VISUAL COMMUNICATION OF THE TRADITIONAL HOUSE IN NEGERI SEMBILAN
Mohd Haizra Hashim¹, Prof. Dr. Abdul Mu’ati Zamri Ahmad², Dr. Muhammad Pauzi Abdul Latif³,
Dr. Mohd Yazid Mohd Yunus⁴
¹ Faculty of Modern Language & Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
² Faculty of Design & Architecture, Universiti Putra Malaysia
¹haizraextreme@yahoo.com, ²abmuati@upm.edu.my, ³mpauzial@upm.edu.my, ⁴mohdyazid@upm.edu.my

Article History: Received on 17th July, Final Revised on 06th September, Published on 12th September 2017

ABSTRACT

Visual communication in architecture is a genuine aspiration in realizing the relationship between the Malays and other communities. The composition of the models in this communication is very well organized and will remain relevant to be developed from time to time. It is an observation on the symbols, types of motifs and design aspects of the carvings, also the structural elements in the Malay architecture of Negeri Sembilan.

This also comprises the study of the chronology of the early history of the Malay architecture of Negeri Sembilan which has its linkages with the Islamic art. Emphasis is given to the diversity in the carving characteristics as a comparison regarding historical, cultural and environmental backgrounds. The delicacy of the craftsmanship among Malay carvers in Negeri Sembilan is reflected in their maturity and ability to fuse traditional elements and Islam. Symbols that have motifs in the carvings result from the carvers' observation and experience.

The selection of these motifs is carefully made to ensure that they are the Islamic teachings and not deviating with the Islamic law. Carvings in the Malay architecture of Negeri Sembilan are also crafted with an aim to beautify a piece of architecture made of various motifs. Those carved parts are always assured to maintain the balance with the surrounding space. Floral motifs are often combined with cosmic or geometrical motifs. In many cases, plant-based motifs are also prevalence translated into carvings. This is a tribute from the Malay carvers to beauty, perfection, and harmony of nature.

Keywords: Visual communication; non-structural elements; architecture; craftsmanship

INTRODUCTION

Malay traditional house of Negeri Sembilan is a symbol of identity and unity of the Malay Minangkabau community. Commonly, in a Malay traditional village, they share the same architectural characteristics. The architectural attributes shape the identity of the Minangkabau community as a whole. Symbolism and aesthetic values create significant forms, symbolizing the community's identity and culture in the olden days. The synonymous form within the Minangkabau community in Negeri Sembilan is a boat-shaped tapering roof, which is ubiquitous in each residence. It shows a unique, special relationship between the Malay Minangkabau community and boat.

The symbols have specific meanings which are only understood by the community. They could be implied or apparent. These symbols are the results of the original craftsmanship produced by the wood carvers who took pride in their work. Abdul Halim Nasir (1987) in his book Traditional Malay Wood Carving said the quality of the carvings made by the Malay craftsmen in the olden days is unmatched with today's standards. Malay architecture is unique because it has aspects of aesthetic and historical values that hold many hidden messages, of which should be studied and unraveled by future generations.

The existence of the Malay architecture has something to do with community and their way of life. This way of life results in the creation of architecture and designs that contains aesthetic values. Traditional Malay architecture of Negeri Sembilan is also deemed as a guide and an epitome – a semblance of a community that represents its people who strongly adhere to their customs. All their beliefs are portrayed in symbolic forms through a village and space planning, crafting aesthetic values in carvings as well as their unique designs. Malay community of Negeri Sembilan is ardently rooted to the Perpatih customs, beliefs in taboos and supernatural forces. Although some of these predate Islam, some are still practicing them today.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

General Objectives:

Maintain a traditional home with communication, symbols and philosophies and also keep aesthetic values for future generations of cultural heritage.
Specific Objectives:

1. Determine the meaning and understanding of symbolism in the traditional Malay house of Negeri Sembilan.
2. Define the meaning and understanding of philosophy in the traditional Malay house of Negeri Sembilan.
3. Determine the meaning and understanding of communication in the traditional Malay house of Negeri Sembilan.

METHODOLOGY

This study attempts to explain the meaning of symbols in Malay architecture in Negeri Sembilan to get an idea of the beliefs and thoughts of the people who created it. In this study, researchers use a traditional house as well as related books about the symbolism in Negeri Sembilan. The selection has been made to ensure that this symbol have a spirit that is used in society or at least there is still a legacy of inheritance although it is no longer been used.

In order to identify and collect these symbols, the researchers use a several methods:

Interview Method
Researcher goes searching to the field looking for a carpenter, academician and host to find out about the symbols in the traditional Malay house. The interview is related to the background of this traditional house as well as the symbols found on it. Through interviews, researchers will be able to illustrate the effectiveness of the symbols based on the illustration of certain examples of collected data including understanding the specific symbols of this traditional house. For information disseminator, the researcher will write one by one every statement delivered. There are also secondary data materials that are easily obtained based on studies conducted by the museums, Negeri Sembilan polytechnics as well as from other parties.

Observation method
Observation method is done by looking at each structural element in each traditional house by recording the picture and recording everything that is seen. The advantages through this method are conducted naturally and there is no compulsion from any party. Nevertheless, this method is sometimes a list of observations that are too much that the researcher is overlooked and can not do it accurately. This observation needs to be done briefly but perfectly.

Library Methods
This method is used to obtain written materials related to this study. Literature research focuses on writing on symbols, traditional Malay houses, customs of Perpatih, divine symbols, unseen nature, humanity and so on. Studies were conducted at several libraries including UPM, USM, UKM, UiTM and the National Library. This library study helps researchers to review the contents of the knowledge including research findings and also theoretical and methodological contributions of this symbolic study. The main goal is to bring researchers to the new library research on the topic of this study and form the basis for other topic goals such as further research that may be required in the field.

VISUAL COMMUNICATION OF THE SYMBOLS IN THE NEGERI SEMBILAN’S MALAY ARCHITECTURE

According to Abdullah Mohamed (1985), Malay houses are built not only to meet functional and aesthetic values but to have particular meanings or symbols. The meanings in the Malay architecture are closely related to the concept of nature and divinity. The construction of residential houses in the community is represented as small nature (Microcosmus) or human.

The philosophy to erect a house consists of this Serba Empat (four-element). Components in this Serba Empat impose a great effect on the life of the Malays, especially in Negeri Sembilan. Regarding the belief, four resembles the companions of the Prophet; Abu Bakar, Omar, Osman, and Ali, who are highly honored with in the community. The four angels; Jibril, Mikail, Israfil, and Izrail which are relied upon as guardians to cast away evil spirits in the realm of mysticism. Other examples, Datuk-Datuk Tiang Balai Yang Berempat and also quotes from Datuk-Datuk Keempat-Empat Suku. The tenet also consists of believing in the four corners of the world, the four cardinal points (north, south, west, east) and the creation of the human being from the four elements (fire, air, water, earth), which is very common to the people. All these components have been fundamentally functional from time to time, and when these four are established, their belief will become powerful. (Yaakub Idrus., 1966)

Commonly, the relationship between a human and his home depends on the owner. It is normally based on the creativity of the builders which is also closely linked to the beliefs, religion, and culture that are practiced by the owner. Old Malay traditional houses that remain today have apparent Minangkabau characteristics, highlighting the Malay Archipelago
architectural heritage. The router appearance is rather simple but laden with progressive philosophy and messages. Consequently, all the main things such as the roles and functions of a traditional house are successfully met.

The followings are encrypted meanings behind the symbols on traditional houses of Negeri Sembilan.

1. **Visual communication of the Roof**

Roof plays an important role in the construction of the Malay houses so that its shapes can be differentiated from one another. In the days before the advent of Western culture, the Malays had houses with a distinctive roof, and they were specially designed based on a wide variety of cultural influences. A Malay traditional house's original roof has an elongated shape and slanting. The roof uses a ridge piece that is positioned in an inverted ‘V' shape. The shape continues as the identity that has become the symbol for the Malays. ([Abdul Halim Nasir, 1985:3](#))

The conical shape of the roof (small at the top and wider down to the bottom) is derived from a concept known as *One*. A human being is deemed to have originated from Adam. The population grows over time and scatters all over the world in different types of race, colour, language, and religion. There are also other opinions claiming that the roof represents a chain of wisdom emerged from the Islamic teachings that have started from *One* and flourished ever since. This is based on the roof that has a close continuation which also operates as a safeguard to other parts of the house such as porch and atrium. ([Affandi Yahya, 1995:77](#))

The following are several opinions on the pyramidal roof of the Negeri Sembilan House:

1. The conical roof is a symbol that is derived from buffalo horns due to its association with the name Minangkabau.

Buffalo horns as a symbol: wisdom, ingenuity, perseverance, strength, and encouragement.

"*Alun is tak alam tak ilek, Hiduk baraka, Baukue bajangko jo.*"

2. Tapering roof represents a bamboo shoot due to its nature as traditional food among the Minangkabau people and a staple dish served on ceremonial occasions. Also, bamboo shoot is also regarded as a very important plant in their life.

3. Tapering roof signifies the origin of the Minangkabau's people as their ancestors are said to have sailed with Alexander the Great’s entourage whose voyages crossed the oceans before docking in Minangkabau’s mainland. 4. The tapering roof also indicates the Minangkabau’s geographical conditions that are made of mountains and hills. ([Ardian, Padantha, Wirasti, Arrahman, Simamora, Luthfiadi, Atmaj, Laelasari 2011](#)).

The roof of this traditional house has a unique architectural feature with tapering roof top that resembles buffalo horns and can hold up for decades, however in recent years, many roofs have been replaced by zinc. The roof also applies as a protector from adverse weather. It is the identity of this traditional house from a general point of view, comprising the interior space design.

2. **Visual communication of the Wall**

All Malay traditional houses of Negeri Sembilan have walls that sit on sills. Grille or skirting wall boards are inserted upright on those sills. Sills are made of long, medium-sized wood installed around the outer parts of the stilts at the same level as the floor which is positioned at the beam-end and strengthened by cleats. ([Yaakub Idrus., 1966](#))

Walls play an important role in shaping the structural aspects of the Malay traditional houses. A house without walls is considered incomplete. The situation is also likened to a person without clothes, impolite and deceptive, also an act of displaying one's shortcomings that can be seen by others. ([Affandi Yahya, 1995:93](#)). Its meaning is always portrayed as boundaries of decorum. ([Yuliana Mamerta, 2014](#))

As a result, walls determine the shape of a house and certainly have their relevance to human life as the old saying, “*bermula Dari Rumah dan berakhir di Rumah*” which means everything that starts from home also ends up in there. A life of a loving family certainly begins at home that has walls, covering the space within, carrying specific functions and concepts. ([Abdul Halim Nasir, 1988:61](#))

The walls of a *rumah gadang* (big house) are split into three sections; side, front and rear. The front wall is expressed in several Minangkabau proverbs:

*Dinding tepi bak namanya
kembang manis muka yang jernih
jernih yang tidak berukuran*
Sidewalls are built with an intention to welcome people (traders, guests) and as a starting point for men to set off for a journey (traveling single young men). The duty to travel away from home has to be carried out by single young men as foretold in the Minangkabau proverbs. As a place for people to come and go, the walls should be *menerima* (accepting) to those who come to visit, clean, beautiful and *manis* (sweet). *Manis* and beautiful refers to a Minangkabau concept that pays tribute to nature, occasions, events and natural objects such as plants. Besides being a part of the concept, it also means *kembang* (bloom); hence the walls are colored and carved with *Sikambang manih*. (Nashbary Couto, 1998)

According to Rudolf Mrazek (1994), there are two typologies in the Minang culture - *Dynamism* and *Anti-parochialism*, in which both foster independence, cosmopolitanism, fairness, and broad-mindedness. This also leads to a culture where the Minangkabau people are compelled to wander. Courage to change for betterment; pursue knowledge and wealth as said in a Minangkabau proverb; *Karatau madang dahulu, babuah babungo alun, marantau bujang dahulu, di Rumah paguno balun* (it is better to embark on a journey than doing nothing at home). This results in generations of young Minangkabau men go abroad to earn a better living.

When it is closely observed, the common shape features the shape of a boat; stilts that are followed by tilted-outside walls. The walls widen upward to resemble the shape of a boat or ship. Lines formed stretching the walls in front of the house such as on window’s pedestal are called *Pengadan*, and some are slightly curved, symbolizing the walls of a boat. (Yaakub Idrus., 1966). Almost all traditional houses in Negeri Sembilan have walls that are similar to the walls of a boat or ship.

The roles of walls of the Malay traditional houses are not only to strengthen the structure, but also to protect its household from public view and a place to take cover from harsh weathers. The concept and philosophy of the walls also have its symbolic meanings in the traditional Minangkabau customs.

3. Visual Communication of the Door

According to Yaakub Idrus (1966), a Riau’s traditional house usually has two or three doors. This thing is cited as:

*Berkau pintu Rumah*
*Tempat masuk orang beradat*
*Tempat keluar orang beradab*

Or symbolically means front door as the custom receiver, rear door as the shame redeemer.

Doors are built parallel, facing the sunset or sunrise points. Both doors are positioned to invoke the blessings from Allah. Front and rear doors cannot be positioned opposing one another because it is believed that they can be a passage for the devil through the house. The doors are used as a boundary and route for occupants to go in and out. This traditional house uses a bar-shaped door latch made from wood as a lock, and it is mounted on the back of the door. This bar has two functions, not only as a lock but also a weapon if there is a case of emergency (Affandi Yahya, 1995:90).

A door with a stringed ornament at the top is called an arch door. There is also a door that is made quite low to the extent anyone who comes in or out of the house must bend his head. This signifies that anyone coming in and out should possess knowledge of the customs and traditions. One must respect the host when entering and must also honor God as the Creator of the universe when leaving. A type of door known as *Lawang or Ambang* is believed to be a route for spirits and diseases. Therefore, most Malays put amulets or charms on top of the door (usually the main door) to ward off evil spirits, ghosts, diseases, black magic or anything else that tend to bring harm into the house (Yuliana Mamerta, 2014).
Doors are a medium for space. They also serve as a symbol of social status or identity of the homeowner based on his taste and creativity. Doors come in various materials, sizes, designs, colors, and patterns depending on one's affordability.

4. Visual Communication of the Window

Commonly, windows found in most traditional Malay houses have fine carvings with beautiful, flowery and geometrical motifs that accentuate the quality of the craftsmanship and Islamic touch. They have several meanings and symbols. These symbols are featured to grace the space and liven up the ambiance within. There is also a symbol of courtesy. Prevalently, windows located in the main room are meant to create a calm and harmonious ambiance. Windows also signify respect and have a welcoming appeal to make people feel invited. (LAIC, 2013)

Windows represent many specific meanings. If they are deliberately made as high as an adult standing, it symbolizes that the homeowner is a good person and knows the traditions. Meanwhile, low windows indicate that the host is friendly and sincere in welcoming guests. (AMK, 2009)

It shows that these windows and their use in traditional houses are not made arbitrarily. All is done in good faith based on philosophy, customs, and religion. Thus, the inventions are in line with the norms of the local community at that time as they believed that each incident had symbolic elements.

5. Visual communication of the Column

According to Yaakub Idrus (1966), there are expressions about the columns of the Malay houses:

_Tinggi Rumah sepemikulan_  
_Terpikul bendul yang empat_  
_Terpikul ladang bertumpuk_  
_Tak beringkah tungku di dapur_  
_Tak tersingkap kain di pinggang_

Meaning: Columns are piled up to shoulder height (sepemikulan) implicate a better living (ladang bertumpuk), peaceful life (tak bertelingkah tungku di dapur) and guarding the pride (tak tersingkap kain di pinggang).

_Tinggi rumah sejunjunungan_  
_Terjunjunun adat dengan lembaga_  
_Terjunjun harta dan pusaka_  
_Terjunjun pinta dengan bagi_

Meaning: Sejunjunungan (upholding) gives a good sign because it shows customs and institutions being preserved as well as the better living. Terjunjun pinta dengan bagi means the needy must be helped.

_Tinggi rumah sepangangkuan_  
_Tergapai kasau dengan alang_  
_Teraih padi dalam petak_  
_Tertutup baju di dada_

Meaning: Tinggi sepanjangkuan is the intent to achieve goals in life, good harvesting season of rice and guarding the pride especially for women.

_Tinggi rumah selutut_  
_Tak berada pintu rumah_  
_Tak berada tangga rumah_  
_Berbeliau ang tidak berpodah_  
_Berparang tidak berasah_  
_Yang lalu melengah_  
_Yang tiba mengincah_

Meaning: Implication of the low columns is not good. The good ones are when the height of the columns is taller than the sepemikulan. (Yaakub Idrus., 1966)

Sections of a house resemble the parts of the human body. Symbols of two thighs and calves are shown in two columns from the beam to the ground. (Abdullah Mohamed, 1985: 54)

Columns dictate the shape of the house and are a symbol of the grace of Allah (God).
According to Selma Nakamura (1999), the *old column* is oriented in the position of Mount Merapi, which represents a tribute to the origin of the Malay Minangkabau descent.

A Malay traditional house is commonly built on stilts. Columns are made both in round or angular shapes. *Tiang Seri* (king post) is located in the main house as the central column. They also carry symbols associated with religion, beliefs and everything else in the Malay world. These symbols are then embedded with a specific meaning related to everyday life.

6. Visual communication of the Hanging Column

The hanging column is usually carved with leaf and flower motifs which signify that the Riau people have an obligation to maintain the sustainability of nature. (Kris Hadiawan, 2011)

The use of a hanging column in the Negeri Sembilan houses resembles Javanese architecture, such as the use of small logs to strengthen the stilts. (Yaakub Idrus., 1995)

According to Halim Nasir (1988), the hanging column is a symbol of pride and strength of the house. Its subsidence signifies bad luck, and it is also believed to be the tightening key to the whole structure of the house.

The hanging column is also a reflection of their inner beliefs based on a custom which the Minangkabau people of Negeri Sembilan are adhered to. It is closely related to cultural ties and customs that have been revolving around the community as a way of life.

7. Visual communication of the *Tebar Layar*

According to Djauhari Sumintardja (1986), a boat is orientated as a culture in the psyche of those who believe that the sea is a source of livelihood and the boat is a vehicle to follow in their ancestor’s footsteps. The *Tebar layar* patterns typically have sunrise motifs to symbolize the joy of life. (Ab Aziz Shuaib, 2012)

The word *tebar* or *tuban* means the water that comes out during the birth of a baby, while the word *layar* has the same meaning with the screen in a shadow play. It all brings to a meaning that the word *tuban* signifies a precursor to knowledge in the real world or a shadow of the knowledge before its birth. (Abdullah Mohamed, 1985: 62)

*Tebar layar* has a high aesthetic value in which it has spiritual and ethical significances, also as a symbol of the personality and culture of the Minangkabau community in Negeri Sembilan. This indirectly reveals the use of *Tebar layar* in their culture.

8. Visual Communication of the Carving

Walls are made of wood, except on the rear parts are made from bamboo. Wooden boards are installed vertically and framed at each joint. They are filled with traditional carvings, and in some cases, columns are also carved. Decorative carvings are dominant in a *Rumah Gadang* (big house) of Minangkabau. These carvings are not associated with spiritual beliefs, only as valuable decorative works of art. (Dawson, Barry; Gillow, John; 1994)

Artistic approaches of the motifs in the carvings can be viewed from the historic angle of the Malay world. Before the advent of Hinduism, the patterns were commonly carved in geometrical designs. After Hindu influences had taken place, the patterns had turned into figurative objects. However, during the arrival of Islam, it was prohibited to have live objects in the carving productions. Subsequently, the style of geometrical motifs including natural plants and verses of the Quran were later introduced and adopted. (Zainul Abdullah, 1981: 50)

Motifs in the Malay traditional carving can be categorized into several types and images:

1. Type of geometrical images, comprising straight lines, circles or angular shapes
2. Type of plants (flora)
3. Type of animals (fauna)
4. Type of cosmic motifs. Examples: clouds, waves, mountains and other universal things.
5. Type of images with letters or calligraphy
   (Yaakub Idrus.; 1986: 24)

The images of animals as motifs are also widely applied in carvings such as birds, fish, and chicken. Those carved motifs are believed to have brought good fortune, also, to symbolize folk games such as cockfighting, birds competition, and fish fighting. The motifs are used as a sign of devotion to their affection towards pets. Meanwhile, flower motifs are carved as a symbol for something beautiful, interesting and as a part of the natural beauty that evokes the feelings of smoothness, pure,
Traditional wood carvers have a responsibility, ability, and integrity to produce works of art that depict motifs, philosophical values that fit in well with the local community. Each carving should have its discipline which assimilates with customs, religion, beliefs, aesthetic values, norms, beauty, harmony and local culture.

9. Visual Communication of the Floor

The floor is the foundation in a house construction and also operates as borders between wall gaps. The floor is said to be the base for a room or kalbu (heart). The floor of a house also acts as a symbol because of its existence is a resemblance to the existence of our various movements. (Affandi Yahya, 1995)

The floor cannot stand on its own if it is not reinforced by some other elements such as rasuk (interlocking beam) and lambung (flank). Similarly, the base for the kalbu must also be reinforced by spirit, sir (secret), sirrus-sir (secrets within secrets) or Allah. Thus, the penyambut (receiver) is equated with spirit, rasuk with sir and lambung with sirrus-sir. (Abdullah Mohamed, 1985: 74)

Floor boards which are arranged side by side and aligned with the sills are known as the parallel floor. Boards that have gaps (not connected to space) are called semampai (lanky). This parallel arrangement signifies that the homeowner always lives in peace and harmony. Floor boards arranged to extend from the front to back or known as the long floor symbolizes that the homeowner is a commoner. That also indicates that he is an average, neither rich nor poor. (Yuliana Mamerta, 2014)

Consequently, the floor is meant to be as the base of a house. The floor covers gaps at the bottom with function and concept of its own. The philosophy of the floor also has symbolic meanings. The floor has a significant role because without it, the construction of a house is considered a flaw.

10. Visual Communication of the Staircase

Stair case is used to go in and out of the house. The word is derived from a combination of two words - hand and grasp because a stair case signifies those who shake hands with both hands grasped tightly. The grasp is inspired in the making of a technology system in constructing a staircase by compressing a series of stair son baluster which is referred to as the hitching place. Rabbet system applied on both stairs and baluster is symbolized as those who shake hands with both hands tightly grasped. (Abdul Halim Nasir, 1988: 45)

Some stairs are not usually even, but odd. This calculation is related to previous heritage customs and beliefs. Even stair numbers are believed can bring calamity into the house such as evil spirits intrusion and natural disaster. Meanwhile, odd numbers can lead to good fortune. Mainly in the Malay architecture, odd numbers play an important role, and their symbolic is a secret that can never be revealed. (Affandi Yahya, 1995: 92)

Railing located on a sill symbolizes the love of a mother to her son. Stair-head is leaning against a door jamb, signifying the leader of the house as the one who always maintains the dignity and safety of the family. Due to the significance, it is a taboo for the Malays to cut off relationships among family members. (Yuliana Mamerta, 2014)

Besides its detachable attribute, the uniqueness of the staircase is quite interesting because overall it showcases the identity of the Negeri Sembilan's Malay community. Staircases today are not as the same as before, but they are still being used even without a specific meaning or philosophy.

MAIN FINDINGS

1. Symbol & Philosophy based on Communication Concept

Communication is an activity that we do at all times in our community life. We need to mingle with the community and communicate to express what we want to say or share thoughts, opinions and feelings with the surrounding community. Communication becomes a necessary requirement in everyday life. Communication is the main necessity of human life that includes interpersonal and intrapersonal. Communication using this symbol is the process of an idea, the value and attitude shared by a carpenter / carving with the surrounding community.

These relationships and symbols bring understanding. Through symbols: people can exchange ideas to enliven the atmosphere of this traditional house. With this communication, people can improve their behavior. In this symbol, they will learn many examples and useful lessons in order to improve their own bad behavior.

Terence Hawkes (1978), in his book *New Accent Structural and Semiotic* states that the definition of semiotics as a science of learning symbols and societies is associated with social psychology as it relates to communication psychology. Symbols are
as ordered messages, denotes something and conveying something. Symbolic is also used by humans to convey something meaning. Its means symbols and meanings are inseparable.

According to Umberto Eco (1980), the symbols on the building have existed since humans began to have knowledge of the building. Symbols are known to humans indirectly through such a roof experience to protect heat and rain. Similarly, the division of home spaces is created by humans for some reason. There are 2 reasons for the symbols:

1. The object is used as a symbol
2. Information to be communicated through the symbol

These symbols can be attributed to the traditional Negeri Sembilan house. The function of a traditional home is a dwelling, but this house can be seen as an object to convey the symbols along with certain significance. Basically a symbol is a sign that is related to an object or something is determined by a community rule. Abstract symbols are usually more personal while concrete symbols are more general and they are agreed upon by the local community.

Broader communication should not be seen as a gap of relationship separation or expansion without borders. Greater communication networks should be implemented in the early intentions of the community in establishing relationships—seeking the same meaning and meaning in their lives. This requires sharing which brings people together in perfect life in their idealism. Filling the meaning of life in perfect form should show a mutually beneficial communication link. This communication not only takes on conservative definitions and definitions, but it requires the eruptions of information ideas that are born of the entire communication system.

In a symbolic world, a touch of taste will be revealed when these beautiful symbols require observation and understanding of the theme and meaning. A symbol is supposed to excel and penetrate into the hearts of the community. The visible symbols have a community relationship as an expression of art. However this symbol of expression will be bland if it is without understanding of the mind.

2. Symbol & Philosophy based on Creativity Concept

Presenting some symbol is the most important feature in generating creative ideas. It requires a subtle sensitivity with a very sensitive observation when assessing the environment, experience and determination to establish the existence of such a symbol. This creative thinking allows the community at that time through an increasingly complex age of life with an unlimited community's desire, but the supply/service is diminishing and inefficient. It matches the statement of Jean Jacques Rousseau, “The world of reality has its limits: the world of imagination is boundless”.

This infinite ability of imagination to combine with creative values of one will be able to create unique symbols in meeting their needs. With this carpenter's imagination able to communicate without face-to-face has resulted in creative ideas with the creation of symbols. These biological needs come from their instincts and social demands. It includes bodily and spiritual will. The production of this symbol is a result of fun art or creativity and the transformation of the aesthetic value of the instinct of the carpenter/engraving. These carpenters try to communicate with the spiritual nature using their own creativity.

Each carpenter is awarded with its own artistic wisdom. This wisdom shows the privileges that exist in a person with the designation of the symbol. This traditional symbol has its own distinctive artistic touch. According to Herbert Mead in the Gubahan Novel by Shahnon Ahmad (1979), from time to time someone will come as special person. He was so special because he has a special worldview and special way of presenting the specific worldview while creates something unique.

3. Philosophy Diagram at Negeri Sembilan Malay Traditional House

![Philosophy Diagram at Negeri Sembilan Malay Traditional House](image-url)
The process of creativity ranges from philosophy to title. The relationship between the symbol and the title. In the engraving/design there is a symbol. The symbol signals the image. Images have meaning and consequently generate titles.

4. Symbolism and the Meanings of Traditional Malay Houses

Symbolism in architecture should be seen in the design of the exterior or in the space or on the details of the motifs and the decorating elements. Rapoport (1982: 22) states that in the context of architecture, personal meaning and relevant to the use of decorating elements. In the context of the traditional Malay house it only involves aspects of emotional, personal and symbolic connotations. According to Rapoport, we can not assume that buildings and structures are free from symbolic meaning either in modern or traditional industrial societies. Based on Waterson (1997), the architecture produces social spaces and symbolic, which reflect and shape the world view of the host and its paintings. The life patterns of the Malays races in ancient times are reflected through the old architecture. The creation of symbols in this architecture is the oldest and the original property of the Malay community. It is generally accepted that this old symbol is the original creation of the Malays. It was not the result of adaptation from Europe, India or China.

The old Malay community is so familiar with nature which is the nature of the plant, the animal and the nature of the horizon. This is because the community at that time often interacts with nature that is around them either in the sea, forest, fields, paddy fields and mountains. Harun Mat Piah (1989: 115) explains that the use of symbols from the universe should be known to understand the meaning of the symbol. That is why the symbols on Malay architecture are associated with nature as a comparison and symbolism that serves as a source of teaching and advice.

What does this symbol do with the Malays? This symbol is one of the branches of art and culture in the Malay World which contains the essence of its philosophy of Malay support. The thinking of this Malay nation can be detected by looking at the features of a design and symbols that can be seen in old architecture (mosques, castles, custom houses, etc.). Although the use of the forms and forms of research objects is the same, their meanings, philosophies and functions are different because the thinking pattern of a particular race is different. The same statement with Seyyed Hossein Nasr's statement (1993: 79-80) which also points to the view that, "What a difference between Dasavatara Hindu temple and the Delhi Mosque both are in India; or the naturalistic Roman temples with the same Romanesque churches in Italy."

5. Ornaments / Decorative Ornaments at Traditional Malay Houses

The word ornament comes from Ornare's word in Latin which means to decorate. In Malay words ornaments are meant for decorating, jewelry like painting and etc. Many architects believe from the past until now the majority use ornamentation in their architecture such as Louis H. Sullivan. Ornament and structure were integral; their subtle rhythm sustained a high emotional tension, yet produced a sense of serenity. (Louis H. Sullivan, 1974)

"Pattern, decoration, [and] ornament attaches people to things. Pattern links us in more intimate ways to our surroundings, in a way that undecorated surfaces do not. If ornamentation is a fundamental element in world artistic traditions, and a fundamental aspect of human visual cultures, it is because at root it is linked to questions of identity - individual identity and collective or social identity." (Adrian M. Small, 2009)
The term ornamentation, decoration and pattern have relationships with each other. Ornamentation is a structure that receives strength from existing strengths. It's not just a mere decoration but it helps to be part of the support structure.

Ornaments are one of the artworks based on works with a wide range of artworks. Therefore, the role of ornaments is very important. In addition, in decorating, it is one of the most important and inseparable traditions of other artistic branches. The role of this ornament is huge; it can be seen in its application in architecture, ceremonial tools, traditional transportation, memorial gifts, furniture, clothing and etc. It aims to fulfill various aspects of life in physical and spiritual.

In studying and appreciating the various forms and meanings of art ornaments, researchers need to know the history, the meaning of the symbol, the style, the type, the way of disclosure, the function or the application of it to an object or home. Researchers need to know and understand the art of diverse ornaments such as: motifs, patterns, character, values, different types of manufacturing and application techniques, with strong wills and curiosity.

According to Agus Mulyadi Utomo (2012), ornament is one of the elements of an art gallery that is very important in the effort to meet the demands of the soul. The general understanding that the ornament has a very large role, that is through its application through various things, such as aspects of human life that are physical or spiritual. Examples of such applications include ceremonial tools, hunting tools, transportation, custom houses, agricultural tools, souvenirs and etc. Ornaments are an artistic element that gets great attention from the community, for the sake of its usefulness and sustainability.

According to him, the creation of an ornament with certain functions, in which its creation is associated with certain functions or uses. Some ornamental functions are described as follows:

- As a pure ornament, it means the forms of ornamentation made just to decorate only for the beauty of a form or object, where the ornament is placed. Its application is usually on household appliances, architecture, clothing (batik & kerawang), on transportation tools and etc.
- As a symbolic ornamentation, the work of the ornament created serves as the decorator of an object that has a certain symbol value within it, according to certain norms (custom, religion or social system). The forms, motives and placement are largely determined by these norms, especially the religious norms to be adhered to, to avoid misunderstanding the meaning or symbol value contained therein. Therefore, an ornament of the symbol should conform to the prescribed rules. Examples of ornamental patterns include calligraphy motifs, life tree motifs as life symbols, and phonical bird motifs as symbols of immortality, swastika and etc.

According to Agus again, ornaments are not only used to decorate a functional object / product but also as an essential element in artwork (paintings, sculptures, graphics), while visualization techniques are not only drawn as we know all this time but also carved and printed. Creation of artwork is not only intended to support the beauty of an object, but with the spirit of creativity the artist begins to create ornamental works as stand alone artworks, without having to ride or serve other interests. This work is known for decorative art (paintings or other works that use decorative as a major element).

From the above opinions it can be concluded that: ornament is one of the decorative works of art that is usually used to add to the beauty of an object or product, or is a standalone decorative artwork, regardless of functional objects / products as its place.

IMPLICATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several implications are presented below:

1. Education factor

The colonial education system has played an important role in providing information based on empirical, logical, rational statements and so on. The impact of this secular education is more pronounced on those who attend colonial education. When Malaysia was independent, the colonial school leavers who have become leaders now have secured a secular education system to this day. This secular education indirectly shaped the minds of the Malay community to reject heritage beliefs, including symbolism which was considered inappropriate and etc.

2. Modern factor

Modern developments in the Malay community have added knowledge to changing the minds of the Malay societies that are limited to the symbols and traditions of traditional culture solely. Significant change is in the field of architecture. Hence, the Malay community does not need any more symbols to inhabit their homes. It is therefore unwise to blame the younger generation if they are not interested and do not accept the art of this tradition as a whole.
3. Religious factors

The Islamic da’wah movement is quite effective among Malays where symbols in the form of animals are not allowed by Islam. The dismissal indirectly led the younger generation not to know the symbols.

4. Woodworking / Engraving Factor

If the demand from society is still high, then these groups can continue with what is inherited from time to time. However, the position of symbols in the future depends on their function and effectiveness. If this symbol is still useful it will continue to exist. This is because traditional elements of culture are largely dependent on the demands of the local community; if its function is unclear then its inherent element of tradition is facing a fading future.

NOVELTY

1. The Negeri Sembilan Malay community of the past is a community that lives in friendly nature with nature and they are observers and appreciate natural resources. Observing nature also allows them to have unique creative ideas. This is different from today's society who is much more likely to build houses in a modern way without focusing on natural resources and not producing symbols in their homes. The era of modernity has completely eliminated traditional Malay houses due to the high cost and impractical. Therefore, in order to curb this problem it is proposed to the government that each housing area should be applied to communication, traditional symbols and philosophies according to the culture of their respective states.

2. Theories such as environmental, determinism, environmental possibilism and environmental probabilism, agree that the physical environment can have a positive impact on the social environment. This means that the best path to the desired social environment is to create an appropriate physical environment (Ezrin Arbi, 1997). The traditional houses built and the symbolisms developed by the Malay community have long established relationships between nature and humanity. It is therefore recommended that art education at primary level be exposed to paintings involving nature, cosmology and even animals so that they love this nature.

3. The concept of preservation of Negeri Sembilan Malay culture in a comprehensive and integrated manner with the implementation of communication, symbols and philosophies should be emphasized on the pattern of community life. This requires university level involvement.

4. Knowledge and understanding of the Adat Perpatih and the saying of the Alam Takambang Jadi Guru should be accompanied by a high level of understanding and accuracy. This is aimed at avoiding conflicts with the Islamic religion practiced by the general public. It is hoped that the positive assimilation process in this culture will be maintained in the future.

5. Cultural and heritage-based tourism has led to the preservation of these traditional Malay houses. This brings many benefits to foreign tourists and, most importantly, is to the next generation. The potential of this tourism has to be spread and the tourism sector will help the local economy.

CONCLUSION

Observations on the remaining traditional houses today, found that the existence of these traditional houses has more emphasis on functionality rather than aesthetic values. The aesthetic values indirectly emerge due to all the functionality has been met, namely as a shelter and gathering place for family members. As a result, the concept of shape according to function is more vital and has been adopted before. Good ventilation and unique lighting setup give an impact on these houses in livening up and creating harmonious home space. This kind of ambiance is critical for the households that live in the house so that they can relax their mind by enjoying the peaceful and balanced environment.

There are many aesthetic elements in the Negeri Sembilan’s Malay traditional houses, which are closely associated with the Minangkabau cultural influences. Fundamentally, it shows that these houses’ architectural elements are complex. This is based on the people’s beliefs, universal views, culture, and psyche about the customs and way of life of the community alike in the olden days. Through the way of life, the Malays balance and shape their traditional architecture by assimilating elements of symbolism (culture, belief, metaphysical) and functionality. These elements have a close inter-relationship with one another based on the symbolism that is being accentuated.

The symbols on the Negeri Sembilan’s Malay traditional houses are a method in telling real universal situations. The use of these symbols gives a plain truth on facts raised by ideas or emotions clinging in the minds of the people. Through these symbols, the community members should use their sensitivity and own interpretation in understanding the psyche and philosophy embedded in those symbols. It is also closely associated with the lives and cultural influences of those symbols’ creators.
REFERENCES