The Study of The Architectural Characteristics of ‘Umah of The Sakai Tribe in Sumatra

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Abstract

The Sakai Tribe or Oghang Daghek (Orang Darat) live simply and depend on nature in the forest and on the banks of rivers. This tribe is one of the tribes in the Central Sumatra region that has ties to the Minangkabau Tribe. The traditional house itself is very simple, which has the characteristics of an early vernacular house in Sumatra. However, a clear and scientific study of the architectural characteristics of this house is still incomplete. What are the characteristics of the Sakai Tribe House? This research was conducted using a qualitative method approach to analyze the object of the case directly in the field descriptively. The purpose of this study is to find the characteristics of this tribal traditional house. This research resulted in the architectural characteristics of the Sakai Tribe.

Keywords: traditional house, sakai tribe, ‘umah, architectural characteristics, vernacular house

Introduction

The Sakai Tribe, also known as the Pebatin Tribe or the Orang Darat (Oghang Daghek), live nomadic depending on the forest (Rimbo) and stay on the banks of rivers in Riau, especially in the Rokan region. Their clothes used to be in the form of vests and pants made of bark. The Sakai tribe comes from the Pagaruyung (Minangkabau) region who are trying their luck in the Riau region. They consist of two groups; Batin Limo and Batin Solapan. This tribe is led by a Panghulu accompanied by Tungkek, Monti, and Antan (Suparlan, 1995 and Isjoni, 2005). This tribe is also spread to the Malay Peninsula (Jakun) to Southern Thailand (Meniq). This tribe is widely regarded...
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as Proto-Malayu but in fact is still a family with the Malay tribes (Deutro-Malay) in Central Sumatra, especially in terms of language and culture. Their kinship system tends to be matrilineal called Sumande.

Table 1. Numbers in Sakai and Minangkabau languages (Source: Khamdevi: 2016-2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Sakai</th>
<th>Minangkabau</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>Ciek/ Satu</td>
<td>Ciek/ Aso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Duo</td>
<td>Duo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>Tigo</td>
<td>Tigo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>Ompek</td>
<td>Ampek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>Limo</td>
<td>Limo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>Onam</td>
<td>Anam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>Tujuh</td>
<td>Tujuah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>(So-)Lapan</td>
<td>(Sa-)Lapan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine</td>
<td>Sambilan</td>
<td>Sambilan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten</td>
<td>Sapuluh</td>
<td>Sapuluah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The house of the Sakai tribe has not been studied properly comprehensively and architecturally. Therefore this research was conducted. What are the Architectural Characteristics of the Sakai Traditional House?

Research Method

The qualitative methods were used in reviewing the architectural characteristics of the ‘Umah. The data was collected in the field through observation and interviews. The samples were selected purposively (Sugiyono, 2012). They were then analyzed using the theory of architectural characteristics, namely spatial systems, physical systems and figural configurations, and style systems (Habraken, 1988). The research was conducted in Minas, Sobanga, Mandau, and Bonai. The definition of building characteristics is a study or investigation of the combination of elements that allow to achieve or obtain a classification of architectural organisms through the properties or characteristics of the building. Classification indicates an act of summarizing or trying, i.e. arranging different plantings, each of which can be identified, and arranging in classes to identify the general data and allow making connections in special cases (Vidler, 1998).

Result and Discussion

‘Umah (or Ghumah) of the Sakai tribe is inhabited by a nuclear family. Basically or initially, the Sakai Tribe house only has one room, where the division of space into two rooms is done imaginary without walls (sometimes also marked with a wood called Bandul). There are the family room (Tongah) and bedroom (Bilek). Boys usually sleep outside, in the Beding (shelter) or in the Balai (customary house), or in the Surau (a little mosque), even today the younger ones sometimes sleep in the Tongah section.
Parents and unmarried daughters sleep in Bilek. In the past, Bilek usually had a stove (Dapu 'Tungku) which served as an inner kitchen. In addition, there is an outdoor kitchen outside the residential building. Above it is a storage room, especially for food and household utensils and work utensils. In front of the house, there is a stair (Tango) to enter this stilt house building.
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In subsequent developments, the spaces increased and were divided by walls made of Meranti bark or woven Kopau (Rumbia or Thatch) leaves. In the back is added a room called Patapak, which functions as a kitchen room. There is sometimes added another room called Pelanta, which serves as a veranda part of the kitchen room. In front of the house sometimes also added a veranda (Pelanta) to sit or receive guests.

The shape and form of this house is a rectangular building that transverse to the side. The roof (Atok) of this house is a gable-type roof. The posts usually use Meranti wood and bamboo. The floors and walls are made of Meranti bark or even with Kopau.

Figure 3. ‘Umah’s appearance in Minas, in Bonai, in Mandau, and in Sobanga (from top-left to bottom-right) (Source: Khamdevi: 2021)

On four sides of the floor, there are Bandul woods that frame the floor. Underneath it is a girder (Asuk Geloga) with wooden ties (Jiau). The roof (Atok) uses Kopau, straw or reeds, or Topou leaves (which are usually used to wrap rice). The roof structure consists of battens (Alang), rafters (Tutup Alang), edge rafters (Kasow Bosa or Kasow Male), trusses (Singo), and ridges (Bubung). The structure of this house can be seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4. ‘Umah’s Structure (Source: Khamdevi: 2021)

The roof (Atok) is shaped like a Kajang canoe or called Lipat Kajang. Some have flat ridges and some have curved ridges (Kajang Padati). For roofs that have a flat ridge, there is a wooden cross
on the roof which also functions to hold the roof covering. The Tiang Tuo or Tiang Penunjong is the main post in the middle or the middle-right of the building and the first post to be erected. The opening of this house is only in the front. The back door was added at a time when the family added space in the back. Natural air and light enter through the walls of the bark. Stairs have three or five steps.

**Conclusion**

The results of this study show the characteristics of ‘Umah in Central Sumatra. ‘Umah is similar to the houses of the common tribes in Central Sumatra (Malay). The following is table 2 conclusions from this study. The results of this conclusion are expected to be a guideline to preserve the ‘Umah of Sakai tribe.

**Table 2. ‘Umah’s Characteristics (Source: Khamdevi: 2021)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architectural Characteristics</th>
<th>Spatial System</th>
<th>Physical System &amp; Figural Quality</th>
<th>Stylistic System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Space Pattern</td>
<td>Tango &gt; Tongah &gt; Bilek</td>
<td>Transverse square building Gable roof</td>
<td>Lipat Kajang or Kajang Padati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>River or Sunrise</td>
<td>Bark or Thatch Walls, Wooden or Bamboo Poles, Thatched Roofs, Rattan Ties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy</td>
<td>Publik &gt; Semi Private &gt; Private</td>
<td>Bark or Thatch Woven Wall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Form</td>
<td>Physical form</td>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>Column</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bark or Thatch Walls, Wooden or Bamboo Poles, Thatched Roofs, Rattan Ties</td>
<td>9-12 poles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rattan Tied Bark Door</td>
<td>1 Main Column (Tuo Pole or Supporting Pillar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Openings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No windows, but porous walls between the bark</td>
<td>Rattan Tied Bark Door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Odd Number of Stairs (3 or 5 pieces)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**References**


