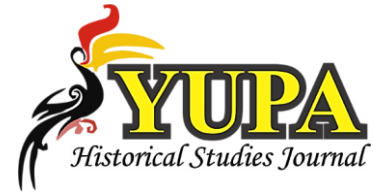


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## The History and Architecture of the Asal Penampaan Mosque in Penampaan Village, Blangkejeren District, Gayo Lues Regency

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**Abstract** This article delves into the history and architecture of the Penampaan Mosque situated in Penampaan Village, Blangkejeren Subdistrict, Gayo Lues Regency. The Penampaan Asal Mosque, located in Penampaan Village, Blangkejeren District, Gayo Lues Regency, stands as a testament to the rich cultural heritage and religious ethos of the local populace. Established in 815 AH/1412 AD, the mosque boasts unique traditional architecture, featuring walls crafted from a blend of soil and husks, and roofs adorned with nipah leaves, symbolizing serenity, and elegance. Serving as a hub for religious and communal gatherings, the Penampaan Asal Mosque has been a witness to the Islamic journey in the Gayo Lues region. Its enduring presence underscores the significance of safeguarding cultural legacies and religious principles. This study contributes to the understanding of local history and architectural heritage preservation efforts.

**Keywords:** History and architecture; Penampaan Mosque; Penampaan Village; Gayo Lues

**Abstrak** Artikel ini bertujuan untuk membahas sejarah dan arsitektur dari Masjid Penampaan yang terletak di Desa Penampaan, Kecamatan Blangkejeren, Kabupaten Gayo Lues. Masjid Asal Penampaan di Desa Penampaan, Kecamatan Blangkejeren, Kabupaten Gayo Lues, adalah landmark bersejarah yang mencerminkan kekayaan budaya dan nilai-nilai keagamaan masyarakat setempat. Masjid ini didirikan pada tahun 815 H/1412 M, dengan arsitektur tradisional yang unik, dinding terbuat dari campuran tanah dan sekam, serta atap menggunakan daun nipah, masjid ini menyiratkan kedamaian dan keindahan. Sebagai pusat kegiatan keagamaan dan sosial, Masjid Asal Penampaan telah menjadi saksi dari perjalanan Islam di wilayah Gayo Lues. Keberadaannya yang kokoh mengajarkan pentingnya melestarikan warisan budaya dan nilai-nilai keagamaan.

**Kata kunci:** Sejarah dan arsitektur; Masjid Penampaan; Desa Penampaan; Gayo Lues



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## INTRODUCTION

Gayo Lues, situated in the province of Aceh, Indonesia, stands out as a region rich in cultural heritage and Islamic tradition. A tangible manifestation of this richness lies in the presence of several traditional mosques that adorn the distinct landscape of Gayo Lues. Among these traditional mosques are the Asal Penampaan Mosque, the Lampahan Mosque, the Tuha Indrapuri Mosque, and the Baiturrahman Darul Hikmah Mosque.

Traditional mosques, including the Asal Penampaan Mosque in Penampaan Village, Gayo Lues, play a central role in representing the cultural wealth and architectural artistry of Islam. The characteristic architecture of traditional mosques, reflecting the influence of local art and culture, creates harmony between Islamic elements and local distinctiveness. As expressed by Khanif Yulianto in his book "Mosque Architecture: Identity and Function in Culture and Local Wisdom" (2015), "Traditional mosques are not only places of worship but also embodiments of architectural beauty reflected in their form and details." At first glance, traditional mosques often captivate attention with the beauty of their distinctive structures and the use of natural materials that blend harmoniously with the surrounding environment (Yulianto, 2015).

In the construction of traditional mosques such as the Asal Penampaan Mosque, elements such as domes, minarets, and artistic ornaments are employed to create structures that not only serve the religious function as places of worship but also serve as representations of the history, beliefs, and culture of the local community (Djamal, 2019).

The Asal Penampaan Mosque, deeply rooted in Penampaan Village, serves as a reflection of the cultural and religious diversity in Gayo Lues. Its design and architecture are considered to reflect the long history of the local community, while also manifesting Islamic values. Through in-depth research, we can understand how this mosque, as a place of worship, also bears witness to the local community's long journey.

Understanding traditional mosques, particularly the Asal Penampaan Mosque, is not only about appreciating its physical architecture but also about unraveling the values and traditions that are an integral part of local identity. By preserving and understanding traditional mosques, we nurture a cultural heritage that has evolved over centuries, while also maintaining the unique identity and diversity of Islamic architectural art (Batubara, Asari, & Faishal, 2023). However, it is regrettable that literature and writings that deeply examine the Asal Penampaan Mosque are still scarce. This paper emphasizes the importance of conducting comprehensive research on the history and architecture of this mosque. Thus, it can reveal the elements that make it unique and its role in shaping the local community's identity. This research is expected to enrich understanding of the cultural and religious values embodied in the mosque's structure, while also safeguarding and appreciating the local heritage that has existed since ancient times.

Research on the Asal Penampaan Mosque is not just about uncovering its physical existence but also about revealing the stories embedded within its walls, narrating how the past shapes the present. Thus, this research serves as a step towards preserving and understanding local history, filling the knowledge gaps that still exist, and inviting us to reflect upon and appreciate the values contained within it.

Studies on historical mosques and their architecture have been widely conducted, including "The Architecture of the Surakarta Great Mosque as a Form of Cultural Acculturation," written by Hasna Dzaki Asasi. In her work, she reveals that the Surakarta Great Mosque in Java reflects cultural acculturation. The mosque's creators successfully merged Islamic teachings with concepts from various places such as Java, Europe, and the Middle East. The acculturation is evident in the elements of this Kasunanan mosque. Besides serving as a place of worship, the mosque also reflects the authority of the kingdom's leaders, which influences the mosque's architectural style. In other words, a building's architecture not only reflects local culture and its environment but also adapts to various external cultures. The role of local rulers also influences the acculturation process that occurred in the Surakarta Great Mosque (Asasi & Sianipar, 2021).

Another study written by Rukha Maulida, titled "The Syncretism of Islamic and Nusantara Architecture in the Central Java Great Mosque Buildings," explores the unique characteristics of Central Java's Great Mosque architecture, which combines Islamic and Nusantara architecture. The building blends Javanese architectural elements, such as pyramid-shaped roofs, with Islamic architectural features like the main dome with a 20-meter diameter and four minarets as universal symbols of Islamic architecture. The mosque's courtyard is equipped with a 7500 square meter plaza featuring six giant electric umbrellas, similar to the Nabawi Mosque in Medina, representing Islamic architecture. The plaza also includes the Al-Qanatir Gate, featuring Roman architecture with large pillars and arches, displaying 25 columns as symbols of the 25 prophets. Thus, the Central Java Great Mosque demonstrates harmony between local uniqueness and universal values in Islamic architecture (Maulida, Nurlita, Hikmah, & Hidayatullah, 2021).

Another article discussing the history and architecture of mosques is Asep Saefullah's "The Kasunyatan Mosque of Banten: Historical and Architectural Review." In his work, he explains that the Kasunyatan Mosque, also known as the Great Kasunyatan Mosque, serves as tangible evidence of Islam's development in Banten and the Nusantara region in general. Despite not being as famous as the Great Mosque of Banten in Old Banten, its significant role in history cannot be overlooked. Established by Sultan Maulana Yusuf, the second Sultan of the Banten Sultanate (1570-1780 AD), the mosque was chosen as a center for religious and scholarly activities. Saefullah also describes that the architecture of the Kasunyatan Mosque reflects its antiquity with its square shape, massive foundation, thick walls, short mihrab, and pulpit. Despite undergoing repairs, its original structure remains intact (Saefullah, 2018).

As for the specific study or writing that specifically examines the Penampaan Asal Mosque, it is a book written by Laina Hilma Sari, et al., titled "Local Wisdom of Old Highland Gayo Mosque Architecture." In this book, much is explained about the mosque architecture in the Gayo Highlands, including the architecture and changes that have occurred in the Penampaan Asal Mosque. The research findings state that the Penampaan Asal Mosque has undergone changes in physical aspects related to material modernity (Sari, Laina Hilma Sari, & Yunita Idris, 2023).

Based on previous research, the historical and architectural aspects of the Penampaan Asal Mosque in Penampaan Village, Blangkejeren Subdistrict, Gayo Lues Regency, have not been fully elaborated and require verification through written sources. Some previous writings are still partial, especially in discussing historical objects inside and around the mosque, which are almost untouched except for the bathing and ablution pools and its gate. Therefore, the problem in this writing is how the history of the development of the Penampaan Asal Mosque and its architecture, including historical objects inside it. The aim is to understand the history of the development of the Penampaan Asal Mosque, its architectural aspects, and the historical objects inside it. The benefit of this study is expected to add data and information about ancient historical mosques in Indonesia, especially in Gayo Lues, and provide theoretical affirmation, especially regarding the characteristics of ancient mosques in the region.

## **METHOD**

This research adopts a qualitative approach with a historical method to introduce the history and architecture of the Penampaan Asal Mosque in Penampaan Village, Blangkejeren Subdistrict, Gayo Lues Regency. The research method follows the five stages of the historical method as outlined by Kuntowijoyo: topic selection, source collection, verification, interpretation, and historiography (Kuntowijoyo, 2013). In the heuristic stage, the researcher collects historical and architectural data sources of the Penampaan Asal Mosque from various sources, including archives, government documents, and interviews with local community figures. The critical stage involves verification and critical evaluation of the validity of the data sources to ensure the accuracy of the obtained information.

The interpretation process is conducted to analyze and interpret the data to understand the historical context and architectural characteristics of the Penampaan Asal Mosque. Identifying factors influencing the mosque's development, both historically and architecturally, is the main focus at this stage. Furthermore, in the historiography stage, the researcher constructs a historical narrative and architectural characteristics of the Penampaan Asal Mosque based on the analysis results. The research findings contextualize within the framework of local history and cultural sustainability.

Data collection techniques involve direct observation of the Penampaan Asal Mosque to identify architectural details, open interviews with community leaders, religious figures, or relevant parties, and analysis of documents related to the mosque's history and construction. With this method, it is hoped that the research can provide a holistic understanding of the history and architecture of the Penampaan Asal Mosque, while also raising awareness of the importance of preserving local culture in Penampaan Village.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **The History of the Penampaan Asal Mosque**

The Penampaan Asal Mosque, located in Gayo Lues Regency, is one of the historical legacies that enrich the cultural wealth of Indonesia. As the oldest mosque in the region, the Penampaan Asal Mosque has silently witnessed various events throughout history. Estimated to have been built since 1214 AD, before Islam widely took root in Gayo Lues, its construction aimed not only as a place of worship but also as a crucial social and political center to unite the Muslim community and strengthen their spirits.

Throughout its history, the mosque served not only as a place for prayer but also as a venue for gatherings, consultations, and discussions on various issues facing the community (Khoiriyah et al., 2023). Like during the time of Prophet Muhammad, the mosque also functioned as a center of governance, and so does the Penampaan Asal Mosque in Gayo Lues. Before Islam spread to this region, the Penampaan Asal Mosque stood as a symbol of da'wah and served as the initial foundation in the spread of Islam amidst the Gayo Lues community.

It's noteworthy that the name "Asal" is believed to derive from a word referring to the origin or the initial foundation in establishing Islam in Gayo Lues. This aligns with the principle exemplified by Prophet Muhammad, where the establishment of a da'wah center is a crucial initial step before the widespread dissemination of Islam (Yatim, 1993). Islamic figures involved in spreading the religion in Gayo Lues utilized the Penampaan Asal Mosque as their operational base and the center of their da'wah activities (Azmi, 2018).

Although it's challenging to precisely trace when the Penampaan Asal Mosque was established, various sources provide different estimations. Some local communities, including elders and religious figures, cannot provide concrete certainty about the mosque's founding year, only recounting what they heard from previous generations. However, some sources indicate that the Penampaan Asal Mosque was founded in 815 AH/1412 AD (Sabil, 2009). Additionally, there are indications that the mosque existed before the Dutch arrived in Gayo Lues, reinforced by a photo displayed on the outer wall of the mosque, showing its considerable age.

As the population grows and the need for larger places of worship increases, the Asal Mosque underwent changes. To accommodate the growing number of worshippers, a new mosque

was built next to the existing Asal Mosque. Both buildings appear integrated, with the original Asal Mosque remaining the main structure, while the second part serves as an expansion of the mosque. Thus, visitors will find two spaces available for prayer and other religious activities within the mosque complex (Sari et al., 2023).

The materials used in the construction of the Penampaan Asal Mosque are traditional materials commonly found in ancient mosques in Indonesia. The mosque walls are built from a mixture of soil and husks, while the roof uses nipah leaves (Sofiana & Naufal, 2023). In the inland mountains of Gayo Lues, there is lush growth of serule and nipah trees. The leaves from both types of trees are used as roofing materials in the construction of traditional buildings in the area. Below is an image of the Penampaan Asal Mosque, which is still very well preserved in its original state, before the addition of the new mosque building.



Figure 1: The Original Penampaan Asal Mosque  
Source: Document by Aji Sofiana Putri



Figure 2: The Current Penampaan Asal Mosque (2023)  
Source: Authors' Personal Documentation

## Architecture of the Penampaan Asal Mosque

The physical form of the Penampaan Asal Mosque has undergone changes over time in response to the development of the era and the needs of the local community. These variations are evident from year to year.

1) Initial Form (Before 1989):

- a) The mosque was initially open without walls, with a wide, tiered roof.
- b) Pillars and perforated walls separated the building space.
- c) The floor was made of compacted earth covered with woven mats made from leaves.

2) 1900s:

- a) Construction of a new Middle Eastern-style mosque measuring 60 x 40 meters.
- b) This new mosque was built adjacent to the original mosque, which retained its original character.
- c) Addition of wooden lattice walls and inner wooden walls to prevent visibility from the outside.
- d) The new mosque was not used for prayers, only opened on Fridays for visits and bazaars.

3) 1989:

- a) Glass was installed in the ventilation holes at the top (mosque dome).
- b) Likely for temperature insulation purposes, while maintaining the need for illumination.

4) 1990s:

- a) Surrounding walls were constructed of rough clay up to 1 meter high outside the pillars.
- b) These walls served to emphasize the physical boundary between the interior and exterior of the building without compromising the quality of illumination inside the mosque.
- c) Clay acted as a binder with stone material inside.

5) 2002:

- a) The mosque was rehabilitated to become the city icon and a cultural heritage mosque after Blangkejeren became the capital of Gayo Lues Regency.
- b) This step reaffirmed Blangkejeren's existence as a capital city with a long history (Sari et al., 2023).

Below are two images showing the architecture of the Penampaan Asal Mosque in the past and present.

1. Roof and Pillar Structure of the Penampaan Asal Mosque The Penampaan Asal Mosque has a pyramidal roof, with four triangles forming one layer of the pyramid roof, and another four triangles forming the second layer.
2. This roof design is an adaptation of the saddle roof, with each triangle having a 30-degree slope to efficiently direct rainwater flow. The image below shows the shape and arrangement of the roof of the Penampaan Asal Mosque.

#### *Roof and Pillar Structure of the Penampaan Asal Mosque*

The Penampaan Asal Mosque features a pyramid-shaped roof, with four triangles forming one layer of the pyramid roof, and another four triangles forming the second layer. This roof design is an evolution of the saddle roof, with each triangle having a 30-degree slope to efficiently direct rainwater flow. The image below illustrates the shape and arrangement of the Penampaan Asal Mosque's roof.



Figure 3: Roof Shape of Penampaan Mosque  
Source: Authors' Personal Documentation

Based on the picture above, we can see that the roof is made of nipa leaves. At that time almost the entire area around the mosque was full of nipah leaves:



Figure 4: The shape of the Soko Guru Pole of the Penampaan Origin Mosque  
Source: Authors' Personal Documentation



According to data presented by Budi (2006), for mosques built between the 15th and 19th centuries, the majority were square-shaped, and more than 50% had four main pillars as the primary construction located in the center of the main hall. These four main pillars are called Soko Guru. There are four main pillars (Soko Guru) that support the roof load. These four main columns also function to channel the load from the sloping roof through beams connecting the main columns or pillars to the outer columns surrounding the building (Budi, 2006).

#### *Foundation of the Penampaan Asal Mosque*

The foundation has a peg or tenon shape at its end that merges with the base of the building, especially the floor. Although the tenon is not clearly visible, assumptions are based on the common type found in traditional wooden constructions like Joglo in Java (Robiyanti et al., 2022). This foundation excels in withstanding earthquake loads, providing stability when facing lateral loads. However, potential damage to the tenon can cause the base of the column to shift and affect the stability of the upper building. Similar conditions can occur if the tenon is not available at the base of the column.

#### *Floor of the Penampaan Asal Mosque*

The use of flooring material in the Penampaan Asal Mosque maintains authenticity by using clay obtained from the surrounding area of the mosque. This material is placed directly on the mosque floor and covered with ambal. This approach not only reflects the authenticity of culture and tradition but also aims to preserve the sanctity of the mosque floor. The decision to use clay from the surrounding area not only reflects sustainable policies by utilizing local resources but also enriches the spiritual dimension by directly connecting the mosque with its surrounding environment.

Using ambal as a covering layer on the mosque floor is a strategic step to protect and preserve the sanctity values. By utilizing ambal, the mosque can maintain the authenticity of clay materials and reduce the risk of damage or erosion that may occur due to external influences. This choice not only emphasizes sustainability through the use of local resources but also depicts policies of care and preservation towards the cultural heritage contained within the Penampaan Asal Mosque. As a result, the use of floor materials consisting of clay and ambal is not just a technical aspect of construction but also reflects spiritual, cultural, and environmental values. The close connection between the floor material and its surrounding environment creates harmony between physical aspects and religious values, in line with the concept of sustainability and tradition preservation in the context of the Penampaan Asal Mosque.

#### *Entrance Door of the Penampaan Asal Mosque*

The doors in the Penampaan Asal Mosque are made of wood. Interestingly, these doors have not undergone significant changes in shape over time. However, the local community has

made simple updates to the doors by repainting them without altering their shape. This action is more aesthetic in nature, focusing on enhancing the visual appearance of the doors.

The finishing applied to the doors of the Penampaan Asal Mosque is also quite simple. The local community tends to renew the doors by applying a fresh coat of paint while retaining their original shape. The choice of paint colors also holds aesthetic value, with door frames painted black while the central part of the door carvings adorned with gold paint. This color combination not only adds an attractive visual touch but also reflects the richness of local culture and traditions.

The maintenance and renewal of the doors of the Penampaan Asal Mosque with a simple approach while preserving their original characteristics depict the community's attitude towards the preservation of traditional values. Although functionally the doors may be considered simple architectural elements, in a cultural context, the doors of the Penampaan Asal Mosque remain valuable and appreciated over time.



Figure 5: Entrance of Masjid Asal Penampaan  
Source: Authors' Personal Documentation

## CONCLUSION

The history of the Penampaan Asal Mosque signifies a significant role in the development of Islam in the region, estimated to have been built in 815 H/1412 CE. Its presence serves as early evidence of the spread of Islam in the inland mountains of Gayo Lues, providing a rich historical foundation imbued with religious values. The architecture of the Penampaan Asal Mosque demonstrates ongoing adaptation over time, from its initial simple form to changes reflecting

cultural dynamics and societal needs. Despite undergoing renovations, preservation efforts involve the local community in maintaining the original characteristics of the building, including aspects such as door arrangement, flooring materials, and foundations. By delving deeper into the history and architecture of the Penampaan Asal Mosque, this research contributes to the understanding of cultural and religious heritage in the region. These conclusions underscore the importance of preserving and honoring historical sites, such as the Penampaan Asal Mosque, as integral parts of the local community's identity and cultural wealth that must be safeguarded for future generations.

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