

Chapter 7

Green Architecture of Malay Traditional House Exhibitions: Mini Malaysia and ASEAN Cultural Park (MMACP), Melaka

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ABSTRACT

Mini Malaysia and ASEAN Cultural Park (MMACP) is one of the tourism spots in Melaka which showcases the Malay traditional houses from thirteen states in Malaysia. Most of the visitors viewing the houses depicting the culture of each states. Contrarily we revisited the park with a curiosity and we would like to know, “How far these Malay traditional houses portray the green architecture?” We designed this research in an exploratory, looking the Malay traditional houses found in MMACP and trace for their green architectural criteria. Through observation, we analysed the data from our field notes, photos, description found on the park’s storyboards and explanations from the tour guides. We can conclude that the Malay traditional houses are green buildings that portray green architecture. From this research, we appreciate our forefathers’ skills and wisdom, to build the houses that harmonise with the environment.

ORGANISATION BACKGROUND

Opened on 17 July 1986, Mini Malaysia and ASEAN Cultural Park (MMACP) is one of the tourism hotspots in Melaka. Different from other theme parks which emphasis on fun and excitement; MMACP is an educational theme park, which showcases the Malay traditional houses from thirteen states in Malaysia and also every country in the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN).

INTRODUCTION

Malay traditional houses are constructed by the indigenous ethnic Malay in Malaysia. Nowadays, because of modernisation, most of the Malay houses in Malaysia are influenced by the contemporary design which gradually losing their traditional character.

Therefore, the original traditional Malay houses are hard to be found and could be traced in some deep rural areas of Malaysia. With the effort of Mini Malaysia and ASEAN Cultural Park (MMACP) preserving, conserving and exhibiting these traditional houses, the visitors able to witness how the old-days houses look like.

Houses shown in MMACP conserve the most characteristic Malay traditions. Explained by the Tour Guide 1, these houses are built in the actual sizes that accommodate the actual living. Visitors can walk into these houses to see and experience the setting. Inside the houses, activities such as traditional games, costume rental, cooking demo and product selling are to reflect the unique cultural representation.

Guerrero-Baca and Soria-Lopez (2018) agree, built heritage such as these Malay traditional houses has been one of the most precious assets for the society because these traditional houses bring together a series of values that make them essential for the development of a society. These traditional houses' unique aesthetic value is linked to a historical deed and includes vernacular/traditional architecture which can be inherited to future generations.

Visiting the park, most of the visitors viewing these traditional houses which contain fixtures and decorative work of art, depicting the culture of each state or country. We have visited the park a few times in the past and we learned a lot about the detail aspects of cultural and artistic values of the Malay traditional houses here.

Contrarily, two years ago, we revisited the park with a curiosity that differed from the ordinary quest of traditional value search. We were interested to know, "How far these Malay traditional houses portray the green architecture?" We believe that these Malay traditional houses have a series of socioenvironmental values that justify their existence. A reflection was made around these Malay traditional houses available at the MMACP within the concept of environmental sustainability.

Considering these traditional houses are the actual building which reflect the actual accommodation of the real living in the past; it is interesting to know how our forefathers constructed their houses with the minimalist lifestyle nearly a century ago. Without the most advanced technology, while under the similar tropical climate of Malaysia, can we consider these Malay traditional houses as green buildings? These research questions guided us to have a new insight when we revisited MMACP and we started our study one year ago.

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