Chinese-Malay wood carving: the Kapitan house at Bagansiapiapi

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Abstract. Malay House can be identified from the shape, stage, saddle roof, and finials. Malay House roof typologies called Limas, Lontik, Bagonjong, Kajang, Layar, and Crossbreed. The house also is enriched by ornaments and carved panel with a certain philosophy and meaning. One of unique Malay house is known as Kapitan house at Bagansiapiapi. This house also shows how Chinese house transforms into a unique Malay house. It can be seen from stage, roof, material, and wood ornament used. According to this phenomena, this paper investigates the Kapitan house to understand the meaning of the ornament and preserving Chinese-Malayness at the same time. The qualitative research approach was used to obtain data and information about this house. It is also added with the interview to descendants of the Kapitan. Field data is analyzed by comparison techniques to find variation and meaning of wood carving on the Kapitan house. The finding shows about layout and typologies of wood carving of the house. Usual Malay house ornament such as engraving panel on windows or another carving motif also can be figured on the house. These ornaments are combined with fauna figure usual used in Chinese house but are prohibited in Malay house.

1. Introduction
Kapitein der Chineezen is a reference to Chinese people who are given the power to take care of their communities, both for security, population (birth, marriage, and death), taxes, and immigration. In the colonial period, the Chinese and East Asians were left under the head of their nation [1]. Kapitan in Bagansiapiapi was a position given by the Dutch to lead their people in Bagansiapiapi. The Kapitan house in Bagansiapiapi was established at the end of the 18th century, namely when sea products became a source of income in this area. Where at this time Bagansiapiapi is one of the largest fish producers in the world.

Kapitan House is a residence and office for the Chinese community in Bagansiapiapi. At a glance, this Kapitan house looks like a Malay house in general, with the characteristic that the house lives on stage, has a saddle roof, and has ornaments [2]. But if we study further, the traditional Chinese architectural features are also attached to this Kapitan house. It can be seen from the shape or layout of the building that is symmetrical, axial planning with the courtyard concept, the characteristics of the red and yellow colors, the shape of the curved roof at the end and has architectural ornaments related to trust [3]. This Kapitan house is made of concrete foundations and beams, then on the walls uses a susun sirih wall pattern, which is an acculturation of Malay architecture [4].

This house was built by Kapitan Oei Hi Tam, built around 1880, estimated to be over 130 years old. This Kapitan house is a very thick mix of cultures. Here it can be said that this house is part of Malay
architecture, but also the requirements of traditional Chinese architecture. The use of carvings as ornaments is also something special; there are Malay carved ornaments combined with Chinese architectural ornaments. Malay house is rich in carvings and ornaments that are not only limited to their pattern but have a deep philosophy and meaning [5]. Likewise, with the use of ornaments on Chinese architecture. There are four main symbols known in the Chinese tradition, namely: Emblems of the Eight Immortals; The Eight Buddhist Symbols; The Eight Treasures; and The Four Accomplishments, these symbols are then often used as ornaments in Chinese buildings [6]. This paper will look at the extent of the use of Malay carvings and Chinese ornaments in a building. According to this phenomena, this paper investigates on the Kapitan house to understand the meaning of the ornament house, and preserving Chinese-Malayness at the same time (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Kapitan House at Bagansiapiapi

2. Methodology

The qualitative research approach was used to obtain data and information about the Kapitan house. Malay architecture wood carving and Chines architecture ornament theory are as a background knowledge supported by information added with the interview to descendants of the Kapitan. The object observation in this study is the wood carvings on the Kapitan houses. Kapitan house is the leader chines ethnic house that is a higher in rank than other houses in Bagansiapiapi. Kapitan house is located at 2° 09’ 42.2” N and 100° 48’ 33.6” E (Figure. 2). Research data have obtained by field observation, structured interview with owner or selection of informants, documentation with the sketch and digital drawing, and study literature. Fieldwork study became the main instrument of social investigation to acquire a detailed understanding of the situation [7].

To understand and the findings obtained, data analysis is the process of compiling data and information that has obtained from interviews, observations, documentation, and document studies systematically [8]. Field data is analyzed by drawing comparison techniques to find variation and meaning of wood carving on the Kapitan house. The following process is dialogue data and theory to see the use of Malay-Chines cultural. And The end process of data analysis is the conclusion of the findings. These findings are expected to provide answers on how Malay and chines carvings are combined, and how culture can adapt.
3. Results and Discussions

3.1. Kapitan House of Bagansiapiapi
Kapitan Oei Hi Tam or Ng Hi Tam house is a house on stilts with curved concrete foundations. Typology of traditional Malay houses is a house on stilts and has high columns [9], therefore, the Kapitan house is included in the Malay architectural characteristics (Figure. 3). Bagansiapiapi is a peatland where the stage house is the best alternative. The structure of the Kapitan house is made of wood, with a combination of limasan and saddle roofs. Then if you see the arrangement of space in plain view, the arrangement of Malay house space is also like being exposed to this house, there is a selang depan / selasar as a reception area, then continued with the main house and kitchen or penanggah on the back, this characteristic is in accordance with what Effendi said Spatial planning of traditional Malay-Riau houses is generally separated into three parts: selasar, main house, and penanggah or kitchen [10]. Besides that, how to install the Kapitan house wall using the method of arranging the walls of the Malay house, the use of lidah-pian walls is the same as the Malay house in general.

![Figure 2 Map of Research Locations in Bagansiapiapi, Rokan Hilir Regency](image)

**Figure 2** Map of Research Locations in Bagansiapiapi, Rokan Hilir Regency

![Figure 3 Kapitan House with Malay Architecture Typology](image)

**Figure 3** Kapitan House with Malay Architecture Typology
The Kapitan Oie Hi Tam house is also classified as a traditional Chinese house, this form of the floor plan and house program is the same as the character of a traditional Chinese house. This is seen in the courtyard, then the bracket system (Tou Kung) as a structural element and a plan that has an axial axis. What David G Khol said is that traditional Chinese architecture in Southeast Asia has characteristics such as presence, courtyard, structural elements that are open (having ornament), emphasis on the shape of the roof, and the use of distinctive colors [11], found at home this.

3.2. Kapitan Chinese-Malay wood carving
Ornaments and carvings found in the Kapitan house are very diverse. This carving combines two cultural elements in one house. The first thing that we saw was the ornament on the roof, where there were ornaments on the part of the bidai or sopi-sopi, the ornaments used were a mixture of sayap layang-layang/kite ornaments (Malay) and sisik naga/dragon scales (Chinese). Furthermore, if we look at the structure of the easel and the roof support, Chinese ornaments are very thick here. A distinctive structure, namely the bracket system called Tou Kung (Figure. 4), is a roof support construction above the column that aesthetically functions as a column head [12], where the Kapitan house uses a Fukien type bracket ornament.

The Kapitan house door is a typology of traditional Chinese architecture. There are three main doors on the front with symmetrical shapes where each door has two leaves. Between the doors, there is a window with two doors and has a grid. On the side of the door, there is a very thick Chinese ornament, carved square with a circle in the middle describing the figure of Fu Lu Shou, a god in Chinese mythology. Fu Lu Shou or Cai Zi Shou, are three gods also called Fu Lu Shou Sanxing (Fu Xing, Lu Xing, and Shou Xing) where these three gods have the meaning of happiness, prosperity, and longevity [13]. The carved image of the god is accompanied by animals such as deer and storks. Next, to the ventilation doors and windows, there are Lotus, Deer, Phoenix, and Stork ornaments. Lotus and Deer symbolize purity, storks symbolize longevity, and Phoenix birds (Feng or Fenghuang) are considered to bring good fortune and symbolize prosperity [14].

Kapitan's window uses grille, carved; gasing-gasing is used as a window grille. Side window ventilation differs from windows at the front of the building, ventilated windows here using a papan tebuk motif kaluk pakis and lilit kangkung. Furthermore, in the interior ventilated part of the building, the dominant carvings are the awan larak and kaluk pakis, each door in the same ventilator has the same motif ventilation. In the courtyard, the use of the raveling in this section is a motif papan tebuk, the motif used is the terali biola (violin) motif. If we see there are two types of raveling carving in Kapitan's house, that is by punching board technique (papan tebuk) and three-dimensional technique (bubut). In the ceiling part is a roda bunga (wheel) motif, this engraving is used as a place to hang the lamp. Also, the
ventilation of the kitchen wall is *jala-jala* (net) motif for cooling air circulation. Mostly can be seen carving on the side and inside the Kapitan's house is a Malay carving (Figure 5).

![Figure 5 Wood Carving and Ornament of Kapitan House](image)

3.3. Negotiation Chinese-Malay wood carving

Ornament of Malays and Chinese are used simultaneously, this is none other than the acculturation of Chinese and Malay cultures. Kapitan Oe Hi Tam does not forget his ancestral culture, where there are strong characteristics in this house. Whereas Negotiations were carried out when this house was built in a Malay cultural area. In addition to the character of the coastal area where stilt houses are the most suitable alternative, the character of the Malay house is also very pronounced in this Kapitan house. Carving negotiations also occur, the use of Malay ornament types is still accommodated in the construction of this house. Malay carving philosophies that are not contradictory are adapted by combining with the traditional Chinese philosophies.

Ornaments contained in general symbolize prosperity and welfare. This is following with the life principles of Chinese society. Malay ornament is also used as a condition with the philosophy of life and prosperity.
Table 1. Types of wood carved components found in the Kapitan houses

| Number | Wood Carved Elements          | Malay Wood Carving | Chinese Ornament |
|--------|------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 1      | Window ventilation panel (WVP)| √                 | √                |
| 2      | Door ventilation panel (DVP) | √                 | √                |
| 3      | Wall ventilation panel (WVP) | √                 | -                |
| 4      | Window railing (WR)          | √                 | -                |
| 5      | Selang/Serambi railing (SR)  | √                 | -                |
| 6      | Stair ornament (SO)          | -                 | √                |
| 7      | Wall panel (WP)              | √                 | -                |
| 8      | Door / Window leaf (DWL)     | -                 | √                |
| 9      | Ceiling panel (CP)           | √                 | -                |
| 10     | Roof eave panel (REP)        | -                 | √                |
| 11     | Gable end (GE)               | -                 | √                |
| 12     | Pole and Structure (PS)      | -                 | √                |
| Total  |                              | 7 of 12           | 7 of 12          |
| Percent|                              | 58%               | 58%              |

Commonly 12 architectural elements are carved in traditional Malay; ventilation panel of the window, door, and wall, railing of veranda and staircase, wall panels, leaves of door and gate, roof eaves, brackets and gable end panels [15]. While at the Kapitan house there are 12 carved elements combination Malay and Chinese; windows ventilation, door ventilation, wall ventilation, wall panel, windows railing, the railing of veranda (selang/serambi), door and windows leaf, staircase ornament, gable end, pole, and another structure carving. The use of Malay and Chinese ornaments are mostly separate from the building, only the door and window ventilation are combined.

4. Conclusions

In the Kapitan house, various ornaments and carvings pattern are found in special motifs that are inspired by Chinese and Malay culture. This is seen as a unique phenomenon of how two different cultures have to preserve their traditional values on the house and at the same time. Thru this way, the architecture of the house becomes important evidence of cultures acculturation in local context these days.

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