

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

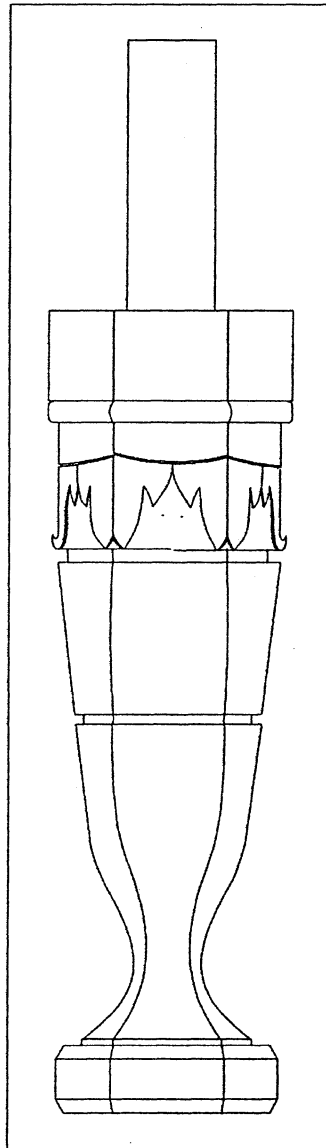
THE PERAK *KUTAI ASLI* MALAY HOUSE:  
FORM, FUNCTION AND MEANING.

ANUAR BIN TALIB

**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**Faculty of Art and Design**

**May 2006**



*“Adat bersendikan Hukum, Hukum bersendikan Syarak dan Syarak bersendikan Kitab ALLAH.”*

(*Adat* is based upon the Rules, the Rules based upon the Islamic Laws, and the Islamic Laws are based upon the Book of God).

## ABSTRACT

The thesis attempts to identify and define the KA house type, attributed as the origins of the two basic styles of the traditional Perak Malay house, namely the *Bumbung Lima* and the “*Kutai*” houses; surveyed in the entire regions of Perak. No serious in depth study on a particular house style in Perak was undertaken before. 109 intact house samples were fully measured, with others in ruins identified. 78 were of the *Bumbung Lima* type and the remaining of the “*Kutai*” house types, found only at the banks of Perak River and its tributaries. 23 were of the KA type, and 8 of the attached *Anjung*, *Beranda* and *Balai* types.

Literature search on traditional Malay architecture from earlier Malay treatises such as the *Undang-Undang Sembilan Puluh Sembilan* of Perak and the *Taj ul Muluk* was made. Searches on Colonial Records, unpublished research materials, expert views from local historians, village elders and Malay *tukang* were also sought to provide the historical background and traditional setting of the culture and the beliefs of the Perak Malays that would be imbedded in the design of the oldest surviving KA houses attributed to circa 1820’s.

The Method of Extensive Survey and Recording of house samples, followed by studio work determines the selection of house samples of both house styles and regional variations for Comprehensive Measurements. Scaled and detail drawing reproductions by Computer Aided Design application of selected house samples alongside tabulations of data measurements of the various house components were prepared for the final data analysis.

The physical house form of the KA was defined by its constant house elevations, column configurations and its spatial organisations, its house structure, components and joinery methods, alongside its decorative elements.

Its design aesthetics were traced from the Qur’anic verses on the basic Divine principles of creation and the dwelling principles in Islam. Interpretations of the verses empower the Perak Malay *tukang* to formulate the basic design principles of the KA that blends with its local Malay worldview, beliefs and customs. This “minimalist” house type efficiently utilise floor areas with economy in the building materials and components; of replaceable lightweight modular components and joinery methods, that renders the entire house transportable.

Interpretations of the Divine Artistry in the natural environment aids to formulate a traditional architecture that adapts to the local climate. Its various decorative features imitate Nature, transformed into art forms that were denaturalised, stylised and abstract.

## Candidate's Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the result of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This topic has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any other degree or qualification.

In the event of my thesis be found to violate the conditions mentioned above, I voluntary waive the right of conferment of my degree and agree be subjected to the disciplinary rules and regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA.

Name of Candidate: Anuar Bin Talib.

Candidate's ID No: 2001639293

Programme: AD 990.

Faculty: Art and Design.

Signature of Candidate: ...

Date: .... . . . . .

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Bismi-ALLAH ar-Rahman ar-Rahim.*

This research is the product of the support, assistance, and encouragement of various people to whom I would like to express my deepest gratitude.

I wish to express my appreciation to Associate Prof Dr D'zul Haimi Mohd. Zain, the supervisor, for his guidance through out this research. His helpful comments, advise and suggestions had given me a valuable learning experience while making this research a reality.

I am also indebted to the University Technology Mara for granting me financial assistance and study leave. I wish to extend my thanks to the Dean and the staffs of the Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Survey, the Department of Interior Architecture, and to all friends who provided various kinds of assistance and moral support. This research was undertaken at the Faculty of Art and Design, UiTM, and with kind cooperation from the Dean, the Coordinator of the Graduate Studies and the staff members of the faculty. The researcher is also thankful to the Bureau of Research and Consultancy of UiTM who had granted research grants pertaining to parts of the study.

There were many other people who have contributed to this research, with whom the researcher was greatly indebted. Foremost are the rare and graceful *tukang*, who shared their immense and valuable experiences, while serving the interview sessions with warm hospitality. Thanks are also due to the kind and obliging dwellers of the RK and PBL houses of Perak, allowing us to enter into their private and elegant homes during the tedious process of house sample measurements and documentations. The research groups were always received with warm hospitality, from the house dwellers, village elders, *surau* committees, and eager volunteers. Despite having their daily chores halted, they generously served the group with valuable information, and with tea and biscuits.

I would also like to give special thanks to the ever-changing groups of helpers and Research Assistances, whose services made the completion of this research possible. House surveys and measurements were assisted by Raja Shahrman (local guide and artist), Sidi Abdal Hayy, En. Abu Bakr, En. Mohd. Noor Ariffin, En. Mohd. Sabriza and numerous staff and student volunteers from the Department of Interior Architecture, UiTM Sri Iskandar. En. Mohd. Noor had eagerly assisted with the presentations of the research methods and initial findings of the research in the various National seminars.

Of the studio technicians, Rahena, Ayuni, Azhar and Sanusi have been very patient with the numerous corrections on the sample house drawings and details by CAD and Minicad computer applications.

I owe my immense debt to my wife Saida Khadija for her support and her many forms of assistances. To my children 'Abdal Salam, Muhammad Amin, Fatema, and Nafisa (born December 2003) who have provided me with a strong support to finish this work. I thanked them for their patience and understanding. Finally, the spiritual guidance and support from the *Imams* have also been illuminating during the laborious process of completing the research.

*Walhamduli-ALLAH-Rabb al 'alamain.*