

# Culture and traditional architecture of Mamasa in west Sulawesi, Indonesia

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## **Culture and traditional architecture of Mamasa in west Sulawesi, Indonesia**

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### **Abstract**

This qualitative research aims to find out the process of building traditional Mamasa architecture. Data collected by observation, interviews, and documentation has been analyzed via descriptive qualitative analysis. The results show that the development process which is a cultural activity done by the ancestors of the Mamasa people in building a traditional house is: 1) Marreto (Logging in the forest), 2) Kesaro (Carrying wood from the forest), 3) Ma'pake'dek banua (Establishing a house), 4) Mambubung, (Ritual of completion of work to build a house) and 5) Melambe (Thanksgiving Party).

**Keywords:** Cultural, Activity, Mamasa, Traditional, House.

## Cultura y arquitectura tradicional de Mamasa en Sulawesi occidental, Indonesia

### Resumen

Esta investigación cualitativa tiene como objetivo descubrir el proceso de construcción de la arquitectura tradicional de Mamasa. Los datos recopilados mediante observación, entrevistas y documentación se analizaron mediante un análisis cualitativo descriptivo. Los resultados muestran que el proceso de desarrollo, que es una actividad cultural realizada por los ancestros de la gente Mamasa en la construcción de una casa tradicional, es: 1) Marreto (tala en el bosque), 2) Kesaro (acarreo de madera del bosque), 3) Ma'pake'dek banua (Establecimiento de una casa), 4) Mambubung, (Ritual de la finalización del trabajo para construir una casa) y 5) Melambe (Fiesta de Acción de Gracias).

**Palabras clave:** Cultural, Actividad, Mamasa, Tradicional, Casa.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Architecture is the result of designing and building by a person or group of people in order to meet the space needs to carry out certain activities (Lullulangi, 2015). Architecture can also mean the art of building and the study of the building (Mangunwijaya, 1992). Another opinion, put forward by Ruskin, says: "Architecture mirrors the various aspects of our lives, social, economic, and spiritual. Architecture reflects various aspects of life: society, economy and spirituality. Architecture is a statement of society's pattern" (Ruskin, 1989: 18). Corbusier says: "Architecture is the masterly, correct and magnificent

play of masses of buildings brought together in light. Architecture is an amazing, a true and valuable mass of a building game of masses of buildings combined in the light” (Corbusier, 1923: 12).

Understanding culture means thinking with reason, customs, or something that has become a habit that has been difficult to change. (Language Center, 2007). Poerwadarminta (1984) explains that culture comes from the word of budi and daya. Budi means intellect, character, morals, temperament, or effort. It is an inner tool for guiding good or bad. Furthermore, the word daya means power, energy, influence, mind, or path (Poerwadarminta, 1984). From the above word sequence, Poerwadarminta (1984) then formulates the definition of culture as the mind and intellect about the already developed culture (advanced civilization). Altman and Werner (1985) says that a simple and broad definition of culture, was offered by the anthropologist Herskovist (1952) who stated that culture is the man-made part of the human environment. The above opinion is that simply and generally, cultural understanding is man-made or part of the human environment. Then Harsojo said that "Culture is a complex whole, in which are contained knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs, and various other abilities and habits gained by human beings as members of a society" ( Harsojo, 1999: 11). Thus it can be said that culture is a conception of the whole of a person's way of life. Architecture is a cultural product because one of the human activities as a cultured creature is to build a shelter in the form of a house, and traditional society with traditional culture also built their traditional dwelling which is commonly called traditional architecture. Traditional

architecture is one of the identities of a community group that supports it, and in traditional architecture the personality and culture of its supporting community are reflected (Lullulangi & Onesimus, 2007).

Mamasa's traditional architecture is an architectural masterpiece built by the ancestors of the Mamasa people in the past, and some are still intact and can be seen and used today. These architectural works are scattered in various regions and traditional villages that adorn the Mamasa mountains. To create such a charming and high-value architectural masterpiece, it is not as easy to build majestic high-rise buildings as in modern times, but the Mamasa ancestors built with great difficulty and struggle, much less because everything was done manually by manpower, coupled with very strict rules. The customary rules, in the form of rituals must be done as custom demands for the salvation of the human inhabitants. So customary rules are so characteristic that the work is called traditional architecture. In other words, to create traditional architectural works must be the full rite as a requirement must be met. Therefore, even though there are people today who build similar buildings, they are no longer called traditional architecture or traditional houses because they no longer do the traditions or rituals that are a cultural requirement to build such a house. In addition, the customary functions that each traditional house occupied in the past, are unlikely to be carried out by similar new buildings built by the present generation.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

This study aimed to find out the process of building traditional Mamasa architecture in the past, which is a cultural activity done by the ancestors of the Mamasa people in building a traditional house. This type of research is a qualitative research. The study population is the whole group of traditional houses that still exist in the Mamasa region. The samples are set in the Messawa, Nosu, Pana's Territories and the area around Mamasa city. Data collection is done through observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis technique is descriptive qualitative analysis, consisting of four activity flows, that is data selection, data presentation, analysis of meaning, and conclusion.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1. Results**

Based on interviews conducted with old people who still know the process of making traditional houses Mamasa, generally can be described as the process of ritual performed to establish a traditional house: Marreto (Logging in the Forest). Before chopping wood, parents must first look for a good day, which according to Tandirandan must be dipetari-tarianni, which in Bonggalangi is called ma'piso-piso, i.e., cutting chickens and asking for gods through the vision of chicken blood and chicken liver after its chest was cleaved. From the grains of

air bubbles in the blood of the chicken, they can know that the god has allowed or not to enter the forest. If not, they must postpone and seek a good day and perform the same rituals until the gods allow them. Furthermore, Mandadung says that "cutting timber, grass, etc., for house construction, on a special day is called *allo mapia* which means it is the day decided upon by an expert carpenter or *tomanarang* as the one being the most auspicious for this purpose" (Mandadung, 1994: 22).

After getting permission from the gods, they entered the forest while carrying a chicken and looking for wood. After getting the suitable wood, they also did what is called *ditippak* i.e., cut down the skin of the wood to fall to the ground. *Membokok* or *messa'de* (inner skin facing the ground or sideways) means that the wood cannot be felled; they must look for another wood. Conversely, if the *mentingngayo* or the inner skin is facing upwards, the cutting may be continued. Before the felling begins, the chicken is cut as a sacrifice to the god who rules the forest. After the wood is cut down and *sodan* (not falling to the ground but stuck on the other wood) occurs means that the wood should not be used and should look for other wood. Likewise, if the wood is felled and falls to the ground but there are other woods that hit and fall and overlap the wood in question, then it also should not be used. Woods that have been burned, should not be used. For example in a forest fire, although the wood is still alive but has never ignited the fire, should not be used. The process of logging and making herbs in the forest is called *marreto* (Bonggalangi, Press Com, 2016). Further Mandadung explains that:



If when cut, the tree falls in an easterly direction, this is about a confirmation of correct selection as the east is symbolic of new life. If, on the other hand, the tree falls towards the west, it will not be used because of the customary belief in the relationship between the west and death (1994: 21).

For the Nosu and Pana areas, the first structural material taken is the material for a'diri or a'liri posi (main pole in the middle of the house) then lettong (pole). This marreto process usually lasts for several months. And when it comes to the month of kadake or indona bulan (full moon between 15-17 months), the process must be stopped because they believe it is the month of fire and the house built on that month is flammable. Likewise, if So'bok started ma'piso-piso (the adat leader in the field of agriculture performs rituals to descend on the fields), the process of making the house must be stopped until the process of pa'totiboyongan (i.e., start working the fields until the rice is fruitful).

If any person dies in the village, the wife of the person who makes the house along with the tomanarang (carpenter) should not mourn the grieving person and if the immediate family dies, the house-building process must be stopped. So many pemali (taboo) that should not be done when building a traditional house, so do not be surprised if the process of manufacture usually lasts for years. There is something interesting in preparing home ingredients in the forest, which is when making wall materials that Mamasa people call rinding angin or rimbang. This process is called usu'bak kayu or ussulun kayu that is making wall materials by peeling wood based on the same annual ring

circumference as the process of making the triplex but they only use a very simple tool. For the areas of Messawa and Nosu Pana it is not too special because the wood is cut first and then cut into the desired length then the process of stripping is done. However, for the area of Mamasa and its surroundings, the wood is planted in a standing state (not cut down) so that the tall wood, it is called dipayai (made a kind of scaffolding around the wood), for the climb and cut its top. Then after the top is cut, the stripping process begins from top to bottom. Each part is to be notched along the circumference according to the length of the wall material (*rinding angin*). The wooden scrolls that have been peeled are then stacked with the other wood and then smoked to be rigid and ready to be mounted as a wall. There is a reason for Mamasa people to do so. They assume that the house was made for *katuoan* (life) so that the *rinding angin* is expected to be taken from *kayu tuo* (live wood). In addition, the type of shelled uru wood is not exhausted, it is still alive and can be used again if there are other families or others who want it. If it is cut down, it will die and if it does not run out it will rot or damage. Unless it is embedded in the soil, it will last for years. *Kesaro* (Wood transport from the forest).

After the ingredients or material structure is considered sufficient and complete in the forest, the next process is *kesaro* (transporting the herb from the forest). It is enough time to prepare the food for the people who will carry the home ingredients. What is interesting and special in the past is that all the people in a village even from neighboring villages must come to know if there is a *kesaro* because there is a moral obligation for everyone to get involved in this

activity. Besides the sense of mutual cooperation is also high, also because of the weight of this work so that if there are people who do not want to be involved, later he who hold the same activity, he will get moral sanction that no one who came to help him.

Ma'pake'de 'Banua (Founded house). After the structural material has been collected in the village, the owner of the house holds another ritual, which is to cut the chicken and ask the gods through the blood of the chopped chicken. If according to their habits if the blood of the chicken is good, it means the gods have permission and can be continued. If not, then the time should be reviewed again because the god has not yet allowed. A good month is when the position of the moon in the sky is uphill, at the time when the moon was makaleso (full shine). Timponga'na bulan (the moon has not been fully shining) is not good because it can result in bad influence for the owner of the house, namely sitimponga'-ponga 'liu (like angry). After everything went well, the gods had allowed then before the tomanarang (carver) started his activity, usually with a special ritual, which is to cut the chicken as a sign of commencement of work. During the activity, especially the Mamasa tomanarang area should be treated specially. Dulang (a plate of high-legged wood) and drinking utensils should not be mixed with other cutlery. Likewise, treatment of them during the process of making the house should be treated specifically. This is so that the temporary home mix is not exchanged or is not in the making. This process usually lasts for a while, i.e., the tomanarang measures, diligently and makes construction connections because the

construction using the system of bonds and pegs and should not involve iron materials such as nails.

After all the processing of the materials is complete, it is time to unite the parts of the construction, commonly called ma'pasitoe or ma'pasiraka ' and begin to build a house. Before this activity, a ritual must first be held called ma'tallu rara that is cutting three types of animals: chickens, dogs, and pigs. Mandadung said that:

The first area of Nosu and Pana first established was la'diri posi (main pole) where the 'posi' stand should be dipatali'i (tied cloth) recited by the Toma'kada (ritual leader) while the Toma'kada also ma'tali tallu (wearing three headbands) each colored red, white, and black (1994: 10).

In general, the process of making a traditional house in Mamasa must start from the bottom, namely: lentong, (pole) and then pelemen (vine), daporan (place sticking manangnga), manangnga (place of rinding angin or rimbang attached), then install the rinding angin (wall) with a way down between manangnga. (Figure 1). Then mounting the ba'a 'as sambo rinding (wall cover) and end up covering the manangnga top. This process is usually called the installation process of the pile and the installation of the wall has been completed, ranging from lombon / bondon (the back room) to ba'ba (front room). Mandadung says that:

During the building process, it is important to know that all the wood should be laid in one direction. The manner

in which the rafters meet at the apex of the roof is a symbol of the coming together of husband and wife. Given this set of beliefs, it is regarded as peculiar if a person has a house prior to marriage (1994: 20).

Then, the custom orientation of the house must be facing Buntukarua (the valley of the water sources) or river upstream because the river upstream is considered as the source of life. For the Nosu and Pana areas each installation of the construction parts, such as bondon installation, (rearmost chamber) shall cut one pig, mounting pata or wood between the introduction (west side floor) and pollo (east side floor) cut a one-tailed pig, ba'ba (central or main room) also cut one pig, and every important piece of construction should also involve cutting a pig like manete (ridge), and other construction parts.



Figure 1. Wall installation (Rinding angin or Rimbang)

Source: Research Results

For Mamasa and the surrounding area, a part from tallu rara, also keep doing the ritual when ma'pasipulung (grouping of construction type), when installation of penulak, (main pole in front and back of the house) and when installation longa, far ahead and back). Especially for the penulak at the time of when the back rod is installed, they should cut pigs while construction of the front penulak, involves cutting a rooster because the traditional house in Mamasa is also symbolized as a rooster. Usually after the installation of the pole and the wall construction has been completed the house is currently used for rest and the house is dibarunggi (temporarily topped) while waiting for a more liberal time, especially in terms of finance to continue construction of the house (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Installation of pole and wall construction has been completed (Banua Sikapu'mi) Source: Research Results

To find out the division of Mamasa's traditional house space, the picture below shows the floor plan of a Mamasa traditional house with the largest size and height, called Banua Layuk. (Figure 3).

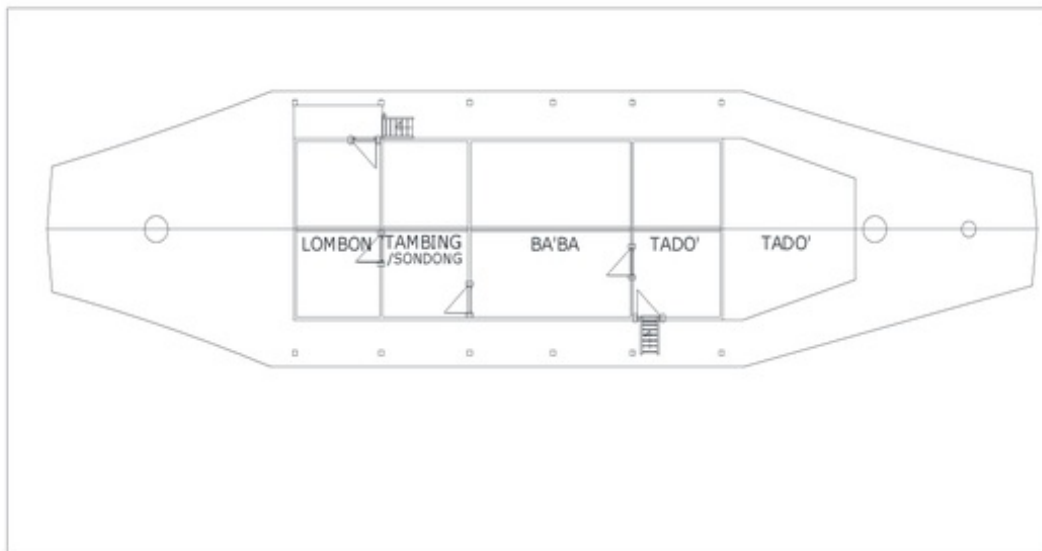


Figure 3. Plan one of Mamasa's traditional house types

Source: Research Results

In addition to the division of space, the structure and construction of traditional Mamasa homes are made entirely of strong and durable wood, so this type of house can survive until it has a very complicated structure and construction system as in Figure 4.

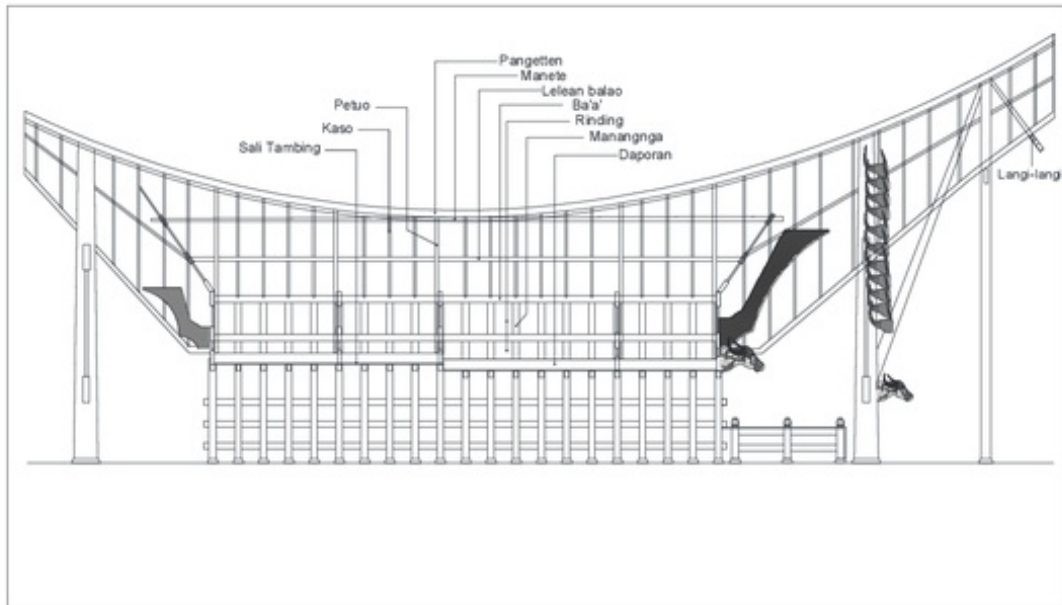


Figure 4. Structure and Construction of one of Mamasa's traditional house types

Source: Research Results

Mambubung, (Ritual of completion of work to build a house). Mambubung is one of the rituals to be performed at the end of the traditional Mamasa home-building process. Usually, after the installation of the roof, there are several pieces on the top of the ridge that have not been installed and are installed later at the time of mambubung. For the area of Messawa and Nosu Pana, mambubung is a thanksgiving feast after completion of building a house and may involve cutting many pigs, depending on the number of pigs that exist and those that belong to the family because nowadays, the custom of kasisandean (mutual help) also applies so that for the rich sometimes pigs have more than 10 tails. After that, for the Nosu and Pana areas still continue with another ritual called uttappoi dapo (start a fire above the house). A pig should be cut for this event. And for these three



areas, it is the last cultural-related ritual to build a traditional house. In Mamasa and surrounding areas, at the time of mambubung, the Tomanarang is suspected or given a special division because he is considered to have grown up in the construction of the house, in addition to the customary provisions to treat them privately from the beginning of the construction until the completion of the house is rebuilt or mambubung. Melambe (Thanksgiving party) (Poerwadarmed, 1984).

Melambe is the highest ritual feast for thanksgiving after one family has built a house, and this only happens in Mamasa and beyond. The type of house that can perform the show melambe is the type banua rapa '(large traditional house but natural color), banua bolong, (large traditional house but full black color) banua sura / banua layuk (large traditional house and or high but full painting color) so that this melambe ritual can only be performed by the nobles. Aside from the traditional leaders who play a role in this procession, it is not important that the Tomanarang is called to ma'kambau '(asking the gods who have the house to live in his new home and get richer). The event procession, beginning with the Tomanarang, climbed onto the ridge through the left side of the house on the back (south). Upon arriving at the top, he laid the lime of betel and began walking on the ridge of the house to the north while reciting the ritual languages (Bonggalangi, Press Com. 2016).

The Tomanarang runs from the south rooftop to the north while reciting the spell and putting the betel vines. After that, he runs again

to the south and repeats the spell reading, and puts down another chalk series. The above is done three times, i.e., walks to the north and puts the lime of betel and also three times to the south while laying the white betel while reading the same spell. As for the meaning of the spoken language of the rite, the outline is: the first part explains the existence of the Tomanarang who is in his house then gets a message or called home to come to a traditional party performed by the host in connection with the construction of his new home. The second part describes the situation or route that is lived until arrived in the village in question. The third section tells the parts of the construction of the house from the bottom to the top of the roof, and the last part is a request to the Gods so that the owner of the house grew rich, and lived prosperous. One of the large traditional houses belonging to the Banua Layuk type is Banua Layuk in Rante Buda Mamasa, which is the position of Hadat Rambu Saratu, the traditional ruler around the city of Mamasa in the past, as in the picture below.



Figure 5. Mamasa Traditional House (Banua Layuk Rambusaratu')  
who is around 400 years old

Source: Research Results (2016)

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

The Mamasa traditional house is very closely related to culture. Mandadung says that "All materials used in house construction must be prepared according to custom" (Mandadung, 2014: 18). This opinion confirms that the entire use of structural materials to build a traditional house should be prepared based on Mamasa traditional customs or cultures related to developmental procedures. Thus, the process of building a traditional house of the Mamasa is a material cultural aspect, in which the material cultural aspect is an expression of a spiritual (non-physical) culture born in the physical form of human works, such as clothing, temples, statues, and traditional houses. Walinono (1983) argues that culture is the totality of human works consisting of 1) Culture, in the form of ideas, norms, values, rules and so on, 2) Cultural behavior, that is a real culture that can be observed in the form of interaction among others human, and the environment, which takes place in a pattern or system called the social system. 3) Physical culture in the form of human works that are objects that can be caught by the senses. Based on this opinion, the traditional house is a work of the man who belongs in the physical culture. Therefore, Mamasa's traditional house is a product of physical culture in the form of ancestors of the Mamasa people in the past, and is still isolated and can be seen even used by the generation or society of Mamasa today.

Mamasa community culture in the past, governed by the custom called *Ada Mappurondo* (ancestral belief) that governs the life of Mamasa society in the past. This culture, according to Makatonan

(1984), is that Ada 'Mappurondo is a complete culture, covering non material aspects as 1) Pa'totiboyongan (The things that regulate agriculture especially rice cultivation in paddy fields, 2) Pa banne tauan (Things related to marriage), 3) Pa'bisuan (rituals performed in relation to human life from birth to age), and 4) Pa'tomatean (matters relating to death and burial ceremony of the dead). These four things are summarized in Ada Mappurondo and are known by the term Pemali Appa' Randdanna (Four basic teachings in ancestral belief). The four non-material aspects are supported by material aspects that are born in the form of material culture, such as agricultural tools, tools used for marriage, tools used in performing customary rituals, and no less important is the container of activity in the form a traditional house known as Mamasa traditional architecture, and for the Pa'tomatean container was born grave architecture which is also not less beautiful and interesting to visit as a cultural attraction in this area.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the above research and discussion, it can be concluded that the process of making traditional houses of Mamasa is closely related to the traditional culture adopted and understood by the Mamasa community in the past, consisting of: 1) Marreto (Logging in the forest), 2) Kesaro ( Carrying wood from the forest), 3) Ma'pake'dek banua (Establishing a house), 4) Mambubung, (Ritual of completion of work to build a house) and 5) Melambe (Thanksgiving party). The five stages of this development process is a physical culture

that will eventually materialize in the form of objects in the traditional houses Mamasa.

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