



## Cultural Studies and Symbolism of Tapis Cloth Motifs in the Culture of Lampung People

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### ABSTRACT

The traditional textile art in Lampung, Indonesia, holds significant cultural significance and is imbued with intricate symbolism. The images found on Tapis cloth not only showcase aesthetic appeal but also encompass profound cultural teachings, spiritual values, and symbolism that profoundly influence the lives of the Lampung people. Tapis cloth patterns embody diverse cultural elements such as mythology, spiritual convictions, a symbiotic connection with the environment, ethnic heritage, equilibrium, safeguarding, and the pursuit of prosperity. Tapis fabric serves as a means of conveying ancient narratives, commemorating cultural legacies, and preserving unique cultural individuality.

### 1. Introduction

Tapis cloth, with its beautiful motifs and rich cultural symbolism, is a very valuable traditional textile art and is an integral part of the culture of Lampung, Indonesia. Tapis cloth is not just cloth but also an artistic manifestation that contains deep cultural meaning that has been passed down from generation to generation. Cultural studies and the symbolism of tapis cloth motifs in Lampung culture provide a forum for exploring the richness of this cultural heritage, understanding cultural values, and uncovering the stories hidden in the tapis cloth threads.<sup>1,2</sup>

Lampung culture, which is rich in its own traditions, beliefs, and history, creates a deep-rooted foundation in the tapis cloth motifs. Each beautiful and complicated motif in tapis cloth may have a deep cultural meaning, referring to cultural values, local

mythology, or symbols of belief in Lampung society. These motifs carry within themselves stories that depict Lampung's cultural identity and are a form of respect for ancestral heritage. This study aims to reveal and understand the symbolism behind the tapis cloth motifs, as well as how this cultural meaning is related to the culture and daily life of the Lampung people. In this context, filter cloth becomes more than just cloth; it is a medium that allows us to look deeper into the soul of Lampung culture, appreciate the stories contained therein, and experience its long-lasting cultural richness.<sup>3,4</sup>

### Mythological meaning

Tapis cloth motifs often refer to mythological stories or local legends in Lampung. It reflects a reverence for mythology and ancient stories passed down from generation to generation. Dragons are mythical creatures that often appear in various Asian cultures,

including Indonesia. The dragon motif in the tapis cloth may refer to mythological stories about dragons, which have deep meaning in Lampung culture. The Garuda bird is one of the important mythical creatures in Hindu mythology. This motif was probably used in tapis cloth to honor Hindu mythological stories that were influential in the region. Motifs depicting gods and goddesses or mythical figures on tapis cloth can refer to stories about gods and goddesses who have an important role in local mythology. The tapis cloth motif may also depict supernatural beings or evil spirits, which are believed to have an influence on everyday life. This reflects the belief in the supernatural world in Lampung culture. Some motifs may refer to important mythical or legendary historical events in Lampung culture. These motifs can be a way to preserve and commemorate ancient stories.<sup>5-7</sup>

### **Belief symbolism**

Motifs in tapis cloth often reflect symbolism associated with the spiritual beliefs and rituals of the Lampung people. Tapis cloth is not just a textile art but is also a medium that contains deep religious messages and beliefs. Motifs depicting protection, such as shields, shields, or suns, are often associated with symbols of protection and good fortune. Lampung people may believe that wearing or owning a tapis cloth with this motif can provide protection from negative energy or danger. Some filter cloth motifs may reflect the concept of balance in life. These motifs can describe the harmonious relationship between humans and nature, as well as between the real world and the unseen world. Motifs that refer to symbols of prosperity, such as flowers or trees bearing abundant fruit, may depict hopes for a prosperous and abundant life. Tapis cloth is often used in various traditional ceremonies and rituals in Lampung. The motifs on the tapis cloth can have a special meaning in a ritual context and become a symbol of good luck during ceremonies. Some motifs may reflect beliefs about connections to ancestors. Lampung people may believe that certain motifs are a way to honor their ancestors and ask for protection and guidance from the spiritual world. It will also reveal the complexity of culture and beliefs associated with this traditional

textile art, as well as how tapis cloth is a means of expressing and celebrating spiritual beliefs and rituals in Lampung society.<sup>8-10</sup>

### **Relationship with nature**

Motifs depicting natural elements such as plants, animals, or river flows often reflect the deep connection between Lampung people and nature. This relationship reflects the rich culture and daily life of the Lampung people. Motifs depicting plants, such as trees, flowers, and plants, can be interpreted as symbols of life and abundance. This reflects the relationship of the Lampung people with land and nature as a source of life. Some motifs may refer to the balance of natural ecosystems. Motifs depicting animals or river ecosystems reflect the belief in the importance of maintaining the balance of nature. Lampung is a fertile agricultural region. Motifs depicting agriculture, such as rice fields or traditional farming tools, can reflect agricultural life, which is important in Lampung culture. Some of the plants depicted in the motifs may have ethnobotanical significance in traditional medicine or local beliefs. Lampung people may use certain plants in their traditional practices. Motifs depicting abundant animals or abundant river flows can be interpreted as symbols of abundance and good luck.<sup>11,12</sup>

### **Ethnic identity symbol**

The tapis cloth motif may be used to identify certain ethnic groups in Lampung society and be a symbol of strong cultural identity. In various regions of Lampung, there are various ethnic groups with distinctive cultures, traditions, and languages. The use of tapis cloth motifs to identify certain ethnic groups reflects the importance of maintaining and celebrating cultural diversity in Lampung. Several ethnic groups in Lampung have tapis cloth motifs, which become their cultural identity. For example, the Lampung Saibatin tribe has a tapis cloth motif that is different from the Lampung Pesisir tribe or the Lampung Abung tribe. The use of unique and distinctive tapis cloth motifs by certain ethnic groups is a way to pass on and celebrate their cultural heritage. This helps maintain the cultural identity of

the ethnic group. Tapis cloth motifs are a cultural distinction between ethnic groups in Lampung. People can easily recognize a person's origin or ethnic group based on the motif of the tapis cloth they wear or use in traditional ceremonies. Filter cloth with certain motifs is often passed down from generation to generation in the family. This creates a strong connection between the tapis cloth, family identity, and ethnic identity. In some traditional ceremonies, filter cloth with special motifs may be given as a gift or as part of a ritual. This reflects the importance of ethnic symbolism in traditional ceremonies.<sup>13,14</sup>

### **Symbol of balance and harmony**

Tapis cloth motifs often reflect the concept of balance and harmony in life, especially in the relationship between humans and nature. Tapis cloth is a form of textile art that reflects the Lampung people's belief in the importance of maintaining balance with nature and establishing a harmonious relationship with the surrounding environment. Motifs depicting natural elements such as mountains, rivers, or forests can be interpreted as symbols of nature. It reflects an appreciation for nature and its important role in everyday life. Motifs depicting humans in activities that are in harmony with nature, such as farming or hunting, reflect the harmonious relationship between humans and nature. Motifs depicting balance, such as yin and yang, sun and moon, or sky and earth, reflect the concept of balance in the lives and beliefs of the Lampung people. Motifs depicting a prosperous life, such as an abundant harvest or a happy family, reflect the hope for a balanced and harmonious life. Some filter cloth motifs may depict humans' relationships with other living creatures, such as animals or birds. This reflects the understanding that all living things are interconnected and must live in harmony.<sup>15,16</sup>

### **Protection symbol**

The tapis cloth motif, which means protection, is one of the important aspects of this traditional textile art. Lampung people may have a strong belief that wearing or owning tapis cloth with certain motifs can provide protection from negative energy or danger in

everyday life. Some filter cloth motifs may be designed to protect the wearer from evil spirits or supernatural entities that could cause harm. This reflects the belief in the supernatural world in Lampung culture. Filter cloth motifs may be used as a symbol of protection from natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, or volcanic eruptions, which could threaten the Lampung area. Some filter cloth motifs may be used in ceremonies or rituals aimed at cleansing and providing health protection to individuals or families. In wedding ceremonies, filter cloth is often used to provide protection to newly married couples. This reflects the belief in protection and happiness in living together. Filter cloth with protective motifs can be an important part of a family heirloom, passed down from generation to generation to provide protection and bring good luck.<sup>17-20</sup>

## **2. Conclusion**

This traditional textile art has deep cultural meaning and rich symbolism in the cultural context of Lampung, Indonesia. Tapis cloth motifs not only reflect visual beauty but also contain deep cultural messages, spiritual values, and symbolism that permeate the lives of the Lampung people. Tapis cloth motifs reflect various aspects of culture, including mythology, spiritual beliefs, a harmonious relationship with nature, ethnic identity, balance, protection, and the desire for well-being. Tapis cloth is a medium for expressing old stories, celebrating cultural heritage, and maintaining a distinctive cultural identity.

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