

## Learning Leadership from Batik Cloth: A Symbolic Study of the *Semén Rama* Motif

Veronika Agustini Srimulyani<sup>1\*</sup>, Yustinus Budi Hermanto<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup>Faculty of Business, Widya Mandala Surabaya Chatolic University, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Economics, Darma Cendika Chatolic University, Indonesia

\*Corresponding Author:

Email: [veronika.agustini.s@ukwms.ac.id](mailto:veronika.agustini.s@ukwms.ac.id)

---

### **Abstract.**

*Batik is not just a cloth with beautiful motifs, because behind the elegance of the motifs or patterns, there are philosophical meanings that reflect the cultural values, history, and identity of the Indonesian nation. Common motifs used in classical batik such as the Semén Rama motif, which is associated with the Javanese palaces, especially Yogyakarta and Surakarta, are not only aesthetically appealing, but also symbolize various aspects of Javanese philosophy, social order, spirituality, leadership, wisdom, purity, and noble character as important elements in the development of human personality. The Javanese leadership ethos studied from the Semén Rama motif is Astha Brata, which contains eight elements of the universe, namely: earth/soil, sun, fire, ocean/sea, sky, wind, moon, and stars (cosmocentric) or 8 (eight) characters and actions or eight (8) gods, namely: Endra, Surya, Bayu, Kuwera, Baruna, Yama, Chandra, and Brahma, are universal and up to date, as a reflection of noble values that are always in the midst of human life. Leaders can reflect on the eight elements of nature so that their leadership practices can run well and be successful in accordance with the development of the path and in line with the contents of the universe which have been systematically arranged by Almighty God.*

**Keywords:** *Semén Rama; Leadership; Astha Brata.*

---

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Indonesian batik is more than just fabric, it's steeped in technique, symbols of identity, values, and culture intertwined with the lives of its people. Batik is thought to have existed since the time of the kingdoms in Indonesia, with the oldest evidence found at Borobudur Temple, dating from the 8th century. Historically, the name and form of batik were known before the arrival of Hindus in Indonesia, around 300-400 AD [1]. Batik is a masterpiece of the Javanese people that has become widespread in Indonesia [2], and on October 2, 2009, UNESCO recognized and designated Indonesian batik as a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity [3], so that every October 2nd is now commemorated as National Batik Day. Batik is a means of cultural acculturation because, in its development, batik motifs and patterns reflect the culture that exists in each era, such as during the Hindu era, batik tended to be colored by motifs and patterns related to Hinduism, and during the Islamic era, Islamic motifs and patterns also colored batik in Indonesia [4].

Initially, batik in Java was an art form within the palace walls, aimed at making clothing in the form of beautifully decorated cloth for the king, his family, and the nobles [5]. Initially, batik was worn by royalty and royalty, and could only be worn by those of high social status. However, over time, batik began to spread to the general public and become part of everyday life. The development of Indonesian batik is closely linked to the Majapahit kingdom and grew rapidly during the Islamic period of Indonesia [6]. For Indonesian people (especially Javanese), batik can be a kind of way of life, because the meanings of batik motifs provide guidance on the journey of human life [5]. As a product of community art, batik implies symbolic meaning of the identity of the community that supports it [7]. The beauty of Javanese batik lies in the complexity of the motifs, the harmony of the colors, and the symbolic meaning contained within them.

The palace is a cultural and political center to maintain and legitimize the power of a king, thus giving birth to a number of symbols and attributes of the kingdom, the main one of which is classic batik or palace batik [8] which contains philosophical teachings and is filled with noble values in the life of Indonesian society [2]. Palace batik, which is often referred to as Solo-Yogya batik or classic batik, is batik that is made

and created with traditional motifs that refer to palace culture [8]. Palace batik was originally created by palace princesses as a pastime, but later spread to courtiers or those close to the royal family as part of royal tradition and identity [9]. This batik developed in palace areas, particularly in Solo and Yogyakarta. Palace batik from both regions has its own distinctive characteristics.

Many Indonesians wear batik as a staple for work, everyday wear, and formal occasions, but not everyone understands the meaning of each motif. The next generation generally only admires its visual beauty, but has little or no understanding of the symbolic beauty or meaning contained within each motif [10]. A batik motif is a pattern or design that combines lines, shapes, and isen to create a single pattern that represents batik as a whole [11]. The majority of classic Indonesian batik motifs are derived from nature and the surrounding environment [12]. Every batik motif created always has a symbolic meaning based on Javanese philosophy [13]. Symbols are expressed as a form of simplification or condensation of aspects of human culture at the level of ideas and reality that are used as a link to describe or write something [7].

Javanese culture and traditions deeply influence various aspects of life, including leadership, so that Javanese leadership is known to have unique characteristics, reflecting the values of refinement, anti-conflict, and the use of commands in a subtle manner [14]. Classical batik motifs often possess rich symbolism, particularly those related to leadership. Some motifs commonly associated with leadership include *Semén Rama*, *Parang*, *Kawung*, *Satrio Manah*, and motifs depicting animals such as the *Garudha*. These motifs are not merely decorative; they also embody noble values such as courage, wisdom, and strength, which are expected of a leader. Understanding the philosophy of classical batik motifs can provide deeper insight into cultural values and leadership in Javanese society.

One of the batik motifs that is full of philosophical stories is *Semén Rama* (Javanese: *Semén Romo*). The name "*Semén*" comes from Javanese, specifically from the word "*Semi*" which means "the growth of a part of a plant." The word "*Semi*" was officially coined as *Semén* to symbolize 1) hope that grows like a tree, or 2) the image of a human being who develops his physical and mental body [15]. Batik with the *Semén Rama* motif was created during the reign of Paku Buwono IV, who reigned from 1788 to 1820 [16]. The *Semén* motif is a non-geometric pattern inspired by the beauty of nature, such as flowers, leaves, mountains, and animals [17]. The *Semén Rama* batik is associated with the epic Ramayana story, told through the reliefs of Prambanan Temple in Yogyakarta. The *Semén Rama* motif symbolizes ever-evolving life and prosperity, as well as ideal leadership values. The visualization of the main *Semén Rama* motif consists of eight elements, thought to have a correlation with the Ramayana story which contains eight points of the *Astha Brata* teachings [16,18]. Batik *Semén Rama* is not just a beautiful fabric that enhances one's appearance, but also a means of exploring meaning and teachings of wisdom. The *semén* motif in batik is heavily influenced by Hindu-Buddhist culture. Batik *Semén Rama*, as a work of art, essentially represents teachings directed and implied to kings or leaders of the people, symbolized in the dampar ornament as a symbol of power [7].

The problems studied are: 1) how does the *Semén Rama* motif represent the concept of Javanese leadership? 2) What are the key symbols in the *Semén Rama* motif and how are they interpreted in the context of leadership? 3) How is the relevance of the leadership philosophy contained in the *Semén Rama* motif in the modern era? The objectives of writing this article are: 1) To symbolically analyze the elements in the *Semén Rama* motif; 2) To identify the Javanese leadership values contained in the *Semén Rama* motif; 3) To present an interpretation of the meaning of the *Semén Rama* motif as a leadership guideline. The scope of the discussion is focused on the palace batik (Kraton Yogyakarta and/or Surakarta) and the classic *Semén Rama* motif which is very strongly related to leadership.

## II. METHODS

The research approach is a qualitative approach with literature study and the analysis used is semiotic analysis to interpret the symbols contained in the batik cloth being studied. The scope of the study object is the *semèn* decorative motif from artifacts in the form of classic batik cloth, namely the *Semèn Rama* decorative motif. The data collection method is a literature study carried out to obtain data in the form of images and writings related to the topic of study, which can be in the form of published books, literature, magazines, newspapers, journals, and websites. The descriptive analysis steps carried out by the author

through several stages, namely: 1) Identifying the collected data, both text and visual forms and literature studies, 2) reading, studying and reviewing all the collected data, 3) Conducting data reduction, 4) Compiling and categorizing data based on each category of research problems, 5) conducting data examination to determine the validity of the data in accordance with previously established theories, both textually and contextually, and 6) interpreting (interpreting) data based on inductive thinking.

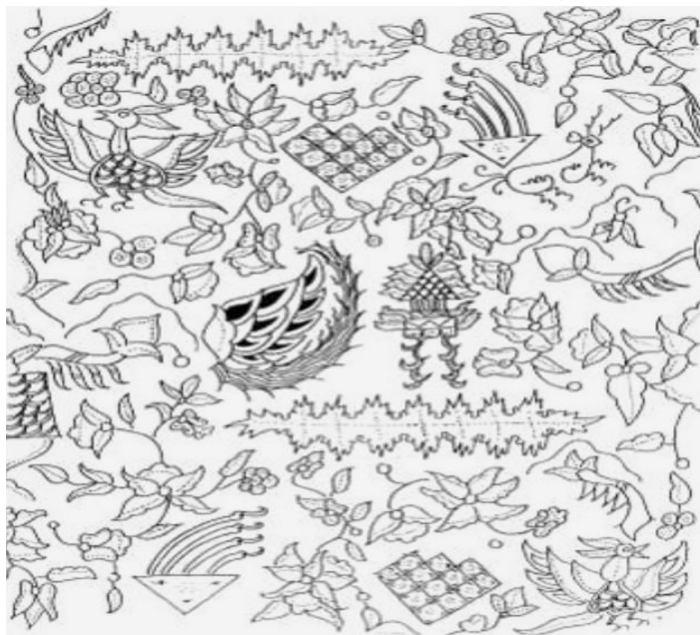
### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### *Classic Semén Rama Motif*

*Semén Rama* is thought to be the babon (parent) of the *semén* decorative motif [19]. Various records state that the *Semén Rama* batik motif was created during the reign of Paku Buwono IV who held the throne in 1788-1820 AD, in this case, this motif provided a lesson to the son of Paku Buwono IV who was appointed as the Crown Prince of his successor. The term *Semén Rama* consists of two words, namely *Semén* and *Rama*. The *Semén* motif has the meaning of fertility, prosperity, and the universe. The term "*semén*" which is attached to the name of this type of batik comes from the word "*semi*" which means to grow. In other words, *semi* is interpreted as a growing or prosperous life. *Semi* also refers to the good connotation of a prosperous and fertile universe, in this case, the wearer of batik with this motif is expected to be a leader who is able to protect his subordinates from evil. *Rama* comes from the name of a king in the puppet story, namely Ramawijaya [20]. The figure of *Rama* is symbolized as a person *pinilih pininta* (chosen and reserved by God to carry out His mission), a symbol of leadership *ing ngarsa sung tuladha* (in front giving an example), a symbol of *eling-percaya mituhu* (remember/aware, believe and obey), a symbol of a true warrior, and a symbol of nobility [21].

#### *Characteristics and Visual Elements of the Semén Rama Motif*

The visualization of the *Semén* motif decorative motif seems more dynamic when compared to geometric decorative motifs which generally tend to be monotonous. The elements of the *Semén* decorative motif are thought to have developed since the end of the Majapahit (Hindu) era, which continued during the period of Islamic cultural influence and continues to develop until today. The visual elements of the classic batik decorative motif *Semén Rama*, consist of eight (8) plus one (1) which is then referred to as the main decorative element [22], which is grouped into: (1) plant decorative motifs, namely the tree of life; (2) animal decorative motifs, namely *garudha*, animals (four-legged land animals, for example, oxen, deer), and birds; (3) natural element decorative motifs, namely *mèru* and flames; and (4) object decorative motifs, namely heirlooms, *dhampar*, and *baito* or ships. The ornaments that fill the empty areas are vegetation represented by leaves and shoots of vines or animals such as butterflies (**Fig. 1**). Source: [23].



**Fig. 1.** *Semén Rama* Batik Motif



The image of the *Semén Rama* batik motif (**Fig. 1**) shows that the forming elements are *garudha* and birds so that the substantial material of this motif is *garudha* (a depiction of Vishnu's vehicle) and birds. The symbol of the decorative motif in the *Semén Rama* batik motif carries the element of pluralism that the substance is diverse with the forming elements in the form of living creatures, both in the form of vegetation represented by leaves and shoots of vines or animals represented by birds, cows, or deer.



**Fig. 2a.** Example of the *Semén Rama* Motif on Batik Fabric

Source: [24]



**Fig. 2b.** Example of the *Semén Rama* Motif Application on Batik Fabric

Source: <https://shopee.co.id/>

### ***The relationship between the Semén Rama Motif and the Ramayana Epic***

Batik with the "Semenan" pattern with the name *Semén Rama* (Ramawijaya) as an artwork is taken from the teachings of Prabu Ramawijaya to Raden Gunawan Wibisono when he was going to replace the king in Alengka after the death of Prabu Dasamuka. The *Semén Rama* motif was created so that the wearer has noble qualities as Ramawijaya's [20] : 1) Ramawijaya is an incarnation of a god, however, Ramawijaya does not boast about his origins; 2) in facing various problems, Ramawijaya always discusses with his younger brother and wife, and is open-hearted in accepting other people's opinions and does not impose his own will; 3) in the Ramayana story, it is mentioned that Ramawijaya has a very evil enemy, namely

Rahwana, however, Ramawijaya is not afraid to face him because he believes that truth will triumph over evil; 4) Ramawijaya is friends with Anoman who comes from the monkey nation, and helps each other in goodness and truth.

The *Semén Rama* batik motif is essentially a teaching directed and implied to the king or leader of the people, which is symbolized in the dampar ornament as a symbol of power which is a symbol of the teachings of *Astha Brata* or *Hastha Brata* [7]. *Semén Romo* contains teachings on the main qualities that a king or leader of the people must have. This advice is contained in *Astha Brata* (eight virtues for a leader).

### *Astha Brata Leadership*

The Javanese leadership style is inspired by the leadership of Javanese kingdoms, including the Mataram, Majapahit, Singasari, and other kingdoms currently spread across the Sultanates and Kasunanans in Java such as Yogyakarta, Surakarta, and Cirebon [12]. The concept of Javanese leadership includes symbolism in Javanese culture such as spirituality in achieving leadership positions, kasekten, simplicity, rituals related to the sipat kandel, which is believed to be important means for leaders to maintain power [25].

The concept of *Astha Brata* leadership is the science of eight (8) qualities possessed by great, authoritative, wise, and prudent kings, namely *Prabu* Ramawijaya and Sri Bathara Kresna [26]. *Astha Brata* is in the Ramayana story cluster known as the play *Wahyu Makutha Rama* [27]. A leader who is able to master the teachings of *Astha Brata* will be able to internalize or embody himself in the existence of eight (8) noble qualities which are representations of the wisdom and greatness of God as the Creator [28]. The eight (8) qualities of *Astha Brata* are presented in **Table 1**.

**Table 1.** Comparison of *Astha Brata* Versions

<i>Manawa Dharmacakra</i>	<i>Serat Rama</i>	<i>Serat Nitiruti</i>	<i>Serat Pustakaraja Purwa</i>	<i>Lakon Makutha Rama</i>
<i>Surya</i> (sun) Able to change slowly	<i>Surya</i> (sun) Fair, deliberative, without violent confrontation	<i>Surya</i> (sun) Guide followers patiently, without harsh confrontation	<i>Watak Surya</i> (sun character) Slowly/carefully in influencing	<i>Laku Surya</i> (sun's behavior) Able to inspire
<i>Wayu</i> (wind) Go down directly to supervise followers	<i>Bayu</i> (wind) Carefully, pay attention to followers	<i>Bayu</i> (wind) Rich in knowledge, thorough, supervises followers	<i>Watak Samirana</i> (wind character) Research and examine follower behavior	<i>Laku Bayu</i> (Bayu's behavior) Pay attention and monitor followers
<i>Chandra</i> (moon) Joyful/pleasing personality	<i>Chandra</i> (moon) Forgiving, cheerful, pleasant follower	<i>Chandra</i> (moon) Fair, pleasant follower's heart, jovial	<i>Watak Rembulan</i> (moon character) Jovial, pleasing followers	<i>Laku Chandra</i> (Chandra's behavior) Gives light, pleases followers
<i>Agni</i> (fire) Be enthusiastic, dare to get rid of evil	<i>Brama</i> (fire) Move/move followers	<i>Brama</i> (fire) Be enthusiastic, dare to eliminate evil	<i>Watak Agni</i> (fire character) Menghukum yang bersalah	<i>Laku Dhahana</i> (Dhahana's behavior) Firm, punish the guilty
<i>Prithiwi</i> (earth) Fair, behaving equally towards followers	<i>Kuwera</i> (earth) Just, believed to be impartial to followers	<i>Kuwera</i> (earth) Passionate, able to encourage followers	<i>Watak Bumi</i> (earth's character) Generous	<i>Laku Kisma</i> (Earth behavior) Generous, rich, likes giving charity
<i>Indra</i> (storm/rain) Providing mutual benefit	<i>Endra</i> (rain) Provide benefits/donation /added value for all followers	<i>Endra</i> (rain) Be polite to followers	<i>Watak Tirta</i> (Tirta character) Forgive, restore the situation	<i>Laku Tirta</i> (water's behavior) Fair, no favoritism
<i>Waruna</i> (sea) Respected,	<i>Baruna</i> (sea) Standing firm on	<i>Baruna</i> (sea) Dare to face	<i>Watak Mendung</i> (cloud/sky)	<i>Laku Samodra</i> (marine)

punishes erring followers	principles	problems, gather knowledge/learn	character) Fair, no favoritism towards followers	behavior) Forgiving, accommodating to followers' aspirations
<i>Yama</i> (death) Able to control all followers	<i>Yama</i> (death) Firm, brave, punish wrongdoing, clean up bad situations	<i>Yama</i> (death) Firm, punish the guilty	<i>Watak Lintang</i> (star character) Strongly adhere to principles	<i>Laku Kartika</i> (star behavior) Confident in holding principles

Sumber: [29],[27],[16],[28].

The elements that make up the *semen motif* generally contain ornaments that symbolize or teach the virtues and goodness in ancient Javanese philosophy known as the *Astha Brata* teachings, meaning the teachings of virtue through eight (8) paths. The decorative motifs or ornaments of *Semèn Rama* in its development have experienced several variations or additions of decorative motifs, such as plant ornaments, but still reflect the leadership of *Astha Brata*.

The motif in *Semèn Rama* batik is symbolic and has a meaning of teachings about the eight (8) ideal characteristics that a leader should have. The correlational relationship between the ornaments in the *Semèn Rama* batik motif and the teachings for leaders *Astha Brata* [16], [29]–[31], can be detailed as follows:

#### 1. Tree of Life Ornament

The Tree of Life ornament symbolizes dharma. This ornament reflects the teachings of *Endra-Brata*, namely, the giver of prosperity and protector of the world by providing rain and nurturing life on earth [30].



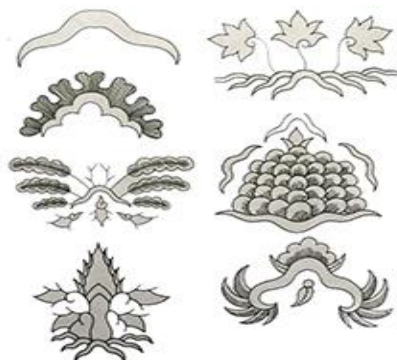
**Fig. 3.** Tree of Life Ornament

Source: [32]

The Tree of Life is a primary motif found in batik fabrics found in nearly every region of Indonesia. The Tree of Life ornament represents the tree of life, a pillar of the universe, beginning with spring or the growing season [22]. In practice, a leader is required to have an earth-like attitude, capable of protecting all those they lead [28].

#### 2. Meru Ornament

The Meru ornament symbolizes the earth, land, or mountain where the gods reside, and symbolizes justice. This ornament reflects the teachings of *Yama-Brata*, which include punishing the guilty while upholding justice [30].



**Fig. 4.** Meru Ornament Source: [32]



The word "*Meru*" comes from Mount Mahameru, and the interpretation of the *Meru* ornament in relation to leadership is that it is stable, solid, and authoritative. A leader must possess great resilience in facing numerous challenges. Just as a mountain stands firm, a leader must possess both physical strength and mental resilience [28].

### 3. *Garudha or Eagle Ornament*

The *Garudha* or *Gurdha* ornament is a *Surya-Brata* symbol (symbol of the sun and solar system) that depicts the character of the Eagle, representing wisdom and determination in carrying out responsibilities, courage in facing challenges, and strength and prowess. The *Gurdha* ornament changed its form when Islam arrived, no longer depicting a complete *Garudha* bird, but rather a pair of wings or lar as part of a complete decorative arrangement [22], symbolizing steadfastness [30]. The *Gurdha* is a symbol of power and the source of life [33].



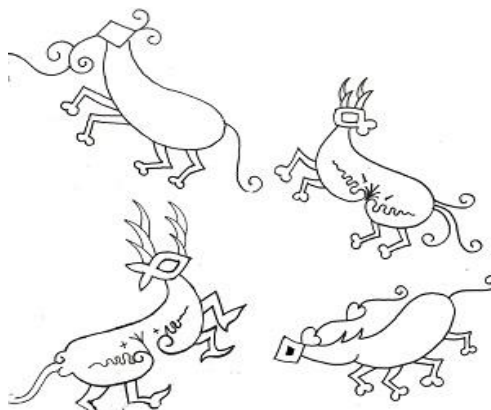
**Fig. 4.** Garudha ornaments

Source: [32]

The *Gurdha* ornament is also depicted with only one half-open wing and interwoven with other decorative motifs. The *Gurdha* ornament represents majesty, strength, protection, and broad vision, depicting nurturing, visionary leadership capable of bringing progress. Leaders with a sun-like attitude are able to channel positive energy in the form of inspiration and enthusiasm to their subordinates or followers [28].

### 4. *Land Animal Ornaments*

Land animal ornaments (e.g., cows and deer) symbolize *Sasi-Brata*, or the character of *Chandra* (the moon), which is characterized by its joyous nature and the gift of merit [30]. These ornaments symbolize the middle world or universe. They also symbolize a high position with a humble andhap asor (a sense of humility).



**Fig. 5.** Animal Ornaments

Source: [32]

According to Hindu teachings, ordinary animals are considered incarnations of the *Dewa Vishnu* on earth, bringing joy and rewards to those who have done good. This ornament depicts the teachings of *Sasi-Brata*, or the nature of the *Chandra* (moon) possessed by the *Dewa Vishnu*. The concept of emulating the *Chandra* nature is closely related to a leader's ability to understand and practice religious and moral values, to guide and consistently provide direction, both practically and conceptually, to followers or subordinates [28].

### 5. Bird and Butterfly Ornaments

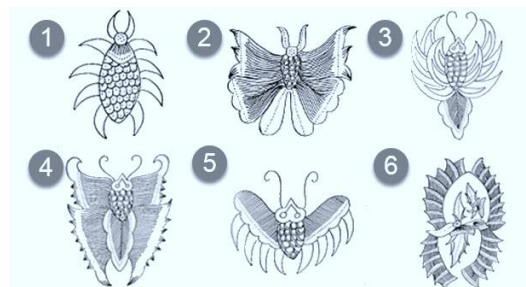
Bird ornaments, sometimes depicted with other flying animals, such as butterflies, are symbols of *Bayu-Brata* or *Anila-Brata*, representing the upper world, air, or wind [30], and depicting a noble character [22].



**Fig. 6.** Bird Ornament

Source: [30]

The bird ornament can be interpreted as meaning that a leader can be anywhere according to the needs of his subordinates or followers, and a leader never feels tired of moving to supervise the people he/she leads. Ornaments depicting butterflies symbolize intelligence or high hopes.

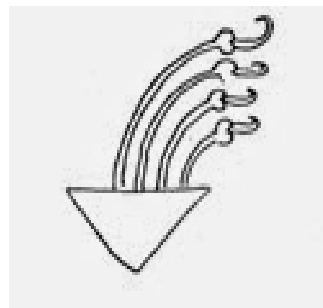


**Fig. 7.** Butterfly Ornament

Source: [34]

### 6. Heirloom Ornaments

Heirloom ornaments have a kind of meaning, a kind of *daru* or revelation, a kind of sparkling light, a symbol of joy and serenity. Heirloom ornaments are sometimes combined with flame-like decorative elements as their spearhead [22].



**Fig. 8.** Baito ornaments

Source: [23]

The heirloom ornaments which are usually symbolized in the form of a spear depict a star as *Dhanaba-Brata* or *Kuwera-brata*, namely *Dhanaba-brata* symbolizes a peaceful character and tries to provide prosperity (food and clothing) to subordinates, and the star or *Kuwera-Brata* contains light which has magical powers [30].

### 7. Building Ornaments and Baito

In houses, *Baito* (boats) are considered symbols of water or *banyu* (water flow). They are symbols of *Baruna-Brata* or *Pasa-Brata* [30]. They represent the nature of the *Dewa* of sea, who has a broad heart like



the ocean but is dangerous to those who ignore him. The sea god is symbolized by water or water-related objects, such as boats. *Baito* depicts a broad heart like the ocean but can be dangerous to those who ignore it [35]. In several other batik motifs, water is symbolized by aquatic animals, representing forgiveness.



**Fig. 9a.** Building Ornaments

Source: [30]

Building ornaments depict the shape of a house consisting of a floor or base and a roof, and can also depict a temple, a floating hall, a palanquin, a palace, or an ark. The nature of the house is interpreted as being able to accept anyone who needs its protection (being open), being able to manage all problems, being wise, and being able to manage expenses and income according to the existing situation and conditions [22].



**Fig. 9b.** Building Ornaments

Source:[32]

The building and *Baito* symbols mean that a leader who masters the water attitude must be adaptive and able to accept different opinions from subordinates, respond to diversity wisely, and be able to consider as best as possible all the opinions of subordinates or followers [28].

#### 8. *Dhampar Ornament*

The subject of *Astha Brata*, namely the king, is symbolized by the *Dhampar* [30]. The king's throne is an important symbol, reflecting the king's role as the holder of revelation and supernatural powers, considered the incarnation of a god. The *Dhampar* ornament, in the context of the *Semén* decorative motif, symbolizes just power and the protector of the people [22].



**Fig. 10.** Dhampar Ornaments

Source: <https://shopee.co.id/>

### 9. Flame Tongue Ornament

The Flame Tongue Ornament is a symbol of *Agni-Brata*, reflecting the character of the *Dewa Fire (Brahma)*, who possesses supernatural powers to destroy enemies. The Flame Tongue Ornament symbolizes the power to defend truth and punish the guilty.

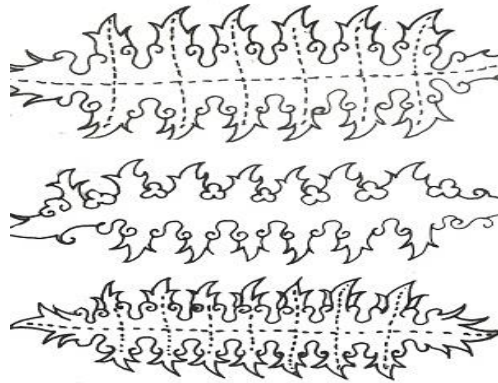


Fig. 11. Flame Ornament

Source: [32]

The Tongue of Flame ornament symbolizes power, and when controlled, it can become a brave, heroic, wise, and virtuous character [22]. The meaning of the Tongue of Flame ornament is passion, enthusiasm, illumination, enlightenment, or the destruction of evil, so it can be a symbol of leadership with integrity, courage, and bringing enlightenment to followers or subordinates. The Tongue of Flame ornament also illustrates that a leader must be able to manage these risks so that they can help the continuity of the organization they lead.

#### ***The Relevance of Javanese Leadership in the Semèn Rama Motif in the Modern Era***

Etymologically, the word *Astha Brata* comes from Sanskrit, where *Astha* means eight, and *Brata* means practice or guidance. According to Yukl and Gardner's [36] classification, the *Astha Brata* leadership teachings can be categorized as a traits approach, referring to the characteristics a leader must possess to be effective. The version of the *Astha Brata* teachings commonly known today essentially contains eight ideal leadership behaviors, symbolized by the attributes of the gods of nature: earth (*Kuwera*), sun (*Surya*), fire (*Brahma*), ocean (*Baruna*), sky (*Endra*), wind (*Bayu*), moon (*Chandra*), and star (*Yama*) [26], [27], [37].

Batik, a fabric with distinctive motifs, is one of Indonesia's most famous cultural heritages. Batik plays an important role in Javanese culture aesthetically, ethically, and religiously. In the modern era, preserving batik is not only limited to maintaining the technique but more importantly, maintaining the philosophical meaning of Javanese batik so that it is not lost over time. The *Semèn Rama* motif serves as a medium for transmitting noble values, which are connected to the Ramayana story which is full of *Astha Brata* teachings or teachings of virtue through eight (8) *Astha Brata* leadership teachings which are used as values, guidelines, and benchmarks by Javanese society to determine and shape the figure or figure of an ideal leader [38].

*Astha Bratha* is a Javanese leadership model which is one of the leadership concepts originating from Indonesian culture, which originates from Hindu teachings which is very relevant to be used as a guideline for the art of leadership for families, communities, nations and countries in the millennial era, because the figure of a leader expected in the millennial era is to have the ability, intellect, integrity, honesty and a far-sighted vision in line with the progress of the times (Akbar, 2022). The practice of *Astha Brata* leadership reflects a leader who is close to subordinates or followers, nature, and society through traits that reflect local wisdom and noble values from eight (8) teachings about the nature of the elements of the earth/soil (*Kuwera*), sun (*Surya*), fire (*Brahma*), ocean (*Baruna*), sky (*Endra*), wind (*Bayu*), moon (*Chandra*) and stars (*Yama*), so that leaders have an important role in overcoming environmental challenges and ensuring sustainability. Leaders can motivate followers to care more about the environment through effective and participatory programs.

*Astha Brata* can be categorized as a cultural heritage that can influence the mentality of Javanese society in the realm of psychological aspects, discourse and individual or collective social practices [38]. *Astha Brata* is the foundation of character leadership, so it is important for leaders to understand the eight (8) local wisdom values contained in *Astha Brata* in order to be able to lead an organization well. However, these eight (8) values are not binding and restrictive, meaning, not all eight (8) *Astha Brata* values must be used in their entirety, leaders can take some, adapt or combine *Astha Brata* values with other values.

The *Astha Brata* leadership concept deserves to be used as an example in presenting good leadership in this modern era because the teachings of the *Astha Brata* philosophical foundation are packaged according to the needs of millennials today [29]. The *Astha Brata* leadership teachings expressed and implied in it are still actual and relevant when applied by a leader to manage family life, society, the campus world, the nation and the state [39]. *Astha Brata* leadership can be applied as a guideline that leaders must have to achieve VUCA Prime and, with the following application: the attitude of water and earth can be used to achieve Vision, the attitude of the ocean and the moon to achieve Understanding, the attitude of wind and fire to achieve Clarity, and the attitude of the mountain and the sun can be applied to achieve Agile [28].

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Classic batik, such as batik with the *Semén Rama* motif, is one of the cultural heritages of our ancestors that has noble value and needs to be preserved, which consists of ornaments: (1) plants, namely the tree of life; (2) animals, namely garudha, animals (four-legged land animals, for example, cows, deer), and birds; (3) natural elements, namely *mèru* and flames; and (4) objects, namely heirlooms, *dhampar*, and *baito* or ships. *Astha Brata* eight characters or leadership traits, in the *Semén Rama* batik, 9 main motifs are depicted. The *Semén Rama* motif is a symbol of the *Astha Brata* teachings, depicting the harmony of nature, fertility, and the continuity of life, which can also be interpreted as a hope for prosperity and well-being for the people.

The results of the discussion of the symbolic study on the *Semén Rama* motif found that the obligation of a leader is to serve others, serve the people or fellow human beings. *Astha Brata* leadership in Ramayana that a leader should adhere to 8 (*astha* = eight) *brata* (character/nature, character, action) eight (8) local wisdom values. The *Semén Rama* batik motif series is full of the meaning of leadership teachings, namely *Astha Brata* in the form of eight (8) Javanese leadership practices, as a reflection of noble values in each motif that reflects steadfastness, flexibility, sharpness of thought, and humility, so that it can be an inspiration for organizational leadership practices amidst the dynamics of modern society. The concept of *Astha Brata* values needs to be internalized in the younger generation because it will strengthen the leadership attitudes of the younger generation and be ready to compete in the VUCA era.

Further research development can expand the study to Javanese leadership styles contained in other classic batik motifs, such as *Gurdha*, *Parang*, *Semen Lar*, *Satrio Manah*, *Kawung*, *Udan Riris*, and *Mego Mendung* motifs, in this case the Javanese leadership style is inspired by the leadership of Javanese kingdoms, including the Mataram, Majapahit, Singasari, and other kingdoms that are currently spread across the Sultanate and Kasunanan regions in Java such as Yogyakarta, Surakarta, and Cirebon.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] S. Maziyah, Mairta, and A. Sumijati, *Symbolic meaning of ancient Javanese* (in Indonesia), *Pramita*, 26: 1, 2016, pp. 26–32,
- [2] A. Suharson, *Batik in the global cultural constellation re-weaves aesthetic, ethical and religious values* (in Indonesia), *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Industri Kerajinan dan Batik*, Yogyakarta: Kementerian Perindustrian Republik Indonesia, 2021, pp. 1–17.
- [3] M. Larasati, *Preserving Indonesian batik culture as a cultural identity through exhibitions at the Pekalongan batik museum during the COVID-19 pandemic* (In Indonesia), *Tornare-Journal Sustain. Tour. Res.*, 3:1, 2021, pp. 46–50, 2021, [Online]. Available: <https://jurnal.unpad.ac.id/tornare/article/view/29849>
- [4] Puryanti, J. Hermanu, and S. Wahyuni, *Study of Javanese philosophical values in Kliwonan batik from Sragen District, Central Java, Indonesia*, *Asian J. Ethnobiol.*, 2:1, 2022, pp. 51–69, doi: 10.13057/asianjethnobiol/y020105.

- [5] E. Eskak and I. R. Salma, *Exploring the values of solidarity in Indonesian batik motifs* (in Indonesia), **Jantra**, 13:2, 2018, pp. 107–124.
- [6] I. Mulyani, Y. Wijayanti, and E. Nurholis, *Philosophical values of West Javanese Banjar batik* (in Indonesia), **J-KIP (Jurnal Kegur. dan Ilmu Pendidikan)**, 2:3, 2021, p. 21, 2021, doi: 10.25157/j-kip.v2i3.6008.
- [7] M. Krisnawati, *A study of the symbols of Semen Rama batik in the lives of Javanese people* (in Indonesia), **Teknobuga**, 1:2, 2014, pp. 75–81.
- [8] R. Roykhan, Sariyatun, and D. A. Kurniawan, *Classical batik as a medium of legitimacy of the power of Sultan Hamengkubuwono VIII in 1927-1939 and its relevance in the development of social history material* (in Indonesia), **J. CANDI**, 19:1, 2019, pp. 93–111.
- [9] K. Parmono, *The value of local wisdom in traditional kawung batik* (in Indonesia), **J. Filsafat**, 23: 2, 2013 pp. 135–146, [Online]. Available: <https://jurnal.ugm.ac.id/wisdom/article/download/13217/9459%0A%0A>
- [10] K. Parmono, *Symbolism of traditional batik* (in Indonesia), **J. Flsafat**, 23, 1995, pp. 28–35.
- [11] N. Alfiannurdin, P. Tresna, and C. Ruhidawati, *Cirebon's cultural heritage: Uncovering the history and motifs of Trusmi batik* (in Indonesia), **NUSRA J. Penelit. dan Ilmu Pendidik.**, 5:1, 2024, pp. 415–423, doi: 10.55681/nusra.v5i1.2267.
- [12] B. Sudardi, *Batik motifs as ameans of building for peace: Javanese perspective*, **Int. J. Law, Gov. Commun.**, 6:25, 2021, pp. 09–16, doi: 10.35631/ijlgc.625002.
- [13] Sarwono, *Simbolism motive kawung of fashion community on wayang kulit purwa Surakarta style* (in Indonesia), **Harmon. J. Pengetah. Dan Pemikir. Seni**, VI:2, 2005, pp. 1–14.
- [14] R. F. M. Saputro and M. Asbari, *Javanese leadership philosophy: Exploring traditional values in a modern political context* (in Indonesia), **Literaksi J. Manaj. Pendidik.**, 03: 01, 2025, pp. 42–47.
- [15] K. B. Utomo, *Habitus of culture: Retaining batik's identity amidst the modernization*, **Univers. J.**, 2011, pp. 1–11.
- [16] Hastangka, *Batik ontology: tracing the metaphysical dimensions of classical Javanese batik* (in Indonesia), **J. Filsafat**, 23: 3, 2013, pp. 199–214.
- [17] K. Saddhono, S. T. Widodo, M. T. Al-Makmun, and M. Tozu, *The study of philosophical meaning of batik and kimono motifs to foster collaborative creative industry*, **Asian Soc. Sci.**, 10:9, 2014, pp. 52–61, doi: 10.5539/ass.v10n9p52.
- [18] S. T. Widodo and Gustami, *Correlation of the symbolic meaning of the Yogyakarta style Semen Rama classic batik motif with the Asthabrata teachings in Serat Rama* (in Indonesia), **Universitas Gadjah Mada**, 2007. [Online]. Available: <https://etd.repository.ugm.ac.id>
- [19] S. T. Widodo, *Decorative motifs of classic batik Semen Rama, Semen Sida Mukti, and Semen Sida Luhur Yogyakarta Style: Appearance and meaning* (in Indonesia), **UPT Perpustakaan ISI Yogyakarta**, 2012.
- [20] R. Astutiningrum, *The magic of batik: Getting to know the spirit of nationalism in Indonesian batik motifs* (in Indonesia), Cetakan 1. **Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah Direktorat Pembinaan SD**, Jakarta, 2019.
- [21] Aruman, D. Juneidi, and I. Hariyanto, *Postmodernism Batik* (in Indonesia), **UPT Perpustakaan ISI Yogyakarta**, 2014. [Online]. Available: [https://digilib.isi.ac.id/1373/9/Artikel Ilmiah.pdf](https://digilib.isi.ac.id/1373/9/Artikel%20Ilmiah.pdf)
- [22] S. T. Widodo, G. R. L. Lastoro Simatupang, R. M. Soedarsono, and S. Gustami, *Combination elements in the visualization of classic Semèn batik decorative motifs in the Yogyakarta style* (in Indonesia), **Corak-Jurnal Seni Kriya**, 5: 2, 2016, pp. 181–192, doi: 10.24821/corak.v5i2.2387.
- [23] S. Casande, *The concept of cement art in batik* (in Indonesia), **Deiksis**, 5 ;3, 2013, pp. 230–238, [Online]. Available: <https://journal.lppmunindra.ac.id/index.php/Deiksis/article/view/>
- [24] U. Ariesa, *5 typical Yogyakarta batik motifs and their meanings* (in Indonesia), **Kompas.com**, 2023, pp. 1–2. [Online]. Available: <https://travel.kompas.com/read/2023/10/01/234357727/5-motif-batik-khas-yogyakarta-dan-maknanya>
- [25] A. Adhit and M. Asbari, *Javanese leadership philosophy: The values and character of a leader according to Javanese culture* (in Indonesia), **Literaksi J. Manaj. Pendidik.**, 2: 02, p2024, p. 141–145, doi: 10.70508/literaksi.v2i02.470.
- [26] V. Sylvina, F. Handayani, and A. Lestari, *Leadership style in the traditional Javanese culture (Study on Romo Hamzah in Yogyakarta)*, **Palarch's J. Archaeol. Egypt/Egyptology**, 18: 1, 2021, pp. 839–849.
- [27] M. As'ad, W. J. Anggoro, and M. Virdanianty, *Exploratory study of the Javanese leadership model construct: Asta Brata* (in Indonesia), **J. Psikol.**, 38:2, 2011, pp. 228–239, 2011.
- [28] H. F. Utama, *The Javanese perspective on life (Asta Brata) as a leadership concept in the VUCA era (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity)* (in Indonesia), **Satwika Kaji. Ilmu Budaya dan Perubahan Sos.**, 7:1,



2023, pp. 237–245, doi: 10.22219/satwika.v7i1.24056.

- [29] A. F. Akbar, *The relevance of leadership teachings based on the philosophy of Asta Bratha in the millennial era* (in Indonesia), **Social, Humanities, and Educational Studies (SHEs): Conference Series**, 2022, pp. 63–71. doi: 10.20961/shes.v5i1.57774.
- [30] Ernawati, *A study of the aesthetics of contemporary batik art through the collaborative work of artists Agus Ismoyo and Nia Fliam* (in Indonesia), **Stud. Budaya Nusantara**, 3:1, 2019, pp. 66–83, doi: 10.21776/ub.sbn.2019.003.01.05.
- [31] D. R. Fatimah, *Application of puzzle media in learning to appreciate classic motif batik for class VII G students of SMP Negeri 4 Pemalang* (in Indonesia), **Skripsi Jurusan Seni Rupa, Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni, Universitas Negeri Semarang**, 2016. [Online]. Available: <http://lib.unnes.ac.id/29459/%0Ahttp://lib.unnes.ac.id/29459/1/2401409050.PDF>
- [32] B. Susanto, G. Virginia, U. Proboyekti, and B. Valgian, *Decoration: Batik motifs according to their main elements are divided into three main parts, namely ornaments, decorative motifs and isen* (in Indonesia), **Batik Indonesia**, 2025. <https://alunalun.info/batik/hiasan.php>
- [33] Septianti, *Study of the form, function and symbolic meaning of the Gurda motif in Yogyakarta banned batik* (in Indonesia), **Invensi**, 5: 1, 2020, pp. 65–80, doi: 10.24821/invensi.v1i1.4125.
- [34] Anonim, *Types of batik motif ornaments* (in Indonesia), **Kabarcibaliung.com**, 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://kabarcibaliung.com/jenis-jenis-ornamen-motif-batik/>
- [35] Madana Batik, *Exploring the rich meaning behind the beauty of Semen Rama's batik* (in Indonesia), **Batik Giriloyo Inc.**, 2025. <https://batikgiriloyo.id/blog/menggali-kekayaan-makna-di-balik-keindahan-batik-semen-rama>
- [36] G. Yukl and I. William L. Gardner, *Leadership In Organizations*, Ninth Edit. **Pearson Education Inc**, 2020.
- [37] F. Hidayat and N. Setiyowati, *Development of a village head performance assessment instrument based on Asta Brata competency* (in Indonesia), **J. Sains Psikol.**, 6: 2, 2017, pp. 56–62.
- [38] S. Rhohana, *The values of Ashtabrata as local wisdom to strengthen leadership attitudes in learning Indonesian history* (in Indonesia), **Social, Humanities, and Educational Studies (SHEs): Conference Series**, 2022 doi: 10.20961/shes.v5i1.57807.
- [39] I. Sutarjo, *Actualization of Astha Brata's leadership in the Millennial Era* (in Indonesia), **Social, Humanities, and Educational Studies (SHEs): Conference Series**, 2022, doi: 10.20961/shes.v5i1.57792.