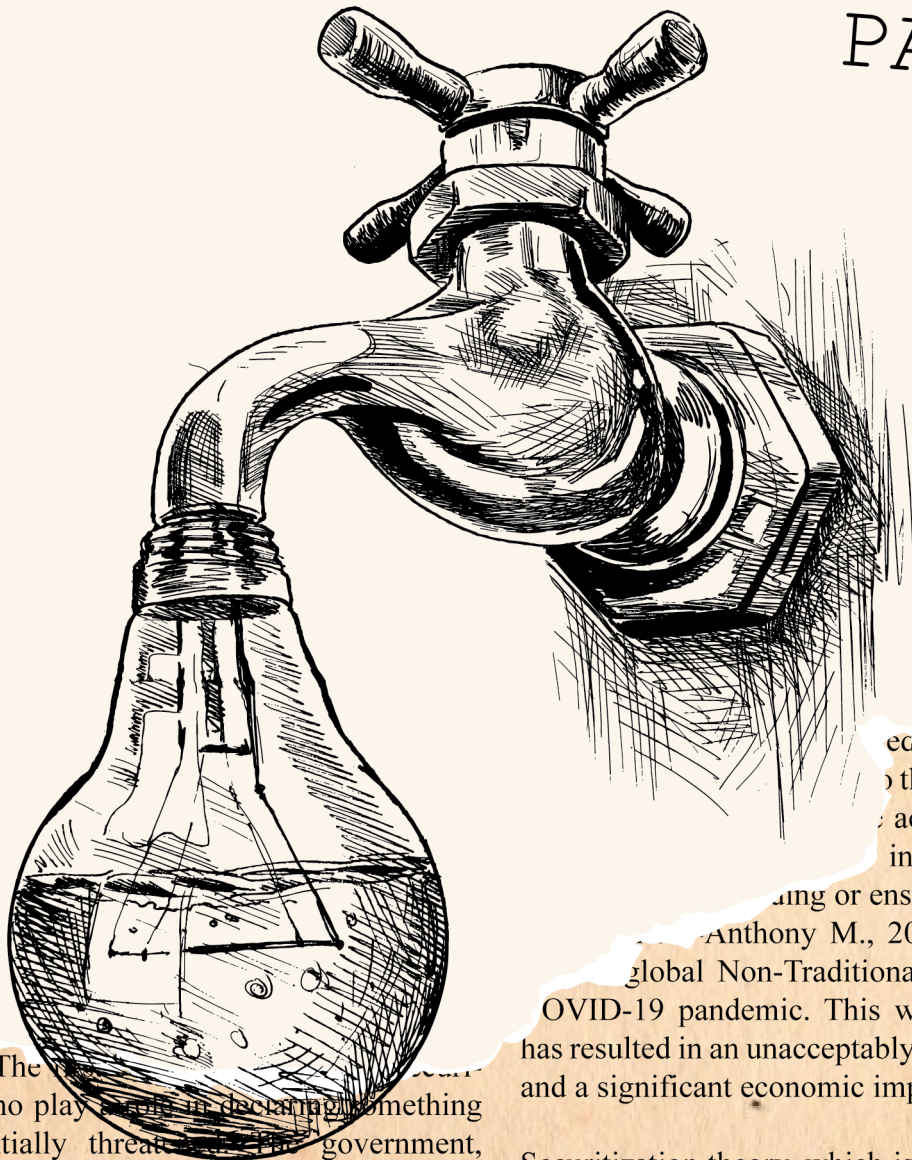


A R T /

I N N O V A T I O N

PART I



... issue. The...
... actors who play... in declaring something
... that is existentially threatening to the government,
... represented by high-ranking officials, lobbyists, and
... even pressure from a group are all examples of securitizing
... tizing actors. Next is the issue or threat that potentially
... brings harmful effects towards peace and stability of
... of the country and lastly is the reference object or who
... needs the security. This is how actors secure the

... eg
... that those mo
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... individuals can h
... ing or ensuring their own se
... Anthony M., 2018). One of the m
... global Non-Traditional Security risks is the
... COVID-19 pandemic. This worldwide health crisis
... has resulted in an unacceptably high number of deaths
... and a significant economic impact.

Securitization theory, which is employed as a frame-
work analysis, is the basic theory that underpins the
analysis in this study. Securitization developed from
Copenhagen School (COPRI – Copenhagen Peace
Research Institute) of security studies pioneered by
Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver and Jaap De Wilde (1998),

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MALAY WOOD CARVING

Plant Species As Inspiration

a chapter by

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Abstract

One of the most essential aspects of traditional Malay culture is the art of Malay woodcarving. This study examines plant species that inspired crafters in their wood carving motif. Numerous plant species had inspired the crafter especially plant species that can be easily be found in the Malay environment. Some of the inspiration comes from plant species that consist of medicinal values, beauty, and symbolism. The discovery of these plant species will help future crafters comprehend how earlier Malay crafters created the pattern and how their beliefs were translated into their creative work. Malay traditional aesthetic features are distinctive.

Plant as Art Motif in Malay Carving

Introduction

One of the most complex and fascinating aspects of Malay culture is its long-standing tradition of woodcarving. Carving into wood is an essential component of the traditional Malay architecture seen throughout Peninsular Malaysia. It is one of the most well-known crafts that Malay artisans create, and it exemplifies their pursuit of aesthetic perfection and acute awareness of the natural world and its constituents. As early as the 14th century, Malay craftsmen in Peninsular Malaysia were practicing a form of woodcarving that became an important craft in vernacular architecture (Said and Ahmad Saifudin, 2001). It is also a symbol, representing the treasured Malay arts, and serves as a national identity.

Animism was the original influence of carving motif, followed by the presence of Hinduism and Buddhism. With the arrival of Islam between the

late 13th and early 14th century, more religious expressions were adopted to replace the figurative style of expressions. After the spread of Islam culture in the Malay Peninsula, an emphasis on the importance of aesthetics emerged as the guiding principle behind the creation of magnificent woodcarvings. Patience, determination, creativity, artistry value, sensibility, and technical proficiency, among others are observable in the most creative craftsmen who made masterpieces inspired by nature (Norhaiza, 2009). Following the rise of Islam, plants became a prominent component in carvings (Othman Yatim, 2000).

Initially, wood carving that was solely produced as a hobby or for recreational purposes because it was considered a craft. When wood carvings were given a specific position in the palace, things started to go in a different direction. The title of “Royal Artist” was typically bestowed upon very talented craftsmen in arts (Seniman Diraja). Consequently, traditional wood carvings thematically based on Malay society’s symbols and traditions earned a prominent place in the palace (Noor and Khoo, 2012; Husin et al., 2012; Perbadanan Kemajuan Kraf Tangan Malaysia, 2009).

Most of the motifs and designs were based on different kinds of plants and animals. Traditional Malay carving motifs can be divided into two categories: decorative motifs or patterns inspired by early or ancient Malay motifs, such as the design pattern with floral motifs, stalks of leaves and tendrils (Awang larat, which means meandering clouds) found in Malay community, and motifs inspired by the imagination of early crafters (Husin et al., 2012). Thus, the objective of this study was to determine the species of plant that have been used in Malay carving art.

Floral Motif and Patterns

Malay wood carvings are distinguished by design components such as numerous types of flowers, leaves, and design elements displayed in carving motifs (Shafee and Said, 2013). The plants used as inspiration to the crafters are summarized in Table 1. The Malay crafters were inspired by Islamic teachings that emphasize the love for nature and encourage them to search for beauty in their surroundings, which are home to a variety of plants. The inspiration for motif compositions in the art of Malay is from five plant sources which include leaf, stalk, flower, fruit and tendrils (Shuaib & Enoch, 2013). Depending on the surface of the carving, leaf compositions are frequently formed of odd numbers such as one, three and five. The patterns are commonly made up of two, three, or five-leaf parts.

No	Plant Common Name	Plant Name	Source
1	Kerak Nasi/ Kesidang/ Tikam belakang	<i>Vallaris glabra</i>	Wahid et al., 2021; Mohd Nasir & Muhamad, 2018; Shuaib and Enoch, 2014; Hamdzun Haron, 2013; Ahmad et al., 2012;
2	Bakong	<i>Crimum asiaticum</i>	Noor & Khoo, 2012
3	Ketam guri	<i>Sida rhombifolia</i>	Kamarudin & Said, 2008; Shafee and Said, 2007;
4	Saga kenering	<i>Adenanthera</i> sp.	Mohd Nasir & Muhamad, 2018; Noor & Khoo, 2012
5	Kangkong	<i>Ipomea</i> sp.	Noor & Khoo, 2012
6	Peputul	<i>Chrysophyllum lanceolatum</i>	Ahmad, 2016
7	Kangkong laut	<i>Ipomea pes-caprae</i>	Shafee and Said, 2007)
8	Paku pakis	<i>Diplazium esculentum</i>	Noor & Khoo, 2012
9	Setanduk	<i>Quisqualis indica</i>	Noor & Khoo, 2012
10	Ketumbit	<i>Leucas lavandulifolia</i>	Shafee and Said, 2007; Ahmad et al., 2012
11	Beringin	<i>Ficus benjamina</i>	(Husin et al., 2012)
12	Kacang laut	<i>Vigna marina</i>	(Husin et al., 2012); Shafee and Said, 2007)
13	Bayam peraksi	<i>Emilia sonchifolia</i>	(Husin et al., 2012)
14	Dala/ Kelumbai	<i>Crataeva macroparpa</i>	(Husin et al., 2012)
15	Kenanga	<i>Cananga odorata</i>	Mohd Nasir & Muhamad, 2018 (Husin et al., 2012)
16	Cempaka	<i>Magnolia champaka</i>	Haron et al., 2014; Husin et al., 2012
17	Bunga Cina	<i>Gardenia jasminoides</i>	(Husin et al., 2012); Hamdzun Haron, 2013; Ahmad et al., 2012
18	Petola	<i>Luffa</i> sp.	(Husin et al., 2012); Ahmad et al., 2012
19	Peria	<i>Momordica charantia</i>	Othman and Abd. Majid, 2017; Noor & Khoo, 2012
20	Sukun	<i>Artocarpus altilis</i>	Othman and Abd. Majid, 2017; Hamdzun Haron, 2013
21	Telinga kera	<i>Henslowia umbellata</i>	Othman and Abd. Majid, 2017; Shuaib and Enoch, 2014
22	Tanjong	<i>Mimusops elangi</i>	Othman and Abd. Majid, 2017
23	Bakawali	<i>Epiphyllum oxypetalum</i>	Mohd Nasir & Muhamad, 2018; Othman and Abd. Majid, 2017; Shafee and Said, 2007)
24	Matahari	<i>Helianthus annuus</i>	Othman and Abd. Majid, 2017; Ahmad et al., 2012
25	Teratai	<i>Nelumbo</i> sp.	Othman and Abd. Majid, 2017; Ahmad et al., 2012
26	Delima	<i>Punica granatum</i>	Shafee and Said, 2007

27	Bunga raya	<i>Hibiscus rosa-sinensis</i>	Hamdzun Haron, 2013
28	Melor	<i>Jasminum</i> sp.	Hamdzun Haron, 2013
29	Kiambang	<i>Pistia stratiotes</i>	Hamdzun Haron, 2013; Ahmad et al., 2012
30	Bunga Lontar/ Tal/ Tar	<i>Borassus flabellifer</i>	Hamdzun Haron, 2013; Noor and Khoo, 2012
31	Bayam	<i>Amaranthus</i> sp.	Hamdzun Haron, 2013
32	Keladi 1	<i>Syngonium</i> sp.	Mohd Nasir & Muhamad, 2018
33	Keladi 2	<i>Alocasia</i> sp.	Mohd Nasir & Muhamad, 2018; Hamdzun Haron, 2013
34	Bunga matahari		Hamdzun Haron, 2013
35	Bunga jari buaya	<i>Aloe vera</i>	Hamdzun Haron, 2013; Noor and Khoo, 2012
36	Bunga tahi ayam	<i>Lantana camara</i>	Hamdzun Haron, 2013
37	Manggis	<i>Garcinia mangostana</i>	Ahmad et al., 2012
38	Cengkkih	<i>Syngium aromatica</i>	Ahmad et al., 2012
39	Saga	<i>Adenanthera</i> sp.	Ahmad et al., 2012
40	Buluh	<i>Bambusa</i> sp.	Keumala et al., 2012
41	Simpoh	<i>Dillenia</i> sp.	Ahmad et al., 2012
42	Labu	<i>Cucurbita</i> sp.	Ahmad et al., 2012
43	Manga	<i>Mangifera indica</i>	Ahmad et al., 2012
44	Bunga lawang	<i>Illicium verum</i>	Ahmad et al., 2012
45	Dukung anak	<i>Phyllanthus niruri</i>	Ahmad et al., 2012
46	Bunga telepek	<i>Nymphaea nouchali</i>	Noor and Khoo, 2012
47	Periuk kera	<i>Nepenthes</i> sp.	Noor and Khoo, 2012
48	Pandan	<i>Pandanus</i>	Noor and Khoo, 2012
49	Mawar	<i>Rosa</i> sp.	Mohd Nasir & Muhamad, 2018
50	Tanjung	<i>Mimusops elengi</i>	Noor and Khoo, 2012
51	Mempelas	<i>Tetracera indica</i>	Haron et al., 2014
52	Kecubung	<i>Datura metel</i>	Haron et al., 2014
53	Macang/ Bacang	<i>Mangifera foetida</i>	Haron et al., 2014
54	Uju-uju/ Jeruju	<i>Acanthus ebracteatus</i>	Mohd Nasir & Muhamad, 2018

The “Kelopak Melayu Daun Hidup” or “Malay petals in a living leaf” (kelopak hidup) pattern was made around 1800 and is more associated with carving in Pattani, south Thailand, and Kelantan, Peninsula Malaysia. The motif used 70% of natural elements and 30% crafter creativity (Daud et al., 2012). In general, plant species which inspired the crafter are easily found in Malaysia. Besides, some of the species are Malaysian traditional vegetables such as Luffa sp. (petola), Ipomea sp. (kangkong), Cucurbita sp. (labu), Alocasia sp. (keladi 2) and many more.

An example of wood carving inspired by the plant species shows in Figure 1. Ipomea sp. design found in ‘Pintu Gerbang’ (Entrance gate), Nepenthes sp. (periuk kera) in Kelantan (Figure 2), which was made in the mid-19th. Besides, some crafters chose the pitcher plant because it has a distinctive leaf shape, and is a typical plant of the countryside (Said, 2002). In addition, motifs of *Sida rhombifolia* (ketam guri) (stem and flower were found at Surau Langgar, Kelantan was carved in 1874 (Figure 3). A product of the 20th-century Jebak Puyuh (Quail Trap) motif was inspired by the *Mimusops elengi* (tanjong) flower and *Adenanthera* sp. (saga kenering) leaves (Noor and Khoo, 2012). Meanwhile, ‘Bangau’ is one of the main elements in boat decorations for fishing boats on the Malaysian East Coast. The ‘Bangau’ theme had been dominated by plant element motifs after the arrival of Islam. The plant motif used are leaves of *Syngonium* sp. (keladi 1) (Figure 5), *Alocasia* sp. (keladi 2), *Pandanus*

and *Acanthus ebracteatus* (Figure 6). The flower motif such as *Rosa* sp. (mawar), *Cananga odorata* (kenanga), *Epiphyllum oxypetalum* (bakawali) and *Vallis glabra* (kesidang) also inspired the crafter (Mohd Nasir & Muhamad, 2018).

Yatim (2001) describes the most often used motifs used are the sulur (the tendril), the awan larat (the curvilinear fretwork) and flower motifs such as the lotus flower. The use and choice of the *Nelumbo* sp. (teratai) flower symbolizes life and its challenges. According to Shafee and Said, (2013), some of the species chosen such as *E. oxypetalum* (bakawali) was to remember the object since it is a traditional medicinal plant used by the Malays from the past until the present. Other plant motifs that are related to traditional nutritional or medicinal values are *Leucas lavandulifolia* (ketumbit), a common herbaceous plant, *Vigna marina* (kacang laut) a kind of herbal plant, *Ipomoea* sp. (kangkung), an edible aquatic flowering plant.

The pomegranate's unique shapes fruit and the vibrant orange of its flowers attracted the crafters. Malay crafters from Terengganu and Kelantan were inspired by the aesthetic value of common weeds like *Leucas lavandulifolia* (ketumbit) due to its bright yellow flower and *Sida rhombifolia* (ketam guri) its wavy foliage (Said, 2002). Some of the species used were inspired by their 'Sulur'. The term "Sulur" refers to the root that develops from the main trunk of a creeping plant. For example, a ventilation panel for a house of Dato Biji Sura in Kuala Terengganu town was carved in plant motif depicting foliage and tendrils of sulur kacang laut, *Ipomoea pea-caprae*.

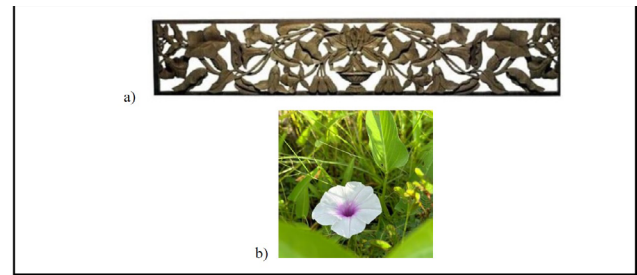


Figure 1: Flower and leaves motif of *Ipomea* sp. in a) wood carving b) actual plant.

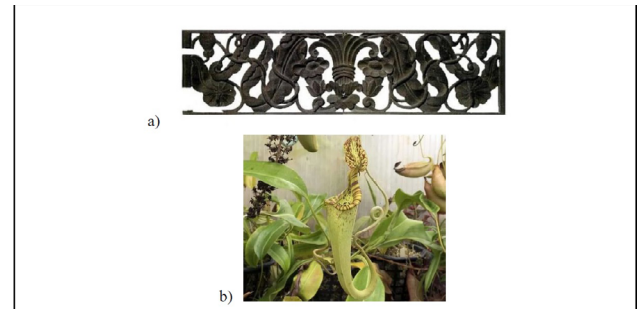


Figure 2: Leaves and pitcher motif of *Nepenthes* sp. in a) wood carving (Noor & Khoo, 2012) b) actual plant.

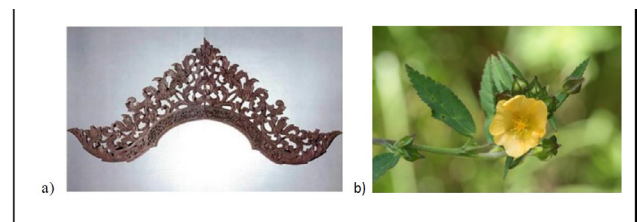


Figure 3: Stem and flower of *Sida rhombifolia* motifs in a) carving motifs (Noor & Khoo, 2012) and b) actual plant.

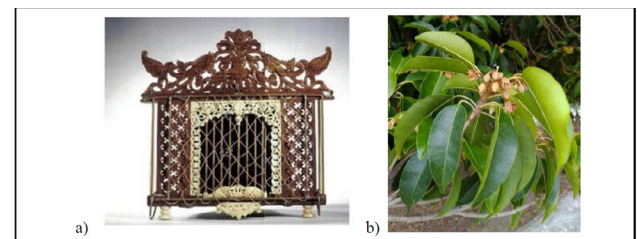


Figure 4 a) Motifs of *Mimusops elengi* (tanjung) flower and *Adenanthera* sp. (saga kenering) leaves in wood carving (Noor & Khoo, 2012). b) *Mimusops elengi* (tanjung) in actual plant.

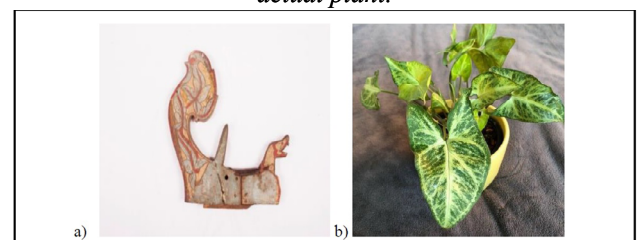


Figure 5 a) Leaves motif of *Syngonium* sp. (keladi 1) (Mohd Nasir & Muhamad, 2018) b) Actual plant of *Syngonium* sp.

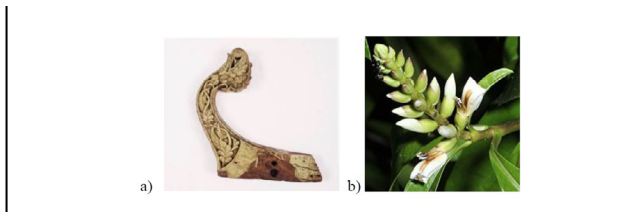


Figure 6 a) Leaves and flower motif of *Acanthus ebracteatus* (jeruju) b) Actual unblooming flower of *A. ebracteatus*.



Figure 7 Leaves and flower of *Epiphyllum oxypetalum* (Bakawali) (Shafee and Said, 2013) in a) wood carving b) actual plant.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study reveals the change in thinking and beliefs of the Malays in all aspects after the arrival of Islam in Peninsular Malaysia. As the carving includes many plant species motifs, Islam has been successful in inspiring past crafters to create motifs that reflect Islamic beliefs. Plant motif dominantly replaced the animal motif. Malay crafters were able to translate the aesthetic of their environment into a concrete object. Architects and craftsmen must grasp the source material and aesthetic features of Malay woodcarvings to continue the inherent virtues of the art for future generations.

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