

Is Green Architecture always Identical with Islamic Architecture? (Assessment on Stacked Grave in Majasto Cemetery, Central Java)

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 10 November 2015

Accepted 22 December 2015

Available online 30 December 2015

Keywords:

Stacked grave, Majasto, green architecture, Islamic architecture, Islamic of Java

ABSTRACT

There are presumption if the green architecture is identically with Islamic one. This statement requires a comparison. For this reason the research has been done in Majasto cemetery, a place that indicate used the both, green and Islamic architecture approach. After a descriptive qualitative research has done, it was found that: (a) green architecture is not always identical with Islamic architecture depend on interpretation of Islamic teaching by local community; (b) Need the *tauhid* concept that green architecture can be categorized in Islamic architecture; (c) Islamic architecture is involved not only in physical form, but it goes beyond of ideological system, ideas, behavior to physical form as artifact; (d) Both, stacked grave system of Majasto cemetery plus *tauhid* philosophy, is a sample from green approach in Islamic architecture. That can be applied universally in Surakarta as well as other large cities.

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To Cite This Article: Indrawati, Sugiono Soetomo, Bambang Setioko, Titin W. Murtini and Nurhasan., Is Green Architecture always Identical with Islamic Architecture? (Assessment on Stacked Grave in Majasto Cemetery, Central Java). *Adv. Environ. Biol.*, 9(27), 415-419, 2015

INTRODUCTION

So far, there has been an presumption that Islamic architecture is just 'Islamization' of other from more established concept [1, 2]. A brief explanation that a good architecture (*rahmatan lil alamin*) such as green or environmental friendly architecture is attributed for Islamic architecture has encouraged a big question: what is making difference between Islamic architecture with other ones? It seems no clear ideology in Islamic architecture. Therefore, assessment of a 'good architecture' is required in order to establish whether or not it is always categorized as Islamic architecture.

In this context, the assessment was conducted on land management of Majasto Cemetery, as one of local community activity to implement an effective cemetery land management. This assessment can explain the ambiguity of Islamic architecture. In other side the assessment sought to obtain an example of solution for crisis of burial grounds occurring in large cities today.

Joglosemar Daily (22 September 2014) released statement of the Head of Sanitation and Park Department of Surakarta that active burial ground was estimated to be depleted in 5-10 years. The statement was supported by the fact that there are only five active Public Cemetery in 2015. About 200 kampong cemeteries were full and to be closed. To improve the effectiveness of graveyard, has been applied the Local Regulation No. 10/2011 [3], but it produced nothing. Cultural aspect was a major factor inhibiting of stacked grave system (Joglosemar Daily, 2 May 2015 and Solopos, 11 May 2015).

Elsewhere, in Majasto village of Sukoharjo Regency - a stacked grave practice has long been applied. Existing tradition produces highly efficient cemetery both in terms of area and environmental conservation. At first glance, Majasto community is seemingly practicing the green architecture concept. Cemetery is one of Islamic architecture research corpuses beside mosque and palace [4], so green architecture practice in Majasto cemetery also be assessed in Islamic architecture terms. From the study, it is expected to obtain answers to the question: 'Is green architecture always identical with Islamic architecture?'; 'Does Islamic architecture has no clear ideology?'

2.0 Literature Review:

2.1 Green Architecture:

Issues of global warming and other environmental damages get serious responses by the architecture with develop a sustainable or green architecture concept. Booth has been a phenomenon growing radically in early 21st century [5]. Green Architecture is defined as an architecture consuming minimally natural resources including energy, water, and materials as well as minimal negative impact on environment [6]. There are six principles, namely conserving energy, working with climate, respect for site, respect for user, limiting new resources and holistic in implementation [7].

Tanuwijaya (a lecturer of Petra University) explained that the concept of green architecture has been applied since 1980-1990's by many Indonesian architects. Among of thrm are Y.B. Mangun Wijaya, Heinz Frick, Eko Prawoto, Jimmy Priatman, Ridwan Kamil, Budi Faisal and others. Although practice of a sustainable architecture has been conducted by local communities in a long time [5].

2.1 Islamic Architecture:

Islamic architecture has wide terminology. That is including the Islamic order based works, Islamic culture products, Islamic region product, and architecture intended for worship of Muslims [8]. Although Islamic architectural produce very diverse style, all of them have the same basic concept, that is 'manifestation of devotion/ worship to Allah/ God' [9, 10, 11, 12]. Islamic values are very important philosophical component in this regard.

After a long discussion with interpretation experts (of Islam), it can be concluded that Islamic architecture is the art and science to design a building or landscape with three main indicators, namely functionally (*hasan*), good (*thoyib*) and aesthetic (*jamil*) [13].

Functional in Islamic architecture have different mean with one in general. In here the functional is interpreted in accordance with the purpose of human creation, to be a caliph of the earth, as called in QS Al-Baqarah: 30 [14]. Functions of a caliph will run well if human life refers to the basics of Islam (*Ushul ad-Din*), namely (a) uphold *tauhid* rejecting *syirik* and (b) developing good moral (*akhlaqul karimah*).

An Islamic architecture should be good (*thoyib*), able to invite to goodness (*amar ma'ruf*) through development of the core of Islam teachings as *rahmatan lil Alamin*. A good architecture (*thoyib*) has four characteristics, namely universal, rational, care and forming a civilization.

An Islamic architectural must be asble to explore elements of design in order to obtain a beautiful masterpiece. Unlike the other indicators, Islam gives a lot of restrictions in this aspect. The aesthetics value should not encourage to badness (*nahi munkar*), should not support the *syirik* activities, not results in damages and destructions, not make excessive grandiose (*israf*) because of it is potentially producing arrogance (denial of the truth and demeaning others).

Interrelationship of three concepts above forming an Islamic architecture concept. Islamic architecture represented by a sturdy triangle with the 'functional' concept as the top and it binds other indicators. See figure 1.

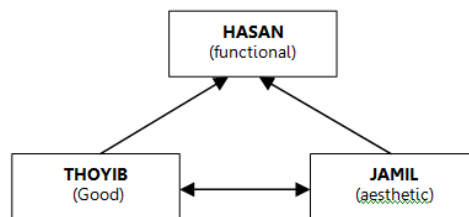


Fig. 1: Indicators of Islamic Architecture.

3.0 Methodology:

What has happened at the Majasto Cemetery is a phenomenon of qualitative paradigm. Observations on the 'social situation' is recommended. The interaction of place, actor and activity must be explore [15]. Qualitative descriptive method was used in analysis. The facts had been collected through observation and in-depth interviews, and than described systematically. Some related theories were used to analyze.

The study was conducted in Majasto cemetery at Majasto village, Tawang Sari district, Sukoharjo Regency – Central Java. Majasto village more known as a place of religious tourism (a shrine). Visitors come for religious visit to the tomb of Ki Ageng Majasto (KAM). He was an Islamic religious figure and a descendant of Brawijaya V. He was the founder of Majasto village,

Majasto Cemetery is located on the top of small hill in Majasto village. There are an ancient mosque (mosque Ar Rohmat) in the cemetery. It was constructed by KAM and Sunan Kalijaga (a member of Walisanga). Until now, most people of Majasto village are Muslims.

In cultural territory, Majasto village is within Nagarigung territory or Javanese cultural center (located about 30 km from Surakarta City). Javanese cultural traditions are well preserved. Some traditional ceremonies relating to burial and bodies are always conducted such as *nyadran*, *telong dina*, *mendak* ceremonial, and so on.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Green Architecture Assessment:

Majasto cemetery is the only cemetery in Majasto village. The land area of less than 1 ha for used all of Majasto community (4.511 person in 2012). For a long time, wide of Majasto Cemetery are not increase. Majasto community have uniquely management system for it. The land is divided into small plots with average size of 2 x 2 m. Each lots is used to bury died members of a family. If land for new plot is unavailable, then system of stacked grave is applied. The numbers of existing headstones over graves are not always the same as the numbers of bodies buried (usually, there are more numbers of bodies than headstones). The headstone is only as a marker. Headstone layout can also be changed to adjust dimensions of available space. Each lots protected by small building over grave (copula), it call as *cungkup* in local term. The *cungkup* are very low, less than 1 meter tall. *Cungkup* are arranged regularly with linear patterns and paths are located between *cungkup*. Layout of grave yard in Majasto Cemetery has been ordered

It seems that green architecture has been implemented by Majasto community. The concept of respect to site has been applied properly. The system of stacked grave causes no increased area of land of the graveyard despite it has been extensively serving the whole community of Majasto village for first time of usage until now. Construction of small *cungkup* is a way of sharing between people of the village both in terms of land use rights and obligation of existing land conservation. The *cungkup* also serves as a protection from erosion because Mount Majasto is a rocky hill with thin layer (less than 1 m) of fertile land. In the way, the bodies remain buried safely (protected from torrential rainfall). Land use management and environmental conservation have been carried out in a community based. The green architecture concept has been applied here completely, supported by the green community.

4.2 Islamic Architecture Assessment:

It had been stated in previous section that Islamic values are very fundamental philosophical aspects in Islamic architecture. Accordingly, what is thought or perceived by people of Majasto in managing burial land is an important attribute of the research to reveal. To understand way of life of a community, can known through their behavior, beliefs, values, norms, symbols, attitudes and actions, motives and perceptions of the people about offerings to macrocosm and microcosm worlds [16].

After interview with one of Majasto residents and a guard of the cemetery, information was obtained that the stacked grave has been implemented for very long ago. A stacked grave is allowed in Islam, but have a sacred timing for burying new body over old one. A grave is allowed to bury new body if *ngentek*, *nyewu* or *mendak telu* ceremonies had been conducted.

Javanese community have many ceremonial or ritual tradition are called *selamatan*. *Selamatan* have mean to get live safety. Ceremonial *slametan* is the effort to get protection from the nature guard, supernatural beings or God.

Ngentek is one of form of *selamatan*. It is conducted at day 1000 of a person death. This ceremony is a series of day 3, day 7, day 40, day 100, *mendak sepisan* (1 year), *mendak pindho* (2 years) and the last one is *mendak telu* (3 years) or *nyewu* (day 1000) or *ngentek* (final ceremony) of a person death.

The traditions are forms of important ceremonies that should be run. Local community believe that spirit of a died person is still live, but in different world. Prior to 1000 days, the spirit is still haunting because it still has an attachment to his/her ex-body. During that days, ceremonies need to perform in order to help ease burden of the spirit. Through prayers sent to God, it is expected that the spirit would be in peaceful condition and placed in a good place at the side of his/her Lord (*Gusti Allah*).

The tradition continues from one generation to the next (no one is daring to leave it). Spirit that is believed to be live always has enormous power, likely to be upset and then, disrupt living people if it has no peaceful life in the 'other world'. Thus, the power should be controlled.

Based on arguments above, Majasto community will stack a grave after ceremony of day 1000. It is believed that the spirit does no longer need his/her ex-body at that day, because it goes up to *Gusti Allah*. In other words, the practice of green architecture of Majasto people is strongly influenced by Javanese culture. Next question is: whether the belief is in accordance with concept of *tauhid* as the 'functional' context and the main indicator of Islamic architecture or not.

Tauhid means to acknowledge the Oneness of Allah and no one or other thing is paralleling Him. *Tauhid* is the core teaching of all Apostles. A foundation on which all other teachings are built [17]. Later, it is explained that the belief of *tauhid* carries very great consequences such as, confident and absolute adherence to the existing provisions (teachings).

Relating to existing belief about the importance of 'ceremony for the death', several opinions are found. Nahdlatul Ulama organization and other traditional Islamic societies are believe and always perform the tradition [18]. This reality implies that the practice of ceremonies above is a part of the Islamic beliefs. This is mean, the Majasto cemetery is an application of Islamic architecture.

On the other hand, members of Muhammadiyah organization for example, do not perform the 'ceremony for the death' because they belief that someone's deeds will stop when he died. Just the pray from the good son, can save or help him in the afterlife, not through the *selamatan* or any ceremonies [14, 18]. Based on the reason, it can be interpreted that the system of stacked grave of Majasto Cemetery is not categorized as Islamic architecture. That is able to categorized in Islamic architecture, if there are not run *ngentek* ceremony to adjust the time for stack the grave. Logical or physical research consideration are must be followed, no mystical perspective.

That justification is very conflict able certainly, because it is not based on in-depth study. Stipulation not based on proper scientific foundation (supposed to be performed by the *Ulama*). In fact, no one has the right to judge status of one's faith. Only Allah (God) who has authority in this regard.

When Islam is in the hands of society, it is already experiencing humanization in accordance with interpreter's capabilities [19]. Referring to some terminologies that are widely used by anthropologists, it can be said that with their rituals and beliefs of using *ngentek* ceremony as the time limit of allowing to stack a grave, people of Majasto can be categorized as an Islamic of Java (*Islam Jawa*).

The Islamic of Java is a variant of Islam. It is different from Islam found in Morocco, Pakistan or Saudi Arabia. Although it is not purely derived from teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, Islamic of Java still called Islam in basically. They has been mixed Islamic value with Javanese culture [20]. According Koentjaraningrat, the Islamic of Java character can be differentiated into two groups: syncretism Islamic of Java and *Puritan* Islamic of Java (*santri*). The first variant is considered to have less obedience to the sharia and it is syncretism in nature (uniting the elements of pre-Hindu, Hinduism and Islam). The second variant is more pious and puritanical. However, people of Puritan Islam are also still affected by animism, dynamism and Hindu-Buddha although it is not as strong as the syncretism one [21]. Islamic of Java has a broad spectrum and no strict boundary line.

The description above is also illustrating that Islamic architecture of Java has a broad spectrum. Accordingly, it is conceivable, how large variety of Islamic architecture in the world.

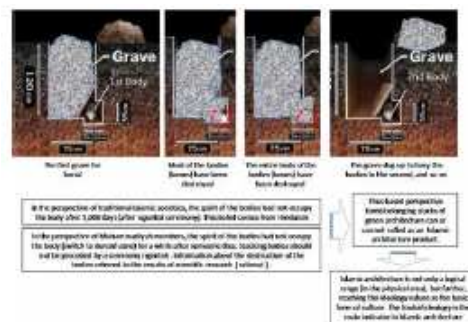


Fig. 2: Stacked grave process.

Conclusion:

The assessment on burial technique of Majasto cemetery used the Islamic architecture and green architecture perspective provides clear information about the Islamic architecture academically. In contrast to assumptions in the beginning of this article, discussion about Islamic architecture indicated that it has a very clear ideology. It has been not only engaged in physical form, the Islamic architecture goes beyond the existing cultural levels. Islamic architecture includes system of ideology, ideas, attitudes to physical form as artifacts.

In the context of grave land use efficiency, the stacked grave of Majasto Cemetery showed one of applications of the respect to site concept that is in line with the teachings of Islam. Islamic architecture approach is in accordance with the concept of green architecture and it can be applied universally in Surakarta city and surrounding regions as well as other large cities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to thank Ustadz Badrutaman (in memoriam). His last message author listened to and embedded in the heart was: 'what comes first is to solve existing problems facing, but the main one is only *tauhid*'. Therefore, the green architecture is necessary to put forward in order to reduce environmental damage. However, Islamic architecture approach should be prioritized in order to bring goodness forever, here and hereafter.

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