

IDENTIFYING A LOTUS MOTIF TRANSFORMATION ON THE MELAKA TRADITIONAL MOSQUE'S ROOF CROWN IN 1720-1950

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ABSTRAK

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Melaka have developed over 500 years of trade and cultural exchanged between East and West in the Straits of Malacca and had been recognized as a World Heritage by the UNESCO in 2008. Besides trading exchange, some of merchant brought an influence of religion, culture and also an art from their country to the Melaka. The process of assimilation of influence can be seen in cultures and buildings of Melaka. For example traditional mosques in Melaka have a different style of architecture compared to the other state mosques in Malaysia. It has a combination of influences from Sumatra and Chinese. There are some of motifs and pattern represent influence can be seen on the mosques. For this research paper, lotus motif from the roof crown also known as buton and mahkota atap of Melaka traditional mosques will become as a subject to study on the stylization permutation based on year. There are 20 traditional mosques were build in 1720-1950 will be selected and which is maintain the roof crown without replacing by doom. Objectively, this research paper is about to study the influences of Lotus motif and the relation of lotus motif with Malay and Islam perception. Visual research and content analysis method will use to gathering the data. Findings showed each of lotus motif have different style based on era which lotus motif in 17th era have a realistic and complexity compared than lotus motifs in 19th era which is more simplicity and stylization.

Keywords: Lotus, Motif, Roof Crown, Melaka Traditional Mosques

INTRODUCTION

Mosque is the nucleus of Muslim community life and the place of worship in the world and the qibla of the mosque directed to the Kaaba.

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Islam has already arrive in Malay-Archipelago since 7th century and started with Western Sumatra, Indonesia by the traders. Malay-Archipelago is a group of island located between South East Asia and Australia including Malaysia, Indonesia and Philippines. Historically, Malay-Archipelago ia a region with full of natural resource ao it become one the most important traders route in the world at that time. Pyramidal roof become an icon of architectural style in Malay-Archipelago. In 15th century, there are many mosques build by the community especially Muslim traders who came to Melaka. The emergence of mixed art happened during colonial conquest period.



Plate 1: Roof crown of Masjid Peringggit

Chinese Influences

Chinese architectural elements influenced can be seen in Malay mosque architecture beside influenced from Islamic and local culture. According to Abdul Halim Nasir (1995), the decoration pattern of the mosque minaret and roof were similar with the pagoda and Chinese roof temple. Each of traditional mosques in Melaka was a pyramidal roof. Top of the pyramidal roof were known as roof crown. In other names such as buah buton, mahkota atap, tunjuk langit and buang guntung. According to N. Utaberta (2012), In the architectural terminology of the Malay traditional, buton is a wood measuring about 60 cm to 100 cm mounted on the rooftop. Buton is a bagde or symbol of a construction formwork, just like a gravestone on the tomb. For this research paper the word roof crown represent buton.

There are several researcher have a similar statement the influences of Chinese on the Melaka traditional mosques. Mohamad Tajuddin Mohamad Rasdi (2000) claimed that Chinese influence in mosque architectural divided into two types, the first is the three-tiered pyramidal roof form and the second is the double tier pyramidal roof form. In Melaka, the unique of these mosques can be recognized through the decorating motifs and visual designs such as flora and fauna motifs that influenced from China.

Masjid Tengkerah also known as Tranquerah Mosques were built in 1728 was one of the directly Chinese influences on the architecture itself. With the minaret similar with the pagodas in China.



Plate 2: Masjid Tengkerah

Lotus Motifs

The uniqueness of most Melaka traditional mosques compare to other state mosque in Malaysia is the roof crown were shaped as a lotus flower motif (Nelumbo Nucifera). According to Abdullah Mohamed (1978) cited by N. Utaberta (2012), in his discussion on the domes of mosques in Melaka, where he reiterated that the dome is originally thought of as a flower bud, that is later adapted and shaped into various permutations. Titus Burckhardt (2009) stated that the lotus as the image of soul opening up to the transcendent light. In traditional Melaka mosque design, roof crown is one of the most important symbolic elements.



Plate 3: Lotus motif on Masjid Tengkerah

RESEARCH DESIGN

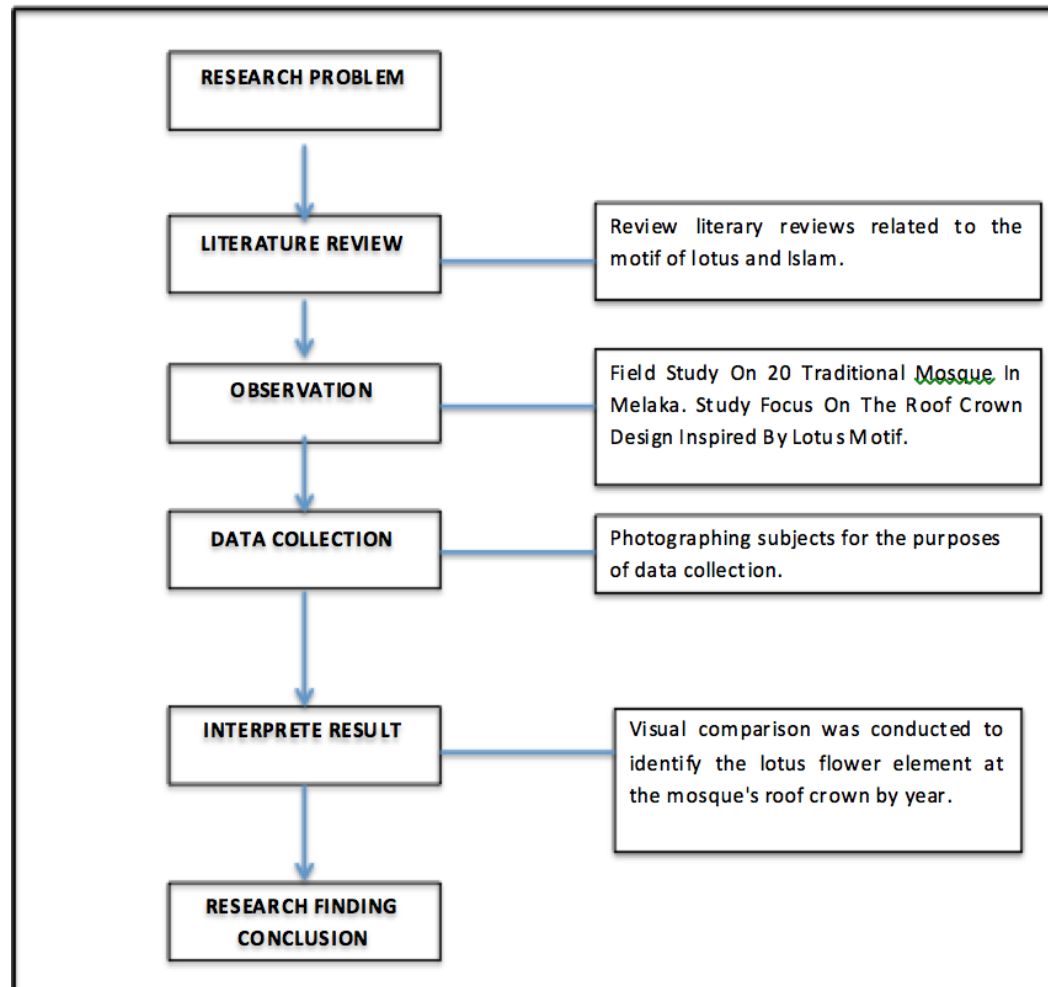


Figure 1: Research Design Process

FINDINGS

Mosques built in 17th era



Masjid Kampung Hulu	Masjid Tengkeria	Masjid Kg Kling	Masjid Pengkalan Rama
Built in 1720	Built in 1728	Built in 1748	Built in 1730

Figure 2: Mosques built in 17th era

Findings showed mosque were built in 17th era have a realistic and complexity lotus motif and have a similarity of shape between Masjid Kampung Hulu, Masjid Kampung Kling and Masjid Pengkalan Rama. Meanwhile motif in Masjid tengkeria have lotus blossom on the base of the roof crown.

Mosques built in 18th era



Masjid Bukit China	Masjid Kg Duyong	Masjid Telok Mas	Masjid Alai
Built in 1818	Built in 1840	Built in 1840	Built in 1890

Figure 3: Mosques built in 18th era

Findings showed mosque were built in 18th era have realistic lotus motif and look much smaller compared then mosque were build in 17th era. There are two mosques have a similarity of shape are Masjid Alai and Masjid Telok Mas.

Mosques built in 19th era

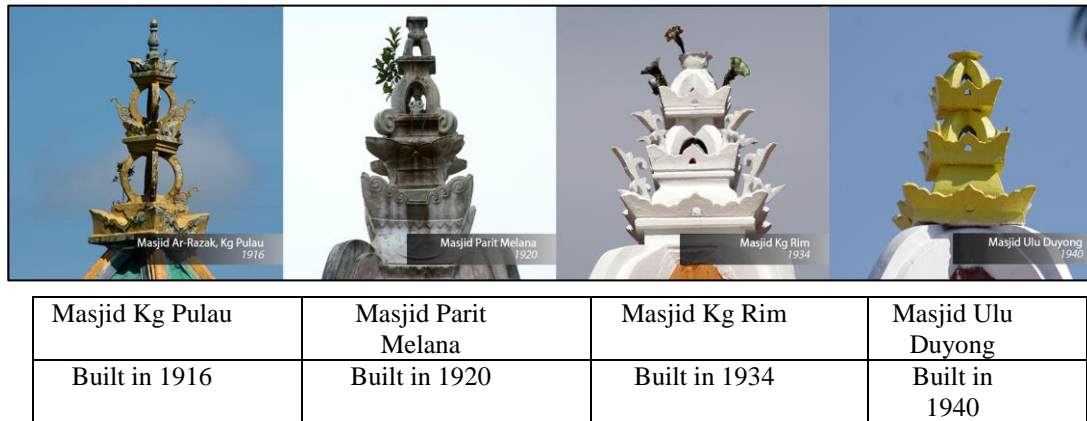


Figure 4: Mosques built in 19th era

Findings showed mosque were built in 19th era have stylization of lotus motif and look much simplicity compared to the mosques in 17th and 18th era. Masjid Kg Rim and Masjid Ulu Duyong have a similar design and shape while Masjid Kg Pulau have totally different shape with the others.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Based on the findings showed there are transformation of roof crown shape including lotus motif from year by year. It s also showed the mosques which located nearly each others have a similar design of roof crown. For example Masjid Kampung Hulu and Masjid Kampung Kling which in geographically its located near to each other even though the year of built is differently. Similar cases with Masjid Ulu Duyong and Majid Kg Rim which have similar design of roof crown.

Beside the similar design, it also shows each of roof crown have triangular shape which the top are smaller than the base. Most of lotus motif located at the base. Its showed the relation of human being with the environment, with engraving on the walls of the old mosque in the Malay region were not only sought by local residents who were affected by the environment at that time and the gradual change of their ancestral beliefs but also from Muslim immigrants, through trade, bringing architecture and their craftsmen who came to the Malay land region. There are several theories that explain the spread of the use of the lotus motifs in the decoration of the mosque walls influenced by the elements of Hinduism and Buddhism According to Yusof, Zin, & Hamid (2014), floral motifs are widely applied to the old and modern buildings of various elements from around the world that cover cultural, ethical, geographical and political aspects to create the honor of Islamic art from the East to the West where it finally shows the presence of Islamic artistic art to produce beautiful and awesome decorations as a sign of love and trust in Allah swt.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

The findings show that in 1700-1900, each of the roof crown have a different design and decorative. The majority of roof crown on the Melaka traditional mosques use floral images as motifs. Then it is followed by cosmos and calligraphy motifs. The floral motif commonly use are the lotus. It can be seen on each of roof crown. The relation between Malay and floral can't be separated in their daily life. It can be seen on almost every Malay woodcarving decorative when most of the motif is floral motifs. Floral symbolised softness, which relates with the Malays who have been teach with characteristic of polite, fair-spoken and courteous from our ancestors. Each of floral symbolised different meaning and it also relates with the Malays who loves to allegorical or in Malay words berkias. Based on that, it can be proof by the existing of writings such as pantun, peribahasa, syair, seloka and simpulan bahasa, which can be found in Malay literature. Each of this literature was use as a medium of symbol, representation and also criticism from the author to teach life lesson to the society. The floral motifs perhaps entailed a bigger recognition as local taste as compared to other types of motifs

For the reommendation, the aesthetic decorative combining motif of the roof crown which consist a sense of intricacy should be preserve as a regional identity monument and could be an iconography of certain places. For example, creating a map of Melaka by using mahkota to represent different spots and locations. In other word its can promote Melaka's heritage and culture of the assimilation of each races.

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