

Malay Vernacular Architecture

Traditional and Contemporary Expressions

Norwina Mohd Nawawi

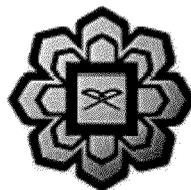


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CHAPTER 5

IN SEARCH OF THE ORIGINS OF THE MALAY-MUSLIM ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH MASJID BUILT FORM

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ABSTRACT

Teaching of architectural history to students of architecture leaves so many gaps to the rationale of its claim with no appropriate answer on the Malay-Muslim heritage in the South East Asian region. The similarities found in the architectural styles of the so called “The Malay Archipelago” had triggered many theories among architectural writers, historian and critics. Understanding the development of civilisation in the said region that is connected to the architectural establishment in both styles and typologies is important. For the purpose of this article, the study intends to discuss selected theories and review some examples of architectural forms of Masjid as the key architectural building of the Malay world found in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Laos PDR and Vietnam. Qualitative approach through literature review and observational visits to selected case studies, where available, were conducted. Preliminary findings from the analyses of case studies suggest that understanding the similarities and differences of the architectural forms could explain the origins of the Malay-Muslim heritage, *insyaallah*.

Keywords: Malay-Muslim heritage, masjid, architectural forms and styles

INTRODUCTION

The passing of time and the circumstances that befall our ancestors in the region had gradually eroded and blurred out the richness of our built environment to mere indigenous and taken-for-granted traditional dwellings in a rural setting. History as published and read widely often always glorify the rulers, the rich and the famous with colonial masters emerging as saviours. The life and the living habitat of commoners only fill up in the age old stories passes down from mouth to mouth of farmers, fisherman, tradesmen and perhaps artisans. Tracing our childhood to yesteryears and searching the habitat we once lived from pages of old albums, postcards, magazines and books, a tinge of nostalgia cling as to how our built environment had evolved. To be teachers of architectural history of own heritage requires in