

# Aesthetics Asu Sengi Temple

**Arif Yulianto \***

Visual Communication Design,  
Sahid Surakarta University,  
Surakarta, 57144  
arifseni0@gmail.com


\*Corresponding author

**Bunga Miranda**

Visual Communication Design, Sahid  
Surakarta University, Surakarta,  
57144  
bungamiranda@gmail.com

**Yudi Wibowo**

Visual Communication Design, Sahid  
Surakarta University, Surakarta,  
57144  
yudiwe99@yahoo.com

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**Abstract**— The Indonesian nation is rich in tradition and history. The historical cultural heritage spread widely from Sabang to Merauke shows that Indonesia is a great nation that has cultural historical roots since ancient times. One of the historical and cultural relics includes temples, sacred buildings which became icons of Indonesian civilization until the 17th century. The temple is an iconic building that is proof of the greatness of the Indonesian nation because it was built with high architectural calculations and technology and has a religious meaning that is rich in transcendental values. The temple is an ancient site in the form of a building that functions as a place of worship for followers of Hinduism and Buddhism. Temples are places of dharma, or burial places for certain kings, for example Kidal Temple, which is identified as the dharma of King Anusapati, while Candi Singosari is identified as the Dharma of Kertanegara as Shiva. However, in the Central Java and Yogyakarta regions, temples usually function as places of worship where Hindus and Buddhists carry out religious rituals. Nowadays, the temple functions more as a historical site that can attract tourists, both local and foreign.

**Keywords**—Asu Sengi Temple, Aesthetics, Dewitt Parker

## I. INTRODUCTION

In learning History, roles it is important that learning is clearly visible not only as a process of transferring ideas, but also the process of maturation of students for understand identity, identity and personality nation through understanding events history. This learning is also purposeful impart the necessary knowledge to achieve basic values for the order a just world, maximizing welfare economic and social.

History lessons need to be taught to increase understanding of self itself, gives an accurate picture about the concepts of time, space and society which will make students capable evaluate the values and results that have been achieved by his generation, teaches tolerance and instilling an intellectual attitude broad, future-oriented, as well as providing mental training and training in dealing with issues controversial which will later help find solutions to various problems social and individual, (Arifin, 2015).

Where the Indonesian people are a pluralistic society consisting of various type of language, religion, and

geographical conditions as well as compound vertically as in education and economic level. Multiculturalism is part of the fact human history so these values must be involved in every process of history learning (Ashari, 2013). Asu Temple is the name of a Hindu cultural heritage temple located in Sengi Village, Dukun District, Magelang Regency, Central Java Province. The name of the temple was given by the local community because the Lembu Nandi statue in the temple complex resembles a dog. The outer walls of the Asu temple are formed as a base with the inner walls functioning as a foundation. Between the two walls, the area has been filled with two meters of rocks and soil, then topped with asphalt. The remaining space is left for the central statue to be placed. On the western outer wall, remains of the stonework that formed the steps (Barker, 2014).

This temple is located on the slopes of Mount Merapi near the confluence of the Pabelan River and Telingsing River, approximately 10 km northeast of Ngawen Temple. Nearby there are also two other Hindu temples, namely Pendem Temple and Lumbung Temple. Asu Temple faces west. This temple has a square plan with a side length of 7.94 meters. The height of the foot of the temple is 2.5 meters, the height of the temple body is 3.35 meters. The height of the roof of the temple is unknown because it has collapsed and most of the stones are missing. With this size, this temple is a small temple (BPCP Jateng, 2016).

Magelang is a paradise for those who love Hindu and Buddhist heritage objects. Magelang is nicknamed the land of a thousand temples because of the existence of many temples in the area around Magelang, especially temples left over from ancient Mataram, both from the Sanjaya and Syailendra dynasties. Apart from Borobudur Temple, Pawon Temple and Mendut Temple, in Magelang there is also a temple called Asu Sengi Temple (Hendra et al, 2021).

Asu Temple is located on the western slopes of Mount Merapi, precisely on the banks of the Tlingsing Pabelan River, Candi Ps Hamlet, Sengi Village, Dukun District, Magelang Regency with coordinates 7°32'00"S 110°21'00"E or around 25 Km from Borobudur Temple to the northeast (Irsyad, 2020). Asu Temple is a relic of the ancient Mataram kingdom from the Sanjaya (Mataram Hindu) tribe. Asu Temple is not far from the SBB route or the Solo Selo Borobudur Route which is an alternative from Magelang to Solo via the Mount Merapi National Park (Mundardjito, 2002).

The name Asu Sengi Temple itself was taken from the name of the local community when this temple was first discovered. The original name of this temple is not yet known for certain. The name Asu in Asu Sengi Temple was given because at the beginning of the discovery of this temple there was a statue of Lembu Nandhi which had been damaged and looked more like asu or dog in Javanese, while the word sengi was taken from the name of the village where this temple was discovered. So the local people call this temple the Asu Sengi Temple (Soekmono, 2017) and (Sudrajat, 2021).

There are three inscriptions found at Asu Sengi Temple, namely the Sri Manggala II, Kurambitan I, and Kurambitan II inscriptions. From these three inscriptions, it is estimated that Asu Temple was built in 869 AD when Rakai Kayuwangi during the reign of the Sanjaya Dynasty was in power. Apart from that, it is also stated that this temple is a place of worship, both worship of gods and the spirits of ancestors of deceased kings. Apart from that, there are also reliefs of kinara-kinari (birds) like those in other temples such as Plaosan Temple, Ratu Boko and Ijo Temple (Wirasanti, 2020).

Asu Temple is square in shape, namely 7.94 meters by 7.94 meters, while the height of the temple is 2.5 meters, and the height of the temple body is 3.35 meters and faces west. Asu Temple is a piece temple because no part of the roof is found. It is estimated that the roof of this temple is a dome because many ruins were found that depict a dome around the temple and the well. Inside the temple there is a well which has a depth of up to 3 meters and is square in shape with dimensions of 1.3 meters by 1.3 meters. Near Asu Temple there are also two temples left by the ancient Mataram Sanjaya dynasty, namely Pendem Temple and Lumbung Temple. The name Pendem Temple is due to the existence of this temple below ground level, while Lumbung Temple was previously a place to store rice during the reign of Rakai Kayuwangi. It is estimated that this temple was used to store rice barns for worship purposes (Sunarto, 2014).

## II. METHODOLOGY

This research uses descriptive qualitative methods. In qualitative research, according to Sugiyono, the instrument is a person or human instrument (Sugiyono, 2014),

Descriptive qualitative method. focus on description. The data collected is mainly in the form of words, sentences or images that have a more meaningful meaning and can stimulate a more real understanding (Sutopo, 2006).

Identification and clarification in obtaining the required data is carried out by going directly to the location, data collection techniques using literature study, observation and interviews.

### A. Data Source

This research takes data sources from literature, libraries, magazines, art journals, the internet (Sutopo, 2006).

### 1. Source person

To collect data using opinions from various parties, namely:

#### a. Expert

People who are experts in the fields of aesthetics and culture, Mr. Soegeng Toekio Mag SR

#### b. Informant

People who are still active in taking Humaniores of Petrus Adi Utomo

### 2. Library Source

Research with libraries was carried out at the ISI Surakarta and ISI Yogyakarta libraries. The author researched literature, magazines, art journals and electronic libraries, namely the internet, which were used to search for theories used in writing this scientific work.

### 3. Source of Photography Works

Research on Aesthetics with Usahid Surakarta students.

## B. Data Collection Techniques

The materials in this research were obtained through literature study, interviews and observations. These three things are expected to support each other and complement the information needed in research.

### 1. Literature review

Priority is given to literature studies in journals that discuss aesthetics. Interviews are conducted to complement the material obtained from literature studies, especially to obtain information directly from sources. The resource persons were selected by people who knew for certain about the research targets, including students: Bunga Miranda and others, Yudi Wibowo as an expert on Culture, Petrus Adi Utomo as an informant, The results of data collection from various sources so that the truth is tested (Ghony, et al, 2012), (Miles and Huber, 1984).

### 2. Observation

Observation of Aesthetics Asu Sengi Temple, Observations were made directly at the shooting session and to examine each work until the final result.

### 3. Documentation

The steps taken are first: determining several objects to be documented, second: documenting, third: selecting works that will later be used as research material (Pyyry, 2016).

## C. Data Analysis

The data collected from literature studies, interviews, observations and documentation were then selected several times and separated into basic materials and supporting or comparative materials:

The nature of the analysis of this research is descriptive qualitative, namely analysis in the form of presenting research results in a comprehensive and in-depth description. Conclusion drawing and verification are carried out to provide conclusions that are quite solid and truly accountable (Prasetyo, 2021) and (Raho, 2016).

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Matthew Arnold (in Barker, 2014: 65) believes that culture is a means to moral perfection and social goodness. Almost in line with Matthew Arnold, Ki Hadjar Dewantara (2013: 54-55) defines culture as the fruit of human wisdom. Budi itself can be interpreted as a human soul that is mature or intelligent, so it is able to create something new. The low level of a culture shows the low level of mind and civilization of a nation. From this it can be said that culture is something unique that results from human habits and thoughts (Kompri, 2015).

Near Asu Temple, two stone inscriptions in the form of monuments (Linga) were found as shown in Figure 1, namely the Sri Manggala I (874 AD) and Sri Manggala II (874 AD) inscriptions.



Figure 1. Asu Sengi Temple A, Repro Bunga Miranda, 2024.

#### A. Decorations at Asu Sengi Temple

Temple buildings in Central Java generally use stone blackish andesite is known to be strong and hard. But in several temples in East Java, West Java and Sumatra are the main materials for temples in the form of red bricks. General use of red brick carried out in temples founded after the X century as a new trend in architectural art in Indonesia. The advantages of red brick are: has high flexibility, is not too hard, and is red in color makes the material feel more artistic.

Asu Temple is a temple. It was founded around the 9th century and was made from andesite or river stone as the main material which is black in color. Selection of andesite stone for temple buildings perhaps starting from the fact that stone is a hard material and Its availability is abundant in the Magelang area, Central Java. Temple buildings generally have the following structure: legs The temple is called Bhurloka or Kamadhatu, the body of the temple or Bhuwarlola or Rupadhatu, and the roof of the temple or Swarloka or Arupadhatu. Temple structure

Figure 2 to 6 is a picture of cosmology in the Hindu religion where Life is divided into three realms, namely the lower realm, namely the life of giants (Butha) which is full of humiliation and barbarity which is reflected in the feet temple. The body of the temple reflects human life in a full

world with temptation, so that sometimes doing good, but sometimes doing wicked. Meanwhile, the roof of the temple is a mirror of the lives of the gods living in heaven, a life full of perfection and eternity.

#### B. Objects at Asu Sengi Temple

Asu Temple faces west, has a square plan with long sides 7.94 meters, while the height of the foot of the temple is 2.5 meters, the height of the temple body is 3.35 meters. The height of the roof of the temple is unknown because most of the collapsed stone is missing. With this size, this temple is a small temple, if compared to other temples. Another aspect of the temple building is the presence of statues as a replication of the existence of the gods worshiped by local communities. The Asu Temple Complex is a temple to worship Shiva where there is a Nandi statue as a vehicle for this god

The name of Asu Temple is based on the presence of a statue that resembles an Asu or dog. What remains in this temple is a plain yoni. It is said that the yoni hole where the phallus is usually attached is always filled with water and never runs out. Then there are kala decorations that are similar to megalithic patterns, even though this kala is younger and is thought to come from the late Majapahit era.



Figure 2. Asu Sengi Temple B, Repro Bunga Miranda, 2024.



Figure 3. Asu Sengi Temple C, Repro Bunga Miranda, 2024.



Figure 4. Asu Sengi Temple D, Rebro Bunga Miranda, 2024.



Figure 5. Asu Sengi Temple E, Rebro Bunga Miranda, 2024.



Figure 6. Asu Sengi Temple F, Rebro Bunga Miranda, 2024.

There are many collections that this temple naturally has. Among them are statues, memorials, and various artifacts and carvings on the walls that tell stories of the past.

#### 1. Statue of Asu

The first attraction of Asu Sengi Temple is a statue at the top of the temple. This statue was built as a depiction of Dewindani's transformation from a human who was then cursed to become a cow and

resemble a dog. This statue was deliberately built on both sides of the temple, but currently the only thing that survives is the dog statue on the left. Due to time, corrosion, and the eruption of Mount Merapi several years ago, part of the temple building also collapsed. Visitors can see this dog-shaped statue when it climbs onto the shoulder of the temple. In that place stands a statue in the shape of a dog which seems to tell visitors that actions that violate community ethics are dangerous.

#### 2. Memorial

Apart from the dog-shaped statue, in another part of the temple there is also a monument which is written in ancient Javanese script and tells visitors about the Dewandani story. If visitors want to know each letter on the monument, visitors can hire the services of a translator. Because at this time, there is no further information explaining the contents of the memorial. On several parts of the monument there are also letters that are missing or have holes, this is due to aging and corrosion. However, visitors don't need to worry, just ask the manager or caretaker. Visitors can get an outline of the story of Dewandani who turned into an imitation figure.

#### 3. Beautiful Wall Carvings

Visitors can see carvings that resemble stories of people's journeys in the past on the walls surrounding the temple. The area along the wall tells the story of the beginning of the people living in the Sengi area and also how they built their civilization. Then the story began to change to a situation where people did not accept Dewandani's behavior. The residents began to demonstrate against the village head and hold deliberations for the common good. Then at the end of the carvings on the wall, visitors can see how a Dewandani changes from a human to a cow that resembles a dog. Also, how he finally died feeling lonely because no one wanted to help him.

### IV. CONCLUSION

Asu Sengi Temple is a historical and world heritage site and is a tourist attraction that is well known to tourists. To maintain the preservation of Asu Sengi Temple, the management of Asu Sengi Temple has synergized and collaborated regularly but has not yet fully embraced the cooperative relationship between the management and the local community. The carrying capacity or capacity of the land must be considered and development must be appropriate and harmonious with local boundaries and the environment.

The management of Asu Sengi Temple has not fully implemented the sustainable concept, especially in the core zone of Asu Sengi Temple. This can be seen from the absence of regulations regarding the flow of tourist visits, namely regulating tourist visits so that not many tourists focus on the core zone so that the temple site does not experience a decline in quality. Apart from that, no steps have been taken to prevent the erosion of the temple stones because of tourist activities.

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