

# Revealing the History of Parakan

*Through the Architectural Heritage of  
Kauman Parakan, Central Java, Indonesia*

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## Abstract

Parakan that has been known as a city of “Kaum” since the pre-colonial era has been designated as a heritage city since 2015 as a part of heritage city of Temanggung, Central Java, Indonesia. The history of Parakan itself has been formed in the different version, referring to some sources either from literature as well as from direct sources (observation and interviews). This condition has encouraged the authors to investigate the history of Parakan through the architectural heritage within Kauman Area as well as through oral tradition from the local community. The existence of architectural heritage within Kauman Area has revealed the history of Parakan, particularly the history of Kauman, Parakan. This research utilizes a qualitative methods and interviews since there is limited written resources covering Parakan’s history. As a conclusion, the authors have found that by exploring, learning and describing the existing architectural heritage within the area, the authors could revealed the history of Parakan.

**Keywords:** *Authentic, History, Parakan, Architectural Heritage, Kauman, Historical Area*

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## Introduction

The designation of some areas become a conservation area as well as heritage area in Indonesia had been encouraged from the convention of the world which concerns about the protection of world cultural and natural heritage. One of the initiatives is the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage which had been held in 1972. Since then, Indonesia which has many heritage areas tries to implement the protection of cultural and natural heritage by designating some regions of Indonesia to become conservation areas or heritage areas. All the implementation of this initiative has been regulated under Undang-Undang No. 11 the Year 2010 about Cagar Budaya/Cultural Heritage.

As one of a heritage area or heritage city in Indonesia, Parakan which is located in Central Java, Indonesia, has many objects which have a significant character either in physical aspect or non-physical aspect as well as tangible or intangible one. As a heritage city, Parakan is lack of documentation and archives which could describe or explain the history of Parakan. Parakan which is a relatively small city is an unknown city, and there is only a small amount of the population in Indonesia who knows about this city.

According to the above condition, this research has explained the history of Parakan, which has been revealed by exploring and describing the existence of architectural heritage in Parakan. Parakan has been divided into some districts or areas which has been known before in two parts: Parakan Wetan (West Parakan) and Parakan Kulon (East Parakan). The Figure 1, shows that there are two parts of Parakan, Parakan Kulon (East Parakan) and Parakan Wetan (West Parakan). And Figure 2 shows that there are five areas in Parakan which have been divided following the pattern of the street. The Figure 2 also shows that there is an axis pattern which has been formed from Kali Galeh (Galeh River) to Kali Brangkongan (Brangkongan River) and from Jetis to Kedu. This axis has been formed from the main street in Parakan.

### MAP OF THE TWO SUB-DISTRICTS IN PARAKAN

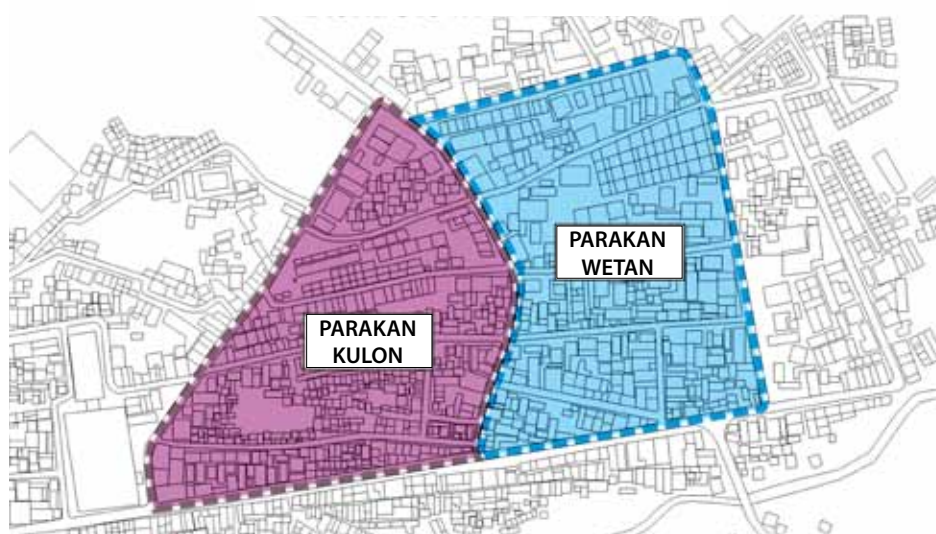


Figure 1. Map of the two sub districts in Parakan: Parakan Kulon (East Parakan) and Parakan Wetan (West Parakan). Source: Private Documentation, 2018.

### SCHEMATIC OF PARAKAN AREA

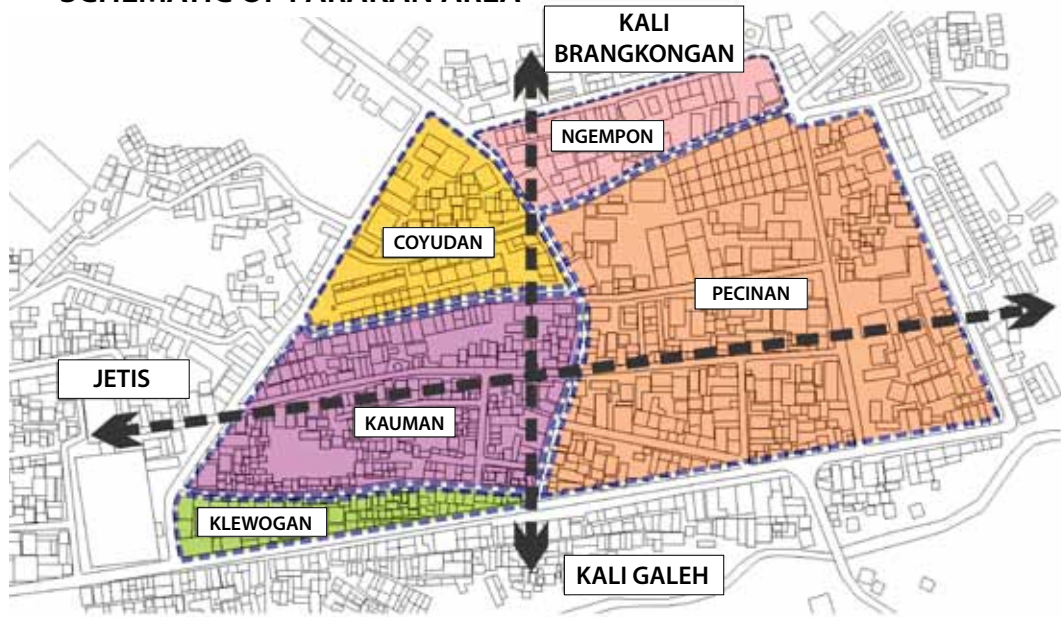


Figure 2. Schematic Map of Parakan Area which has been divided into five areas. Source: Private Documentation, 2018.

From the Figure 2, two significant areas can be observed in detail; there are Kauman Area and Pecinan (China Town) Area. Both areas are historical areas in Parakan. This research has only discussed about Kauman Area of Parakan, because this area has a significant history of Parakan since long time ago, mainly since Parakan had been known as the City of Kaum. Figure 3 shows how the historical areas in Parakan have been divided into two areas known as Kauman Area and Pecinan Area.

### MAP OF HISTORICAL SITES

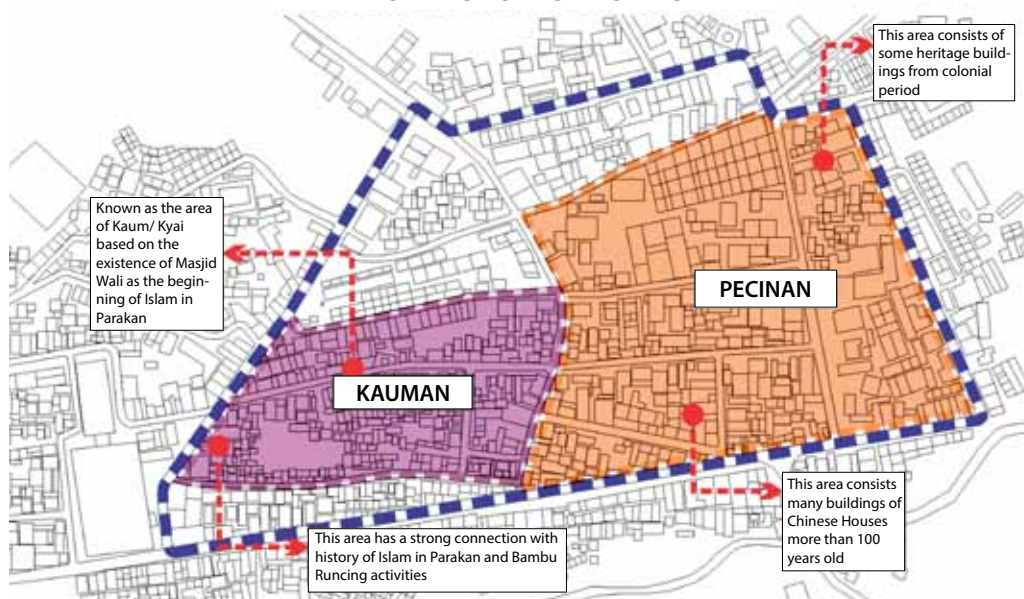


Figure 3. Mapping of Historical Area in Parakan which has been divided into two significant areas: Kauman Area and Pecinan (China Town) Area. Source: Private Documentation, 2018.

## Research Methods

This research has explored and revealed the history of Kauman Area, Parakan, Central Java, Indonesia through the architectural heritage of Kauman Area. To fulfill the aim and objective of this research, the authors have conducted a descriptive qualitative research method which used a descriptive narrative approach using oral tradition from the local community as a primary source to investigate the history of Kauman Area, Parakan. The first approach was by exploring all the existing architectural heritage in Parakan generally, and the second approach was by reducing the findings into one area which has been known as Kauman Area, Parakan.

## Findings and Discussion

### What is History?

Human as a social being cannot avoid history. History can be used as a reminder of the past because without the past there will be no present day and future. This statement has been underlined by the phrase of “no history no future”. History itself had been derived from the word “history” which came from the Greek “historia” which means: inquire, knowledge acquired by investigations, it is a study of learning and understanding about the past according to the description from old written documents or archives (Evans, 2001). The word of history also related to old times events such as memory, findings, collections, organization, presentation and interpretation of specific information about particular events. History could be connected to academic research which is using a descriptive narrative method in delivering and analyzing an event in the past in a chronological way, and objectively can find the pattern of cause and effect of a particular event in the past. Lowenthal (2000) also had mentioned that for some reason, history could be related to the culture of the community as well as to the place which is related to the legend and cultural heritage.

On the other hand, Jenkins in *Rethinking History* (2003), had mentioned that history is a series of discourses about an event in the past which is happened in the real world. He also had said that history is not only an event of the past which could be forgotten, but history could be considered as a series of events that could become discourses for people to step over to the future. In this case, people could create a new event which could be done for the world to be a better one. History could be considered as well as learning discourses to be seen as the weakness and could be fixed for the future, and this could become more meaning.

Moreover, Aristoteles (Jenkins, 2003) had stated that history could be defined as a system for translating events in the past in a chronological way. In the same era, history could be considered as events of the past which have records, notes, documentation and archives as a substantial proof.

From the above discussion, it could be underlined that history can be considered as a chronological event in the past, which could be used as a method of way of thinking to collect data and information that related to the past and could be used to help to analyze all the collected data. History can be defined as a way of thinking of significant event which has been seen in different time or era. By using his-

tory, it could be understood the chronological event also the reason of cause-effect of those events and why it is still maintained until the present day.

### **The Authenticity of History**

A source of history can be said as an authentic one if it is a product of the first-hand person who has it. The word of authentic itself has been defined in a different meaning. Leeuwen (2001) had stated that something could be called “authentic” because it is “genuine,” because its origin or authorship is not in question, and it is not an imitation or a copy. According to him, this authenticity (age, provenance, authorship, etc.) to be established through scientific procedures. Relatively, worthless artifacts could be authentic by this definitions, and some of the works of the most revered authors, painters and composers of the European tradition would be inauthentic.

On the other hand, there is two concept of authenticity (Steiner, 2005) which is a familiar word but has an unstable idea. It had been stated that authenticity could be defined in two distinct sense: authenticity as genuineness or realness of artifacts or events, and also as a human attribute signifying being one’s true self or being true to one’s essential nature. Steiner also had mentioned that Heidegger has his concept of authenticity. Heidegger had used the term of authenticity to indicate that someone is themselves existentially. This concept has been considered as a more profound concept than being oneself behaviorally or psychologically. According to Heidegger, authenticity has three characteristics: mineness, resoluteness, and the situation. These three characteristics are representing: mineness refers to recognizing that individuals can have possibilities of their own that are not shared with others, resoluteness refers to the courage and tenacity it takes to claim one’s rather than share those with others, and the last character is situation which relates to rare experiences in which people find themselves in their unique place in the world, in an unusual case in relation to the connectedness around them.

The term authenticity is an essential thing related to heritage. When a researcher has an issue to be observed in heritage issue, then authenticity cannot be separated from it. It is because heritage cannot be separated from history, and history always needs an authenticity. Many scholars have observed and discussed authenticity and heritage. They have highlighted the relationship between heritage and authenticity (Steiner and Reisinger, 2006; Laenen, 1989; Lowenthal, 1985; Plant, 1993; Handler, 1986; Kellner, 1995; Venkatesh, 1992). In the present day, history is a significant thing to be understood and to be learned. People have thought that history is something that could be defined their identity, particularly about physical and non-physical aspects as well as intangible and tangible elements of their heritage. Heidegger also had mentioned that when one’s existential authenticity identity and meaning can be found, then history can give people possibilities to define them.

From the above discussion, it could be concluded that authenticity is essential to the debate about history and heritage. Both cannot be separated, because history



and heritage are related to each other. To explore the authentic history, it should consider some aspects that referred to the history itself and to the physical proof that exists in the area of research object. When historical research has no any documents or archives as an authentic proof, then the authors should take another way or method to solve the problem. One of the solutions is by observing the architectural heritage that still exists within the heritage area. In this case is the heritage area of Kauman, Parakan, Central Java, Indonesia.

#### **Architectural Heritage of Kauman Area, Parakan**

One of the methods to reveal the history of the heritage area is by using the existing architectural heritage within the city. The architectural heritage as an object could describe the historical aspect either physical aspect or non-physical aspect, tangible or intangible one. From limited literature, the authors have found that the history of Parakan, Central Java, Indonesia can be divided into two categories, from a structure of time and a structure of the event. From the structure of time, Parakan can be divided into three eras:

- Mataram Kuno or Ancient Mataram in Hindu Era until Mataram Islam or Islam Mataram Era
- Colonial Era
- Post-Colonial Era until Present Day

On the other hand, from the structure of the event, Parakan can be divided into three eras:

- Parakan as a City of Kaum (Hindu and Islam Era)
- Parakan as a City of Bambu Runcing (Colonial Era)
- Parakan as a Heritage City (Post-Colonial Era- Present Day)

Both structures have a similarity because between a structure of time and a structure of the event; they cannot be separated. They have a strong relationship one to another. To start the discussion, the authors have explored the history of Parakan generally in three eras and have studied Kauman Area, particularly in each period.

#### **Parakan as a City of Kaum**

The history of Parakan, cannot be separated from the history of Javanese Kingdom. From many kinds of literature, the history of Parakan has been begun since the Hindu Era in Mataram Kuno Era (700 AD-1700 AD) and following with Islam Era since Mataram become Mataram Islam Era (1600 AD-1800 A). There are two significant objects of cultural heritage in Parakan, that indicate The Hindu Kingdom has influenced Parakan. Both significant objects are the inscription of Kayumwungan and the complex of Liyangan Temple (Figure 4). Parakan is located in Central Java, and it is one district of Temanggung City. Parakan has been known since Mataram Kuno Era. The name of Parakan known since the Era of the Mataram Kuno Kingdom, the King of Sanjaya. According to Basori, one of the significant source, the word of Parakan came from "Para Rakai" which means "The Rakai." Rakai is a term which refers to Hindu's monks or Hindu's priests; it is the Sanskrit language

means full moon. In the era of Hindu, there were a lot of Rakai lived in the area of Parakan. There are many pieces of evidence to prove this existence, such as the existence of the complex of Liyangan's Temple in Parakan and the complex of Di-eng's Temple in Wonosobo the city next to Parakan. Those Rakai were living in the district of Parakan which became a sacred district. The site of Liyangan as heritage sites has proved that the place was a complex of Hindus people, it was not only the compound of the temples but also a settlement in an urban scale. This existence of Liyangan, also evidences that the district was a significant and located as a central area in the surrounding Sumbing and Sindoro Mountains.



Figure 4. One of the ruins of Liyangan Temple's Complex: Hindu's temple complex. Source: Private Documentation, 2018.

The Era of Mataram Kuno Hindu had been faded after the arrival of the Prince Benowo. The Prince Benowo had walked away to leave the Kingdom of Pajang and tried to settle new kampong in the bank of the river. Many people came to join the Prince Benowo and started a new life in the new district that known as Parakan. According to the interview with Murtiyoso (2017), Parakan means a place with water inside it, to get some fishes, and Basori (2017) said that Parakan derives from the word "marak" (Javanese language) which means "come along." Both of those words are in the right track referring to the history of the district itself. Parakan as a place of Prince Benowo to live is a bank of the river, so it is a place with water. On the other hand, also Parakan as a place of Islam people is the place to get close to God because there is a lot of Kyai (Moslem Priests) live in the district of Parakan particularly in Karang Tengah area or known as Kauman area (will be discussed later about this area).

According to the information from Kamidi (direct interview in 2017), he has stated that the evidence of the existence of Parakan that had been known as Karang Tengah Village is the existence of Prasasti Kayumwungan. This Prasasti is a stone with an inscription that explains the history of an area with an Ancient Javanese

and Sanskrit language. Prasasti Kayumwungan that had been found hundred years ago in the area of Karang Tengah Village is evidence of the existence of Parakan which had been an area of all Rakai in the Era of Mataram Kuno Hindu. This Prasasti of Kayumwungan should be five pieces of stones with Ancient Javanese inscription, but there are only two pieces left (D27 and D34). This Prasasti has been known as well as Prasasti Karang Tengah and can be found in National Museum of Indonesia (Museum Nasional or Museum Gajah).

### **Parakan as a City of Bambu Runcing**

Parakan has been known very well as a City of Bambu Runcing since that this city became a place for many Indonesian soldiers to make Bambu Runcing. Bambu Runcing is a sharpened bamboo that had been used as a traditional weapon to fight with colonial invaders. In the colonial era, particularly in Dutch Era, many Indonesian soldier had fought and died in the war. Since the Dutch had colonized Indonesia, there were many movements from Indonesian soldier in all areas within Indonesia. Although, there were many Indonesian soldiers had been merged from all district, but the power of Indonesian soldier still in poor condition. This condition had encouraged some figures in some area within Indonesia to think harder to create a strategy to fight the Dutch. One of the areas with the dominant figure is Parakan. Parakan with KH Subuki or well known as KH Bambu Runcing, became a well-known place to create Bambu Runcing. Parakan became a famous place around Indonesian soldier. Many Indonesian soldiers from other cities have come to meet KH Subuki, asking for blessing and creating Bambu Runcing as a traditional weapon (Purwantiasning, 2019).

There are some places within Kauman Area which were used for the activities of creating Bambu Runcing. Some of those places still remain the same, either the physical condition as well as the form of the building. But some of those places have been transformed into new form since that the community of Kauman, Parakan have tried to forget the past. For example, the house of KH Subuki, which known as Rumah Candi or Heritage House, was used as a place for gathering between Muslim figures and national figures like Jenderal Sudirman, is remain the same. The form of the house still in the same condition, either the facade, the shape of the windows and the doors also the form of the roof. Although, the function of the house in the present day, is not just for living but also for commercial activity. At the front area of the house, there is a small restaurant which is provided many meals.

Another place which has been used by the activity of creating Bambu Runcing is the mosque which has been known as Bambu Runcing Mosque. The real name of the mosque is Al Barokah Mosque. This place had been used to gather all Indonesian soldier to be blessed by KH Subuki, and there was a pool on the verandah which had been used to swamp Indonesian soldier for about 24 hours to have strengthened. After the colonial era, the form of this mosque had been renovated significantly. The pool had been demolished, and the shape of the mosque as well has been changed from a traditional style to modern style.



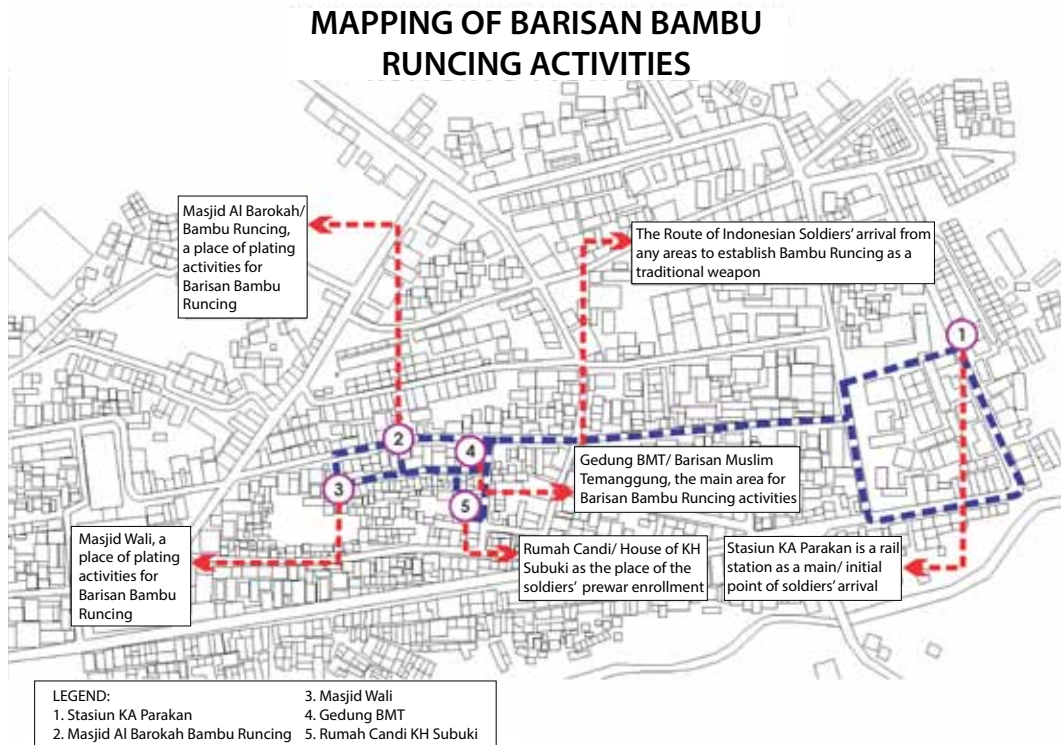


Figure 5. The mapping of Barisan Bambu Runcing activities within Parakan. Source: Private documentation, 2018.

### Parakan as a Heritage City

According to Burra Charter (2013), a place with a unique or significant character can be designated as a conservation area as well as heritage sites. Referring to this document and the Indonesian regulation about cultural heritage which has been stated in Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia No. 11 the Year 2010 about Cultural Heritage, Parakan has this potency to be promoted as a heritage city. With many procedures and discussion between academics, historian, local community as well as local government, in December 2015, Parakan has been designated as a heritage city as a part of heritage site of Temanggung City.

One of the considerations of this designation is because Parakan has so many historical objects that should be preserved. It is not just historical object, but Parakan has a historical value as well which has been derived from the past. Reading and learning about the history of Parakan either through limited documentation and literature as well as through oral tradition, has encouraged ordinary people wants to know more about Parakan (Purwantiasning, 2019). There are so many evidences that could be investigated which are located in Parakan generally and in Kauman Area mainly.

Parakan itself has been divided into two historical area which known as Kauman Area and Pecinan (China Town) Area. Both districts have many pieces of evidence of history. Kauman Area has many pieces of evidences about the activities of Bambu Runcing Soldier in the colonial era. All the evidences are Omah Candi of KH Subuki (Figure 8), Langgar Wali, the area of Kauman itself, the cemetery of

KH Subuki, Al Barokah Mosque or Masjid Bambu Runcing (Figure 7). On the other hand, Pecinan Area has so many beautiful Chinese houses along the street in this area from Gambiran House, Hok Teng Tong Temple as well as the residence of Kungfu Master Louw Djing Tie from China that had immigrated to Parakan.

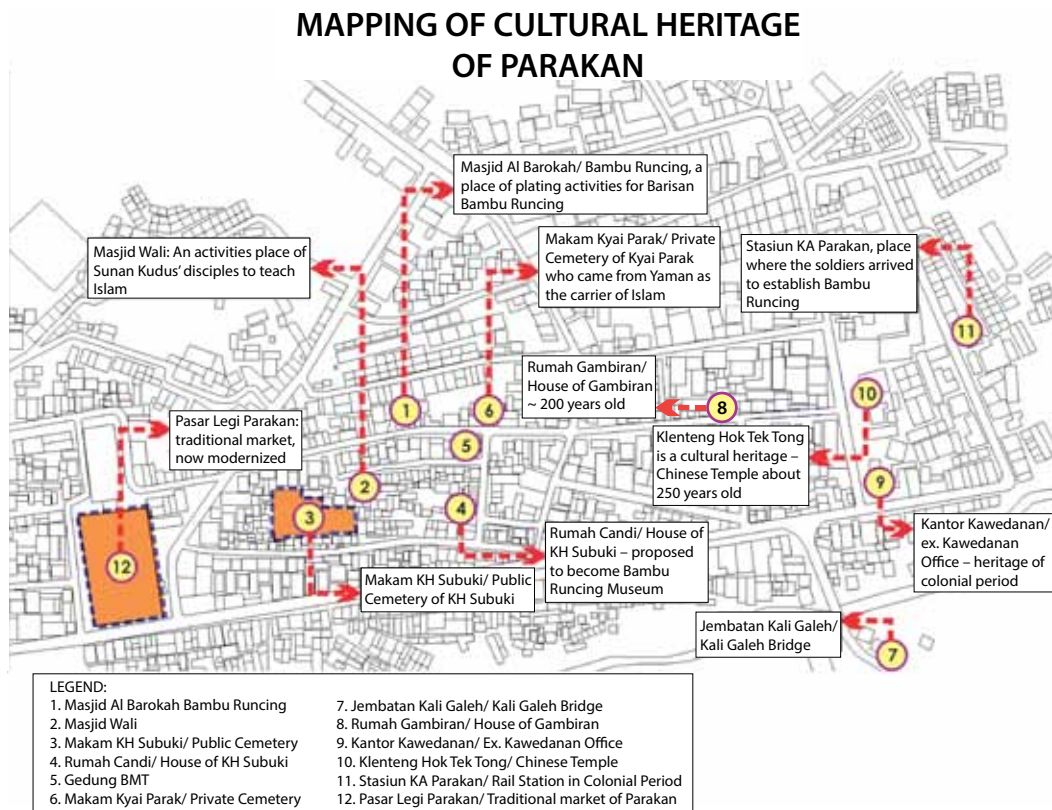


Figure 6. The mapping of cultural heritage in Parakan. Source: Private documentation, 2018.



Figure 7. Al Barokah mosque or has been known as Masjid Bambu Runcing. Source: Private documentation, 2019.



Figure 8. Resident of KH Subuki has been known as Rumah Candi (Heritage House). Source: Adilin Basiri, 2017.

### Conclusion

To reveal the authentic history of Kauman area in Parakan, the authors have tried to investigate the past by exploring, learning and describing the existing architectural heritage within the area. To explain the architectural heritage, a secondary source has been needed to complete the information. Some literatures which is very limited have helped this research to be fulfilled. One of the solutions is by investigating the history through an interview to get some knowledge from the expert notably historian, academics and local community who knows very well about the history of Parakan.

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