

TOURISM AND THE *HINGGI* DESIGN OF EAST SUMBA: A STUDY ON THE AESTHETICAL MORPHOLOGY OF COLORS AND MOTIFS OF TRADITIONAL CLOTHS

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In Indonesia, the tourism business, international tourism in particular, had been proceeding since the beginning of the 20th century and was increasingly confirming its existence during the period of the 1970-ies up to the 1990-ies due to the government planned development policy at that time. The development had impacted considerably on various sectors related to the country's culture, especially on the local people's traditional art in tourists receiving areas. Particular tourist destination areas have experienced certain changes in the orientation of production, from meeting the needs of internal cultures to serving the demands of external tourism established markets. This paper discusses the development of motifs of a specific traditional cloth produced by the East Sumba people in the years 1900 – 2000. During the span of the respective 100 years, the visual appearance of the cloth, hinggi, had undergone changes due to external influences coming along with tourism. It transformed from its idealistic or traditional characteristics to having certain commercial attributes as shown by the morphology of its design or motifs. Besides, the cloth functions had also changed from a traditional object of textile to become a souvenir for use as an interior decoration element.

Tourism, external market, commodities, design, hinggi

Tourism in cultural dimensions

Tourism is variously defined, as specified by different economic, technical, as well as holistic approaches (see Leiper, 1979: 392-4). Looking into the definitions, all of them are basically complementing one with the other although they tend to be on the context of sector interests, especially the economic and technical approaches. Therefore, the definition of tourism as stated by the World Tourism Organization (WTO – 1993) as 'human activities of traveling and staying at places away from their daily environment for no longer than one year for leisure, pleasure, business, and other objectives' is made a reference for this writing. Besides its holistic nature, the definition also places people on a central position. It is indeed the focus on human beings that makes the definition to have cultural implications on tourism and thus, showing its affinity with products of culture, especially material cultures. Different viewpoints of Leiper (1979), McIntosh (1995), Mill (1995), and Chambers (2000) will look further into this matter.

Leiper (1979) viewed tourism as a system comprising of three main elements, namely people, geography, and industry. The element of people differentiates tourism and non-tourism activities from the aspect of freedom in the use of time and money, and also that the tourists are consumers

of economic resources in the tourist destination areas (Leiper, 1979: 395). McIntosh (1995) also observed tourism as a system. However, in the technical details McIntosh covered the components of tourists, business, destination area governments as well as the host communities, specifying also their respective interests and responsibilities. Different from Leiper, McIntosh explicitly viewed tourism as a cultural phenomenon. According to McIntosh, the main objective of tourism, particularly in the context of international tourism, is to get to know better the people of other countries. This way, besides promoting mutual respect and understanding, tourism will also enhance the exchange of knowledge and ideas (McIntosh, 1995: 191). Mill suggested tourism as processes with distinct human touches and included socio-psychological elements in the process of tourism, namely travel experiences and sentimental or unforgettable memories of traveling (Mill, 1995: 25), things not mentioned by Leiper and McIntosh. The socio-psychological aspect, especially the tourists' experiences, is closely related to Gordon's view about souvenirs, which functions not only a means for recollecting travel experiences, it also is a literal proof, a memento of the tourists' journey and experiences (see Gordon, 1986: 136). Chambers observed tourism as a phenomenon of modernity, particularly in the awakening of capitalistic economy. Chambers considered capitalistic economy to be closely related to commoditization, a process of transforming objects and services from their non-commercial position into a commodity. This process had impacted upon various business sectors, including sectors of culture and heritage as realms for indigenous objects of arts and crafts (see Chambers, 2000: 94).

International tourism, external markets, and souvenirs

Chambers observed further the cultural dimensions of tourism as having some affirmative and representative implications of the culture, and besides, an inter-nation cultural learning context as well (see Chambers, 2000: 12). This is significantly shown in international tourism, markedly in its modern format, that is, massive, managed, and commercial. Having this position, tourism becomes a channel for external influences to penetrate into diverse sectors of local culture, including heritage. Indonesia is in this case not an exception.

During the PELITA 1 up to PELITA 6 (Five-year Development Plans between the years 1969 – 1998), the Indonesian international tourism development had also made use of the potentials of cultural heritage products as tourist attractions. Different kinds of Indonesian traditional arts were offered as tourist attractions, ranging from architecture, performance arts, music to fine arts. All of these are the elements establishing external markets which is the term used for people who are interested in or admirers of traditional art products outside of the culture of the producing communities (Adams, 1969; Graburn, ed., 1976). Besides the tourist and tourism centers, it had pushed further the commoditization of these products into many different forms.

Commodities in the external markets comprise of the local, indigenous art products as well as products of the other areas. Bali, a prominent tourism center, became an external market for the island own traditional art products and also for art products of the other ethnic groups, like Asmat (Papua), Tanimbar, Toraja, Dayak, Batak, Flores, Timor Sumatera and others, including the Sumba ethnic group, in this case, the communities living in East Sumba. This situation is caused by the fact that international tourism had not been developing in the area, or because of its location beyond the main stream of international tourism travels, or merely because of the opening of business opportunities. In Bali, the external markets are mainly operating in well-known tourism coastal areas, such as Sanur, Kuta, Seminyak, and Grobogan, and also in the areas of Ubud and Gianyar. In Yogyakarta, the locations are, among others, in the areas of Malioboro and Prawirotaman, whereas in Jakarta, besides the shopping centers like Taman Hiburan Ancol, Pasar Raya Grande, and Sarinah, external markets are also found in the areas of Kebayoran Baru,

Kemang, Kebon Sirih, and Jalan Surabaya. Apart from these places, external markets are also taking place in hotels and international airports, which usually have special retail outlets for selling traditional objects of art from various areas.

Besides coming from different local areas, traditional art products offered in external markets or tourist art markets are also conveyed in many different appearances. Carve works, statues, sculptures, paintings, jewelries, garments, earthen wares, ceramics, various kinds of fabrics, woven goods, and many others come in various forms, styles, and functions, ranging from interior and exterior decoration elements for buildings to garments, including also souvenirs. The commoditization of traditional art products had induced certain fundamental changes to the objects, from their traditional, innate character based on local spirituality to become secular commodities. This had brought consequences for various aspects of the products, in this case, cultural social values and physical aspects.

As a commodity in general, the existence of such products, souvenirs for this matter, started from a synergy between internal and external strengths. However, souvenirs are commodities with specific psycho-cultural aspect contents. Apart from being produced for fulfilling the tourists' desire to recollect their travel experiences, souvenirs are also proofs of the tourist visits to certain tourist destinations. Physically, souvenirs contain contextual and global values stemming from the potential local culture as well as the tourists' cultures in the context of their perceptions about the tourist destination areas, travel experiences, and sentimental recollection of their journeys. Souvenirs come in different forms and shapes, as results of a blending of local and external culture styles, although the production tends to satisfy the consumers' desires (see Grabum, 1976: 68-9).

The above specifications have placed the production of souvenirs as a certainty for utilizing the special indigenous features of tourist destination areas as central themes. Products of the local community material culture, in this case, specific products of traditional arts and crafts are the main resource.

Hinggi, a traditional textile and art product of East Sumba, falls into the respective conceptual frame of souvenirs. Nevertheless, before delving into the *hinggi* case, the discussion will first explain the situation of international tourism relations with the existence of East Sumba art products in general.

International tourism and art products of East Sumba

Considering the ecology and culture, East Sumba is indeed one of the tourist destination areas most attractive to be visited in the East Indonesia territory. The mainstay of tourist attraction in the area is the indigenous cultural heritage of traditional village clusters and burial shrines as well as the various arts and local custom ceremonies. Prominent objects of art are the architecture of traditional houses, wood carving and sculptures, bone carving, as well as various kinds of dances. Woven cloth is the mainstay of traditional art products of East Sumba, which, as mentioned earlier, is well appreciated both in the country as well as overseas. Foremost weaving centers are found in the villages in the surrounding areas of the capital city Waingapu, namely Prailiu, Mauliru, and Kawangu. Besides, there are also other weaving centers in Rende and Pao, 47 km to the east of Waingapu and in Kaliuda, 40 km further. In these villages the tourists can watch the cloth weaving process and buy some if they are interested.

Unfortunately however, the rich cultural asset has not yet been able to spur speedy development of East Sumba tourism. Some of the main weaknesses are the less friendly natural environment of East Sumba, arid, barren and hot almost throughout the year, as well as the poor infrastructure for reaching the tourist destination areas. Most of the infrastructure and facilities for tourism activities, like hotels, restaurants, telecommunication networks, electricity, clean water, and travel agents are still concentrated in Waingapu. Besides, development of the existing tourism potentials is still at the planning stage, for example, objects of cultural heritage in the sub-districts (*kecamatan*) of Haharu, Pandawai, Umalulu, Rindi, Pahunga Lodu and Lewa. The same holds true for development of nature tourism in the sub-districts of Haharu, Pandawai, Wulla Waijilu, Tabundung and Karera, as well as the tourist parks in the sub-district of the city of Waingapu. Such condition has caused the tourism business, in the sense of getting a great number of foreign tourists' visits, not comparable with the other famous tourist destination areas like Bali (see Table 1).

Table 1: International tourist arrivals in Bali and East Sumba

(Entrance gates: Ngurah Rai Airport in Denpasar and Mau Hau Airpirt in Waingapu)

DestinationYear	Bali *)	East Sumba **)
1996	1,194,793	3,624
1997	1,293,657	3,291
1998	1,246,289	387
1999	1,399,571	2,446
2000	1,468,207	857

Source:

*) Office of the State Minister for Culture & Tourism, 2002

**) www.gtzpromis.or.id/Proda/documents/TS_Sumba_Timur.pdf

The tourists visiting East Sumba comprise of different nationalities. Nevertheless, they can be broadly categorized into two groups, namely domestic tourists and foreign or international tourists. In general, the domestic tourists comprise people of the surrounding areas and regional territories, mostly from Java. Most of the foreign tourists are coming from Western Europe, Japan, Korea, and Australia. The international tourists' knowledge about East Sumba and all its tourism potentials, including their decision to visit the area, are in general, indirectly obtained from their visits to Bali or the other famous tourism centers in Indonesia, like Yogyakarta and Jakarta. Such indirect tourism is also established, among others, by the presence of various art products of East Sumba, especially traditional cloths, which are marketed at diverse prominent tourism centers mentioned earlier. On the international tourism level, the traditional East Sumba cloths are facing consumers or admirers who are outside their innate culture. East Sumba cloths, including *hinggi*, are not only objects of customs and traditions, but they also become objects of tourism amidst the arena that have positioned the cloths as commodities of tourism, as souvenirs. Here, they become subjects of the different tourist desires that will later play a role in various aspects of cloth production, such as the visual shape, size, material, function, and production techniques. The cloth production and allocation are in a tense situation between traditional norms and aspirations of the external markets which will specifically bring consequences on visual aspects, namely design and motifs.

***Hinggi* of East Sumba – techniques and functions**

Hinggi is one form of material culture of East Sumba traditional art product that is important in the aspect of both spiritual as well as secular life. *Hinggi* takes the form of a sheet of cloth, a rectangle measuring ± 250 cm x 120 cm.

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Hinggi is made by use of the *ikat* warp technique, which is used for designing motifs of cloth by dyeing bundles of cotton threads where certain parts are covered with a dye blocking medium. It is called *hondu hembra* in the local language (*hondu* = *ikat*; *hembra* = warp). The main materials consist of manually spun cotton threads and natural dyes. In East Sumba the *ikat* weaving technique is used for making various kinds of traditional cloths, but it is dominantly used in the production of *hinggi*

Hinggi has a central position in the customs and traditions of the East Sumba people, in the context of both spiritual and secular, placing the cloth to have both symbolical and practical functions. Both functions are interrelated as shown through its different uses, both in the religious context as well as the socio-economical ordinance within the communities. In this context, *hinggi* is oriented to the customs and traditions of East Sumba and with regards to this paper it will be referred to as the '*hinggi*'. Referring to the views of Gittinger (1990) on the cultural roles of traditional Indonesian cloths, the existence of traditional *hinggi* in the East Sumba culture is concerned with its functions as wearing apparel, a symbol of prestige, a ceremonial object, a present in the gift exchange system, and a communication media for conveying messages. Besides, *hinggi* also has another function, namely as a media for aesthetical expressions (Anas, 2006: 145-8).

Considering its most important function as a wearing apparel, *hinggi* is the main component of men's traditional suit. For this function, *hinggi* appears in a pair of identical sheets of cloth, one is wrapped around the hips and the other is slung over the shoulder. The complete traditional suit is worn when people go to important events, such as wedding, and burial ceremonies, or agricultural harvesting celebrations.

The function of *hinggi* as a symbol of prestige is seen in the contexts of gender and social hierarchy. It is symbolically related to supernatural powers (*marapu*) and reincarnation, namely descendants of the aristocrats (*maramba*). Considering also the strict traditional requirements in the weaving process, all these features have made the *hinggi* cloth highly valued, at the same time, also confirmed the distinguished status of its owner. In this context, the high status given to *hinggi* departed from the customs and traditions in East Sumba, placing cloths in the realm of women. Woven cloths represented the ability and responsibility of women, in developing the idea, social ordinance, production process, as well as the end products. Therefore, woven cloths, including *hinggi*, symbolize the dignity and wealth of women, both morally and materially (Anas, 2006: 133).

Hinggi has two adhering functions in the gift and exchange system, namely in their connections to traditional ceremonies and as materials for exchange with the necessities for living. Traditional gifts and exchanges are particularly seen in wedding and burial ceremonies. In wedding ceremonies, *hinggi* became one of the things brought by the bride for exchange with the things brought by the bridegroom. In burial ceremonies, apart from being a symbol of respect for the deceased and family, *hinggi* is also presented as a provision for the spirit of the deceased person (man) for his journey to the afterlife. All the presented cloths will be reciprocated with equal gifts in the future (Anas, 2006: 134). As capital goods, *hinggi* is bartered for farm produce, forest products, jewelries, metal objects, ivory, and other necessities.

With regards to its communication functions, *hinggi* plays the role of message carrier. The message is covered in the form of conveyance of respect, confirmation of authority and social status as well as possession of wealth. Respect is revealed through bestowal of high quality

hinggi at traditional ceremonies. Authority and social status are emphasized by the use of high quality *hinggi*. The message of wealth is expressed through the number and quality of *hinggi* a person has.

As a ceremonial object, besides functioning at marriage and burial ceremonies such as explained earlier, *hinggi* is also used in the traditional process of transporting gravestones to the burial location. *Hinggi* is installed on the gravestone, usually a large tablet, just like a sail of a boat in its trip to the afterlife.

The other function of traditional *hinggi* as a media for aesthetical expression is based on grounds of idealisms of the East Sumba people where quality of cloth is appraised based on the technical skills and aesthetic sensitivity of the weaver. East Sumba weavers use some materials, tools, and techniques and certain decorative elements as medium in the production of *hinggi*. Accumulation of skills in spinning of fibers and in weaving, expertise in collecting and processing of dyestuffs, mastery in tie and dyeing of threads, and sensitivity in selecting and designing the pattern and motifs, all determine the quality of a particular sheet of *hinggi*. *Hinggi* cloths meeting these qualifications will bring respect to the weaver or owners and are highly valued in the East Sumba customs and traditions.

The visual aspects of *hinggi* concern its design or motifs, which are presented in various configuration levels and kinds, ranging from the simple, blank sheet of cloth with no patterns to complex motifs appearing on the woven cloth. Complex motifs are seen on *hinggi* having a red color tone (*hinggi kombu*) and *hinggi* having a blue tone (*hinggi kaworu*) as backgrounds.

Hinggi is a long-established customary product growing in the East Sumba culture since the old time. Its motifs are not only unique, but they also show a great variety of qualities originating from the East Sumba cultural environment as well as foreign influences. The motifs are impressively shown in distinct and large configurations distributed symmetrically on the $x - y$ axis throughout the cloth surface (Adams, 1969; Larsen *et al.*, 1976; Warming & Gaworski, 1981; Forshee, 1996). The entire motifs are arranged in a division into three horizontal planes based on a quadrant structure. Two of the three horizontal planes (A) have identical motifs arranged in diametrical positions with the third patterned horizontal plane (B) in the middle (Figure 1).

Two color tones, namely red and blue, are used as basic colors in the *hinggi* motifs. Both color tones can appear individually or mixed together, the latter is done through a layering or multiple dyeing techniques to produce the third group of color tones, ranging from dark brown, deep red, to dark purple color tones. The mixed coloring style is usually found on *hinggi kombu*, whereas *hinggi kaworu* usually have blue color tones.

Adams (1969) divided the *hinggi* motifs into three large groups, namely the figurative, the schematic, and foreign influenced groups of motifs. The figurative group of motifs departs from living creatures (fauna, flora, and human beings) and natural objects (non-living) in stylistic styles (Figure 1). This motif group is only based on ideas of East Sumba local ecology and cultural resources. The schematic motif group has a basic geometric shape of lacework, of abstract style (Figure 1). The motifs are inspired from local cultural sources and maybe foreign cultures as well (Portuguese). Motif groups with influences of cultures from outside East Sumba, are particularly connected to cultures from China, India, and the Netherlands. Just like the other configurative motifs, the shapes and styles of foreign motifs are also based on figures of human beings, flora, fauna, animals of mythology, and natural objects, and are of stylistic style. Chinese influence is seen on the presence of dragon motifs. This motif appeared through a process of adaptation of

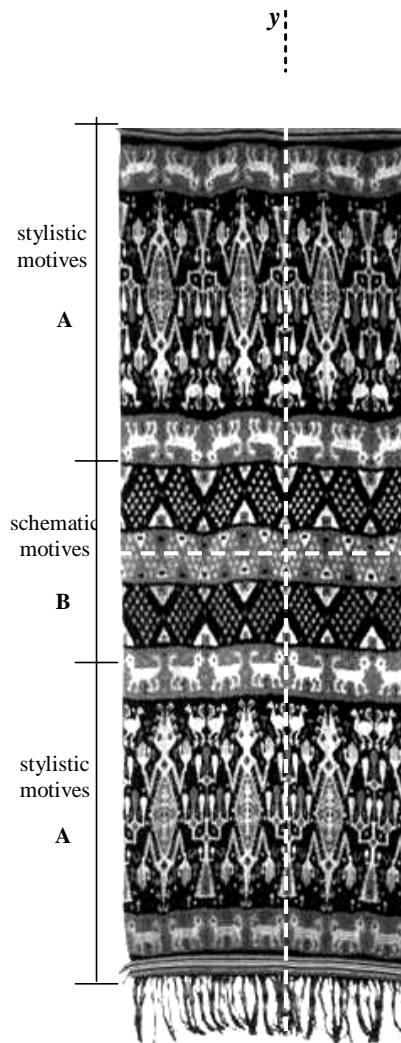


Figure 1
Traditional *hinggi* in the > 1900 era. Diametric symmetrical motifs, $x-y$ axis, in quadrant pattern, the ecology and local culture of East Sumba as sources of ideas

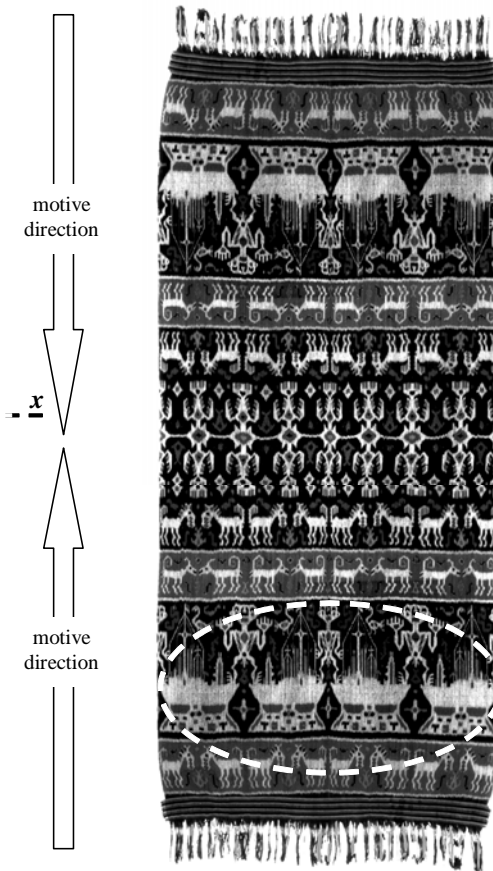


Figure 2
Hinggi produced in the > 1913 era. Motifs with realistic styles (boat styles).

similar designs of Chinese ceramic products entering Indonesia. Dutch influence appears in shapes of lions and shields (Dutch coats of arms), crowns, as well as the three colored flags (Adams, 1969: 129 – 51). Influences of India are shown in motifs of elephant figures with stylistic styles and the *patola ratu* motifs which take the abstract geometrical style. Portuguese connections are seen in openwork schematic motifs with semblances of crosses on badges used by noblemen or knights (armed forces).

Apart from the figurative, stylistic, and abstract designs, many of the *hinggi* motifs have symbolical meanings based on the people's beliefs in supernatural powers, with the king as representation on earth. Some of the famous symbolical motifs are the skull-tree (*andung*) motifs symbolizing power and strength, human (*tau*) motifs symbolizing their ancestors, horse (*njara*) motifs symbolizing masculinity, dragon motifs symbolizing aristocratic status, and crocodile (*buya*) motifs symbolizing powers of the king.

All the above explained designs and meanings of *hinggi* motifs have placed the cloth basically as a ceremonial or traditional object and referred to the production era between the years 1900 – 1912, named the 'standard period' (Adams, 1969: 95). Considering the use of the term 'standard', the *hinggi* cloths produced during that period of time were at the ideal quality level, explicitly indicating their position as reference for the production of *hinggi* in later periods. The term 'traditional' *hinggi* is also meant to differentiate that particular *hinggi* with the various other quality *hinggi* cloths produced in later periods with external influences caused by cultural contacts between the East Sumba people and outsiders progressing along with tourism development in Indonesia.

***Hinggi* designs in the context of tourism between the years 1900 – 2000**

Tourists' interests for *hinggi* are commercially motivated by diverse factors which are basically of promotional nature, and particularly those related to the fame of 'primitive' arts and development of various lectures about them among the western communities as well as international tourism (see Anas, 2006: 248 – 53). Indeed the development had caused the *hinggi* and the producers to be directly exposed to the foreign public, continuously and for a long time already, factors that spurred the penetration of external influences.

Placing the developments in time frames, then, during the period between the years 1900 to 2000, process-wise, *hinggi* was in a continuum of changes on both its physical and functional aspects. In general, the time span can be divided into two periods, namely years 1900 – 1970 and years 1970 – 2000.

Period of years 1900 – 1970

This period comprises three sub-periods, namely between the end of the 19th century to year 1912, year 1913 to 1945, and year 1945 to year 1970.

Period from the end of the 19th century to year 1912: the beginning period of changes

This time span was colored by *hinggi* made especially for internal cultural needs. The external market for *hinggi* during this period seemed not to grow in the context of commercial or international tourism activities as comprehended nowadays but more due to individual interests and undertakings. It started in the end of the 19th century, when ethnographers and the Dutch Museum started to collect *hinggi* and made continuous efforts to introduce the cloths to the Dutch and European public through various publications and exhibitions (Adams, 1969: 1, 98 – 9). The popularity gained by *hinggi* enhanced a growing interest for them, especially the Dutch communities in Java and Europe, which initiated the business activities. Nevertheless however, most of the commercial activities were still within the limits of local trade areas. The marketing to Java and overseas countries at that time was still relying on inter-island transportation. During this time period, the visual appearance of *hinggi* had not experienced significant changes, although

technically, many of the products had started to use machine spun threads and synthetic dyestuffs. Therefore, as viewed from the context of change, the changes in *hinggi* in this period were still in the early stage.

Period of years 1913 – 1945: reduction of motifs and development of realistic styles

Fluctuations in increased and reduced *hinggi* production were happening during this period. Increased production was due to the growing external markets, along with the opening of the Waingapu harbor in the inter-island sea transportation line of the Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij (KPM) in year 1913 (Adams, 1969: 96). This event had increased accessibility to Sumba with the outer world, both regionally as well as internationally when compared to the earlier periods. This development had also given rise to new phenomena on *hinggi* with promotional and productive implications that impacted indirectly on the motifs.

Promotional wise, *hinggi* was getting increasingly popular along with the traffic flow of people entering and going out from (East) Sumba. The market had spread beyond the geographical boundaries of the source area, especially to Java, and henceforth, also indirectly to overseas countries, European countries in particular. Implications of such promotion had reciprocally triggered the globalization or internationalization of the *hinggi* external market.

Production wise, the making of *hinggi* developed on two different tracks, each with its respective characteristics and target users (see Wielenga in Adams, 1969: 99) whereas beforehand, there was only one single track, namely the ‘traditional’ *hinggi*. The first track is the production of *hinggi* in the scope of the cloth’s rightful existence and its functions as a traditional object with reference to the traditional qualification standards. The second track is the production of *hinggi* for the external market after year 1913. This was a commercial market and therefore, had induced various changes concerning the designs, raw materials, techniques and functions. The design had experienced many changes, simplification and enlargement of the motifs as well as a reduction of color tones.

Simplification is indicated by the absence of motif details and reduction of the use of different colors. Enlargement is obtained by increasing the motifs’ sizes, including spacing them farther apart. More and more machine-spun yarns (*benang toko*, yarns bought from the shop) are used, as well as synthetic dyestuffs (*wenter*). Production was usually done simultaneously to obtain maximum efficiency. Such *hinggi* design had also gained additional motifs and styles. This was especially seen in the use of new, foreign designs, among others, various shapes of ocean-going vessels (Figure 2), women’s faces (Queen Wilhelmina from the Netherlands, 1890 – 1948) and of daily things (for example, bicycles), while the earlier are, among others, Dutch flags and coats of arms, the *patola ratu* (queen’s cloth), and the Indian elephant motif, as well as the Chinese dragon motif. Presumably, development of these motifs was also due to enhanced quality of education, particularly since the year 1929, functioning as catalyst of information flow from the outside world into Sumba (*Sejarah Daerah Nusa Tenggara Timur; History of East Nusa Tenggara*, 1977/1978: 107).

The shapes and styles of the motifs indicated a tendency of realistic motifs (Forshee, 1996: 72-3) (Figure 2), whereas beforehand, they were only limited to abstract and stylistic motifs. In connection with this development, in the context of this discussion on *hinggi*, the term ‘realistic’ *hinggi* will be used for the realistic motifs style.

The use of realistic styles on motifs of *hinggi* was allegedly due to the intention of meeting the European market tastes. Changes on the design also include the reappearing of old and already vanishing motifs. Reappearances of these motifs among others, was due to the objective of serving the demands of the interested buyers to imitate the *hinggi* motifs available in the museum catalogs or magazines circulating in the Netherlands or Europe.

In spite of the various changes, the 'realistic' *hinggi* could still be functioning in the internal cultural society of the producers' community since basically the motifs are still showing certain characteristics that refer to traditional conventions, especially the diametrical configurations. Considering this matter, obviously the changes shown in the 'realistic' *hinggi* are still of a partial or limited nature. The changes are not great in the sense that they do not change the design themes and principles as well as functions of *hinggi*. Substantively therefore, the 'realistic' *hinggi* is of pragmatic nature. They appeared with two contexts at the same time, namely for the sake of customs and traditions, as well as for the interest of the external market

Reduced *hinggi* production for the external market took place during the Japanese occupation in Indonesia (1942 – 1945) (Adams, 1969: 100), and production was increasing again after these years until the end of the sixth decade of the 20th century.

Period of years 1945 – 1970: continuity of the realistic style

Considering the design, in the years after 1942 the *hinggi* tended to stop developing. Apart from the impacts of Japanese occupation, excesses of World War II and the not yet stable political situation in the country until the middle of the 1960-ies, were indirectly became constraints for social and economic development of people all over the country, including development of tourism. Concentrations of *hinggi* production during these years tended to only meeting internal cultural needs, whereas external markets were lacking development (see Adams, 1969: 100). Presumably, production of *hinggi* in general during the years 1945 to the 1970-ies was not showing significant changes, both physically as well as technically.

Period of years 1970 – 2000: design dynamics

This period referred especially to the production of *hinggi* in the last 25 years of the 20th century as the period of increased *hinggi* production in East Sumba due to enhanced eagerness of the external market that was triggered by development of international tourism in Indonesia (Forshee, 1996: ix). The progress was related to macro-economic policies of the 'New Order' central government stressing upon national developments in all fields including the tourism sector, in this case, international tourism, which was considered as superior and important for economic development in Indonesia (Departemen Penerangan, 1969: 168 – 80). Realizations of international tourism development started in Bali, signified by the rehabilitation of the Ngurah Rai Airport in the area of Tuban, Denpasar, in year 1969 (although long beforehand, in the 1930-ies, the Dutch colonial government had led the way for international tourism in Bali by promoting the island of Bali as the 'island of gods' or the 'Nirvana island'). This first step was followed by various development programs of infrastructure and facilities of international standards (see Picard in Hitchcock *et al.*, ed., 1993: 79). Bali's attractiveness as center of tourist destinations at world level had spurred its growth into a tourism industry of international scale with all its components that were related to tourism interests and services for the tourists, including the making available of diverse art products in various forms. This development would not only trigger external market growth for local art products, but also products of the same kind from different other areas in

Indonesia, including East Sumba cloths. East Sumba is located relatively close to Bali, thus, making it easier for supplying the cloths to tourism destination centers in the island. Aside from opening opportunities for confirming the existence of *hinggi* for the wide public, the external market also placed *hinggi* to face diverse aspirations of foreign tourists. *Hinggi* came forward in a range of more varied designs and motifs than they were in the past. Earlier, the changes in the design and motifs of *hinggi* were partial, but nowadays, the development has made the cloths' pragmatic role ('realistic' *hinggi*) to gradually advancing towards substantial variances away from the traditional standards that make them no longer possible to fulfill their traditional functions other than as a trade commodity. The variances are related to design creativity, both motifs and colors, in dealing with market aspirations, leading to the creation of new appropriation for *hinggi*, namely for room decoration such as wall-hanging, which increasingly encourage the various changes in their design and motifs.

Changes in styles, themes, and motif arrangements

The changes in the design of *hinggi* nowadays could be classified into four categories. First is the 'realistic' *hinggi* with decorative secular themes as a continuity of the 'realistic' *hinggi* of the 1913 – 1942 and 1945 – 1970 eras. The realistic style of the era was increasingly attributed to the suppleness of lines and dynamics of movements, although the design symmetry was still referring to traditional *hinggi* (x and y axis), divided into quadrants. Red and blue color tones were still dominant in this first *hinggi* category, just like the traditional *hinggi*.

Second is the *hinggi* with a symmetrical motif arrangement with only the axis y in dual division. The diametric position has an x axis, still maintaining the traditional *hinggi* design but with different motifs. The motifs are expressed in shapes of realistic style with decorative secular themes as well as of stylistic and abstract styles with spiritual symbolic themes. *Hinggi* with such motif arrangement is called *hinggi hondu kihil* (*hondu* = *ikat* (tie); *kihil* = rotation) (Figure 3). Indeed the color tones of *hinggi hondu kihil* are still referring to the red and blue color tones of the traditional *hinggi*.

Third is the *hinggi* with symmetrical design, y axis with doublet pattern motif configuration in coincidental arrangement which, on the whole, expressed in a one

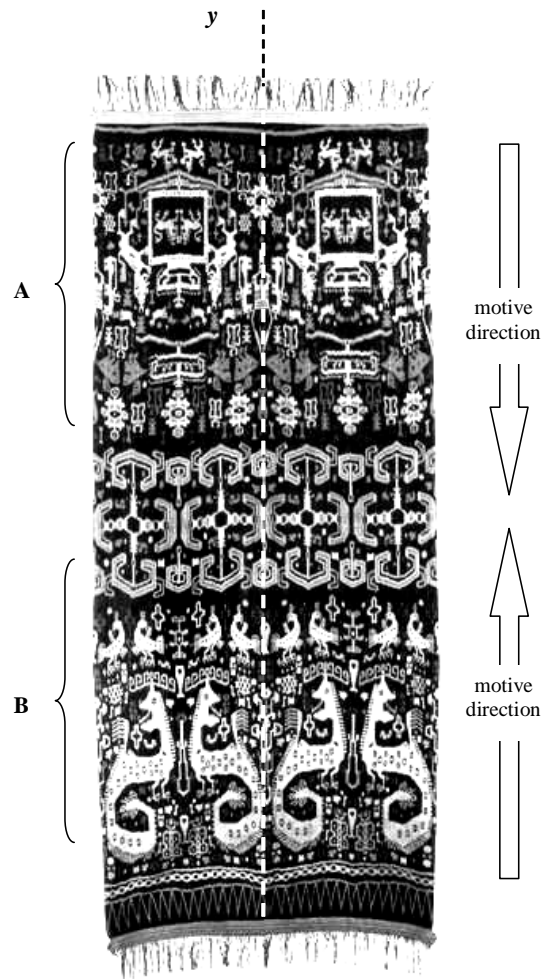


Figure 3
Hinggi hondu kihil, produced in the >1970 era. Different motifs (A-B), y axis, diametrical arrangement, doublet pattern

direction position. The design themes are varied, nevertheless, they tend to be decorative secular with variations of using the motifs of traditional *hinggi* (which are symbolical and spiritual) and other sources of East Sumba material culture like scenes of dances or daily life happenings. Such *hinggi* is usually called the ‘one direction’ *hinggi* and is already showing symptoms of color tones dominated by red color tones, a deviation from the traditional *hinggi* color tones of red and blue.

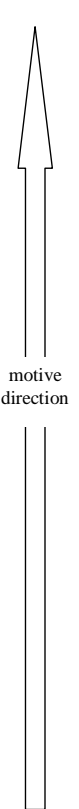
Fourth is the *hinggi* with further changes in design with secular decorative themes. The arrangement of motifs is based on symmetry of axis y with doublet pattern configurations in coincidental arrangement, expressing scenes of important events in the cultural life of East Sumba people. The scenes are illustrated in narrative sequences from the upper end to the lower end of the cloth. The motif styles are getting more supple (biomorphic) and dynamic in coincidental arrangements. In the context of this writing, the respective *hinggi* is referred to as the ‘narrative’ *hinggi* (Figure 4). Red color tones are dominant in this category of *hinggi*. Among the native communities, the ‘narrative’ *hinggi* is often named in accordance to the scenes that made up the design theme. Regarding the latter, the *pasola* scene used as the *hinggi* design theme has caused the cloth to be called *hinggi pasola*. Besides *hinggi*

‘*pasola*’ there are also the *hinggi* ‘*papanggangu*’ (depicting the burial ceremony of a king) and *hinggi* ‘*palai ngandi*’ (depicting the kidnapping of the bride by her husband to be). *Pasola* and *papanggangu* are the two great events in the tradition of the Sumba ethnic group which later become a famous tourist attraction although there is no exact schedule for such events. In the case of *papanggangu*, the reason is that various traditional requirements should first be met before organizing the event, whereas in the case of *pasola*, there is yet no exact date, although the event is always held around the end of February or beginning of March). *Palai ngandi* becomes a tourist attraction more because of dramatization of the event, namely an act in the Sumba culture which is later made as cloth motifs.

The various changes, especially those related to the ‘one direction’ *hinggi*, are basically beyond the traditional quality standards, and thus, they could no longer be called traditional *hinggi*. The

Figure 4

One direction ‘narrative’ *hinggi*, *pasola* version, made in the > 1970 era. Motifs in realistic style with biomorphic lines, y axis, doublet pattern. Narration starts from the upper end and ends at the bottom end of the cloth.



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‘one direction’ *hinggi* is within the context of the tourists’ aspirations wishing the cloth to function as wall decoration. The objective is to have the *hinggi* draped on the wall of a room like a painting with motifs of local culture themes, but easily understood. Changes in the functions of *hinggi* also include their uses as fabric or material for making western style apparels (coats, blazers, shirts, and jackets), interior and households accessories (drapes, upholsteries, and bed covers; also various fashion accessories like purses, bags, sacks, and hats. However, the respective change of functions is only limited to the use of *hinggi* as a sheet of woven cloth that could be cut and formed according to the usage patterns. This function does not demand basic changes on the design and process of tying and dyeing of the thread bundles.

Conclusions

Tourism has encouraged development of external market that leads to production of greater varieties of *hinggi* designs and motifs, each with their respective characteristics. Viewing the different designs and motifs from a historical context, the development could be divided into two periods.

The first period took place between the years 1900 – 1970, particularly after year 1913, where designs were oriented to simplification of motifs and color tones, as well as the use of machine-spun yarns and synthetic dyestuffs. This period had only induced partial changes, especially on visual aspects, namely the motifs and showing interest in *hinggi* production efficiency. The objective of efficiency was to maintain supply of products in connection with increased market demands as well as to safeguard the tourist attraction power of *hinggi*. On the one hand, tourism had played its role quantitatively, namely of increasing demands and production. However, qualitatively on the other hand, tourism’s role was lacking. Quality of *hinggi* products was declining, especially considering the motifs, which were greatly reduced due to various simplifications. Nevertheless, *hinggi* products with such design are pragmatic, in the sense that

Table 2
Development of *hinggi* designs and production purposes during years 1900 – 2000

Period Production track/ Purposes	< 1900	1900 – 1910	1910 – 1920	1920 – 1930	1930 – 1940	1940 – 1950	1950 – 1960	1960 – 1970	1970 – 1980	1980 – 1990	1990 – 2000	> 2000
Internal culture (idealistic track)												
External market (pragmatic track)												
External market (commercial track)												

they were produced not only for the external market, at the same time they could still serve various traditional needs. Meaning also that, while on the one side *hinggi* could still function as a traditional object, on the other side the design and motifs of *hinggi* had also experienced changes due to their orientation towards the external market.

The second period, namely between the years 1970 – 2000, *hinggi* cloths were produced with greater variations of design and motifs. Besides the simplifications, which are quantitative, *hinggi* design and motifs had also underwent qualitative changes, namely in aspects of shapes, styles, arrangements, colors, and themes. The shapes, which were simplified during the previous period, had become more complex. Styles of motifs that tended to be abstract and stylistic before became increasingly realistic with supple biomorphic lines. The arrangement of motifs had changed from having a double *x-y* axis to single axis (*y*). Configurations of color tones had transformed from basic tones of red and blue to a dominance of red color tones. Beforehand, design themes were based on spiritual culture and now they are based on material culture. All of the developments reveal substantial changes to the pattern of *hinggi* motifs, from symbolism to decoration, reflecting a penetration of tourists' tastes and aspirations into the design. The changes had also affected substantially on the uses and applications of *hinggi* as indicated by its transformation from ceremonial, traditional objects into commodities. This development shows that tourism, besides playing its role quantitatively, particularly in diversifying the design and motifs, it also plays its role qualitatively, not only in aspects of design and motifs but functional aspects of the *hinggi* as well. Such appearances of *hinggi* are totally of commercial nature and could no longer be used as traditional objects.

Table 2 is showing the continuum of objectives or purposes of *hinggi* production, whereas Table 3 below is showing *hinggi*'s diversified designs within a period of about 100 years.

Table 3
Diversified *hinggi* designs

Production track		Idealistic track > 1900	Pragmatic track > 1913	Commercial track > 1970
Aspects	Motifs			
Design	-shapes	traditional/original (majority)	traditional/original – new	new (majority)
	-styles	stylistic-abstract	stylistic-abstract- realistic	realistic (dominant) secular-decorative
	-themes	spiritual-symbolic	spiritual-symbolic- secular	dominance of red
	Color tones	red-blue	red-blue	diametrical – coincidental – 1 direction; doublet
	Arrangement of motifs	diametrical- 2 directions; in quadrants	diametrical – 2 direction; in quadrants	

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