

CHARACTERISTIC DESIGN OF *KERIS PANDAI SARAS*

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ABSTRACT

Keris Pandai Saras is one of the distinctive weapon heritage in Malaysia. The past comprehensive study about *Keris* have written much regarding its method of manufacture; the customs; and the traditions of its origin, which learn by Malay from Javanese sources. Therefore, this paper is an attempt to throw some light on the characteristic design of *Keris Pandai Saras* that will differentiate their design with other types of *Keris* in Malaysia. In this study, overview and review through literature, which provides images is useful as to determine the common design for *Keris* compare to the *Keris Pandai Saras*. However, the interview with the expert manufactured of *Keris* will be conducted. As well as observed and captured selected several samples the *Keris Pandai Saras* will analysed their design features. The findings of this research is different design *Keris* are according their *ganja* in blade. The characteristic of design *Keris Pandai Saras* according their *aring* or *ganja* which is *Kerawang* and *Akut* or *Belalai Gajah*. All this characteristic must be have to find the design *Keris Pandai Saras*. From this research, people can know the characteristic of design *Keris Pandai Saras* and the different of other *Keris* in Malaysia. This research only focuses on one of the *Keris* in Malaysia which is *Keris Pandai Saras*. The finding is very useful to emphasize the importance of *Keris Pandai Saras* and sustaining the Malay heritage in Malaysia.

Key Words: Characteristic, Design, *Keris Pandai Saras*, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

Keris is one of the traditional weapons of the Malay in Malaysia, thus, *Keris* is also a part of material culture. Material culture can be considered to be the totality of artefacts in a culture, the vast universe of objects used by humankind to cope with the physical world, to facilitate social intercourse to delight our fancy, and to create symbols of meaning (Schlereth, 1983). *Keris* is a tools or short weapon that use by Malay cluster. *Keris* was unique in Malay world and can be found in Malay population, such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapura, southern Thailand, southern Filipine and Brunei (Efendi, Anwar, 2006). However, because of the differences of the environment and culture in where the *Keris* was scattered, the *Keris* was named differently based on the placed. For example Filipina or Mindanau called it as *Sundang*, Bali called as *Kedutan*, Sumatera called as *Karieh* and other called as *Kerih* or *Kres*. In Malaysia called it as *Keris* (Abdullah, 2001).

In Malaysia, there are many *Keris Semenanjung*, which are *Keris Pandai Saras*, *Keris Melela*, *Keris Bugis*, *Keris Alang* and *Keris Sundang*. *Keris Pandai Saras* immortalized the name of its maker (*empu*), a blacksmith who came from Java and migrated to Pattani. Mohamad. K, Rahman. N. H. S. N. A, Samian. A. L. (2012). Hamid. A. M. N (2014) said *Keris* come in this day derived from the 13th century. All *Keris* have their own design. All design has hidden meanings. Wearing a *Keris* always considered as the completeness of a Malay costume which is also related to the beautiful of Malay fashion and decorative arts.

PROBLEM STATEMENTS

Based on an interview conducted with an assistant curator from National Museum Kuala Lumpur (Ahmad, 2013), the problem has been raised up, as nowadays, in the millennium period, perhaps it is unsurprising that the young generation has no longer honors and understand certain traditional Malay culture and civilization in their daily life, particularly with respect to the culture of *Keris*. There are also those, among the Malay community itself, who does not consider *Keris* inheritance as mystical items should be let alone to appreciate it. Even some museum curators do not know the origin and perspective pattern of *Keris Pandai Saras*. However, most collector and *empu* (blacksmith) knows the history and pattern of *Keris Pandai Saras*. This scenario required more attention and need details and visual documentation about *Keris* in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Keris begins in 8th century at island of Java. It can be proven as the evidence that be found in reliefs at Borobudur Temple (Yub. S, 2006 and Frey, E. 2009). In Village Dukumu, Grabag district, Magelang, Central Java, there are relief that show iron equipment in stone inscriptions which made during the year of 500 AD. There are some pictures in the inscriptions in which the knife pictured is very similar with shape of the *Keris* (Yub. S, 1967). According to Ostmeier's readings, the first *Keris* were manufactured between the years 152 and 210 of the Javanese calendar (AD 230-88). These were straight blade types, with the first sinuous blade has been recorded in the Javanese year of 251 (AD 329) (Frey, 2009).

Keris is divided into three main parts which is the blade, the hilt and the sheath (Radzi. S. M, 1994). The *Keris* blade is 'symmetrical' in shape. The 'symmetrical' shape makes the *Keris* blade more stable when erected to the philosophical right and also gives the dagger strength, stiffness and stability when in use (Mohamad. K, Rahman. N. H. S. N. A, Samian. A. L, 2012).

All *Keris* has their own design. Differences in design and function in the latest development is a result from various factors such as the geographical conditions and the influence of the natural environment of Malaysia. Malay *Keris* appear in nature, simultaneously and each province and territory has its own characteristics either Java or native land in peninsular Malaysia, but the design and accessories from Malay *Keris* are

different from other *Keris* created and designed patterns in Indonesia, Southern Philippines or even in Borneo (Ali. M.K.).

METHODOLOGY

Figure 1 shows the flow chart in investigating the characteristic of *Keris Pandai Saras*. It started on the secondary and primary data to begin these studies to find important information which is primary data involving interviews and observation as its source of data.

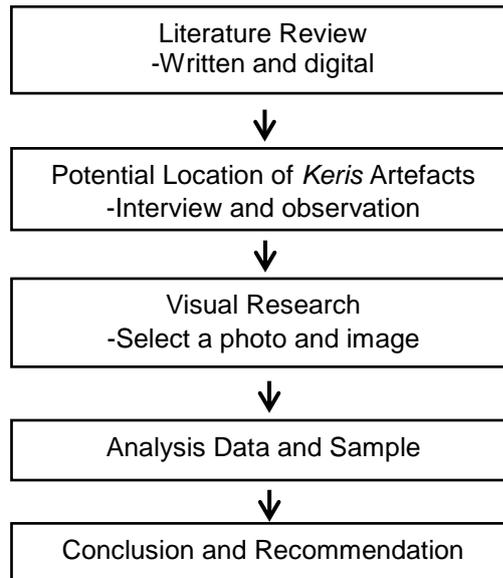


Figure 1 Flow Chart

RESULTS

Every *Keris* has its own unique designs which are not only in terms of its physical appearances but, on how it was perceived. Hence, the *empu* (blacksmith) need to be sensitive to those unique qualities and characteristics of the *Keris*. This, to regain awareness of our inheritance of the Malay and consequently keep this country heirloom treasures in its place for the *Keris*. There have three (3) characteristics design of *Keris Pandai Saras* which are:

1. Aring/Ganja

Aring was placed in the end upper part of the blade which is having a *kerawangat* the end of the *ganja* (*Kamus Dewan Edisi Empat*, 2012). *Keris* which have *kerawang* in their *ganja* also called as *Keris ganjarawan/Keris ganjaKerawang*. Aring is the important part of the *Keris* which is to know the type of *Keris*. People can know the type of *Keris* just by looking at the *ganja* without open the Sarong (sheath) of *Keris* (Rosli. M. M, 2014). Aring also known as *ekor cicak* (lizard tail) because of the shaped looks like a lizard tail. *Aring* aims to *besenjata penyinggung* and as the protector grips (Abdullah. Z, 2007). In Indonesia, *Aring* also known as *Ganja*. *Ganja* is a piece of iron that has a hole for the *puting* to attached to the *Keris*. *Ganja* was placed at the blade and hilt (*Kamus*

Dewan Edisi Empat, 2012). Part of the *Ganja*, it has thick and blunt shape, and at the other part it has sharp and thin shape. Usually *Ganja Keris* made from different materials. Some was made by using the same metal as the blade, and usually this type of *Keris* was named as *Keris ganja seiras*. Meanwhile, if the *Ganja* and the blade were made by using different metal, it called as *Keris ganja menumpang* (Harsrinuksmo. B, 2004).

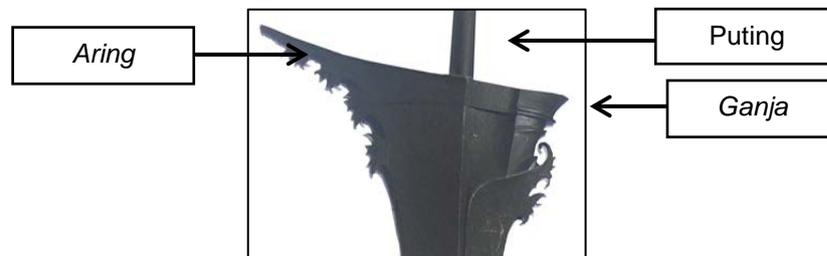


Figure 2 Aring and Ganja Keris

2. Kerawang

Kerawang (carving) is a specially design in *Keris Pandai Saras*. *Kerawang* is one of the elements of the *Keris Pandai Saras*, which is also called as *Kerawang umbi* or *kerawang duri mengkuang* because, the pattern same as the *duri mengkuang*. Function of *duri mengkuang* is as *penyangga* (trestle). *Kerawang* for *Keris Pandai Saras* is different from other *Keris* which is the *Kerawang* design for *keris pandai saras* must have two *Jawi* writing which is *Ba* (is like C) and *Ha* (is like number 3). The function of Huruf *Ha* is when two *Keris* touching each other, it will hold the hand from harming the owner hand (Hamid. A. M. N. 2014).

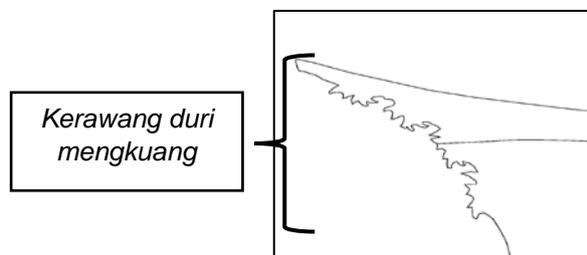


Figure 3 Kerawang

3. Akut Belalai Gajah (elephant's trunk)

Akut origin from Malay word *angkut* means carrying goods. They have many *akut* such as *belalai gajah* (elephant's trunk), *kuku garuda* and *paruh burung*. For *Keris Pandai Saras*, *akut* design more to the shape of the elephant's trunk. It called as *belalai gajah* (elephant's trunk) because, the elephant use their trunk to carry the foods, to give to their child. So that, the *akut* was symbolized as sustenance.

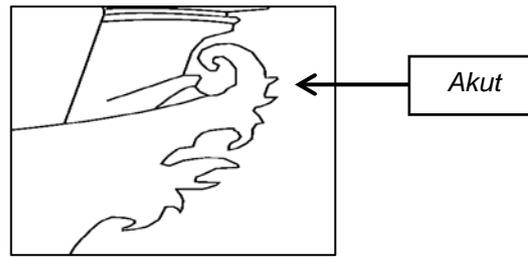


Figure 4Akut

CONCLUSIONS

The elements in *Aring/Ganja* plays significant roles to identify the *Keris Pandai Saras*. The uniqueness that appears on these elements can be regarded as an identity of the blacksmith (empu). Therefore, the correct use of design could play very well role in quality of the *Keris*. This paper has explained well on how to identify the characteristics of design *Keris Pandai Saras*. Based on this study, further research will be done on the Sheath, hilt and *pendokok* that are suitable in *Keris Pandai Saras*. These elements are important in *Keris*, and without these elements, people cannot call it as a *Keris*. Furthermore, efforts should be put to establish knowledges pertaining to *Keris Semenanjung*.

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