

The physical conservation of The Dutch heritage culture in Palembang city

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The physical conservation of The Dutch heritage culture in Palembang city¹

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Abstract

The problem of this research is how the condition of historical materials of the Dutch heritage is and what role the Palembang municipal plays in maintaining them. The problem is important because Palembang has many historical materials of Dutch heritage. However, from field research, it is true that there are many deviations and malfunctions toward the materials. Based on the research, data can be explored which showing that some sample buildings as Museum of Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II, Textile Museum, Office of Water pipe, building of Jacon en Van den Berg, Musi Hotel, Sehati Hotel, Balai Prajurit, Balai Pertemuan, Charitas Hospital, and Siloam Church have experienced many changes or even lost. Palembang Municipal, over her office of culture and tourism, tries to make an inventory on the culture heritage. After that, local government enrolls them to Directorate of Cultural Heritage, giving some guide to their owner and people that living around the sites for conserving and not changing their form. The task participates a professional group like Masyarakat Sejarawan Indonesia (Indonesian Historian Organization), Palembang branch, for making an inventory of cultural heritage materials in Palembang. Various constraints that faced by local government include a so limited funds for cost, that it is hard to do. Beside it, condition is worsened by a lack of Municipal and local regulation as a legal basic for protecting and conserving the cultural heritage.

Keywords : conservation, cultural heritage materials.

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PRELIMINARY

Palembang is an old city in Nusantara, which has a various culture heritage materials. The heritage can be tracked to Kingdom of Shrivijaya, Sultanate Palembang, Dutch colonial era, Japanese occupation and independence period. One interesting era is the Dutch colonial, because of natural condition, namely Palembang has only a little “mainland”. It is caused by the fact that the region is dominated by so many tidal swamp, that people has to made their houses of wood and pillars.

Transition from “waters” to “mainland” for the first time was made by Dutch colonial government in the early 20th century. Thus, it seems that some permanent buildings that built in this city are motivated by the Dutch domination over Palembang at that time. It can not be separated from the Dutch’s policy in Nusantara, in logical consequence of her establishment and stability in Indonesia that produced by Liberal economic and Ethical policy. The Dutch needed an effective and modern managed system. Therefore, they needed an adequate infrastructure. In governmental sector, the Dutch government in Batavia publiced *Decentralisatie Wet* on 1st April, 1906 (*Staadblad van Nederlnadsch Indie*, No. 126) that promoted Palembang as a *Gemeente* (municipal).

Following up the policy, Dutch colonial regime built some communication facilities like roads, bridges, and permanent infrastructures for filling the needs, for the sake of public affairs, business and settlement. The early area that built was a shopping centre in 16 Ilir, around Merdeka Street to Talang Semut area, and also Charitas Hospital. A part of the area is still conserved, but another part experiences another function, or lost at all. The condition is urgent for the research, to determine a final condition and to know the factor behind the change. What is role that government plays in conserving the colonial cultural heritage materials? What steps has, is and will municipal government take toward the heritage? The research tries to solute the problems.

Culture heritage buildings

Based on the Constitution of Republic of Indonesia number 11, 2010, about cultural heritage, it is mentioned that cultural heritage building is “structure that made of natural or man-made things for filling a walled and/or unwalled space, with roof”. The building is a part of cultural heritage, meanwhile a cultural heritage is

Cultural heritage has a material character as ² cultural heritage building, cultural heritage structure, cultural heritage site, and cultural heritage area on mainland and/or under water that needed to conserve its existence that having a strategic value for history, science, education, religious and/or culture over determination process

Cultural heritage plays a great role in determining nation’s pride and value over its historical information that held inside. The message can be addressed with exposing intangible concept, that explaining a concept of thing, symbol, meaning that related to function, technology for making, behavior pattern, written form (if the writing is found inside). Identity settling as a nation is an absolute condition, because it will determine a nation’s existence (Sedyawati, 2003; *Arkeologi...*, 2012).

As a part of cultural heritage, the building functions to explain history, science, education, religious and culture. Therefore, it must be protected, spread and functioned for the cultural progress. The progress means to advance nation with all components, to the end namely to increase nation’s welfare. To optimize the function, any conservation is necessary.

According to Law number 11 of 2012 article 1, paragraph 22, it is said that “conservation if a dynamic step to maintain cultural heritage and its value by protecting, spreading and functioning”. The statement emphasizes an effort to protect, to spread and to function cultural heritage building in establishing an identity of nation.

Historical building

Criteria of building that included into cultural heritage is

Has 50 years age or more; representative of a minimal style for 50 years; having a special value for history, education, science, religious, and/or culture; and owning a culture value for nation's personality.

In accordance with the age of Republic of Indonesia for 69 years, and the fact that majority cultural heritage building of Dutch regime were built in the early 20th century, the condition of 50 years is represented.

In management and conservation, it needs a legal protection, namely convention, constitution, law, government regulation and its following up. A various protection regulations are in the hand of government. Related with region, role to protect, to spread and to function is local government's responsibility, with public participation. Based Law number 11/2010 article 96, there are sixteen powers of local government on cultural heritage materials, namely

- 1) Determining an ethical principle of culture heritage conservation;
- 2) Coordinating a inter-sector and inter-region cultural heritage conservation.
- 3) Inventing some data of cultural heritage;
- 4) Setting level of cultural heritage;
- 5) Setting and repealing a status of cultural heritage;
- 6) Making any regulation of cultural heritage conservation;
- 7) Starting any cooperation for conserving cultural heritage;
- 8) Making a research on legal violation;
- 9) Managing area of cultural heritage;
- 10) Forming and dissolving any technical unit of conservation, research and museum;
- 11) Applying a policy for human resources in discipline of archeology;
- 12) Promoting to anyone who to conserve cultural heritage;
- 13) Keeping and/or maintaining a cultural heritage for security interest;
- 14) Grouping cultural heritage based on its interest as a national, province and regency/municipal level;
- 15) Setting a limit of site and region; and
- 16) Stopping a process of space functioning or building process that have a damaging, missing or losing of cultural heritage in consequent, all as well as partial.

The above mentioned points show a great authority that transferred to local government.

To set an object as a cultural heritage material, some steps are taken, namely collecting and verifying data that done by Data Managing Team. The result is provided to Expert Team of Cultural Heritage for a further examining. After that, it is necessary of an expert team consisted of various disciplines that related to the work. Task of this team is to make a research and assumption over materials that “regarded as cultural heritage”, to protect and to save the materials, waiting for the publication of local regulation on it. Thus, team’s function is very strategic in saving cultural heritage as national identity (Satrio A dalam *Arkeologi untuk Publik*, 2012).

In some developing countries, cultural progress usually faces two opposite poles. In one side, cultural heritage is necessary to be saved and maintained (conservation). In the other, it faces a material economic interest. Usually, priority will be given to physical interest (Ramelan in *Arkeologi untuk Publik*,2012). It is true because there is a more prospective material result in a short time, meanwhile it seems as if the conservation program “wastes time and money”. Another factor is a lack of understanding and awareness about significance of nation’s heritage conservation for next generation, for present as well as for the future. Indeed, cultural heritage has a significant role in forming nation’s value and pride over its historical message and information that hold.

The Dutch’s cultural heritage buildings

Palembang’s installation as *Gemeente* (Municipal) in 1906 rose a compulsory condition to provide some facilities for the status. Another factor was more and more Dutch living there. Colonial government began to build infrastructures like roads, bridges and another facilities. Before it, the Dutch had built office and house for her resident on the ruins of former *Kuto Lamo* palace, that destroyed for the goal (ANRI, *Besluit van Governour Generaal*, tanggal 21 Agustus 1822 nomor 10, *Bundel Algemeen Secretarie*). The building is known as Museum Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II. Almost one hundred years later, a serious step was taken

with the making of city master plan in 1929 by Ir. H.T. Karsten as a famous architect at that time. His buildings can be seen from the research, firstly Museum Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II. The museum is first building that built by Dutch colonial government in Palembang. The building, that functioned as an office and formal house for Dutch resident (van Sevenhoven), was built on the ruin of former *Kuto Lamo* palace that broken down. The museum has 32 meter long, 22 meter wide, and 17 meter high (ANRI, *Besluit van Governour Generaal*, tanggal 21 Agustus 1822 no. 10, *Bundel Algemeen Secretarie*; Hanafiah, 1998; Santun, 2011). Under Japanese occupation, it functioned as a military barracks. In the early period of independence war, it made as headquarters of military territorial area II, Sriwijaya. Later, it was taken over by the Palembang Municipal and finally, it functions as a museum (interview with Ali Hanafiah, 8 Juli 2014).

Secondly, Textile Museum. The building was built in 1883 as an oldest one. It functioned as a settlement for Dutch high officials as level as resident in 1930s. in 1961, it functioned as an office of Judicial Inspectorate, renamed into office of High Court. Finally, it functioned as Textile Museum since 5th November, 2008. In the recent years, the condition is neglected because of people's rejection against Municipal's plan to transform it into an international heritage hotel (Harian Sumeks, 18 Mei 2011).

Thirdly, a former Burgemeester office or water pipe office. Its existence was very important for municipal and to supply a clean water for Dutch population here. Thus, the building was a symbol of Dutch domination and also as landmark of the city because of architecture value. After Indonesian independence, the building was taken over by Municipal and since 1963 it functioned as major's office of Palembang to the present. From the end of 2013 to the beginning of 2014, Palembang Municipal renovated a roof top of seventh floor that changing the historical building into new form (Farida R. Wargadalem in *Tribun Sumsel*, 31 Maret 2014; Hanafiah, 1998).

Another building is office of Jacobson van der Berg and Co., its location is on Sekanak street. The building has experienced some transformation of names and owners to the present. Generally, it has a great function for business, namely

for PT. Jacobson that supplying beverages (wheat, beer, medicines and so on). After independence of Indonesia, the company was taken over in nationalization program by Indonesian government into PN. Fajar Bakti and to be owned by Pt. Satya Niaga, that engaged in export business of coffee and rubber, also coffee production (1968-1973). Before transforming into Dharma Niaga (cement warehouse), it was owned by Indonesian government's company Panca Niaga. The old building is neglected, and experiences some damages. Its large windows are closed with brick wall. A part of it is separated by insulators for office room and repository warehouse (*Laporan ...*, 2002; interview with Bapak Firman, dan Tedi, 29 April 2014).

In early 20th century, two luxury hotels were built, namely *Schwartz* (Musi), and *Smit* (Hotel Sehati) on Merdeka Street, Palembang. Their existence was needed to anticipate for the city's growth as a central of government and economic transaction. Many important persons coming from Batavia were included tourists and businessmen. After Independence, it was unknown who the owner of them. Before transforming into the present condition, namely Sehati Hotel, the building was broken down and changed into Kantor Wilayah Pajak Sumsel dan Bangka-Belitung (office of tax for South Sumatra and Bangka-Belitung regions) in 2006, based on Minister of Finance's decree number 132/PMK/01/2006. Musi Hotel was transformed into office of BKD, Palembang, in 2010. Before taken over by the third, both buildings were owned by private (Hanafiah, 1998; *Laporan ...*, 2002; *Profil...*,2007; interview with Erni, 10 Juni; interview with Firman Ramadhan, 22 Mei 2014)

The next building is Balai Prajurit (hall of soldier). The building is under control of Military Area Command II Sriwijaya and functioned as a meeting hall, for marriage celebration, and another activities. It was built in the early 20th century by Dutch government as a public *Societeit*, that known as Rumah Bola (house of ball). Its existence is very strategic, signed Palembang as an important city in Indonesia that developed by the Dutch colonial regime, because *Societeit* was one of symbols of a modern city (*Laporan...*,2002; Hanafiah, 1998). Near it is a meeting hall, functioned as meeting room under Dutch and Indonesian

government. Seen at front or façade of this building, there is no significant renovation. But its interior gets some additional in permanent wall and some triplex insulations were set by local civil service institution. In early 2014, this building was handed over to the third party and renovated with retaining her original form. It functions as a restaurant and theater *Kuto Besak* (*Laporan ...*, 2002; Hanafiah, 1998; interview with Miss X, 29 April 2014).

In educational sector, there is an important building of *Mulo School*. Dutch junior high school, that built in 1926. The building is well maintained and under supervision of formal educational institution, namely SMP Negeri 1 Palembang. Some renovations are made, as at gate and additional rooms for studying. However, the original form is maintained (*Laporan ...*, 2002).

In health sector, Charitas hospital was built by Charitas Congregation in 1926. The hospital is first private hospital in Palembang (*Laporan ...*, 2002; Hanafiah, 1998). As an oldest hospital of Catholic mission, it grew fast. There are so many additional that the rest is only the front side as an early identity of Charitas Hospital. Meanwhile, in religious affair, Siloam Church was built in 1935. The renovation is only at the back, namely for an office. (*50 Tahun...*, 2006:3-10 and 65; interview with Pendeta Em Rumanto, and Pendeta Esmanto, 18 Mei 2014).

The steps taken by Palembang Municipal

General steps in the past, present and future is to make an inventory of cultural heritages in this city. Beside it, a registration over the invented materials is done to National Directorate of Cultural Heritage. The inventory is improved with a training program organized by Directorate of Cultural Heritage, Department of Education and Tourism in November 2013. After that, the local office of culture and tourism in Palembang got a subsidy as computer, laptop, printer, camera, digital scales, mega-scale flash disk, GPS (a scale for determining any location, map, scale) and so on (interview with Lisa Surya Andika, 29 April and 29 Oktober 2014; interview with Retno Purwanti, 29 Oktober 2014).

Palembang Municipal, over its culture and tourism office, involves a professional organization of Masyarakat Sejarawan Indonesia (MSI) branch of

Palembang, in making any inventory on cultural heritage assets here. The Municipal motivates and guides the owner's building and people around it to take a part actively in conserving and maintaining some historical buildings, included not to change the original form. (interview with Lisa Surya Andika, 29 Oktober 2014; interview with Habson, 22 Mei 2014).

Hindrance in inventory

A lack of legal basic in protecting, functioning and developing a cultural heritage material in local regulation (Perda) and municipal regulation is a great hindrance. Beside it, office of culture and tourism has not yet team of cultural heritage that needed for taking a part in educational course organized by Directorate of Cultural Heritage. It is a great hindrance for Palembang Municipal to make a further step. Meanwhile, an urgent need of experts can not be fulfilled because of a minimal funds (interview with Ali Hanafiah, 2 September, 2014; interview with Lisa Surya Andika, 29 Oktober 2014).

Epilog

Some cultural heritage buildings in Palembang experience many degradations, even destroyed or lost totally (Jacobson van der Berg, Hotel Sehati, dan bekas Museum Tekstil). Palembang Municipal tries to save by inventory and registration with involving MSI branch of Palembang. She registers the building of Meeting Hall to Directorate of Cultural Heritage in Jakarta.

Another step taken by Municipal is to guide the owners and people around the cultural heritage building for taking a part in maintenance and not changing the original form. Hindrance that Municipal has to face is a lack of fund, so she can not install an expert team and team of cultural heritage. She has no a legal basic in the form of local or Municipal regulation.

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Informan

No	Name	Age	Occupation
1	Lisa Surya Andika	45	Kabid Kebudayaan BUDPAR kota Palembang
2	Ali Hanafiah	53	Kepala Museum SMB 2 Palembang
3	Retno Purwanti	47	Pegawai Balar Arkeologi
4	Abi Sofyan	48	Karyawan Museum SMB 2
5	Habson	45	Pegawai BUDPAR kota Palembang
6	Tedi	34	Pedagang di sebelah gedung Jacob Son
7	Firman R	47	Kasubag Kepegawaian BKD Kota Palembang
8	Erni	42	Kabag Informasi Kanwil DJP Sumsel Babel
9	Miss X	30	Manager Restoran Teater Kuto Besak
10	Em Rumanto	68	Pendeta Gereja Siloam
11	Esmanto	50	Pendeta Gereja Siloam

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