




## READING ACTIVITIES IN KAUMAN AREA, PARAKAN, INDONESIA, DURING THE COLONIAL ERA USING MAPPING ANALYSIS

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### ABSTRACT

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This paper aims to identify the activities of a local organization known as Barisan Bambu Runcing as a part of the undertakings of Indonesian warriors in the colonial era, particularly in Kauman, Parakan, Temanggung, Central Java, Indonesia. The role of Indonesian warriors was very particular, as it involved their preparation to fight the Dutch and the Japanese. By identifying such activities in the colonial era, future generations will understand historical events, so they will appreciate history. We have chosen a heritage city in Indonesia as a case study to achieve the research objectives, one known as a city of Bambu Runcing (sharpened bamboo for a traditional weapon), namely Parakan, which is located in Central Java, Indonesia. Parakan, which has been designated as a heritage city since 2015, has a unique character. Its historical area is separated into two sectors: Kauman Area and Pecinan Area. This research employed Kauman Area for the case study because it has a long significant history as the place where Bambu Runcing was established. A qualitative method was used, specifically a historical method through the oral tradition approach, in order to reveal the activities of a moslem Indonesian warriors' organization which known as Barisan Bambu Runcing in the colonial era, particularly in Kauman Area.

**Contribution/Originality:** This study originates new approach in architectural research. Delivering oral tradition approach, this study will contribute how an architectural research could be conducted with new approach in qualitative methods.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

As a part of our research, this paper discusses the activities of Indonesian warriors in the colonial era, which were very significant at this time. Kauman Area in Parakan is a heritage area in the city, the other being Pecinan, which is located in East Parakan and is also known as Parakan Wetan, with a Chinese community. Kauman, as part of the heritage area of Parakan, has a very significant character and history, notably as the home of the man who introduced Bambu Runcing as a traditional weapon for Indonesia warriors in the colonial era. His name was KH Subuki, one of the great Muslim leaders of Parakan. He was known as a humble and kind person and became a Muslim leader in the 1940s. As mentioned in Navapan and Oonprai (2019) that stated about how historic area can contributes to the memory of the city, creates urban identity and forms the modern townscape. Parakan as a heritage city since December 2015 which has been establishe by the central government of Indonesia, is a part of

the memory and identity of the colonial era.

To uncover the activities of Indonesian warriors in Kauman Area during the colonial era, we have interviewed some significant figures who understand a great deal about the history of Barisan Bambu Runcing and Barisan Muslim Temanggung (the organization of Indonesian Muslim warriors who used sharpened bamboo as a traditional weapon). These figures are descendants of KH Subuki and members of the local community who understand the history of Kauman Area, particularly the activity of Barisan Bambu Runcing and Barisan Muslim Temanggung. We chose some grandsons of KH Subuki, as we considered the best informants would be ones related to the history.

Some primary sources that were collected from the respondents helped us to sort the information and map the data. By using this mapping of activities, we were able easily observe the activities of Indonesia warriors in the colonial era, enabling the objectives of the research to be achieved completely.

## 2. STUDY AREA AND DATA

### 2.1. Parakan in the Colonial Era

The colonial era in Indonesia began when the Portuguese came to Maluku in 1509. In 1595, they were driven out, although the impact of the Portuguese was very significant. The Spanish also colonised Sulawesi (Celebes) in 1521, and before being expelled in 1692. At the same time, in the 1500s to 1600s, the Dutch started to colonise Indonesia in Java, particularly in Batavia in 1595. After the Javanese Kingdom (Mataram Kingdom) had vanished, the Dutch became more powerful in their colonisation of Java Island. After the Giyanti Treaty in Kedu District, Temanggung, the Mataram Kingdom was split up into two kingdoms. Subsequently, Kedu District was no longer one of the properties of the Kingdom, and in 1811 the Dutch colonised Kedu. The Dutch then established a new local government structure known as the Menoreh District, which remains in Parakan today see [Figure 1](#).

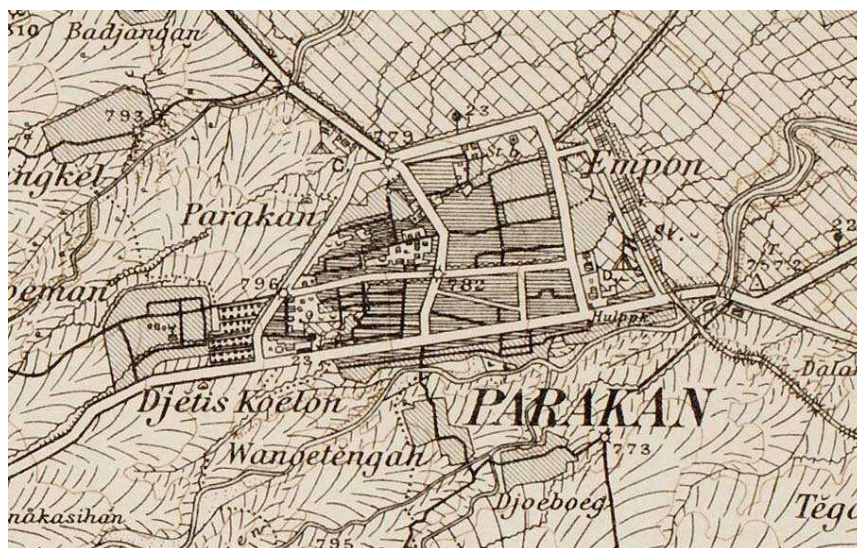


Figure-1. A Map of Parakan as a small city in Java Island

The battle against the Dutch continued, until the great war called Perang Diponegoro (Diponegoro's War) was fought from 1825 to 1830. This war in Java was led by the Pangeran Diponegoro (The Prince of Diponegoro) for five years. After the war finished, many of his followers stayed in Parakan, particularly Kauman Area, settling there and having families. These followers tried to hide their original identity from the Dutch by mingling with the native community of Kauman and waiting for the new leader to fight another battle with the Dutch. One of the *pendherek*, or followers, was KH Abdul Wahab, who came from Melangi, Yogyakarta. He lived in Jetis, Parakan, as a follower of Pangeran Diponegoro, and had a family there, with a son named KH Harun Ar Rosyid, the father of KH

Subuki, who was born in Kauman, Parakan in 1858. The significant history of Kauman began when KH Subuki developed Bambu Runcing as a traditional weapon.

## 2.2. Barisan Muslim Temanggung

In 1942, the Dutch were driven out of Indonesia by Indonesian warriors using the traditional weapon called Bambu Runcing, which was introduced by KH Subuki see Figure 2. He gathered together all the young people to prepare to fight the Dutch and established a squad called *Hizbullah-Sabilillillah* under his leadership. Asrof as a member of the third generation of KH Subuki, explained the chronology of how Bambu Runcing was introduced by his great-grandfather. At that time, Indonesian warriors did not have any effective weapons to fight the Dutch. Using natural resources including the abundant bamboo forests in Jetis and Kedu, KH Subuki tried to awaken the spirit of Indonesian warriors, particularly the young ones, by introducing Bambu Runcing as a traditional weapon. This lack of weapons had previously discouraged all Indonesian warriors, particularly the young ones, in Java Island.



Figure-2. Significant person in Kauman Area, Parakan known as Jendral Bambu Runcing, his name is KH Subuki, he has been proposed as an Indonesian National Hero.

To respond to the situation, KH Subuki tried to gather thousands of Indonesian warriors and prayed to Allah SWT to give them strength to fight the Dutch. Referring to the document of Barisan Muslim Temanggung, the content of the prayer is as follows:

## 2.3. *Laa Tudrikuhul Absar Wahurwa Tudhrikuhul Absar Wahurwa Latiful Kabir.*

The meaning of the prayer is basically to believe that everything is under Allah's will. According to the interview with Asrof and Basori, Japanese warriors had come to Parakan, but had then been driven away by the Indonesian warriors armed with Bambu Runcing under the leadership of KH Subuki see Figure 3. This news spread to all the cities in Indonesia, particularly Java Island, and consequently thousands of Indonesian warriors came to Parakan by rail or on foot to meet KH Subuki and to ask for his prayers and blessings.





**Figure-3.** Kyai Haji Subuki in his daily activity, with his stick which there is a sharp knife inside the stick.

Referring to the literature and interviews, at least a thousands of Indonesian warriors came to the area of Kauman each day. They all used the public spaces to conduct many activities during their visit to the area. All the Indonesian warriors worked together with the local community (farmers, Islamic students and civilians) to make Bambu Runcing within the area. According to the generation of KH Subuki, all the Indonesian warriors from other cities in Indonesia, particularly those from Java Island, stayed in Kauman Area, and lived on the street and in the alleys. They made Bambu Runcing, ate, slept and prayed using all the public spaces within the area. They came by train from Parakan railway station and also walked from other cities near Parakan. At that time, Parakan, just like Mecca, was known as a sleepless city. The alleys within Kauman Area were full of Indonesian warrior who were waiting for their turn to ask for a blessing and prayer from KH Subuki. All the alleys within Kauman Area were full of thousands of Indonesian warriors; they were no longer able to stay in the houses or mosques, but slept in the street. The area became a transit place for Indonesian warriors before going to fight the Dutch or Japanese soldiers. All the activities related to these events will be described in the following section.

### 3. METHOD

We have explored and revealed various activities during the colonial era in Parakan through oral tradition, concentrating the findings into one area known as Kauman Area. We used the oral tradition approach, with the local community as a primary source, to uncover the activities of the community, particularly those of Indonesia warriors who came from all cities in Indonesia. We employed the descriptive qualitative research method, employing a descriptive narrative approach. Oral tradition was used as an approach to reveal what took place in Kauman Area, particularly the activities during the colonial era related to the history of Bambu Runcing as a traditional weapon for Indonesian warriors. As Vansina (2006) states, oral tradition can be used as an approach in the architectural research of history. He adds that oral tradition can become a verbal testimony from one generation to the next. According to this, we have employed this approach to reveal the hidden history of Kauman Area, particularly that related to the architectural aspect, in this case public space as a living space. The research was conducted for around 12 months, with observations and interviews. We interviewed various people to obtain significant information about the history of Parakan, particularly Kauman Area. To achieve the research aim, we created a family tree of KH Subuki to identify significant respondents, and then interviewed them using the oral tradition approach.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1. Oral Tradition as an Approach

Purwantiastning *et al.* (2018) consider some studies which discuss oral tradition as an approach in historical research. One such study is that of Grant (2014) who states that oral tradition accompanies almost every aspect of community life. The form of oral tradition varies from poetry, song, story, legend and myth. It has been regarded as a form of knowledge that can be delivered from one generation to another, particularly regarding historical events. Grant explains that it can become a form of entertainment or education.

Moreover, Vansina (2006) as a historian who has employed oral tradition as an approach in historical research, has defined it as a verbal testimony which is transmitted from one generation to the next. He also mentions that oral tradition as an approach can become history itself, as it will become an appropriate approach to uncovering historical events through the local community.

We employed oral tradition as an approach, with reference to Vansina (2006) who states that “oral tradition exclusively consists of hearsay accounts, that is, testimonies that narrate an event which has not been witnessed and remembered by the informant himself, but which he has learned about through hearsay”. By using information from the significant respondents, we have revealed the history of Parakan, particularly that of Kauman Area as the location of Bambu Runcing.

We have established that oral tradition has been regarded as a source of knowledge about the past. This approach could use the traditions which occupy a special place among the various kinds of historical sources. There is a significant value of oral tradition as a historical source. Purwantiastning *et al.* (2018) refer to the work of Vansina (2006) who argues that this oral tradition approach in some traditional regions was used as oral testimony concerning the past transmitted from one person to another, and from one generation to another. Vansina also explains that there are many historical sources, including ancient ones based on oral tradition, particularly in some areas which have no written documentation about their history. To construct the past, or history, the local community uses oral tradition from one generation to another.

We have also used some written sources to make a comparison with the history revealed from the oral tradition approach. We have compared this information from written sources with the information from the designated respondents using the interpretation approach. We also interviewed some academics, historians and local community members, particularly ones from the Kyai Haji Subuki generation. They explained the history of Parakan, particularly that of Bambu Runcing, from oral tradition, based on information they received from their parents or grandparents. The history of Parakan has always remained in their hearts and minds, from one generation to another, until the present day.

We also believe that this oral tradition approach will broaden the knowledge of the study and also improve the quality of the research. Moreover, by using the oral tradition approach, we have understood that architectural research as a historical method can be consequently supplemented.

Purwantiastning *et al.* (2018) also refer to the argument of Jones and Russell (2012) who discuss the relation between orality and writing in the context of social memory, which is particularly important in respect to historical archaeology, a field that has long been preoccupied with the relationship between material culture and texts. They also state that social memories are composed of the fragmented stories that surround specific places and events, and which are passed around within and between generations. This condition will gain the historical attachment of someone through the oral tradition. As mentioned by Purwantiastning *et al.* (2018) that historical attachment would give emotional impact to each person, differently because the existence of historical building or sites will provide different experiences to individuals.

### 4.2. Public Space as a Living Space

In architecture, there are two aspects that cannot be separated from each other: form and space, both of which

are important. Space can be tangible or intangible, depending on how one describes or feels it. A philosopher who studied space was Lefebvre. According to Lefebvre (1991) space is formed from human spatial, which depends on the activity within it. In addition, the spatial concept of space is influenced by human knowledge, which plays an important role in formulating space for humans, and how they describe the sense of place.

How a space can become sacred depends on how people have a sense of place in relation to it. For example, a mosque is a holy place for Muslims because all Muslims believe that it is a place to pray, so it is sacred for them. On the other hand, a church becomes a holy place for Christians because it is place for them to pray. Thus, the meaning of place is very important for humans. The sense of place depends on how people treat the place as how it is.

Moreover, a sense of place is essential if there is an important factor related to the place, such as an event in the past or its history. Common public spaces will become significant if a significant event or history occurrence took place within them. For example, if there is an open space such as an *alun-alun*, a common public space which normally has no history at all, if there has been a significant event related to it, it will become a significant within the area. This refers to Lefebvre, who argues that collective space is the real space, produced by social relationships within the community:

*“(Social) space is a (social) product ... the space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and of action; that in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power; yet that, as such, it escapes on part from those who would make use of it. The social and political (state) forces which engendered this space now seek, but fail, to master it completely; the very agency that has forced spatial reality towards a sort of uncontrollable autonomy now strives to run it into the ground, then shackle and enslave it.” (1991, 26-27)*

From the above discussion, it is clear that common public space could become a particular space for humans if there is significant activity within it. As in architecture, Lefebvre said that a space could be formed from human activity, which could produce a significant space between people. According to the theory of Lefebvre, we have seen in our interpretation the activities of Indonesian warriors within Kauman Area, particularly in the alleys in the colonial era. Common public space in the area became significant space because of the activities of the temporary immigrants who visited the area for a short period.

#### 4.3. Activity of the Indonesian Warriors within Kauman Area, Parakan

According to the interviews with some of the respondents, particularly the third and fourth generation of KH Subuki and the local community who knew the history of Parakan very well, particularly Kauman Area in the colonial era, we classified the activities within the area at this time as follows:

1. The activity of Indonesian warriors from other cities who arrived from Parakan railway station and who had come on foot from the surrounding region.
2. The activity of Indonesian warriors who worked together with the local community (farmers, islamic students and civilians) in making Bambu Runcing.
3. The activity of all the Kyai (moslem leaders) in Kauman Area in giving blessings and prayers for the warriors before they were ready to go to battle with the colonial soldiers.

The Indonesian warriors themselves can be classified into two groups: warriors from other cities in Indonesia, and local ones from Kauman Area. From the local community in the area, the warriors came from farmers, civilians and Islamic students from all the Kyai in Parakan. The flow of the warriors can be seen in Figure 4, which shows their circulation from Parakan railway station to the important places in Kauman Area (Masjid Al Barokah, the Residence of KH Subuki, the Kauman Area, the base camp of Barisan Muslim Temanggung). The warriors walked from the railway station to Kauman Area via Gambiran Street. On their arrival, they waited in Masjid Al Barokah to meet all the Kyai, particularly KH Subuki, to ask for blessings and prayers at his residence.

Figure 4 shows some important places that were visited and stayed in by the warriors in the colonial era, while



they were making Bambu Runcing and asking for blessings and prayers from all the Kyai in Kauman Area. They used public spaces to stay and live in, particularly the alleys. All the activities of the warriors, who were also called “instant” immigrants from other cities in Indonesia, took place within the alleys of Kauman Area. They made Bambu Runcing in the area, they slept on the streets within the alleys, and they waited for blessings and prayers from KH Subuki.

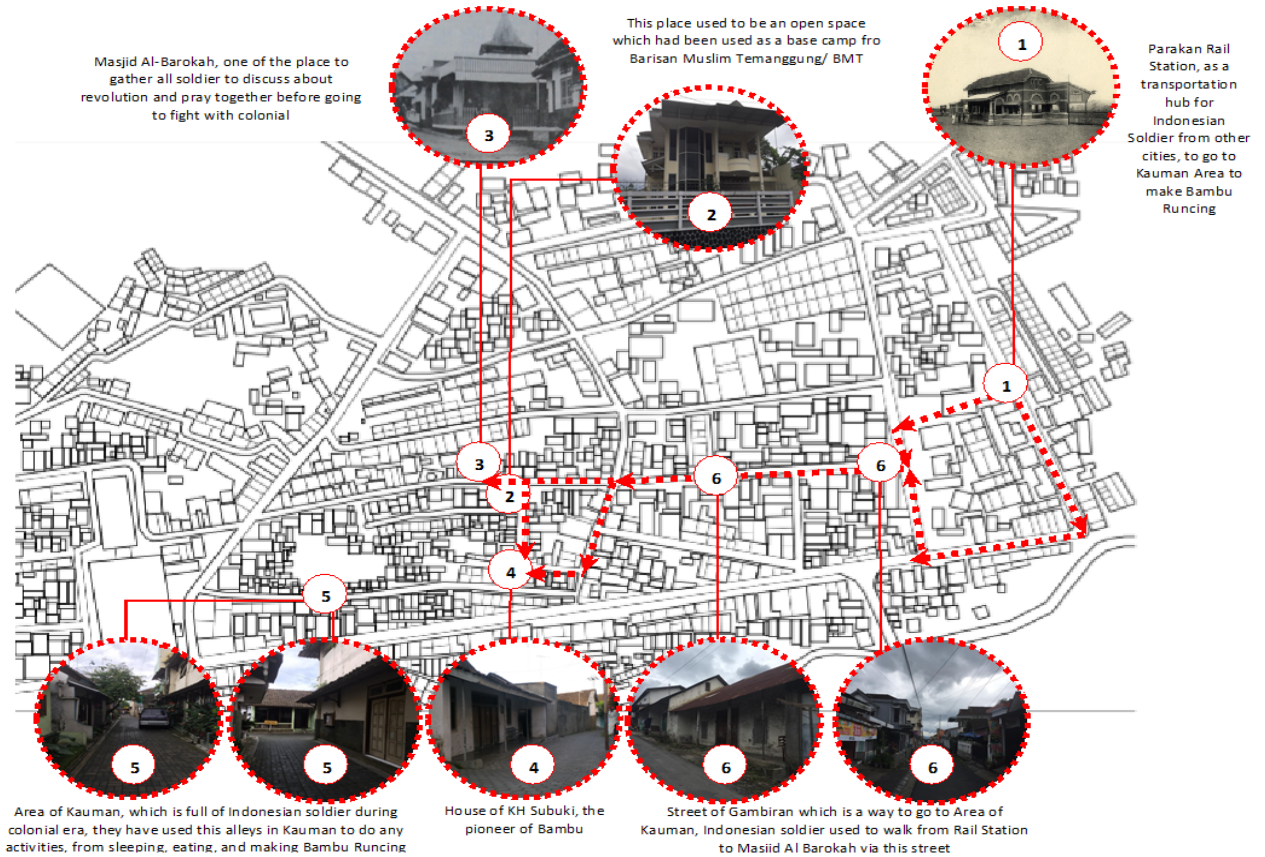
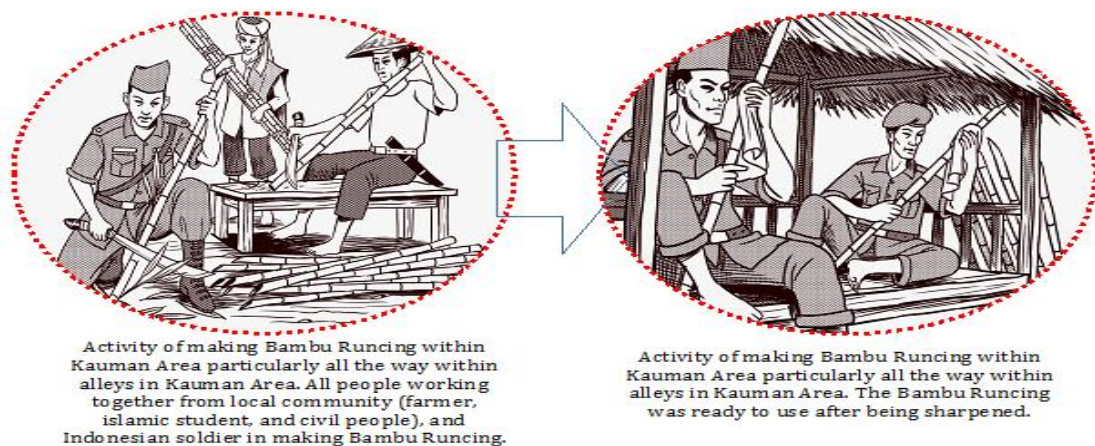


Figure-4. The flow of Indonesian warrior from other cities in Indonesia who came to Kauman Area.

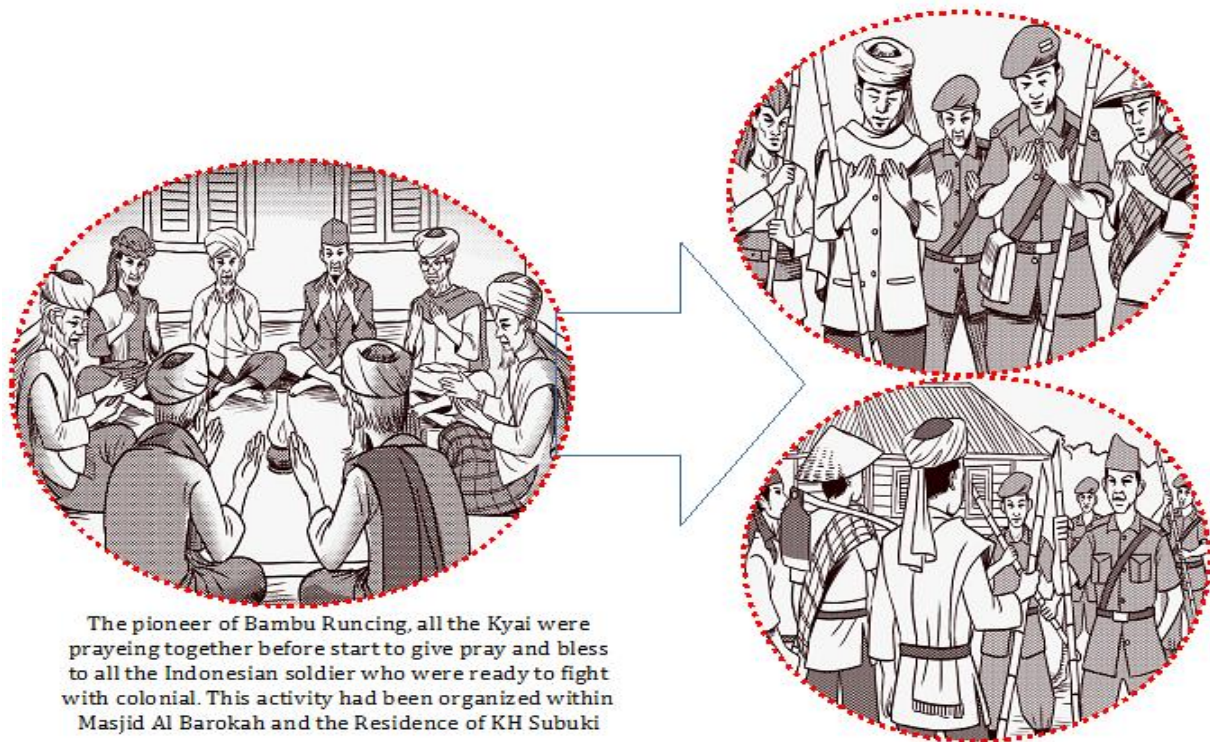
On the other hand, to describe these activities, we tried to visualise the descriptions from the respondents into sketches, as follows:



**Activity of making Bambu Runcing within Kauman Area within the alleys**

Figure-5. The activity of Indonesian warrior in making Bambu Runcing within Kauman Area particularly within all alleys in Kauman Area.

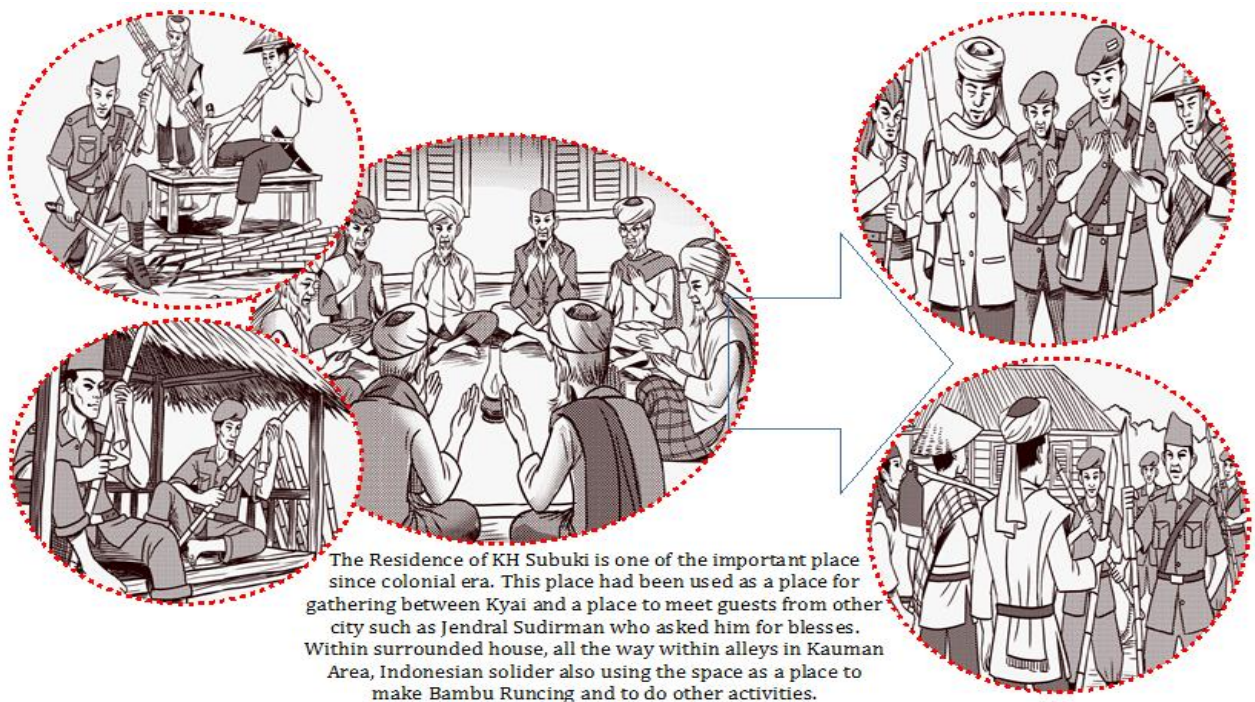




The pioneer of Bambu Runcing, all the Kyai were praying together before start to give pray and bless to all the Indonesian soldier who were ready to fight with colonial. This activity had been organized within Masjid Al Barokah and the Residence of KH Subuki

**Activity within Masjid Al Barokah and surrounded area**

Figure-6. The activity of all Kyai as pioneer of Bambu Runcing, they were praying together before start to give a bless and a pray to all Indonesian warriors.



The Residence of KH Subuki is one of the important place since colonial era. This place had been used as a place for gathering between Kyai and a place to meet guests from other city such as Jendral Sudirman who asked him for blesses. Within surrounded house, all the way within alleys in Kauman Area, Indonesian soldier also using the space as a place to make Bambu Runcing and to do other activities.

**Activity within the Residence of KH Subuki and surrounded area**

Figure-7. The activity in the residence of KH Subuki and surrounded area. This place had been used as a base camp for all Kyai and place to meet guest such as Jendral Sudirman.

Figures 5, 6 and 7 show the activities of the warriors and local community, who were incorporated in Barisan Muslim Temanggung or Barisan Bambu Runcing within Kauman Area. Figure 5 shows how the warriors worked



together with the local community (farmers, Muslim students and civilians) in making Bambu Runcing as a traditional weapon to fight the colonialists (Dutch and Japanese). It also shows how the warriors made the Bambu Runcing and prepared it for battle, while Figure 5 shows that the location of these activities was in the alleys within Kauman Area. Figure 6 shows the activity of all the Kyai of Bambu Runcing who prayed for the warriors before they went to fight the Dutch and Japanese. This activity was described in the Masjid Al Barokah, which is known as Masjid Bambu Runcing nowadays. The last depiction, as shown in Figure 7, is of the activities of all the Kyai and Indonesian warriors in the residence of KH Subuki and the areas nearby. They prayed before going into battle. All the activities shown in Figures 5, 6 and 7 can be incorporated into one Figure, i.e. Figure 8.

Figure 8 shows the flow of the Indonesian warriors from the railway station of Parakan and other cities nearby, and also the compilation of activities within Kauman Area, Parakan. All the activities of the warriors in making Bambu Runcing, as well seeing KH Subuki, are shown chronologically in the figure. Figure 8 also shows the alleys within Kauman Area, which were transformed by the warriors from public space into living space. The alleys within the area are shown in orange.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

By using the oral tradition approach, this research has revealed the activities of Indonesian warriors within Kauman Area in the colonial era. This approach could also be used to reveal the authentic history of the area, particularly the activities during the colonial era in public spaces within the alleys. Oral tradition could be used as an approach to reveal how a public space was used as a living space by Indonesian warriors at this time, which could be related to the theory stating that architecture always has a connection between form and space. By revealing the activities in Kauman Area in the colonial era, we have achieved significant understanding of the architecture and history of this case study. Moreover, this approach could be used as an alternative in architectural research.

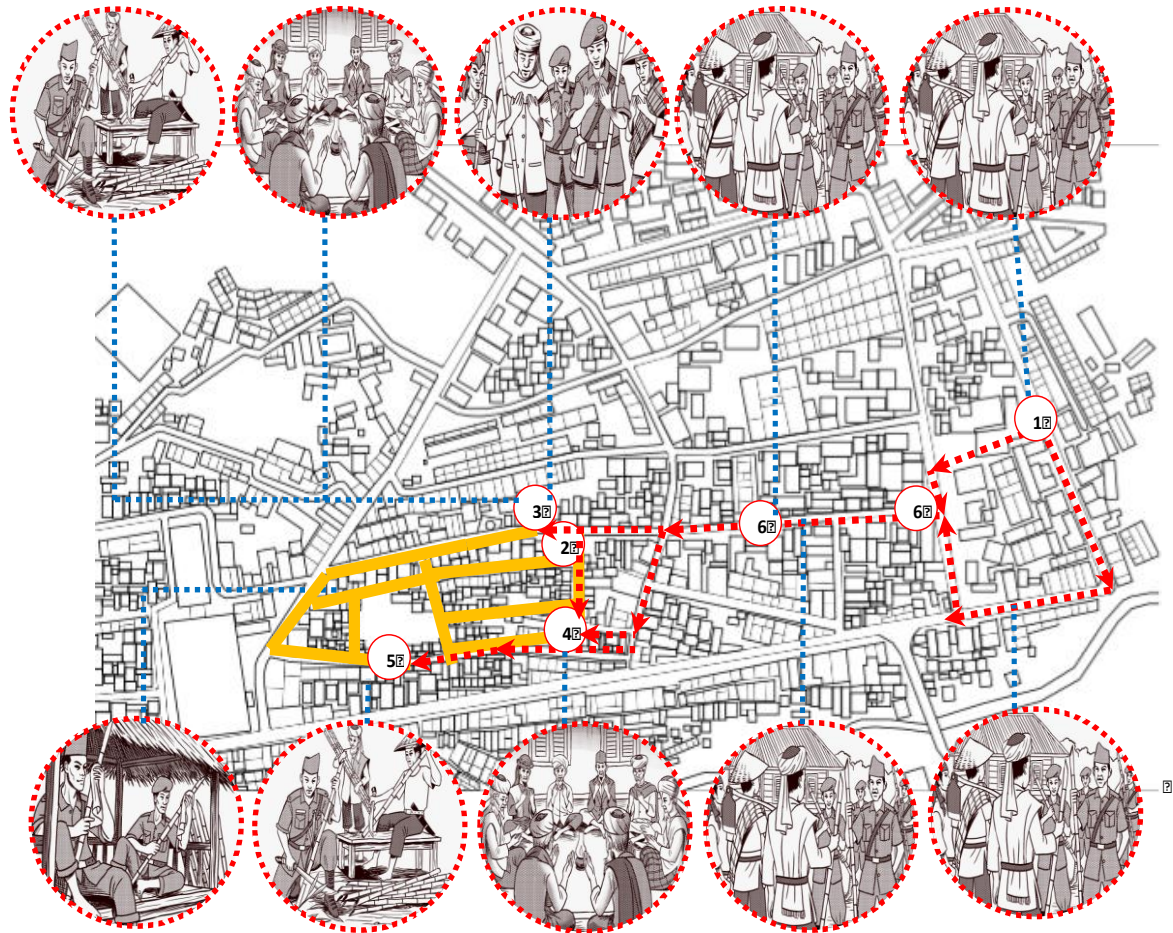
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**Figure-8.** The compilation of activities within Kauman Area, Parakan which described all the activities of Indonesian warrior and local community of Parakan in making of Bambu Runcing.

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