

## The History of Nawa Gapura Marga Raja, The First Gate of Cirebon

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**Abstract.** The gate is a building that during the Hindu and Buddhist times was part of the temple complex. gapura can be said to be an expression of expression related to the beliefs of its supporters. The gate is an architectural work that describes the cultural characteristics of a group of people. For Javanese people, the gate is treated with an understanding of tradition and belief, because it is the pattern and shape of the gate building structure by the Javanese cosmological tradition. This research uses a visual narrative method, to see the relationship between the past, present, and plans. Data collection through oral approaches, interviews, and literature studies. The results of this study show that the Nawa Gapura Marga Raja is a building that was founded by Pangeran Wangsakerta in 1677 AD, as a function of the entrance to Gotrasawala activities, then developed into the entrance to the harbormaster and secret door for the escape of the Keraton family members, and in the future, we must preserve it.

**Keywords:** *gapura, gotrasawala, nawa gapura marga raja, visual narrative*

### 1. Introduction

The gate is one element of the building form which has aesthetic value in addition to its technical function as a dividing gate between the following spaces. The shape of the gate has basically been known before Islam entered Indonesia, the shape of the gate has even been known since the Majapahit era [4].

The history of the city of Cirebon is inseparable from the historical stories of two major kingdoms in West Java, namely the Pakuan Padjadjaran Kingdom and the Galuh Kingdom, this story was recorded in the Purwaka Caruban Nagari manuscript written by Pangeran Arya Cirebon, in 1720 AD. The term Cirebon, originally from Caruban, then Carbon, Cerbon and finally Cirebon. Cirebon by residents is called "Nagari Gede", gradually pronounced by the common people "Garage", and then "Grage" [1]. The term Cirebon is "kirata-base" (volksetymology) derived from Cirebon. Ci in Sundanese language, means water and rebon, a type of small shrimp, which is an ingredient for making shrimp paste. This is related to the fact that Cirebon has been producing abundant and good quality shrimp and shrimp

paste from ancient times until today. There was an old man who gave information that the word Grage was said to come from Glagi, which is the name of dried shrimp as an ingredient in shrimp paste. The guardians are called Carbon "Puser Jagat", a country located in the middle of Java Island [2]. One of the works of art and culture in Indonesia in general and Cirebon in particular is the gate. Gapura comes from the Sanskrit language, namely "Gopura" which means the gate (Singgih, 2013). The gate is a building that during the Hindu - Buddhist period was part of the temple complex. The difference between the temple and the gate is in the room. The temple has a closed room, while the gate is a hallway that functions as a way out [3]. The existence of various gates in Java can still be seen today, especially Cirebon City, which is one of the areas in West Java which has many gates with unique and interesting characteristics. We can see this in several historical buildings, such as the Kasepuhan Palace Gate, Kanoman, Kacirebonan, Keprabonan, Gerbang Sembilan Sunan Gunung Jati Cemetery, Gate Nine (the first entrance to Kasepuhan Palace), Sunyaragi Cave Gate, and even several gates inside the Palace.

As a coastal city, it turns out that Cirebon is not only famous for its coastal areas, it is also famous for areas formed by large rivers, which have become one of the silent witnesses of the history of the development of Cirebon City. There is a historical building in the form of a gate, which is located on the riverbank, to be precise on the bank of the Kriyan River, which stands firmly in a historical building, which is about 300 years old. The building is named Lawang Sanga or Nawa gapura Marga Raja, as written in the manuscript of Pangeran Wangsakerta, entitled Pustaka Rajya Rajya i Bhumi Nusantara, Parwa 1, sargah 1, verse 224, which reads:

*"awighnam astu / Swasti / Telas sinusun mwang sinerat sayampratar tan henti/ de ning pirang sang manurat sinerat ri sasakala / **nawa gapura marga raja**/ Eka suklapaksa /Srawana masa // \* nihan ta / mangdadyakna dirge yusawastisanira sang manurat sang amaca / Sang anggeugeuh mwang sang angupakareksa pustaka /tasmata yudian hana kaluputan athawa kasasar ing serat sastreki / waraksamakna ta // mapan tan hana nusekang luput sakeng salah mwang kepan pun"* [11]

Translation:

*"Hopefully nothing gets in the way. Good luck, It has been compiled and written day and night endlessly. By several writers Nawa gapura marga raja (1599 saka / 1677 AD), 1st half bright, Moon srawana (2 July), Hopefully, it will be long. his age for those who write who read who store and who maintain this manuscript., So if there is an error or error in this literary writing, Forgive". (Opan Safari 2019).*



Figure 1. Nawa Gapura Marga Raja/Lawang Sanga

This building is the main gate of the Kasepuhan Palace in the early stages, which functions as the entrance from the direction of the Java sea, this building also functions as a gateway to the

harbormaster or trading activities related to the islands of Java and Cirebon in particular. Besides, this gate is also the entrance for envoys of kingdoms from all over the archipelago, and representatives from around the world, to attend the "Gotrasawala", an activity to compile historical stories on the development of Kingdoms in the archipelago, to be compiled into a master book of information on kingdom development. the kingdom in the archipelago, headed by the prince Wangsakerta.

The research concept that uses this visual narrative method tries to understand the expected future through present understanding (attention) which is related to the understanding and arrangement of the past.

## **2. Method**

The research will be carried out using a visual narrative method, namely structuring the past, present, and future, the result is that the future that is expected, through the present, is based on the understanding of the past that is remembered. Data collection through oral historical approaches, interviews, and literature studies.

## **3. Finding and Discussion**

### *3.1. Description of the past (Memory)*

This building originally served as the main gate to the Kasepuhan Palace from the direction of the Java Sea, to be precise next to the Kriyan river, approximately 1 KM from the high seas, apart from being the entrance gate for royal guests from the sea, this building also functions as the entrance to the harbormaster. at that time, even the broadcasters of Islam. According to the results of an interview with a Cirebon cultural observer, Mr. Casta, he stated that Nawa Gapura Marga Raja or Lawang Sanga, at the time of its development process, was influenced by the values of a very strong Islamic ideology, this is related to the concept of Wali Sanga, which indeed at that time it was the period of the development of Syiar Islam in Java, especially West Java.

"Kuncen"/The locksmith, Suwari, said that Nawa Gapura Marga Raja means door nine. Because there are nine doors consisting of one door in the middle, four doors on the side, three doors at the back, and one door at the back which is separate from the main building. The function of Lawang Sanga is as a berth for boats from various kingdoms in the archipelago and abroad. Before the guests go to Pakungwati Palace, they will first go through the Nawa Gapura Marga Raja gate. That said, it is closely related to the history of the saints. It is said that this is the place where the guardians congregate to conduct da'wah and spread Islam in Java. After finishing their negotiations, they then went by boat on the Kriyan river, to carry out their respective duties. It is also a way out for the royal family when there is an attack on the palace.

Apart from being a receiving building from the direction of the waters to the Palace, Nawa Gapura Marga Raja is also a symbolic building that plays a role in a series of "Syafaran" traditions carried out by traditional communities in Cirebon. The Nawa Gapura Barga Raja building itself is a "plastered" brick-walled building with nine doors (nawa = nine, gopura = door/gate).

According to the manuscript of Pustaka Rajya-Rajya i Nhumi archipelago, Nawa Gapura Marga Raja was built in 1677, at the initiative of Prince Wangsakerta, at the time of the "gotrasawala", activity or meeting of representatives of the kingdoms in the archipelago, in compiling a master book of the history of Kingdom development. -Kingdom in the archipelago. The "gotrasawala" activity was attended by approximately 77 representatives of the kingdoms throughout the archipelago, although according to Ayatrohaedi, the "gotrasawala" committee (prosecutor pipitu) had more than 77 invitations.

The invitees who attended Cirebon by way of the sea, then entered the mainland of Cirebon via the Kriyan river, then will meet a historical building right on the right side of the Kriyan river. The Kriyan

River is one of the important rivers that witness the history of the development of Cirebon City. Previously this river was used as the main entrance for merchants, invitations from the king, and even State representatives who were present in the city of Cirebon, to be precise the Kaepuhan Palace, by sea. The width of the river is about 15 meters, and the distance from the sea to the Nawa Gapura Marga raja building is about 1 km (current size).

There is a building right on the bank of the Kriyan river, approximately 10 meters away, the building is white, with a roof that looks Sundanese style (julang ngapak), the height of this building is about 3 meters, there are 9 gates, with very thick walls. The gate is exactly 1 in front of the building, which is the largest gate 2 in the middle of the right and left sides, but the gate of this section is covered by walls, and 5 at the back of the building (one on the left side, one on the right side and 3 right on the back). In addition, according to Mr. Suwari ("kuncen" nawa gapura marga raja), this building also functions as the entrance for tribute givers to the Cirebon kingdom.



Figure 2. Front of Nawa Gapura Marga Raja

### 3.2. Present Description (Attention)

This building was built in 1677, built at the same time as the Sang Ciptarasa Grand Mosque and Pejagrahan Mosque. "People think that if you want to go to the pilgrimage, you have to start it first at Pintu Sanga, then to other places," he said. Currently, the existence of the Nawa gapura clan raja is starting to be marginalized, marginalized, even beginning to be forgotten, some cultural activists, the history of Cirebon is starting to move, they are trying their hardest to protect and preserve the existence of this building because this building is one of the historical evidence of the development of the Sultanate and the development of the City. Cirebon. According to Opan Safarii, this building is indeed a small part of the Keraton Kasepuhan Cirebon complex. Initially, it also served as the entrance to the Keraton, but as its development, the entrance has shifted to the north, to be precise in front of the Keraton square.

Suwari also said that most of the Nawa Gapura Marga Raja buildings are still original, including the doors (in the middle of the building) which are made of teak wood. Currently, Lawang Sanga is no longer functional. However, in certain months, many people come for a pilgrimage. "Usually a lot of pilgrims who come every month of "Sura" and "Mulud". The Lawang Sanga building was renovated at the top in 1999," he said.

Squeezed between the houses of the crowded people and the narrow alleys around it, Nawa Gapura Marga Raja no longer seems to show its greatness and elegance. The building that used to be the main



entrance gate to the Palace from the direction of the waters is increasingly languishing because some parts of it have collapsed, damaged, and even disappeared without a trace.



Figure 3. Nawa Gapura Marga Raja, The position of the building which is squeezed by people's houses

The inspection road along Kali Kriyan also seems to have drowned this building because the floor surface has become lower than the surrounding road. Not to mention the ignorance of the surrounding community to maintain a clean environment is a major factor in the increasing slum area of this area. Nawa Gapura Marga Raja still stands directly facing the Kriyan River pier, it's just that the main gate of the water is now not a busy dock area where boats are moored there, but turned into a garbage dump.

Nawa Gapura Marga Raja is a historical building and is included in a cultural heritage building. It is located on the bank of the Kriyan River at the back of the Kasepuhan Palace Complex. This building had a very important role in the past because the guests of the Cirebon Sultanate who would stop at the palace came and went from the door. The role of Nawa Gapura Marga Raja is not only in the socio-economic field but also in other fields such as culture, education, and politics. In ancient times the Sultanate of Cirebon which was a large Islamic Sultanate had established multilateral relations with other countries, nations, and kingdoms, such as those from Gujarat, Campa, China, Arabia, and so on. The role of Lawang Sanga as the palace gate from the waters of the Java Sea is so important that it is said that the area used to be a fairly busy area.

The Nawa Gapura Marga Raja building has a unique architectural style because it is a combination of various cultural elements, namely Islam, Hindu / Buddhist, European, and Chinese. The roof construction is in the form of a tajug roof, but it is not supported by the construction of horses. The roof construction stands on a gunungan (sopi-sopi) with a sharply curved shape above it (in the shape of a cleaver), with the front and rear porches supported by two secures which have a style almost the same as the bolts in Chinese buildings. The pyramid-shaped tajug construction stands on the securities, so that the load force of the roof construction is not supported by walls and mountains, but is channeled through the bolts and column posts. The roof construction is made of wood with a roof tile covering. While on the wall there is a large door made of wood. The wooden construction on the roof and main door of this building are still in the same shape and material as it was originally, there has not been any renovation, only a little on the roof at the back.



Figure 4. The roof and main door of Nawa Gapura Marga Raja

The perimeter of the building is a brick wall with a semi-circular curved hole in the wall. This part is known as "lawang" or door. The number of doors is 9 with the following division: 1 main gate that has a door, 2 doors are "paduraksa" gates on the left and right outside the main building, 2 on the right and left behind, and 3 doors with an arc arch construction behind the building, 1 solid mercury gate on the right side behind the building.

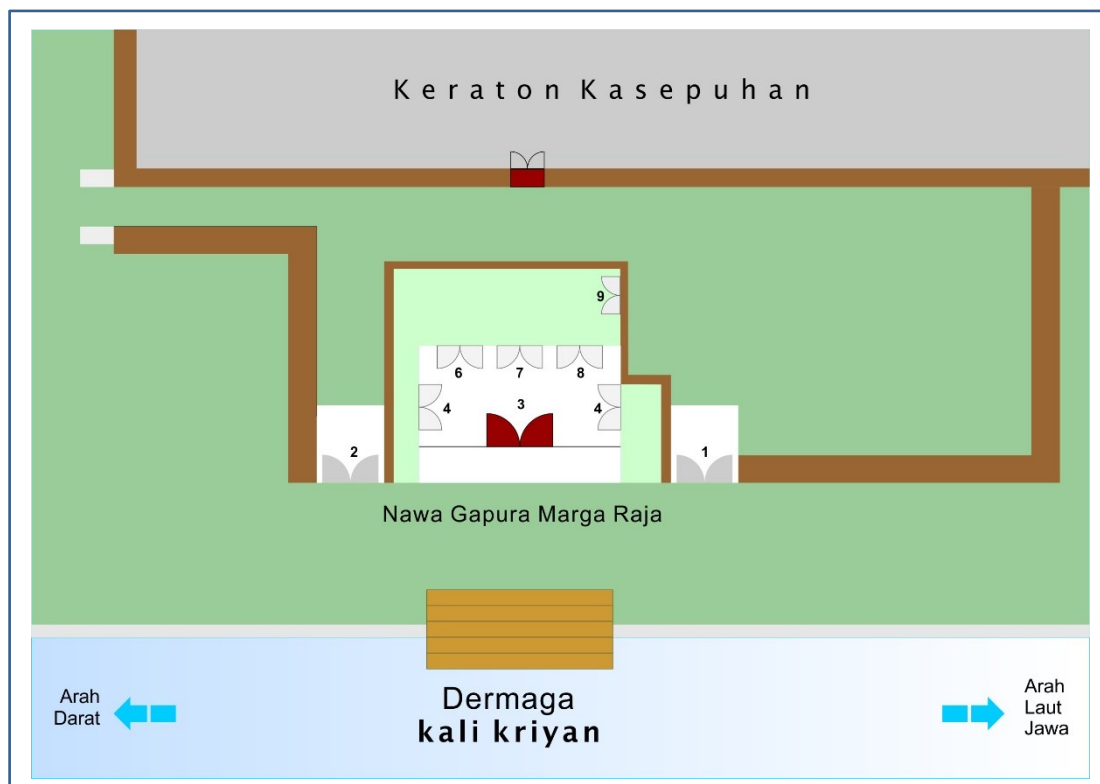


Figure 5. Nawa Gapura Marga Raja/Lawang Sanga floor plan





Figure 6. Nawa Gapura Marga Raja/Lawang Sanga

At this time, the condition of the Lawang Sanga building is very poor due to the lack of maintenance so that some parts of the building have been damaged and even collapsed. This situation is exacerbated by the existence of settlements that squeeze the Lawang Sanga building so that the area becomes a dense residential area. Access from Lawang Sanga to the Keraton has been closed by dense settlements, so to reach the Keraton we have to walk through narrow alleys between residential areas. On the left and right of the Lawang Sanga building, there used to be a "paduraksa" gate. By this time one of the gates had its roof construction collapsed, while the other gate was completely gone. The gate on the right side with two white Singa Barong statues in front of it, condition is not good anymore. Around the Lawang Sanga building, it is now bordered by brick walls to limit it with residential areas. However, the actual perimeter wall that is around Lawang Sanga is an integral part of the Keraton wall. At the back, we also see the temple gate of Bentar, which on the left and right is a statue in the form of a dragon snake. Unfortunately, both parts of the head of the statue are no longer intact.



(a)

(b)

(c)

Figure 7. "Paduraksa" Bagian Nawa Gapura Marga Raja/Lawang Sanga that collapsed

According to the narrative of Mr. Suari, Kuncen Nawa Gapura Marga Raja, when he was a child, on the lower right side of the building there used to be a tunnel connecting the river to the Palace. The road leads to Balong Gede which is located at the back of the Kasepuhan Palace. Due to silting, over time the tunnel hole closed and is now no longer visible.

Based on the explanation above, we can see that this building is starting to be abandoned by the people, especially the Cirebon people, only this can be seen from the current condition of the building, only a few groups or groups care about the existence and sustainability of this building.

### 3.3. *Present Description (Attention)*

The Nawa Gapura Marga Raja building itself has a unique architectural style because it is wrapped in a combination of various cultural elements, namely Hinduism, Arabic, China, and even Europe. The construction of the roof of the building is shaped like a tajug roof or a prayer room (synonymous with the roof of the Sundanese / julang ngapak concept building), which stands on a gunungan with a sharp curved shape on it or in the form of a cleaver with the front and rear foyers supported by two stylish curtains which is almost the same as the securities in Chinese buildings, as well as the thickness of the walls in a typical European style.

The Nawa Gapura Marga Raja building underwent renovation in 1999 on the roof. Then, in October 2014, Lawang Sanga was repaired with the budget for the Revitalization of the Palace. However, the repair itself has only touched the roof, by replacing rotten teak wood frames. Large trees that shaded Lawang Sanga were deliberately cut down to prevent collapses due to strong winds.

The condition in front of Lawang Sanga is currently paved with paved roads, while access to the river is made of terraced sheet piles. In front of the sheet, the pile becomes a garbage dump, so that the area becomes dirty and smelly. Meanwhile, pedestrian access to the palace gate is closed by residential areas. Even local residents use the space on the side of the palace wall as a place for drying clothes. It seems that it is necessary to think again about relocating settlements around Lawang Sanga, if the area is to be developed as a tourist area, while at the same time restoring the function of the building as the main gate of the palace from the waters of the Java Sea.

With the above conditions, it is important to have efforts to restructure by rehabilitating and revitalizing the area considering that the area is a cultural heritage area that needs to be preserved and preserved. Suwari added, on the other hand, the local community itself always holds the Barikan tradition every year. This tradition is carried out on the 10th of Muharram. At that time, the main door of Lawang Sanga was opened from 17.00 WIB until then the "Isya bada" held a "tawasul" and then closed again.

This strategy of the City Government is supported by the role of self-government, be it cultural heritage communities, cultural observers, historians as well as people who care about historical buildings starting to take realistic actions in preserving, preserving, and reviving cultural materials which have become silent witnesses to the history of the development of Cirebon City. One of them is the restoration of the Nawa Gapura Marga Raja area, to become one of the tourist areas that support the location, starting from the creation of a playground, relocation of garbage dumps, restoration of a small port on the Kriyan River, to paving the road to the Nawa gate Marga Raja building.



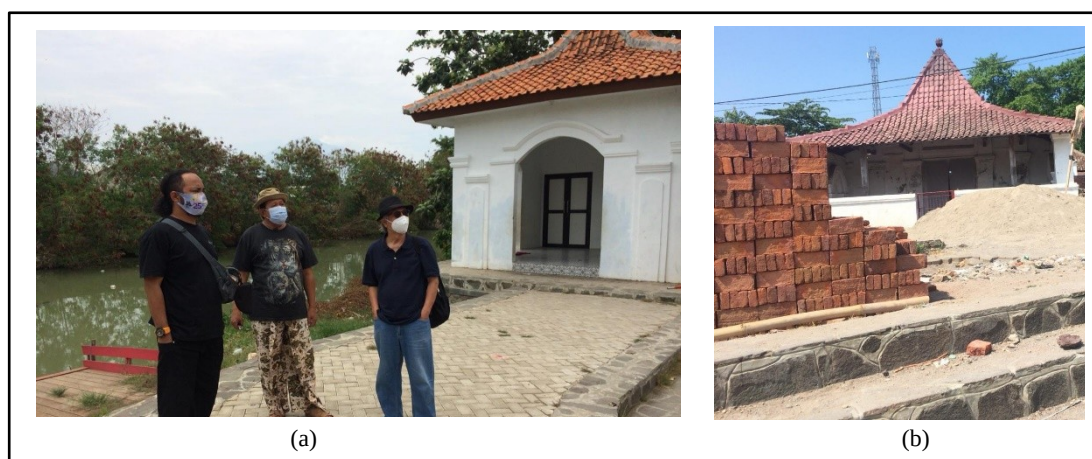


Figure 8. Restored area around Nawa Gapura Marga Raja/Lawang Sanga

In particular, academics and researchers who have special attention in the fields of art, culture, architecture, history, and even interior, can make a concrete contribution in preserving, maintaining and rebuilding, the spirit and integrity of mute cultural materials left behind by the geniuses of the past who were able to provide education. for the current millennial generation.

#### 4. Conclusion

Nawa Gapura Marga Raja is a cultural heritage area and a tourist area that needs to be preserved and preserved, then it returns back to its original function as the entrance to the Kasepuhan Palace from the direction of the Sea. Nawa Gapura Marga Raja, or better known as Lawang Sanga, is a historical building, as a silent witness to the development of the Palace and Cirebon City, both socially, economically, politically, trade and security, which was built by Pangeran Wangsakerta in 1677, as a function of the door. entering from the direction of the sea, for the guests of Gotrasawala's activities to compile the historical manuscripts of the kingdoms in the archipelago. Furthermore, in line with its development, a number of other functions of the building emerged, among others; Shahbandar gate to traders from other parts of the archipelago, especially traders from abroad (Arabic, Chinese, Indian, etc.). The Nawa Gapura Marga Raja building has a unique architectural style because it is a combination of various cultural elements, namely Islam, Hindu / Buddhist, European, and Chinese. The concept of Islam looks dominant in this building, especially in connection with the Wali Sanga, apart from implied deep meanings of the human concept, there is also an understanding of the pre-Islamic context, which is still preserved by the Cirebon people. It is necessary to revitalize the environment around this building, both the surrounding community, the surrounding area, as well as the Nawa Gapura Marga Raja building.

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