



Abel Sorensen, Hotel Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia, 1956-1962. © BODMER, Frank, Ali, Mohammad, Djakarta, through the Ages, Jakarta, Government of the Capital City of Djakarta, 1970.

## Modern Indonesian Architecture: a Cultural Discourse

BY SETIADI SOPANDI

The paper highlights the course of Indonesian architectural development through the narrative of national and cultural identity which prevailed almost consistently from the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Despite the various contexts and the involvement of participants from different eras, the question of identity recurs among architectural practitioners, political figures, as well as the general public in Indonesia. In this light, architects are perceived as active agents continually contributing models of national identity through architectural forms, expressions, materials, and narratives.

### Identities

Indonesian architectural historiography has been overwhelmed by the recurring questions of a national identity<sup>1</sup>. Starting from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there is a continual tendency to drive architectural works and discourse in search of a self-cultural and national expression. Despite being irrelevant to architectural project commissioning, this had become a nation-wide obsession shared by other professionals: archeologists, historians, writers, poets, artists (especially painters), and performance artists.

Starting from the 1920s-1930s, “Dutch” architects working in the Netherlands East Indies had been actively conversing and experimenting with ways to express a new “national” identity. The spirit grew out of the midst of the global clash between the new progressive European modernity and the seemingly dormant old splendor of the “East”. Since the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, professionals – including engineers, pharmacists, as well as architects – had been dealing with the introduction of new materials and building techniques, building standardization, the problem of urban sanitation and public hygiene, as well as the hot-humid tropical climate. Many considerable urban architectural – and infrastructural – works are depicted as a cultural modernizing agency during the last decades of the Netherlands East Indies as well as in the early Indonesian independence period. In this light, architecture serves as a beacon of cultural development while, on the other hand, provides pragmatic problem-solving strategies and technical art. However, the issue of national identity reemerges and intertwines with other narratives, making it the only dominant theme.

### A Synthesis

The year 1909 is marked by a few works done by the earliest professional architects practicing in the Netherlands East Indies. As the profession grew in the modernizing society, some architects actively engaged themselves in debates and investigation on how to represent a national (colonial) architectural identity within their works. Some started

debates by criticizing the newly-built structures dressed in “neo-gothic” or “neo-classical” fashion, and preferred fresh and exciting modern architectural expressions. A few went further and involved themselves by doing archaeological investigations, pioneering anthropological studies, and engaged in archaeological restorations. They also began promoting new models as the result of “synthesis”. This view was affirmed by a “suggestion” by Hendrik Petrus Berlage (1856-1934), made during his journey through the Netherlands East Indies in 1923, where he told “young” (Dutch) architects to support a kind of sympathy for “local” traditions as well as to embrace European modernity, and to try to create a “synthesis”, namely “Indies architecture”.

The architectural standpoint of Henri Maclaine Pont (1884-1971)<sup>2</sup> occupies a unique place in Indonesian architectural history not only because of his striking designs, but because he had come to represent the form of critical practice of that period by addressing his works and writings in the cultural discourse. His best-known works are those which feature creative interpretations of traditional roof forms, blending different roof types in a single building supported by a creative structural support system. Henri Maclaine Pont deliberately liberates himself from customs and available typologies, and freely uses both local organic materials and modern industrial products. In addition to that, he had been actively researching and writing about various archaeological sites. Henri Maclaine Pont discovered that local carpentry/craftsmanship deserved to “move forward”, by not stopping at the refined traditional techniques and local materials, but to also master modern European techniques and to create new forms that are simultaneously “modern” and “local”. His works – such as the grand hall of Technische Hoogeschool/Institut Teknologi Bandung (1920) and Pohsarang Catholic Church (1939) – are interpretations of traditional buildings realized through modern construction and structural experimentation. Technische Hoogeschool in Bandung features laminated-plywood-arches supporting innovative multi-tiered roofing that resembles a blend of

various Indonesian traditional roof forms. Henri Maclaine Pont designed the original masterplan of the campus, including the monumental axis and gates leading to the twin halls [*aula*] and their supporting buildings. The west hall [*aula barat*] was built first and personally supervised by Henri Maclaine Pont himself. The east hall was built afterwards – almost identical in form and structure – to host slightly different functions. After more than 90 years, the structure remains in excellent condition thanks to the recent full restoration effort initiated by the Institut Teknologi Bandung in 2013. Bambang Setia Budi, the architect who led the restoration project, faithfully followed the design and structural principles prescribed by Henri Maclaine Pont in his original drawings. The restoration architect removed minor additional elements and returned the spaces according to the original intentions. The laminated-wood arches were still in very good condition and only needed minor restoration work. Bambang Setia Budi decided to remove layers of paint that covered the timber structural elements and to show the original materials and how they are composed. The shingle roof tiles were cleaned, and replaced whenever necessary. Extra care was also given to the rough rusticated stonework which made up the bottom part of the façades and verandah columns. The whole original complex of the Institut Teknologi Bandung remains the most venerated piece of architecture in the whole campus and was listed in 2011 as one of the most important architectural heritage buildings in Indonesia.

In the Pohsarang Church, Henri Maclaine Pont went further by creating a very innovative tensile structure. The structural system employs laminated-plywood arches to form a vault which is tightly held by steel rods. The roofing surface is strikingly covered by custom-made terracotta tiles strung together by cables. The spaces and the “Javanese-Gothic” expressions of Henri Maclaine Pont’s works clearly show his architectonic idea, which can be considered as a way to “guide” and “elevate” existing carpentry skills and local materials. The architect’s role and position, as formulated by Henri Maclaine Pont, is that of a conscious and confident agent of change – as a “mentor” who works behind the veil of rationality. The forms and spaces of his architecture are proof of his attempt to transcend those that have come before, to achieve a new height in terms of structural and architectural integration (figures 01-02). In the mid-1990s a team of architect and contractor was commissioned by the acting bishop to renovate the whole church complex, including to expand its seating capacity anticipating the growing number of pilgrims. The renovation retains the original form and the tensile structure intact, including the brickwork that dominates the interior. Unfortunately, the renovation architect failed to recognize the important presence of the laminated-plywood arches and replaced them with steel truss arches assuming that wood would erode sooner than steel. The team also built a hall close to the original church using the identical form and tensile principle of hanging the terracotta roof tiles deployed by Henri Maclaine Pont. However, the choice to use steel instead of laminated-plywood arches is regretted as

the action erased an important part of the genuine architectural quality.

Architect and town planner, Herman Thomas Karsten (1884-1945)<sup>3</sup>, took a slightly different approach than Henri Maclaine Pont. Thomas Karsten believes that particular forms contain meanings and cultural significances that should be maintained or carefully reinterpreted. Some “Javanese” forms should be reserved for particular functions, as should “modern” forms. Thomas Karsten was commissioned by the Java Instituut (est. 1919) – a society focused on Javanese culture, in which he was also a founding member – to design the Sonobudoyo Museum (1919-1935) within the precinct of the Yogyakarta royal palace compound. The museum collects and shows artifacts related to Javanology – a study of Javanese numismatic objects, documents, ceramics, fine arts, technical objects, geological artifacts, paleontological remains, and ethnographic articles. Being a core member of the Java Instituut, Thomas Karsten carefully designed the museum complex based on traditional types that prevailed and in accordance with the Javanese palace setting. Similarly, Thomas Karsten was also involved in the initiation and the design of Sobokartti Folk Theater (1930) in Semarang. The theater is a dedicated space to show traditional Javanese performances. Thomas Karsten combines three-sided viewing areas orientating towards the center stage under a multi-tiered Javanese roof supported by simplified Javanese timberwork. Currently the theater still functions as it was intended, but it is in need of extra care. The building still continues to house and revitalize Javanese folk performing arts and it is protected as one of many works of architectural heritage by the municipality of Semarang. The challenge lies in the fact that the city of Semarang has been troubled by the annual flood caused by the flat topography of the city and the rapid sedimentation of the estuary. The city ground level also is being raised in anticipation of the flood and sea water intrusions. The area surrounding Sobokartti has been elevated more than 40 cm higher than it was in 1930s, and has been threatening the theater. To protect the building, the caretaker has installed ground drainage inside the periphery of the building and, in the event of rising ground water, two small water pumps work hard to pump the water out of the property. This act will protect the building, but not for long.

Thomas Karsten’s other well-known work, the Johar Market (1938-1942), utilizes reinforced concrete extensively, employing mushroom-shaped column capitals that support flat slabs of concrete roofing. The roof slabs are placed high above and are arranged to allow hot air to escape from the voids. Thomas Karsten also sensitively shapes the floor and kiosks which enable local peddlers carrying heavy loads on their backs to comfortably put their goods right on the display table. Thomas Karsten moreover anticipated the local “wet” market behavior by carefully considered floor channeling to keep the floor dry and clean. Johar Market is listed as one of Semarang’s protected buildings. Despite its status, Johar Market is currently in a very appalling condition, closed down and left empty, due to a major fire that broke out in 2015. Many of the mushroom reinforced

**01** Henri Maclaine Pont, Technische Hoogeschool, Bandung, Indonesia, 1919.  
© Indonesia Pavilion for the 14<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia 2014, Paul Kadarisman.



**02** Henri Maclaine Pont, Pohsarang Church, Trowulan, Kediri, Indonesia, 1937–38.  
© Indonesia Pavilion for the 14<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia 2014, Paul Kadarisman.



**03** Thomas Karsten, Sobokartti Folks Theater, Semarang, Indonesia, 1930.  
© Indonesia Pavilion for the 14<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia 2014, Paul Kadarisman.



**04** Thomas Karsten, Johar Market Hall, Semarang, Indonesia, 1938-1942. © Indonesia Pavilion for the 14<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia 2014, Paul Kadarisman.

concrete columns are in very bad condition and barely support themselves. The municipality engaged architects and conservationists in a team to guide the restoration effort. Despite the skeptical opinions among observers, a full restoration project has been planned to take place by the end of 2017 (figures 03-04).

### A Global Face

During the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, architecture slowly became a chosen face of world politics. New nations emerged and began demanding various architectural attributes to complete their social and cultural cohesions, so as to exist in a new political world order. The first president of the Republic of Indonesia, Sukarno (1901-1970), trained as a building engineer, was a product of the Netherlands East Indies higher education system and a student of Charles Prosper Wolff Schoemaker (1882-1949) in the Technische Hoogeschool in Bandung. Sukarno had a keen understanding of this late colonial architectural discourse, and was aware of how architecture could benefit his campaign of “nation building” for the newly independent Indonesia. During the early

independence period, Indonesia was constantly overshadowed by the threat of national disintegration: territorial disputes, civil unrest and rebellions. In modern architecture, Sukarno had found a solution for “nation building”, and a way to overcome the “worrysome diversity” of Indonesia.

Toward the end of the 1950s and the first few years of the 1960s, Sukarno began several major infrastructure projects, including the construction of various architectural monuments, especially in Jakarta. Sukarno developed a massive urban planning scheme for the south of Jakarta, virtually carving a north-south axis. Sukarno personally ordered the dismantling of particular colonial heritage sites, and encouraged the construction of modern buildings. Nationwide competitions were initiated to seek ideas for these architectural projects. Sukarno thought that the characteristics of modern architecture – clean, open, dynamic, and neutral – could act as Indonesia’s new symbol of national identity, free from the cultural burdens of the past and the specter of colonialism. Sukarno began building various “monuments”, from obelisks and statues, government offices, road infrastructure projects, and sport stadiums.

The Medan Merdeka [Independence Square] is the showcase for architectural symbols. Once named as Koning-splein, it was an area to be developed as a new city center for Batavia, it was designed to hold public buildings, parks, and other services. Since the early 1950s Sukarno attempted to redesign the area, from a colonial town center into the ground zero of the young nation. The square was then renamed as Medan Merdeka; and rising from its center was a monument – Tugu Nasional [The National Monument] (1961-1975)<sup>4</sup> – surrounded by new, important buildings and landmarks such as Bank Indonesia building (1958) and the national mosque, The Istiqlal Mosque (1954-1978). The involvement of architect Friedrich Silaban (1912-1984)<sup>5</sup> became more intensive when he won commissions for those three projects through national competitions, which evolved into frequent appointments by the President to tackle other national-scale projects.

Deemed as appropriate for the state, Friedrich Silaban's architectural principle was straightforward, simple, but grand, monumental, modern, and climate-responsive, providing ample shelter from either rain or sun. He openly refused to refer to particular traditional architectural forms and opted for a modern vocabulary. Throughout his career, Silaban consistently held to his principles in every single project he did. His works are far from gimmicky and are very attentive to scale and proportion. He always strove for clean lines and ensured perfect protection from the rain and sun while allowing the breeze to go through the spaces. He protected and expanded indoor spaces with generous verandahs – a kind of space that he declared as “truly Indonesian” – because they are regarded as essential to everyday life in the tropics and is unmistakably evident in almost every traditional dwelling in the region (figures 05-06).

Sukarno also commissioned other architects and artists to design and build landmarks for the expanding Jakarta. Indonesia received a gift from the Soviet Union in the design and construction of the Asian Games Complex (1959-1962) – named as Gelora Bung Karno complex – located at the southern end of Thamrin-Sudirman Street. The vast sports complex triggered the physical development of Jakarta southward; integrating the Kebajoran Baru satellite town into the capital. The Gelora Bung Karno complex is currently having a major overhaul to host the 18<sup>th</sup> Asian Games in 2018. Six listed buildings, including the Main Stadium and the iconic Sports Palace, are undergoing a major renovation to incorporate new requirements and demands as well as to enhance the integrity of their original architectural characteristics.

To mark the end nodes of the monumental streets linking the monumental venues, Sukarno commissioned Henk Ngantung (1921-1991) and Edhi Sunarso (1932-2016) to build bronze “realist” monumental statues, symbolizing abstract ideas of modernization, patriotism, and struggles against colonialism. He also deliberately used various funding sources to support his ambition of crowning Jakarta with modernist architecture imports. Sukarno took advantage of the late 1960s Cold War contestation between the Western and Eastern Blocs by accepting offers of gifts, loans, and

economic cooperation from the United States, Bulgaria, the United Nations, and others.

A portion of Japanese War reparation funds went into building Indonesia's first International Style tall buildings: Sarinah department store (1961-1966), Hotel Indonesia (1956-1962), and Wisma Nusantara skyscraper (1964-1972) in Jakarta, Samudra Beach Hotel (1962-1967) in the seaside town of Sukabumi, West Java, and Bali Beach Resort (1965)<sup>6</sup> in Nusa Dua, Bali. Sarinah department store, Hotel Indonesia, Wisma Nusantara, and other modernist tall structures adorning Thamrin Street, the most celebrated streetscape of Jakarta, acted as splendid greeting to the new incoming urbanites as well as foreigners (essay cover).

Hotel Indonesia was designed by Abel Sorensen, a Danish born American-educated architect. The project was intended to be the first international standard hotel accommodation in Indonesia, which was expected to be fully operating by the time Indonesia hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> Asian Games in 1962. The Selamat Datang [Welcome] statue, by Henk Ngantung, surrounded by a pond in front of the hotel was intended as a warm greeting for the visitors during the event. The iconic hotel underwent a major facelift in the mid-2000s. Hotel Indonesia has operated since 2008 is now operating after being incorporated into a superblock comprising the original hotel, a luxury shopping mall, an office tower, and an apartment tower. The new design retains most of the shape and distinct characteristics of the original building.

Sukarno was using architecture to bring nationalistic sentiments to his subjects as well as to grow sympathetic gestures among what he called “new emerging forces” in global politics. Following the confrontation over the formation of Malaysia (1963) – backed by the British and the USA – Indonesia withdrew from the United Nations (1965) and immediately formed the Conference of the New Emerging Forces (CONEFO, 1965). However, the construction of some of these monumental structures was halted due to the 1965-1966 major political and economic crises. After the fall of Sukarno and during the early years of the New Order regime, Jakarta had many unfinished projects devoid of activities. The capital looked dim and a seemingly dangerous place to live. The Istiqlal Mosque project only gained significant progress after the early 1970s when the main dome was finally set in place. The project continued slowly and only reached completion in the early 1980s (figure 07). The imposing steel skeleton of Wisma Nusantara was left exposed and rusty, and was only fully completed after 1972 thanks to a new investment plan. Despite no longer being iconic or monumental, the skyscraper is still in good condition.

The CONEFO Project designed by Soejoedi Wirjoatmodjo (1928-1981)<sup>7</sup>, started in 1965, shared a similar fate. It was only fully realized in 1983 with a new function as the home for the Indonesian Parliament. The project comprises the main assembly hall – roofed by a concrete shell construction – and a medium-rise office block on top of a podium. The objects are arranged in a dynamic sculptural composition held together by a monumental axis leading to the main assembly hall. The original parliament complex is kept intact while the rear portion of the plot had been built up

05 Friedrich Silaban, Bank Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia, 1958-1961. © Friedrich Silaban Archive, via arsitekturindonesia.org.



06 Friedrich Silaban, Istiqlal Mosque, Jakarta, Indonesia, 1954-1982. © Setiadi Sopandi, photography by William Sutanto.

to accommodate additional office space in the last couple of decades. In the last couple of years there has been an unresolved debate on the need to massively expand the complex with a high-rise tower joining the original protected buildings. The debate, however, has learned towards politically charged issues – involving corruption allegations and inappropriately luxurious facilities for the parliament members – rather than about the technical problems of preservation and redevelopment of the complex.

### Tourism and Ethnicity

The progress seen in the early 1970s has helped Indonesia find a new optimism. The country began experiencing a time of relative peace, and soon found itself in the midst of rapid economic growth thanks to the open global economy. However, Indonesia was also ruled by a government that repressed the people's freedom of expression. The flow of capital, goods, services, and labor empowered and built the upper and middle classes in large cities, while at the same time creating pockets of poverty, seemingly neglected/disregarded by economic development. Several state corporations were given monopolies over various strategic commodities, as well as mandates to build an economic power that could sustain Indonesia's developmental costs for the next few decades.

From the early 1970s, Bali became an international tourist destination, promoted as the total cultural tourism package. Bali shared in the economic boom caused by the flood of capital that came with business people and expatriates. With such an opportunity, hotel development in Bali began to revitalize discourses in traditional architecture and craft to “celebrate” their “Balineseness”, to support the tourism industry. Expatriate artists and entrepreneurs also contributed their influence to the development of hotel aesthetics and architecture during the 1980s. Wija Waworuntu (1926-2001), an art dealer turned hotelier, gradually developed his own family house in the Sanur area into one of Bali's first boutique hotels and set the very first example on a new trend in hotel designs. Hotel Tanjung Sari remains in Wija Waworuntu's family ownership and management and continues to provide services to a small niche market of tourists. The hotel retains most of the original characteristics with small improvements over the years. Despite being a commercial entity, Hotel Tandjung Sari continues to play a significant role in the preservation and development of the neighborhood of Sanur to keep the environmental quality and characteristics unchanged, and to keep Sanur from overdevelopment. Nowadays Sanur still retains most of its one-story buildings and greenery, and keeps restricting business owners in the area from bringing large crowds of tourists into the neighborhood.

Waworuntu played a pivotal role in the regional architectural scene when he invited Sri Lankan architect Geoffrey Bawa (1919-2003) to design the Batujimbar resort complex which influenced the tourism industry in the region. Then, hotelier Adrian Zecha (1933-) began his chain of elite boutique hotels – Amanresorts – in Bali: offering guests the “authentic” experience of living in Balinese traditional

houses without sacrificing a luxurious modern lifestyle. The effect of these developmental projects was far-reaching. Craftsmanship and the use of local-organic materials took a central role in architectural designs, even dominating the architectural façade of urban houses in large cities. Centers for woodcrafts, stonemasonries, and marble crafts provided diverse creations to support the style market.

As Bali began to affirm its identity, the State began to influence the compartmentalization of rigid regional identities based on provincial administrative territories. Rather than promoting International Style architecture, the New Order regime (1967-1998) opted for a more localized, tradition-based regionalist formal architectural vocabulary<sup>8</sup>. A cultural theme park, Taman Mini Indonesia Indah [Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature Park], was initiated by Tien Soeharto – the first lady – to promote this idea. Indonesia's cultural diversity was classified and reduced to 27 provincial administration entities – represented by 27 traditional houses and 27 pairs of traditional dresses – and 5 official religions – represented by 5 religious buildings. In this scheme, Indonesian national identity is formulated as a synthesized mosaic of the “finest” examples of regional traditional cultures. The attention towards tradition was also warmly greeted by professional architects and became a nation-wide movement in the 1990s. Seminal works by foreign architects were also praised for their “regionalist” sensitivities, employing familiar forms and materials for seemingly modern building types. Paul Andreu (1938-) employed multi-tiered and gable roof forms with terracotta tiles to shelter the new international airport of Jakarta, Soekarno-Hatta terminal 1 and 2 (1977-1985). Paul Rudolph (1918-1997) designed Wisma Dharmala skyscraper resembling juxtaposed traditional tropical roof forms to protect the tower from excessive rain and sun, resulting in a very expressive, complex, stand-out and yet beautiful structure (figure 08).

### For Greater Purpose

During the 1980s, there were critical practices that responded to how the “formal” economic development potentially marginalized small and informal segments of the growing urban populations. Yusuf Bilyarta Mangunwijaya (1929-1999)<sup>9</sup>, a Roman Catholic priest and architect, tried to advocate for a marginalized community on the banks of Kali Code, Yogyakarta, during the late 1980s. Once an illegal squatter settlement, the Kali Code community was subject to eviction by the local government. With the help of local informal leaders and officials, Yusuf Mangunwijaya elevated their living standards by providing the settlers with better access to the urban infrastructure and facilities, including basic education, water supply, sanitation, and community activities. Yusuf Mangunwijaya conducted social outreach and encouraged the improvement of the inhabitants' social resilience, in addition to repairing environmental facilities. The architecture of the area was designed as part of an independent construction effort by the community itself, with guidance provided by the architect, and with additional help or involvement by many social and education workers. This outreach came to the attention

07 Soejoedi Wirjoatmodjo, CONEFO or DPR/MPR RI, Jakarta, Indonesia, 1965-1983. © Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons, Davidelit, 2008.

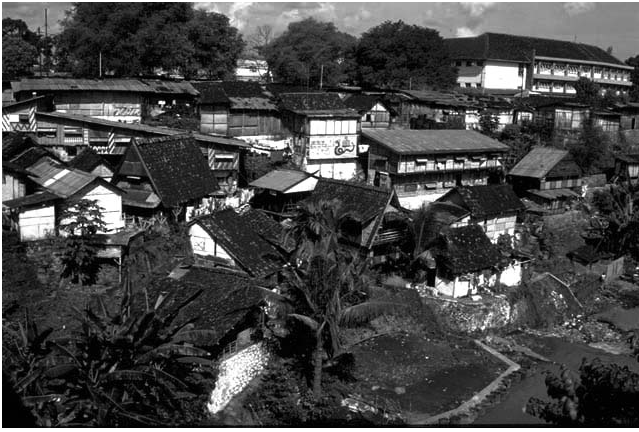


08 Nusa Consultants, Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature Park, Jakarta, 1972-1975. © Apa dan Siapa Indonesia Indah, Jakarta: Our Hope Foundation, 1975.



09 Y. B. Mangunwijaya, Sendangsono Pilgrimage Site, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 1974-1980s. © Indonesia Pavilion for the 14<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia 2014, Paul Kadarisman.





10 Yousef B. Mangunwijaya, Kali Code Settlement, Yogyakarta, 1980s. Aga Khan Award for Architecture (1992). © Yousef B. Mangunwijaya & Koperasi Permukiman dan Lingkungan Hidup Code Gondolayu.

of the wider public, when it received the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1992 (figure 09).

Yusuf Mangunwijaya's other notable commissions included a pilgrimage site – Sendangsono – and his own residence – Wisma Kuwera. For both projects, Yusuf Mangunwijaya employed and coached his carpenters/craftsmen to create and to express their individual skills using easily-accessible materials. Mangunwijaya provided ample opportunities for them to express their craftsmanship, while pioneering the architect's role as someone who encourages skills development and construction training for the craftsmen. An architect becomes a "leader" with particular ideas and political strategies, while architecture (form, space, material, construction) is "merely" a medium of such development. Yusuf Mangunwijaya has left a deep impression in Indonesian contemporary architectural discourse, by linking the search for a national identity with personal conscience, professional ethics, and a political stance among Indonesian architects. For him, architectural expression should be "honest" and "true". Architecture, in this light, could not have an exclusive agenda and should be directed to serve "greater" purposes.

Yusuf Mangunwijaya depicts "honesty" as something pragmatic and unpretentious, echoing one of the key dictums of the Modern Movement in architecture. Structural integrity and materiality should be expressed by the way a building looks as well as by how the structure, materials, and labor are sourced and employed. Being immersed in their contexts, Yusuf Mangunwijaya's architectural expressions are often liberated from formalism and strict geometry, and show rather freely flowing space and very crafty ornamental construction details. Introducing a "weak architecture", Yusuf Mangunwijaya's teaching<sup>10</sup> became far reaching thanks to his seminal book *Wastu Citra: Pengantar ke Ilmu Budaya Bentuk Arsitektur, Sendi-Sendi Filsafatnya Beserta Contoh-Contoh Praktis* [lit. *Wastu Citra: Introduction to Cultural Studies, Architecture Forms, its Philosophical Foundations, as well as Practical Examples*]. The book summarizes Mangunwijaya's views on how Indonesian architects should behave toward their own cultural identity in the midst of

global cultural exchanges and respond to current social and economic problems of the have-nots.

In recent years, there have been some concerns about how to "preserve" Mangunwijaya's legacy. Some of his built works, despite showing a very strong personal character, are difficult to preserve. In the case of the Kali Code settlement, Mangunwijaya's buildings were meant to be many things other than permanent architectural monuments. The multipurpose hall, library, and houses he designed were to facilitate the immediate needs of the community, as well as a protest statement to the authorities. The architectural values he added were to loudly refute the stigma about Kali Code settlement as an eyesore, disease-ridden, unhygienic, uncivilized place for a community. Apart from providing physical shelter and space for activities, Mangunwijaya worked with activists and the community on how to empower the unskilled and unemployed people in the neighborhood. It was clear that Mangunwijaya's main point was to help the community to survive and to improve their livelihood, therefore the architectural pieces that he produced were intended to serve only that purpose.

There are other concerns about the churches and the pilgrimage sites Mangunwijaya designed. Some of the caretakers of the properties raised issues on how the properties are no longer easy to maintain, and may need to be upgraded to serve more people. Apart from being poorly maintained, there were also unsightly additions. Few have uttered their concerns to the authorities and consulted Erwinthon Napitupulu<sup>11</sup> for advice.

### Epilogue

For more than a century, the discourse on national identity has remained an unfinished business. After a decade of administration and economic decentralization, Indonesians are now facing some new challenges. Amidst stable economic growth, Indonesian architects are becoming aware of the fact that our cities are threatened by global cultural homogenization due to massive capitalist development. Moreover, after the recent national religious, political, and ethnic frictions, the cry for a "new" national integration is hitting the surface again. Therefore, the question of a national identity for Indonesian architects is still very much a moral gravity that works against the creative freedom we enjoy.

In order to do that, there are several attempts by individuals and groups to identify, investigate, and to document Indonesia's architectural heritage. Until a few years ago, research, documentation, and preservation efforts had been heavily directed towards building and monuments from the colonial periods. However recent attempts and rapidly growing awareness amongst the professionals and government institutions had been very promising. Exhibitions and publications on modern Indonesian architects were launched, thus filling in the blank spots in the course of modern architectural development in Indonesia. Recent attempts to restore and revitalize the 1960s sport stadium complex undertaken by the Ministry of Public Works and Housing – in co-operation with the Indonesian Institute of

Architects – is a huge step in this process. The Institute has also been a keen guardian of modern architectural heritage by providing assistance to guide and to host architectural competitions for the Indonesian Parliament Complex, the ASEAN Secretariat Building, and several other restoration/revitalization/renovation projects. Recently a non-profit on-line initiative – [arsitekturindonesia.org](http://arsitekturindonesia.org) – launched its web-based architectural archive providing digitized archives related to Indonesian architectural practices. Other attempts are not necessarily related to modern architectural works, but also cover the documentation and preservation of vernacular traditions from tribal communities. Architecture is once again becoming a potential contributor to national identity, representing an important phase when architects and architecture employed the language of modern architecture for the nation.

### Notes

- 1 This is, of course, not unique. Most postcolonial nations share this common trait due to the globalizing world, the growing empathy of the colonizers, and the increasing consciousness among the colonies since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. For the first account to critically examine the history of architectural discourse in Indonesia, see Iwan Sudrajat, *A Study of Indonesian Architectural History*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Sydney, University of Sydney, 1991.
- 2 Born in Jatinegara, Batavia, Maclaine Pont spent most of his life in the Netherlands Indies. He received his training in civil engineering in Delft – Technische Universiteit Delft, known as Polytechnische School van Delft during Maclaine Pont's study. The school was established in 1842 as a Royal Academy for the purpose of training civil servants to work in the Dutch East Indies – and soon after graduating he moved back to the colony. In 1911, he received his first major work to design the headquarters for the Semarang-Cirebon Railway Company in Tegal and thereafter established his private practice in Semarang.
- 3 Thomas Karsten was initially trained as a mechanical engineer before he finally shifted his major to structural engineering during the major institutional reform of Polytechnische School van Delft. Escaping WWI, Thomas Karsten moved to the Dutch East Indies at the invitation of Maclaine Pont. Though never formally trained as a town planner, Thomas Karsten was exposed to the social reform housing planning discourse and became a member of a socialist planners association in Amsterdam. Eventually he was hired as an independent planning consultant for the Public Works Department on major cities in the colony.
- 4 The National Monument project was a long process. First started as a national competition in 1954, the ground breaking was only started in 1961. The first competition failed to appoint the winning entry, so was the second competition. Friedrich Silaban was named as the second prize winner in the first competition, and later became a dominant figure among the jury panel in the second competition (held in 1960). Friedrich Silaban was appointed to produce a second proposal which also failed. Sukarno then appointed architect Sudarsono (1912-?) to work under his personal direction and produced the built design.
- 5 Friedrich Silaban was trained in a vocational school, Koningin Wilhelmina School (KWS), between 1927-1931 in Batavia, Dutch East Indies. The technical education provided him with the necessary practical skills to serve in the Public Works Department as a draftsman or as an overseer in construction projects. But Friedrich Silaban was very determined to be a professional architect, like those who graduated from higher education institutions. Upon graduation, he actively participated in and won design competitions, and eventually was awarded his first major commissions in the late 1940s. He attended the architectural course at the Academie van Bouwkunst te Amsterdam in 1950 before he returned and continued his professional practice in Indonesia.
- 6 Now renamed as Inna Grand Bali Beach Resort.
- 7 Soejoedi Wirjoatmodjo initially studied architecture at the Institut Teknologi Bandung before he was granted a scholarship to study in the *École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts* in Paris. Before finishing his

studies, he moved to Delft. During the worsening diplomatic relationship between Indonesia and the Netherlands, Soejoedi Wirjoatmodjo and his fellow Indonesian students moved to Germany. He moved and finished his studies at the Technische Universität Berlin. Upon his return to Indonesia, he was appointed as the head of the architectural department of the Institut Teknologi Bandung. He was also appointed to consult to the government on opening new architectural schools in major Indonesian cities. During the short span of his career, Soejoedi Wirjoatmodjo managed to influence the course of modern Indonesian architecture by designing numerous institutional buildings dressed with streamlined compositions of cubic forms. Among his best-known works are the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretariat Building (1973), Ministry of Agriculture complex, Ministry of Forestry (1977), Ministry of Transportation, the French Embassy in Jakarta (1971, demolished in 2012), and Indonesia's embassies in Kuala Lumpur, Belgrade, and Colombo.

- 8 President Suharto rarely expressed his view on architecture. However, in a keynote for the inauguration of Wisma Nusantara (2 December 1972), he uttered his endorsement of the use of “genuine personality” to cater for the development of tourism industry.
- 9 Yusuf Mangunwijaya (popularly known as “Romo Mangun” or “Father Mangun”) was ordained as a priest in 1959 by Archbishop Albertus Soegijapranata who suggested Yusuf Mangunwijaya train as an architect. He was 30 years old when he was enrolled as an architecture student at the Institut Teknologi Bandung. The following year, he transferred his training to Rheinisch Westfälische Technische Hochschule in Aachen, Germany. He returned to Indonesia in 1966 and began his service as a priest. Apart from his main duty as a Catholic priest, he worked in various fields, including producing literary works, essays on culture, religious affairs, and technology. Since the early 1980s he started his involvement at Kali Code.
- 10 *Pengantar Fisika Bangunan* is a technical book that outlined a wide array of basic technical skills for architects and construction workers, from utility, construction and structure, to matters related to climate. The book garnered a lot of interest when it was published, as it emerged during a time when architecture publications in Indonesia mostly featured discourses on identity and style – coinciding with the rise of “postmodern architecture” as a trend.
- 11 Erwinthon Napitupulu was educated as an architect and he spent several years studying, collecting, and documenting all of Yusuf Mangunwijaya's architectural projects. Erwinthon Napitupulu's archive remains the most trusted source for this purpose, and his insights on what is the essence of Yusuf Mangunwijaya's projects, and how to properly preserve and maintain his works is unparalleled.

### References

- BERLAGE, Hendrik Petrus., *De Indische Reis van H.P. Berlage*, Rotterdam, Busse, 1931.
- BODMER, Frank, ALI, Mohammad, *Djakarta Through the Ages*, Jakarta, Government of the Capital City of Djakarta, 1970.
- MANGUNWIJAYA, Yusuf, *Wastu Citra: Pengantar ke Ilmu Budaya Bentuk Arsitektur, Sendi-Sendi Filsafatnya Beserta Contoh-Contoh Praktis*, Jakarta, Gramedia, 1988.
- DARLING, Diana, *Tanjung Sari: A Magical Door to Bali*, Singapore, Editions Didier Millet, 2012.
- PASSCHIER, Cor, “Mencari Arsitektur Indonesia yang Utama pada Masa Akhir Kolonial”, in *Tegang Bentang: Seratus Tahun Perspektif Arsitektural di Indonesia*, Jakarta, Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2012, 26-39.
- SOPANDI, Setiadi, *Friedrich Silaban*, Jakarta, Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2017.
- SUDRAJAT, Iwan, *A Study of Indonesian Architectural History*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Sydney, University of Sydney, 1991.