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Morphological Structure of the Ayam Patah Kepak Tengkolok Design

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Abstract

The *tengkolok* has been a part of Malay men's attire since olden times. However, its use is now restricted to specific ceremonies and customary events held in the palace. Therefore, this paper aims to analysed on how the the shape and structure of the design and the meaning behind the design of the *Ayam Patah Kepak tengkolok* of the Perak Sultanate's heritage. The authors use a qualitative descriptive research method with a cultural approach to explain this. Data collection methods such as interviews and observations were used to collect written and visual data. According to the findings of the study, this paper analysed the design symbol of *Ayam Patah Kepak tengkolok* through five different viewpoints: frontal, right side, the rear, left side, and top. This design symbol carries meaning about status, about heroism, masculinity. These characteristics symbolize the nature of the greatness of the Malay leader who was appointed as a king who was admired. It is hoped that this paper will entice the interest of researchers, particularly those interested in Malay clothing, specifically the Malay *tengkolok*, as well as the younger generation in identifying the headdress. The meaning behind the design of this *Ayam Patah Kepak tengkolok* can be acknowledged and retained. This study also revealed that the headdress is not only beautiful to wear, but the beauty is more apparent in the meaning behind its design. Documenting the significance of the *Ayam Patah Kepak tengkolok* is one of the measures taken to preserve the Malay headdress as well as to protect and preserve high-value Malay heritage treasures.

Keywords: Shape, Structure, Symbol, Tengkolok, Ayam Patah Kepak, Heritage

Introduction

Every Malay existence is implicitly rich in meaning and philosophy. The Malay *tengkolok* is no exception. Each Malay *tengkolok* has an implicit meaning that corresponds to their lives. An advice by our ancestors exemplifies this; we should not sit on a pillow for fear of getting boils (Diyana & Hamsidar, 2018). However, the implied meaning is that it is not good to sit on a pillow that is used for sleep. For fear of a late marriage proposal, a damsel is discouraged from sitting on the steps of a staircase. The implication is that a staircase is a walkway and being sedentary on it may result in accidental injury to those who use it.

In this regard, a nation's culture has high value and must be inherited by society today. For the Malays, having hair in place was initially only possible by wrapping the head with a cloth, but over time, this way of wrapping changed depending on the occasion, and it has since become an art that belongs to the Malays (Mohamad Nazri Ahmad, 2000). The headdress is an example of Malay heritage. The Malay community's traditional headdress is unique, consisting of a tied cloth on the head. The *tengkolok* is the headdress in question. *Tengkolok* was a head cloth worn by courtiers, dignitaries, and Malay grooms in the past (Hamidah Husain dan Mohamed Roselan Malek 1995).

Other monikers for this headdress include *tanjak*, *destar*, *semutar*, *bulang hulu*, and *sapu tangan* (Aziz, 2006; Zainon, 2006; Dzulkarnain, 2014; Adha, 2018, 2020; Akasha, 2020). The term varies by state, for example, *tanjak* in Selangor and *tengkolok* in Perak, (Aziz, 2006). Although there are several terms for the Malays' headdress, the purpose is the same: to cover or protect the head. According to Raja Kobat (1996), wearing a *tengkolok* is also a way to hide the forehead. Wearing a *tengkolok* is one of the symbols of national identity (Mahmud, 1994). In the past, wearing a *tengkolok* could determine a person's rank and position. *Tengkolok* is also associated with the palace and heroism, and it is worn during official ceremonies and customs (Ahmat, 2012). *Tengkolok* in Perak is styled in accordance with official palace ceremonies such as the Royal Funeral, Coronation Ceremony, and Award Ceremony (Dzulkarnain, 2014, 2020; Akasha, 2020).

The *tengkolok* is an extremely valuable Malay art piece. This *tanjak* art's finesse contains a variety of stories as well as backgrounds that reflect who the wearer is. It is made by hand, folded, embellished, and shaped with the hands and knees. It is unlikely that it will be folded or embellished using cutting-edge technology like machines or robots. This is due to the fact that it is made with unique hand skills. Men typically master the art of tying the *tengkolok*. According to Osman (2014), the commoners are the originators of the *tengkolok*. Initially, a piece of cloth was wrapped around the head to ensure that the people's hair looked neat when they were in the Sultan's presence at the palace. Instead of wearing the wrapped cloth, the palace eventually made the *tengkolok* one of the official attires in the palace because it demonstrated the neatness of covering the head. Following that, *tengkolok* binders began designing various types of interesting and beautiful *tengkolok*.

The creation of various *tengkolok* designs reflects the peak of the binder ruminative. Given the complexities of folding and decorating a *tengkolok* in addition to artistic talent, a *tengkolok* binder must possess positive traits such as diligence, hardwork, patience, and creativity. Because there was no special reference in the past, the binder of the *tengkolok* used nature as a source of inspiration when designing a *tengkolok*. As a result, the old Malay society was one of the first to incorporate elements of innovation into their designs. They can create a unique and special work of art that is a variety of *tengkolok* designs from just a piece of cloth wrapped around the head.

Behind the beauty and uniqueness of the *tengkolok's* design, there are people who work hard to preserve and uphold the Malay *tengkolok's* craft heritage. Toh Seri Wangsa Hj. Abdul Rahim Bin Mohamad, Mohamad Dzulkarnain Bin Osman, Raja Azizulhair Raja Harun Al Rashid, and Haji Mohd Basri Bin Ngah Mat Ali are the bearers of the Perak state *tengkolok*. Each binder has a different way of folding the *tengkolok* based on the basic *3-finger fold*, *rolls*, and *triangle*. There are manners and taboos in folding and dressing the *tengkolok* in addition to these basic techniques.

Tengkolok of the Perak Darul Ridzuan's Sultanate

The beauty of the design of the Perak Sultanate's heritage *tengkolok* is the result of the hard work of those who preserve the Malay *tengkolok* tying skill alive. They are *tengkolok* binders who use their creative abilities to fold and decorate the *tengkolok*. According to the study's findings, the state of Perak has four *tengkolok* binders (TB), particularly for the design of the Sultanate of Perak Darul Ridzuan's *tengkolok*. They are Toh Seri Wangsa Haji Abdul Rahim bin Mohamad, also known as Tok Ayah or Pak Tok Ibrahim, Mohamad Dzulkarnain Bin Osman, also known as Pak N or Nain, Raja Azizulhair Raja Harun Al Rashid, also known as Ku Ayah or Ayah Jed, and Haji Mohd Basri Bin Ngah Mat Ali, also known as Haji Basni. Their abilities are crucial during the degree and medal awarding ceremony held in conjunction with the Sultan of Perak's birthday. During the ceremony, they will receive orders from medal recipients for the preparation of the *tengkolok*, which is an important component of Perak's royal ceremonial attire. The Sultanate of Perak has two sultans who are skilled at tying the *tengkolok*: Al Marhum Sultan Idris Murshidul'adzam Shah I and Al Marhum Sultan Iskandar Al Mutawakkil Shah II.

They are among the pioneers who uplift the art of tying the Perak Darul Ridzuan sultanate's *tengkolok*. Their efforts and enthusiasm should be emulated by the younger generation today so that the art of tying the *tengkolok* is preserved and passed down from generation to generation. Each of these binders has a unique way of folding and embellishing the *tengkolok*. Although the main binder is Al Marhum Sultan Idris Murshidul'adzam Shah I, the skill of folding and decorating the *tengkolok* was learned from a different Tuan Guru. The difference in this basic folding technique is the binder's effort to improve and simplify the art of *tengkolok* binding while retaining its heritage art form.

Symbolism

A symbol is a mark that substitutes an object or idea. A symbol can also be defined as a conventional indicator created by an individual or society with a specific meaning. According to Whitehead (2011), the human mind operates symbolically when elements of its experience such as consciousness, beliefs, feelings, and images are stored or recorded. The symbol's meaning will be formed by all these components. Furthermore, the purpose of symbols is to stimulate the imagination through the use of relationships, associations, and suggestions. As a result, this investigation will focus on the rooster symbol used in the design of the *Ayam Patah Kepak tengkolok*, particularly in the state of Perak Darul Ridzuan.

Research Methodology

By conducting a literature review, visual analysis, and interviews, the qualitative method was used to analyze the pulchritudinous in the Perak Sultanate *Tengkolok Ayam Patah Kepak* Heritage. The primary data collected from several informants and writings on the Malay *tengkolok* were derived from interviews and observations. Observations were also conducted to learn the Perak sultanate's *tengkolok*-making technique.

Research Findings and Discussion

Perak Sultanate Tengkolok Ayam Patah Kepak Heritage

Ayam Patah Kepak (APK) is a *tengkolok* design used by Tuanku Sultan Sultan Azlan Shah from 1984 to 2014. Tuanku Sultan is a fan of this APK *tengkolok* design. During the Sultanate of Perak Darul Ridzuan's 30 years of rule, Tuanku Sultan styled this *tengkolok* as the official *tengkolok*. In this regard, the people are permitted to wear the design of His Majesty

Tuanku Sultan of Perak's *tengkolok* (Mohamad Dzulkarnain Osman, 2014). During his reign, Sultan Azlan Shah decreed this consent. Although His Majesty granted permission for ordinary people to wear the *APK tengkolok*, the size and dimensions differ (Mohamad Dzulkarnain Osman, 2014). The dimensions and size of Tuanku's *tengkolok* design are a state government classified information and are not known to the public. This results in His Majesty's *APK tengkolok* being unique in design with distinct characteristics. The identity of the *APK tengkolok* is defined by certain specialties and features on the design of this *tengkolok*.

The shape of the *APK tengkolok* can be seen from five different perspectives, as shown in Figure 1. Figure 1a depicts the front view, Figure 1b depicts the right-side view, Figure 1c depicts the back view, Figure 1d depicts the left side view, and Figure 1e depicts the top view. On the left side of the *APK*, there is a portion of the *tengkolok's* base. The *APK tengkolok* has a "broken" section at the bottom. This "broken" part represents a broken wing and is close to the "salt knot" shown in picture 1 below.

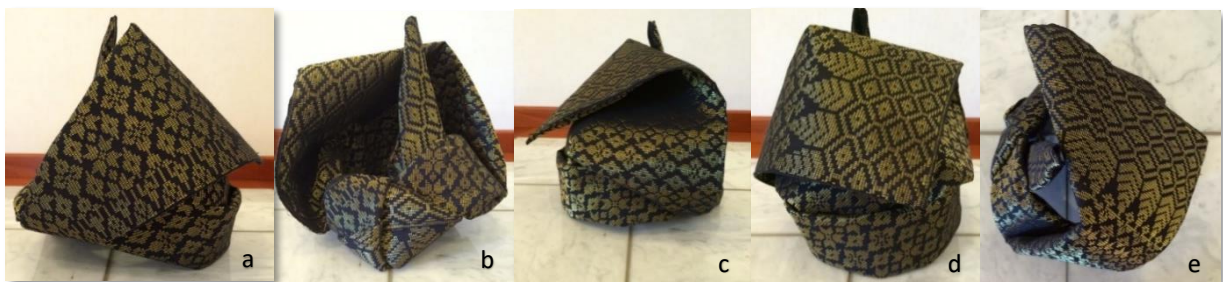


Figure 1: Five different perspectives on the *tengkolok*
Ayam Patah Kepak tengkolok

The *Ayam Patah Kepak Tengkolok* structure, a Perak Sultanate heritage.

The structure of the *Ayam Patah Kepak Tengkolok* that will be discussed is divided into three techniques: basic folding technique, knotting style, and *gubahan solek*.

(a) Basic Folding Technique

This basic folding technique is the first fold produced for almost all Perak sultanate styling, including the *Ayam Patah Kepak*. The basic folding technique has three work steps, as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1

Steps of basic folding technique

Steps	Description
First	The <i>tengkolok</i> fabric is stretched with the top of the triangle facing upwards. Level the entire surface of the fabric to flatten it. From the middle, a three-finger measurement is taken.
Second	a) The measurement of three fingers taken diagonally. b) The measurement of three fingers taken vertically. : The size of three fingers for a male's finger : The size of four fingers for a woman's finger
Third	Five times the size of three fingers is folded, and the top part of the cloth is left in the measurement of one span.
Fourth	The <i>tengkolok</i> fabric is lifted and inverted.
Fifth	The inverted <i>tengkolok</i> fabric is placed on the knees and points towards the binder's body.
Sixth	The fabric's two ends are pulled upwards and levelled.

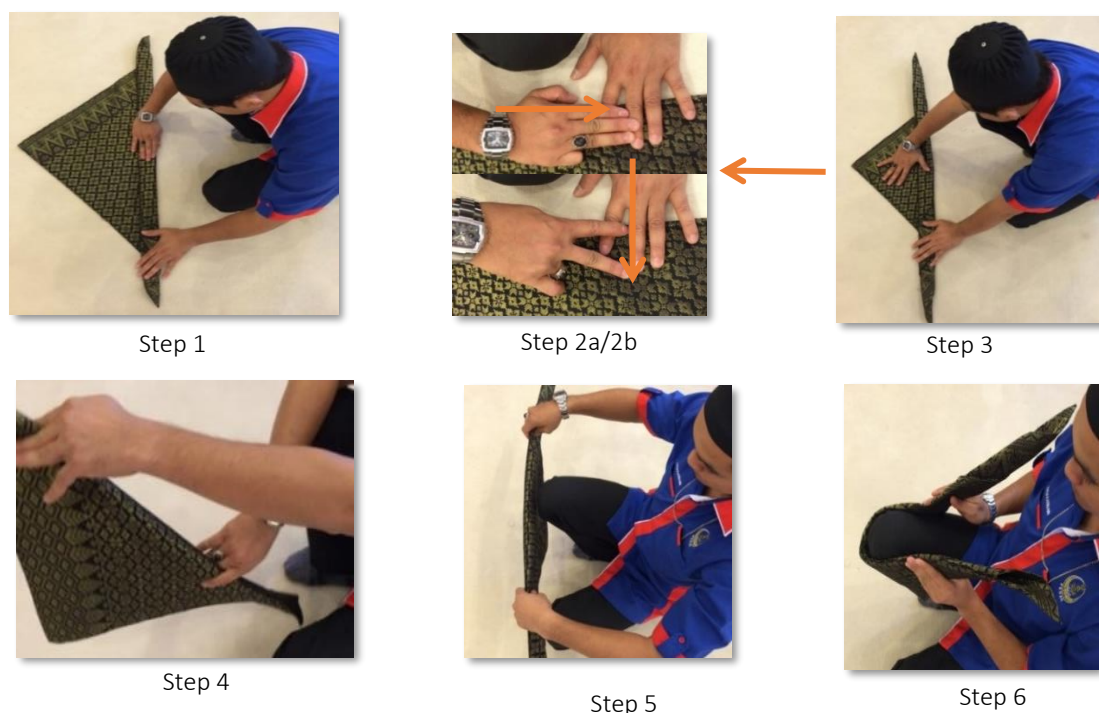


Figure 2: Basic folding technique working steps

(b) Knot Tying Technique

The knot tying technique produces *garam sebuku* and *pucuk rebung*. The Perak Sultanate's beautiful *tengkolok* is distinguished by *garam sebuku* and *pucuk rebung*. Table 2 displays the eight work steps involved in producing the Perak state knotting technique.

Table 2

Steps of the knot tying technique

Steps	Description
First	Place one end of the cloth in the right hand facing down, and the other end in the left hand overlapping upwards.
Second	The fabric's two ends will be crisscrossed and facing downwards.
Third	Fold the bottom fabric ends up in a vertical position.
Fourth	The fabric's vertical ends are pulled from the bottom of the crisscrossing fabric and primed.
Fifth	The excess fabric is inserted into the knot at the top.
Sixth	Insert the next end of the fabric into the bottom of the knot and pull it up to form a <i>pucuk rebung</i> .

Source: Field Study, 2014

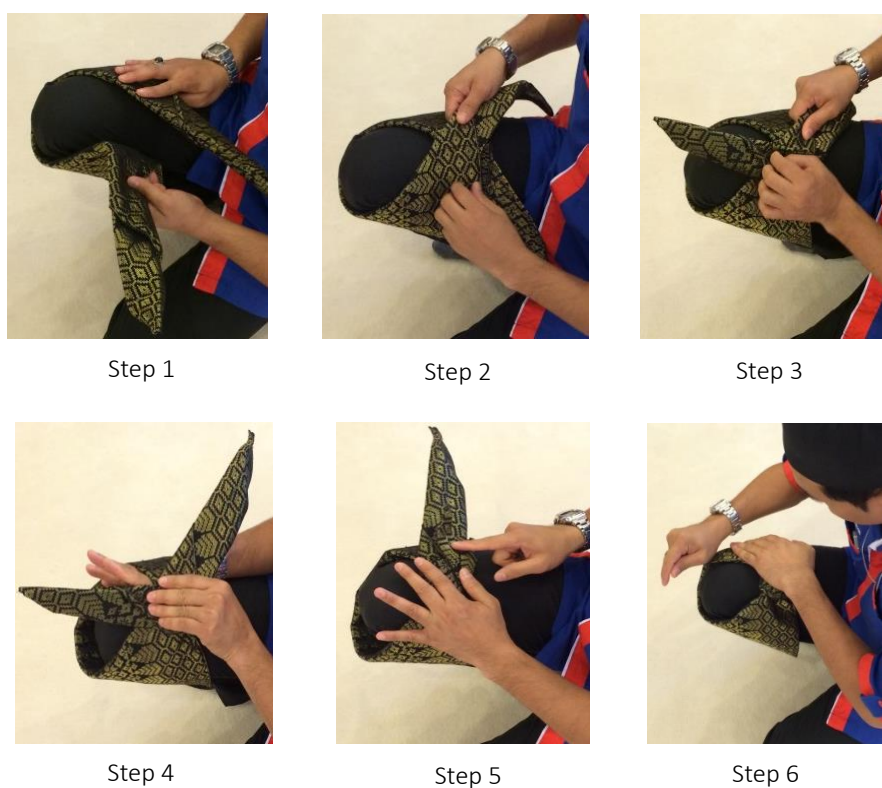


Figure 3 Working steps of the knot tying technique

(c) The Gubahan Solek Technique

Pak Tok Ibrahim, Pak N, Ayah Jed, and Haji Basnee were four *tengkolok* binders who were examined for the *Ayam Patah Kepak (APK) gubahan solek* technique. The technique used by these four *tengkolok* binders was discovered to be the same. As shown in Table 3, the *APK gubahan solek* technique consists of five steps.

Table 3

APK tengkolok composition technique steps

Steps	Description
First	Turn the <i>tengkolok</i> fabric so that the top of the fabric is on the thighs. The top of the fabric should face the binder's body.
Second	The <i>tengkolok</i> fabric is pressed with the left hand. Meanwhile, the right hand pulls the fabric's top upwards.
Third	The left hand is used to pull and fold a portion of fabric at the <i>solek's</i> bottom.
Fourth	Pull and fold the top of the fabric diagonally to the right.
Fifth	On this <i>APK tengkolok</i> design, the fabric is folded and bent to form a fracture. The binder's artistry will be required to fold and bend the fabric at this point.

Source: Field Study, 2014



Steps 1



Steps 2



Steps 3



Steps 4



Steps 5

Figure 4: Steps of the *gubahan solek* technique**(d) Point of View**

The design of the *Ayam Patah Kepak (APK) tengkolok* will be studied from five different viewpoints: front, right, rear, left, and top. Each side examined will reveal the overall shape of the *APK tengkolok*.

Front View

The base (B), *pucuk rebung (PR)*, and *solek (S)* are visible on the front side of this *APK tengkolok* shape. There is a broken section near the base of the *tengkolok*. The main feature of the *APK tengkolok* is this broken part. According to image 5a, the shape of this *tengkolok*

was bound by PT1. PT4 created the shape of this *tengkolok* in Figure 5b. When referring to the composition of PT1 in figure 5a, its design is inferior to that of PT4. As a result, these two APK designs have different *solek* but still have the broken *APK solek* feature. The *solek* constructed by PT1 informant is triangular and low, whereas the *solek* constructed by PT4 informant is higher.

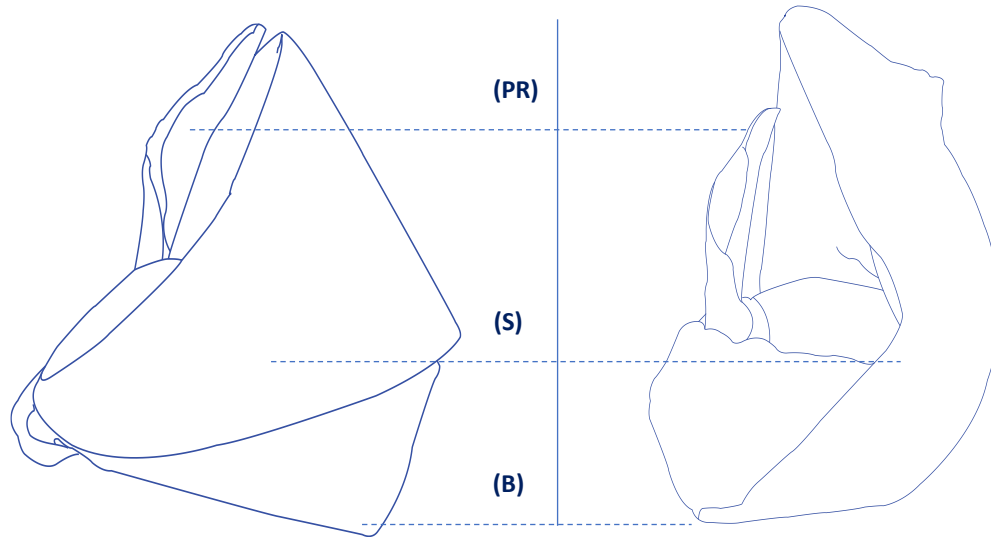


Figure 5 (a) Front side of APK TB1 and (b) Front side of APK TB4
Source: Field Study, 2014

Right Side View

This is an interesting angle because the entire *garam sebuku* (GS) and *pucuk rebung* (PR) are clearly visible. When properly examined, this *garam sebuku* reveals a small inverted triangular shape. While *pucuk rebung* has a tapered triangular shape.

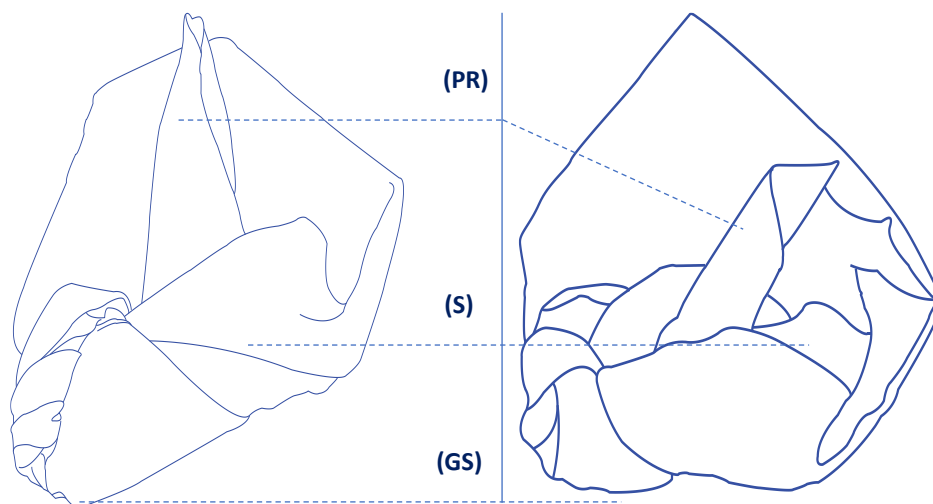


Figure 6 (a) Right side of APK TB1 and (b) Right side of APK TB4
Source: Field Study, 2014

Left Side View

This left side shows the *base* (B), *pucuk rebung* (PR), and *solek* (S). The base is square in shape. The top of the *pucuk rebung* follows at the top of the *solek*.

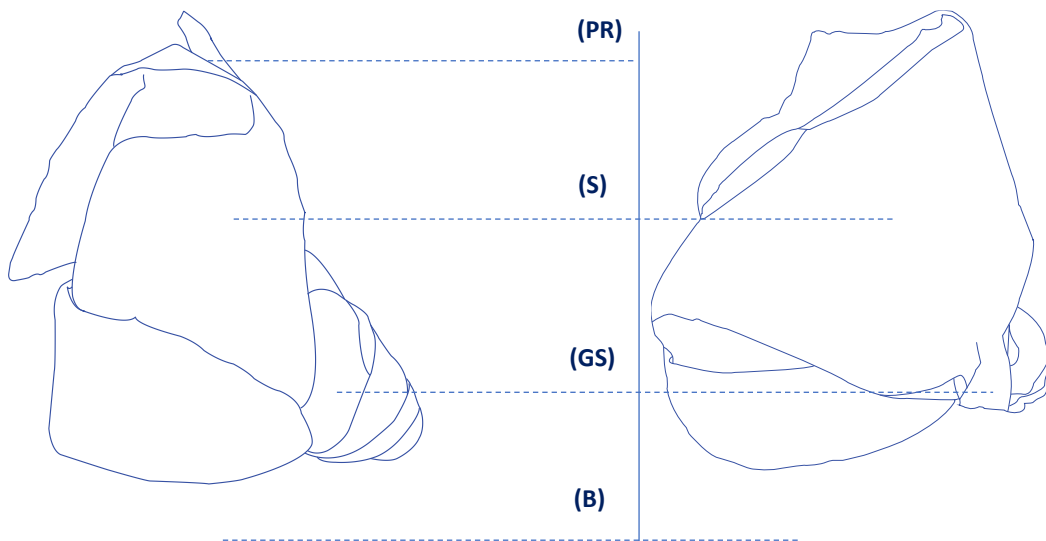


Figure 7 (a) Left side of APK TB1 and (b) Left side of APK TB4
Source: Field Study, 2014

Rear Side View

The back of this *tengkolok* design shows the *tengkolok base* (B), *pucuk rebung* (PR), and *solek* (S). Finally, the top of the *pucuk rebung* leans to the left.

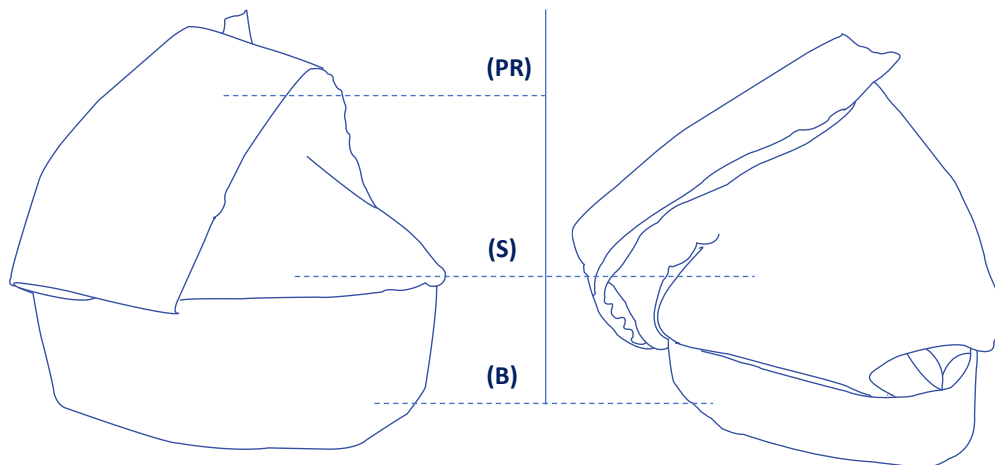


Figure 8: (a) Rear side of APK TB1 and (b) Rear side of APK TB4
Source: Field Study, 2014

Top View

The top side view reveals a triangular shape on the solek.

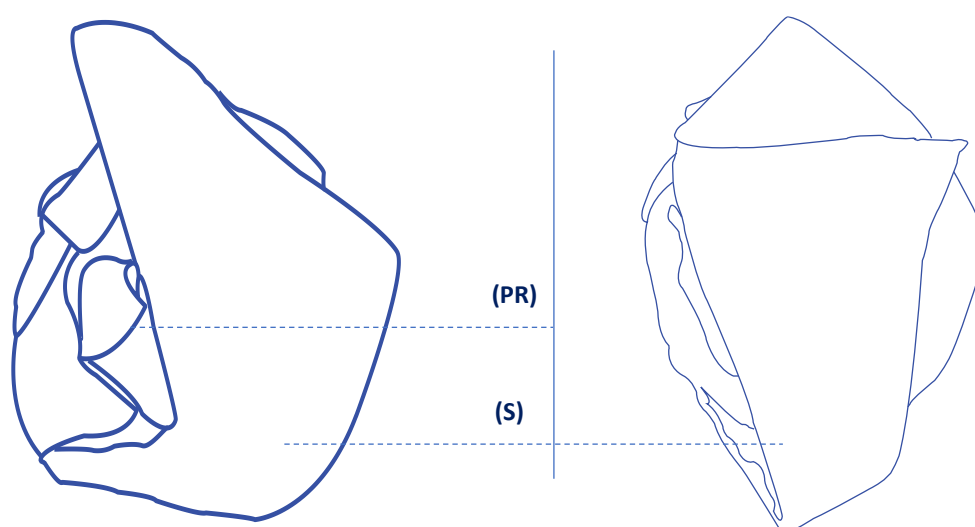


Figure 9: (a) Rear side of APK TB1 and (b) Rear side of APK TB4
Source: Field Study, 2014

Symbolic Design of the Ayam Patah Kepak (APK) Tengkolok

This *tengkolok's* design is inspired by fauna, specifically chickens. The chicken in question is a rooster participating in cockfight. This activity of cock fighting was once one of the leisure activities pioneered by men. The inspiration for this design came from seeing an injured rooster with its wings broken. The previous *tengkolok* binder was inspired to design the *Ayam Patah Kepak tengkolok* by the condition of the rooster with broken wings. The beauty of this APK *tengkolok* design is in the solek, which has one broken section. The fracture reveals that the *tengkolok* is an *Ayam Patah Kepak Tengkolok*. The symbolism of this design can be examined in figure 10 below.



Figure 10: Cockfighting roosters with broken wings
Source: <https://katamalaysia.my/culture/ayam-bertinju-penjaga-menang-duit/> [12 June 2022]

Conclusion

The structure and design of the *Ayam Patah Kepak tengkolok* are discussed from five different viewpoints. These viewing angles are front view, right side view, rear view, left side view, and top view. The beauty of the shape of the *Ayam Patah Kepak tengkolok* can be detailed in great depth through these five points of view. The details of the shape of the *tengkolok* can highlight the symbolism behind the design of the *Ayam Patah Kepak tengkolok*. The *Ayam Patah Kepak* symbol is a rooster whose wings are broken during cockfighting. This symbolism can also demonstrate the depth of knowledge of past *tengkolok* binding. The art of binding the *tengkolok* is one of the Malay community's skills that must be preserved. The art of binding the *tengkolok* has become a valuable treasure of the Malay community. As a result, all parties must share responsibility for preserving the art of binding the *tengkolok*. The younger generation is one of the target groups that should be prioritised in terms of acquiring these skills. This skill does not require only courtiers to learn it; what is important is that they are Malays who still appreciate Malay culture and heritage art. As a result, today's young generation is encouraged to learn the art of this skill so that it can be passed down from generation to generation.

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