

MALAY HOUSE, AN UNIQUENESS OF ARCHITETURAL DESIGN FORM

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Abstract

Malay houses almost always identifying through building raise on the pile, saddle roof and repeated gable-finials decorative that make them as a local distinct uniqueness. This uniqueness, which could be the strongest features, have brought significant cultural value and influencies to the development of building architecture. Gable horn, part of gable-finials, known as traditional roof decorative element has architectural similarities in the broad area coverage. Not only in traditional building of the archipelago, but also found strong evidence has similarities with decorative elements used on gable-finials in the region surrounding Astronesia such as; South East Asia, Malanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia and Madagascar. This has made identifying characteristic strong decorative elements. Gable horn become one hallmark of traditional architecture Astronesia region. Values contained not only from an architectural point of view, but can develop in accordance with their respective regional culture. The study was based on literature review and field surveyed to observed the presence of gable horn of Malay architecture traditional building. How variant element that can be encountered and became the origin to architectural presedent. Indeed, eventhough there are some varieties and forms of architectural elements throughout the archipelago, three major elements of raise on the pile, saddle roof and gable finial are become the most important characteristic of Malay house.

Keywords – *gable-finials, traditional architecture*

I. INTRODUCTION

Traditional compound, where Malay house spread on, was created respons to the actual housing need and community aspiration. It meet their socio-economic, cultural dan environments requirements (Yuan, 1987).

Malay house created nearly perfect solution to control of climate, multifunctional use of space, flexibility in design and shopisticated prefabricated system which can extend with the growing needs of family (Yuan, 1987). It is also identifying through riches cultural building components and decorative elements which have meanings that make uniqueness which could be the strongest features (Waterson, 2009).

This house, mostly spread in central Sumatra and Malaysian Peninsular, is not just a living house. It is a part origin of people spirit in community and conception of human soul (Waterson, 2009). It designed with deep understanding and respect to nature. It built closed to sea shore or river side in hinterland area which usually as compound formation that sprawl to each other.

II. RESEARCH APPROACH AND RESULT

The aim of research is discover Astronesia architecture style through empirical of Malay house at Central Sumatera, Indonesia. This research attempt to addressing and identifying indigenous shelter concept design through field studies and theoretical.

The approach in this research was using both qualitative and quantitative. Main research was collecting primary data through field study. It follows to conducted by literature study such as theories, previous research reports, empirical earlier studies include interview of some experts in this field.

2.1. Traditional building of the Archipelago

At glance, the most obvious of Astronesia architectural style how building house is rise on pile. This is very general feature of built form in South-East Asia, Micronesia and Melanesia. But it seems to fade out in Polynesia where buildings are often set upon raised stone platforms (Watson, 2009).

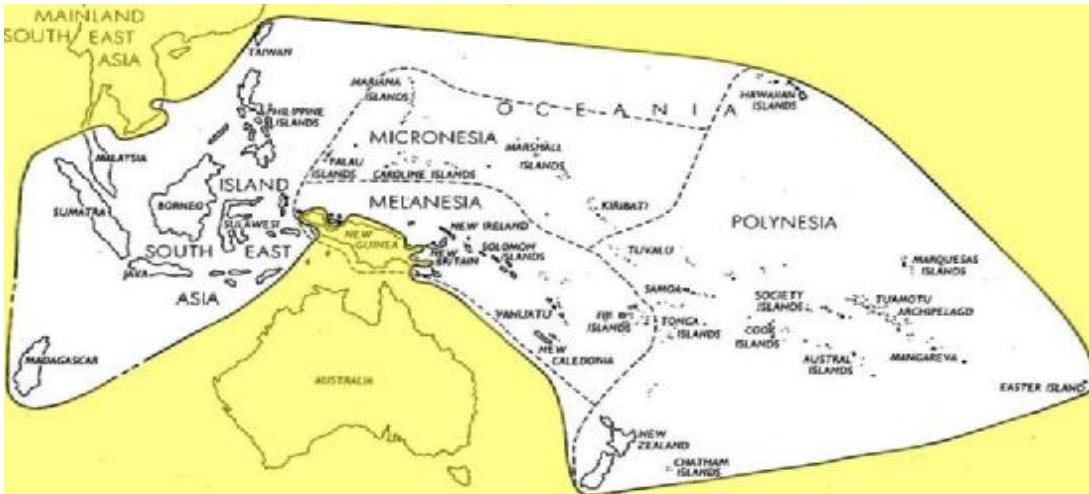


Figure 1. Astronesian boundary family
 Source: Waterson (2009)

Another distinct element is saddle roof with an extended ridge-line often resulting in outward sloping gable-end, and sometimes highly exaggerated points to the eaves. In some places, saddle roof has developed a whole range of variations according to its surrounding condition



Figure 2. Some of Astronesia Traditional Houses
 Source: Waterson (2009)

Similarities architectural elements in Astronesia region found in gable finial decorative as strong evidence how importan this feature. It can be formed simply from extensional of the rafters, or may be elaborately carved. Gable horn, sometimes come from a likeness to animal such as buffalo, bird or dragon which are believed to serve a protective function for the inhabitants.

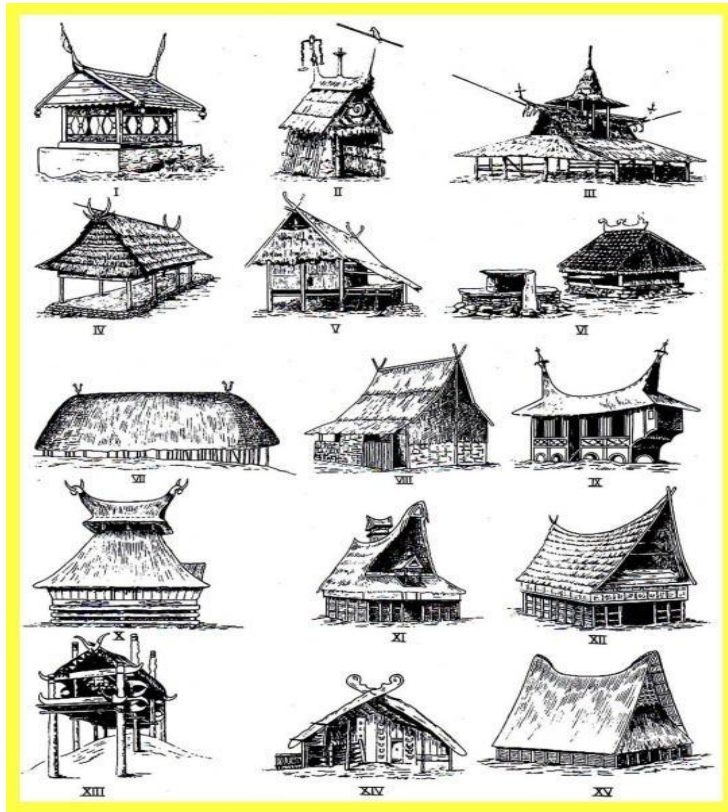


Figure 3. Gable roof and gable horn of Indonesian ancestral
 Source: Waterson (2009)

The choice of horns as a motif doubtless reflects the great importance of societies where it is a major form of wealth and sacrifice, beside protective. In certain area, gable horn also point to the potential of these decorative elements to serve as a sign of rank or status in society.

2.2. Rise on pile

Raise building on pile give distinct advantages. In fact, it is suited to tropical as a response to surrounding environments. It can describe a methods to adjust high distance floor above surface ground. There are some varieties to put or and rise building on pile. It seems this piling concept contradicted to modern technique that building should be tied up into ground. Malay pile building can be placed on the rock, or attach through simple platform without embed into ground



Figure 4. Building structure stand on simple platform
 Source: Firzal (1994)

2.3. Saddle roof

In generally, the Malay traditional saddle roofs are rectangular form and rarely square. It can be divide into three group which base on basic form such as: (1) *Belah Bubung Roof*; or *bubung melayu/rabung melayu/lipat kajang/lipat pandan/atap labu/ atap layar/ atap bersayap / atap bertinggam*, (2) *Limas Roof*; or *limas penuh/limas berabung melayu*, (3) *Lontik Roof* ; or *pencalang/lancang(traditionalboat)/gorai* (Effendi, 1986).

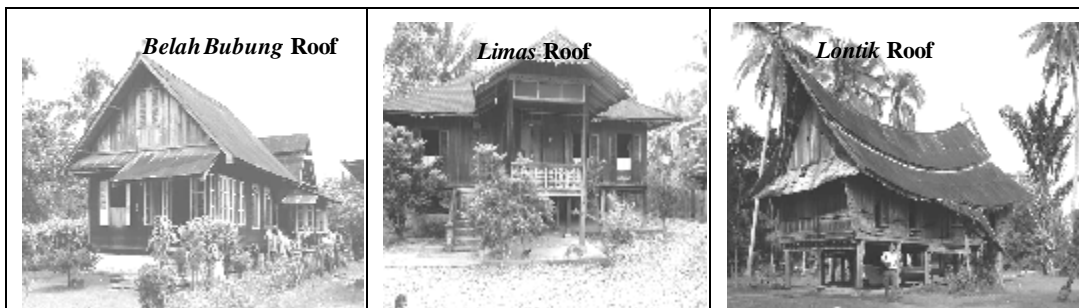


Figure 5. Basic form of saddle roof
 Source: Firzal (1994)



Figure 6. Variant of saddle roof
 Source: Firzal (1994)

2.4. Gable-finials decorative

The finial is an architectural device, typically carved and employed decoratively to emphasize the apex of a gable or any of various distinctive ornaments at the top, end, or corner of a building or structure. A gable finial can be describe as vertical surface situated at one or at both ends of the roof, adjoining a pitched roof. Its shape depends on the type of roof and parapet, mostly triangular, which is as on the facade rather than the back end (front gable).



Figure 7. Variant of Malay gable finial
 Source: Firzal (1994)

Gable horn, part of gable-finials, known as traditional roof decorative element has architectural similarities in the broad area coverage. Not only in traditional building of the archipelago, but also found strong evidence has similarities with decorative elements used on gable-finials in the region surrounding Astronesia such as; South East Asia, Malanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia and Madagascar. This has made identifying characteristic strong decorative elements. Gable horn become one hallmark of traditional architecture Astronesia region. Values contained not only from an architectural point of view, but can develop in accordance with their respective regional culture.

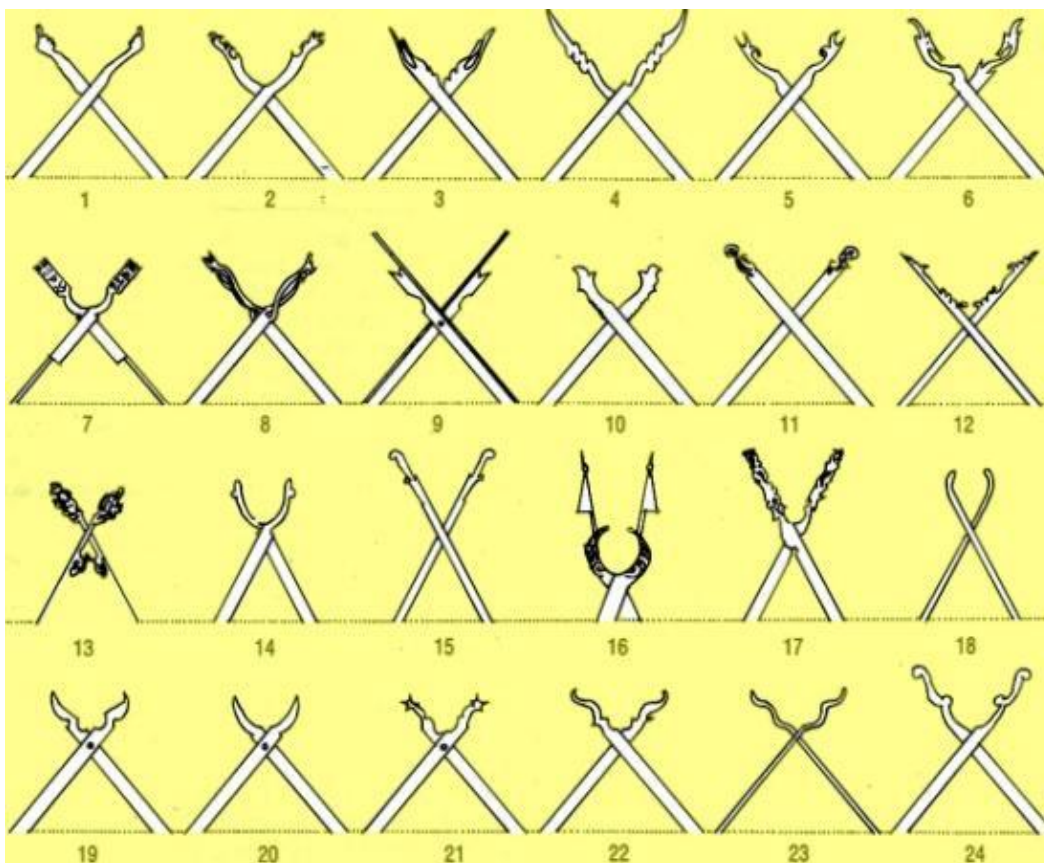


Figure 8. Typical of South-East Asian gable horn
 Source: Waterson (2009)



Figure 9. Varian of recent gable finials decorative
Source: Firzal (1994)

III. CONCLUSION

Although there are so many varieties and forms of architectural elements in the region Astronesia, but raise on the pile, saddle roof and gable finial are become most important characteristic of traditional architecture Astronesia. This can be described that how these elements can be developed in many variants throughout the archipelago.

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