



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i11/15126> DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i11/15126

Received: 13 September 2022, **Revised:** 17 October 2022, **Accepted:** 30 October 2022

Published Online: 15 November 2022

In-Text Citation: (Jaafar et al., 2022)

To Cite this Article: Jaafar, R., Hooi, L. B., Othman, A., Haron, H., & Yusof, N. A. (2022). Design of Masjid Kampung Keling and Acculturation of Chinese Culture. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 12(11), 2105 – 2125.

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Vol. 12, No. 11, 2022, Pg. 2105 – 2125

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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



www.hrmars.com

ISSN: 2222-6990

Design of Masjid Kampung Keling and Acculturation of Chinese Culture

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Abstract

The Chinese communities' historical involvement in the architectural style of Malaysia's old mosques has established its presence in Malay society. Acculturation is focused on the meeting and mutual effect of Malay and Chinese cultures in this study. The goal of this research was to understand the aspects of Chinese culture that inspired the architectural and artistic styles of the mosques. This investigation focuses on the Masjid Kampung Keling in Malacca. The public's understanding of the history of Chinese cultural acculturation in this distinctive mosque is limited. As a result, this study was carried out to broaden and improve knowledge of traditional Malay architectural features, particularly Chinese acculturation. For this research work, a qualitative research methodology was developed alongside cultural studies and exploratory data methodologies in order to comprehend the mosque's distinct design aesthetic. The findings of this study provide a clearer picture of how early Islamic cultures in the Malay region developed their architecture. Pyramid roofs, roof crowns, embellishments, and towers are all examples of Chinese cultural acculturation. The findings of this study provided a better understanding of how earlier Muslim communities in the Malay world developed. As a result, it is expected that this study will provide a comprehensive picture of the evolution of mosque design in Malaysia and Malacca and can be applied to the ongoing development of concepts that will be useful to future academics.

Keywords: Malacca, Traditional Mosque, Acculturation, Chinese Culture, Design

Introduction

The mosque is the primary place of worship for Muslims and the heart of Islamic society. Mosques were built all over the world as places of worship as Islam gained popularity. However, in the field of Islamic education, the mosque as an institution serves a broader range of purposes. Because of the Prophet Muhammad SAW journey to Medina, the establishment of the mosque was a significant factor in the advancement of education and became a very significant institution. According to Mustari and Jasmi (2008), the Prophet Muhammad SAW established the Quba Mosque, al-Mirbad Mosque, and the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, which has since become the centre of Islamic education.

The moral and social inspiration of Muslims drives the use of a mosque as an educational institution other than a place to perform special worship activities (Omar et al, 2019). The appearance of the mosque institution as an educational centre was a shift caused by a conflict between the main functions of the house, which is the right of the individual and slightly less suitable as an institution open to public meetings. In this regard, Zaimche (2001) argued that the mosque is the most important and effective place of learning because it can revive the sunnah and eliminate heresy while also teaching and practising the laws of Allah SWT.

As a public gathering place for people from all walks of life, the mosque can provide necessities and requirements for Muslims. Mosques grew rapidly as educational centres as Islam spread and its colony expanded following the death of Rasulullah SAW. Mosques have been built in accordance with these efforts throughout the newly established Islamic territories, including territories once ruled by the Roman and Persian empires (Dougherty, 1996). According to Islamic terminology, the mosque's function is to serve as a focal point for all religious and community activities, particularly those pertaining to worship and Islamic education (Omar et al., 2019; Dougherty, 1996).

The Grand Mosque or Al-Haram in Mecca, Nabawi Mosque in Medina, Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, Kufah Mosque in Iraq, and Basrah Mosque and Amru bin al-As Mosque in Fustat in Egypt are among the earliest mosques. Initially, the mosque institution was introduced as an educational centre, and other functions with the educational structure were kept on an informal basis (Tamuri et al., 2012). However, when a study centre is established in connection with the mosque known as al-Suffah, it has become a more systematic centre of education. In a variety of original and borrowed forms, the building's shape frequently represents concepts about nature and the surrounding area. The word "mosque" comes from the Arabic word "sajada" or "sujud," which means "to prostrate" and is typically associated with worship. This implies that the mosque is a place of prayer or adoration for Allah SWT. According to Abd Hamid et al (2015), the fundamental reason for designing and building a mosque has remained consistent from its inception to the present: to provide a space for practising Islam, including Friday prayers, public worship, and da'wah, as well as to meet the needs of the community in general or to provide resources that can improve quality of life.

The Malay World's history is inextricably linked to the history of Islam and its early mosques. The origins and spread of Islam in Southeast Asia are still hotly debated topics. The Malay world, or Nusantara, refers to the universe of islands. Although the terms are interchangeable, Nusantara refers to the Southeast Asian countries of Brunei, the Philippines, Singapore, the southernmost portion of Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Malaysia. Islam is thought to have gained significant ground by the 13th century AD, following the rise of many Islamic kingdoms, such as Pasai and Perlak in the Malacca Straits. Between 1271 and 1295 AD, Marco Polo, a Venetian merchant, explorer, and writer, travelled through Asia along the Silk Road and then crossed the Malacca Strait on his way back to Europe, stopping in Perlak on Sumatera's northern coast. Many of the town's residents had been converted to Islam at the time, according to Marco Polo. According to Ibn Battuta, a mediaeval Moroccan Muslim traveller and Islamic scholar who travelled to China via the Malacca Strait between 1345 and 1346, the ruler of Samudra Pasai was a Muslim who enthusiastically carried out his religious responsibilities. After the Hindu-Javanese Majapahit Empire fell, the spread of Islam continued throughout the Malay Archipelago. The discovery of tombstones and stones with Jawi writings adds to the tangible evidence of Islam's early history in this region. In general, several hypotheses exist regarding how Islam entered the Malay World, including the well-

known Arab, Indian, and Chinese theories. However, each has made a significant contribution to the spread of Islam in the region.

The earliest mosques in the Islamic world held special meaning for Muslims all over the world, inspiring them to strengthen their faith and belief in Islam. The mosque has been the most important and influential institution in Islam since the time of Prophet Muhammad SAW. A mosque's design style can generally tell us about the period and region in which it is found. To discuss the design style of Malacca's traditional mosques, it is also necessary to discuss the history of Chinese culture acculturation and the special relationship between Malay and Chinese that allowed for acculturation to the design style of Malacca's traditional mosques.

As a result, understanding this context allows comprehension of cross-cultural relationships associated with the design style, as well as the various intellectual contexts that have been debated.

Research Objective

The objective of the study is to provide a general history of Malacca's Masjid Kampung Keling. The second is to analyze the Masjid Kampung Keling's architectural design. The third is to discuss the cultivating of Chinese culture in the Masjid Kampung Keling.

Literature Review

Concepts of acculturation and culture

Culture is defined broadly as a diverse pattern of human behaviour. Every culture, tribe, and nation have different cultural practises, customs, and human values. A culture develops characteristics that distinguish it from other cultures. As a result, culture has a significant impact on determining a civilization's identity and contributes to the evolution of human life. Acculturation, the process by which multiple cultures come into close contact for a set period of time, produces a new cultural breed. A variety of factors influence the concept of acculturation, including colonisation, migration, trade, and tourism. Acculturation interactions are widespread throughout the world, encouraging imitation and copying. Acculturation is readily accepted when it involves a tangible benefit to society, such as mosques. Acceptance of non-material cultural components such as ideology and idea are more difficult. Acculturation frequently results in imitation all over the world. Because acculturation and adaptation are now well understood, it is possible to develop policies and programmes that will assist all parties in achieving their objectives (Berry, 2005).

Acculturation can be seen in languages, faiths, and beliefs, as well as social structures, societies, knowledge systems, art, and architecture. Acculturation refers to the extent to which a person accepts specific values, beliefs, traditions, and practises in a new culture (Guarnaccia & Hausmann-Stabile, 2016). Acculturation, according to Spielberg (2004), is a process that involves both cultural and psychological changes as a result of interactions between two or more cultural groups and their participants. While acculturation affects individual behaviour changes, it also has an impact on social structures and institutions at the group level. According to Schwartz et al (2010), there are two key insights into the concept of acculturation. The first is the concept of acculturation, which seeks to understand the various occurrences that occur when groups of people from other cultures enter a new civilization and alter the original cultural pattern. Using this concept, acculturation is distinguished from assimilation and cultural transformation. The issue of cultural transformation is viewed as having a broader scope, which includes acculturation. The interaction of two or more cultural

systems is the starting point for the second concept, acculturation. In this case, cultural transformation is used to comprehend acculturative change. Non-cultural factors such as ecological or demographic changes could be to blame.

Acculturation, according to Schumann (1986), is a two-way process of cultural interaction involving two groups in a relationship impacting one another, or what Mariscal & Morales (2015) refer to as transculturation, which is a relationship between cultural elements. Cultural changes result from the interaction of the two civilizations. Berry (2010) defines acculturation as "the phenomenon that occurs when two groups of different cultures first come into direct contact, followed by the adaptation of either one or both groups' original cultural patterns."

Berry (2005) identified numerous acculturation strategies, including assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalisation. The assimilation method is used when people prefer everyday interactions with people from other cultures over maintaining their own cultural identity. The separation technique is the inverse. People who adhere to the principles of their native culture while avoiding social interaction are said to be employing the separation strategy. The integration strategy is realised when a person is motivated to preserve his or her own culture while also fostering regular interactions with members of other groups.

Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research methodology, as well as cultural studies and exploratory data techniques, in order to comprehend the distinctive design aesthetic of Masjid Kampung Keling. Data collection, organisation, evaluation, and interpretation were used to obtain answers at various stages of the process. In order to close the knowledge gap, a number of literary studies were conducted using a variety of sources, including historical and architectural publications, journals, dissertations, theses, and articles on various topics.

Finding and Discussion

Masjid Kampung Keling

Masjid Kampung Keling was built in 1748 (Yusof et al., 2014), 20 years after the construction of Masjid Kampung Hulu. It is located at the popular Harmony Street (Jalan Tukang Emas), which is also home to other places of worship for different religions that are the Cheng Hoon Teng temple (Buddhist) and Sri Poyyatha temple (Hindu). The mosque is not far from Masjid Kampung Hulu, and there are still arguments on the logic of a second mosque in the same area because in Islam, the construction of a mosque is done to meet the needs of the mosque congregation around the area, and a second mosque is unnecessary if the first mosque has delivered its function.

The history of Kampung Keling based on the story of the locals is said to have started from an early settlement descended from Arsaily. The population were the Indian Muslim Gujarat traders who had married locals and settled in the area. The majority of the residents living in this village were Peranakan Keling, hence the name Kampung Keling. The term "Kling" or "Keling" refers to Indian natives from south-eastern India, and the continent of Keling in the Malay language was related to the term "Kalinga" (Sanjay, 2011). They were usually Muslim merchants in the sixteenth century and resided at a settlement known as Kampung Pali, Kampung Balik Pali, or Kampung Kapar (Ahmad & Mujani, 2019). The name Masjid Kampung Keling is derived from the name of the original village, which is inhabited by many Indian Muslims (Ahmad & Mujani, 2019). In the seventeenth century, Tamil Muslim

merchants on the Malay peninsula came to be designated by another term, that is Chulia (Sinnappah, 1987).

According to locals, Masjid Kampung Keling was built by Che Mat Hj. Kecut. The site of the mosque is said to belong to the Dutch, and it was gifted to Harun, the father of Shamsuddin Harun who was responsible for the construction of Masjid Kampung Hulu. Che Mat Hj. Kecut was a wealthy man at the time. He was assisted by his son-in-law Hj. Yahya to collect land rental tax around Kampung Hulu. The proceeds from tax collection are used to build several mosques around the city of Melaka, including the Masjid Kampung Keling. Originally built with timber, it was rebuilt into a building made of bricks in 1782 and renovated again in 1808. Nevertheless, it is said that the present condition of the mosque was the result of the renovations between the years 1938 and 1940. The unique feature of the mosque is that the contractor who built the mosque consists of a combination of all races living in the area (Ahmad & Mujani, 2019). This mosque is also known as Masjid Kampung Pali, Masjid Kampung Balik Pali or Masjid Kampung Kapar.

In the study conducted by Ahmad & Mujani (2019), the actual date of the opening of Kampung Keling was unknown to either locals or outsiders. This situation cannot be determined precisely but facts are stating that there was a close connection of the locals with the arrival of Gujarat traders from the Coromandel Coast of India (Moorthy, 2009).

Another theory about the mosque is the original site of the mosque was the first place where Indian Muslim traders who came to Malacca to trade in the 14th and 15th centuries performed their prayers once they arrived in Malacca. Peranakan Indian known as the 'Chetti' is believed to be of Indian origin who arrived in Malacca during the Malay sultanate era (Moorthy, 2009). The Indian community at that time was influential in Malacca such as King Kassim who was of Muslim Indian descent. The community was associated with being the Aceh gold merchants as well as goldsmiths and farmers. During the Portuguese and Dutch occupation, they still traded as usual and were considered rich, and some managed to buy land in the Malacca area.

When Malacca began to decline as a centre of international trade beginning the Dutch occupation, the economy of the Peranakan Keling community was also affected (Moorthy, 2021). Most of them began to turn their attention to living in villages. However, since the rental price of land and houses was too high, this situation forced them to sell houses and land to the richer Chinese (Moorthy, 2009). When they lived in Kampung Keling they built the mosque as a place of worship and community gathering and eventually handed the ownership over to the local community (Kadir et al., 2019). Masjid Kampung Keling was built to serve as a congregational mosque (Ernst, 1995), and it was fully funded by the community. Each tile in the mosque represents one person who donated for the construction of the mosque (Ahmad & Mujani, 2019).

Design Style of Masjid Kampung Keling

Like any other old mosque in Malacca, the main structures of Masjid Kampung Keling include the prayer room, the veranda, the roof, pulpit, minaret, and ablution pool among others. The mosque is unique because we can see different design influences such as Malay, China, Indian and Javanese blended harmoniously as seen in its architecture and ornamentation. Similar to other mosques with multiple-tiered roofs, the shape of the floor plan of Masjid Kampung Keling is square (Nash, 1998), which also serves as the main prayer hall.

The four main pillars that support the roof can also be seen in the same area. They are made of the material that were imported from Sumatra. The mihrab of Masjid Kampung

Keling is a semi-circular shape niche with an arched ceiling. There are verandas on each side of the mosque, except for the side where the niche is located. This façade, which was once a raised arcade, also houses the Mimbar of the pulpit.

The Mimbar is square with a semi-circular roof, and every corner is elaborately decorated with wood carving featuring the *awan larat* motifs popularly used in Malay design and also associated with the design in Chinese temple. There is also a swastika symbol associated with Javanese-Hindu motifs at the lower part of the *mimbar*. Masjid Kampung Keling also employed the pyramidal-roof consists of a three-tiered roof, and the roof is decorated with a roof crown at the top. The roof crown of the mosque is made of ceramic, a durable material that can endure any climate and is decorated with engraving that resembles the English King's crown. The use of ceramic was considered a luxury other than its enduring appeal during that era.

The minaret is a six-storey four-sided shaped structure with a semi-circular arch opening on each wall, and it has a spiral staircase connected to reach the top floor of the minaret. At the top of the minaret, lies a crown roof. The minaret which has been associated with the Chinese pagoda (Nasir, 2004) also served as a lighthouse during its heydays, which is plausible given its location along the Malacca River and the Straits of Malacca, and its role in the trade community.

The minaret distance from the mosque compound is approximately 3 m and it houses a *beduk*, which is used to signal a call of prayer. However, those days are gone and now the mosque uses a loudspeaker to replace the *beduk* (Ahmad & Mujani, 2019). At that time, the absence of loudspeakers made the drum or *beduk* more effective to signal a call for prayer. Most the old mosques in Malacca have *beduk*, which is usually located in the veranda area or next to the mosque. Although nowadays, loudspeakers are used to call a prayer, the presence of a *beduk* can still be seen, although its function is no longer maximal, and it is rarely used, except in certain times.

An ablution pool is located at the right side of the mosque and was decorated with ceramic tiles to match the interior. There is a fountain at the centre of the pool surrounded by medium size pillars painted in silver and gold.

The Foundation

The nuances of the Nusantara style mosque can be seen in this Masjid Kampung Keling. It stands on a square floor unlike the hexagonal or rectangular like most mosques in the region. There is an additional construction to the mosque space to accommodate the number of worshippers during Friday prayers, and it can accommodate up to 600 worshippers at a time, especially during a celebration.

Main Prayer Hall

The prayer hall is the main structure in a mosque. There is an arcade that consists of five semi-circular arches at the forefront of the prayer hall where the niche is located, giving the mosque a distinctive feature compared to other old mosques in Malacca, such as Masjid Kampung Hulu. The six Palladian columns with Ionic capital sit on a concrete base painted in gold. The four main pillars that support the top tier of the roof can be seen. The space with glass panels is reserved for the female worshippers, and it is a temporary annex. During a Friday congregation prayer, the panels are moved to allow men worshippers pray at the area. The mihrab or niche of the mosque is a small space with curved arch located at the forefront of the prayer hall, and the wall is fully covered with ceramic tiles. Looking up from the prayer

hall, part of the roof is covered with high ceiling, and some part of the roof structure can be seen. The coloured clerestory windows can be seen from the prayer hall. A beautiful chandelier centered at the main hall illuminating the space at night. It is said that in the olden days the chandelier was gas-powered, but it has been modified to become electric-powered.

Veranda

The veranda is no less important in a mosque building that has the function to accommodate additional worshippers if the main prayer hall cannot accommodate a large congregation (Yusof et al., 2014). The verandas are located at the northern, southern, and eastern part of the main hall, and there are short stairways that connect the lowest ground of the mosque to the veranda. The veranda is also carpeted similar to the carpet installed in the main prayer hall. The other pillars of the mosque are located around the verandas, and they were made of concrete and stand on a pedestal decorated with Peranakan style ceramic tiles. The intricate iron balustrades can be seen between the pillars surrounding the verandas.

The Roof

The roof of the Masjid Kampung Keling has the three layers pyramidal roof adorned with roof crowns at the top and roof ridge decorated with carvings at each end. The top tier of the roof is supported by the four main pillars made of *ulin* or *belian* wood, and the rest of the pillars support the second and third tiers of the roof. There are coloured pane clerestory windows between the first and second layer of the roof with ornamented panels made of wood installed for lighting and ventilation purposes. In addition to the decoration at the elongated ends of the roof ridge, the roof ends also display wood carvings with geometric patterns that are typical in Malay decoration.

The Minaret

Different from the minarets of the old mosques in Malacca (which are in octagonal or hexagonal shape), the minaret of Masjid Kampung Keling is a four-sided tower that resembles a pagoda. Apart from being used to signal a prayer, it used to function as a lighthouse for the seafarers to navigate their way along the Straits of Malacca in the old days.

Pulpit

The pulpit of this mosque is exquisitely carved with floral and some geometric motifs. It holds a dome-like roof with ridges and decorated ends. There are small steps that lead to the place where the Imam delivers his sermon, and the floor of the pulpit is carpeted. The pulpit is painted in dark red and gold.

Decorative Elements

As found in other old mosques, Masjid Kampung Keling has its own unique decoration. The most distinguished decorative element can be seen on the pulpit where piercing and relief carving was used displaying intricate motifs. According to Abdul Kadir & Suyurno (2018), the pulpit is decorated with Javanese-Hindu motifs as found on other pulpits of the old mosque. Other decorative elements include Islamic art calligraphy wood carvings that can be seen adorning the top part of the arches in the main hall, on the window head and also the door head. The wood carvings on the window and door head used piercing technique which is not only filtering the daylights but also provides ventilation to the internal space. The carving of the traditional Malay house is not only aesthetical but also functional for filtering daylight.

(Zuraini et al, 2015). The high ceiling of the main prayer hall is also decorated with intricate wood carvings. Other decorative elements that can be seen is the use of Peranakan ceramic tiles on some parts of the wall and the floor of the mosque. The original floor is installed with ceramic tiles. It is believed that the floor tiles were the result of the charitable contributions of the early residents there, whereby, one tile was equivalent to a donation from one resident (Ahmad & Mujani, 2019).

Door and Window Elements

Nine doorways lead the worshippers to the main prayer hall, and there are six window frames, located on the east and west sides of the main prayer hall. The two window frames at the front wall where the mihrab is had different designs compared to the others with its distinctive-looking diamond shape, similar to the ones in Masjid Kampung Hulu. The doors have a door lite on each side. A door lite is the individual glass panel in a door. The windows are covered with wooden grilles, a typical old wooden window style that can be found in many of Malay's traditional houses in Malacca.

Ablution Area

The ablution pool of Masjid Kampung Keling is almost similar with the one in Masjid Kampung Keling. It is located next to the mosque and is covered with ceramic tiles. The gilded tiered fountain at the centre of the ablution pool differentiates it from the ablution pool of Masjid Kampung Hulu. There is a roof with an opening at the top sheltering the pool, and it is supported by pillars painted in silver and gold.



Figure 1.1: Front Image of Mihrab of Masjid Kampung Keling
Source: Penselpatahtunteja (2019)



Figure 1.2: Main Prayer Hall of Mihrab of Masjid Kampung Keling
Source: Sirbtrips.com.n.d.



Figure 1.3: Roof and Minaret of MKK
Source: Melakaoldmosqueinfo.blogspot.com.2017



Figure 1.4: Mihrab of Masjid
Kampung Keling
Source: Sharulnizam Mohamed
Yusof. 2019.



Figure 1.5: Ablution Pool
Source: Bujangmasjid. 2010.

The Acculturation of Chinese Culture in Masjid Kampung Keling

Looking at the early development of the history of Chinese carpentry in Malacca, the entry of design elements from China can be seen through two main phases, namely around the 15th and 18th centuries. The first phase occurred during the reign of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 A.D) and the Malacca Sultanate era (1409-1511 A.D), while the second phase occurred when the Dutch conquered Malacca in the 1641 A.D. Between the 16th and 17th centuries, the development process involving Chinese carpentry in Malacca stagnated due to the Portuguese occupation of Malacca (Lee, 2016).

The influx of Chinese carpentry influence that took place in the first stage occurred as soon as the Melaka government established diplomatic relations with the Chinese government. During the Sultan of Malacca's first visit to China, the Chinese government sent some Muslim Chinese craftsmen and upon their return to Malacca, mosque buildings began to be erected (Suyurno et al., 2017).

According to Armani & Arbi (2014), the tiles used in the early stages of mosque construction were brought specifically from China. The development of Chinese architectural design also increased during the reign of Sultan Mansur Syah in 1426 (Ahmad et al., 2015) where the migration of Chinese to Malacca brought along their distinctive architectural design and structure, which can be seen in some of the old mosque's roof and minaret. This type of construction was then practised in the construction of buildings erected in the city of Melaka (Ahmad et al., 2015).

However, the mosques that were built in the city during the heyday of the Malay Sultanate of Malacca were destroyed by the Portuguese, while the prototype of this mosque was still used as a guide to build mosques after the fall of the Portuguese in Malacca in 1641 (Suyurno et al. 2017). The second phase of the entry of Chinese carpenters in Malacca took place when Malacca was under Dutch rule. The Dutch saw the Chinese community as a secret call that could guarantee the Dutch's position to survive longer in Asia after beginning to realise that the British threat could shake their power.

The Chinese community in Malacca mostly worked as builders and carpenters. They were also the first craftsmen to work and use bricks in the construction of buildings (Abdul Kadir et al., 2019). To succeed in this political guaranteed mission, the Netherlands imported Chinese workers from Batavia (Jakarta) through the East India Company based in Java to help in the process of economic development and carpentry in Malacca (Suyurno et al., 2017). These migrating Chinese communities began to introduce Chinese architecture in their carpentry.

As a result, the architecture of the mosque began to grow rapidly. Chinese carpentry skills also influenced the formation of original construction methods and architecture (Ismail & Hassan, 2017) in Malacca in the 18th century. The components introduced were roof crowns, sulur bayur, and portal that is unique and easy to identify (Armani et al., 2014). Usually, the craftsmen involved in this construction introduced a new form of construction and the form was assimilated with traditional architecture. These Chinese craftsmen played a role in the construction of the place of worship and the design of the building was adapted from the remnants of buildings found in Southern China during the Qing Dynasty (Baharudin & Ismail, 2016).

Among the reforms introduced was the use of ceramic tiles to replace the roof made of coconut leaves, roof crowns to decorate the top of the roof mosque, and the use of bricks to replace the original forms made of wood or other materials. The tower was also introduced as one of the most important features in the construction of the mosque (Abdul Kadir et al., 2019). The Chinese populations in Malacca grew rapidly and their role was also very important in development activities when Malacca was under the Dutch rule (Ismail & Hassan, 2017).

The presence of the Chinese community in Malacca was warmly welcomed by the Dutch and their skills were also recognised (Ebrahimi & Yusoff, 2018). Chinese skills were considered so high that a Malay leader sent a letter to the British governor asking for some Chinese craftsmen to assist in carving the royal tombstone (Bahauddin & Ahmad, 2018). This shows the importance of Chinese influence in Malacca's building history.

Pyramidal Roof

In keeping with the title given to the decoration at the top of the mosque, various interesting shapes can be seen on the roof showing the creativity of the builders who combined Islamic teachings and the cultural heritage of the local community that has long existed in their lives.

Generally, each crown of the roof of a mosque has a rectangular base section. This is to ensure the stability of the crown connected to the roof section. In general, the crown of the roof of a traditional mosque in Malacca consists of several main features such as it is located at the top of the mosque, it is pyramid-shaped, its base is square or rectangular, it is layered, and has decorations.

The old mosques in the state of Malacca have a pyramidal roof arranged in layers (also known as meru roof). The tier comes in two or more tiers supported by main pillars. Apart from being referred to as the overlapping roof of the mosque design found in Malacca, it is also referred to as a pyramid-roofed mosque (Abdul Kadir & Suyurno, 2018).

The name is given based on the shape of the roof, which has a large base at the very bottom and is narrower at the top (Abdul Kadir et al., 2017). As in figure 1.6, Masjid Kampung Keling is still considered as part of meru roof design since the shape of the roof is pyramidal shaped.



Figure 1.6: Masjid Kampung Keling with three tiers pyramidal roof
Source: (Wikipedia, 2019).

Two main theories debate the influence of this meru roof. The first theory was pioneered by (Pijper, 1947; Stutterheim, 1948). They projected that the pyramid roofs were from Hindu cosmology influence and this architecture was influenced by Balinese architecture in Java. During the pre-Islamic era, buildings with meru roof in Nusantara were considered the sacred buildings of the gods. The shape was then slowly adopted on mosque buildings as a peaceful transitioning process from Hindu-Buddhism to Islam. This opinion is similar to Armani & Arbi (2014), in which they described the early architecture in the Malay world already had its own unique identity before Islam. Masjid Kampung Keling use meru-shaped roof and has multiple tiers overlapping roof. The logical thinking of the construction of the old mosque with this meru roof is that it took consideration of the local tropical climates where the overlapping roof doesn't collect water when it rains and the higher roof acts as a natural vent to cool down the prayer hall when the weather is warmer.

According to Ismail and Hassan (2017), this type of roof got a strong Hindu-Buddhist cultural influence that took place in the 7th to 14th centuries. It is said that the peak of the roof resembled a mountain or Meru that is regarded as a living god by Hindu, while the Malay community perceived the ancestral roof as their Malay rulers. The second theory was projected by Graaf (2004); Lombard (1996) who argued that the construction of this layered roof was from the strong Chinese influence on the ancient mosques in Java because of its pagoda-shaped roof.

Evidence that can be linked to this theory is that many dominant Chinese traders settled on the North coast of Java while spreading the teachings of Islam (Armani & Arbi, 2014). According to Abdul Kadir et al (2017), the feature of this pyramidal roof is taken from Chinese and Japanese carpentry. This layered roof design style is unknown in the Middle East. The style and design of the pyramidal roof the shape of these mosques is taken from the architecture practised during the Ming Dynasty.

The result of the migration of the Chinese community to Southeast Asia has brought together the pyramidal roof design with some modifications to suit the environment of the Malay world. Looking at the design of this Malaccan style mosque, one of the most important features of the roof design of this mosque is its pyramidal roof with decorative elements such as *sulur bayur*, and the top of the roof is decorated with a roof crown. The pyramidal roof under this study also has clerestory windows with decorative panels in different materials such as ceramic tiles, wood, plaster, and glass, the same with decorative elements that can be found in Chinese temples. Therefore, this study agrees with the second theory where the influence of this pyramidal roof design came from China because the important features found in the mosques of Malacca have similarities with the houses of worship and residences of the Chinese community.

However, differences can be seen in the size of the main prayer space where each mosque still retains a square shape, similar to the first mosque developed by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. and the mosques found in the Arab world in general. Some of the old mosques in Malacca also have a square shape main prayer space and is fitted with a meru roof. It is different from the space inside a religious building in China which is rectangular in shape and is fitted with a pyramidal roof.

Based on the findings during the field study, some similarities can be seen in the meru-roofed mosque with the roof found in Chinese houses of worship such as the layered roof shape, the roof crown as the main decoration at the top of the mosque, and *sulur bayur* or decorative elements at the end of the roof. This Chinese roof design spanned almost 2000 years and its influence spread all over China long ago. When the pyramid-shaped roof was introduced in the Malay world, it had undergone several modifications to suit the current situation, the nature, and public acceptance, particularly in Indonesia and Malacca.

Roof crown

The decoration on the top of the roof of the mosque is better known as the roof crown and usually it is made of ceramic. Besides being known as roof crown, it is also known as *mustoka*, *buah buton* by the people of Kelantan, or *buah gutong* by the people of Terengganu. This decoration can only be found in the old mosques in the Peninsula, especially in Malacca, and it is also found in temples in China. The origin of the making of this roof crown comes from the province of Canton and Fukien, China. Utaberta et al (2012) believes that the roof crown in Malacca Mosque has a Chinese influence.

When the Chinese migrated to Malacca, they introduced this roof crown as a component in the construction of buildings and then absorbed it into the construction of mosques (Suyurno et al., 2017). This component later became one of the most important features that were eventually considered as the symbol and identity of the old mosque in Malacca. The manufacture of roof crowns is usually produced using ceramics. The use of ceramics at that time was considered a luxury because ceramics (Abdul Kadir et al., 2019) was a very valuable commodity, besides having its charm. There is a possibility that the whole roof crown was produced in China and shipped to Malacca before being installed at the top of the

roof. This is because there is no collective record stating the presence of a ceramic or pottery industry around Malacca at that time to enable the entire production of a roof crown to be done fully by locals in Malacca. According to Rosey Ma (2009), Hui community, the Chinese Muslim in China has a very distinct artwork on porcelain and ceramics. Vases in all shapes and sizes, and household items were typically Chinese in style and design, adorned with Islamic ornaments and inscriptions. The artworks were usually gifted to dignitaries of Muslim countries. In China, there is a ceramic industry in Jingdezhen, Southern China, that was established as early as the 6th century CE, though it was named after the reign name of Emperor Zhenzong, in whose reign it became a major kiln site around 1004. By the 14th century, it had become the largest centre of production of Chinese porcelain, which it has remained, increasing its dominance in subsequent centuries (Vainker, 1991). This shows that the ceramic or pottery industry in China had developed and matured long ago, and the country has a countless ceramic industry all over the country, which makes it possible for the theory of ceramic import ware to be found in Malaysia, and the possibility of some of the ceramic elements of decoration in old mosques of Malacca had travelled far from China before being installed at the mosques.

The application of the roof crown in the mosque building can further highlight the greatness of the mosque style due to its high value (Ahmad et al., 2015). Roof crowns made of ceramic were very durable and able to withstand Malaysia's hot and humid tropical climate. The crown of this ceramic roof used to go through a series of long firing processes, and it was fired at a high temperature that hardened the clay and changed to its final shape. Therefore, the use of Chinese ceramics roof crown not only can highlight the appearance of the mosque as an attractive worship building, but its durable aspect can save costs compared to other roof crowns made of different materials such as wood and plaster.

The motifs that are frequently used in the decoration are flora motifs (such as lotus), and nature motifs (such as the meandering cloud). The shape of the roof crown in the mosque is also like a pyramid, which is large at the bottom and smaller at the top. The uniqueness of the roof crown is seen in its intricate pattern as well as the durable material. The design of the roof crown in the 18th-19th century in Malacca had a certain uniqueness and became an identity to the traditional architecture of the mosque in Malacca. Each roof crown has its own design, some of the roof crowns consist of a layer of decorative element, some have a decoration of up to five layers as can be seen in the Masjid Kampung Keling (Figure 1.7.).

The first layer starts from the base of the crown and the design gets smaller at the top. The roof crowns found in the study show a resemblance to a stupa and are decorated with lotus petals at some of the layers.



Figure 1.7: Roof Crown of Masjid Kampung Keling

Source: (Zakaria et al., 2012)

Sulur Bayur

In each mosque with a meru roof, there is a *sulur bayur*, which is the ornamentation at the end of the roof ridge. Other names of *sulur bayur* are *sulur bayung*, *sayap layang-layang*, *sayap ayangan*, *ekor itik*, *anjong balla'*, and *som* (Utaberta et al., 2012). According to Abdul Kadir et al (2019), several mosques in Malacca have patterns with Chinese carvings and decorations, and they are very noticeable and usually can be seen at the ends of the roof and the top of the mosque. The decoration of *sulur bayur* can also be seen in Chinese temples (Ahmad et al., 2015). Those buildings show roof ridges with delicate and fine sculptures of mythical creatures such as dragons, phoenixes, and zodiac animals, and sometimes a combination with florals can be seen. This type of ornamentation on the roof ridge got influenced by Chinese architecture, brought by the Chinese community who came from Guangdong and Fujian provinces, and this ornamentation style began to flourish in Malacca and were produced in many patterns and shapes at that time. Among the motifs used are animals, birds, flowers, fish, insects and gods, and the roof ridge were usually made using mortar, marble, and porcelain chips (Armani et al., 2014). However, the *sulur bayur* in Malacca old mosques are much simpler and mostly consist of geometrical patterns, vegetal ornamentation, and calligraphy since the portrayal of figurative representation of animals and human figures is forbidden in Islam to uphold the holy image of the religion.

"He who creates pictures in this world will be ordered to breathe life into them on the Day of Judgment, but he will be unable to do so." Hadith, Sahih Muslim (818-875)

To simplify the exaggerated roof ridge decoration in Chinese architecture, the artisans created a design with no element of excessive appearance. Overall, the design and pattern of the roof ridge found in China can be divided into three forms: first, the roof ridge that ends with an arch, and second, the roof ridge that ends with a geometric decoration (straight and curved lines, shapes that result from geometric abstract carvings, and some influenced by nature), and third is a roof ridge that ends with a ceramic sculpture (Abdul Kadir et al., 2017). This category includes images of humans, plants such as pine trees and natural elements such as clouds, mountains, and waves. All these motifs have their meanings depending on the interpretation (Armani & Arbi, 2014). The *sulur bayur* of Masjid Kampung Keling (Figure 1.8), looks like a flora motif and the shape is curved inward. However, according to Ahmad Zakaria et al (2012), the motif resembles a swirling motion of waves.

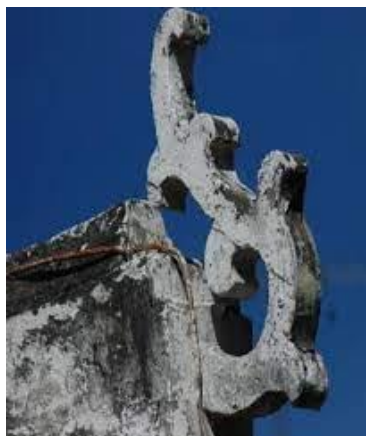


Figure 1.8 Sulur bayur of Masjid Kampung Keling
Source: (Syaimak, 2015).

The Minaret

In the olden days, a torch pin was installed at the top of the tower and a flame was lighted to indicate that it was time for prayers or to announce something important. It also functioned as a lighthouse for the seafarers to navigate their way along the Straits of Malacca. The towers were built with features displayed following the instructions of locals and they are different from other districts. Each district or country built the towers with their creativity with a combination of Islamic design and local culture (Abdul Kadir et al., 2019). The mosque towers in each country are built differently following the conditions, climate, and topography (Baharuddin & Ismail, 2016). The tower in Malacca old mosques was usually a later addition to the mosque, long after the final construction of the mosque had been completed. The minaret also housed a *beduk*.

In the early stages, the traditional mosques in Malacca used *beduk* to inform that it was time for prayer. *Beduk* was also used to call the village community for a gathering for easier communication when the head of the village wanted to convey information. In the early 19th century, the minaret was introduced and began to be built on many traditional mosques in Nusantara, and the feature was different from the other mosques throughout the world. Mosques in Malacca that have pyramid-shaped roofs were usually combined with the uniqueness of a Chinese minaret that resembled a pagoda (Sojak et al., 2019).

According to Abdul Kadir et al (2017), this pagoda-shaped tower was built by the Chinese who were specially brought from China through the order of the person who was responsible for the construction. Many view the Chinese pagoda as an inspiration for the construction of mosque towers in the archipelago, including Malacca (Mohd Sojak et al., 2019). In addition, the influence of this pagoda-shaped tower originated from the Tang Dynasty and was brought into Malacca by the Chinese community living in South China. (Armani & Arbi, 2014). The octagonal minaret of Masjid Kampung Keling (Figure 5.10) is located at the northern side of the mosque, with a staircase inside which leads to the top. The minaret is covered with a roof, and it has eight semi-circular arched openings at the top part of it.

The minaret of Masjid Kampung Keling (Figure 1.9) is four-sided and from the outside, it looks like the minaret has six floors. Each level has one or two small openings on each wall. At the top part, there are eight semi-circular arches around the walls. The roof has a decorative element at the end of the ridge, almost similar to the decoration on the mosque's roof. The minaret of Masjid Kampung Keling shows the most obvious Chinese design (Asif et al., 2019). There is the view that the craftsmen involved in the construction of this mosque were under the observation of a Chinese craftsman. Concerning that, Chinese architecture can be seen in the construction of mosques in Malacca in the 18th century when the state was under Dutch rule.



Figure 1.9: The Minaret of Masjid Kampung Keling
Source: (Vmenkov, 2008).

The Wall and Archway

The mosques in the Malay Archipelago initially did not have a wall or gate. The use of the wall in mosques was first introduced during the Dutch rule in (1641-1824) and the construction of walls in mosques in Melaka was the result of carpentry from China. The wall of the mosque is simple and usually modestly decorated. One of the main reasons the mosque has walls is to keep the mosque safe from unexpected things. For this reason, bricks or concrete were chosen because it provided a strong barrier to the mosque. According to the management of the mosque, the gate is a divider of space from the hectic atmosphere outside, so it provides a calm atmosphere inside the mosque that allows the congregation to pray and meditate peacefully.

The archway of the Masjid Kampung Keling (Figure 1.10) shows a combination of different architectural styles. It is a combination of European, and Chinese styles and the archways show no strong sign of Islamic architecture, Malay, or Hindu-Buddhist architecture (Somayeh, 2014). The archway of Masjid Kampung Keling shows an influence of a *paifang* or a traditional style of Chinese architectural arch or gateway structure. The archways of Masjid Kampung Keling represents an interesting example of Chinese influence through the decoration on the archway's roof which shows a resemblance to the decoration found in Chinese temple around Malacca. As seen on the curved ends of the archway of Masjid Kampung Keling, it shows the influence of Chinese workmanships. And it has a striking similarity with the decoration of the gateway of Cheng Hoon Teng Temple, the country's oldest Chinese temple located at close proximity of Masjid Kampung Keling. Decorative elements can be seen on some part of the wall structure especially on the upper part of the wall. The decorations are almost similar to the decorative elements found on the roof ridges of the mosque.



Figure 5.12: The Archway of Masjid Kampung Keling

Source: (GalavantingJeff, 2017).

Conclusion

According to the findings of the study, there is a cultural relationship between the Chinese and the Malays that causes cultural acculturation to the architecture and decoration of the Masjid Kampung Keling. The influence of Chinese cultural elements on the mosque is clearly visible on the pyramidal roof, roof crown, minaret, archway, decorations, and motifs such as the *sulur bayur*, which can be traced back to traditional Chinese architecture and craftsmanship. In Malacca, the Chinese community played a significant role in the field of carpentry. The Chinese community's migration to Malacca introduced the region's heritage of Chinese architecture and craftsmanship. The acculturation effect on the design style of the old mosques in Malacca clearly demonstrated that Islam is universal and can be accepted as a part of Muslims' lives as long as it does not violate sharia. The arrival of Chinese in Malacca has resulted in distinct influences on the design style of Masjid Kampung Keling. The design style was influenced by those responsible for its construction, whether they were the funder, architect, builder, artisan, or supervisor.

It is recommended to future researchers who will conduct a study on the acculturation of foreign culture in historical mosques that the study be continued in a more detailed manner, such as using mixed-method research to collect more comprehensive data. The primary goal is to look into the Chinese involvement in the architecture and ornamentation of Malacca's old mosques. It is critical to investigate the significance of these influences in order to gain a better understanding of the mosque design revolution as well as the acculturation that occurred in the region. As a result, it is critical to broaden these studies beyond Malacca to include other countries such as ASEAN and China. A cross-sectional study of early mosques in specific regions can be conducted to reveal the similarities and differences in design styles to determine where they originated in order to better understand the influence of the Chinese in the archipelago's early mosques, particularly in Malacca. Because history is something related to the past and obtained through the physical evidence that remains, detailed and comprehensive documentation of this historical building must be taken seriously. Malaysia's history and Chinese influence on building architecture will recall the country's development through events and remnants of historical monuments that can still be seen today.

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