

## CONCEPT HISTORY OF YOGYAKARTA COURT BUILDING IN KASSIAN CEPHAS PHOTO

**Sri Wahyuning Septarina**

*ISI (Institut Seni Indonesia) Denpasar*  
*septarinagading@gmail.com*

### ABSTRACT

*Kassian Chepas is an Indonesian photography figure. A first native who lives and works in Yogyakarta. During Sultan Hamengku Buwono VII, Chepas was given the mandate to become an official photographer and painter of the Yogyakarta Palace. Chepas in his photo does not only tell the life of Javanese people. Prince Mangkubumi was the drafter of the establishment of the Yogyakarta Palace which was finally strengthened by photographs produced by Chepas. The concept of the development of Yogyakarta and its buildings has been considered based on a philosophy based on Javanese, Hindu and Islamic culture. The analytical method used is descriptive qualitative with a historical approach. Cephias is also known as a photography figure in the development of Indonesian cultural history.*

*Keywords: Keraton Yogyakarta, Chepas, Photography*

### INTRODUCTION

Yogyakarta Sultanate currently has 10 sultans. Prince Mangkubumi who became the first sultan, reigned during the Company period. The next seven sultans (Sultan HB II-VIII), reigned during the colonial period. Sultan HB IX was the only sultan who reigned in the transition from colonial to independence. Sultan HB X is the last sultan who still reigns until now is at the time of independence. Of the ten sultans who had ever been enthroned at Yogyakarta Palace, almost every sultan each contributed in the development of the city of Yogyakarta. The Sultan not only built buildings in the area of the palace complex, but also built other buildings which were considered to be special places outside the area of the palace.

Buildings in the Yogyakarta Palace began to show the physical structure of the building after a man named Cephias became a special photographer in the Yogyakarta Palace during the reign of Sultan Hamengku Buwono VII. Cephias was born on February 15, 1844 to the couple Kartodrono and Minah. Cephias began studying to become a professional photographer in the 1860s. There were three Dutchmen who provided him with photography, namely Isidore van Kinsbergen, Simon Willem Camerik, and Isaac Gronemen. Around 1863-1875, Cephias had an internship at an office owned by Isidore van Kinsbergen, a photographer working in Central Java. He was just a status as an official photographer while working in the Yogyakarta Sultanate. Since becoming a photographer specializing in the Sultanate that name began to be known to Europe. In addition, Cephias also gained knowledge about camera technology from the authorities as well as the supremacy holders of the highest knowledge at that time. Cephias has photographed many things about life in the palace, ranging from photographs of Sultan Hamengku Buwono VII and his family, buildings around the palace, Garebeg ceremony in the square, a procession of objects for ceremonial purposes, dances, to views of the city of Yogyakarta and surrounding. Not only that, Cephias is also known to photograph many temples and other historic buildings, especially those around Yogyakarta.

In *Staatsblad van Nederlandisch Indië* (1891) the name Kassian Cephias was recorded along with her two children, Sem and Feriz. Cephias was declared an

Indonesian native because he had an important position in the community as a professional photographer, a job that was still very rare among the natives of that era.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses descriptive qualitative methods that have a research design to describe or provide an overview, describe and describe the object under study (Arikunanto, 2006: 11) with a historical approach. The aim is to develop a conceptualization of historical theory based on the work of Kassian Cephas's photo of the Yogyakarta Palace. Data collection techniques only use interviews, observation and literature studies. Interviews were conducted with several courtiers and also descendants of Sultan Hamengku Buwono VII & VIII. Observation in the area of Ngayogyakarta Palace and surrounding areas to be able to observe buildings contained in the Cephas book namely *Bangsai Kencana* and *Gedhong Purworetno*.

## DISCUSSION

Photography is choosing and eliminating, choosing what is considered to have clarity and is interesting to meet the photo frame and eliminate things that interfere. Photos are more than pictures (Szarkowski, 1966: v). Photos provide a real sense of reality that is filtered, reduced, or even exaggerated, which in the end feels so factual and convincing. These facts as "suggestive hints" that cannot be assembled into a narrative, a story, but by isolating and documenting fragments, then the photographer gives meaning and significance to those facts that are more than just expressions.

Kasian Cephas was the first professional Javanese photographer in Indonesia who grew up in the European photography tradition in Indonesia (Ajidarma, 2002: 124). According to Gerrit Knapp (1999: 1), Cephas was a mediator between two cultures because he understood Dutch, mastered photography that was able to compete with European photographers, and settled in white settlements, a relatively broader and more dynamic association than Javanese during generally, it actually shows how colorful Cephas life is, in the attraction of two cultures. This native Javanese photographer was an apprentice at the Yogyakarta Palace under the guidance of Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono (HB) VI, who was enthroned from 1855 to 1877. Cephas did not consider self-expression as a photographer to be important (Ajidarma, 2002: 124). The photos of Cephas are generally devoid of character at all. But according to Soerjoatmodjo (Ajidarma, 2002: 130), what is important for Cephas or those who order his photos, is not an image that expresses individuality, but an image that represents a dignity.

The palace is defined as a physical building and also as a social entity (Darsiti Soeratman, 1989: ix). Conception as a physical building, the king as the center of the ruler of the palace has the obligation to make life and activities in the microcosm. The palace is a physical building not only as a residence of the king, but also the center of political and cultural life, as well as the center of magical power of the kingdom. The palace is also a social entity consisting of the community where there is a social interaction between the scope within the palace and outside the palace.

The location chosen by Prince Mangkubumi at that time did not have no reason, but the location was chosen because of special considerations that contained

philosophical and magical values related to the topography. Architectural and spatial art, is one part of the culture that was confirmed from the beginning by Raden Sujana who was the first name of Prince Mangkubumi when he founded the Ngayogyakarta Palace. The ability to carry out the process of acculturation of three cultures, namely Java, Hinduism and Islam can be found in the architecture and layout of the Ngayogyakarta Palace.

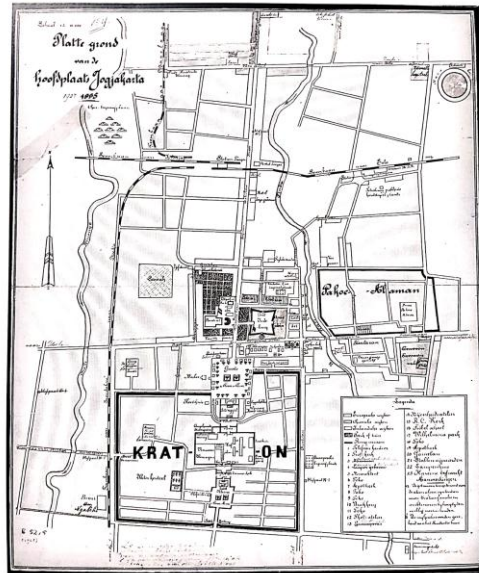


Figure 1. Map Of The Center of Yogyakarta  
Source: Gerrit Knaap, 1999

The richness of philosophy is reflected in the sacred area flanked by rivers and is in a straight line between mountains and oceans. The cultural and philosophical basics that have been carried out by Sultan Hamengku Buwono I continue to be preserved by his successor King and became the forerunner of the City of Yogyakarta and the Palace of Ngayogyakarta.

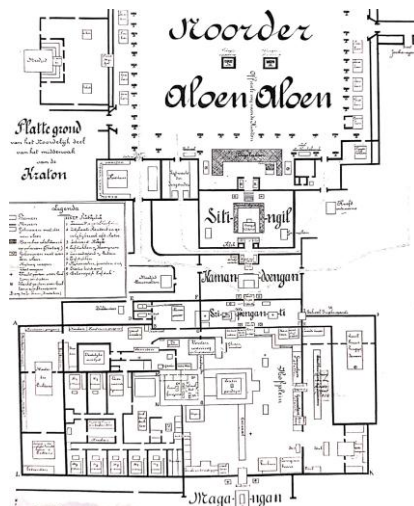


Figure 2. Northern Part Of The Central Section Of The Kraton  
Source: Gerrit Knaap, 1999

The construction of the Ngayogyakarta Palace is ongoing work. At the end of 1775, Van Der Burgh said that the Sultan: 'employs and consumes the energy of his people continuously to build various kinds of buildings for the king's pleasure, the buildings will be demolished and rebuilt if they do not meet the aims and expectations' (Yogyakarta Special Region Cultural Office, 2015: 21).

According to the Yogyakarta Archaeological Heritage Preservation Hall in 2003 and from various sources it is known that the peak of the visual form of the Ngayogyakarta Palace occurred during the reign of Sultan Hamengku Buwono VIII (Padmana, Satrio, et al, 2019: 44).

Various buildings inside the palace are enshrined by Cephas, including the Kencana Ward, Kedhaton Court, front porch of the Sultan's residence, Gedong Kuning, and large pendapa. Cephas also produced visual recordings of buildings and sites directly under the ownership of the Yogyakarta palace, such as the Great Mosque, a few frames from the ruins of Taman Sari, the aristocratic baths at Ambar Binangun, some photos that recorded the royal royal tomb complex of Mataram in Pasar Gede, including the gate to enter the tomb, cupola (tomb) (addition) Senapati and Sultan Sepuh and the entrance to Pasar Gede as well as photos of the court procession conducted at Siti Hinggil.

Traditional Javanese style ward buildings are used as places with main or important functions in the palace. The characteristics of the ward buildings in the palace in the traditional Javanese style with various accessories are unique, rare and of high historical value. Its uniqueness and scarcity, given that only in the Yogyakarta Palace, the buildings are located and sustainable. It is also of historical value considering that the traditional Javanese-style building in the palace was built by Javanese kings since hundreds of years ago which represented the greatness and beauty of his day.



Figure 3. The Bangsal Kencana The Heart of The Kraton Komplex  
Source: Gerrit Knaap, 1999

According to historical sources, the Kencono Ward was built by Sultan Hamengku Buwono I in 1756 AD. Bangsal Kencana means the golden ward symbolizes every object in the form of goods, vehicles or buildings used by the king or queen. The core of the palace itself is the Bangsal Kencana, a pavilion building, some of which

are made of gold and with a dominating golden color, classy, and full of charisma. The construction of the hermitage was originally intended for religious or sultanate events. This place is also used in "Jumenengan" which is the sultan's ascension ceremony. Kencono Ward is also a traditional Joglo-shaped house and is a traditional house typical of the Kingdom of Mataram or Yogyakarta Palace. The kencono ward of the Sultan's Palace functions as the residence of the kings of the Yogyakarta Palace. Besides being known to function as a residence of the king, Bangsal Kencono also has a function as an important meeting room. Kencono's ward had little influence from the typical Dutch, Portuguese and Chinese architectural arts. In the Kencono Ward design, there are elements of the design, although dominated by Javanese customs in terms of carvings, roofs, pillars and building walls.

Another building that is the building documentation of the palace is Gedhong Purworetno. Gedhong Purworetno was built during the time of Sri Sultan HB V. Formerly since the time of Sri Sultan HB V to HB VIII, Gedhong Purworetno functioned as an office for the throne king. During the time of Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwana IX, Gedhong Purworetno was no longer used as the king's office, because the king had an office in the Kepatihan Complex.



Figure 4 Gedhong Purworetno  
Source: Gerrit Knaap, 1999

## CONCLUSION

Cephas has photographed many things about life in the Palace, ranging from photographs of Sultan Hamengku Buwono VII and his family, Garebeg ceremony in the square, a procession of objects for ceremonial purposes, dances, but also buildings around the Palace to views of the City Yogyakarta and surrounding areas. Cephas's photographic work makes a source and historical evidence of the journey of the Yogyakarta Palace during the reign of Sultan Hamengkubuwono VII. Cephas makes the documentation is for documentation or even commercial. The results of Cephas's work are not only on cultural rituals, artifacts but also architecture and art. Cephas has an important role in compiling the historical narratives of the Yogyakarta Palace.

## REFERENCE

- Ajidarma, Seno Gumira. 2002. *'Kisah Mata: Fotografi antara Dua Subjek Perbincangan Tentang Ada'*. Yogyakarta: Galang Press.
- Dinas Kebudayaan Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta. (2014). *Ensiklopedi Kraton Yogyakarta*. Yogyakarta: Dinas Kebudayaan Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta.
- Dinas Kebudayaan Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta. (2015). *Buku Profil Yogyakarta, City of Philosophy*. Yogyakarta: Dinas Kebudayaan Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta.
- Dinas Kebudayaan Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta. (2018). *Sultan Hamengku Buwono VII & Kedaton Ambarukmo*. Yogyakarta: Dinas Kebudayaan Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta.
- Knaap, Gerrit. 1999. *'Cephas, Yogyakarta: Photography in the service of the Sultan'*. Leiden: KITLV Press.
- Soeratman, Darsiti. 1989. *'Kehidupan Dunia Kraton Surakarta 1830-1939 (Seri Pustaka Keraton Nusantara)'*. Yogyakarta: Tamansiswa.
- Szarkowski, J. 1996. *'The Photography Eye'*. London: Secker & Warburg.