Gurda Motif in the Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic Period in Java

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Abstract. The article that discusses Garuda bird on Hindu-Buddhist era and Islamic times aims to reveal more depth about how Garuda's position and role in Javanese cultural perspective. In addition, to know the forms of Garuda and its application from the Hindu-Buddhist era and its transition into the Islamic period and its development. Furthermore, it can be used to find out the comparison of the visual form of Garuda in pre-Islamic times and in Islamic times. The study is done through a historical approach by making observations on the history sources which are arranged in sync. Garuda bird assessment is very useful, because it is based on the idea that the motifs of batik *Gurda* did not appear suddenly but has undergone a very long process of journey. The motif that symbolizes the Garuda bird is initially depicted more realist and even anthropomorphic form that can be found in various realief temple that exist in Java island, among others in Prambanan temple, Kidal temple, Belahan temple, Minakjinggo temple and Sukuh temple. Initially Garuda was described as a human half bird. Then in the time of Majapahit, Garuda depicted with wings stretched wide with the human body half bird. At the time of Islam the form of Garuda transformed into wings as an impact of the growing belief of aniconism.
Keywords: Garuda, Hindu-Buddhist, Cultural, Islamic, Sukuh, Prambanana, Motif

1 Introduction

The writing of this research wants to reveal about the eagle on the batik of the historical aspect. However, when drawn in the period before the appearance of batik then a little more will talk about garuda not as a batik motif, but more on how the visual form of garuda before becoming batik motif and its development which then one of them become batik motif. Garuda in batik is often referred to as *Gurda*, is a form of motifs that the composition shape of lines and fields to form two dimensional visual images which is the smallest part of a pattern, tangible arrangement is in the style of two wings and a tail that became the main motif in a batik pattern arrangement. Garuda bird depicted with two left and right wide wings and has a long tail in the middle [1]. Garuda in view of the Javanese cultural mindset has a significant place, regarded as God's bird. The picture of Garuda birds as a bird that has the power of God's vehicle and is able to fly high into the sky, makes Garuda often revered and gain its own place for the Javanese.

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This can be seen in the life of the Surakarta Palace, as one form of representation of Javanese culture. In the context of Kraton Surakarta, Garuda birds are often found in various aspects of life, such as used as naming the king's chariot. The king in this case is the gods and in the concept of Javanese power including the representative of God, then using a vehicle like God, so the train used is Garuda Kencana [2]. In addition, Garuda is also often used as decorative ornaments on objects that are considered to have more power such as heirlooms or on objects that become symbols of the king's power as in batik, *keris*, umbrella, building ornaments and so forth.

Garuda is a symbol of the wind, which in Javanese cosmology wind is an element of life symbolized by a yellow color that has the character "*supiyah*". In the composition of the concept of *Tribuana* / *Triloka* in the teachings of Javanese culture, which is divided into 3 realms / universe, the wind becomes the symbol of the upper world described as *Alam Niskala*, the explanation described by Dharsono in Nusantara culture [3]. On the other hand, Garuda bird also become the symbol of the sun or commonly called the *Suryabrata*. In Javanese mythology, Garuda is often called the Sun Eagles, becoming a characteristic image of strenght [4].

Based on the description above, it can be seen that Garuda in view of Java society is very strong rooted believed to be a being that has power. From here the author tries to explore more deeply why it can happen and how the reality. By trying to trace through history in sync social facts, mental as well as from the relics of the past. This writing is very important because it aims to reveal more clearly how the position and role of Garuda on the perspective of Javanese culture. In addition, to know the forms of Garuda and its application from the Hindu-Buddhist era and its transition in the Islamic period and its development. Furthermore, it can be used to find out the comparison of visual forms of Garuda in pre-Islamic times and in Islamic times. So that can be used as a basis for further review about *Gurda* motif and its development especially on batik.

2 Method

This research uses interactive analysis method which is the relation of flow from three main components ie data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing, with activity done interactively, then continued with process of collecting data repeatedly so that it form of cycle. This research is a hermeneutic qualitative research that emphasizes the interpretation of meaningful expression. In this research it is possible to interpret the interpretation which has been done by community group to re-describe as a phenomenon of culture result in this case *Gurda* with its various complexity [5].

The steps taken by the author in analyzing the problems of this research, among others, by doing intractive analysis that begins with data collection, then do data reduction and continued with data presentation and conclusion.

3 Discussion

3.1 Garuda in Hindu-Buddhist Period

The understanding of Garuda as a bird that has power, begins with the belief of Hinduism, where Garuda is considered as the *wahana*[1] (vehicle) of Lord Vishnu. The Gods almost always have animals as a vehicle. The rides are sometimes real animals, sometimes in mythology, and sometimes mixed animals. In the depiction, the vehicle is both the symbol

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[1] Wahana in Sanskrit is *Vahana* is a vehicle in the form of a creature or object that becomes a mount belonging to one of the Gods in Indian mythology. The word "*Vah*" in sansekreta means to carry or transport.

and emblem of the Gods it carries. For example Nandi is an ox is a vehicle of Lord Shiva [2], symbolizing strength and virility. The goose, the vehicle of God Brahma, symbolizes wisdom, amazement, and beauty. As an assistant of Gods, the vehicle performs its duty as a double folding of the power of Gods.

Garuda is believed to be the vehicle of Lord Vishnu in Hindu mythology mentioned as half human half bird who is king of the birds. Garuda is often depicted as having the head, wings, tail and the eagle's snout, and the body, hands and feet of a human being. Traces of this belief can be seen clearly on the artefacts of Hindu-Buddhist relics that are found in some temples. Among them are at Prambanan temple, Kidal temple, Belahan temple, Minakjinggo temple and Sukuh temple.

Prambanan temple built around 850 AD by Rakai Pikatan and continuously refined and expanded by King Lokapala and Balitung king Maha Sambu [6]. Based on the Siwagrha inscription dates to 856 AD, this sacred building was built to glorify Lord Shiva. This temple has three main temples namely Vishnu, Brahma, and Shiva the *Trimurti* symbol. The three temples each have one companion temple namely swan for Brahma, Nandi for Shiva, and Garuda for Vishnu. The temple rides are located right in front of the god riders. In front of Shiva temple there is Nandi temple, inside there is statue of Nandi cow. Right in front of Brahma temple there is Angsa temple. This temple is empty and there is no swan (*angsa*) statue in it. Probably once dwelled *Angsa* statue as a vehicle Brahma in it. In front of Vishnu temple there is a temple dedicated to Garuda, but the same as the temple of Angsa, in this temple is not found Garuda statue, possibly the statue of Garuda ever existed in this temple.

On the other side there is a relief that tells the god weeping in front of Hyang Wisnu begs for Rahwana's sake. Batara Vishnu sits on the back of the dragon of the earth or is often referred to as Sang Hyang Ananta who come out of the ocean and Garuda presents a blue *Tunjung* flower to Sang Hyang Vishnu. Garuda is depicted with the face of a beaked bird like an eagle, using headdress and ears. His body is like a man wearing a decoration on his chest as well as his hands and arms wearing necklace (*kelat bahu*) and bracelet.

Garuda is also found in the Belahan temple located in Wonosonyo village, district of Gempol, Pasuruan, East Java. This temple is a *petirtaan* (water place) that has the uniqueness of the existence of two statues of women Dewi Sri and Dewi Laksmi. Statue of Goddess Lakshmi who outflow of water from her breasts which then accommodated on a pond measuring 6 x 4 meters under the statue. Both of these statues stand and back to the wall made of brick decorated with reliefs depicting the figure of Lord Vishnu who rode the garuda as high as about three meters.

In the Kidal temple located in the district of Malang, also found Guruda. Kidal Temple is one of the heritage temples of the Singasari kingdom. This temple was built as a tribute to the great King Anusapati, the second King of Singasari, who reigned for 20 years (1227 - 1248). Kidal temple is architecturally, thick with Eastern Javanese culture, made of andesite stone and vertical geometric dimension. The foot of the temple looks a bit high with the stairs going up into small pieces. At the foot of the temple carved 3 pieces of reliefs depicting the story of Garudeya legend (Garuda). This story is very popular as a moral story about the liberation or ruwatan of ancient Javanese Literature in the form of *kakawin*, tells about the journey of Garuda in liberating his mother from slavery with the redemption of holy water *Amerta*. This story also exists in Sukuh temple located on the northern slope of Mt. Lawu. The story of Garuda is known to the society at the time of the rapidly growing

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[2] Shiva is one of the three main deities in Hinduism known as trimurti, the other two gods are Brahma and Wisnu. In the teachings of Hinduism, Lord Shiva is a melting god, tasked with melting everything that is outdated and not worthy of being in the mortal world anymore so it must be returned to its origin.

Hinduism of the *Waisnawa[3]* secte especially in the period of Kahuripan and Kediri kingdoms. The Garudeya story in Kidal temple is engraved in 3 reliefs and each is located on the center of the sides of the temple's feet except at the entrance. The first relief depicts Garuda below 3 snakes, then the second relief depicts Garuda with a jug on its head, and the third relief Garuda holds a woman. Among the three reliefs, the second relief is the most fully Garuda relief.

Fig. 1. Garuda in left picture at Kidal temple is the second relief depicting Garuda take the water of *Amerta* and the right picture of the third relief Garuda managed to save her mother from slavery

Garuda also emerged in the Majapahit era this can be seen from the Minakjinggo temple in Trowulan, Mojokerto regency, located about 100 meters east of Segaran pond becomes the only temple of the unique Majapahit heritage. If in general the temple in this era is composed of red brick, but this temple is composed of andesite stone with a carving that full of meaning. As a foundation, Minakjinggo temple uses red brick arrangement with a height of 3 to 4 meters. While the body parts and head of the temple using andesite stone carved with various forms of relief. From the location of the ruins of this temple has been found a statue of Garuda, which is then stored in the Museum Majapahit in Trowulan. The depiction of Garuda is still the same as the previous era of human like but winged body with legs (clawed) and have a beak. The shape is almost similar to the garuda appearance in Sukuh temple.

In Sukuh temple built at the end of the Majapahit kingdom located on the slopes of Lawu mountain, in the village of Berjo, Ngargoyoso subdistrict, Karanganyar regency, Garuda is depicted as a statue which is part of the *Amerta* or water life story. In Sukuh temple there is an inscription / writing text, that is a *Suryasengkala* symbolizing the year 1363 *Saka* or 1441 M [8].

Fig. 2. Garuda in the Majapahit era found in the temple Minakjinggo left side, and right side of form Garuda on Sukuh temple

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[3] Is a sect in Hinduism, which in the process of worship is more focused on the worship of Vishnu as the supreme god. Vaishnava is a belief and doctrine that also has an obligation to its adherents (in Hinduism is called Bakti Yoga), which are all based on the Vedas and the literature of the Puranas such as the Bhagavad Gita, Isha Upanishad, and Vishnu Purana and Bhagavata Purana.

From the description can be drawn the red thread that Garuda in Hindu-Buddhist period is regarded as a creature who has the power, also a vehicle or ride of Lord Vishnu. Garuda's visual images vary but in general the Garuda is portrayed as half-human half-birds. The main character that never comes off is the beak visualization. However, after entering the Majapahit era the strongest character form is actually seen on the wings that are always depicted in the state of stretching as a characteristic as a Garuda bird.

3.2 Garuda in the Islamic Period

The period of Islam in Java is marked by the emergence of the Demak kingdom, in the northern coastal area of Java. Demak was previously as a part of the Majapahit kingdom, then emerged as a new power inheriting the legitimacy of Majapahit greatness [7]. In contrast to the Hindu-Buddhist period, during the Islamic *anichonism*[4] happenend, so that the depiction of Garuda became significant change.

At this time there is a belief in the absolute prohibition of the depiction of the Creator (God). In Islamic teachings there is a prohibition of depictions of all human and animal depictions described in hadith (*hadits*[5]) and by the old traditions of Islamic people. This has led to the art of Islam which dominated by geometric patterns, calligraphy, and leaf patterns. The object of aniconism includes God, all Gods and sacred characters, legendary characters and history, to all human beings, animated beings and living beings. The absence of an icon in Islam by Burckhardt is referred to as not only having a negative role, but also a positive role. Create emptiness, eliminate all the desires and suggestions of the lust of the world, and instead they create an order that expresses balance, tranquility, and peace [9]. So that in the Islamic period emerged visual forms that emphasize the depth of meaning. Living beings are manifested in the form of abstract symbols that are the essence of the strongest character of a form. There is deformation, stylization and transformation of human forms, animated creatures and other living creatures. Not apart also with the form of Garuda. Garuda does not just disappear but still affect the natural mind as a legendary creature, only the form of visualization appear different.

Garuda is depicted with stretched wings as the strongest form of the eagle's shape, as in the Majapahit era, but the human figure of half-birds was not revealed. This can be seen in the relics of the Mantingan mosque, an ancient mosque in the village Mantingan, district Tahunan, regency Jepara, Central Java, is a mosque founded during the Sultanate of Demak. At the Mantingan Mosque appeared patterns of ornaments used in the form of carvings with floral and fauna flirting motifs. Typology of buildings with the concept of Islam-Hindu fusion is evident in the form of buildings and the gate. One feature of this mosque is its relief, some of which have a pattern of plants that seem to form the shape of living things, so as not to be said to violate the prohibition of Islam. On the other hand, there are also many reliefs depicting the stretched wings that are likely to be the strongest character form of Garuda. There is also a picture of ornaments by Sewan Susanto called as the beginning / the starting of the pattern of *Semen* [6]on batik that is *Meru, Garuda*, tree and

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[4] Prohibition in Islam against the creation of images of living things. In the early days, anonymism in Islam was intended as an act to eliminate idolatry, especially against the idols worshiped by pagan worshipers.

[5] Hadith are all words / sayings, deeds and decrees and approval of the Prophet Muhammad SAW which is made into provisions or laws in the religion of Islam. The hadith is used as a source of law in Islam besides the Qur'an, Ijma and Qiyas, where in this case, the position of the hadith is the second source of law after the Qur'an.

[6] *Semen* comes from the word semi which means to grow, so that it means a life that is semi or in other words life that develops or prosperes. The *Semen* pattern consists of 3 parts. First is the motif associated with land, such as plants or quadrupeds. Second is air-related motif, such as Garuda, birds and mega clouds. While the third is the motif associated with water, such as snakes, fish and frogs.

temple in relief medalion of Mantingan mosque (Susanto, 1980: 299). Here is a picture of a *Semen* pattern that is extracted from the relief medalion in the Mantingan mosque.

Fig. 3. The *Semen* pattern was composed of the old mosque wall of the tomb complex of Queen Kalinyamat in Mantingan, south of Jepara in 1559 (Source: Sewan Susanto, 1980: 303)

In the painting there is a composition of ornaments from *meru*, plants, lotus, tree, cloud, gate temple, and tree of life. Since the teachings of Islam prohibit images of living things like humans and animals, the depiction of living things is made not real. These creatures are made vaguely by stirring or stylizing in their forms. Based on this then known motifs of stylation like garuda and other animals that adorn the pattern of batik *Semen*. The patterns of batik *Semen* often display elements of flowers that are being broke, the pistil is still small or before bloom as a variation used elements of animal stilts and natural surroundings such as birds, butterflies, rocks, living trees and others. In the world of batik, beside *Semen* pattern also develops patterns *Sidomukti*, *Kawung* and others that are known now as the development and refinement of Hindu-Buddhist motifs.

Fig. 4. Medalion Mantingan mosque is similar to relief on Penataran temple with medalion pattern. In the relief there is a composition of ornaments from *Meru*, plants, lotus, trees, cloud, gate temple, and tree of life. According to Sewan Susanto, it is the forerunner of *Semen* motif on batik [10].

The development of ornamental patterns in the Islamic period also can be found on the tomb wall of Sendang Duwur Bojonegoro from the Islamic era in 1585 [9]. It is the tomb of Sunan Sendang Duwur or Raden Nur Rachmad located on top of Amitunon hill of Sendang Duwur village, Paciran district, Bojonegoro. There is an interesting thing on the wall of the tomb gate, which is depicted with the form of a spanning wings, it is reminiscent of the wing pattern of Garuda. Almost the same as the medallion in the Mantingan mosque, that is a stretch of wings, similar to the *gurda* motif known in batik ornaments.

Garuda in the next phase again becomes an admired symbol, this is because without visualizing in real terms it automatically eliminates all the fluctuations and suggestions of the lust of the world, and instead emerges an order that expresses balance, tranquility, and peace. This means that when anicism develops then there will be symbols full of meaning as a form of expression of Javanese culture which is more subtle hidden. This can be seen explicitly at the time of Paku Buwono III (PB III) in Keraton Surakarta. At that time, of course, also influenced the previous mindset about Garuda which is regarded as a sacred

motif that has symbols full of meaning, so in this case can not be used arbitrarily. Its users are arranged in such a way as signs and symbols of greatness. The rule is stated in the *Serat Angger Awisan*[7] (wax fibers) made at the time of PB III in Keraton Surakarta, mentioned that this motif should only be used by the king and his relatives only [10]. It shows that the Garuda in batik transformed into *gurda* motif has its own distinctness on the dynamics of the Islamic period which then happened syncretism[8] with the previous times into the Javanese culture.

Fig. 5. The existence of the same pattern between spreading ornament at Sendang Duwur grave with medallion of Mantingan mosque and *gurda* motif on batik, wing is the main character in the structure of motif.

4 Conclusion

Garuda is a picture of a mighty bird that at the beginning of its emergence in the Hindu-Buddhist in the form of half-human bird without wing with a crooked beak as its main feature that described as eagle-like birds. Then in the time of Majapahit Garuda depicted with wide wings stretched with the human body half bird. At the time of Islam the form of Garuda transformed into wings as an impact of the growing belief of aniconism. But the belief that Garuda as a creature that has the power continues to grow and then used as a sacred symbol whose embodiment has experienced in styling. Styling of Garuda still highlight the strongest character of the visual structure of the Garuda bird itself so that although it has transformed the shape but it still recognizable as a Garuda in the batik that is called as *gurda* motif.

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[7] *Serat Angger Awisan*, is a manuscript in the form of *Naskah Carik* no. 374 Ha SMP-KS # 202, neatly stored in Sana Pustaka Kasunanan Surakarta.

[8] Syncretism was originally a union of Javanese Dwipa teachings mingled with Hinduism, Javanese dwipa has an open nature so that Hindu Buddhist beliefs converge, as a result the mystical practice with ascetic models and Javanese mythology is growing so that myths arise which are essentially the worship of power above humans.

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