

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SULUK AMBATIK FILM

Batik, which is synonymous with Javanese culture, is renowned in the world and has been recognized as an intangible and oral cultural world heritage of humanity. However, in Java itself, literature on the creative process of batik is scarce. For this reason, perhaps *Suluk Ambatik* is one of the most important amongst them.

The *Suluk Ambatik* text is a part of the *Serat Piwulang Estri* manuscript which is now stored in the Pura Pakualaman library, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Written by Paku Alam I in 1828. During the leadership of Paku Alam II (1830 – 1858), which became the golden peak for the development of literature and culture in the Pakualaman court. This manuscript was rewritten by Paku Alam II, to be exact in 1837. There is another version of the manuscript. *Suluk Ambatik* which states that *Suluk Ambatik* is part of the manuscript *Suluk Kota Gede* with the year 1841. Thus *Suluk Ambatik* from the Pura Pakualaman manuscript, *Serat Piwulang Estri* is an older manuscript than that contained in *Suluk Kota Gede*. Pakualaman's version of the ancient manuscript is the main material for the film *Suluk Ambatik*.

As an ancient manuscript, the text of *Suluk Ambatik* in Javanese is not easy for the public to understand. Apart from the aspect of language which is rarely used (Javanese Madya), this text is full of philosophical content related to the process of batik practice, the symbolic world, its relationship with the universe and the Divine. What is most interesting is that *Suluk Ambatik* is not just a literary work but also an important lesson about self-management (character building) through the creative process of making batik.

The film team first learned about *Suluk Ambatik* in 2020 from the senior Yogyakarta philologist Romo Manu Widyaseputra based on the manuscript *Suluk Kota Gede*. Furthermore, starting in 2021 the team started to conduct research and deepen their understanding about the manuscript *Suluk Ambatik* led by Agung Harjuno, M.Hum who studied Javanese literature. Since then the team has been translating and interpreting the manuscript. Until finally the film team met Dr. Sri Ratna Saktimulya, M.Hum, a philologist who studies the manuscripts of Pura Pakualaman where *Suluk Ambatik* is still well preserved. Furthermore, from the results of the translation and interpretation of the script, the team carried out the process of writing a film script with the assistance of Dr. Sri Ratna Saktimulya, M.Hum.

The team chose the path of transformation from the media of an ancient manuscript into a film in an effort to make this script's knowledge and its noble values widely accessible. The text *Suluk Ambatik* in this ancient literary work offers an understanding of the creative process of batik used as a form of character building for a maturing a girl's soul as she moves towards the age of marriage and is identical to the process of batik making. However, the values this text reflects are universal and timeless. The batik artist must maintain a pure heart, a firm determination in life based on an understanding of the Divine and a fostering of compassion for others. The film *Suluk Ambatik* is not only intended for audiences in Java and Indonesia but also for the world. As a film, the team chose the approach focused on the contemporary younger generation to make it interesting and easy to understand and as well to introduce and deepen an understanding of the values of *Suluk Ambatik*. This has been done bearing in mind that the younger generation is the inheritor of culture for the future, according to the message of the film *Suluk Ambatik*.

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