

Research Article

Studying the Al Mahdi Mosque

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Abstract.

Al Mahdi Mosque was built during the Magelang Regency. In general, mosques in central Java are different from other mosques. For example, this mosque was built in a style that resembles a temple. The temple-like style originates from Budi Suroso (Kwee Giok Yong), otherwise known as Mahdi, who is the head of the mosque's Takmir, who is of Chinese descent. Based on our research, 13 signs represent Chinese culture and philosophy found in the buildings and they are classified into three groups: first, there are four icons containing the mosque's tera lanterns, the mosque's poles, the mosque's roof shapes, and the mosque's minarets. Second, there are six symbols, namely, red on the body of the mosque's poles, green on the edges of the pillars and roof in the mosque, gold/yellow color on the mosque calligraphy, and white on the walls and roof of the mosque, unlimited ornaments on the walls of the mosque, and carvings on the windows. Third, there are three indexes which include the square pagoda of the eight mosques, the mosque's nameplate in four languages, and the writings of Al-Maul Husna on the lanterns at the front of the mosque.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Indonesia's tolerance in religious diversity. Bears or led mostly Indonesian people to devoted to islamic faith, but few people who followed other beleifs. With so many kinds of religions, Indonesia has mutual respect and respect for cultural diversity, both of themselves and for regional cultures, which are closely embedded in the lives of the Indonesian population. Not all culture that is passed down in daily habits, but also culture that is passed down in a form and style of building. One of them is the Al Mahdi Mosque in Magelang.

Al Mahdi Mosque is located in Magelang Regency, in general, mosques in central java are different from other mosques, this mosque was built in that style that resembles a temple. The Al Mahdi Mosque was built by residents of the complex because the mosque that used to be a place of worship was too far away. This temple-like style

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originates from Budi Suroso (kwee Giok Yong) otherwise known as Al Mahdi, who is the head of the Mosque takmir, who is also of Chinese descent.

Mixing or acculturating culture in the style of building mosques aims to strengthen inter-religious relations and increase harmony in social life is the key to the interest of this research. Not the style of the building, the ornaments that adorn the mosque are also a blend of culture from Chinese culture, followed by Arabic scripture. So this research is studied using Pierce's semiotic theory and based on Chinese cosmology cultural. And this research uses descriptive approach method of qualitative statistics.

1.2. Formulation of the problem

1. What are the semiotic meanings and typical Chinese cultural values found in the Al Mahdi Mosque?
2. How is the representation of Chinese culture at the Al Mahdi Mosque?

1.3. Objectives

1. To find out what are the cultural meanings contained in the Al Mahdi Mosque.
2. To find out the representation of Chinese culture at the Al Mahdi Mosque.

1.4. Benefits of research

The benefits in this study are divided into 2, namely theoretical benefits and practical benefits. Are as follows:

a. theoretical Benefits

The results of this study are expected to provide philosophical insight, scientific studies, and understanding of the semiotic study of the culture of the Al MAHDI Mosque.

b. Practical Benefits

The results of this study are expected to serve as an insight into the study of semiotics at the Al Mahdi Mosque, can provide new insights for the general public and Chinese society, and as a reference research for conducting research on mosque buildings with Chinese architectural concepts.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Culture in Indonesia

According to Sutardi (2007: 9) the Indonesian nation is a nation that has cultural diversity. On a fertile land containing natural wealth that places Indonesia as an important country in Southeast Asia and the world. According to Anthony Reid, as quoted in Sutardi book, Indonesia's strategic position allows cultures from all over the world to freely enter Indonesia. Cultural development is also influenced by:

1. Geographical environment
2. International contacts

Mattulada as quoted by Sutardi (2007:11-12) said that one of the five characteristics of ethnic grouping is the socio-cultural pattern that creates an action or behavior that is valued as part of customary life that is respected together.

2.2. Cultural Acculturation

It is the mixing of cultures which is the beginning of a major change as a result of the influence of incoming cultures from all corners of the world (Sutardi, 2007:15). Mixing is related to social concepts that arise when a culture meets a foreign culture which from time to time begins to be accepted and processed in such a way without causing the value of the original culture to be lost.

2.3. Semiotics

Semiotics or semiotics is an absorption from the Greek semeion which means "sign". Terminologically, semiotics is a branch of science that has a relationship with the study of signs and everything related to signs, van Zoest in Sartini (2011). Semiotics is a sign as a form of communication that is perfected into a literary model that deals with essential aspects to be able to understand literary phenomena as a distinctive communication tool in society, Teew (1984:6) quoted in Sartini (2011).

2.4. Pierce's Semiotics

In studying a sign, there are several methods of approach using semiotic analysis. C. S. Pierce's semiotic concept focuses on the trichotomy relationship between signs in the work. The trichotomy relationship in question is the relationship between object,

representamen, and interpretant. In the trichotomy relationship, it is further divided into 3 parts, namely icons, indexes, and symbols.

An icon is a physical object that resembles what it represents. The representation is characterized by similarity (Sobur,2003: 158). An index is a sign that shows a natural relationship between a sign and a

signified that is a causal relationship, or a sign that directly refers to reality (Sobur,2003: 159). A symbol is a sign that shows the natural relationship between the signifier and the signified (Sobur,2003: 42).

2.5. Al Mahdi Mosque Building

Cultural acculturation can be realized in the form of building, one of which is a place of worship. Al Mahdi Mosque is one of the mosques has an architectural style resembling a temple. Al Mahdi Mosque is located on Jalan Delima Raya, North Kramat, North Magelang District, Magelang City, Central Java.

The Al Mahdi Mosque was built by residents of the complex, because the mosque that used to be a place of worship was too far from the complex. This temple-like style originates from Budi Suroso (Kwee Giok Yong) or better known as Mahdi, who is the head of the mosque's takmir, who is also of Chinese descent.

2.6. Previous Research

The following are previous studies that are relevant to this research:

Afrilliani's thesis (2015) entitled "Analysis of Cultural Semiotics of the Jami' Tan Kok Liong Mosque in Bogor". University of North Sumatra, Medan. The problem discussed in this study is the overall meaning of the Jami Tak Kok Liong Mosque. The method used is descriptive research method and qualitative method, based on field research. The theory used is semiotic Piercing theory. The research results obtained are cultural meanings and cultural values. The difference between previous research and this research is that previous research only focuses on cultural meanings and values, while this study focuses on the meaning of symbols and the conclusion of all the meanings of symbols.

Handayani's Thesis (2018) "A Semiotic Analysis of Chinese Culture at the Sumenep Palace". Brawijaya University, Malang. The problems discussed in this study are the Chinese symbols found in the Sumenep Palace. This research uses descriptive research methods. qualitative. Methods of collecting data by means of interviews, observation,

and documentation. The results of this study indicate that there are 21 signs that are classified into 7 types of icons, 7 types of symbols, and 7 types of indexes. The 7 icon indexes consist of: Labang mesem (smiling door), Pendopo Agung, Keraton Palace Door, Tirtonegoro Palace, Ambtenaar Office, Gazebo, Horse-drawn Carriage Garage. The difference between Handayani's research and this research lies in the object being studied. Handayani's research examines the Sumenep Palace while this study examines the Babah Alun Mosque in Papanggo, North Jakarta. The advantage of this study compared to previous studies is that this study describes all the symbols that exist in the Al Mahdi Mosque building in depth and thoroughly.

3. Methods

3.1. Types of Research

The research method is a step in compiling a scientific work. This is because the research method is a tool used in collecting data with accurate and detailed results.

The type of research used in this research is qualitative research. Qualitative research examines interactive and flexible perspectives. Qualitative research is proposed to understand social phenomena from the author's point of view based on data in the field.

3.2. Data Source

The data of this study are all information that is in the Al Mahdi Mosque. In the research methodology there are two types of data acquisition, namely primary data and secondary data.

The data sources used in this study are divided into two types (Sugiyono, 2010:137), namely as follows.

1. The primary data source of this research is the photo of the Al Mahdi mosque building.
2. Sources of secondary data in this study are library data in the form of books and scientific journals related to the object of research, namely building works.

3.3. Data collection techniques

The technique used in data collection is the documentation method. Documentation documentation method is one method of collecting qualitative data by seeing or by other people or subjects.

The following are data collection techniques used by researchers in research writing this thesis.

1. Doing documentation (Photos)
2. Conduct interviews
3. Literature study

3.4. Data Analysis Techniques

Sugiyono in Widiarni (2013:40) states that data activities in qualitative research are carried out interactively and continue to be complete. The activity is divided into three parts including; data reduction stage, data presentation stage, and verification stage. Steps in analyzing data, namely:

1. Grouping data into tables based on semiotic theory.
2. To examine the visual meaning of the ornaments in the Al Mahdi Mosque based on semiotic theory.
3. Interpret the representation of the Al Mahdi mosque according to Chinese culture.

4. Result and Discussion

This chapter presents the results of research findings and discussion on the object of the Al-Mahdi Mosque. The explanation of the findings and discussion of this chapter is based on Pierce's semiotic theory.

4.1. Finding

The Al-Mahdi Mosque was founded in Magelang Regency by Mr. Mahdi as a local resident who together with other residents thought that the uniqueness of the village, namely the union of various ethnic groups, Chinese and Javanese races, became the background behind the construction of the Al-Mahdi mosque.

TABLE 1: Findings on objects based on Pierce theory.

No.	Object Representation	Relationship	Object	Interpretant
1.	Icon		Lantern on the terrace of the mosque	Lantern on a pagoda building in Vietnam. Brings a sense of security
2.	Icon		mosque pillar	The pillars of the Great Mosque of Xi'an. A total of eight is considered to bring good luck.
3.	Icon		The shape of the outer roof of the mosque	The shape of the roof on the Great Mosque of Xi'an. A simple roof shape for all circles and positions.
4.	Icon		mosque minaret	Resembling the pagoda in Kaifeng, rated the higher the focus the more on god.
5.	Symbol		Red color on the body of the mosque pole	Signifies good luck, wealth, fortune that comes.
6.	Symbol		Green color at the ends of the poles and the inner roof	Like hope that brings luck, as well as kindness that protects worshippers.
7.	Symbol		The gold/yellow color on the mosque writing	Marking the identity of the mosque. glorify Allah's words.
8.	Symbol		White color on the tempok and roof in the mosque	The white color signifies the grief and destruction that are expressed during worship to purify again.
9.	Symbol		Endless ornaments	Indicates the relationship between Allah and His creation that there are no boundaries between them.
10.	Symbol		Engraving on a small round window	Indicates the relationship between Allah and His creation that there are no boundaries between them.
11.	Index		octagonal shape	Each side has the lafaz Allah and clings to the power of Allah.
12.	Index		mosque nameplate	As the identity of the mosque, it is represented in 4 languages, namely Indonesian, Mandarin, Javanese, and Arabic.
13.	Index		As-Maul Allah Al-Husna On The Lantern	The attributes of Allah that shine in the light of the lamps.

4.2. Discussion

1. Icon

(a) Lanterns on the terrace of the mosque

Source: piqsels.com
 The concept of cultural acculturation in the Al-Mahdi mosque building can be seen on the front or terrace of the mosque. Lanterns or lanterns found in mosque buildings can also be found in several other typical Chinese buildings, such as at the entrance to the Pagoda temple in Vietnam. In traditional Chinese life, lanterns



Figure 1: Lanterns on the Terrace of the Mosque. Source: personal documentation.



Figure 2: Lanterns at Vietnam Pagoda Temple Entrance.

used to be used for lighting, as well as hanging in front of houses. The philosophy of placing lanterns on the terrace of the house is considered to bring peace or a sense of security and luck or bring sustenance. On the outside of the lantern there is usually calligraphy that says positive things that are expected to have a good impact on everyone who enters the building. Similar to the Al-Mahdi mosque, placing a lantern on each side of the mosque terrace will provide a sense of security when worshiping and bring good things when leaving the mosque.

1. (a) The pillars of the mosque

Al-Mahdi Mosque has eight pillars on the front which are red on the body of the pole and green at the end of the pole. Similarly, the Great Mosque of Xi'an in Xi'an is the oldest mosque in China. The function of the pillars themselves is as a building foundation to stand firmly like other buildings. The difference is the meaning of the number of eight pillars according to Chinese cultural ideas.



Figure 3: Pillars of the Mosque. Source: personal documentation.



Figure 4: Pillars of the Great Mosque of Xi'an. Source: Nusagates.com.

Chinese culture, the number eight (八 bā) is considered to have a very deep meaning, which is to bring good luck and prosperity. In Romans, the number 8 also has its own meaning, namely infinity which means infinite. With the intention of luck and prosperity will continue to come without stopping to every congregation of the mosque.

1. (a) Mosque Tower

The Al-Mahdi mosque and in other mosques, the main function of a minaret is as a place to call, the call to prayer so that the sound produced will be processed through high walls and make a louder sound. However, in Chinese cultural philosophy, the tower or pagoda is a building from Buddhism whose function is to store the bodies of monks. But in the development of China, the pagoda is used as a religious place.



Figure 5: Mosque Tower. Source: personal documentation.



Figure 6: Tower in Kaifeng city, Henan. Source: Wikimedia.org.

The philosophy of the formation of a cone building or the taller the building the smaller it is so that the adherents of the teachings as their knowledge increases, the more they focus on their god which is shown from the pointed end of the tower. Similar to mosques for Muslim worship, the tower is formed to sound the call to prayer so that every worshiper who hears it will immediately come to the mosque to perform worship

1. (a) The shape of the roof of the mosque

Source: gomuslim.coThe roof of the Al-Mahdi mosque building resembles the roof of the entrance to the Great Mosque of Xi'an. The general function of the roof is basically as a protector and cover of a building. Chinese culture itself, the shape of the roof on a building can explain a position or position of someone who owns the building. The meaning of the roof shape of the Al-Mahdi mosque and the Xi'an Grand Mosque is simplicity because it is considered capable of accommodating worshipers from all groups and positions.



Figure 7: The shape of the roof of the mosque. Source: personal documentation.



Figure 8: The shape of the roof of the entrance of the Great Mosque of Xi'an .

1. *Symbol*

(a) The red color of the mosque pole



Figure 9: Red color on the pillars of the mosque. Source: personal documentation.

The red color on the body of the mosque's pillars is not solely the national color of China, but the color red has a deep meaning. Red color symbolizes luck, fortune, wealth, happiness. Implemented into the body of the pillar, it is intended that worshipers who worship are always accompanied by happiness, and gain a lot of sustenance and luck will always accompany every step.

1. White color on the walls and roof inside



Figure 10: White Color in the Mosque Sky. Source: personal documentation.

In Indonesian culture, white is a color that symbolizes purity, cleanliness, but it is different from China. The color white in Chinese philosophy means sorrow and destruction.

If interpreted in terms of Chinese philosophy, the white color on the walls and roof in the mosque means that every worshiper who is grieving, sad, or feeling broken inside, will always be given protection, and his illness healed by Allah.

If interpreted in Indonesian philosophy, the white color on the walls and roof of the mosque means that no matter how bad the deeds that have been done by humans, the mosque is a place to complain and beg for forgiveness and be purified again.

1. Wall ornament

Source: Chinese Symbol and Art Motif book Winding lines with a variety of simple patterns have been around since the dynasties of imperial China. These winding lines have a pattern that has no end. Not infrequently found in various buildings with typical Chinese because the meaning of the endless lines means infinite. By implementing an

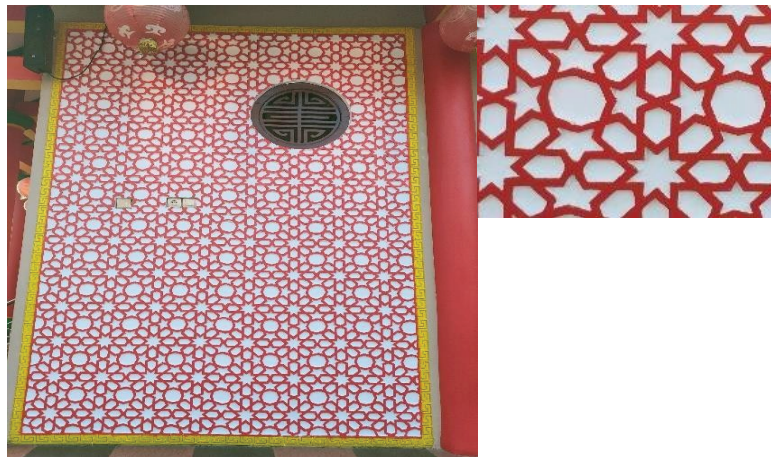


Figure 11: Ornaments on Mosque Walls. Source: personal documentation.

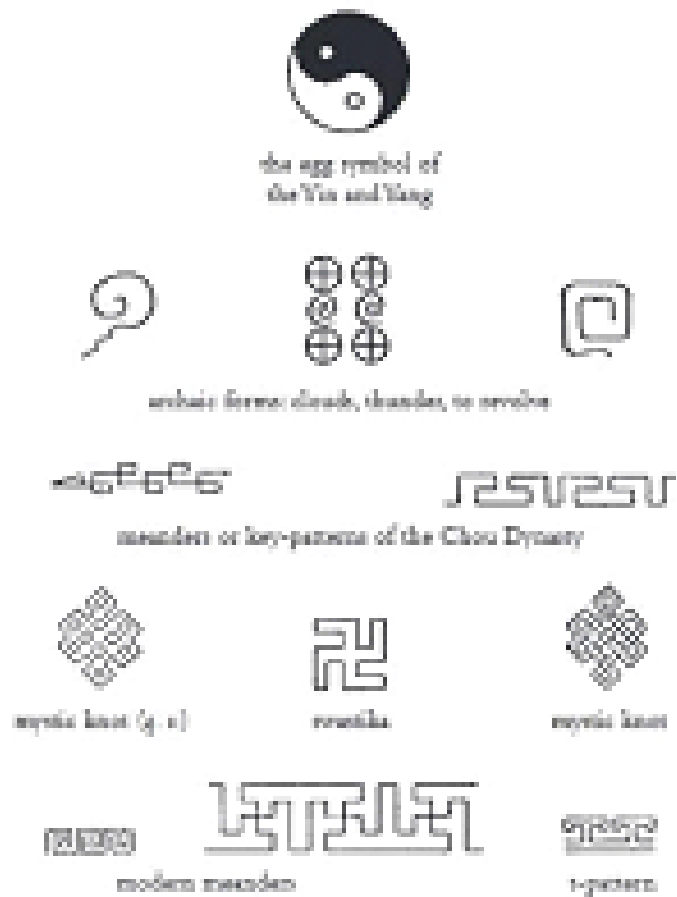


Figure 12: Winding lines.

unlimited pattern on the outer walls of the mosque, it is hoped that the congregation will have a good relationship with Allah without any limits or conditions.

1. mosque air ventilation



Figure 13: Mosque Round Window. Source: personal documentation.

The Al-Mahdi mosque building has air ventilation in the form of windows that are not too big. The shape of the size contained in the window also can not be ignored. When observed, the shape of the window carving resembles the letter (风 fēng) which means wealth, success, achievement. The use of carved patterns on small windows found in mosques signifies that no matter how small or big the achievement, success, wealth that is owned and obtained, humans must always be grateful and always remember Allah.

1. *Index*
2. Octagonal roof shape



Figure 14: The shape of the octagonal mosque roof. Source: personal documents.

Source: wiki.com In cosmogony philosophy in China, (卦 Bāguà) is an eight-sided figure that is of equal size and rests on a single point in the middle. The eight sides



Figure 15: Patkua Diagram (Bāguà ☰).

are water, earth, fire, earth, heaven, gung, swamp, and thunder. Then in the middle is the symbol of Yin and Yang, the center of all sides. In addition, Patkua (☰ Bāguà) in history was used to determine the layout of buildings and the cardinal points known as fengsui.

In the Al-Mahdi mosque, each side of the Patkua octagon is the words of Allah which all focus on one point, namely Allah SWT. The Yin and Yang symbols are designated as Allah SWT, the creator of the universe, which is the main key to the goodness and destruction that he creates.

1. Mosque nameplate



Figure 16: Al Mahdi Mosque Nameplate. Source: personal documentation.

The nameplate of the mosque describes a building with the name Masjid Al Mahdi by displaying four languages. 'Masjid Al Mahdi' indicates the use of Indonesian because it is located in Indonesia. Javanese script is shown because the mosque is located in Magelang, Central Java. The Chinese script is indicated because of the mixing of

cultures, both buildings and history. behind it. Arabic script shows that in worshipping Allah, humans use Arabic as the language of instruction.

1. As-Maul Husna on the lantern



Figure 17: Writing of Praise in Arabic on Lanterns. Source: personal documentation.

The philosophy of placing the good names of Allah on the lanterns, and placing the lanterns on the outside of the mosque is because every human being who has made various mistakes will always be opened for forgiveness in which Allah's good qualities are radiated by the light of the lantern.

4.3. Conclusion

Based on the research that has been carried out, there are 13 signs that represent Chinese culture and philosophy found in mosque buildings and are classified into 3 groups, first there are 4 icons containing mosque terra lanterns, mosque poles, mosque roof shapes, and mosque minarets. Then there are 6 symbols, namely red on the body of the mosque pole, green color on the ends of the pillars and roof in the mosque, gold / yellow color on the mosque writings, white on the walls and roof in the mosque, unlimited ornaments on the walls of the mosque, and carvings in the windows. small round mosque. There are 3 Inderks containing the square pagoda of the eight mosques,

the mosque's nameplate in 4 languages, and the writing of Al-Maul Husna on the lanterns at the front of the mosque.

The presence of residents of Chinese descent in the area around the mosque has a positive impact on the general public, the construction of the Al-Mahdi mosque which resembles the original Chinese building is a mixture of cultures and forms of harmony among the surrounding community. The paculturation seen has an impact on increasing tolerance between tribes, races, origins from each other and focuses on worship for Allah SWT.

4.4. Suggestions

This research is expected to be a reference, reference, additional knowledge both for further research and to add insight. Externally reviewing and developing for further research can benefit a wide audience. The limitation of this research is that it only focuses on the discussion based on Pierce's Semiotics and it is hoped that it will be used for further research.

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