

## Conference Paper

# Local Wisdom in the Cultural Symbol of Indonesian Traditional House

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## Abstract

The research aims to reveal the local wisdom through the cultural symbol in Indonesian Traditional House particularly *Umah Edet Pitu Ruang Gayo*. This research used a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach. The source of data were conducted through documentation study, observation, and interviews. The research Revealed that the design of *Umah Pitu Ruang* are divided into two parts, they are basic structural design and motif of *kerrawang Gayo*. The results of the research revealed that based on design, there are 4 symbols namely Gergel symbolizes "unity", *Luangi ni puting suyen* symbolizes "blessing", *Bubung urum Rongka* symbolizes "protection". and Benang serta peceng symbolizes the right of ulama, in other words the priest or ulama is obliged to correct the wrong. Based on motif, there are 13 symbols namely *emun beriring*, *emun mutumpuk*, *emun berkune*, *emun mupesir*, *emun berangkat*, *puter tali*, *Pucuk rebung*, *sarak opat* and *lelayang*. Based on color there are 5 symbols, including yellow, green, red, white, and black.

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## 1. Introduction

Local wisdom is basic knowledge gained from living in balance with nature. It is related to culture in the community which is accumulated and passed on. This wisdom can be both abstract and concrete, but the important characteristics are that it comes from experiences or truth gained from life. The wisdom from real experiences integrates the body, the spirit and the environment. It emphasizes respect for elders and their life experiences. Moreover, it values moral more than material things. (Nakorntap.et.al, 1996 in Roikhwaphut: 176). (Manugeran, 2017: 1) emphasizes that, Local wisdom is a set of ideas or polices based on the values of virtues found in a community and often applied, believed to be the guidance of life, and handed down from time to time. Based

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on the definitions, that local wisdom can be understood as a human effort by using their mind to act towards something, object, or events that occur in a certain space.

Indonesia is a country of diversity, home to numerous different ethnic groups, languages, cultures and religions. However, a common language and the national motto of 'Unity in Diversity' helps to bind the 17.500 islands and their inhabitants together. In Indonesia, every ethnic has its own local wisdom, such as ethnic of *Lampung* known to be open to accept other ethnics as brother, and so does ethnic *Batak*. *Java* is famous with the etiquette and gentle behavior, as well as other ethnics like *Minang*, *Aceh*, *Sunda*, and others. They have their own unique culture and life guidance according to their beliefs to achieve common prosperity.

This research is to reveal the local wisdom through the cultural symbol in Indonesian Traditional House particularly *Umah Edet Pitu Ruang Gayo*. It is seen that the significant point of local wisdom is the unity. The traditional house in *Gayo* highland, is *Pitu Ruang gayo*. Although *Gayo* has different areas with others but the local wisdom in *Umah Edet Pitu Ruang Gayo* remains the same.

## 2. Literature Review

*Rumah adat pitu ruang Gayo* is a symbol of custom in *Gayo* highland, as Tengku Abdullah in Syukri, (2006: 153), says that *umah pitu ruang gere ilen i bangun, edet urum ukum gere ilen ara*" means that in *Umah Edet Pitu Ruang* the society can discuss all the problems, both concerning customs, culture, *syari'at*, and politics of government.

### 2.1. Design

The uniqueness of *umah edet pitu ruang Gayo* has a philosophy and very deep meaning. According to Hakim in Syukri (2006: 154) there are four deep philosophies in *umah edet pitu ruang Gayo*, that is: *Gergel* (grogol) and *unte-unte* (coupling) a symbol of unity. "*Luangi ni puting suyen*" means pile holes with pegs, symbolizes blessing from parents to build the traditional house. *Bubung urum rongka* a symbol of protection means that the King always protects his people. And *Benang serta peceng* that is the right of *ulama*; in other words the priest or *ulama* is obliged to correct the wrong.

### 2.2. Motif

According to Melailotoa (1990:378) motif is a shade that becomes the basic of style to create a form of ornament that serves to decorate a space field and object used. In this

case, the meaning of motif is the shades or ornament shapes of *Umah Edet Pitu Ruang gayo*. The motif that adorns the traditional house is a cultural symbol and an aesthetic value.

### 2.3. Color

According to Dewojati (2004: 38) color is the most prominent visual element of other elements. Its presence makes the object seen by the eye. Color can also show the different feature and character. In addition color can also be used symbolically. It can be explained that, color is essentially seen because of the ray of an object.

## 3. Research Method

The research is descriptive qualitative research. According to Kothari, C.R. (2014) the major purpose of descriptive research is description of state of affairs as it exists at present. Moleong (2007: 6) reveals that qualitative research is intended to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the subject of research such as behavior, perception, motivation, and action,, and it is described in the form of words and language on a natural special context by utilizing various natural methods.

To collect the data, the writer used the documentation study, observation, and interviews. The author found *Umah Edet Pitu Ruang Gayo*, Central Aceh, as one of the place to filter the information in the form of documentation. Then, the result of observation and interviews of the object were in the form of written and records. The research conducted wa a direct observation on *gayo* traditional House, as Moleong (2007: 186) says that "Interview is the conversation with a certain purpose".

To analyze the data, the writer used documentation study. The source of the data consists of two types, there are primary and secondary data source. The primary data is essential sources derived from *Umah Edet Pitu Ruang Gayo*, Central Aceh. The secondary data, is taken from books, journal, and relevant materials to support this research.

## 4. Result and Discussion

### 4.1. Syimboic meaning of design Umah Edett Pitu Ruang Gayo

The uniqueness of *umah edet pitu ruang Gayo* has a very deep philosophy or meaning. According to Hakim in Syukri (2006: 154), there are four philosophies of *umah edet pitu ruang Gayo*, they are:

1. *Gergel* (grogol) and *unte-unte* (coupling) symbolizes unity. This is called *hak ni rakyat* (the right of societies to work together).
2. "*Luangi ni puting suyen*" means the pile holes with *baji* means pegs. This symbolizes "blessing", the meaning of blessing here is the approval or prayer of parents to build *umah edet pitu ruang Gayo*.
3. *Bubung urum rongka* means the rectangles and frames that symbolizes "protection". *reje* or the king always protects his societies, this is called "*hak ni reje*" meaning the king's right to preserve justice in leading the society.
4. *Benang serta peceng* means yarn, the size, sight or view. In other words, the *Imam* or priest is obliged to straighten the bent and correct the wrong. So the role of the priest is crucial. It can be seen that the construction of the Traditional house, is an integral relationship between the king and the priest, the elder and society.

#### 4.2. Symbolic meaning of motif Umah Edet Pitu Ruang Gayo

There are 13 motifs contained in *Umah Edet Pitu Ruang Gayo*. Then, after Islam came to Gayo Highland, three motifs were deleted namely "*iken*" (fish), "*nege*" (dragon) and *kurik* (chicken). The first reason was it could be the object of public worship; secondly, the prohibition of Islam drawing Allah's created image including animals; thirdly, these were regarded as a less important motif. The thirteen motifs are:

1. *Emun beriring* (clouds lined up)

"*Emun beriring*" (clouds lined up) is a form of clouds that march on the sky. So it is visualized as a form of motif. It symbolizes the unity. According to Suwito (Interview result) in Gayo proverb "*beluh sara loloten mewen sara tamunen*" means that the unity has many meanings, such as never forgetting their own identity as Gayo society who always maintain the value and norm of customs of Gayo.

2. *Emun mutumpuk* (Clouds)

"*Emun mutumpuk*" is the collection of clouds on the sky. The clouds symbolize the association of society for discussion. According to Kurnia (Interview result) "*awan bertumpuk*" is used as a symbol of Gayo traditional house that symbolizes the association of society to solve problems by deliberation, as Gayo proverb says "*keramat mufakat behu berdedele*".

3. *Emun berkune* (Branches cloud)

"*Emun berkune*" is a symbol of guide. According to Mukhlis (Interview result) "*Emun berkune*" has another meaning, that is to separate to stand alone from

other community, in the four of directions of wind, the north, east, south and west.

4. *Emun berangkat* (moving clouds)

According to Suwito and Kurnia (Interview result) "*emun berangkat*" symbolizes that that society should be united "*rempak lagu re, bersusun lagu belo*". Thus, the community always help each other, in terms of culture, education, and government systems.

5. *Emun mupesir* (spout clouds)

"*Emun mupesir*" symbolizes separation of their ownelves to create a new community. According to Suwito (Interview result) "*konot nge benaru*" means once the small is now grown up; it is time for independence; the separation is because of marriage or education.

6. *Puter tali* (double twisted)

"*Puter tali*" symbolizes unity. With unity, we are strong and stand upright, and if we are divided, we fall. According to Suwito (Interview result) "*keramat mufakat behu berdedele*". Double twists is not broken, but if one twist it will be very fragile and easily broken.

7. *Pucuk rebung*

"*Pucuk rebung*" symbolizes to always work together in every element both cultural, custom, education and government. This symbol is very important in society.

8. *Cucuk penggong*

*Cucok pengong* symbolizes "*ratip musara angguk, nyawa musara peluk*" means maintaining the cultural values and custom values in gayo society; uch as *Mukemel* (self-esteem), *Tertip* (order), *Setie* (loyalty), *Semayang-Gemasih* (compassion), *Mutentu* (hard work), *Amanah* (honesty), *Genap Mufakat* (deliberation), *Alang Tulung* (helping each other) and *Bersikemelen* (competitiveness).

9. *Sarak Opat* (four elements in one integrated bond)

*Sarak opat* symbolizes the king (*reje*), the priest (*imem*), the elder (*Petue*) and society (*rayat*)

10. *Lelayang* (kite)

"*Lelayang*" symbolizes nobility, education values and saving the ethnic custom wherever we stand on. According to Suwito (Interview result), that "*Lelayang*" symbolizes the enhancement of knowledge both worldly science and hereafter.

11. *Nege* (dragon)

“*Nege*” symbolizes guard or protector in *gayo* highlands.

12. *Iken* (fish)

“*Iken*” symbolizes loyalty and genuine devotion to the king.

13. *Kurik* (ayam)

According to Djalil (interview result), (*kurik*) symbolizes natural wealth in *gayo* highland, which is commonly found in the *Gayo* forest.

### 4.3. Symbolic meaning of color of Umah Pitu Ruang Gayo Takengon

*Gayo* society has five colors that are considered having meanings applied in every element of the object, such as *umah edet pitu ruang gayo*, government agency, and custom clothes.

1. yellow (the king)

Yellow symbolizes the color for the king or leader. The king is the highest person in the governance arrangement of *Gayo*, who is responsible for his entire societies.

2. red (Commander)

Red symbolizes bravery. It is called the color of commander because in *Gayo* highland to keep the security and peace of people is the commander’s duty. On the other hand, red also symbolizes the spirit of *Gayo* community to defend their territory.

3. green (advisory and fertility)

Green symbolizes advisor in society; the advisor always acts in fair to solve the problems in society. Besides, the green is also interpreted as a fertility and prosperity. The fertility here is that *Gayo* highland is famous for its fertility.

5. white (Priest/Holiness)

White symbolizes the priest or holiness. In *Gayo*, the priest is the most respected person in government and in daily life. The priest has an important role in guiding society to the right way.

6. black (Society)

The black symbolizes society. The society has the important role in realizing the roles of the leader, as *gayo* proverb goes “*keramat mupakat behu berdedele*” meaning responsibility.

## 5. Conclusions

From the research result, it is seen that Indonesian Traditional House particularly *Umah Edet Pitu Ruang Gayo* contains points of local wisdom through the cultural symbols: that is based on design and there are 4 symbols namely *Gergel* symbolizing "unity", *Luangi ni puting suyen* symbolizing "blessing", *bubung urum rangka* symbolizing "protection". and *Benang serta peceng* symbolizing the right of *ulama*. In other words, the priest or *ulama* is obliged to correct the wrong. Based on motif, there are 13 symbols namely *emun beriring* symbolizing never to forget identity as a *Gayonese*, *emun mutumpuk* symbolizing to always solve a problem by deliberation, *emun berkune* symbolizing, the solution of a group to stand alone, *emun mupesir*, symbolizing separating and standing alone in the region or other countries, *emun berangkat* symbolizing tidying up the ranks in society to uphold unity, *puter tali* symbolizing that united we stand, divided we fall. *Pucuk rebung* symbolizing building all systems both custom, culture, government and education, *sarak opat* is set of system in society, *cucuk penggong* is harmony, and *lelayang* respect the custom in our dwelling. Based on color there are 5 symbols, such as *the yellow* symbolizing the color of power, strength, majesty and symbol of the leader of the State. *The green* representing natural advisory and fertility. *The red* symbolizes toughness, self-defense, unity and courage and also symbolizing of the *Gayo* people's sacrifice for their country. *The white* has a sacred meaning, and symbols of honesty, and *the black* symbolizes the community as the implementer and as a driving force in advancing life.

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