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Power and cultural manifestation in the development of colonial architecture (case study : Great Mosque Al-Mashun Medan)

I F Pane^{1,2}, M N Loebis^{1,2}, I Azhari³ and N Ginting¹

¹ Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Padang Bulan, Medan 20155, Indonesia

² Laboratory History, Theory and Criticism of Architecture, Department of Architecture, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Padang Bulan, Medan 20155 Indonesia

³ Department of History Education, Universitas Negeri Medan, Jalan Willem Iskandar Pasar V Medan Estate, Indonesia

E-mail: imam.faisal@usu.ac.id

Abstract. Architecture is the result of cultural products. Its growth is also in line with the development of a culture adapted to the conditions when the building was built. Manifestation of culture is reflected in all aspects of the physical building. The realization of the culture can adapt along with the presence of other cultures in the development of the era. Indonesia is one of countries that has a lot of culture includes Medan. In this city, the culture that stands out is Malay because the development of the Malay sultanate at that time. The role of the colonial government was also present in the forming area of the city with the various development policies of city facilities. Because of the phenomenon, then this article proves that there is a blend of traditional culture represented by Malay architecture with coming cultures brought by the colonial government in this case functional modern architecture. With a qualitative approach and history of the existence of the object of study, namely Al-Mashun Great Mosque Medan, then this phenomenon of a blend can be seen and make it a valuable asset for the city of Medan.

1. Introduction

One of the dominant factors in the formation of the architecture is culture. In its development, culture is always associated with human activity not only to form the culture but also activity can affect the architecture. Culture is closely related to the condition of the place where they are situated and have a form which is appropriate to its environment. Along with the times, a form of culture can be different because culture can be changed by adjusting its era. Being different does not eliminate the meaning contained in the culture. Meaning contained there will be able to continue to survive if the next generation of this culture is still use culture in their daily life. According to culture is divided into three, namely *cultural system*, *social system* and *physical culture* [1]. From that three forms of culture can be seen that the form fused together as a result of activities that have the ideas and plans and also have things as the products and the physical form of the culture.

This physical form within the larger context called architecture because as physical and non-physical come from the activities undertaken by humans. Architectural development along with the times, cultural activities or civilization in the era brings its own characteristics in its architecture [2]. For that, every era or a different event has a different architecture also includes influences that can



enrich the architecture of the place. Indonesia is a country with diverse ethnic and cultural variety of all. In addition, Indonesia has experienced a fairly long period of colonization and experienced a period into the colonies. But it's long before the independence, Indonesian already are regions that are rich in culture.

Medan is a city located in North Sumatra Province, composed of several ethnic groups (*Malay, Mandailing, Toba, Karo, Simalungun, Pakpak Dairi, Nias coupled with Indian and Chinese*), which have different culture and traditions. It adds the Indonesian culture as a whole. All of these have different cultural backgrounds and produce different traditional architecture. Cultural development also supports the development of architecture in a holistic manner in the respective ethnic groups. Social cohesion is needed to unite the power possessed by the ethnic groups. Social cohesion will strengthen the presence but remain united [3].

The traditional architecture is a building constructed in the manner and form that must follow the rules outlined by culture. The rules are influenced by the beliefs that exist in the community. It can be seen from parts of the physical building that has special meaning, generally for the safety and welfare of the people in accordance with their beliefs. But along with the times, traditional architecture is no longer represented a certain belief, but it has been associated with changes in view of the progress of the era [4]. It can be seen that the house is no longer a dominant as the main house but it has got to the ground. This influence appeared prominently in villages that still have a traditional house but no longer uses the traditions of the ancestors as the joints of his life. Traditional house seemed abandoned and people will prefer a home that suits the era.

Medan is a strategic city located on the western parts of Sumatra. The city is a trade city along with the opening of the estate by the Dutch colonial government and made an agreement with the Malay sultanate at the time. Plantations made the sultanate of Deli moved from Labuhan to Medan, and the economy was growing rapidly at the time [5]. The rapid progress in plantation made this city develops and then began to be built facilities to facilitate business and trade such as railway stations, banks, hotels, courts (*open space*) as well as government offices. Malays ethnic is one of the ethnic initiated the construction of the city of Medan and some relics of the Malay Sultanate including traditional Malay architecture is still in good condition and functioning. With the development of the city, then the development of architecture took part in coloring the appearance of the city.

On the basis of this phenomenon, the development of a culture that is represented by Malay traditional architecture with outside architecture brought by the Dutch architect will be blended each other. Western education which at that time more emphasis on *modern architecture* attempted applied to the colonies for their development policies at the time. But this area has existed with traditional architecture and local wisdom then the coming architects tried to blend modern architecture with the native culture of this area. Local wisdom can have an impact on cultural identity and can support sustainable tourism [6]. This paper proves that modern architecture can be aligned combined with traditional architecture and how the combination had an impact on the development of architecture in the city of Medan.

Literature review in this paper discusses one of the traditional architectures in the city of Medan that is *Malay Traditional Architecture*. The town has a strong link with the Malay identity. Some important relics of this sultanate include *Maimun Palace, Great Mosque and Sri Deli Park*. Its construction was in collaboration with the colonial government with architects coming from the Netherlands. This rapid development was supported by its development of the city of Medan by the Dutch colonial government.

On that case, the Malay traditional architecture was very strong presence in the development of the colonial building at the time. Malay traditional architecture is synonymous with Islam with the arrival of Islam and many the residents of coastal areas converts to Islam. The diversity of ethnic groups in North Sumatra (*Sumatera Utara*) have made many Malays who do intermarriage with settlers from the mountainous regions such as the Batak Karo Batak Toba, Mandailaing and others so it made the spread of Islamic culture was growing in line also with the expansion of the Malays to coastal areas in Sumatera island.

Traditional house in general has a distinctive shape and meaning in each region, as well as Malay traditional house. Malay traditional house construction is always based on the *resam custom, climate and Islamic law*. These three united in creating a traditional building. This resam custom is essence of harmony and balance against the private interests and the public so that it will give you happiness and tranquility. The tropical climate determines the shape of a Malay traditional house. The high rate of rainfall forms the house aligned with climate. Having regard to Islamic law then the men room is different from the women and the motif on wall hangings more use motifs or ornaments from the forms of plants and avoid motif or trimmings that resemble animals or humans.

Malay traditional house typology is has space underneath and has continuous buttress column above (Figure 1). Having an opening or fairly wide window on the side of the house. It uses a ladder that is located in front and behind the house. In some types of house, there is the porch to entry into the house. The high vault of approximately 1.5 meters and on the part of the main house can reach 2 meters. With this condition, this house is kind of *stage house* uses wood materials on all around the building and there are some houses that its ladder were made of concrete. Based on its kinds, Malay traditional house consists of three types: 1. *Six coloumns house* 2. *Six columns house with porch* 3. *Twelve columnshouse (porch house)* (Figure 2.). Generally, this house has a cool air because there are ventilations to circulate air inside the building.

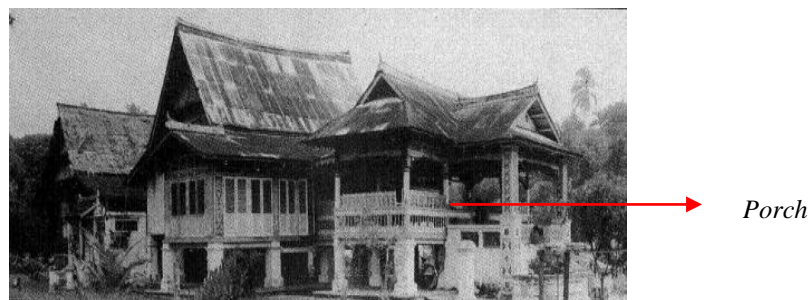


Figure 1. One of Malay Traditional House.
(Source : id.wikipedia.org)

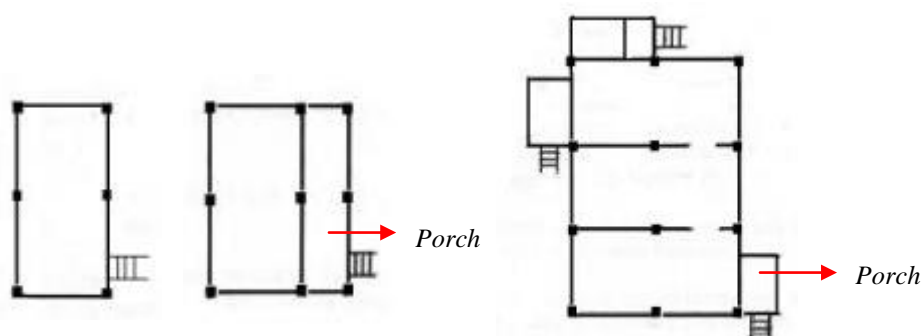


Figure 2. Plan of Malay Traditional House.
(source: Amran E. Prawoto)

Malay Traditional House roof has a unique shape, the roof material usually derived from thatch palm. The roof form of the Malay house consists of various shapes ridge that is a *long ridge, five ridge, silver ridge and pyramid ridge* [7] (Figure 3&4). At the end of the ridge there is an engraved cover. In general roof is a representation of boat shaped arch [8]. Roof on the main house has a curved tip upwards on the front of the building, at the back (kitchen area) roof is higher and up-shaped called with elephants drinking or elephants feeding. In fascia board, it is made of a single board or two layers

embedded on the bottom side of the roof are carved shots throughout fascia board (*pamelas*). Under the roof at the end of a long ridge there is a triangular section that serves as a wall called *Singap* or *Tebang Layar*. The shape protrudes slightly out of the wall of the building and given the motif and there are vent as circulation for Lassie in the attic room.

The composition of the room in a Malay traditional house is at the front there is *Selang Depan* (the front of house is lower) which serves to put the goods that do not have to go into the house. Use the stairs to go up to the front of the hose and at the foot of the stairs there is a jar filled with water for washing the feet. Front porch space is functions to receive man guests and neighbors located after the front hose, from selang depan goes up some stairs that odd number, on the front porch of this room there is no furniture but only stretching mats. On the front porch of this area there are also many windows filled with ornaments and carvings, the size of the window when people sit so they can see out of the room.

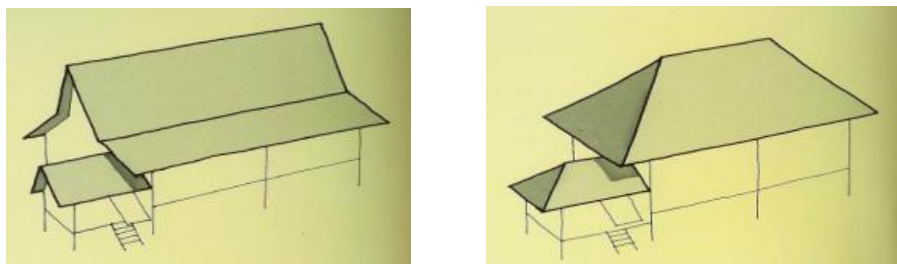


Figure 3. Long and Five Ridge.

(source: Yuan, 1987)

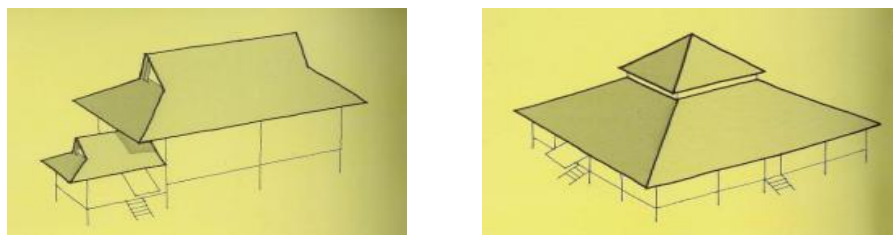


Figure 4. Silver and Pyramid Ridge.

(source: Yuan, 1987)

After form the front porch and then to *the main room* whose height is approximately 30 cm from the front porch. The function of this room is receiving great guests or people who are respected. In this main room there are stairs that go up to the loft bed for Lassie. In this room there are also window which has exactly high as on the front porch. At the rear of the house there is also a side hose similar to the front hose, from the side hose can be up to the back porch and then lower kitchen is located on the back porch of the house.

2. Method

The method used is a *qualitative method* to assess local cultural mix in this case the traditional architecture and colonial architecture in this case the modern architecture which is applied in colonial buildings. This method is used because it is a suitable approach to examine the object of research. According [9], states that qualitative methods can be used to see objects as a whole and data analysis can be done inductively. This method is necessary to do an approach with the facts obtained in the field and analyzed with the theory used.

The focused of research are 1. *Shape and Building look*, to see the shape of the building which is the building plan and elevation the entire building, 2. *Building Ornaments*, ornaments of the building is taken as a variable to see the correlation with traditional influences within the building, 3. *Building*

detail, building details to see more detail related with traditional influences. While the object of research is in the city of Medan, namely *Al-Mashun Great Mosque Medan*, the object of this study is a building that still can be used and the identity of the city of Medan.

3. Result and Discussions

The mosque which becomes the pride of people in Medan was once in same region with Maimun Palace and Sri Deli Park (Figure 5). Its architecture is unique by coloring the mixing Malay-Islam-Europe. It was built on 21st August 1906 and 10th September 1909 was completed during the Sultan Ma'mun al-Rashid Perkasa Alamsyah, architect Theodoor van Erp and JA Tingdeman. Based on location, the mosque is located at the junction of Sisingamangaraja and Masjid Raya Street. Currently there are hotel and shopping center in front of it and there is a pedestrian bridge. In the side of Masjid Raya road, there is Sri Deli Park which was in same area in this mosque. The figure shown by the mosque is very interesting with the dome on the corners of buildings make the view from all angles of the building be a very interesting adding of vertical columns as the curtain wall on the building. Innovation is required in maintaining local culture including community participation [10], so that the historical heritage building can be maintained well.

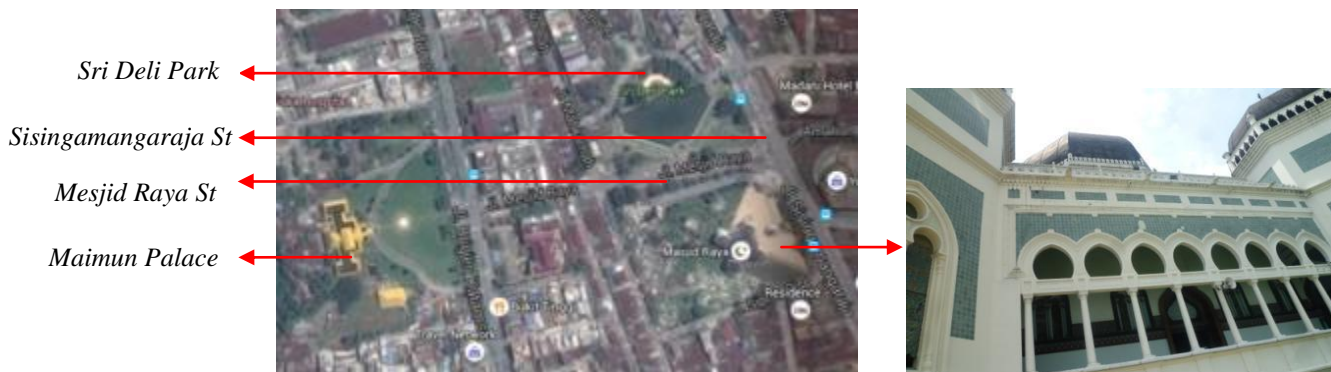


Figure 5. Great Mosque Al-Mashun Medan.
(Source: google maps)

The results of this study can be seen that a blend of traditional architecture and colonial architecture of The Great Mosque Al-Mashun Medan looked at the phenomenon of the figure of the entire building. This mix gives harmonious impression to be members for making it as a characteristic of regions and cities.

The long journey of the history of Dutch colonization in Indonesia makes the aspects relating to the Netherlands to Indonesia. Dutch go to Indonesia at first to trade under the flag of VOC in 1619, but in colonization is more than three centuries, this area eventually became the colony of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. In the care of the Dutch colony areas, so Netherlands built a government in Indonesia under the rule of the Kingdom of the Netherlands with the decentralization policy [11]. Based on that, the city of Medan which is one of the cities that developed during the colonial administration was given the status of Municipal (*Gementee Raad*), the status of the city of Medan is governed by Mayor Dutch [5].

With the status of the city of Medan which had stood alone then the construction of the city began to rise because colonial government requires supporting building in dealing with its colonial area. In general, the development of architecture in Indonesia influenced by the style carried by most architects who work in Indonesia which was Dutch architect educated by modern view that developed in Europe at the time.

Countries which come to Indonesia not only the Netherlands alone, but there are also other countries such as Portuguese, Chinese, Indian, Arab, etc., but the longest and most influential nation is

the Netherlands. This influence also affected the architecture, the development of architecture at that time apart due to the impact of eclecticism influence and growing modern architecture in worldwide. Local potential turns contributing in the formation of architecture in Indonesia, these local influences which brings the term *IndisArchitecture* in the development of architecture in Indonesia, because it has happened the engaging in the design of the Dutch architect although it was not in a large scale. In general, the movement of the architecture of the colonial period is divided into two major parts, 1. *Eclecticism architecture* influenced by classical elements and second [12], 2. *Indis architecture*, got the new influences on the development of functional modern architecture called the *Nieuwe Bouwen* (new buildings). This architecture is also influenced by the movement *De Stijl* initiated by the groups of art and architect modernization [13]. The new building also has characteristics in common with functionalism movement in mainland Europe. The results of the blend of them can be seen below:

3.1. The shape and building look

The Great Mosque Al-Mashun built in the complex Deli Sultanate. This complex is a complex of government the empire at that time were doing some collaboration with the colonial administration include the opening of a tobacco plantation. In this complex there are places of worship which is The Great Mosque Al-Mashun which is built for the sultan and the urban community worship. From the side of its orientation, this shape and look of the mosque seems to look functional modern architecture (*Nieuwe Bowen*) but it can be seen clearly their blend elements of Malay traditional architecture there. One of them is the floor of the mosque which is pulled up that resembles stage house in Malay architecture.



Figure 6. The Porch around The Great Mosque Al-Mashun Medan.

The concept of *the porch* on Malay traditional architecture applied to the buildings around the mosque. The porch in the form of terraces is surrounding the building before entering into the main prayer hall (Figure 6).

3.2. Ornament of building

Some ornaments have a similar thing with the traditional architecture of Malay. This indicates that the identity of this building is different from the surrounding buildings but the traditional influence is strong there. It looks strong influence of Islamic architecture but combined with traditional elements.

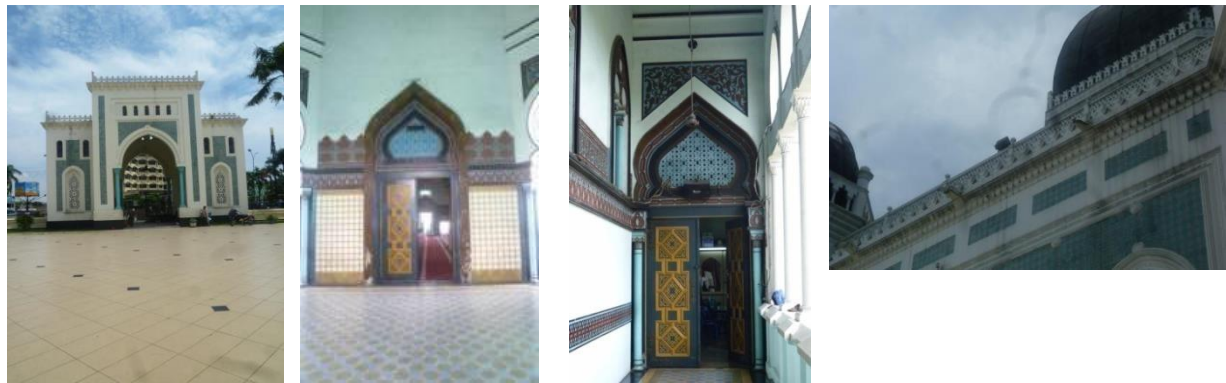


Figure 7. Ornaments at The Great Mosque Al-Mashun Medan.

The identity of this building can be seen from the first time from gate which is built right on the corner. With this gate, the harmonization between buildings and gates is very strong because of its position when viewed from the symmetrical front gate to the main building. This symmetrical formation is often used in *Palladian Architecture Style* that developed in Italy. This influence was brought by the Dutch architect who designed this mosque. Ornaments that are part of the door or window have similarities with ornaments in Malay traditional architecture. The main door and the side door have two doors like at Malay House. There are ornaments around the building. It is located at the top of the wall of the building and before the dome. This ornament looks like fascia board in a Malay traditional house (Figure 7).

3.3. Building detail

Details of this building have some influences from Malay traditional architecture. It is seen that the role of colonial rule was great in this mosque design process. In process of the design, architect combines Malay traditional architecture elements with an architecture that comes from outside. The form which is authentic makes this building until now has buildings with a distinctive architectural style and is particularly prominent and become the pride of the people in Medan (Figure 8).

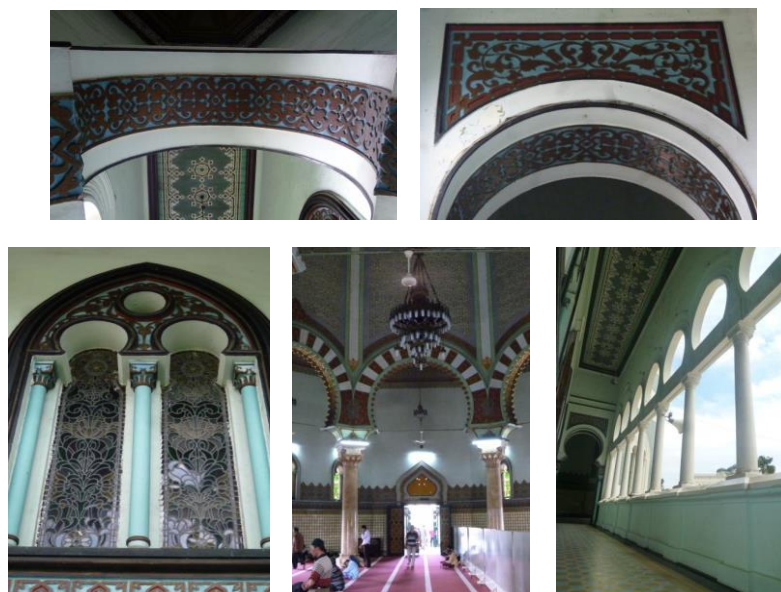


Figure 8. Detail in The Great Mosque Al-Mashun Medan.

In detail both interior and exterior of the building has a detail that stand out, likes the decorations on the walls and ceiling. The mosque uses expose column on the inside and outside of the building. There are some ornaments harmonizing with the columns of the building. Some details of the ornament on this mosque resemble a detail in Malay traditional building.

4. Conclusion

A mix of traditional and colonial bring a significant impact on the development of architecture in the city of Medan. With this combination, the architecture result has its own peculiarities which constitute evidence of the harmonization of the blend. This was evident in The Great Mosque Al-Mashun building Medan, functional modern influences combined with the influence of Malays and Islam gives the impression that the architectural style has fused firmly. In this mosque building, there is a strong influence of Malay architecture. It is seen in the figure ornaments and details of buildings that use Malay influence. The concept of Malay architecture in the porch is also applied to the mosque so that the building is steeped in the influence of Malay traditional architecture. It requires community participation to maintain the form of strong social cohesion, innovation and a culture to retain the existing identity.

Acknowledgment

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