

# Local Wisdom And Functions Of Malay Traditional House In North Sumatera

Ramlan Damanik, Warisman Sinaga, Yosrizal

**Abstract:** This study aims to describe the shape, function and meaning behind the ornaments found in custom homes Malay and Malay royal palace, especially those in Langkat district, Indonesia the city of Medan and palace Five Barrel Coal. The traditional house Malay and Malay royal palace has a traditional architecture is most famous for the style, shape and ornament shaped sculpture that increasingly looks grandeur. Characteristics and color at home ornament Malay culture and Malay royal palace depict everyday life and personality of Malay society steeped in traditions that must be upheld and the religion of Islam is sturdy and applied in daily life. Objects in this study is the ornaments found in the Maimun Palace of five barrel and Malay traditional house located in Langkat, because of the time factor and with age many ornaments that have been severely damaged. Ornaments Malay representation and values possessed by the Malay society. The method used in this study is a phenomenological method of recording and presenting the phenomenon that is found as a fact that the field includes existing condition and its amendments, the results of this study are described qualitatively. The results of this study indicate that the existence of the ornaments on the Malay traditional house and the Malay Royal Palace is closely related to nature, and has the function and meaning of each, and worked with carving technique that uses a wooden base.

**Keywords:** Malay, ornaments, custom house and the royal palace.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

ETHNIC of Malay is one that is on earth ethnic Indonesia, as social beings in need of communication in everyday life. In connection with that as social beings strives to interact with using the phrase as one of the signs for a particular purpose. From this interaction appears the intent or message delivery represented through signs. Ethnic Malay located in North Sumatera also recognize the diversity of skills as a medium expression meaning embodied in the form of visual or image. Visual form which is instrumental in the development of culture and communicate cultural values. One of the media to express the meaning of meaning and philosophy of the Malay ethnic ornament is ornament or decoration and variety of carving. Each ornament encountered there is a message, passion and advice to bequeath to the next generation. Ornaments have encountered at home traditional Malay, Palace, Maimun Palace and five barrel. The ornament is a sign and the sign was meaningless so the sign and the meaning was inseparable from the science of semiotics (semiology). Semiotics as a science that examines the sign is used as a method to analyze and dissect the meaning of Malay ornaments found in traditional Malay houses and Malay royal palace. These signs must have meaning and its own values for ethnic Malays, Besides, it also has a Malay ornament ornaments values of local wisdom, and the value of local knowledge is a legacy of its predecessors to next generations. By generation researchers therefore intend to conduct research on semiotics and values of local wisdom contained in the Malay ornament in traditional houses as well as the Malay royal palace.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Understanding of Semiotics

Semiotics or semiology is the terminology that refers to the same science. Previous Longmann Dictionary of Contemporary English (1978) explains, semiotics is: teach the study of sign in general, asp, as they related to language. Semiotics is derived from the Greek words semeion, which means 'sign' or 'sign'. So, semiotics means knowledge of pins (Zulkifli., 2007,). This was confirmed by Aart van Zoest, Semiotics, derived from the Greek word 'semeion' meaning a mark. So semiotics, the science of signs. Semiotics is a branch of science that deals with the assessment of signs and everything connected with the sign, such as sign systems and processes that apply to the mark. "Semiotics, Overteken, hoeze ermee Werken en wat we doen" 1993 ". In the same book Aart van Zoest, adding that: Semiotics is a branch of science that studies signs and everything connected with it, such as sign systems and developments in connection with the use of such signs. From some of the responses above, it can be concluded that semiotics is the science of signs that lead to the development of the sign, the use of signs and ideas as a general philosophical theory that systematically communicate information or message it contains. In revealing the meaning of the sign is presented in a work of art an observer employing methods semiotics. With the growing realm can utilize in the semiotics. ie visual communication (Visual Communications). In this exposure, the study discussed in the realm of visual communication includes the study of good arts, graphics system, color system, signs of an icon, a symbol, a visual phenomenon in mass communication, advertising, comic, money, game cards, clothing, architecture, geographic map, movies, and so on. In connection with works of art in this research will direct the use of semiotics is the study of visual communication. (Sachari 2005).

### 2.2. Sign

In the Headlines of "Semiotics of Communication-Practical Applications for Research and Thesis Communication", Indiwan Seto Wahyu Wibowo stated that: "semiotics is usually defined as an assessment of the signs is primarily a study of codes that any system that lets us look entitas- certain entities as signs or as something meaningful ". (Wibowo, 2011).

- Ramlan Damanik, Faculty of Cultural, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia. Corresponding Email: [ramlan@usu.ac.id](mailto:ramlan@usu.ac.id)
- Warisman Sinaga, Faculty of Cultural, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia. Email: [warisman@usu.ac.id](mailto:warisman@usu.ac.id)
- Yosrizal, Faculty of Cultural, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia. Email: [yosrizal@usu.ac.id](mailto:yosrizal@usu.ac.id)

Similarly, Aart Van Zoest statement: "Among the signs and practice shown/represented there is a relation; meaning that the mark has a representative nature. Signs and representations had led to an interpretation. Thus, the representation and interpretation is a characteristic sign". (Azmi, 2002). From the opinions of the above can be concluded that the sign is one part of semiotics is a meaningful form. As well as the sign represents a purpose that is in a form that is presented, between symbols and hidden meanings. It has a very close relationship, which seemed to form a clear representation of the meaning represented.

### 2.2.1. Types of the Sign

Judging from their relationships, Charles Sanders Pierce distinguishing marks as follows :

1. Icon, the icon is a sign that there is such a possibility, regardless of the existence of a denotatum (marker), but can be attributed to him on the basis of an equation that potentially has. This definition implies that everything is an icon, because everything in reality can be attributed to something else. So that it can be understood icons is also a sign that resemble objects (objects) that represents or signs in common use characteristics similar to those intended.
2. Index, is a sign that in the case of a sign hanging from their complexion a denotatum (marker). In other words, a sign that nature depends on the existence of a marker. This sign has a causal connection with what it represents.
3. Symbols/Emblem, is a sign of where the relationship between the mark with denotatum (marker) is determined by a generally accepted rule or collective agreement (convention). Sign language and mathematics is an example of the symbol. The symbol can also represent an abstract idea where there is no similarity between the shape of signs and meanings.
4. This study seen by tagging and meaning in which the marking (the concept of Charles Sanders Pierce) were studied through different types of icons, indices, and symbols.

### 2.3. Local of Wisdom

In the dictionary sense, local wisdom (level of wisdom) consists of two words: wisdom and level. In English-Indonesian Dictionary John M. Echols and Hassan Syadily, level means local, whereas wisdom equals wisdom. In generally, local wisdom can be understood as the ideas of local (local) that are wise, full of wisdom, good value, embedded and followed by members of the community. In the discipline of anthropology known term level of genius. Level of genius is a first term was first introduced by Quaritch Wales. Anthropologists have discussed at length the notion of local genius (Ayatrohaedi, 1986). Among other things Haryati Soebadio said that level of genius is also cultural identity, identity / personality national culture that led to the nation is able to absorb and process the appropriate disposition of foreign cultures and the ability of its own (Ayatrohaedi, 1986). While Moendardjito (in Ayatrohaedi, 1986) says that the elements of local culture potential as a local genius as it has proven its ability to survive until now. Characteristics are:

1. Stand up to foreign cultures
2. Have the ability to accommodate the elements of foreign cultures

3. Have the ability to integrate elements of foreign culture into the native culture
4. Have the ability to control
5. Able to give direction to the development of culture.

Behavior is general and widespread in society, hereditary, will develop into values held firm, hereinafter referred to as the culture (culture). Level knowledge is defined as truth that has been a tradition, or steady in an area (Gobyah, 2003). Level knowledge is often called level of wisdom can be understood as a business man using his intellect (cognition) to act and behave towards something, objects, or events that occur in a given space (Ridwan, 2007). Wisdom etymologically means a person's ability to use his mind to address something reasonable events, objects or situations. While local, showing the interaction space where the event or situation occurs. Thus, level knowledge is substantially the norms that prevail in a society that is believed to be true and become a reference in the act and behave everyday. Therefore, level knowledge is a crucial entity for human dignity in the community (Geertz, 2007).

### 2.4. Understanding of Ornament

Gustami in his book Art Ornaments of Indonesia excerpt explains that: "Ornament is a component of the art products are added or made available for the purpose as decoration. Besides his duties graced the concerns implicit aspects of beauty. For example to add to the beauty of the object does so much good and interesting, consequently affecting also in terms of reward in terms of both spiritual and material terms/financial "(Gustami, 1980). According Suardi (2000), ornaments derived from the word meaning ornare decorate. In Encyclopedia of Indonesia (2004), is described as any ornament geometric ornament style or the other. Ornaments made on a basic form of handicraft (furniture, clothing, etc.) and architecture. Sunaryo (2009), explains that: "Ornaments is the application of decoration on a product. The forms of the ornament decoration being its main function is to beautify objects decorated products or goods, the object was probably already wonderful product, but after adding ornaments to her expected more beautiful ". Function ornament beauty terms of overall concerns, for example, to add an item making it nice and attractive. Furthermore, the ornaments often are symbolic values or certain purposes. It may be associated with a world view (philosophy of life) of human or community creators. Even in relation to the objects that meaning (deep meaning) accompanied by certain expectations anyway. It is thus clear that the duties and functions of ornament is to decorate an object. Based on some of the above explanation, that ornament or decoration is a human effort to embellish or decorate a work of art. Ornaments are present in the midst of a community media as an expression of feeling manifested in the form of visual and may play a role in the development of the past. These ornaments were also created to express and convey the meaning of the culture of an area of the local community.

## 3. METHODS

Based on problems in such research, the methodology used is the more precise analysis of semiotics. As well as the descriptive method was selected as the way in solving the problem. Then the data in the analysis of this descriptive method using semiotics (Descriptive Research), with a

qualitative approach. The qualitative approach so that it is more in reference to the approach of semiotics that is making the description or overview of the objects examined, based on the data that appear as is, and describe systematically will facts the situation factually and closely.

## 4 RESULT

### 4.1. The use of colors in the ornament

Color is the most striking attributes that distinguish a form from the environment. Colors also affect the visual weight of a form. The presence of color makes the object can be seen, and through the elements of color can reveal to atmosphere, or the nature of objects he designed. Color also indicates the nature and character are different. By its nature we can mention the color of the young, the old colors, dark colors, dimmed and brilliant colors. Viewed from that stuff, the color is composed of red, yellow, blue and so on, while in terms of character one can mention hot colors, cool colors, soft colors, striking color, the color of light, color weight, color sad, happy colors. The color arrangement in Malay ornaments using two colors, namely green and yellow. But at this moment ornament Malays also adopt other colors such as white, brown, golden color and the color of others. This color is generally often used as a ornament Malay color. The yellow color ornaments Malay palace building, mosque and houses in the city of Medan is symbolic grandeur and fertility and prosperity in life. This color is generally often used on ornament background. The green color symbolizes the identical color of Islam. So that the green color is always used on buildings nuances of Islam. As for the types of ornament based on the shape, among others :

#### A. Motif Plants (Flora)

Motif plants ornament are ornamental motifs taken from different kinds of plants such as the shape of leaves, flowers and stems. Then a form of decoration that propagate to the left and right. Ornaments plants very much used. Plants motif almost mastered every form of decoration created. But in general, the various carvings were put into three groups of stem on which the engraving, namely the Kaluk Pakis, group Flowers, and a group Shoots Bamboo :

#### 1. Shoots Bamboo Ornament

Bamboo shoots are young bamboo shoots. Bamboo shoots triangular shaped with curved lines and straight therein. In general, in the triangle there is a vertical line that chained with twigs (lines) curved left and right. Curved lines that are forming a pattern carved bamboo shoots. This motif taken from the top of twenty two bamboo emerging. In addition, the ornamental motifs have many kinds of bamboo shoots are used in the home or decoration anatomical objects in everyday use (eg ornate jars). Ornaments meaning or motive is symbolize fertility and happiness in human life present in Figure 1.



Figure 1. The picture of Ornament of bamboo shoot.

Beside from being a beautiful ornament bamboo shoots as well as complementary symbol or mascot that represents the entire ornament for the Malay community.

#### 2. Wheels Ornaments Flowers (Flowers Grodga)

Wheels Ornaments Flowers (Grodga Flowers) is a semicircular ornament in which the left and right of curved and shaped ornaments such as a crown of vine leaves and flowers, and all of which are limited to a rectangular shape which is a frame as a follow in Figure 2.



Figure 2. The Picture of Wheels Ornaments Flowers

#### 3. Ornaments Genting Disconnected

These ornaments unbroken tiles patterned foliage decoration and spiral and does not break off and there are forms of wildlife such as birds or fish resembling a triangle or rectangle and given the size overview. And usually precarious unbroken ornament is located on the top of the vent outside the front, side left, right or inside the palace hall shows in Figure 3.



Figure 3. The Picture of Ornaments Genting Disconnected

Based on Figure 3 that meaning contained in unbroken decorative tiles is that hard human life, will not run at all sustenance brought by Allah SWT.

#### 4. Flowers Cloves Tiled Ornament

Shape of Flowers Cloves Tiled ornament is tight and solid with each other to form an arch of flowers and similarity motif bamboo shoots on the bottom of the ornament but has the unique shape of its own is the arch left and right ornament resembling flowers and birds take flight and have a sharp corner between small and big at the end of the tip shape, and on the top of the porch veranda.



**Figure 4.** The Picture of Clove Flower Ornament Tiled.

The meaning of Clove Flower ornaments Tiled is defined grandeur grandeur of ourselves and makes us become more respectable and dignified when dealing with others.

### 5. Ornaments of Lilit Watercress

Lilit ornament decoration Watercress is elongated following the line of a straight line swerved to the right and left with respect for the variety so impressive vertical direction and widened like a horizontal direction. Which has a meaning unflinching zeal, went ahead despite the hindrance, but the goal according to the conditions at that time.



**Figure 5.** The Picture of Ornaments Lilit Watercress

Lilit Ornamental meaning in accordance with the shape that is wrapped around signifies the spirit of unremitting and continues to surge despite face many trials and proceeded to its destination.

### 6. Bulk of Pinang Ornament

The bulk of the ornaments Pinang is an arrangement of betel reins. One with the other interrelated and interconnected so that relating to the form of tiles. Variety as the reins nut inu can be lengthened or shortened according to the space provided for the ornament bulk of Pinang, shape ornament is like a rhombus that has a curvature from left to right and from bottom to top and from side to side and bordered by a small wood erect as a barrier between one ornament with other ornaments. Typically bulk of Pinang ornament to be located at the top front room ventilation room.



**Figure 6.** The Picture of the Bulk Ornament

Ornaments reins Pinang have a meaning that if we seek sustenance will never drop out.

## B. Patterned animals Ornament

As for the living creatures that serve ornament motives are living creatures which were scattered around the surrounding environment, such as birds, ducks and others. Ornaments patterned animals, among others:

### 1. Ducks Round or Duck Sekawan Ornament

This ornament is a blend of elements of fauna and art, therefore duck ornament or teal evening return' duck sekawan' not visible manifestation of the real ducks caused by the influence of Islam that has been adopted by the king of Datuk Matyuda and followers that shirk to make ornaments living creatures.



**Figure 7.** The Picture of Ducks Ornament or Duck Sekawan

Ducks ornament is an example of togetherness and solidarity, and never precede each other in front of him. And ornaments Ducks return or duck flock meant that people should accord in the search for life and living.

### 2. Bees depend Ornament

This ornament made of wood rosin soft and strong that the carving is very easy to be formed according to the volition of the engraver, ornaments is almost identical to ornament bamboo shoots, shaped like a beehive that depend in wood and given the variation with curves and flowers are elongated, position of Depending Bees ornament is usually located on resplang home and as a garnish on the bottom edge of the field that extends in front of the door.



**Figure 8.** The Picture of Depending Bees Ornament

Bees produce honey that is useful for health, and therefore ornaments bees depend significantly goodness and prosperity for residents and occupants of the royal palace

### 3. Ants successive Ornament

It looked like ants in tandem. Part ant's body and head adorned with ornate arches or leaves. While on the legs ornate florets or beetles. This engraving is placed on the elongated fields, such as frame doors, wainscoting, doors and windows, pillars and so forth. This motif is having to live in harmony and full mutual cooperation.



**Figure 9.** The Picture of Ants successive Ornament



**Figure 12.** The Picture of Chain Linked Ornament

### C. Natural Patterned ornaments and other motive other

#### 1. Star Star Ornament

In accordance with the name of the ornament that natural motifs, ornaments star was found in the position of the top of the attic outside of the tower from the top right of the Palace or house. Shape ornament Star's scratch from the bottom up and from left side to right and include small spheres on it so the ornament looks bumpy, and This ornament is made of a wooden base damar. This means have Motif a Stars and have a meaning of authenticity, God's power, and the source of light in human life.



**Figure 10.** The Picture of the stars Ornament

#### 2. Trellis Violin Ornament

Shaped like a violin and its fence which is a blend of Malay and Europe created the Violin Trellis Ornament. Violin Trellis ornaments are almost always placed on the fence barrier, typically from the violin to the present trellis is always placed on the barrier fence. Trellis Violin ornament is in addition as a barrier also to beautify the outside of the palace. And this ornament meaningful as a protector for the residents of the house or palace.



**Figure 11.** The Picture of Violin Trellis Ornament

#### 3. Chain Linked Ornament

This ornament is located in the room wives of King, this ornament has a cavity so that the room looked cool, the form of ornament is like a chain associated with each other, form relating to one another means that the generation of Malays never end and there is always one generation to so there is the philosophy of the Malay saying "It will not Missing Malay on Earth".

#### 4. Jala's Ornament

Jala's Ornament is rhombic, this ornament making is simple although simple yet encountered, how to make it very easily by crossing several holes forming the diamond-shaped timber such as diamond hole. Position of Jala Ornamnet is often found in Courant window, door or vent in the kitchen. Mesh nets meaningful ornaments coolness and comfort for occupants.



**Figure 13.** The Picture of Jala's Ornament

#### 5. Ricih Wajid Ornament

Wajid Ricih ornaments are also called tooth ornamental Grasshopper. Ornamental Grasshopper, shaped pieces wajid kind of food made of sticky rice. The position of Wajid Ricih ornament is located at resplang (wind hood) that seals the end of the timber ridge. This ornament is composed of two layers. Its basic form resembling shoots rebeng because it has a triangular shape at the lower end of the ornament, but the difference is a row of solid and ornate ricih wajid ini. Ornamen complement each ornament is a meaningful unity without any friction and tension in society.



**Figure 14.** The Picture of Ricih Wajid Ornament

### 5. DISCUSSION

#### 5.1. Local Wisdom Values of Ornament Malay

Many kinds of ornaments created the predecessor of building houses and royal palaces Malays make it as a legacy from one generation to the next, in addition to beautify the building, ornament also brought purpose and values are positive and beneficial to the next generation, while the values of local wisdom ornaments these include:

1. Aesthetic value, aesthetic value presented in Malay ornament with the colors that adorn the building and the Malay royal palace. Color red, yellow, and green in addition

serves to beauty also carries a message that the color red as a symbol of nature valiant ethnic Malays, yellow color symbolizes humility and openness, friendly to the environment until now the oracle of the Malay race is very famous polite and friendly, the yellow color is dominant at home and Malay royal palace, while the green color symbolizes that the Malay inhabitants converted to Islam and have value very confidence is high so as to conquer the vast ocean.

2. The value of religion, religious values contained in Malay ornament is as His creature in the last few ornaments carved hand side or up and down and on the ornament is taught that as human beings should always be thankful though happy and sad and should always be persistent, because God does not will provide sustenance for his people who do not want to try,
3. Moral Values, moral values are a guide of good behavior for each individual as a morality that is reflected in their daily behavior, and the ornaments reflected the advice of the advice given the ancestors to the next generation, such as the values of mutual cooperation that reflects togetherness in the evening return ornaments duck or duck herd, and how to educate children in the encounter on the bamboo shoots ornament containing a call if you're going to educate children should start small because if an adult if not taught good things will definitely carry over carry.
4. Cultural Values, the beauty of the carving or ornamentation used to educate children to strengthen the identity of the character to face the future as the future generation.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

### 6.1. Conclusion

Motif ornamental and the Palace from the Malay kingdoms made of flora, fauna and natural ornaments created not only as decoration to beautify the house or the royal palaces Malays but also have values of wisdom that we can make an example to educate children to the next generation. For example is ornaments bamboo shoots are taught to educate children and ornamental duck childhood pals who teaches nature of mutual cooperation.

### 6.2. Suggestion

1. Because of this endangered Malay ornaments need to be applied to every house to be built ornamented.
2. The role of the government to pay attention to and preserve buildings old buildings that have ornaments to be given attention so that building the building is not extinct.
3. In order for the study was not to be here, it is hoped their advanced research to other researchers using the approach of science of semiotics, as will possibly creation of works of art and tradition to interpret the work in appreciating or search for the truth of perceptions based on knowledge, experience, confidence, and even the system of values of tradition. As well as invite all parties and related elements, including the religious institutions to jointly explore the cultural values that areas respectively. Together in maintaining and preserving the cultural heritage of the nation from the brink of extinction.

## 7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study is dedicated to the University of Sumatra Utara (USU) that has been providing assistance funding for this

research.

## REFERENCES

- [1]. Al Mudra, Mahyudin, 2003. Home Picked Traditional Malay Lap Zaman, Yogyakarta. Center for Research and Development of Malay Culture.
- [2]. Benny, H. Doed, 2008, Semiotics and Social Dynamics of Culture. . Depok. FIB University of Indonesia
- [3]. Gustami. 1978. The excerpt from the Arts Ornaments Indonesia. Yogyakarta. STSRI Halim.
- [4]. Kartini, Ayu, 2004. Analysis of Application Ornaments Malay nuance in terms of shape and color in the city of Medan. Essay. Medan.Unimed.
- [5]. Lase, Aprilia 2016. Ornament Malay Coal At the five barrels Ornamnet of FIB USU. Medan.
- [6]. Sinar, Lukman and Wan Syaifuddin, 2002. Malay Culture East Sumatera. Medan.
- [7]. Suardi, Dedy. 2000. Ornaments Geometris. Bandung. Teens Rosdakarya Press.
- [8]. Sulastianto, Harry. 2008. Cultural Arts for IX Junior High School. Bandung. Grafindo Media Primary.
- [9]. Sunaryo, A. 2003. Variety of Ornamental Figurative Mantingan Mosque of Jepara. In Expression, Institute for Research. ISI Journal. Vol. 9(3): 23-34.
- [10]. Sunaryo, Aryo. 2009. Nusantara Ornaments. Semarang. Dahara Prize Publishers.
- [11]. Wibowo, Indiwani Seto Wahyu, 2014. Semiotics Communication Practical Applications for Research and Thesis Communications. Jakarta. Partners Media Discourse.
- [12]. Zainon, Siti Ismail, 1986. Reka Form Kraftangan Malay Tradition. Selangor.Hulu Kelang Board of language.
- [13]. Zoest, Aart Van. Semiotics 1978. About Signs, How It Works and What Do We Do With it. Jakarta. Foundation of Agung Sources Publishing.