

# Developments in the Islamic Heritage in South East Asia. From the Past to the Future “Case Study – Mosque Architecture in Malaysia and Possible Influences in the Classification Styles”

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**Abstract - This research aims at revealing the historical improvements of the Islamic Architecture in Southeast Asia since the first design Idea of a mosque which has been created by prophet Mohammad till these modern days in Southeast Asia. It is noted that the Islamic architecture has been developed in six traditional typologies types of mosque for renewal. Southeast Asia’s Mosque was divided into a set of types according to the prevailing culture in the region.**

**These types are: The Iranian Indian, Turkish, Chinese, and Southeast Asia’s Types. This research sheds light on the main features of these types, to establish the correlation between the features of the mosque in Malaysia which contain characteristic of the main types, but distinguish in the form according to the local community’s traditions and culture.**

**Keywords:** Islamic Heritage, Mosques, Southeast Asia, Malaysia, Mosque Architecture.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The first Mosque in the Islamic world was built in Medina inspired by an idea from the prophet Mohammad. It was a rectangular construct from mud; its roof was covered with the use of palm leaves, in accordance with the local style represents in flat construction with four walls at the opposite sides of the roof.

The first section of the roof is covered with palm leaves, while the columns were located adjacent to rooms pertain to the prophet Mohammad.

The other section was allocated at the opposite end of the Mosque for the poor’s and the immigrants who like to spend the night, and for those who have devoted their life to learn the Quran and to serve the prophet.

The mosque gave the impression that the building with a flat surface of the proof and a compound of many open spaces. The multipurpose room idea came as a place for worship and prayer, and for multi-usages.

This form of multi usages in building of the mosque is still existing in the modern era with free choice about the architectural forms, but one of the crucial things is the direction of (Qiblah) to attain simplicity and elasticity of the Islamic architecture, to use all spaces in a single large space which is the multipurpose room, designed by the prophet Mohammad to educate his followers equality, modesty, and freedom.

This architectural elasticity and freedom helped the Muslims architects in different countries of the Islamic world in designing different forms according to their traditions, also allowing them to imitate other non-Islamic Cultures, innovating modern and elastic architecture.

The most imitative form of the mosque topology was found in Arabia, Spain and North Africa, the flat proof’s small domes covered the (Mihrab). This type of mosque is also provided with (Sahn) forming a linkage around the whole shape of the mosque. {6}

Hypostyle is a term used to describe a room with many columns similar to that of the Egyptian’s temples, it has one minaret, while prophet Mohammad’s first mosque had no minaret. {3}{4}.

This typology contains one or more minarets, where the basic prying space has been crowned by a huge semi-circular dome with half domes to resist the spanning system, it features the (Sahn) covered with many small domes.

In the Iranian’s typology, the massive iwan’s gateway can be seen from the (Sahn)’s entrance, and from the entrance gateway to the great wall (figure 2).

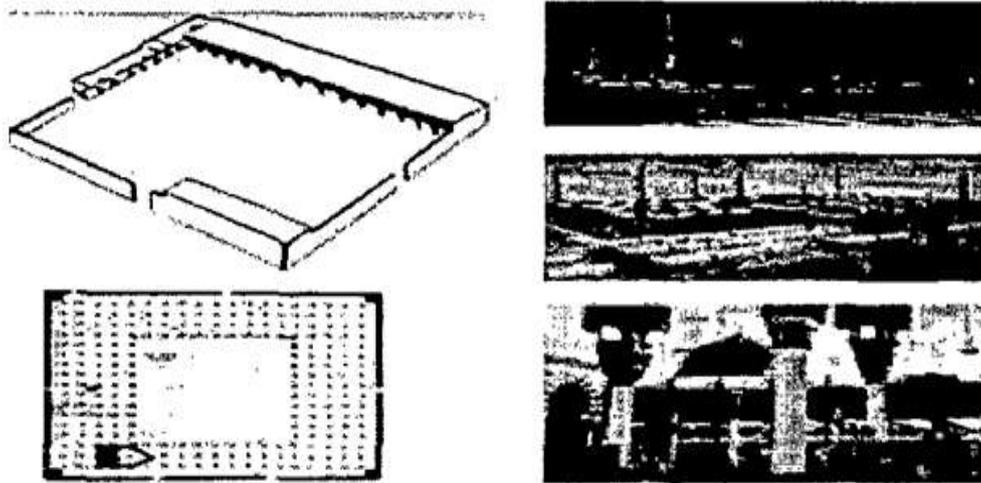


Figure 1: The prevailing usage of domes has emerged from the ottoman period and formed central domes in the Roman's Catholic world

Many of the Iranian mosques were also used as (schools) Madares for other facilities, and three massive iwan's gateways opening from the inner courtyard in specific spaces. {6}.

The mosque was covered with painted domes that vertically rise and sharply turn to the apex.

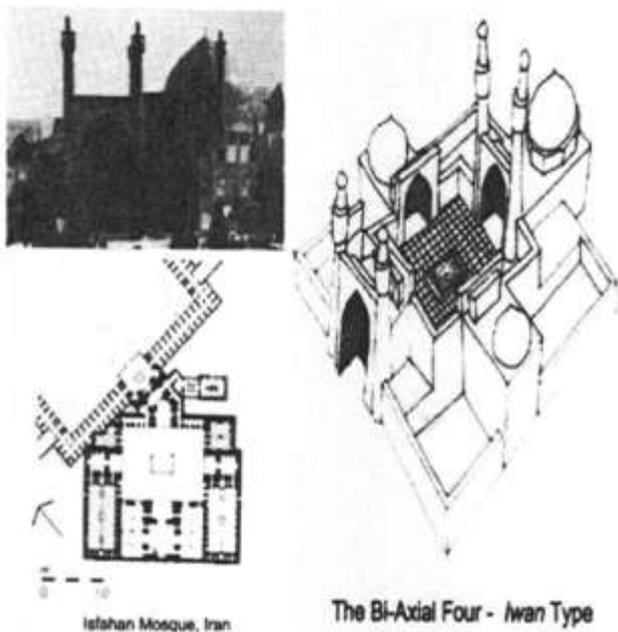


Figure 2: The courtyard - (Sahn)

The Indian subcontinent models of its mosques after the Iranian with big gateways, but the Indian's mosques were distinguished by their preferred onion domes and arches. In addition to the huge courtyard space with the usual sign (figure 3).

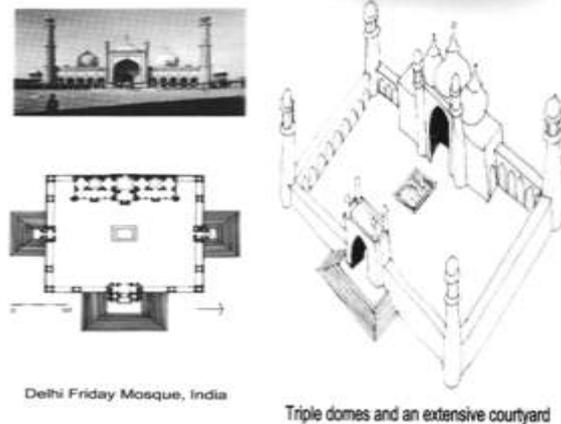


Figure 3: The huge courtyard space with the usual sign

The Chinese mosque typology used the house, temple and palace form (Figure 4). The whole complex is walled with many inner courtyards serves as the outdoor spaces, the roof structures were from timber as the buildings' walls.

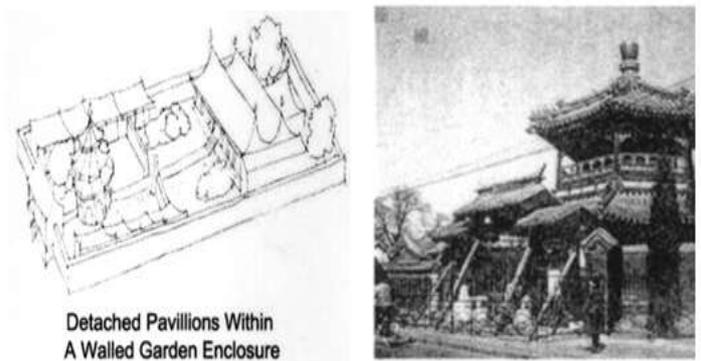


Figure 4: The Chinese mosque typology used the house, temple and palace

The Southeast Asia region the Nusantara type was found, it had similar setup, except it used the pyramid with multiple levels of roof (figure 5). The first mosques did not have

minaret, the architectural elements have appeared after few decades as district architecture project as a minaret.

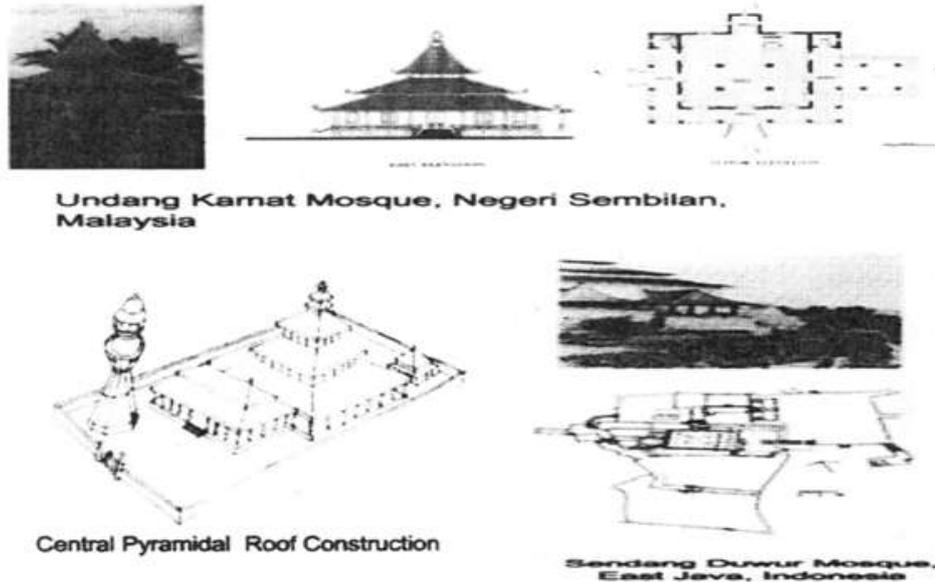


Figure 5: The pyramid with multiple levels of roof

The second, In Malaysia, there are seven styles of architectural traditions that had the influence on the design of the mosques.

**II. DESIGNS OF THE MOSQUES WERE CLASSIFIED AS FOLLOW**

1. Traditional
2. Sino- Eclectic style
3. E-classic Style European-Colonial
4. The North Indian
5. Modern Vernacular Style
6. The Modernistic Style
7. The post- modern revivalism

These architectural traditions have described the features of each style; they contain the motive for socio-political influence making the great impression about the choice of these types of architectural traditions.

**1. Traditional vernacular style**

The word traditionally is used to represent practices and ideas of the Malays before the entrance of colonialist to into the country, while the word vernacular indicates at the existence of materials, craftsmanship, and technology during the pre-colonial period {1}, {2}.

1.1 There were three forms of mosque which can be clearly distinguished by the use of the roof form:

- 1) Three tier’s pyramidal roof form as the one in kampong (Figure 6).
- 2) The second type is the two – tier pyramid roof form, as in papan a gable roof shape which is similar to the home (figure 6). There existed a single or double level shape of the roof in this type.

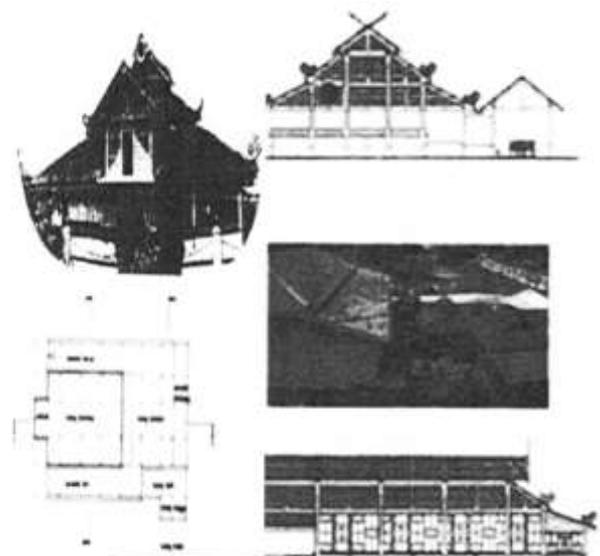


Figure 6: Three tier’s pyramidal roof form as the one in kampong

1.2 The architectural classification of the mosque in this style is as follow:

- 1) Were made of wood.
- 2) All mosques had veranda.
- 3) The absence of minaret, but later was added.
- 4) Mosques, have only one space layout.
- 5) Mosques were built near a river for ablution, few of them had wells for preparing to prayer.
- 6) All mosques used the traditional lumber of the post and beam system.

## 2. Sino- Eclectic Style

This term has been derived from two aspects of the phrase: It indicates at a Chinese influence, eclectic which indicates at a combination of influences on the architectural tradition.

2.1 In this category, there are two types of mosques:

1. The three-tiered pyramidal roof form
2. The double pyramidal roof form

The first type of roof form similar in proportion to that of the traditional vernacular style (figure 7)

But the difference lies in the prominent curvature of the roof rides which is made of cement, as in Kampong Hulu Mosque. The Tengkeru Mosque, and the Kampong Keling Mosque in Melaka.

2.2 In this style, the architectural classifications of the mosques are:

1. The mosque in this style sits at the floor not in at relief as the traditional ones in vernacular.
2. Have raised by (50 cm) with stone staircase to access the main floor.
3. The plan of the mosque consists of drawings of prayer and area of a veranda that surrounds the three parts of square.
4. These mosques are located in the dense urban areas surrounded with a masonry fence, with a gateway covered as reminiscent of Chinese temples.
5. The ablution area is curated by a pool in masonry, almost there is a graveyard patch as part of the mosque compound.
6. The mosque has pleasant environment, shady trees' and seating for users to sit down and talk, or for relaxation after the prayers.
7. The roof is decorated with vegetable motifs.

The double tired shape of the roof of the mosque is similar in all features with the exception of the number of levels of the

roof this can be seen in the Undang serum mosque of Nigeria Sembilan.



Figure 7: The Tengkeru Mosque, and the Kampong Keling Mosque in Melaka

## 3. E-classic Style European

European classicism refers to the Renaissance architecture which was derived from the Greek's and Roman's heritage. The architectural project is divided by a tripartite, starting from the center's base and top with double support of column semicircle arch or walls with pilasters.

The main characteristic is the strong symmetrical composition of earth and space. Mosque of (Sultan Abu Bakar) in Johor Bahru has four minarets, with small domes to the crest. The prayer hall's roof is a closing hipped. The mosque PasirPelangi built a pyramidal roof in the form of remembrance. The vernacular tradition of the mosques in the post but the absence of any division of levels. Sultan Ibrahim's mosque of Muar Johor has used a gable roof that covers a wide central portion of prayer.

3.1 The constructive elements:

The columns & the arches, are in masonry semi- circular, the cement floor of the plant is rised less than (50 cm) above ground built of tile. The structures the roofs are of wooden beams.

#### 4. North Indian Style

This type of architectural design has been imitated by the Malay's civilization, particularly in onion domes.

All mosques were formed from plant with more minarets in the horse shoe shape, and many small domes large onion shaped. In addition to multiple arches on columns decorated with gold, as the mosque of Penang, the Jame, Masjid India in Kuala Lumpur, are examples of this style. {10},{9}. The plans of the mosques are like the mosques of any other style with central domes and veranda.

The mosque's compound is fenced with the usual external parking (figure 8).



Figure 8: The Mosques were formed from plant with more minarets in the horse shoe shape, and many small domes large onion shaped

#### 5. Modern Vernacular Style

This term is used to indicate to building which is constructed using mainly reinforced concrete structure frame with plastered brick infill.

It is vernacular because the presence and practice of these new materials, construction technique is the norm in this country. The mosques in this category are unique to represent an eardrum or pyramidal roof with a small dome contains one large dome located above the prayer in the main room (figure 9). These mosques are within modern village of timber or semi wooden houses with a simple gable. The mosque was built of lumber or partially of masonry, while the veranda should be enclosed by a series of arches.

Theses mosques usually contain a single space of prayer for women in the rare part of the space with a tent or partitions with the furniture. It is clear that women space seems to be an

afterthought in most of these accommodations of the mosques. Majority of these mosques contain one or more minarets with grand gateway portal where the community has close political relation with the government's party. {10},{9}.

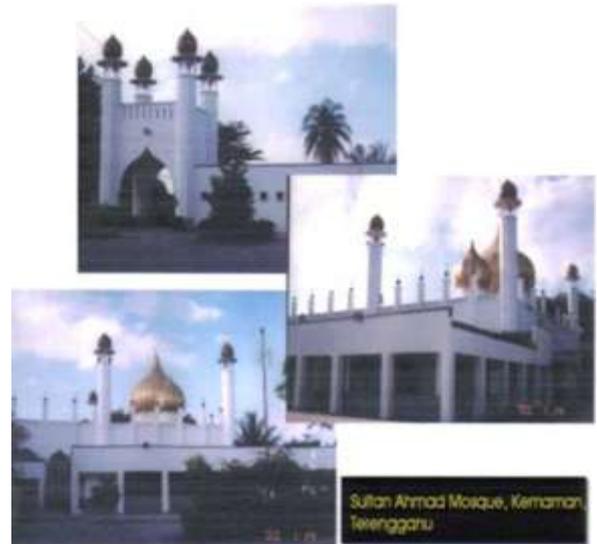


Figure 9: Sultan Ahmad mosque

The mosques in this category are unique to represent an eardrum or pyramidal roof with a small dome contains one large dome located above the prayer in the main room.

#### 6. Modernistic Style

The early evolution of architecture in Europe of the 20th century, many of these ideas relate to the concept of a true architecture, is one opposing the historical revivalism in any form and against the ornamentation in any form. There are two types of modernist styles in the mosques in Malaysia.

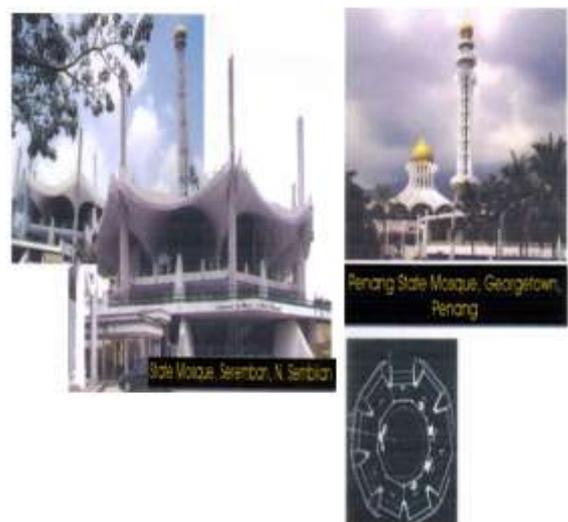


Figure 10: The modernist styles in the mosques in Malaysia

## 7. Post- Modern Revivalism

It is an approach which opposing the principles of what has been understood as a modern style. The term revivalism indicates at one of the many ways in which the post-modernist attempts to establish an architecture of meaning for the general public not for the elite class. {4}, {5}.

7.1 In this category, there are two types of post-modernist and revivalism: {7}, {8}.

1. The first type is the foreign revivalism
2. The second type is vernacular revivalism

The grand statements of the so-called "Glorious Islamic" are the preferred language from the government to express the deep concern "the other important thing is the symbol of Islam.

The vernacular revivalism asks for less monumental approach with its use of three-tiered pyramidal roof form constructed of concrete or timber. The mosque of Melaka represents the grand extreme, while the mosque of Jimmy Lim of villages of Pahang represents a more humble version.,(figure 11). The Malaka state mosque combines the use of arches and gateways along with its neo-vernacular imaginary.[11], [13], [12], {8}. The siting of the mosque is on top of the highest points, in the middle of manmade lakes or isolated from the urban fabric (figure 11).

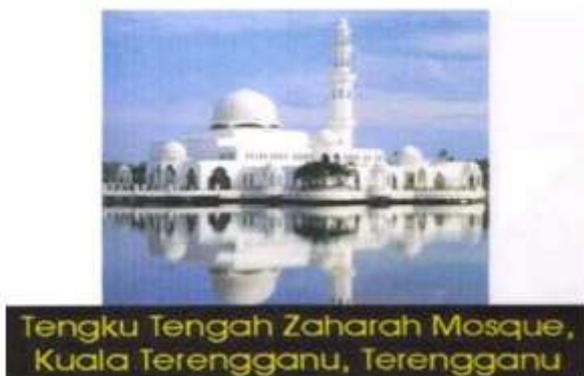


Figure 11: There are type of post-modernist and revivalism

## III. CONCLUSION

The sketch of the mosque in Malaysia represents a rich architectural style, a vocabulary leaves much needs because of the absence of preference for a specific style over another. Supporters of the Middle East revivalism should admit a strong support for the style of monopoly of Islam it can be concluded that Islam for the variety of architecture tradition for the principle of religious doctrine that all people are equal.

Furthermore, the variation in the style is the way for Islam adaptability to the various cultures and beliefs that does not contradict with the main activity to adore to the one God. The other conclusion is that all styles were imitation to face the external influences in the conquered areas. The use of pyramidal roof shape is imitation of Javanese mosque where Islam became a strong political power. While the use of the Indian style means a revolutionary spirit of Islam in the region.

This is evident in contemporary architecture as in palace and mosques, as symbols of Islam success. While the modern style structuralism does not seem to have any design program differs from a simple formal game adapted to modern life. The modern Islamic culture failed to respect the environment inside and outside as it was in the past, like respect of privacy and equality among people. Today, everything disappeared for the crisis values in the Islamic world in this variation search all architects to exert efforts to explain progressive identity, respect of the rich culture, and social erudite from Islamic architecture.

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