

JAVANESE LETTERS: SYMBOLS OF JAVANESE CIVILIZATION: (INTRODUCTION, HISTORY, PHILOSOPHICAL VALUES, LEARNING METHODS, UTILIZATIONS, TOUCH OF TECHNOLOGY IN JAVANESE LETTERS)

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Abstract

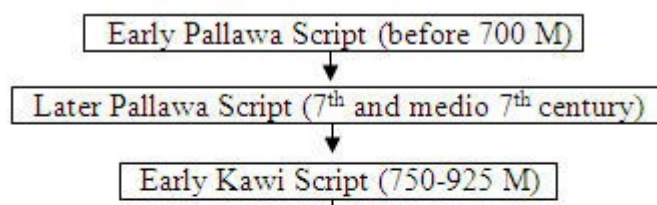
This paper aims to introduce Javanese letters to make it more widely-known and as the result it will be able to attract more people to know and learn Javanese letters. Words are an indicator or reflecting that a country has gone through its advanced state of civilization entered to historical era. Javanese script is a pride for Javanese and also a sign of the beginning of their historical era. Javanese script has not been widely known. Even by the Javanese themselves, these characters are becoming obsolete, and just to witness the history of the nation. Though Javanese literature that amounts to 19.000 manuscripts and now scattered in 125 institutions in 22 countries were written in Javanese script. Of course, by studying Javanese script, a lot of historical facts that had been stored in the ancient manuscripts will be revealed. Therefore, this paper will try to emphasize all about Javanese letters in order to spread wider knowledge on Javanese letters towards international academic community. This paper will (1) discuss the origin of the Javanese script both scientifically and also from the tales that developed in the community, (2) introduce the forms and ways of writing Javanese letters, (3) discuss the symbolic philosophical values contained in Javanese letters. Javanese character do have symbolic values, among them as a symbol of human origin, symbol of devotion to God, giving instructions on how to capitalize on a prosperous life in this world, afterlife, and many more that will be explained in more detail in this paper. This paper also provides an overview of the condition and ways of learning Javanese characters in Elementary Schools, Junior High Schools and High Schools in Java. In addition, this paper will also elaborate the use of technology and the use of Javanese letter in public sector such as in writing the name of roads, and the use of Javanese letters in the convection industry, as the basis of motif design. Through this paper, it is expected that Javanese letters will be more widely-known and as a result it will be able to attract more people to know and learn Javanese letters.

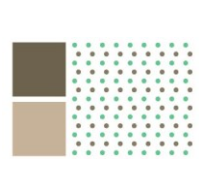
Keywords: Javanese letters, Javanese civilization, symbol, culture

Introduction

The Origin of Javanese Script

Javanese script had a long history of its development. Based on the evidence in the form of inscriptions and paleography, Casparis (1975) distinguishes the stages of development of Javanese script as follows.





Those stages are a general development example in Java, but each region in Java also experienced development on a regional level. This led to a variety of Javanese script shape in West Java (Sundanese script), East Java and Central Java. In association to the development of the script, the Majapahit empire began to collapse in 14th -15th century. Exciting developments along this period of historical change is the existence of a new Java script used in about the 16th century (Rochkyatmo in Yulianto and Pudjiastuti, 2000). The development of this Javanese literacy encourages the development of Javanese literature in sense of the Javanese literature had been written in various media

Indeed, Javanese script's origin can be traced scientifically, but there were also an oral tradition development on the origin of Javanese script. This legend is well-known between Javanese communities. The legend is as follows: Once upon a time in Majethi Island, lived a handsome knight named Ajisaka. He has two servants who are very loyal, named Dora and Sembada. At one time, Ajisaka ventured with Dora while Sembada were instructed to guard the sacred heirloom. Before leaving, Ajisaka instructed Sembada that he should never give the sacred heirloom to anyone except Ajisaka himself. Then, Ajisaka wander up to the Kingdom Medhangkamulan. People in this country are suffering because the king is a giant flesh-eating man named King Dewatacengkar. The king was very ruthless and cruel. Ajisaka was able to defeat Dewatacengkar and was crowned king Medhangkamulan. Once He is crowned as the king, Ajisaka remembered his sacred heirloom that he left in Majethi Island. Finally he sent Dora to take the heirloom. Ajisaka prohibited Dora to back to him before he obtain the treasure. Then, Dora went and met with Sembada in Majethi Island. Dora said that he was sent by Ajisaka to take heirloom. Sembada didn't give the dagger because he remembered Ajisaka's command before Ajisaka was leaving Majethi. The same reaction, Dora insisted on taking this heirloom to carry out orders Ajisaka. Eventually these two man fight. Both are equally powerful. They both fought fiercely before the finally died. Ajisaka heard the death of Dora and Sembada. He felt very sorry and guilty, because his two servants were death for maintaining loyalty to him. To remember the two servant's loyalty, then Ajisaka create letters which reads:

Table 1: Javanese Letter based on Ajisaka Story

Sound Literacy	Lettering	Meaning
ha-na-ca-ra-ka	ꦲꦤꦕꦫꦏ	there is messenger
da-ta-sa-wa-la	ꦢꦠꦱꦮꦭ	they have clashed
pa-dha-ja-ya-nya	ꦥꦢꦲꦗꦪꦤ	equally powerfull
ma-ga-ba-tha-nga	ꦩꦒꦧꦠꦤ	both killed

Scientific developments of Javanese scripts are usually being taught to students at the senior high school. While the legend of Javanese origin is taught to the students in elementary and junior high schools to attract their interest.

Introduce the Forms and Ways of Writing Javanese Letter

Java script is called Carakan. The 20 main script units are in the following form:

Aksara Jawa gagrag Jogjakarta				
ꦲ	ꦤ	ꦕ	ꦫ	ꦏ
ha	na	ca	ra	ka
ꦢ	ꦠ	ꦱ	ꦮ	ꦭ
da	ta	sa	wa	la
ꦥ	ꦢꦲ	ꦗ	ꦪ	ꦤ
pa	dha	ja	ya	nya
ꦩ	ꦒ	ꦧ	ꦠ	ꦤ
ma	ga	ba	tha	nga

Figure 1: Javanese Letter (Subandi, 2010)

The letter is called nglegena 'naked' because it has not had any sandhangan or clothes that could make them into another vowel sounds. To make Javanese vowels have another sound, it needs an additional tool called sandhangan. Furthermore, as the Javanese system is silabis, for stopping characters, the additional 'couple' needs to be added. There is also a script as a script to write something that is considered to be respected (murdha letters). Forms can be seen in the figure below:

Nama Sandhangan	Aksara Jawa	Keterangan
Wulu	◌ [◌]	tanda vokal i
Suku	◌ _u	tanda vokal u
Taling	◌ _e	tanda vokal é
Pepet	◌ _o	tanda vokal e
Taling tarung	◌ _o [◌]	tanda vokal o
Layar	◌ _r	tanda ganti konsonan r
Wignyan	◌ _h	tanda ganti konsonan h
Cecak	◌ _{ng}	tanda ganti konsonan ng
Pangkon/pangku	◌ _{vokal}	tanda penghilang vokal
Péngkal	◌ _{ya}	tanda ganti konsonan ya
Cakra	◌ _{ra}	tanda ganti konsonan ra
Keret	◌ _{re}	tanda ganti konsonan re

Figure 2: Sandhangan of Javanese Letter (Hastuti, 2011)

Pasangan Nglêgêná				
◌ _h	◌ _{na}	◌ _{ca}	◌ _{ra}	◌ _{ka}
◌ _{da}	◌ _{ta}	◌ _{sa}	◌ _{wa}	◌ _{la}
◌ _{pa}	◌ _{da}	◌ _{ja}	◌ _{ya}	◌ _{nya}
◌ _{ma}	◌ _{ga}	◌ _{ba}	◌ _{ta}	◌ _{nga}

ki-demang.com

Figure 3: Pasangan of Javanese Letter (Demang 2012)

Aksara Murda						
◌ _{na}	◌ _{ka}	◌ _{ta}	◌ _{sa}	◌ _{pa}	◌ _{ga}	◌ _{ba}
Pasangan Murda						
◌ _{na}	◌ _{ka}	◌ _{ta}	◌ _{sa}	◌ _{pa}	◌ _{ga}	◌ _{ba}

Figure 4: Aksara Murda of Javanese Letter (Hastuti, 2011)

Table 2: The Example of Javanese Writing

1.	ꦱꦏꦏ	sick	
2.	ꦲꦤꦶ	nail	
3.	ꦕꦁꦠꦶꦱ	catfish	
4.	ꦧꦏꦸꦫꦲꦩꦶꦩꦶ	banana harvest	

Java scripts also recognize punctuation as in the Latin alphabet. In addition, there are also letters that is deliberately made to write words uptake of foreign languages, such as Arabic and English.

Symbolic Philosophical Values Contained in Javanese Letter

The symbolic value Javanese script, many revealed by the philosophical, including Ki Hajar Dewantara, Sultan Agung, and others. Javanese script meanings can also be found in old anonymous manuscripts. For example, in the manuscript of Colorful Lupiya, Kridhaksara, *Serat Bab Kasusastran*, and others. In general, Javanese has a philosophical value of Javaneseness that at sometimes mixed with interpretations of Islam. One widely known philosophical value that is summarized by the author from several sources including:

Ha-na-ca-ra-ka means 'there are messengers'. It means that man is a messenger of God as the inheritors of the earth, **da-ta-sa-wa-la** means "cannot avoid". That means he could not avoid the fate that has been revealed by God for his life. **Pa-dha-ja-ya-nya**: it means 'win-win'. That is, humans need to win in the world and hereafter. Being able to be a winner as it navigates the trials of life in the world according to the instructions of his Lord. **Ma-ga-ba-tha-nga** means ban away from God and carry everything ordered, until the death. Another interpretation is as follows: **Ha-na-car-ra-ka**: that people living in the world equipped with ca (idea) ra (taste), ka (intention). The ability to control ideas, feelings, and desires. **Da-ta-sa-wa-la**: that man must arrange his life and his heart. **Pa-dha-ja-ya-nya** it: it means the same power. Humans have two potential to do good things and bad. This is the duality that has become human nature. **Ma-ga-ba-tha-nga**: human meaning in the world under any circumstances, in one point they would be bathang or dead. Therefore they should always remember God. Other interpretations of the Javanese script in Serat Kridhaksara, it peels each Javanese form and then interpreted that each letter in Carakan is a symbol of baby growing in the mother's womb (Wahjono, 2003). Another symbolic meaning in Javanese script is the way to write scripts that hangs on the line, it means that human beings are always dependent to the Creator.

Condition and Ways Of Learning Javanese letters in Elementary Schools, Junior High Schools and High Schools In Java

Java language in three provinces in Java, Central Java, East Java and Yogyakarta are taught as a mandatory local content from elementary through high school. But with a very limited class hours, two hours a week. And that's not all grade levels are taught. Usually in grade 6, 9 and 12, javanese is not being taught because the schedule is used for the preparation of the

national final exams. Javanese learning at the school is generally constrained by some problems as follows: (1) learning Javanese is considered difficult because it is no longer used as daily literacy media. The use of Javanese script in the present is confined as a symbol pinned to the names of roads, conference buildings, government buildings, etc., (2) Learning Javanese script has been integrated in the Java language subjects with only 1-2 hours per week. The allocation is very small in contrast with the number of reading and writing competencies to be mastered by the student, (3) Teaching reading and writing Javanese script tends to monotone and force students to memorize the forms and rules of writing. it makes students is not interested in following learning to read and write Java script, (4) lack of media in Javanese language learning that is attractive, interactive, modern and able to attract students' interest in studying Javanese script, (5) Lack of reading books written in Javanese, while the teacher handbook is usually not aligned to the competence of the students, (6) the outlined competencies in the curriculum are not achieved, resulting in accumulation of competencies that have not been mastered by the student, (7) lack of teacher's learning materials mastery, and (8) Students do not understand the benefits of studying Javanese script. To overcome these obstacles, it is necessary to reform the alternative learning Javanese script as follows: (1) lesson plan improvement, (2) the use of apperception, (3) the management of students, (4) the selection of appropriate learning approaches, (5) the selection of effective teaching methods, (6) the development of learning resources, (7) the development of instructional media, (8) the development of the scoring system, (9) follow-up study, and (10) teacher quality improvements.

The Use of Technology in Javanese Letter

The technology is already applied to the Javanese script. One aim is to facilitate the Javanese script writing and reading. One of them is the hanacaraka v.1 program. Here is an example of the display menu on the program.

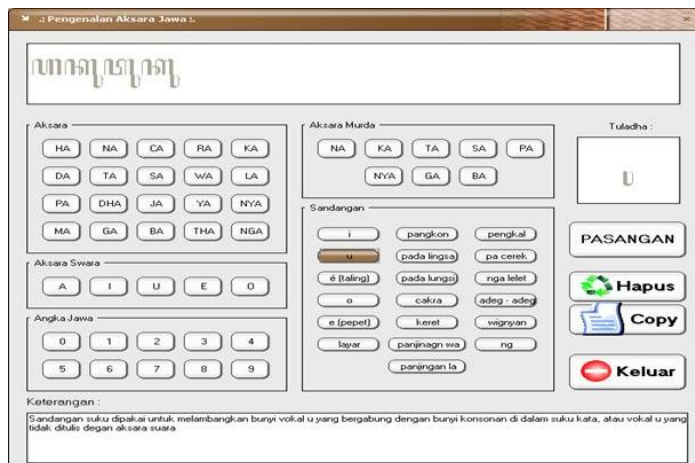


Figure 5: Display Menu of the *hanacaraka v.1* Program (Dinas Kebudayaan DIY, 2005).

The program allows users to convert Javanese script into Latin script, and so on. The program was created and developed by the Department of Education and Culture of Yogyakarta. Hana caraka v.1 is allowing users to write Javanese script quickly. This is because users can write words, sentences, and even pages of a document in Latin letters, and convert it into the Javanese script with just one click. This program continues to be refined with the addition of new features. The most recent version of the program is the hanacaraka v.2. This program is an improved hanacaraka v.1. The newest program is coupled with new enhanced applications, available in three languages, English, Indonesian, and Java, as well as a program that allows users to independently practice in reading and writing Java script.

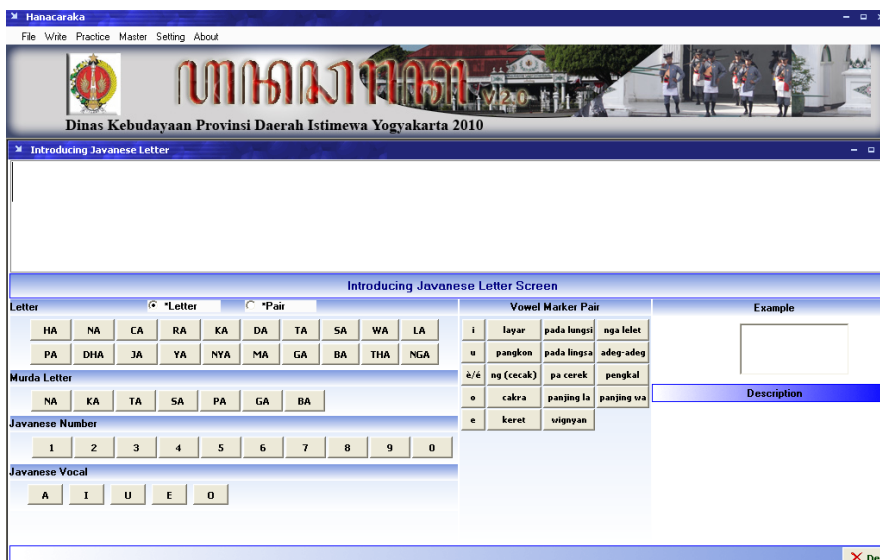


Figure 6: Display Menu of the *hanacara v.2* Program (Dinas Kebudayaan Prov. DIY, 2010)

The touch of technology in Javanese script is also applied in the learning sector. Various software that has been built using macromedia flash, adobe flash, html, and others are developed to facilitate students in various levels of education to study Javanese script. Some of the media that have been made include: *Pembelajaran Membaca Aksara Jawa untuk Siswa Sekolah Menengah Pertama*, *Media Interaktif Nulis Aksara Rekan lan Aksara Swara*, *Media Pembelajaran Membaca Aksara Murda*, and others. The usage of hanacaraka v.2 program and examples of the use of instructional Javanese media would be demonstrated directly in the presentation of this paper.

The Use of Javanese Letter in Public Sector

The use of Javanese letters in public places is not yet fully done in Java, especially Yogyakarta. This is because there are no clear rules to govern the use of Java letters in the public sector. Actually, for the preservation of Javanese letters, Indonesia could imitate Brunei Darussalam. Brunei has implemented the use of Jawi letters in the public sector. Outdoor advertisements, television commercials, government offices and private is still using the Jawi letters. In addition, there are special agencies working to translate the advertisements, the names of offices, etc. for free. The use of Javanese letter in DIY, mostly only used for street names. Not to be used in advertisement. Several government agencies are already using Javanese letter. But in use, there are still many writing and spelling errors. Here is an example of using Javanese script in the public sector.



Figure 7: Using Javanese Script in Public Sector (Priantono, 2009).



Figure 8: Using Javanese Script in Public Sector (Anis, 2012).

Besides being used in the public sector, Javanese script is also used in the industrial sector. However, its use is still very limited. Javanese batik patterns are typically used in the garment industry. It is also used to beautify and give the impression of classic wedding invitations, books, wall hangings, and others. Here is an example of using Javanese script in batik patterns and embellishments.



Figure 9: Javanese Script In Batik Patterns



Figure 10: Javanese Script for embellishment

Javanese Script Delivered as Media Culture and History of Java

Java tribes also have a lot of text into a sign of the intellectual history of the Javanese way. Once created documented, manuscripts written in Javanese script were approximately 19.000 manuscripts, and now are scattered in 125 pieces in 22 pieces of state institutions (Ding 2005). While the private collection is not yet well inventoried (Behrend 1993). The Javanese manuscripts contains are very diverse. For example, manuscript chronicle which contains a mixture of myth and history. In addition, many manuscripts regarding legislation, puppet, literary, piwulang, Islam, divinity, horoscope, language, music, gamelan, dance, legends and include the so-called folklore. In additions, there are also piwulang manuscripts that are containing advice and teachings to attain perfection in life. There is also a script that contains a variety of teaching horoscope that was developed by the Javanese tradition like ngelmu petung (good day forecast, fortune, dreams, ill-fated, and others), rajah, sorcery, Neptu (day of birth), katurangganin

g woman (woman's physical nature views) calculations to build houses, and the other (Jumanto 1999). All these old manuscripts is written by media rontal leaves and paper. While writing used in those books are mostly in Javanese letters. At the present time, those old books are only stored in the museum in conditions that are poorly-maintained and weathered. The lacks of researchers who are able to read and translate the contents of Javanese manuscripts, making the study of Javanese manuscripts are not proportional to the number of existing Java manuscript. It is therefore necessary to promote Javanese script so that the content of this heritage can be saved and understood. Here are some examples of Javanese manuscripts.



Figure 11&12: Examples of Javanese Manuscripts (Kumar and Mcglyn, 1996).

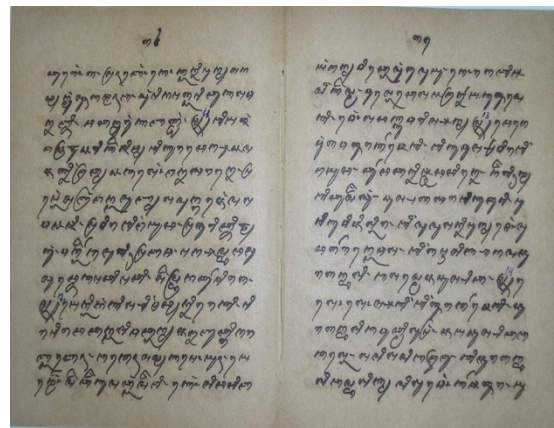
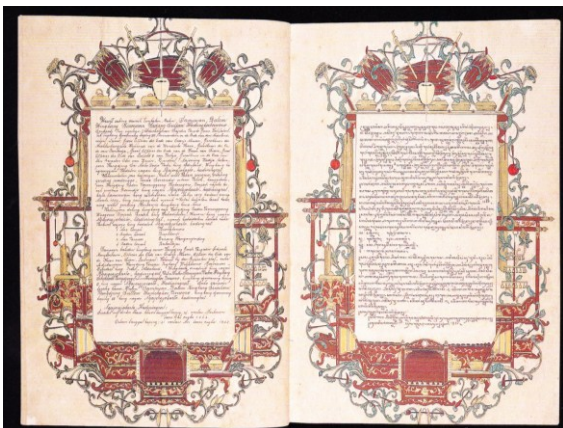


Figure 13: Example of Javanese Manuscript (Kumar and Mcglyn, 1996)

Figure 14: Example of Javanese Manuscript

Conclusions and Suggestions

Javanese script is a local script as a media into ideas of Javanese culture. Therefore, Javanese script must be addressed in order to remain sustainable and known from generation to generation. One effective way is learning this script at school and actually use Javanese script in the daily life of the Javanese people. There are many local scripts which have characters and usage as Javanese. So it is necessary to formulate a data base of this local scripts that compile comprehensive inventory of it. This is the best way of keeping the script still known as one of the evidence which marks the entry of Javanese people from prehistoric to the historical era.

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