

Analysis of the Japanese Culture Influence in the Visualization of Djawa Hokokai Batik

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Abstract

Djawa Hokokai Batik is produced by batik companies in Pekalongan, especially Chinese batik entrepreneurs in the period 1942 - 1945. The name Hokokai is taken from the name of the organization that helped the Japanese army in creating prosperity in Asia. One of the activities of this organization is ordering batik to be distributed to Indonesians who have contributed to Japan. Through this paper, it will be analyzed the influence of Japanese culture to the visual of Djawa Hokokai batik. Japanese culture in this case is focused on Japanese kimono motifs. This is a qualitative research using historical approach and aesthetic theory.

Djawa Hokokai Batik has its own uniqueness that is made in the form of “morning-evening”, namely batik cloth with two different patterns of arrangement on a piece of cloth. The batik cloth motif shows a combination of classic batik motifs such as parang, kawung, ceplokan, lereng, and batik motifs that have been influenced by European culture and Chinese culture. Djawa Hokokai Batik shows its uniqueness by combining motifs from the three cultures above with Japanese culture, so that it shows dense composition and more detailed motifs.

Based on the results of the analysis it can be concluded that the Djawa Hokokai batik was influenced by Japanese kimono motifs. The influence can be seen from the composition of objects that look solid, visualization of objects that look detailed, and the tendency to combine contrasting motifs such as floral motifs with geometric motifs.

Keywords: *Djawa Hokokai Batik, Motif, Kimono*

1 Introduction

Batik is one of the products of Indonesian culture. Batik-making began in the Surakarta and Yogyakarta palaces, and then expanded to other areas in the country. The batik motifs of the Surakarta and Yogyakarta palaces strictly follow the rules adopted. For example, the “Lereng” (slope) motif is only used by kings and princes, people outside the royal family are prohibited from using this motif.

On the other hand, people outside the palace develop skills to make batik for their daily use. The development of batik motifs outside the palace, especially in the north coast of Central Java, gained influence from outside cultures such as Chinese, Dutch and Japanese cultures. This study focuses on the influence of Japanese culture in Djawa Hokokai batik during the Japanese occupation period in Indonesia. This influence is analyzed by comparing the batik motif with the kimono motif.

2 Methodology

This study uses a qualitative method with a historical approach, especially to understand the development of the kimono pattern and the development of batik in Java. In addition, it uses an anthropological approach, especially with regard to the process of acculturation. The data collection technique is done by studying the literature.

Assimilation is a social process that arises when there are: (1) groups of people with different cultural backgrounds, (2) interacting intensively for a long time so as to produce a new cultural form which is a mixture of the two cultures [1].

3 Kimono

Kimono is a traditional Japanese dress commonly used together with obi (sashes), *haneri* (removable decorative collars on undergarments), *obi-dome* (obi brooches). Japan's textile patterns are among the most beautiful in the world. They have endless appeal. They are also noted for their spiritual and symbolic aspects. Each pattern, which has been passed down over many years, is deeply meaningful [2].

The motifs on the kimono are adjusted according to the changing of the four seasons. Below is a table that describes the patterns with the seasons.

Table 1. Motif on Kimono, *Obi*, *Haneri*, and *Obi-dome* [2]

Seasons Pattern	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
1.	Tatewaku	Summer at the Water's Edge	Hand Drums	Rounded Sparrows
2.	Peonies	Morning Glories	Stripes for Autumn	Gosho Dolls
3.	Flower Baskets	Shibakusa	Maple Leaves	Stripes for Winter
4.	Cherry Blossoms	Birds of Summer	Sarasa	Camellias
5.	Wisteria	Bellflowers	Art Deco	Hemp Leaves
6.	Peacocks	Landscapes	Fans	Cranes
7.	Narcissus	Tanabata	Autumn Scenery	Takarazukushi
8.	Spring	Bush Clover	Expressionism	Splash Patterns
9.	Birds of Spring	Lilies	Birds of Autumn	Toys
10.	Ksudama	Summer Insects	Stories	Temari Handballs
11.	Magnolias	Pinks	Musical Instruments	Birds of Winter
12.	Ships	Stripes for Summer	Red Maple Leaf Viewing Parties	Nandina
13.	Cherry Blossom Viewing Patties	Flower Rafts	Early European Ships	Snow and Snowflakes
14.	Roses	Bridges	Swans	Ise Lobster
15.	Shells and kaioke	Irises	Exotic Scenery	Dogs
16.	Butterflies	Asian Clematis	Wheel of Genji	Winter Scenery

Seasons Pattern	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
17.	Spool of Thread	Weeping Willow	Scales Crest	Tomoe
18.	Cherries	Waves	Fruit and Nuts	Majolica Omeshi
19.	Flowers of the Four Seasons	Hydrangeas	Gourds	Ox-drawn Carriages
20.	Stripes for Spring	Rings of Water	Leaves	Karajishi
21.	Flower Arabesques	Fish	Flowers in Pongee	Cattleya
22.	Clover	Genjiko	Ivy	Formal Gift Decorations
23.	Bells	Round Fans	Chrysanthemums	Turtles
24.	Plum Blossoms	Foreign Flower	Famous Sights of Kyoto	Phoenix
25.	Tachibana	Waterwheels	-	The New Spring
26.	Thistles	-	-	-

From the table above, it can be seen that there are various motifs used according to the seasons in Japan. The motive is divided into several sources, namely:

- (1) Old Japanese cultural motifs
- (2) Flowers, fruits, and plants motifs
- (3) Animal motifs
- (4) Natural scenery motifs
- (5) The motive of the objects
- (6) Geometry motifs
- (7) Foreign cultural motives

Tomoe is an ancient symbolic pattern, ubiquitous on Shinto and Buddhist temple throughout Japan, in which shapes with round heads and long curving tails, much like commas, are depicted inside a circle. The word “*tomoe*” means “turning” or “circle”.



Figure 1. Tomoe Pattern [2]

Plant motifs include the peonies, roses, irises motifs. Flower motifs are often displayed in the form of flower arrangements or in certain terms such as kusudama, which is a flower bag that functions as an aroma therapy. Animal motifs include butterflies, birds, elephants, fish, shellfish,

and peacocks. Especially the peacocks and elephant motifs are the influence of foreign cultures that entered Japan.

The motifs of the objects include boat shapes showing the arrival of Europeans to Japan, fan shapes, baby dolls (Gosho Dolls), hand drums, musical instruments, and books. Architectural buildings include objects that are visualized as kimono motifs as in the Famous Sights of Kyoto motif.

Geometry motifs can be seen with the use of lines combined with floral motifs, besides that there are geometrical motifs in the form of hexagons, as well as geometric shapes that are included in art deco, splash patterns, and snow motifs.

In the composition of the placement of the motifs, there are several trends as follows:

- (1) All motifs are placed in the kimono area
- (2) Landscape motif
- (3) Motifs with empty fields
- (4) Motifs that combine plants or flowers with geometry
- (5) The overall geometric motif

4 Djawa Hokokai Batik

Djawa Hokokai is an organization formed by the Japanese when they came to power in Indonesia in 1944. The Java Hokokai or 'Javanese worship union' was founded to replace the "Putera" organization which aimed to mobilize the Javanese population [3]. Djawa Hokokai Batik is produced by batik companies in Pekalongan, especially Chinese batik entrepreneurs in the period 1942 - 1945. One of the activities of Djawa Hokokai is ordering batik to be distributed to Indonesians who have contributed to Japan.

The Djawa Hokokai batik motif was made in Pekalongan and other areas such as Kedungwuni and Batang. The main pattern in this kind of batik consisted of big floral images, some of the most frequently use peonies, chrysanthemums, carnations, the sakura blossom and others already known before the Japan occupation. The style was naturalist, which was common in coastal batik. Motifs that appeared frequently included butterflies with multi colored wings, peacocks and fans. The butterflies were large and they were not merely side patterns before the Japanese occupation [4].

Structurally, Djawa Hokokai batik have a head, a body, side pattern and a frame at the outer side of the head. Djawa Hokokai batik have two different and contrasting designs on one "body". This was done because textile materials were very rare and expensive at that time. This type of batik with different motifs on a piece of cloth is known as the "pagi sore" (morning-evening) cloth. The Djawa Hokokai batik always uses many motifs so that it looks full without any empty fields. Classical batik patterns originating from the palace are combined with Chinese Peranakan motifs.



Figure 2. Djawa Hokokai cloth, 251 x 107 cm, Body Bouquets of roses, 1943, Pekalongan. Influence Japanese [4]



Figure 3. Djawa Hokokai cloth, 256 x 108 cm, Body Tulips against ukel asam background and flowers (peonies) against lereng godong (strips of leaves) background, 1943, Oei Khing Liem Pekalongan. Influence Japanese [4]



Figure 4. Djawa Hokokai, 252 x 110 cm, Body flowers, butterflies, and peacocks, 1943, Pekalongan. Influence Japanese [4]

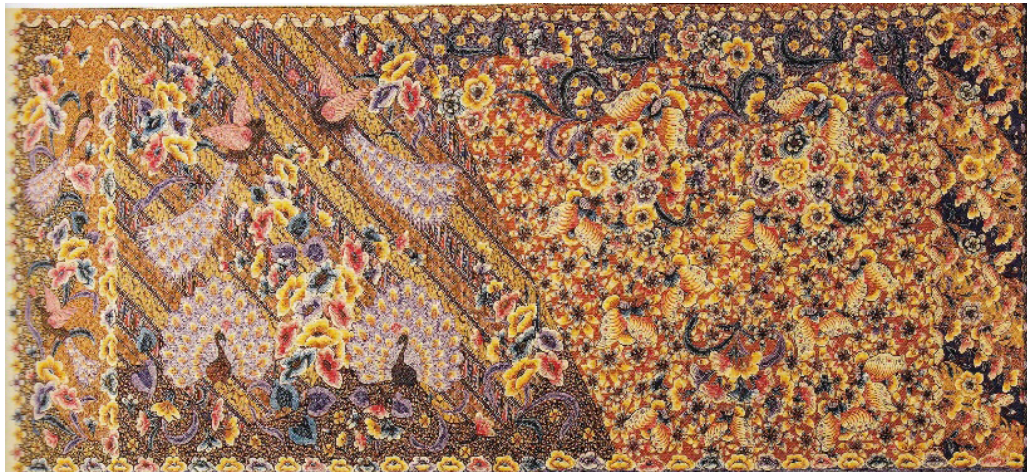


Figure 5. Djawa Hokokai, 252 x 110 cm, Body flowers, butterflies, and peacocks, 1943, Pekalongan. Influence Japanese [4]

Before being known as Djawa Hokokai batik, in the Kudus and Solo areas, the peranakans had made batik with a solid motif for Chinese women. This motif is known as the Semarang buketan (flower bouquet) because it was intended for peranakan Chinese in Semarang [5].

5 Analysis of the Influence of Japanese Culture in Djawa Hokokai Batik

Djawa Hokokai Batik has a pattern similar to the Chinese Peranakan motif, especially in the use of the buketan motif. Furthermore, the existing pattern becomes a different morning-evening cloth on two areas separated by a diagonal line. This separation allows the user to use two different motifs in one cloth. Apart from the limitations of textile material at that time, the morning - evening batik cloths showed the creativity of batik makers in the north coast of Java.

The difference between the Djawa Hokokai batik and the buketan batik motif is in the filling of the patterns on the textiles. Batik Djawa Hokokai is very dense with various objects. The empty fields that appear in the batik buketan on the Djawa Hokokai batik are filled with classic batik motifs such as parang, lereng, ceplokan, atau kawung. Flower motifs commonly used are sakura, chrysanthemums, orchids and dahlias.

One part that clearly shows Japanese influence is the pattern called susomoyo. Susomoyo is a fringe pattern consisting of decorative flowers and butterflies arranged from the top corner to the bottom or the bottom corner to the side, like a kimono pattern arrangement [6], as seen in picture 6 below.



Figure 6. Lereng and buket [6]

The motifs on the Djawa Hokokai batik are similar to the motifs found in the kimono motif. One example of this similarity is the butterfly motif and the Chrysanthemum motif known as the Kiku or Rangiku, which are important symbols in Japanese culture. Chrysanthemum was introduced by Chinese culture to Japan in the Nara period (710 - 93) to become a symbol of longevity and rejuvenation.

The peacock's motif is one of the motifs in the kimono used in the Djawa Hokokai batik motif, although it is different in visualization. In addition, the peacock, which eats noxious and poisonous insect, is considered a symbol of faith. In esoteric Buddhism, the deity Mahamayuri, who is often depicted riding a peacock, is believed to bestow blessings to remove disasters and distress that befall people [2].

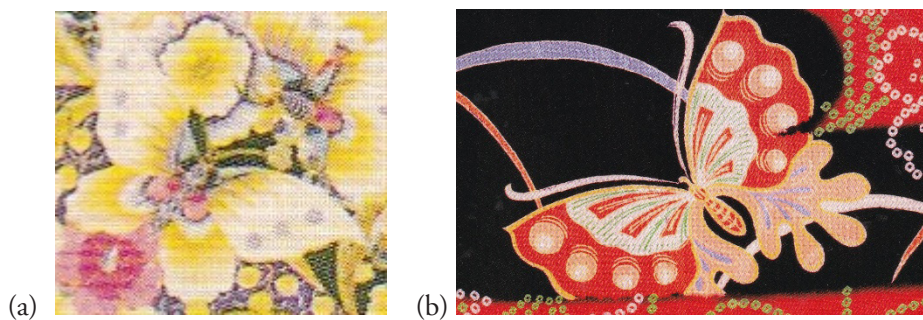


Figure 7. Butterfly motif in (a) Djawa Hokokai batik (b) kimono [6] [2]

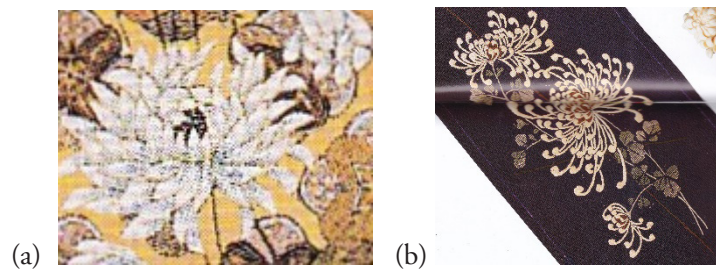


Figure 8. Chrysanthemum motif in (a) Djawa Hokokai batik (b) kimono [6] [2]

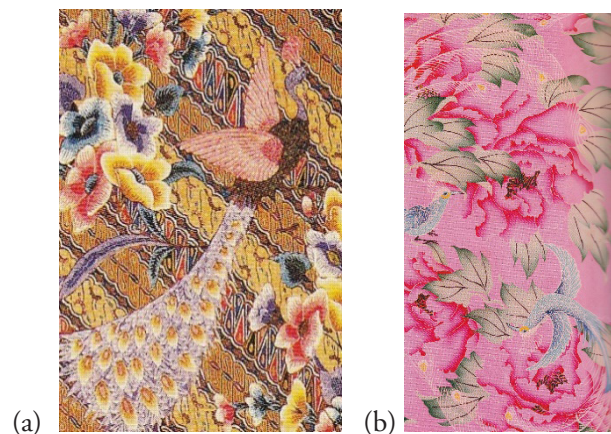


Figure 9. Peacocks motif in (a) Djawa Hokokai batik (b) kimono [6] [2]

Based on the description above, there are similarities in the objects used for the kimono and Djawa Hokokai batik motifs. Although there are similarities in objects, there are differences in visualization.

The assimilation process occurs in the Djawa Hokokai batik, which is an old cultural element in the batik structure that adapts to the symbols used by Japanese society. On the other hand, some of the symbols used actually come from Chinese culture. The Djawa Hokokai batik also combines classic motifs from the palace with brighter colors.

One example is the peonies flower motif originating from China which has influenced batik motifs in the North Coast of Java. Below is a peonies batik motif on a sarong made by The Tie Siet in Pekalongan 1920 – 1930s. Peonies are much loved by the Chinese for their bold size and colors. They are also associated with female beauty. Here peonies dominate the diagonal bands (dlorong) on the body as well as the large bouquet on the head [7] (Elliot, et.al., 2015, 47).



Figure 10. Sarong dlorong buketan The Tie Siet Pekalongan 1920 – 1930s [8]

The peonies motif from China spread to Japan. At the time of the Japanese occupation of Indonesia, batik craftsmen in Pekalongan used the peonies motif for Japanese needs. One of the Djawa Hokokai batik samples using the peonies motif is batik made by Oei Khing Liem in Pekalongan (Figure 11). Through the explanation above, it can be seen how one culture influences and adapts to other cultures.

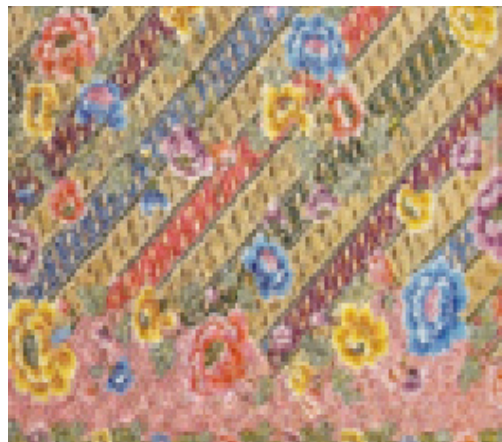


Figure 11. Peonies against lereng godong (strips of leaves) background, 1943, Oei Khing Liem Pekalongan. Influence Japanese

6 Conclusion

Djawa Hokokai Batik was made based on the needs of the Japanese occupation government in Indonesia to provide souvenirs to local officials. Batik craftsmen adapt existing batik motifs to Japanese culture. Some of the motifs that are made are similar to those commonly used in kimonos, such as peonie, chrysanthemum, and butterfly motifs.

The Djawa Hokokai batik structure is based on the Chinese Peranakan batik and the Dutch batik structure, then there is an adjustment using the morning - evening (pagi – sore) structure. This structure is based on economic conditions in the community, namely the scarcity of textiles or

cloth to make batik.

The Djawa Hokokai batik motif is very dense by combining Chinese Peranakan motifs with classical motifs originating from the palace. The visualization of the motifs looks like stylization of plants and animals. The motifs chosen are adjusted to symbols in Japanese culture.

7 References

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