



Journal of Architectural Research and Education

Journal homepage:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/JARE/index>



Philosophical Analysis of the Roof Shape of the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque, Cirebon

Nur Muhammad Barokah

Manna Interior

*Correspondence: E-mail: ardi.solokota@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque, one of the oldest grand mosques in Cirebon City, boasts a unique history and architecture. Built by the Wali (guardians) during the reign of Sunan Gunung Jati, the first sultan of the Cirebon Sultanate, the mosque symbolizes a rich cultural and spiritual heritage that continues to be preserved and maintained. The mosque's architecture is influenced by cultural acculturation, reflecting the rich and diverse cultural influences of Sundanese and Javanese. One interesting aspect to examine is the philosophy of the roof of the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque. The unique three-tiered pyramidal roof shape holds profound philosophical and symbolic meaning. The roof is not only a physical element of the building but also a representation of the spiritual and cultural values contained within it. This study uses observation, measurement, and text analysis methods to uncover the philosophy of the three-tiered roof of the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque. This research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the message intended to be conveyed through the roof structure of the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque and reveal the values hidden behind the mosque's architecture. Thus, this study is expected to provide insight into the physical architecture of a building, but also invites reflection and understanding of the relationship between architecture, culture, and spirituality in the context of the Great Mosque of Sang Cipta Rasa in Cirebon.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Submitted/Received 29 April 2024

First Revised 19 June 2024

Accepted 11 September 2024

First Available online 1 Nov 2024

Publication Date 1 Nov 2024

Keyword:

Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque,
Triple-tiered roof,
Philosophy,
Cultural acculturation

1. INTRODUCTION

Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque, which is one of the oldest grand mosques in the city of Cirebon, has a unique history and architecture. This mosque was built by the Wali (guardians) during the reign of Sunan Gunung Jati, the first sultan of the Cirebon Sultanate. It is located directly in front of the Kasepuhan Palace complex in Cirebon City.

Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque has unique architecture and design. The Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque is influenced by cultural acculturation, therefore the architectural style and intricate decoration of this mosque reflect the rich and diverse cultural influences. One interesting aspect to study is the philosophy of the roof of this mosque. The shape of the pyramid roof with three layers has philosophical and symbolic meaning, so that we can delve deeper into the message that we want to convey through the roof structure, which can provide insight into the values contained within it.

Research into the philosophy of the roof of the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque can provide deeper insight into the meaning and symbolism contained in its roof structure.

This research will use field observation methods, building measurements, and analysis of historical and cultural texts related to the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque. It is hoped that the results of this research can provide a deeper understanding of the philosophy of the roof of this mosque and reveal the values hidden behind its architectural structure. By understanding more deeply about this mosque, we can appreciate the historical and cultural values contained within it.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Data Collection Technique

In data collection, two data collection processes are primary and secondary data. The primary data collection process carried out was in the form of field observations, building measurements, and analysis of historical and cultural texts related to the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque. Secondary data is carried out in the form of processing data obtained from literature sources such as books and journals.

2.2. Research Location

The Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque is administratively located in Kasepuhan Village, Lemah Wungkuk District, Cirebon Municipality, West Java Province. The Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque was built to the west of Cirebon city square. The existence of the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque is closely related to the activities of the Kasepuhan Cirebon palace, from the past until now.



Figure 1. Location of the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque
Sumber : *Google Earth*, 2024

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. The Development and History of the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque

The development of Islamic architecture has always been in contact with other cultures (Supriatna & Handayani, 2021). This contact with other cultures not only influenced Islam in its religious teachings, but also influenced the architecture of Islam itself, so that the existence of mosques is identical with the spread of Islam in a region. According to Barliana (2008), initially, a mosque did not have to be a special building or a particular architectural work, a mosque could simply mean a stone or a stretch of savanna grass, or a desert field surrounded by a porch building like the "field mosque" which was first built by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The first mosque built during the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW was the Quba Mosque, Madinah. Initially, this mosque was only rectangular in shape and was located in an open field. The walls are made of date palm trunks and the roof is made of date palm leaves. After renovations, the new Quba Mosque emerged with a dome-shaped roof (Fu'ad Abdul Baqi, 2017).

According to Rochym (1995), The growth of mosques always follows the development of Islam which has penetrated into various aspects of life which have different characteristics in each region where Islam develops. Therefore, the mosque also reflects a close relationship with aspects of social life as a result of the application of Islamic values in daily life. The more rapid the development of Islam in a region, the more influences occur and this creates a variety of different forms of mosques.

The Great Mosque of Sang Cipta Rasa, also known as the Kasepuhan Mosque and the Great Mosque of Cirebon, was founded at the beginning of the spread of Islam in Cirebon. The name has the meaning of majesty, development, and use. This mosque was founded by Nyi Ratu Pakungwati, daughter of the ruler of the Kasepuhan Palace, Prince Cakrabuana, and Sunan Gunung Djati. Initially named Pakungwati Mosque by the people of Cirebon because it was close to the Pakungwati Palace, the construction of the mosque was led by Sunan Kalijaga. After completion, Sunan Gunung Djati married Nyi Ratu Pakungwati, so the palace changed its name to Keraton Kasepuhan and the mosque became the Kasepuhan Mosque.

The history of this mosque began during the reign of Cirebon by Sheikh Syarif Hidayatullah or Sunan Gunung Djati, who was the grandson of Prince Prabu Siliwangi, the king of Pajajaran, and the son of Syarifah Muadzin, a descendant of the king of Egypt at that time. According to local historical records of Cirebon and the story in *Purwaka Caruban Nagari*, a book about the history of the founding of the city of Cirebon written by Wangsakerta in 1669 AD. Islam entered Cirebon in the 15th century, around 1470 AD, which was spread by Sunan Gunung Djati when he was 27 years old and became a missionary in the city of Cirebon.

The Great Mosque of Sang Cipta Rasa, often referred to as the Kasepuhan Mosque, was built in 1480 CE at the suggestion of Sunan Gunung Djati and Nyi Ratu Pakungwati (Alamsyah, 2010). The mosque's construction was led by Sunan Kalijaga, with the assistance of a Majapahit architect named Raden Sepat, who was previously a prisoner of the Majapahit Empire (Budi, 2015). They were assisted by around two hundred workers from Demak, so the total number of workers involved was around 500 people. The name "Sang Cipta Rasa" contains the meaning of majesty, development, and use. At first, the people of Cirebon called this mosque Pakungwati, taken from the Pakungwati Palace. Then, along with the change of name of the Palace to Kasepuhan Palace and its complex to Kasepuhan Complex, this mosque changed its name to Kasepuhan Mosque.



Figure 2. Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque in 1930

Source : Mudhofar Muffid in the Journal "Javanese and Sundanese Architectural Concepts at the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque, Cirebon"

According to Mangunwijaya (1988), The triple-tiered roof is a manifestation of the sacredness of a building and still contains the meaning of *tribuwana*. As in the structure of a temple building, it is generally divided into three parts, namely the foot, body and head. In the construction of the Demak mosque, it was then transformed into Islamic teachings, so that the three-tiered roof on the Demak mosque is interpreted as a symbol of faith, Islam and Ihsan.

Since the Demak Mosque was built in 1479 AD, the characteristic three-tiered roof began to be adopted by mosques built after it. However, as time went by, these characteristics began to be combined with other characteristics, such as the characteristics of the area where the mosque is located.



Figure 3. The Great Mosque of Demak (1810) and the Great Mosque of Yogyakarta (2000)
Source : Bambang Setia Budi in the Journal "A Study on the History and Development of the Javanese Mosque"

3.2. The Architecture of the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque

The architecture of this mosque combines styles from Majapahit, Demak, and Cirebon, with a predominance of brick material and most of the supports using wood. The exterior of the mosque building is a blend of various cultural and historical elements. All the structures, forms and accessories of this mosque are maintained to preserve the values contained within it and the history associated with the architecture. This mosque is surrounded by a diamond-shaped wall made of brick, with a toothed hexagonal ornament on the roof of the wall.



Figure 4. Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque's interior (brick wall)

Source : www.cxomedia.id

The Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque is a striking example of a mosque that is the result of cultural acculturation, including Chinese culture (Gunawan et al., 2023). The walls of the mosque are adorned with Chinese porcelain, forming plates in red and blue. Legend has it that these porcelain plates date back to the distant Ming Dynasty (Gunawan et al., 2023). Visual arts on elements of Masjid Agung Sang Cipta Rasa also become proof of hybrid cultural identity in Cirebon, represented on the roof to get influence (Javanese, Hindu-Buddhist, Arabic/Islamic); gate (Hindu-Buddhist); maksurah (Arabic); mihrab (Arabic, Chinese); pillars (Javanese, Arabic) (Kartika et.al, 2020).



Figure 5. Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque entrance's gate

Source : [Wikipedia.com](https://www.wikipedia.com)

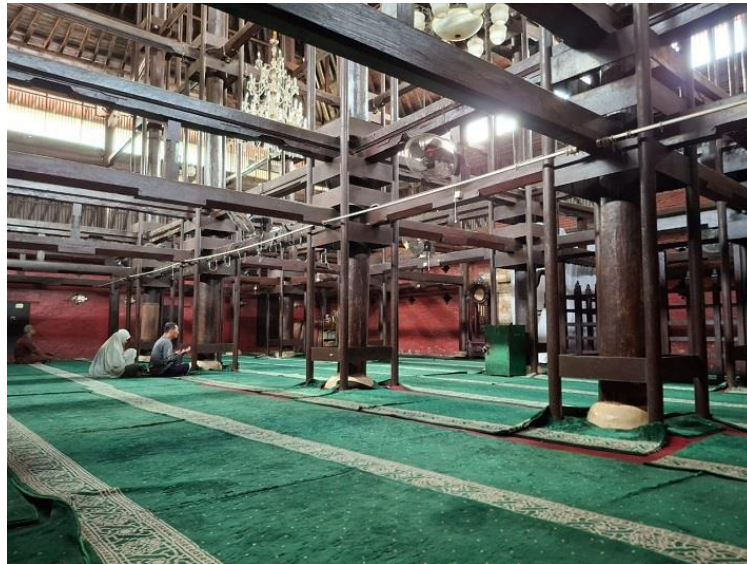


Figure 6. Prayer area in Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque
Source : marinews.mahkamahagung.go.id

According to Schiffer et al. (2019), the mosque's initial floor plan was rectangular, measuring 17.95 x 14.08 meters. The building was supported by 74 columns, with 30 on the inside and 44 on the outside, or porch. The Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque has around six doors spread in various directions. Three doors are located in the east, one in the north, and two in the west. The doors to this mosque resemble the Paduraksa Gate. At the main gate of the mosque, which is located in the east, there is a wing-shaped decoration arranged in three parts at the top. In addition, there is a barrel temple that decorates the door. Above the gate, there is curved Arabic writing. The door of the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque also usually has a rhombus decoration on the door.

Javanese mosques are a unique type of mosque architecture and have their own architectural style when compared to mosques in other areas in Muslim countries. Javanese mosques have certain characteristics that distinguish them, such as tiered roofs, verandas (surambi), and minarets (Zainuri, 2020). The tiered roof is one of the most striking characteristics of Javanese mosques, consisting of several layers of roofing that culminate in a peak decorated with distinctive ornamentation. The veranda (surambi) is an addition generally found in Javanese mosques built in the 19th century, while the minaret is a newer element and is not found in the oldest mosques.

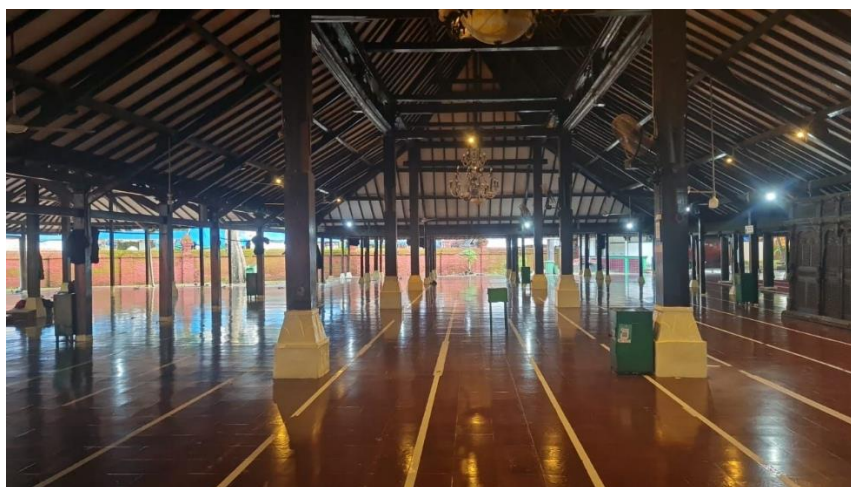


Figure 7. Veranda (surambi) at Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque area
Source : www.cxomedia.id

The Javanese Mosque is also known for its main structure which uses a main wooden pillar in the center of the main prayer hall to support a pyramid-shaped roof. The number of main pillars is usually four, but sometimes six or eight, and sometimes only one. This main structure together with the tiered roof provides a high interior space and creates a strong vertical axiality (Budi, 2004). Javanese mosques also often have walls surrounding the mosque complex, separating the sacred area from the profane ground.

According to Muffid (2014) The Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque has a unique roof shape. It is pyramid-shaped, but with three layers. The roof's shape is a blend of Sundanese and Javanese architecture. The pyramidal shape of the mosque's roof is influenced by Sundanese architecture, while the triple-tiered roof is influenced by Javanese architecture.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After going through several stages, the results of the discussion were obtained, including:

4.1. Roof of the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque

The pyramid roof of the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque on the core building consists of three levels that taper towards the top, as shown in the following image.

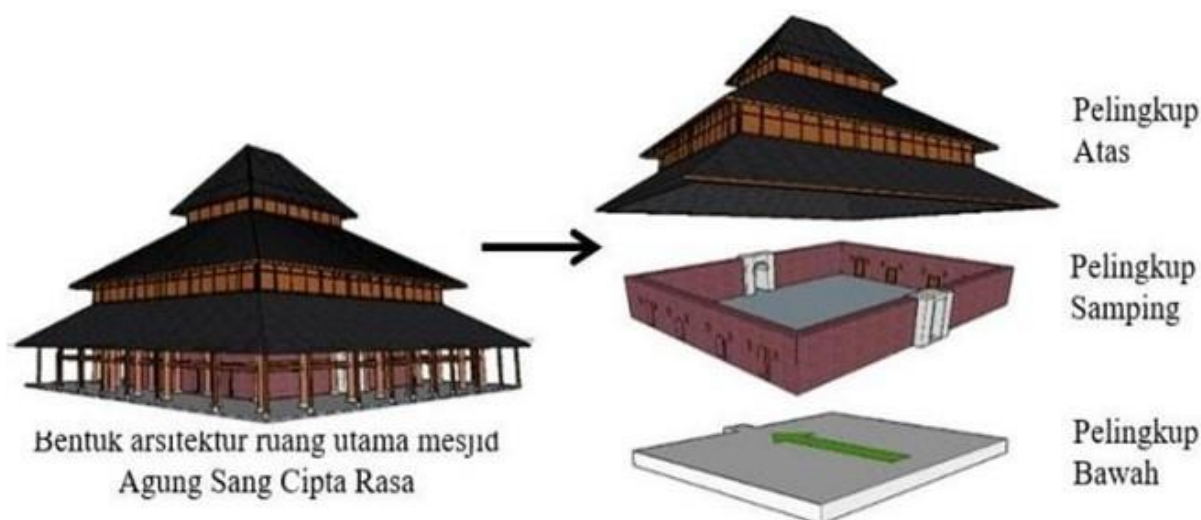


Figure 8. Architectural form of the main room of the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque

Source : Ashadi in the book *"Makna Sinkretisme Forms in Mosque Architecture Walisanga"*

The shape of the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque building does not contain momolo. The lowest roof is supported by the porch pillars, while the roof in the middle is supported by the main pillars and porch pillars. The top roof is supported by the main pillars inside the core building space and is reinforced with trusses to prevent sagging. At the bottom of the truss, a ceiling made of wooden planks is installed, both for the top roof and inside the core building space. There is a gap of about 2 meters between the three roofs. The triple-tiered roofs of Javanese mosques, particularly the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque, have philosophical and symbolic significance.



Figure 7. Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque
Source : *Google*, 2024

4.2. Philosophy

The triple-tiered roofs of mosques in Java have deep philosophical meaning and spiritual messages, beyond mere aesthetic aspects. The three levels of the roof symbolize the levels of obedience: Islam, Iman, and Ihsan, which reflect the condition of the people at the end of time (Gaputra, 2020). This roof is a reminder for Muslims to continue to increase their faith and reach the peak of perfection in worship.

The analogy of a three-tiered roof as a ladder that must be traversed describes the spiritual journey of humans towards true closeness to the Creator. More than just an architectural element, the triple-tiered roof is a symbol of learning and self-reflection, reminding us to continue to improve ourselves and strive to achieve perfection in worship amidst the onslaught of the times. Thus, the triple-tiered roof of the mosque is not only part of the physical structure of the building, but also a means to reflect on and deepen the spiritual relationship with God.

4.3. Cultural Acculturation

The triple-tiered roof of the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque is a clear example of the cultural acculturation of Sundanese and Javanese architecture. The pyramidal roof shape is influenced by Sundanese architecture, while the triple-tiered roof is influenced by Javanese architecture. The three-tiered roof was first introduced by the Great Mosque of Demak, bearing a resemblance to the terraced punden found in prehistoric times. The use of the three-tiered roof is not only for aesthetic purposes but also has deep philosophical significance.

The three-tiered roof of the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque has a unique roof shape. The roof of this mosque is in the form of a pyramid but has three layers, which is a blend of Sundanese and Javanese architecture that blends harmoniously. The Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque, with its magnificent triple-tiered roof, is a symbol of the harmonious blend of two great cultures in Indonesia. This reflects the rich and complex cultural heritage of Java, where elements from various traditions can come together in a stunning work of architecture.

The triple-tiered roof is also a typical architectural feature often found in mosques in Java and has a symbolic meaning in the context of Javanese culture. Mosques that have three-tiered roofs are considered to be a sign that the mosque follows the Javanese architectural tradition which is rich in cultural and religious values that have been passed down from generation to generation.

The importance of architectural elements such as the three-tiered pyramid roof in reflecting and strengthening the cultural and religious identity of a building, as seen in the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque, shows that architecture is not only the physical form of a building, but also a representation of the values upheld by the local community. Thus, the three-tiered pyramid roof on the mosque is not only part of the building structure, but also a symbol that connects the building with the cultural and religious heritage inherent in the community.

5. CONCLUSION

Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque, which is one of the oldest grand mosques in the city of Cirebon. This mosque was built by the Wali during the reign of Sunan Gunung Jati as the first sultan of the Cirebon Sultanate. The three-tiered pyramid-shaped roof of the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque has philosophical and symbolic meaning. Its unique shape is not only aesthetically beautiful, but also contains a deep spiritual message. This roof is not only a physical architectural element, but also a means to reflect on and deepen the spiritual relationship with God, the three levels of the roof symbolize the levels of obedience: Islam, Faith, and Ihsan.

The triple-tiered roof of the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque is the result of cultural acculturation between Sundanese and Javanese architecture, reflecting the exchange and unification of cultural elements from the two regions. This roof is a concrete example of the harmony between the Sundanese limasan roof and the Javanese three-tiered roof, creating a cultural integration that respects the heritage and traditions of both. This demonstrates the richness and diversity of cultures that influenced the architectural style and intricate decoration of the mosque, and illustrates how different cultures can come together to create something beautiful and meaningful.

The three-tiered pyramid roof of the Sang Cipta Rasa Grand Mosque is not just an ordinary architectural element, but is an important symbol that reflects the cultural, religious and spiritual values of the local community. Its existence is a reminder of the nation's cultural richness and the importance of preserving these traditions.

REFERENCES

- Abdul Baqi, Muhammad Fu'ad (2017) Shahih Bukhari Muslim. PT Elex Media Komputindo.
- Alamsyah, S. (2010). Nilai Budaya Arsitektur Masjid Sang Cipta Rasa Cirebon Provinsi Jawa Barat. *Patanjala*. Vol. 2 No 2, 172-190
- Ashadi. (2017). Makna Sinkretisme Bentuk Pada Arsitektur Mesjid-Mesjid Walisanga. Arsitektur UMJ Press.
- Barliana, M. S (2008). Perkembangan Arsitektur Masjid: Suatu Transformasi Bentuk dan Ruang. *HISTORIA: Jurnal Pendidik dan Peneliti Sejarah*, 9 (2), pp 45-60
- Budi, B. S. (2015). Masjid Kuno Cirebon. IPLBI.
- Budi, Bambang Setia (2004). A Study on the History and Development of the Javanese Mosque. *Journal of Asian Architecture and Building Engineering*, Vol. 3, pp 189-195
- Gaputra, A. D (2020). Acculturation Elements on Sang Cipta Rasa And Panjunan Red Mosque. *Journal of IslamicArchitecture*, 6 (20), pp 119-126
- Gunawan, A. N. S., Laksitarini, N., Oktaviani, A., Aqmarina, F. A. N., & Haran, I. (2023). Akulturasi Arsitektur Bangunan Cina pada Masjid Agung Sang Cipta Rasa Cirebon. *Besaung : Jurnal Seni Desain Dan Budaya*, 8(2), 162–167. <https://doi.org/10.36982/jsdb.v8i2.3289>

- Kartika, N., Piliang, Y. A., Santosa, I., Dienaputra, R. D (2020). The Visual Arts of Masjid Agung Sang Cipta Rasa Cirebon: Hybrid Culture Identity. *Harmonia: Journal of Arts Research and Education*, 20 (1), 95-107
- Mangunwijaya, Y. B (1988). *Wastu Citra: Pengantar ke Ilmu Budaya Bentuk Arsitektur*. Jakarta : Gramedia
- Muffid, M., Suprijadi, B., Rukayah, S (2014). *Konsep Arsitektur Jawa Dan Sunda Pada Masjid Agung Sang Cipta Rasa Cirebon*.
- Rochym, Abdul (1995) *Mesjid Dalam Karya Arsitektur Nasional Indonesia*. Bandung: Offset Angkasa.
- Schiffer, L. R., Suprapti, A., Rukayah, S. R., Nugraya, Y (2019). Pengaruh Akulturasi pada Makna Ornamen Bunga Teratai Di Mihrab Masjid Sang Cipta Rasa Cirebon. *Jurnal Ilmiah Desain dan Konstruksi*, 18 (2) pp 124-139
- Supriatna, C., Handayani, S. (2021). Ungkapan Bentuk dan makna Filosofi Atap Masjid Raya Sumatera Barat. *Jurnal Arsitektur ZONASI*. 4(2), 307-312.
- Zainuri, Ahmad (2020). Integrasi Islam dan Budaya Lokal dalam Seni Arsitektur Masjid Kuno Di Jawa: Sebuah Tinjauan Umum. *Heritage: Journal of Social Studies*, 2 (2), pp 125-144