept on Kerek Community's Life Cycle  
Source: Heringa, "Ninik Towok's Spinning Wheel", 2010

It can be concluded that visualization of motif and color on traditional batik of Kerek community specifically has strong meaning pertaining to their knowledge of cosmology and aesthetic. White, based on their knowledge, is a symbol of a beginning of human's maternity, pure and innocent. As well as *irengan* which is dominated by dark colors and black, it is correlated with death and end of human's life represented by dark colors. Then in between, there are red and blue which is believed as symbols of fertility, humanity and life.

Batik Kerek has characteristic also on its motif. Motif on Batik Kerek is influenced by 3 cultures, that are Hindu, during the glory of Majapahit Kingdom, China and Islam, when Tuban became an international port and many foreign traders entered and interacted intensively with the local community.

### 3. THE RESEARCH METHOD

This is fine art and design research, of which it needs a comprehensive understanding on data analysis related to technical/practical issues, process, object and theory. Therefore, data collected are divided into three: text, visual material, and experiment result. Text data is researcher's personal record, literature in form of books, scholar journal, flyers, poster, newspaper, magazine, exhibition catalogue, PowerPoint file, email, questionnaire, and interview record. Visual material is studied through picture, sketch, and product image/drawing. Thereafter, data of exploration result is gained through a test towards the studied object physically; or other product that can be related with the product is going to be made. Field studies such as observation, interview, audio, visual and audio visual recording, and experiment are performed to get the data.

Visual morphology method is used to explain meaning contained in the fabric through a study on its visual elements such as motif, decoration, composition, and colour.

### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Below is batik aesthetics of Kerek community that closely relates with their cosmological concept of their life, where on each visual of the batik, contained a particular meaning:

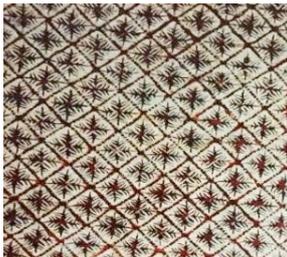
*Table 1 The Aesthetic of Motif of Batik Typically from Kerek, Tuban Sub District and its relationship with Life Cosmolgy Concept*

No	Textile	Picture	Visual and Aesthetic Meanings
1	Putihan		White background with blue or black motif; symbolizes innocence and purity (Karsam, 2014).
2	Bangrod		According to the tradition, it is usually worn by single women and relates it with menstrual blood. Symbolizes fertility and productivity (Karsam, 2014). The word <i>bangrod</i> comes from <i>diabang</i> (red colored) and <i>dilorod</i> (boiled to get rid of wax). <i>Bangrod</i> is related with regeneration and worn by young women who are ready to get married (Heringa, 2010: 37).

3	Pipitan		Has <i>remekan</i> base and usually worn by married women as a symbol of living a life with husband, children and give birth (Karsam, 2014).  This cloth is usually worn by women who have younger children. The word <i>pipitan</i> means togetherness, closeness. In Java, it means the togetherness and closeness of husband-wife and children (Heringa, 2010: 38).
4	Biron		This cloth is used as <i>sasrahan</i> from the groom to the bride. It is symbolized as an initial step before the woman finally united as a part of the man's family (Heringa, 2010: 38).
5	Irengan		Has a dark motif in black color, a symbol of an end and usually worn as the body cover of a person who has passed away as a protection for the spirits from bad things (Karsam, 2014: 39).

Figure Source: Heringa, "Ninik Towok's Spinning Wheel", 2010

Table 2 Inventory on Motif of Batik Typically from Kerek, Tuban Sub District, Based on 'Life Cycle' Cosmological Concept that Illustrates Maternity Meaning

No	Motif Name	Visual Motif	Meaning and Explanation
1	<i>Panji Lor</i>		Pattern in this batik is believed to be refer to svastika shape which means life cycle of Buddha. This <i>sayut</i> fabric is categorized as batik <i>putihan</i> .
	<i>Sampek Engtay</i>		This <i>sayut putihan</i> is usually worn to carry a new born baby as a form of protection to the baby. Pattern butterfly and flower show 'happiness'.

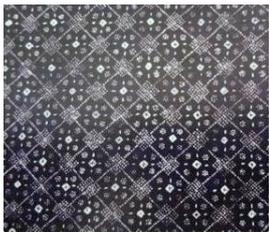
Source: Tenun Gedhog "The Hand-loomed Fabrics of Tuban, East Java", 2010

Table 3 Inventory on Motif of Batik Typically from Kerek, Tuban Sub District, Based on 'Life Cycle' Cosmological Concept that Illustrates Sexual Maturity Meaning

No	Motif Name	Visual Motif	Meaning and Explanation
1	<i>Slimun</i>		This <i>sayut slimun</i> is always there in 'fabric dowry box'. It is difficult to make this pattern, it needs meticulousness. Long time ago, to make the fabric, it required ritual process such as: self-purification, prayer, and offerings.
	<i>Guci Babar</i>		This fabric is categorized as <i>bangrod</i> . The red color in this fabric has a deep meaning compares to its motif of <i>lung tluki</i> (a type of spreading plants, also can be categorized as cotton), this fabric is for a girl who is ready to get married.
	<i>Srigunting</i>		Motif <i>srigunting</i> is a type of bird that is always on a paddyfields. Color for this <i>sayut</i> , as well as <i>ganggeng</i> , can be adjusted according to age classification, starts from red for youngest woman to dark color for elderly woman.
	<i>Kembang Waluh</i>		This motif illustrates a pumpkin flower that grows spreadingly. This kind of <i>sayut</i> is usually worn by Tuban women to go to the field or to the market to carry their belongings.
	<i>Lokchan</i>		This motif gets a strong influence from China in form of phoenix with <i>tluki</i> background, as well as cotton flower.

Source: *Tenun Gedhog "The Hand-loomed Fabrics of Tuban, East Java"*, 2010

Table 4 Inventory on Motif of Batik Typically from Kerek, Tuban Sub District, Based on 'Life Cycle' Cosmological Concept that Illustrates a Period of Getting Old until Death Meaning

No	Motif Name	Visual Motif	Meaning and Explanation
1	<i>Kenongo Uleran</i>		This fabric is a dress material with three little modules motif, composed geometrically forming diagonal rows. <i>Kenongo</i> is <i>kenanga</i> (cananga/ylang-ylang) flower, while <i>uleran</i> means wormy.
	<i>Rengganis</i>		<i>Rengganis</i> means hope for a life full of sweet things, without exaggerating desire and full of respect. This fabric is categorized as ' <i>irengan</i> ' so that it is usually worn specifically for rituals.
	<i>Panji Serong</i>		This ancient <i>jarit</i> is categorized as <i>irengan</i> , it is usually worn for rituals. Its pattern is three types of squares with central point, and lines pointing north-west and east-west which has a spiritual meaning.
	<i>Ganggeng</i>		<i>Ganggeng</i> is a moving sea algae. This motif is made in different color upon need, such as red for a young woman in a fertile period and ready to get married, blue and red is for a woman who has given birth, purple almost black (as on picture) is for elderly woman, and black to cover a person's body who has passed away.

Source: Tenun Gedhog "The Hand-loomed Fabrics of Tuban, East Java", 2010

## 5. CONCLUSION

In analyzing a tradition product and attempts in inventing innovation of the tradition product, one has to have a comprehensive knowledge on values, meaning and phylosophy contained in the product. Since ultimately, eventhough an innovation is oriented towards newness, but still it has to have spirit towards strong tradition values, so that any innovative product will still has identity as a tradition product of the community.

It is including in analyzing this tradition values on batik *tulis gedhog*. Attempts on inventing decoration innovation is frequently performed as tradition revitalization. Nevertheless, it is rarely to find a motif reference that is original. The storage of genuine textile artifact as a source of motif

and color information cannot be relied on that much since it has unavoidable obsolence. The fabric can be physically damaged caused by climate factor or insect bites. It becomes an issue where ancient archeological textile is hardly to find in Indonesia. Therefore, this motif inventory uses visual morphology to pay attention to the entire visual elements on batik *tulis gedhog*, it is expected in future development, it can start to refer to the original motif.

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