ISLAMIC INFLUENCE ON THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE MALAY WORLD

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WELCOME TO VIRTUAL MALAYSIA

‘Selamat Datang’
Introduction

Definition of Islam, Muslim and Islamic

What is ‘Islamic or Islamicate Architecture’

Background of the Malays of the Malay World

The Salient features of Islamic Influence in the architecture of the Malay world then and the contemporary architecture

Summary

Q & A session
Introduction

- The lecture intends to introduce students of architecture to another aspect of architecture within a wider world – Architecture of the Muslim World.
- MALAYSIA
The World Map

Ref: Islamic Architecture from Internet
DEFINITION OF ISLAM, MUSLIM AND ISLAMIC
What is Islam, Islamic and Muslim?

- Islam is the name of the religion whose final Prophet was Muhammad.
- Islam simply means a state of peace achieved through submission to God.
- *Islam* as the natural religion has been practiced throughout the centuries by all the prophets i.e. Noah, Ibrahim, Musa, Harun, Isa and others with the guide of books of taurah, zabur and engel. Muhammad being the final messenger of Allah has completed the revelation in the Al Quran for which Islam was named as the natural religion by Allah in the Quran (see Al Maidah).
What is Islam, Islamic and Muslim

- Muslim is a name used for an adherent of the Islamic faith.
- A Muslim is one who aspires to achieve this state of submission, as a lifelong quest.
- The term Islamic is accurately applied only to what pertains directly to the faith and its doctrines such as Islamic Law, Islamic celebrations, Islamic values, principles and beliefs.
What is Islam, Islamic and Muslim?

- The term Islam belongs to the realm of the aspiration, the ideal, the pure.
- In other words, we may acquire knowledge from this realm from authentic Islamic sources, and we may examine its constructs, interpret its doctrines and describe what is required of adherents of Islamic faith; however, we may not describe a person or any historical phenomenon as Islamic.
- Hence not even ‘Islamic Architecture, Islamic Art, Islamic countries, Islamic city, Islamic etc..
These incorrect usages are prime examples of the way in which writers have failed to distinguish between religion and its adherents’ actions and cultural constructs.

In other words in can be deduce that cultural phenomena that emerged from the Muslim regions under more or less direct influence by Islamic factors, which may or may not conform to the demands of the belief and value system, are called ‘Islamicate’.
What is Islamic Architecture?

“...or Muslim Architecture may be seen as the one great product of two streams of development, one in the Mediterranean and the other in south central Asia.”

Ref: Sir Banister Fletcher, 1996, *A History of Architecture*

Nu jie Mosque, Beijing, China

Islamic Architecture in the Malay World. 29th May 2009
“...Taken as whole, the architecture of the Islam must be seen primarily as a matter of arcuated masonry construction in which its artisans achieved the highest levels of finish and invention.”

“...Muslim Vernacular building reflect the closely knit society and the climate of the regions in which they have evolved.”

Ref: Sir Banister Fletcher, 1996, A History of Architecture -page 571

Ref: Sir Banister Fletcher, 1996, A History of Architecture -page 629
“...Is it a word that identifies a special kind of architecture, that of a civilisation reflecting, or determined by, special qualities inherent in Islam as a cultural phenomenon?"

ref: Ersnt J.Grube in Architecture of the Islamic World
What is Islamic Architecture?

- “..is the focused towards enclosed space, on the inside as opposed to the outside, the façade or the general exterior articulation of the building.”

- “…….. ‘hidden architecture’ that is architecture that truly exists, not when seen as monument or symbol visible to all and from all sides, but only when entered, penetrated and experienced from within.”

ref: Ersnt J.Grube in Architecture of the Islamic World
“Buildings which serve no Islamic purpose like mausoleums and statues, no matter how beautifully they may be constructed or decorated cannot be called Islamic. Islamic Architecture is determined primarily by function or use and not by form. The form of a building must serve and enhance its function.”

Ref: Abdul Wahid Hamid, 1999, Islam the Natural Way, MELs

Islamic Architecture in the Malay World. 29th May 2009
What is Islamic Architecture

- In its optimisation of the technology of the region;
- In its embrace of the different cultures of the world with the common faith and regional Islamic architectural expression.

Kampung Laut Mosque
Oldest timber mosque in Malaysia
The Issue of “Islamic” architecture

- For a long time, Islam and architecture of the Islamic World has not been placed in the framework of world architecture.
- It was taught in fragmentation as just a physical product of certain cultures and not its transient teachings that had embrace ¾ of the world.
The Issue of “Islamic” architecture

- History of Architecture has been written by many in so many ways so as the history of man and other subjects.
- History written by the Westerners is almost always viewed by the eye that sees with a pre-conceived ideas what the outcome will be.
- History of Islamic Architecture is no better.
- Some do try to understand how Islam and Muslims live in the way of Architecture, however they are not able to comprehend them fully the whys and wherefores that is intrinsic in the Islamic Society.
What is Islamic Architecture

- “While studies of natural history and traditionally belong to the realm of science rather than history, the Qu’ran draws important connections between human society and the environment......God tells mankind his role on earth..”
What is Islamic Architecture

- Islamic Architecture as it stands, differ from the period definition of the western architecture by the west, as its origin and legitimacy derived from the religious basis which at the same time is also political and social.

- It is supranational cultural connotation and extends over extremely vast area straddling 3 continents of the ancient world...

Ref: Environmental Design, page 64, journal of the Islamic environmental design research centre, Lito-Tipografia “Aurora”, Italy
What is Islamic Architecture

“Islamic Architecture was a “functional architecture”, using local materials and free from artistic dogmas such as “symmetry” or the artificial and expensive Greek and Roman orders”.

“The result was free elevations, free forms, and often exciting compositions that still stand as masterpieces of world architecture, reflecting functions, simplicity, comfort and beauty, which are major requirements of the Sharia.”

The approach to mapping Islamic architecture on world architectures

Chronology, geography, historical themes
Islamic Civilisation in the World History - in brief

- Chronology
- Geography
- Historical Themes

“The most accurate and understandable chronological construct for the universal world History is the discussion of parallel cultures within broad bands of time, or eras.”

Ref. Susan L. Douglass, 1994, Strategies and Structures For Presenting World History
Chronology

The Traditional Western Scheme of History
Reformed Western Scheme of History
A More Thoroughly Refined Scheme of History
The Traditional Western Scheme of History

ANCIENT

Judaic

Graeco-Roman

MEDIEVAL

Western European Christian

MODERN

Europeanised World

Ref. Susan L. Douglass, 1994, Strategies and Structures For Presenting World History

Islamic Architecture in the Malay World. 29th May 2009
Reformed Western Scheme of History


Islamic Architecture in the Malay World. 29th May 2009
A More Thoroughly Refined Scheme of History

Ref. Susan L. Douglass, 1994, Strategies and Structures For Presenting World History

Islamic Architecture in the Malay World. 29th May 2009
Geographical Influence

- Climates,
- landforms,
- bodies of water,
- culture
- development of technology
- economic,
- social progress
- environmental forces
- migration
Milestone of development by historical theme include the classification of periods into Stone Age, Iron Age, Axial Age, Atomic Age, etc.

In Architectural Theme of Ancient, Medieval and Modern, Islamic Architecture runs parallel to the Period of Western Architecture.
Muslim’s Holiest Architecture

Makkah Al Mukarramah
The Holiest

An Nabawi, Medina
2\textsuperscript{nd} Most important

Al Aqsa, Jerusalem
3\textsuperscript{rd} Most important
In its fundamental knowledge that Man as a vicegerent of God on this earth has a duty to perform in seeking Allah’s Pleasure…..that he treats other man, nature and environment with the guided knowledge and wisdom. With that understanding, Man can create development that enhances not only their lives but in harmony with the environment.
BACKGROUND OF THE MALAYS OF THE MALAY WORLD

The land bridges, the Malays and the Malay Archipelago, the trade routes, Muslim traders and Islam
Land bridge and Migration

Islamc Architecture in the Malay World. 29th May 2009
Austronesian connections

A single outrigger craft, probably similar to the type used by Austronesian seafarers.

Islamic Architecture in the Malay World. 29th May 2009
Beliefs and Customs

- Malaysia is one the country in south east asia that had received the call for islam since the 13th century through trading and assimilation of culture from migrants as far as Persia, Yemen, India from the West and Cambodia, Champa (Vietnam) and China from the East.

Beliefs and Customs

- The Malays before Islam, belies in supernatural belief, animism and Hindu. Hindu or Indianised kingdom of Langkasuka and Srivijaya had governed Malaysia, Indonesia and Cambodia for a number of centuries.

Remnant of Hindu temple at Bujang valley, Kedah, Malaysia
Although Malaysia’s official religion is Islam, other religions are free to be practiced by others apart from the Malays. In Malaysia, Malays are Muslims.
The coming of Islam to the region

Peta Nusantara
Kedatangan
Islam (Ihsan
Encyclopedia of
Malaysia)
THE SALIENT FEATURES OF ISLAMIC INFLUENCE IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE MALAY WORLD THEN AND THE CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE
Thus the origin of ARCHITECTURE are best understood if one takes a wider view and considers social-cultural factors, in the broadest sense, to be more important than climate, technology, materials, and economy.

In any situation, it is the interplay of all these factors that best explains the form of buildings.
The movement of people and place of origin

- Movement of population and the consequent meeting and fusing of cultural traditions have been a constant feature of the region’s history and prehistory.

- Architectural styles reveals startling similarities suggestive of distant but common origin.
The Austronesian house: Contemporary models

Parallel with the historical evidence linking Malaysian vernacular architecture with others in the region are the styles of houses and the methods of house construction. The post-and-beam method and the roof form, in particular, provide concrete evidence to connect the Malaysian house with those of neighbouring peoples.

Common features in Southeast Asian houses

Indigenous architectures of Southeast Asia share certain underlying principles of construction, to which Malaysian vernaculars are no exception. They are based on a post-and-beam method of construction, the posts running from the ground to the roof; while the beams supporting the floor platform are mortised through the posts and held firmly by wooden wedges (see ‘The Malay house: Materials and construction’). In this system, the roof is the dominant aesthetic element, while walls are rarely load-bearing. They are often screens prepared separately—woven from split bamboo, for example—and then attached to the structure. All the parts of the house can be prefabricated and then assembled with relatively little labour. Even very large structures, such as the longhouses of Sarawak, are built according to the same principles and make extensive use of cooperative village labour.

In many Austronesian house styles, the roof is such a dominant element that it entirely encloses the house platform, making walls unnecessary. These houses are commonly windowless and dark inside, serving their occupants mainly as a place to sleep and store their heirloom valuables. But some peoples, especially in lowland areas, like the Bugis, Makassarese or Achehnese, have traditionally built their houses very similar to the Malay style, open and airy, with large, shuttered windows designed for maximum ventilation. Skilled woodcarving, from the beautiful carved shutters, friezes and panels of old houses in Terengganu to the elaborately carved banisters and doorways in a Kayan longhouse, bear witness to
Traditional Architecture

Houses, Mosque, Halls
Although the most developed of Malaysia’s vernacular houses belong to the Malays-reflected in the range of construction methods and building materials employed.

These vernacular house forms are result of long-term modification and adaptation, shared experience and innovations approved by the community.

The design superiority and its relevance ensure their continued survival in modified form—Contemporary Vernacular.

The Malay Kampong and the Malay Traditional Houses
Assimilation of values to traditions

- Islam does not physically change the architecture of the Malay world in drastic forms. The belief in oneness of God-ALLAH as fundamental and Islam as way of life affects mostly the planning layout of homes as well as detail decorations. Others structures not contravening to the shariah remain as shown in the following traditional architecture:
Coastal Village

Fishing villages, like this one at Marang, Kuala Terengganu, are located along the beaches and sandbanks. The houses are usually more densely grouped than in inland kampons.

In many kampons, coconut palms not only provide an essential food item but also screen houses from the glare of the sun. Traditionally, the Malays plant a coconut palm after the birth of each of their children.
Coastal and Riverine Settlements

The earliest settlements in Malaysia developed along river basins because rivers were the only means of transportation into the interior of the country as well as their estuaries provide safe haven for seafarers and fishermen. Major towns such as Melaka, Kota Bharu, Kuala Terengganu, Kota Kinabalu and Kuching all begin as a river settlements.

Riverine Village

Advances in the modern transport systems, the importance of coastal and riverine settlements receded. Today the waterfront settlements are mostly fishing villages. In Sabah and Sarawak, coastal villages or kampung air are still apparent at the coastline.
The Rumah Penghulu originally located in Sg. Kecil, Kedah, now restored and relocated at Badan Warisan in Kuala Lumpur.
The Malay House

Regional variations of the bumbung panjang house

In the northern west coast states of Perlis, Kedah, Penang and Perak, the bumbung panjang house is plain and functional. It usually consists of either a basic rectangular rumah ibu with a front veranda with rows of shuttered openings and an enclosed rear veranda, or two structures separated by a selang (passageway), placed parallel to each other or at right angles or end-to-end. The selang, which has a dropped floor and a roof that fits under the eaves of the adjacent structures, not only provides a convenient way of adding to an existing form by avoiding merging roof forms, but serves to demarcate the ‘living’ and ‘working’ areas of the house. It also provides a private entrance for women and a place for them to socialize. This house style is commonly called rumah selang.

A variation of the two-structure form is the gajah menyusu house, so-called because it resembles a baby elephant suckling its mother (gajah means ‘elephant’ and menyusu ‘to suckle’). The rumah dapur (kitchen), which is a smaller version of the main house, is placed end-to-end and the difference in their status is indicated by

Malaysian Architecture History in brief
Some details of the Malay Houses

Wallboards may be arranged vertically, horizontally or diagonally, or in combination. The many voids in the Malay house, for example, in the gable screens and the full-length shuttered windows, reflect the importance given to ventilation.
Axonometric View of the Malaccan Malay House

Malaysian Architecture History in brief
The Malay house: Materials and construction

The traditional Malay house is primarily a timber structure, built off the ground using the post-and-beam method by local carpenters or by the owners themselves. Its walls are usually made of timber, although bamboo is still used in certain areas. Numerous full-length windows line the walls, providing both ventilation and a view outside. The high-pitched, gabled roof, which dominates the house, was traditionally covered with thatch but is now more often covered with galvanized iron.

Materials
The main structure of the traditional Malay house—the posts, crossbeams, tie beams or girts and roof structure—are made of hardwood, such as cengal (Neobalanocarpus heimii), belian (Eusideroxylon zwageri), merbau (Intis palumbanica) or redik (Vatica spp.), while the secondary structure of the house—the rafters, floor joists, wall studs, window frames and door frames—are usually made of a moderately hard timber, such as meranti (Shorea spp.) and jelutong (Dyera costulata).

The posts, called tiang, which carry the weight of the roof directly to the ground, measure at least 12 centimetres square. The crossbeams supporting the floor are mortised through the posts and secured by timber wedges, while girts and tie beams at the top of the posts hold the posts in position and form the base of the roof. Various types of joints and connectors have been developed by Malay carpenters to allow the house to be built in stages, and also to allow it to be dismantled and re-erected elsewhere.
There are many variations of traditional Malay houses on the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia although the basic component of *Rumah Ibu* (the Main Living Area), is common to the whole region. The Main distinguishing feature is the roof. On the West Coast 2 major roof forms are indigenous *bungung panjang* (long ridge roof) and the foreign influenced *bungung lima* (hipped roof).
Strong Thai and Cambodian influences have shaped the culture of the East Coast for many centuries, and have created what some consider to be the richest cultural heritage of Peninsula Malay states.
The East Coast Tradition

- It is believed that the early ancestors of the Malays came from the ancient civilisation of Kemboja (Cambodia) and Champa in Indochina and settled along the east coast of the Peninsula.

- When trade flourishes in the later years it further enforced the cultural influences from these countries.

- 2nd-16th Century

- Kelantan, Trengganu and Patani in Southern Thailand was part of the Malay Kingdom of Langkasuka.

- Many of the traditional art forms known today originated there - mak yong, wayang kulit, menora and sobek...so does the architectural vocabulary distinctive of the east coast.
Regional Influences and Common Features

- Evolution of architectural style of the east coast must have derive from several influences brought about by migration and trade. The development shows homogenous features peculiar to Kelantan, Terengganu, Thailand and Cambodia.

- Features include the steep, tiered roofs with curve gable ends;

- Rhomboid-shaped terracotta roof tiles of Thai origin-Singhorra Tiles;

- Walls made of timber panels which are slotted in groove frames found in both Thai and Cambodian construction techniques.
Examples of the East Coast Architecture

- **The Kelantanese House**

- **The Terengganu House**

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*Malaysian Architecture History in brief*

- The peles (gable ends) are said to resemble the hull of a *perahu* (local fishing boat), decorated in the shape of a bangau (egret). It is commonly believed that the spirit of the bangau protects fishermen at sea and it is thus introduced into the house as a guardian.

- The roofs of Kelantan and Terengganu houses are usually covered with *singhorra* tiles, named after the town, Songkhla, in southern Thailand where the tiles originate. Gently curved *peles* (gable ends) are fitted to the ends of the roof overhangs, giving the houses their distinctive appearance. Thai houses have a similar form which is supposed to represent the *naga* (water dragon), an aquatic symbol pervasive in Thai rites and rituals.
The Traditional Architecture of Palaces and Public Building

In Feudal Malay society; the Istana-residence or palace of the Sultan or Raja, was a paramount importance. Not only was it the place where the Sultan lived, but also the centre of learning, culture and the arts.

Mostly of timber but built on a larger and grander scale than the traditional Malay house, the construction were still base on basic architectural elements. Elevated platforms and other internal devices signified public and private domains as well as hierarchy and formality. Elaborate carvings on walls and posts distinguished the palaces from homes of the common people.
Mosque typology

- Vernacular mosque
  - Three tiered for natural ventilation
  - Made from timber with no nail joints
  - Raised from the ground
  - Tiles from clay from nearby Siam

Kg Laut Mosque, Kota Bharu, Kelantan
Influence by Chinese muslims
From traders to Melaka

- Vernacular Mosque
  - Of bricks and stones
  - On platform
  - Naturally ventilated

Kampung Hulu Mosque, Melaka, Malaysia
- Jamek Mosque from Indian influence (brought by the British)
Mosque Development

- The Mosque and the tomb.
Contemporary Architecture
Corporate, Housing, Commercial, Institutional
SUMMARY

Islamic Architecture?
The perception of Islamic Architecture had misconstrued the fundamental of what Islam as a way of life is to something still and physical.

Naturally Islam has not change the architecture that was born out of need and necessity in any cultures or region. What it does is to make one aware on ones responsibility towards the Creator and Environment as a steward. And thus create spaces, architecture and aesthetic pleasing innovations out of needs that transcend time, place and age..without wastage for humanity. It has to be SUSTAINABLE.
Setting the Balance...in environment

- “He has raised the Heaven on high, and He has enforced the balance. That you exceed not the bounds; but observe the balance strictly; and fall not short thereof.” (55:7–9)
- “Mankind! Your transgression will rebound on your own selves.” (10:23)
THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE...IT IS A VIRTUE

......terima kasih.
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