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The Wood Carvings of Two Traditional Timber Mosques in Kelantan and Terengganu

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Abstract. Wood carving has a long history in Malaysia. It is greatly influenced by the rich landscape of tropical forest in the living environment of the locals. The motifs of the carving are primarily derived from the images of flora and fauna. It mimics the intricate nature of leaves and flowers of the plants. The craftsmen initially use the bas-relief design consisting also of animal imageries on the boat's sides or sometimes on the house components and even the dagger handle. However, with Islam's arrival in the early 15th century, due to its teachings, contributed to the ban of animal images on art form. While most of the carvings are done on wood, there is no ample evidence of records available due to time and tides of the decaying process of the artwork. Likewise, there is no extensive research and documentation produced by academics to record the traditional wood carving of the Malays. Although few collections had documented the contemporary Malay houses produced by local scholars, sadly, there was no recount on the importance of housing elements and the technique of construction neither on wood carving. Hence, this paper attempts to examine the influence and pattern of wood carving on traditional mosques in Kelantan and Terengganu. The research conducted case studies, to seek the signs of the features and elements of wood carving on the traditional mosque in Kelantan and Terengganu, disclosing the influence of patterns and motifs on the selected images of its architecture. A measured drawing technique commonly used in conservation works guided the research operation which comprised of hand-drawn sketches to capture the details, measurement of building components, as well as transferring the images using tracing paper, while the other methods in gathering the information extended to direct interviews and photography. Then, the data collected were analyzed to determine the differences of each carving patterns and motifs in the two mosques in Kelantan and Terengganu. The result of the research established the future records on the variety of motifs and patterns of the Malay wood carving. Subsequently, it further elaborates the extensive techniques of wood carvings system



and records the patterns found at Kelantan and Terengganu's mosques for future inventory and recorded history.

Keywords. *traditional timber mosques, wood carving motifs, Terengganu and Kelantan*

1. Introduction to Traditional Mosque

The arrival of Islam in Malaysia has dramatically changed the way of thinking and the way of life of the locals [1]. Naturally, the people respect the environment and responses to cultural practices which are exemplified in the built form. Likewise, the architecture of dwellings is also adapted to the guidance of Islam. A Malay-Islamic architecture such as mosques, suraus, traditional Malay royal palaces and residences including tombs, or better known as *pusara*; were part of the historical remnants of the Malay built form that is often used as a reference for the architecture of the Malays [2]. Furthermore, the mosque is the center of the community. Thus the agglomeration of houses around the mosque symbolizes the unity in Islamic teaching evidently through architecture as well. As a result of its historical development, the mosque architecture has undergone various changes and transformation paralleled to the events of Islamic practice, as reflected in different forms and patterns of Islamic religious buildings in the region.

The traditional mosque architecture in the Archipelago and the mosque architecture built during the early Islamic civilization shows distinct form and construction. The Mosque in the Malay Archipelago is much simpler and greatly influenced by the availability of the building materials and the technique of construction exclusively in timber. Consequently, timber as a material that is hardly durable results in the traditional mosques in the Archipelago as almost forgotten by historians [3] and yet the architecture of these mosques is one of the essential architectural relics of Islamic civilization. Additionally, the power struggle and civil war also destroyed the buildings amidst the scarcity of citizen's involvement in the further creation of arts and crafts. Thus, this condition led to the architecture of the traditional building only being built for survival and immediate usage with weak materials [4]. On the other aspect, the deterioration in timber building construction technology is due to the Hindu and Buddhist civilization, which introduced the custom of stone and masonry as building materials that was then widely used since it was more durable.

2. Research Objective

There exists a dialectic discussion on the conservation of Malay Architecture, primarily focusing on the Malay house. The interests itself has been engaging scholars since the early 1980s, but with a little continuation on the subject of the Malay Mosque's ornamentation and relics. Therefore, this paper aims to investigate these elements in the traditional timber mosques both in Kelantan and Terengganu. Both of these regions are the centres of wood carving as well as related arts and craftworks that is fundamental to the Malay world. Finally, a comparative research on the motif and its influence in the mosque buildings was evaluated visually.

3. Research Methodology

The documentation of the written aspects related to carvings and artworks were reviewed from books and various journals. The field-work was carried out in July 2018 until March 2019 at the site in Kelantan and Terengganu. Several visits were done to have a detailed inspection of the components of the buildings. The visual interpretation of the carving's motifs and patterns are gathered by using carbon paper that was traced and drawn on the site. Meanwhile, the stages of inquiry are divided into three parts. The first part is on the floor plan, and the surrounding area, including the tombs and ablution area - annexed to the main building. The second level of the examination was on the envelope of the building that includes the fenestration elements and vent light of the wall sections and, lastly, the roof structure, and the fascia boards. Here, the technique of measured drawing was highly applied. Sketching method and tracing on-

site and photography were used and labelled according to the components of the stages, as mentioned earlier. Meanwhile, two traditional mosques were selected in Kelantan and Terengganu due to its original state and high-quality carvings as highlighted by Farish Noor and Eddin Khoo [5]. Finally, after the fieldwork, the existing woodcarvers of the mosques were interviewed.

4. The Malay Mosque

The mosque in the Malay World has its own distinctiveness compared to other Islamic architecture especially to the Middle-Eastern styles [6]. In general, the building of a mosque varies according to the shape and form of the building plan. The most common shapes are either square or rectangular, this is to accommodate the maximum number of *jemaah* in the prayer line. Thus, the roof structure which is the most prominent structure to give shapes and coverage of the space below also create a dominant character of its own in the built form. The hip roof for example, only allow to cover the elongated floor plan while the tiered roof differentiates the massive mass of the building as well as allowing lights and ventilation to the occupants inside. The style of architecture of these mosques are influenced by the architecture of Javanese, while some mosques also have elements of influence from the Middle-Eastern, Indian, Persian, and even European [7].

Indonesia, as a neighbour of Malaysia is a vast country comprises of thousand of islands and, therefore, it gives birth to different design of mosques according to their context. The typology of the building commonly corresponds to the context of the region. According to Wiyoso [4] the mosques design in the Archipelago is supported by the geographical situation of the Malay World and the transformation of culture. Evidently, the mosques in Indonesia are mostly built of tiered roof system befitting the application of timber as the main building materials. It is common to find that every district exhibit a different architectural language in design together with the Colonial influences and the context of the place where they live.

5. History Of Wood Carving

Since the beginning of the century, artisans who practice wood craftsmanship, in particular carvings, have enriched its historical development. Nonetheless, it is difficult to conclude who started the craft and where it originated from since there are no apparent records and documentation of its origin [8]. However, in the Malay Annals (*Sejarah Melayu*), Tun Seri Lanang described the beauty of Sultan Mansor Shah's palace (1459-1477). He recorded the beauty of its magnificent architecture that is decorated with a variety of attractive wood carvings on the walls, thresholds, doors, windows, staircases, and other components of the building. The palace was later known as the '*Istana Hawa Nafsu*' (Palace of Passion), and the '*Sejarah Melayu*' described that the palace was the most beautiful building of its time. '*Sejarah Melayu*' remains an early record of Malay wood carvings on traditional architecture. From there, it is vibrant with the recollection that the traditional Malay community was cautious about the intricate value of art and wood carvings in architecture [9]. Another recorded story in '*Hikayat Misa Melayu*' described the wood carvings at Istana Sultan Iskandar Zulkarnain (1756-1780). The palace was located on Pulau Indera Sakti, in Kuala Sungai Kinta, Perak. Unfortunately, the palace has disappeared and can not be traced due to development and modern progress. Conversely, the art of wood carving in Peninsula Malaya was heavily influenced by Hindu elements intricately devoted to the images of diversified Hindu deities.

Since the beginning of the 1st Century, it was contested that the Hindus influenced the distinctive socio-cultural formation of the Malay community. The elements of Hindu culture that had a profound influence on the socio-cultural aspects of the Malay society embraced literature, traditional medicine, and beliefs. It is alleged that handicrafts, especially wood carvings in the Malay world, have some traces of Hindu culture [10]. Additionally, the factors influencing Malay wood carvings were through the social structure of the feudal systems. Under this system, the community was divided into two groups. The first

group was the aristocracy of the nobility and the palace, while the second group consists of the commoners living in coastal areas, hinterlands, and villages. The aristocrats' residence was decorated with high-quality carvings created by palace carpenters and carvers. The design and decorative elements symbolized the representation of administration and formal Royal organization [5].

The late Nik Rashidin Nik Hussein opined that the history of wood carving is only appreciated by the person who dedicated their works by doing the carving on the wood himself through the intricate finishing product. He further elaborated that, during such moments, the artisan will immerse himself in transmitting history through his experience and skills [5]. The authors added that the carving activities are very significant in three states, namely - Kelantan, Terengganu, and Patani. However, there were woodcarvers in the states of Pahang, Kedah, Perak, and Malacca too. Most of the time, though, the carvings are found at the palace, mainly to decorate the interior space of the hall (*balai rong*). The aesthetic of the designs are associated with the formal organization of the palace and indirectly has accorded recognition to the art of traditional Malay wood carving [9]. In the beginning, wood carving was created for a craft activity and as a medium for entertainment by ordinary people. It can be found in the handle of the Malay dagger – i.e., *keris* or walking sticks and boats. This situation changed when wood carving became one of the essential elements of palace decorations. Talented and highly-skilled craftsmen in the arts were usually designated as '*Seniman Di Raja*' (Royal Artists). As a result, traditional wood carving, which was conceptually based on symbols and culture of the Malay community, soon found a special place in the high society [11]. The Golden Age of traditional Malay wood carving began when the Sultan took over the art of wood carving as the patronage of the discipline. It is said that the art of wood carving and other traditional crafts such as traditional music, traditional textile, *keris*, traditional food and, etcetera flourished after it was under the authority of the Sultan. The age of brilliance of the art of Malay wood carving initiated when the national recognition lifted the status of the artisans as the palace artists [12]. The art of carving in the palace has its aesthetic value and its purpose and philosophy. In an esthetic sense, the art of carving customarily emphasized the artistic significance and symbols of the status of the palace, while at the same time respecting its purpose, and emphasis on the apparent and implied beauty of the wood carvings made. Furthermore, the motifs and patterns were specially designed for the palace. Thus, specifically, it has its significance, symbolism, and philosophy, which ultimately differentiates the ruling class from the commoners.

5.1 Wood Carving Philosophy

Generally, the beauty of the carvings found on the wall is aiming at giving treatment to the wood panels. Wood carving on the fascia board (*papan pemeleh*) added a series of embellishment to the eaves (Figure 3). The carving used on the side of the window enhanced the function of fenestration on the window's panel. Meanwhile, the perforated hole (*tebuk tembus*) in wood carving at the interior of the building can give a sense of beauty and add value to the art of the building. Although the figurine is laid on the panel, the concept and philosophy of carvings are still the same as the medium for beauty (Figure 1 & 2). It emphasizes more on the flora rather than the fauna.

Further, wood carving is an expression of love for beauty [8]. The beauty is also born from the nature of honesty to the art. Consequently, the art is regarded as the quality of patience and diligence, which is the philosophy of art and craftworks practised by most Malay craftsmen and carvers. Such intricacy of artistry is principally sourced from the environment and is often the inspiration for the carvers. The idea complements the ideal human life, to ensure that humans can live perfectly on earth and interact with nature while glorifying the Creator.

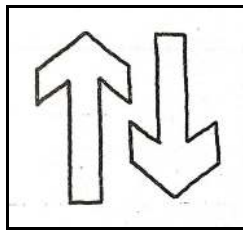


Figure 1. The concept of human relationship with Creator (Drawings by Hanafi, 2007)

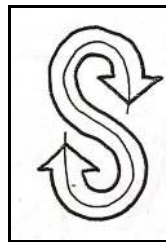


Figure 2. The combination of human and Creator (Drawings by Hanafi, 2007)

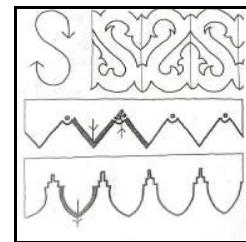


Figure 3. The concept of life (Drawings by Hanafi, 2007)

The abundance of plants in the surrounding is an essential element as a foundation of inspiration to the woodcarvers. Scholars have noted that the Malays have a close relationship with nature. Kling [13] profounded that the environment surrounding of the Malays comprises of swamps, hills, rivers, sea, and mangroves that enriched the creative practice of their daily lives (Table 1). This abundance of natural resources bound the close relationship of the Malays with the Creator. Islam encourages its people to create various works of art. However, the work must not contradict the tenets of Islamic teachings, the Quran and Hadith and does not prohibit its followers from appreciating music or visual arts. Notably, the beauty presented in music and visual arts must be of common interest to the people’s acceptance within the scriptural teachings of Islam. Thus, Islam prohibits decorative elements that resemble animals and human figures. However, this prohibition does not impede the freedom to explore the work of art in Islam. There are also abstract motifs found in the art of pottery, metal, and the likes, which have proven to have high-quality skills and artistry.

Table 1. Evolution of Malay carvings motif. Source [10]

No	Influence of Hindu Cultural	Influence of Islam	Symbol and Meaning
1	Kala	Foundation of carved flower	Source of the carved flower
2	Makara	Sulur bayu	Tendrils
3	Mountain/ Cosmic Mountain	Head (Gunungan)	Anything triangle at the top
4	Bodhi Tree	Beringin Tree	Tree which is associated with Buddhism
5	Stupa	Stupa	The top of triangular shape
6	Padma/ Teratai	Tanjung, a fragrant flower	Beauty
7	Naga	Not used in the motif	Not applied
8	Geruda/ Jentayu	Petala Indera/ Gagak Sura	Mythical bird/ mitos

6. Case Study 1 : Kampung Laut Old Mosque, Nilam Puri, Kota Bharu, Kelantan (1730)



Figure 4. Kampung Laut Old Mosque, Nilam Puri, Kota Bharu, Kelantan. (Image by : Wahid & Abdullah, 2019)

6.1 Background of Case Study 1

The Kampung Laut Old Mosque (KLOM) has a fascinating contested history regarding its origin. However, its historical value is priceless for architectural lovers, researchers, and students alike (Figure 4). The building was relocated to Nilam Puri, Kelantan, after the great flood in 1966. Its relocation was due to the efforts and initiatives of the Malaysian Historical Society. According to Mizan and Anuar [14], this mosque is three hundred to five hundred years old and the oldest mosque compared to the Great Mosque of Demak in Java. According to a local historian, Mr Nik Man bin Nik Mat, the existence of the mosque can be traced to his ancestors - Raja Imam, who founded it. He added that about 400 years ago, there was a Muslim Prince from Sri Wijaya - Syed Mahmud, also known as Raja Muda Laksamana. The Prince sailed from Java after a battle and power struggle over the throne. In his voyage, his ship was struck by a storm and stranded on South Siam Beach. Some of his followers remained at the coast while others explored the land and “opened” a small village called Kampung Laut. Syed Mahmud changed his name to Raja Iman and then built a mosque. He added that the mosque initially had an open pavilion. This story contested the findings of Al-Ahmadi [15], who collected oral history on the cases of Kampung Laut Mosque. He concluded that the mosque was 500 years old and was built by a Champa preacher. They came from Java and assigned to spread Islam and simultaneously constructed a mosque in the region. They established two mosques located in East Java Island, one of which is known as Masjid Agung Demak in Java. Meanwhile, the Kampung Laut Mosque was the first mosque established by them before they landed on Java Island. This traced record indicated that the Kampung Laut Mosque is the earliest mosque built before the Great Mosque of Demak and is a significant relic in the Malay Archipelago.

According to the third source though, Encik Abdullah bin Muhammad, who lives in Kampung Langgar Kota Bharu, claimed that the mosque was founded by the Wali Songo (*Nine Wali*) called Sunan Giri and Sunan Bonang. Both of them were Sufi members who came from Java Island and were students of Shaykh Mohammad Saman, a prominent religious figure of the time. It is said that Shaykh Mohamad Saman had instructed them to build the mosque. It was constructed with a four-pillar inclusive shape and supported by twelve exterior columns. The mosque was built to the Main Prayer Hall with a rectangular floor plan (Figure 5). Its roof consists of a three-tiered structure called '*Bumbung Limas bertingkat*' (Figure 6). Between the second and third layers of the roof, there are timber louvres functioned to provide natural ventilation and natural lighting at the Main Prayer Hall. At the topmost of the roof, there is a decorative element known as '*buah buton*' as the pinnacle pointing to the sky. The entire floor of the mosque is elevated about one meter from the ground. The mosque does not have a foyer, and the walls are decorated by luxurious wall panels called '*Janda berhias*' to the full height of the window opening.

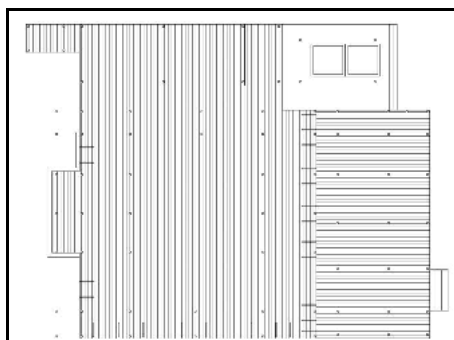


Figure 5. KLOM Floor Plan (Drawing by: Wahid & Abdullah, 2019)

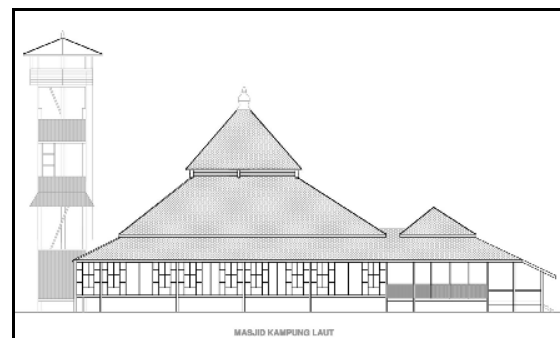


Figure 6. Elevation of KLOM (Drawing by: Wahid & Abdullah, 2019)

6.2 Carving Elements of Case Study 1

KLOM has eight bracket columns located on the front and back (Figure 7). Altogether, there are sixteen types of carvings found on the brackets: however, two of them are incomplete. The carvers may have died or moved to another area before he could finish the work. The motifs are entirely different in comparison to the motifs at the existing KLOM pulpit or that of Pasir Pekan Mosque. The panels are fabricated from *cengal* wood. This motif is known as the '*Daun Dewa*' or the Langkasuka motif. According to Mrs Rosnawati Othman, it is identified as the oldest motif in wood carving artistry. This motif is said to be found in a 7th Century old *Keris*. The Langkasuka motif came from the Langkasuka Civilisation that flourished in the Archipelago in the early century. If observed at its outline, it is a motif that arises from an abstract lotus flower. If the Siamese carvings are famous for their fire motifs, the Old Malay Empire is renowned for its lotus flower motifs, which illustrates the symbol of holiness and the living. The pattern does not have any source of seed, source of water, source of vases, or soil as customary in the philosophy of carving. However, its richness is in the leaves, which are twisted and repetitive to produce patterns and motifs achieving visual balance. While the works featured symmetrical design and method through a 45-degree axial angle, however, through scrutiny, there is an imbalance from the right and left. The truth in wood carving philosophy is practised by the carver to show that the wood carving design is a static visual connection. In the Malay wood carving, the source of the technique is seen through the 'S' movement that is presented (Figure 2). In the Langkasuka motifs, there is no 'S' element, and that is why it was called the early-motifs in Malay woodcarving. Later, the motif is transformed by other carvers into '*daun tua*', '*kerak nasi*' leaves, '*tikam seladang*' leaves, and so on. This transformation was based on their manifestation, knowledge, skills, and philosophy with the natural context, surrounding, and evolved religious beliefs. The Langkasuka motif is, therefore, an older technique, which is uncommon now in our contemporary wood carving form. Nonetheless, the motif is still abundant in the traditional *Keris* making.



Figure 7. Lotus Flower Pattern at the Column (Image by: Wahid & Abdullah, 2019)

7. Case Study 2 : Old Mosque Langgar, Kota Bharu, Kelantan (1874)



Figure 8. The front view of the Old Mosque Langgar, Kota Bharu, Kelantan was built in 1874 (Image by: Wahid & Abdullah, 2019)

7.1 Background of Case Study 2

Old Langgar Mosque (OLM) describes the situation and the environment of the lifestyle of the Kelantan Sultanate and its kin (Figure 8). There is a cemetery in front of the mosque built by the Kelantan Sultan known as ‘*Makam Di Raja Langgar*’ (Royal Tombs). In 1756, Sultan Long Yunus was a renowned personality who managed to unite the smaller kingdoms in Kelantan into a powerful government. He was laid to rest in Kampung Langgar, and later the area was designated as *Makam Di Raja Langgar*. From here, the settlement was established and opened to the public; at the same time, the mosque was built (1870). The OLM mosque has an elongated prayer hall (Figure 9), and the façade of the mosque has some influence from Siamese architecture (Figure 10). In 1886, a civil war broke out in Kelantan during the reign of the Long Senik Mulut Merah, and he was killed and buried in the *Makam Di Raja Langgar* too.

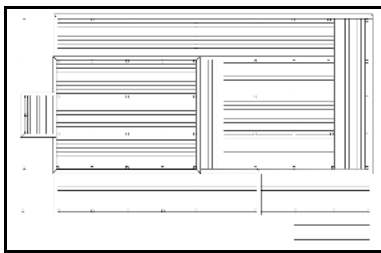


Figure 9. OML Floor Plan, which shows the original layout
(Drawing by: Wahid & Abdullah, 2019)

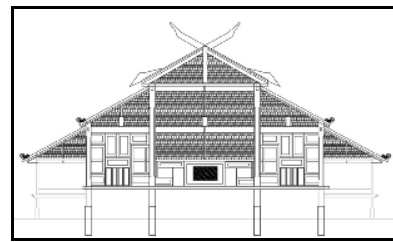


Figure 10. Front Elevation of OML
(Drawing by: Wahid & Abdullah, 2019)

7.2 Carving Elements of Case Study 2

The mosque has only one 2-D carving panel located at the pulpit. The motifs of the subject were from Chinese influence, showing the floral carving along with the panels. The panels were claimed to have been taken from other buildings and placed here because it omitted the peacock motifs and the bird's head (Figure 11). As explained earlier, the symbol of animals is against the tenets of Islam. The peacock's motifs are also found on the mosque's original pulpit, which is under the care of Academy Nik Rashidin in Kandis, Bachok, Kelantan, and is also its new location. The effort to trace its original pulpit was conducted by researchers from interviewing the Director of Academy Nik Rashidin and Mrs Rosnawati Othman.

According to Mrs Rosnawati, this pulpit was almost forgotten because it has been traded at antique stores and eventually salvaged by Nik Rashidin due to its historical significance. It is believed that this pulpit came from the mosque that was built in 1874. The pulpit seat is made from a carved wooden panel with an ornament of ‘*ketam guri*’ and ‘*kerak nasi*’ leaves. The panels are placed around the decorations with ‘*tebuk tembus bersilat*’. There are four pillars of carved lotus motif flower ascending its stairs. At the lower side of the carved panel of the column, elaborative writings in *khat* bestowing “*May Allah bless the family of Sultan Mahmud Shah Kelantan*” and, “*Ya Allah, show us taufik and hidayah over all our good deeds*”, is written. The ‘*gunungan*’ carving in the flower pattern of ‘*ketam guri*’ and ‘*kerak nasi*’ with the characteristics of ‘*sulur bayu*’ is located at the end of the pulpit.

Another artefact in Nik Rashidin’s collection is the pulpit ceiling panel. It is made of *cengal* (hardwood) and measures 21.8 cm x 21.8 cm x 1.29 cm. It is carved with the Langkasuka motif similar to the Tomb of Che Ku Tuan Nawi, that signifies its heritage value. The whole design is from the pattern of lotus bud or stupa that is kept safely by the Academy Nik Rashidin.



Figure 11. The Figure shows the carving in the mosque panel. The lower panels shows the carvings from Chinese motifs with the hidden peacock outline. This carving has been identified for use in the mosque's original pulpit. (Image by: Wahid & Abdullah, 2019)

8. Case Study 3: The Kampung Tuan Mosque, Kemaman, Terengganu (1830)



Figure 12. The Kampung Tuan Mosque, Kemaman, Terengganu was built in 1830. (Image by: Wahid & Abdullah, 2019)



Figure 13. The Interior view of Kampung Tuan Mosque, Kemaman, Terengganu was built in 1830. (Image by: Wahid & Abdullah, 2019)

8.1 Background of Case Study 3

Kampung Tok Tuan Mosque (KTTM), located in Kemaman, is among the oldest mosques in Malaysia (Figure 12). This mosque was established in the early 19th century. It is located in the village of Tok Tuan, Bandar Chukai, in the district of Kemaman, Terengganu. Chukai, which means 'tax', is regarded as a regional centre in Kemaman. Due to its proximity to the river, it is the main route used as a water transportation system and traditional food sources. The mosque is located at the fishing village and sits facing the Limbong River, which is one of the gateways to the area. It is still used as a place of worship and the dissemination of Islamic knowledge and social affairs of the community.

The mosque was built in 1830, along with the opening of Kampung Tuan (Figure 13). The founder and design of the mosque were Syeikh Abdul Rahman Syed Abdul Samad Al-Palembangi. He is also known as Tuan Mandak, a teacher and educator of the Islamic religion for the local community. He is the son of Sheikh Abdul Samad Al-Palembangi, a renowned religious teacher in Malay World, who was also known as the Islamic warrior against the Siamese Kingdom a long time ago. Nevertheless, the mosque famous in Terengganu due to the spirit and dedication of his great-grandson to Sheikh Abdul Samad Al-Palembangi, also known as Tuan Wok. He is also a religious teacher and has contributed much to the Islamic knowledge for the local community.

This mosque is also an institution for the study of Sufism knowledge known as *Tariqat Syeikh Saman or Sheikh Waliullah*. *Zikir* (hymn) ceremonies are often performed at this mosque that fascinates the attention of the nearby communities. The congregants of the mosque believe that prayers enliven the spirit of the place as well as significantly upholds the spiritual welfare of Tok Guru Wok. The faithful believed that their prayers are received by the Al-Mighty conclusively if they pray at this mosque. Therefore, the mosque extraordinarily becomes the focus of the community from all over the region during that time.

The mosque is used for Friday prayers in Chukai (Figure 14 & 15). However, in 1920, there were a few new mosques built to accommodate the growing population. Consequently, the number of prayers to

this mosque decreased over time due to the ever-increasing number of new mosques. Eventually, the golden age of the KTTM mosque vanished following the demise of Tok Guru Wok. Later, his family members moved to Beserah in Pahang after a dispute with the locals. However, this mosque is still functioning for daily prayers until now. And there are even dedicated followers of Sufism who perform prayers here and conduct religious classes with the locals and ceremonies at the mosque.



Figure 14. KTTM Floor Plan. This rectangular floor plan is designed without a column structure in the middle that supports the load from the roof structure. Looks like a curved-shaped mihrab on the forefront of the imam's use in congregation prayers.

(Drawing by: Wahid & Abdullah, 2019)

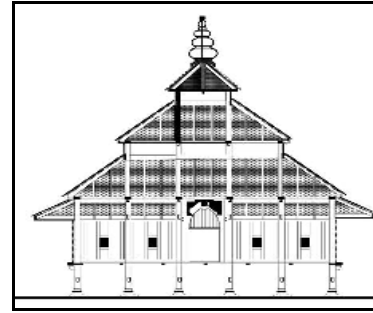


Figure 15. Section of KTTM, Kemaman, Terengganu.

(Drawing by: Wahid & Abdullah, 2019)

8.2 Carving Elements of Case Study 3

The carving motif on the mihrab of this mosque was decorated with lotus petals carved with '*tebuk timbul*' technique. There are not many decorative elements found on the KTTM. However, its pulpit has a different shape of wood carvings and the motifs of '*gunungan*' at the front panels. The walls of this mihrab are written with '*khufi*' calligraphy from the verses of Qur'an but are left incomplete (Figure 16).

According to on-site interviews, '*Khufi*' inscriptions are incomplete in the '*gunungan*' of mihrab panels, was deliberately left unfinished to interest readers to research the whole verse for comprehension further. However, according to Mrs Rosnawati Othman, there is a possibility that the carvers who did the *khat* panels had possibly moved elsewhere or had died before the carving was completed. There is also an urban legend that, if someone can practice and finish the verses of the Qur'anic inscription on the mihrab, a mystical power that can not be overwhelmed by any ordinary person engulfs him. Moreover, in carving, there is also a philosophy and principle saying that carving is deliberately prepared by carvers who are weak and imperfect, testifying the nature of human beings. Such recurrence is also the case in the brackets section of KLOM, Nilam Puri, Kelantan in which only two panels are completed out of the 16 sections of the bracket.

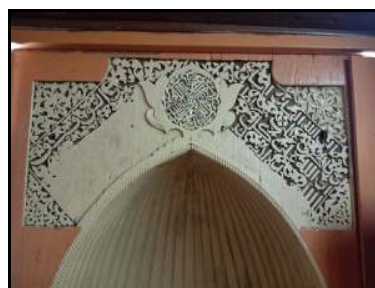


Figure 16. The Figure shows the carving of the khat at the mihrab. This symmetrical carving has a focal point in the center using lotus flower motif. On the right side of the panel is almost a perfect panel while on the left is unfinished works. (Image by: Wahid & Abdullah, 2019)

9. Case Study 4 : The Kampung Bukit Bayas Mosque, Kuala Terengganu (1830)



Figure 17. The Figure shows the KBBM, Kuala Terengganu from the outside.
(Image by: Wahid & Abdullah, 2019)

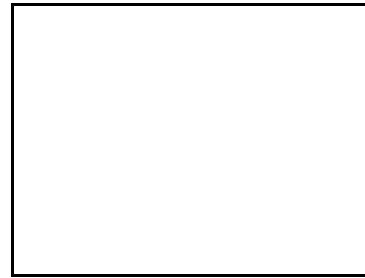


Figure 18. The Figure shows the KBBM, Kuala Terengganu from the outside.
(Image by: Wahid & Abdullah, 2019)

9.1 Background of Case Study 4

Kampung Bukit Bayas Mosque (KBBM) (Figure 17 & 18) was built earlier than Kampung Masjid Mosque with high-quality and refined artworks. According to Ayah Ngah Ustaz Ahmad Awang; Kampung Masjid was handed to Hj. Kadir in 1870. At that time Sheikh Kadir Al-Bukit Bayas was only a child. Sheikh of Bukit Bayas died in 1867 when Sultan Umar's timber palace was handed over to Hj. Kadir Kampung Mosque.

According to historians, Sheikh Haji Wan Abdul Kadir Bukit Bayas, at the age of 30 years old, came to Terengganu from Patani in 1824. Although his background in Patani was not announced, it is believed that he came from a devoutly religious family. Equally related to the story, he moved to Terengganu from the Siamese attack in Patani in 1823. He was accepted as a cleric by the people of Terengganu, the similar role he played while in Patani. His success in Terengganu spread, which led many Patani fighters to migrate to Terengganu in stages. Most of them came by sea and opened new settlements along the coast of Terengganu, namely; Besut, Batu Batu, Rusila, Dungun, and so on. Terengganu became their choice because of its stable political situation protected by the Kelantanese Kingdom, who was also the enemy of the Siamese. Coincidentally, the migration to Terengganu coincided with the era of the Dutch handing over Malaya to the British. The Patani population moved to the interior once they received community recognition. The age of Shaykh Haji Kadir Bukit Bayas was the period of strengthening Islamic knowledge in the Islamic society of Terengganu. During this time, the Patani Islamic fighter, such as Sheikh Haji Abdul Kadir Bukit Bayas, built the Islamic school in 1832 at Bukit Bayas. He was entrusted as a teacher to Sultan Daud (1830 - 1831), Sultan Mansur (1831 - 1837), Sultan Muhammad (1837 -1839) until Sultan Umar, who reigned from the year 1839 to 1877. Among his students was Tok Ku Paloh and Haji Abdul Rahman Limbung. According to another annotation, Sheikh Wan Abdul Kadir Bukit Bayas migrated with his friend, Tok Duyung (Haji Wan Abdullah bin Wan Mohammad Amin), to open an Islamic school in Duyung Kechil in the 1840s.

9.2 Carving Elements of Case Study 4



There are some exciting elements and motifs in this mosque. Different motifs can be identified on every panel with its function. There are also parts of carving that had been removed and installed in other places. The carved motifs on the walls of the mosque consist of flora, *khat*, and geometrical patterns. Most of the interior wall is decorated with sunflowers motif with '*tebuk tembus bersilat*' technique, while some parts are decorated with calligraphy and geometrical designs. The combination of sunflower and calligraphy motifs represent unique decorative elements. After scrutinizing the pattern, the motifs of the sunflower are not repetitive and not even the same between one panel to another (Figure 19). However, the source of the concept in the technique is similar, to 'the seed behind the stem'. The shape of the symmetry is also identical, although the carvings on the left and right are different. All of these carving elements are Malay motifs that originated from the philosophy of the 'S' shaped then developed into

flower signifying a return to the source (Figure 2). These panels are surrounded by frames to accentuate its intricate carving.



Figure 19. The Figure shows an origin of a symmetrical carved panel with sunflower motifs designed using *'tebuk tembus bersilat'* technique. The concept of 'the seed behind the stem' circulates to form the 'kudup', flower and subsequent to the origin. An 'S' shaped is one of the essence of traditional Malay carving technique where solid and void silhouette quite low but still maintains the balance to represent the entire panel of decorative elements. There is a frame bordering decoration that shows its scale and minute detail (Image by: Wahid & Abdullah, 2019)





Table 2. Table of 2D carving panel element at selected case studies Traditional Timber Mosques.
(Source: Wahid & Abdullah, 2019)

No	Item	Mosques			
		Kampung Laut Old Mosque, Nilam Puri Kelantan (1730)	Old Mosque Langgar, Kota Bharu (1874)	Kg. Tok Tuan Mosque, Kemaman, Terengganu (1830)	Kg. Bukit Bayas Mosque, Terengganu (1840)
i	Carving panel on wall (2D carving)				
ii	Carving Style		'Tebuk tembus bersilat' (symmetrical design)		'Tebuk tembus bersilat', and 'tebuk tembus' (symmetrical design)
iii	Carving Motif		'Bunga ketam guri', 'daun kerak nasi', Chinese Motif, with calligraphy		'Bunga ketam guri', 'kekacang', 'sesayap'
Total		0	1	0	2

The table above (Table 2.0) shows that there are only two mosques with 2D carved panels. For the Old Mosque at Langgar, Kota Bharu, there is only one panel using *'tebuk tembus bersilat'* technique and symmetry. This panel is located on the walls of the mosque. Among the motifs used are *'ketam guri'*, *'kerak nasi'*, a resemblance of Chinese motif and calligraphy.

For the mosque at Kampung Bukit Bayas, Terengganu, three panels use *'tebuk tembus bersilat'* technique, *'tebuk tembus,'* and applied symmetrical principles in panel design. Most of the motifs available are *'ketam guri,' 'kekacang,'* and *'sesayap'*. While for the other two mosques, there are no traditional carved panels. Most of the motifs used in the carving panel at this mosque are traditional Malay carvings, where the patterns, motifs, and designs are typical of its style.

Table 3. Schedule of comparison for 2D carvings element at selected Case Studies Traditonal Timber Mosques. (Table by : Wahid & Abdullah, 2019)

No	Item	Mosques and Location				Note
i	Carving panel (2D panel)	Kampug Laut Old Mosque, Nilam Puri Kelantan (1730) = A	Old Mosque Langgar, Kota Bharu (1874) = B	Kg. Tok Tuan Mosque, Kemaman, Terenggau (1830) = C	Kg. Bukit Bayas Mosque, Terenggau (1840) = D	
						
ii	Overall Design					
	<i>Symmetrical</i>	O	O	O	O	A/B/C/D
	<i>Assymetrical</i>	X	X	X	X	-
iii	Overall Motifs:					
	<i>Daun sesayap</i>	X	X	O	O	C/D
	<i>Ketam guri</i>	X	O	X	O	B/D
	<i>Kekacang</i>	X	X	X	O	D
	<i>Matahari</i>	X	X	X	O	D
	<i>Langkasuka</i>	O	X	X	X	A
	<i>Teratai</i>	X	X	O	X	C
	<i>Chinese</i>	X	O	X	X	B
	<i>Kerak nasi</i>	X	O	X	X	B
	<i>Daun Tua</i>	X	X	X	X	-
iv	Overall Technique :					
	Freeform	X	X	X	X	-
	Framing	O	O	O	O	A/B/C/D
	Tebuk tembus	X	X	X	X	-
	Tebuk tembus Bersilat	X	O	X	O	B/D
v	Location :					
	<i>On Wall</i>	X	O	O	O	B/C/D
	<i>Above window</i>	X	X	X	O	D

	<i>Above door</i>	X	O	X	X	B
	<i>Mihrab</i>	X	X	O	O	C/D
	<i>Post</i>	O	X	X	X	A
	<i>Ceiling surface</i>	X	X	X	O	D
	Total	4	8	7	11	

Concerning the above analysis, the entire A, B, C, and D mosques had applied symmetrical principles in the forming of carving panels. Whereas in the carved motifs; the leaves motifs are found in mosque C and D. The mosque B and D use the '*ketam guri*' and mosque C using '*sesayap*' motif. Most elements of these motifs are combined with other motifs. The mosque D panels introduced the sunflower motifs. Meanwhile, mosque A also uses bracket with the Langkasuka motif. Mosque C uses the motifs of the lotus flowers, which are among the earliest motifs in traditional artistic sculpture. At mosque B, there are many applications of Chinese-style panels and '*kerak nasi*'. Most of the panel uses framing forms in all the mosques. Mosques B and D use the '*tebuk tembus bersilat*' while mosque A and C decoratively use a panel of '*tebuk timbul*' technique.

The location of most of these carving panels for mosques B, C, and D are on the walls (Table 3.0). Meanwhile, some carvings at mosque D, which are evidently on the components of the windows. Only one panel of the carvings are on the top of the door that is at mosque B. Besides that, the mihrab section of mosque C is heavily decorated with plant motifs carving. While, at mosque A, there are brackets located at the mosque. As for mosque D, the carved elements on the ceiling is visible.

10. Conclusion

In summary, the study found that the Malay wood carving is divided into several facets where a typical traditional Malay carving can be identified from its character. Through the interview with Mrs Rosnawati Othman, she confirmed that the motifs and elements of the decorative subjects could be distinguished from its composition. The most obvious indication of this statement is the frame or border of each work signifying prominent aspects. Nevertheless, there are carvings with no frames, especially those designed in free-form such '*gunungan*' or continuous piece.

The second finding shows that there are symmetrical elements in the carvings. Furthermore, most carvings are repetitive of the same motifs, which gave a balance in visual impression to the naked eye. It is a justification for the concept of balance in life. The third is that it demonstrates a significant factor in the design of traditional Malay carvings, where there is a different pattern of carvings between one side and the other. Conspicuously, when viewed at a close range, most of the panels in traditional carving have a slight difference between the left and right. The imperfect symmetry is deliberately to highlight the human weakness in poetic comparison towards the nature of design by the Creator. Furthermore, it justifies a symbolic representation of the natural element, which is not equal to each other. The philosophy of this carving makes it visually balanced.

The fourth is identified through the source of the conception of the wood carving motif. Most of the traditional Malay carvings analogy resembles the seed in the pot, then the soil, later the water source, and in the end the flower or the stem. The interpretation of lines started from simple circular line-form of the letter 'S' and connected with leaves from the stem (*kudup*), added with flowers that show the complete carving results. The artistry illustrates the philosophy of Malay art, which is gentle, minute-detailed, and intricate-implication to the environment, society, and obedience to the Creator. Accordingly, the philosophy of carving and nature in the craftsman's identity makes the carvings seemingly fluid. As Noor and Khoo [5] profounded that "*Asal itu punca, punca itu rahsia, tajam tidak menikam lawan, tetapi berlegar mesra*" (literally translated – the beginning has a source, the source is secret, sharp as fighting an opponent but it matches harmoniously).

All of these elements are the arch characteristic of traditional Malay carvings. The case study established that the motifs of woodcarving in all of the four mosques are somewhat similar in their

motifs' appearance. It may be due to environmental factors, skills, knowledge, craftsmanship, and culture. In Kelantan, for example, most of the motifs found are the motif of the '*ketam guri*', the '*ketumbit*' and a mixture of other motifs. This repetition is because, most carvers in Kelantan decline to mark carvings in surrealist concept and negated to imitate the nature directly, replicating the same design. However, the final design is in abstract form, which unrivalled the Creator's creation. Most carvings are simple but still retain their characteristics as a traditional style. Also, the application of solid and void is to balance the carving panel. Therefore, most carvings in Kelantan are simple in terms of design, motifs, and intricateness.

In contrast to the carvings in Terengganu, most of the motifs used are from the '*ketam guri*', '*kekacang*,' and '*sesayap*'. According to Mrs Rosnawati Othman, sculptors in Terengganu considered carving as art compared to carving in Kelantan which received the influence of wood carving from Patani. Therefore, the complexity of Terengganu's carving style makes it rather prominent and refined in terms of quality and results. Although most of the designs of carving patterns are taken from carving designs in Kelantan and Patani, yet, they further refined the work. Consequently, Terengganu carvers focused their skills on the fineness and quality of the carving. The discovery of carvings at the Kampung Baruas Mosque in Kuala Terengganu confirms this argument. Most notably since the carvings here are elaborate, and the intricateness of solid and void elements is evident. Nevertheless, it is also likely that there is a personal touch of Patani sculptors that had immigrated to Terengganu, had also contributed their expertise in the carving artistry.

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