

# Sunda Rational Patterns in Golok Walahir as A Cultural Artifact

Teuku Zulkarnain muttaqin<sup>1</sup>, I Ketut Muka<sup>2</sup>, I Ketut Sida Arsa<sup>3</sup>, Dandi Yunidar<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> (Product Design, Telkom University, Indonesia)

<sup>2,3</sup> (Doctoral Program of Art, ISI Bali, Indonesia)

**ABSTRACT :** *Golok is one of the Sundanese traditional tools used to cut or slash, this common perception is built among society. This study examines the application of Sunda rational pattern in Golok Walahir as a cultural artifact from Sindangkerta Cipatujah Tasikmalaya West Java. Golok Walahir is not merely a functional tool, but embodies symbolic, aesthetic, and philosophical values. Previous studies have mainly focused on Golok Walahir as a cultural identities dan preservation aspect. Leaving a gap in understanding its underlying epistemological structure. This research employs a qualitative ethnographic approach with interpretative analysis based on Sumardjo's Sundanese rational pattern theory. The finding reveals that Golok Walahir embodies the Tritangtu concept tekad, ucap, lampah manifested structurally in its components: perah (handle), wilah (blade), and sarangka (sheath). These elements represent a harmonious paradox between opposing forces such as male-female, straight-curved, and sacred-profane. The study also identifies that the rational pattern also applies to subjects such as the bladesmith and owner, providing insight into a holistic cultural system. This research contributes to expanding the knowledge about Nusantara aesthetics concepts by positioning Golok Walahir as a manifestation of Sundanese cosmological thinking, reinforcing the importance of local cultural knowledge embedded in traditional artifacts.*

**KEYWORDS -** *Golok Walahir, Sunda, Rational Pattern, Cultural Artifact*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Golok, written on Siksa Kanda Karesian as one of the Prabu's (king) weapons beside *pedang*, *abet*, *pamuk*, *peso*, *sondot* and *keris*, with a giant as its God, used to be a weapon to kill the enemy (Hartati, 1992). Golok in Sundanese is divided into three main functions: *golok gawe* (working tools), *pakarang* (weaponry), and *ageman* (relic). Golok Walahir is origin from Sindangkerta, Ki Awa, as one of the elders said, that Sindangkerta people are a *huma* (dry fields) community whose life and death are based on golok (Awangga, 2025). in addition to being used as a working tool, is also known as cultural identity (Muttaqien, 2015). Golok Walahir is divided into two main social functions: *pungsi sapopoe* (daily use), wich is divided again into three specific functions: slashing, cutting, etc., as a making tools such as hoe handles and for bamboo crafting. *Pungsi pasren* (symbolic function) used for traditional rulers, village officials, traditional elders, etc., that divided again to two specific functions: sacred and general. The sacred one is used in traditional ceremonies such as *hajat lembur* (village fete), *marak* (catching fish), *hajat munding* (buffalo fete), etc. The general one is used for slaughter, travelling, attending invitations, etc. The famous golok in Sindangkerta made by Puh Bihot (the last master craftsman) is golok *pasren* that is made for individual purpose (Samson, 2024). Golok Walahir has been unproduced since 1955 after Puh Bihot passed away; there is no longer a successor (Muttaqin, 2024).

Golok Walahir had a simple yet attractive and unique shape. There are not many people outside Sindangkerta village who know about this golok, but once they recognise it, they admit that this golok has something different

(Samson, 2025). Golok Walahir visuals are divided into three terms: *bodasan* (white colour), applied for golok *gawe* (working golok). *Beureuman* (red colour), applied for golok *pasren*, and *papaes* (style/aesthetic function), made for daily work but built with style (Samson, 2024). Golok Walahir, as another golok, had a component such as *perah* (handle), *wilah* (blade), and *sarangka* (sheath) with a detail on each part. There are three basic names of the *perah*: *lutung moyan* (sunbathing langurs), *golong tambang* (rolled rope), and *hurang paeh* (dead shrimp), and several additional names such as *hurang monrongkol* (curl up shrimp), *hurang mongkoy* (humped shrimp), etc. Three kinds of *wilah*: *bentik puhu* (base curved), *bentik tengah* (middle curved), and *bentik congo* (curved tip) (Samson, 2024). There is no specific name for the *sarangka* except for different material uses. This specific shape and name show how detailed Puh Bihot is as the bladesmith; he knows how to make a golok with different concepts and functions. Besides being a bladesmith, Puh Bihot, also known as a farmer, he created a tool for farming.

Golok Walahir is one of the Sundanese artifacts, the Sundanese culture ecologically influenced by the environment. According to Koesoemadinata in Indrawinata Sundanese people called as mountain people because they live on the mountain, proved by their expression to the song and livelihood (Indrawardana, 2012). Sindangkerta Cipatujah is one of West java regions, situated at south coast and facing trough Hindian ocean (Widianingsih, 2025). The society named themselves as *Tatar Karang* cultur community (CMS S. , 2022). Golok Walahir creates by Puh Bihot to work with Sindangkerta environment, besides mountains, hills, and river, Sindangkerta's society live side by side with the ocean. Some of them work as a farmer, fisherman, entrepreneur, etc (Widianingsih, 2025). Anthropometrically, Golok Walahir is suited with the Sindangkerta's people, the geometry, structure, size and material are made for supporting the activity. Below is the picture of Golok Walahir *gawe* type:



Photo 1. Golok Walahir *gawe* (working) type, (source; Author, 2026.)

Sindangkerta's society is Sundanese people, most of it are moslem. The traditional culture in Sindangkerta is based on Sundanese traditions such as *hajat lembur*, and *hajat munding*. The relationship between human beings and the nature environment is conducted on their cultural ceremonies (CMS S. R., 2016). *Hajat lembur* held as a thankfuly moment to God after their succesfull moment in the past year, the elders who lead the ceremonies also announce to the audience about future predict based on the experiences and traditional calculation (Samson, 2024). Buffalo is an important animal to Sindangkerta's society, beside it used for farming, it also used for natural alarm for tsunami. Golok Walahir takes part in these ceremonies as a symbol for someone who leads and had some knowledge about traditional rules, golok worn at the waist of the leaders (Awa P. , 2023).

Golok is one of artifacts that often study with many purposes, the number of studies is about golok as an identity, Golok Seuat Banten is one of it (Sahara, 2023). Banten's golok had been submitted to UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage (Atmoko, 2024). Golok as an identity also used by Betawi's as the symbol of heroism (Prasetyo, 2022). Golok is an identity not only for the region, it's also for characteristic, golok used by the jawara at Banten that represents a strength, courage and leadership of someone who bring golok (Hudaeri, 2003). The existing research about Golok Walahir is focused on golok as an identity for Sindangkerta society and region, and step to preservation aspect. Golok is Sundanese artifact, in Sundanese culture, an

artifact is an object that manifested from local knowledge based on their cosmological and rational thinking (Sumardjo J. , 2011). The research about Sundanese artifact in Sundanese rational pattern perspective is about the household appliance (Jamaludin, 2022), and analysing statue site arca domas in Bogor (Mahardika, 2013). This epistemological aspect is an important issue that was infrequently studied before, especially for Golok Walahir as a Sindangkerta's artifact culture identity.

This research focuses on how the Sundanese rational pattern is applied which creates aesthetic meaning to Golok Walahir in the cultural context. This research study has contributed to two things. First, adding new insight to academics about the Sundanese rational pattern as an aesthetic concept that can be applied to other products besides household appliances. Secondly, it provides designers with ideas to create a modern concept with a traditional approach to culture, especially the Sundanese rational pattern, in terms of bringing meaning to the product. The present study describes the part of Golok Walahir that presents the pattern and finds the reason behind it with logic and rational thinking.

## II. METHODS

The research uses qualitative methods with ethnography approach to investigate an underlying concept and meaning of Golok Walahir. The qualitative method was chosen to allow researchers to get into the Walahir-Sindangkerta society wick store data and lives life according to local culture. The Sindangkerta society was Sundanese and often uses golok in their daily activities. By understanding the community's life and environmental conditions, we can discover the connection between the Sundanese rational pattern and Golok Walahir concept.

The researcher chose Golok Walahir as the object because it no longer has any successors to its maker. For the Sindangkerta people, the Golok Walahir not only functions as a working tool, but also has symbolic meaning that is worth preserving. The revitalization of Golok Walahir is underway. This revitalization aims to restore the community's collective memory of the local wisdom values inherent in the Golok Walahir, it is hoped that with the re-emergence of the Golok Walahir, the community will be able to re-enact these values.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sunda three patterns common know as *Resi*, *Ratu*, *Rama*. *Resi* is ranked first before *Ratu* and *Rama*. According to Ki Awa as the traditional elders of Sindangkerta village, the concept of the Sunda three patterns in Sindangkerta put *Rama* in the first position. *Rama* in Sindangkerta Sunda three pattern is parents who are elders, wise and must be able to protect. *Resi* is in the second position, *Resi* is one who makes, organizes, and manages laws. *Ratu* is in the last position, *Ratu* is the decision maker, deciding whether a law can be implemented or not (Awa A. , 2026). The difference in position in this three-pattern concept is not a problem because in principle what is contained in it is still has the same meaning. *Resi* is the will, *Ratu* is the mind, and *Rama* is the act.

*Resi* has the will to makes the law, organize and manage it well, this position as Aki Awa said is same as the parliament with the president in Indonesian government system. This position in Sindangkerta based on observation and an interview is taken by the elders and sub-district head or village headman. *Ratu* is the mind and the decision maker; this position according to Aki Awa is same as the supreme court and constitutional court In Indonesian government system. Sindangkerta's *Ratu* based on observation result is in the elders also. *Rama* is the act, the one who has a bit different character based on Sindangkerta's concept. In the Indonesian government system, the people are those who implement the laws made by the government. In Sindangkerta, *Rama* based on an interview must be a protector, reminder, supervisor, and wise discussion partner for the decision-makers.

If it is stated that in a democracy the people are the owners of the highest sovereignty, then in essence the position of *Rama*, both from a general perspective and Sindangkerta's elders are in the same position. The people must be wise, brave in voicing the truth and monitoring policies. The elders in Sindangkerta from the observation result had an important position, they can be *Resi*, *Ratu*, and *Rama* at the same time. This is because the elderly organize and place themselves into certain roles based on the lineage that each elder has. However, even tough there are differences in perspective regarding the Sunda three patterns, it remains the foundation of people's thought patterns in their lives. The purpose of Sunda three patterns is to harmonize all the elements *Resi*, *Rama*, and *Ratu* (Sumardjo J. , 2010).

Golok Walahir was created by Puh Bihot, the last bladesmith who passed away in 1955. Golok Walahir was no longer produced after his death (Muttaqien, 2015). Ki Awa, as one of the elders in Sindangkerta was trying to revitalize the Golok Walahir. The revitalitaion is still running through and produces a replica of Golok Walahir made by Ki Awa in collaboration with the bladesmith and *maranggi* (sheath maker) from the area around Sindangkerta (Awangga, 2025). The general pattern of a golok consists of a *perah*, *wilah*, and *sarangka*. The Sunda three patterns could be recognized by analyzing the shape of golok, wich part assumed as *Resi*, *Ratu*, and *Rama*. Based on the literature review, there is a paradoxical aesthetic concept in Sunda three patterns that combines male, female elements in an object, and the harmony of both (Sumardjo J. , 2010). The male concept is represented by a straight or rigid shape, while female is represented by a curved or flexible shape, by understanding this concept in golok, we can read the Sunda three patterns and the meaning in it. Below is the picture of the anatomy of Golok Walahir.

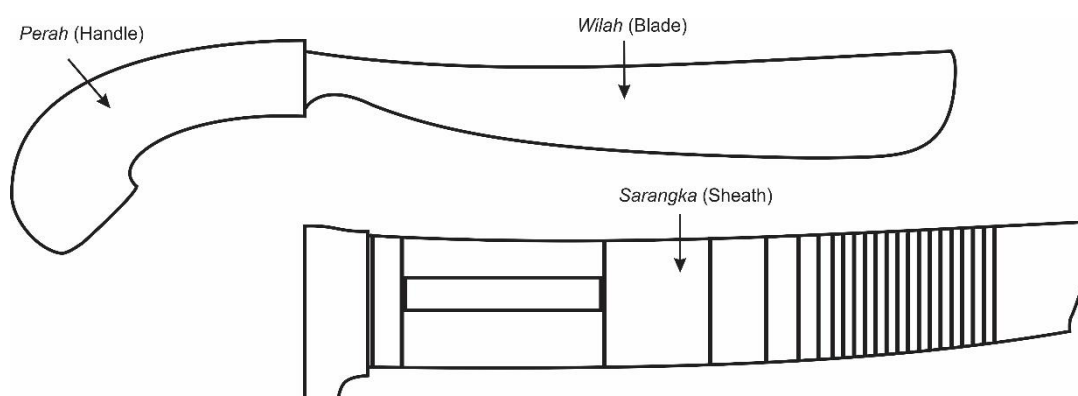


Photo 2. Golok Walahir anatomy, (source; Author, 2026.)

The size of Golok Walahir ranges between 25-60cm from *perah* to *sarangka* with 3-5cm width for the *wilah*. Below is the picture of the Sunda three patterns analyzing Golok Walahir.

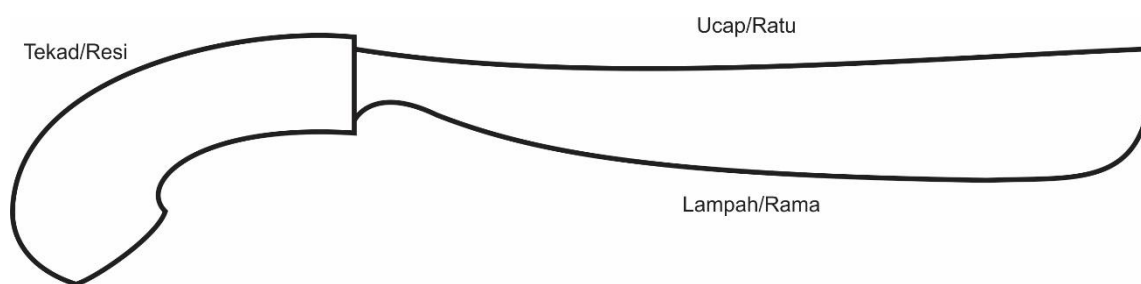


Photo 3. Golok Walahir Sunda three patterns, (source; Author, 2026.)

The Sundanese three patterns aspect in Golok Walahir at *perah* is *Tekad/Resi*/will. *Perah* is the part of golok that is in direct contact with the user, connection between the user and golok started from here. *Wilah* is *Ucap/Ratu*/mind, all of user mind would support by the back part of *wilah*. The bottom of the *wilah* is *Lampah/Rama*/act, while the will and mind are united, the sharp side of the golok takes an act to fulfill it. The harmony of Golok Walahir in Sunda three patterns is in the *sarangka*, a combination of *perah* and *wilah* shape wich are haromonized with the *sarangka* shape produces a final visual that is pleasant to look at.

The result proves that Golok Walahir has an important role both in used for working in daily life and in traditional activities. Most of the Sindangkerta people are Sundanese and work as farmers. Sundanese people cosmologically believe in a system of relationship between the celestial world, the human world, and other natural worlds that influence their life especially for farming life. The Sunda three patterns are based on this system, not only for farming, but the concept is also implemented to others object include golok. Golok Walahir as cultural

artifact related to Sindangkerta geographic and social culture, Puh Bihot as the last bladesmith created a form of golok that was suitable for use by the community. The Golok Walahir geometry, structure, material and manufacturing technique are designed to handle cutting, slashing, and other tasks related to nature and the daily lives of the community.

The difference in *Rama*'s conceptual position between the literature review and the general perspective and Sindangkerta lies in the role of action. In the general concept, the action is depicted as the public, while in Sindangkerta it is depicted as a wise parent. The Sunda three patterns in Golok Walahir consists of *Resi*, *Ratu*, and *Rama*. *Resi*/will in *perah* position because it directly connected to the user through the hand. The golok being an extension of the hand, it assists with task that cannot be done directly by hand. When it is used, golok must be comfortable to hold so that it can be in sync with the hand's movements. *Ratu*/mind in the *wilah* taken from the straight shape that symbolizes the male in the paradox aesthetic concept. The Golok Walahir in this section has the *paut nyere* (coconut or sugar palm stick) concept that is thick at the base, then tapers toward the tip. This concept ergonomically affects working comfort and provides strength to the golok structure. *Rama* /act in the *wilah* is in the curved shape that symbolizes the woman in the paradox aesthetic concept. The concept of Golok Walahir in this section is *ngabeuteung Siraru* (subterranean termites) that curved from the base to the tip. The tip is not sharp like a golok in general, this is one of the unique features of Golok Walahir. *Rama* is action, the concept of Golok Walahir for the sharp edge is long lasting sharp. In line with *Rama* action concept, when the intention arises and enters the *perah*, the golok is swung and hits the target on the sharp edge (*Rama*). *Ratu* supports the work by dampening the vibration from the impact so that the golok does not slip from the hand while adding the *Rama* power to penetrate. *Resi*, *Ratu* and *Rama* are unity that must support each other so that the work is completed well. The *sarangka* harmonized with the *perah* and *wilah*. Besides the visualisation, its role is not only to keep the blade from being damaged by impacts when stored, but also to protect the user from its sharpness.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The Study investigated the Sunda three patterns in Golok Walahir, what is the meaning of the shape according to the *Resi*, *Ratu* and *Rama* concept. The perspective of the Sunda three patterns is about the harmony between masculine (straight shape/line) and feminine (curved shape/line). The balance between these two forms creates the beauty of the object. The shape of Golok Walahir consists of two-line elements, as explained in the discussion results and pictures. The concept was created according to the needs of the users, namely the Sindangkerta community. Thus, Golok Walahir reflects the beauty and uniqueness of Sindangkerta.

From a theoretical perspective, the application of Golok Walahir form qualifies as an object that applies the Sunda three patterns. This adds to the references of objects with Sunda three patterns beyond the architecture and food containers that have been studied previously. The Golok Walahir also qualifies as a cultural artifact that possesses local wisdom value because it contains local elements. In addition to materials obtained from the surrounding environment, Golok Walahir is also related to a symbol of a person's social status, where the golok serves as a measure of one's high or low knowledge. The golok is not only from one region, each golok has its own uniqueness, historical background, concept, and the ability of each maker is different. The Golok Walahir is made with the historical, geographical, and socio-cultural background of Walahir-Sindangkerta Tasikmalaya, its uniqueness complements the treasure trove of knowledge about cultural artifacts based on local wisdom.

#### V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to express their gratitude to all parties who supported and contributed to this research, especially the elderly and traditional officials who served as sources for data collection. They also thank their academic colleagues who provide constructive input and insights throughout the research process. This research was not sponsored by any specific research grant, public, or non-profit foundation.

#### REFERENCES

- [1.] Atmoko, M. H. (2024, Oktober 25). Golok Banten Dipromosikan Jadi Warisan Budaya Tak Benda UNESCO. 2024, p. 1.
- [2.] Awa, A. (2026, Februari 15). Wawancara pola tiga Sunda di Sindangkerta. (T. Z. M, Interviewer)
- [3.] Awa, P. (2023, Oktober 8). Wawancara golok Walahir . (T. Z. M, Interviewer)

- 
- [4.] Awangga, K. A. (2025, Oktober 31). Wawancara Nilai dan Fungsi Golok Walahir. (T. Z. M, Interviewer)
- [5.] CMS, S. (2022). Inventarisasi Pengetahuan Lokal Hajat Lembur Masyarakat Tatar Karang. *Kabuyutan: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora Berbasis Kearifan Lokal*, 41-52.
- [6.] CMS, S. R. (2016). Fungsi dan Nilai Tradisi Hajat Lembur di Tatar Karang Priangan Tasikmalaya Jawa Barat. *Pantun Jurnal Ilmiah Seni Budaya*, 119-131.
- [7.] Hartati. (1992). *Serat Siksa Kanda Karesian*. Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan .
- [8.] Hudaeri, M. (2003). Tasbih dan Golok: Kedudukan dan Peran Kiyai dan Jawara di Banten. *Al Qalam*, 141-172.
- [9.] Indrawardana, I. (2012). Kearifan Lokal Adat Masyarakat Sunda Dalam Hubungan Dengan Lingkungan Alam . *Komunitas*, 1-8.
- [10.] Jamaludin. (2022). *Estetika Sunda, konsep dan implemantasi pada wadah makanan pokok tradisional*. Bandung: Pustaka Jaya.
- [11.] Mahardika, F. (2013). Analisis Situs Arca Domas Berdasarkan Pola Rasionalitas Budaya Sunda. *Jurnal Waca Cipta* , 1-17.
- [12.] Muttaqien, T. Z. (2015, June 1). Rekonstruksi Visual Golok Walahir oleh Pak Awa Sebagai Upaya Pelestarian Identitas Budaya Masyarakat Desa Sindangkerta Kabupaten Tasikmalaya. *Tesis*.
- [13.] Muttaqin, T. Z. (2024, April 30). Langkah Melestarikan Golok Walahir Sebagai Salah Satu Identitas Budaya Masyarakat Sindangkerta Tasikmalaya. *Tugas kuliah Publikasi*, p. 3.
- [14.] Prasetyo, A. A. (2022). *Foto Story Golok Sebagai Identitas Budaya Betawi*. Bekasi: Universitas Mercu Buana.
- [15.] Sahara, A. D. (2023). Golok Seuat as Banten's Cultural Identity. *Jawi*, 135-147.
- [16.] Samson, P. (2024, April 18). Wawancara pelestarian golok Walahir. (T. Z. M, Interviewer)
- [17.] Samson, P. (2025, Mei 22). Wawancara perkembangan golok Walahir saat ini di Sindangkerta. (T. Z. M, Interviewer)
- [18.] Sumardjo, J. (2010). *Estetika Paradoks*. Bandung: STISI.
- [19.] Sumardjo, J. (2011). *Sunda Pola Rasionalitas Budaya*. Bandung: Kelir.
- [20.] Widianingsih, W. (2025). *Daftar Isian Profil Desa Sindangkerta*. Cipatujah: Kantor Desa Sindangkerta.