

LEARNING FOR AND FROM NUSANTARAN ARCHITECTURE

EDITORIAL

Nusantaran architecture, the old Javanese name for the Javanese and Malaysian archipelago, has a long tradition, which evolved completely outside from European ideas. This architecture has evolved under the special circumstances of the archipelago, with its frequent earthquakes, tsunamis, the tropical humid climate, the many smaller and larger islands, the mountains and long shore lines. Architecture has developed over the centuries paying respect to the particular circumstances. But Nusantaran architecture can not only be reduced to mere technical problems. Since the old days it also is an important vehicle to transport social and cultural features, such as social status, or cultural dependence. Combined with the materials that were traditionally available, a very special architectural language has developed, and a few aspects are discussed in the papers of this issue. The findings, however, are also important for abroad as well: Nusantara's people, architects and politicians are searching for their own cultural heritage and how to transform this into a contemporary architectural language. The findings and the problems that have to be dealt with are important parameters for other regions of the world as well, and thus it can be stated: learning not only for but also from the Indonesian example.

Nusantara's architecture plays also an important role in socio-cultural terms, because it can act as a tool of self-representation. Using architectural features for representation of the family's status is commonly used all over the world, but particularly in the Indonesian archipelago a manifold variety in the architectural language of the buildings aiming to represent the family, is considerably high, which also reflects the circumstance that there are so many different tribes and cultures living in Nusantara, each with its own heritage of architectural language. As versatile as the architecture is, there are several common features that can be found throughout Nusantara, and this is the division of buildings into three zones: the pedestal, which is bound to the ground, the middle zone, the area for humans and their affairs, and finally the roof zone, which is associated with the celestial world. **Erich Lehner** discusses in his article the importance of this tripartite formation, not only for vernacular buildings, but also its impact on contemporary architecture.

Architectural expression plays an important role in Nusantara, which is commonly understood by the people. It is, too, widely believed that the façade of a house is like a face, communicating between the owners and the outside world. Nusantaran architecture is moreover closely linked to landscape conditions, to climate as well as to the many different local cultures of the archipelago. The challenge of the 21st century, however, is the transformation of local, traditional architecture into contemporary modern styles, which is particularly in Indonesia also an issue of politics: there is an identity policy of the government that aims to combine local traditions with modern architecture. But what can that be, how could contemporary architecture that is based on heritage look like? This struggle of finding an appropriate architectural language that is based on traditions is critically discussed by **Diah A. Purwangrum** in her article.

The following article by **Mohamad Hanif Abdul Wahab and Aziz Bahauddin** highlights the spatial organisation of traditional houses of a region in Malaysia, where the Minangkabau live. The investigated place is a traditional settlement area where the Minangkabau settled down after entering the region. Their preferred space for residential quarters lies alongside riverbanks, consequently following the spatial orientation of the buildings. The authors describe this spatial orientation by using methods of phenomenology combined with ethnography and thus can show that the buildings follow a special orientation that is related to the landscape conditions.

Ena Y. Titisari discusses the importance of traditional religious structures, namely the Candi Sumberawan, that today is embedded in a dense and lively urban fabric. A candi is a Buddhist or Hinduist temple, and since Indonesia today is a Muslim country, many of them lie in ruins or are not so heavily used like in India. However, they are still important sites for all Indonesian people, no matter which religion they belong to. There are many different social activities taking place in and around a candi, and this is highlighted by drawing on the example of a candi in the middle of a dense urban quarter.

The last paper of this issue draws attention to different wall shading systems of Malaysian buildings. This overview by **Muhammad Gambo Abdullah, Mohd Zin Bin Kandar, Lim Yaik Wah and Joshua Abimaje** shows the different shading systems that can be used instead of energy intense systems such as air conditioning or electric ventilations. The recessed wall façade shading systems are innovative passive energy systems that use natural ventilation. In this way, the technology can help to reduce energy consumption, thereby reducing emissions and having a positive impact on climate change.

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