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Pattani's Architectural Epitome of The Yaring Palace: Journeying The Historical Phases of A Regional Design Language

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Abstract. This paper uses the case of the exquisite design Yaring palace as a framework and springboard to discuss the particularities of the design language of the Pattani palace and architecture. The region of Pattani represents a unique crossing between a Thai identity and a Malay identity in terms of architecture. Because of its geographic position, both Asian identities merge into a language of regionalism syncretism that creates a rich blend of architectural expression representative of a South East Asian language. The paper discusses its facade expression, ornamentation, layout and interior design elements.

Keywords: Patani architecture, Classical design, hybrid architecture, syncretism

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Introduction

Historically, Pattani is perhaps best known for the rare instances of matriarchal kingdoms in traditional South East Asia. Seventh-century documents mentioned the monarchy of several queens and, particularly the rebellious Patanian Queen (Raja Ungu) which is recorded in several local Hikayat and confirmed by European sources.

Of particular interest and significance of Pattani is how its straddles the early transpeninsular routes that cut through the peninsular Malaya and South Thailand. Regions of present Malaysia and Sumatera had always been the routes of ocean-bearing trade and religious movements and settlements and rivers had connected the trade routes between China and India for centuries. The sea trade between these two continents were particularly plied by traders from Arab, Persian, Tamil, India and Chinese origins; basically those who have criss crossed the transpeninsular route for centuries. Pristine coastal areas became the natural landfall of traders and teachers of religion who gradually settled in this region. Both Samudra Pasai and Kerisek in Pattani are examples of communities named after local names linked with the sandiness and pristine nature of the sea boundary. Both traditional local Malay histories open with the movement of the capital from an inland city called Kota Mahligai, which is located at Prawae, to the coastal village of Patani. The new capital is later located at Kerisek, the Malay name of Ban Kru Se, a village 6 km east of the present city of Pattani.

In approximately the late fifteenth century, a centre of power and influence had brewed and developed on the coast where the town of Patani is located (Figure 1 and 2), which seeded and flourished under the rule of a newly converted Islamic dynasty, and which later grew into an urban centre of some importance.

Methods

Research refers to a search for knowledge, which can also be defined as a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on specific topic. Research methodology is used to systemically solve the research problem, where researcher need to know and decide that certain techniques and procedures will be applicable to their research problem or not applicable. The research methodology outlined in this research is measurement, production of measured drawings, primary data collection such as interview and data analysis through secondary sources such as articles and brochures.

Various measuring techniques have been used to get the exact measurement of Istana Wang Yaring. The measurements are taken by using measuring tape and digital laser measuring device. Measuring tape is used to measure area of the floor, walls, columns and areas within accessible height, while digital laser measuring device is used to take the measurements of ceiling, roof areas and areas that are cannot be measured with the use of measuring tape. Recorded measurements are then inserted into AutoCAD application to ensure the accuracy and uniformity of each measurements taken before. The building form is envisioned and sketched roughly based on the measurements taken and after series of thorough discussion. These sketches will be scrutinized later and amended depending on the outcome, which later will be streamlined for its final submission that is in form of measured drawings.

Primary data collection method such as interview with locals are conducted near

the palace vicinity. For secondary data analysis, the information are looked up from the authentic internet sources such as online journal and official travel websites. Finally, by using existing drawings, sketches on site visit, photography and literature review, the study then linked the all above information gathered to be configurated into a writing.

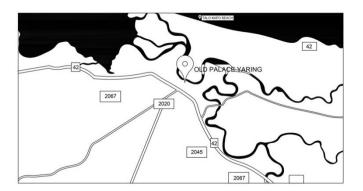
Result and Discussion

History of Pattani

Pattani (Patani) or the Sultanate of Pattani was, essentially a Malay Muslim Sultanate in the historical Pattani Region. It covered approximately the area of the modern Southern Thai provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and much of the northern part of modern Malaysia. The 6–7th-century Hindu state of Pan Pan may or may not have been related. As an urban center, it grew by around the mid-13th century CE, it was a distinctive kingdom with its own government and its golden age was during the reign of its four successive queens from 1584 onwards, known as Ratu Hijau (The Green Queen), Ratu Biru (The Blue Queen), Ratu Ungu (The Purple Queen) and Ratu Kuning (The Yellow Queen), during which the kingdom's economic and military strength was greatly increased. It had links with the eastern Malay kingdom of Pahang and the southern Malay Sultanate of Johor.

History of Palace

Wang Yaring Palace is a Malay classical palace located in Ya Mu, Tambon Yamu, Amphoe Yaring, Chang Wat Pattani which was built in 1895. The first King Jering appointed by the Siamese government was a Chinese resident of Siam named Nai Pai. But to adjust and facilitate the administration, King Jering was later converted to the Malay royal Patani, King Nik Yusof with the title "Tokki". Jering @ Yaring is one of the 12 districts in Pattani region (from 77 areas throughout Thailand). In terms of it, it was once one of the seven Pattani Malay states that had been broken down and split (divide and rule) by the Siamese government from 1816. From these 7 Malay states gradually changed into 3 Southern Thailand border areas namely Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat starting from 1933 until now (Benchi and al 180-185).



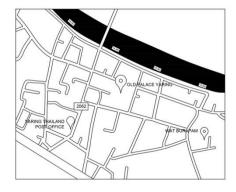


Fig. 1 and 2 Location of Istana Wang Yaring at Yaring District, Pattani, South Thailand.

Overall the palace can be said to be divided into three zones with a courtyard. There is a very spacious site in front of a palace filled with plants. There is a courtyard in the centre of the building.

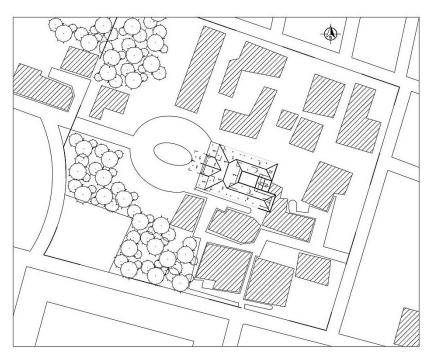


Fig. 3 The orientation of Istana Wang Yaring and its surrounding.

The left side of the palace includes rooms, toilets and storage areas. At the back of the palace, there is a dining room for relatives and several fish ponds. There is an ornate decorative panel at the top of the door called locally known as the 'pola pemida' which contain local ornamentation in local vegetal style in simple and framed design. The extent of Carving used usually has an aesthetic value with an implicit intent. While the roof is made of five-square-shaped clay-shaped roof artificial brick, it is also decorated with *singgora* tiles, an ore-made type white board piece.

Architectural Form

The Pattani palace is argued as a "classicalised' vernacular because it is a heightened version of the local vernacular and has a sense of symmetry and order. It represents an outcome of timber and hybrid construction with the decorative language of woodcarvers who still constitute the legacy of artisans and builders of the Sultans.

Figure 4 reveals how it represent a variant of a generic axial form found in other Malay region as per the typological division of Malay facades in palaces identified by Tengku Anis et al. It is capped by a layered gabled roof with a distinctively Thai decorative finial. Its frontage is however unique, as there are two curved staircases, curving around the central projection.

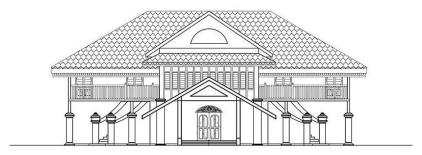


Fig. 4 Front elevation of Istana Wang Yaring, Pattani



Fig. 5 Curved staircases of Istana Wang Yaring, Pattani

Its layout reflects the normal tri cameral layout of Istana having a public, semipublic and private zone or quarters. Another distinctive and as touching feature is its double staircase which can be found connected two parts of the Istana and which are decoratively profusely by local modernised motifs.

Another distinctive Pattani character is the decorated transoms around doors which aid ventilation and the elongated casement window, which is a characteristic of Thai architecture, not only intends to enhanced ventilation but to ensure the protection of wind-driven rain.



Fig. 6 Elongated casement window of Istana Wang Yaring, Pattani

Architectural Influences

Due to centuries-old settlements evolved from coastal, mangrove ecological landscapes, it is natural that the quintessential tropical vernacular is seen from the elevated, bioclimatic and columnar forms of timber architectural viewpoint. Masonry traditions were only linked with religious and monumental architecture is linked to religious complexes that dominated its earliest civilizational centres. Due to the abundance of timber in this tropical region, coupled with prevailing hot and humid climate, the peak of architectural language and style is epitomized in the archetypical timber building, with steeply pitch roof, elevated structures and large tall openings.

The natural tendency of architectural evolvement in these traditional Asian societies is ultimately towards masonry forms, and language, which is seen as the apotheosis of their skills. This alternative aesthetic tradition, evolving from masonry forms and construction methods, has a particularity in Muslim in that it depicted an essentially simple spiritual character of place which eventually became the Islamic region of South East Asia. The region is also the birthplace of Malay civilisation and history, functional public buildings. This celebrates the juxtaposition and contrasts of earthbound masonry and ephemerally of lightweight construction. This inevitably epitomises hybridity that mainly dominated its public realm, public buildings and aristocratic residences.

This also focuses on the architectural language of Muslim South East Asia, focusing on northern Malaysia, and weaves the historical narrative within its text. It begins with what is known as the oldest civilizational in South East Asia. It begins with Lembah Bujang as the starting point, and discusses the austere forms of temples and sanctuary, and evolves into the mosque structures that symbolise the coming of Islam; then it's briefly travelling to Melaka to delve into the origins and uniqueness of its hybrid traditions in architecture. Before returning to Kedah and it's hybridity as a result of Siamese relations. The local architecture of Penang the Jawi Peranakan strand is discussed as an evolving splinter of the essentially vernacular language.

Focusing on sites and civilizations along the Straits of Malacca, which have been

the global trade route for centuries and using case studies in Indonesia, in Thailand and in Malaysia, the study presents a collection of case studies in which elements of the grammar from cultures external to the region, have been absorbed and syncretized into the local forms and language including the aristocratic language of the region. These forms have been less discussed in previous researches and writings which have previously focused on the vernacular stylistic language. The region and era represents one of the most multicultural and syncretic regions of East Asia and contains the earliest phase of multicultural absorptions and early recognised on like an old world transmute into a new world and was brought into the final phase of the 'old' world. The cases are then argued as representing a range of stylistic positions in classical regionalism, or part of the syncretic forms which are in fact manifestations of an essential character of a character of Asian modernity, i.e. its ability to mutate, absorb and syncretise into various manifestations that reflect the different dimensions of multiculturalism and cultural coexistence.

As an epitome of South Thailand architectural language, Istana Wang Yaring is an example of cultural syncretism between the Malay, Siamese as well as the Chinese. The building elements and design of Istana Wang Yaring reflects the amalgamation of the architectural style and language of said culture, which is shown in its architectural form through the existence of courtyard, five-ridged roof form and usage of carved floral motifs. The courtyard located at the centre of the building reflects the adaptation from the Chinese architectural style, because the concept of courtyard is absence in the Malay architecture style. The concept of courtyard originated from the Chinese courtyard house, i.e *siheyuan*. Courtyards were constructed back then to increase privacy as well as dividing the house according to its spatial functionality.

Shifting the focuses on Istana Wang Yaring roof forms, it clearly depicts the merging of two architectural styles – both Thai and Malay. The palace has five-ridged roof forms originated from the Southern Thai traditional house style, while at the same time the roof portrays the basic design of gabled roof which can be seen on Malay traditional houses. This is because, both the roof of Istana Wang Yaring and traditional Malay house have extended frame with ornaments on the edge of the roof. Its ornaments, which can be seen as floral-carved wooden motifs located at the kerawang, fascia board as well as lattice are influenced by the Malay architectural style after the coming of Islam. The presence of stone masonry in the construction of Istana Wang Yaring, which can be seen on its pillar and floor slabs are influenced by the increasing usage of the material in the peninsular Tanah Melayu and Southern Thai at that time.

Conclusion

Istana Wang Yaring is an epitome of the richness of South Thailand architectural language. A language that syncretises the influences of Malay architecture and Thai character and features over time. In heritage terms, it is well preserved and well maintained, and it exemplifies how a palace is not only a symbolic structure but a

domestic space at the same time. Tectonically, it epitomises the Classical 'mature' language of Malay architecture, which is a distinctive hybrid language of timber and masonry in which proportions of the timber construction are still kept while certain ground structures and spaces have adopted the masonry construction and design. Its columns recall the hybridity of Classical Malay and almost resemble the moulded and layered pedestals of certain other classical palaces in Malaysia such as the Baitul Rahmah and Baitun Anwar in Kuala Kangsar, Perak, Malaysia. In conclusions, it is a representative of the Malay language of architecture which is generic and locally variant at the same time and represents the intrinsic syncretic nature of Malay architecture particularly in the nations bordering the archipelago of the Nusantara.

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