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Symbols of Social Strata Border in Traditional House Architecture

(Case Study: Saoradja Lapinceng and Banua)

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Abstract—This research is about special characteristics of two traditional houses in Sulawesi, Indonesia, namely Saoradja Lapinceng and Banua Layuk. The Saoraja Lapinceng is a noble house of Bugis tribe in South Sulawesi and Banua layuk is a noble house of Mamasa tribe in West Sulawesi. The elements of traditional houses have specific meanings, known by members of certain group and honoured as a code in community. These are including seating positions within the house, based on social strata. Nowadays, the custom loses its importance as chairs become more common for sitting activity. Qualitative research was applied to approach this topic supported by interviews and photographs.

Keyword—Strata social, traditional house

I. INTRODUCTION

There are two factors contribute to the decline of newly constructed traditional houses and make them difficult to survive in long term. People are attracted by new things and also new designs. Furthermore, todays building industries offer more opportunities of cheaper building and more cost concern on wood houses construction, which also helps to minimize the construction time of a new house. With this development goes along, architectural forms also change or lost as well as the ornaments which are actually not only decoration but imply special meaning and transport content certain customs and faith. Certain the higher of the owner was more ornaments are to be found.

Today's traditional houses in South and West Sulawesi and some other areas in Indonesia had changed their characteristics from the original form caused by developing architecture designs and materials, making the symbolic ornaments and elements of traditional house lost their meaning.

This study will explore the use of symbol of traditional house as border between nobles and commoners, sampling traditional house from Bugis and Mamasa tribes. Both traditional house have different tradition, culture, customs and religion, but symbol of noble border for inside rooms were applied in both houses. Bugis house has similarity to the traditional architecture of Malay, occupying coastal or flat lands. While Mamasa is part of Toraja tribe, which the house

forms has some similarities to Batak and Nias traditional house.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This study intends to review the architecture traditional house Bugis and mamasa (symbol as bordering) related to social and culture of these tribes. Two houses were chosen as object study: a Bugis house with more than 200 years old of the highest noble in Lapinceng, namely Saouraja lapinceng and a house of Mamasa tribe named Banua layuk. It is also a 200 years old house owned by a Custom Leader.

This study is qualitative research with survey and field study method. The data of Bugis house has taken from 2013 until 2016 with field and literature study. While for Mamasa tribe house, survey was conducted on November 2015. The literature study focuses of plan house of both traditional houses. While the survey and field method observes on the bordering symbols of noble and commoner in both traditional Bugis and Mamasa houses. The observation was accompanied by photographic of the elements, re-sketches of Bugis and Mamasa house and interview.

The aim of this study is to explain element of home interior as a border symbol between noble and commoner, on which house visitor may know where to sit inside the house. The symbol in rooms has rarely found todays, due to communities' ignorance and current generation has limited understanding on the values.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Traditional Architecture of Bugis and Mamasa House

Traditional architecture formed by tradition, culture, custom, religion and environment [1]. The traditional house usually has correlation to a ritual performed by community during the process of house construction. Watterson explained that the traditional house in Indonesia has similarity which the community do in a ritual [2]. The ritual means to protect construction workers and house owner from evil. Another report [3] mentioned the Bugis house is divided into three lontang and the first lontang is sitting space for visitors. Other

study said that horizontally, Bugis house is divided in three parts : terrace, main house and kitchen house [4]. The main house is the house core, where a Bugis house applies its parts, such as size, uneven number, and ornaments placement as symbols with meaning. Abida explained uneven number explained as a symbol of social rank in the community [5]. Viewing of house like a human being states that house consists of head, body and feet [6], while another theory explains that the Mamasa tribe has analogies that house is similar to a boat, represented in its roof as boat on the sea. Banua layuk is a house occupied by Custom leader in Mamasa, and there are deferent types house according to by rank social level [7].

B. Sign of Borderline in Saoradja Lapinceng

The traditional house of Bugis and Mamasa have many elements and ornaments as the symbol to distinguish the noble and commoner houses. The symbols are put on house exterior or interior, the meanings are conveyed and to be known by surrounding community. A sample of this symbol is surfacing beam of interior house, it is a general symbol or virtual line where visitor sit in rows according to their level of social strata.

Elements of home interior in traditional house, are commonly become symbol with meanings to advise visitor on getting their sitting space. The sign of symbol usually placed on floor, wall or ceiling. The signs act as borderline between noble and commoner on getting their space in the room. An element between watang pola (main house) and tamping is functioned as the symbol of main house and tamping while also as signage of borderline between the noble and commoners. In the past, commoners and slaves got to sit on the tamping, where main house is the space for a noble or others who are not commoner or slaves.

The Saoraja Lapinceng (Figure 1) is one of a nobleman house built about 200 years ago, consist of guest room with beam surface on the floor. There are two types of beam as space borders; the long small beams, placed in vertical and horizontal to the floor surface between poles, and the other type is rectangular beam with 10-15 and 20-25 cm high.



Figure 1. Three separate sections of a building

There are also four beams with 10-15 cm and one beam with 20-25 cm high. The highest beam in the room is the symbol of area for the highest noble person, or in Bugis

nobility titled as Datu. The beam with 10-15 cm high is signage of space for noble persons without Datu title.

The Saoraja Lapinceng is divided into three zones; private, semi-private and public. Private space is for king/queen and the highest noble (Datu). Semi private is space for other nobles (except Datu) and public is space for commoner and slaves. All spaces are distinguished by borderline of a long small beam on the floor surface, with approx. 2 cm high. (Figure 2).

The function of beams in Saoraja Lapinceng is to manage sit positions for visitor according to their social rank in the community, so that each person should know where to sit in the house without any enunciation. These signages of Bugis house are rarely found today as they are not applied to new constructed houses anymore. This is a sample of some Bugis house elements that functioned as signage, which have been left by community and gradually forgotten today.



Figure 2. The surface of beam determine different high.

Some of the lost elements in Bugis house interior are the surface beam on floor, ceiling beam that placed between main house and tamping's ceiling, and the difference leveling of floors in main house and tamping. This lost phenomenon is due to the community's attitude to build simpler houses with flat floors and flexible for furnishes management in house rooms.

The noble houses today are tend to follow the type of commoner houses with no elements of house interior with borderline sign for visitors. Even in a new type of Bugis house, it lost one of house's modules which is called as tamping.

C. Sign of Borderlines on Banua Layuk

As explained previously, Banua layuk is a house occupied by Custom Leader / Custom Holder in the village. Mamasa houses consist of some types of houses occupied by persons according to their social levels, so that the person will be easily known in social rank by their house.

Difference social ranks in community can be seen through signs in houses such as; craft, color, buffalo horn and so fort. They are signs placed as house exterior or marks on interior house, usually as marginal symbol of nobles and commoners. The signs are put on the wall of a house as a symbol, hanged on a rectangular beam about 20-25 cm from wall in form of buffalo's head. Herewith, visitors or guest may know at which area they may sit inside the room.

Interior signage as borderline of social rank is easily found inside Mamasa house of some villages in Mamasa regency. The majority of community is still applying the midpoint of interior house. It is different compare to Bugis houses that currently difficult to find any interior signage as social rank borderline in the house.



Figure 3. Beam as symbol of space border between nobles and commoner

Mamasa room (guest room) consists of two zones, namely public and private. The private and public rooms are separated by border marks on house wall. The mark also functioned as border line between the noble and the commoner spaces. A room of Mamasa house is smaller compare to room of Bugis house. They are also different on the spaces between the noble and commoners. In Saoraja Lapinceng, room is divided into three spaces, as Bugis tribe itself has different nobility levels, while Mamasa tribe hasn't.

IV. CONCLUSION

Traditional architecture is a heritage of Indonesia and the world in general. Many types of traditional houses in Indonesia had been lost their identity caused by community ignorance, left the identity being forgotten and not known by current generations. Moreover, today's traditional houses are gradually lost their important elements, affected by the development of modern materials and architecture. Some communities prefer to choose modern materials and design for their house, leaving the important elements of house which have meanings or as symbol. Those elements are being replaced by modern materials and forms which are only represent functions. Herewith, government and communities can work together to identify the model and elements of traditional houses those had been lost or forgotten by vigorous documentation or sketches. The works should be supported by government policy in form of open air museums so that future generations will not lose the history of their ancestor. In addition to that, architect should actively participate to contribute ideas on designs those maintain the values of local elements.

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