



## The Philosophy of the Traditional Lamin Architectural Style of Pemung Tawai, Pampang Cultural Village

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to examine and analyze the meanings and philosophies embedded in the ornaments, carvings, motifs, and statues found in the traditional Lamin houses of the Dayak Kenyah ethnic group, particularly in Desa Budaya Pampang, East Kalimantan. The focus of this research is to understand how architectural elements of the Lamin, both exterior and interior, not only serve as aesthetic components but also represent beliefs, customs, and respect for ancestors. By using a qualitative method and a semiotic approach, the research collects data through direct observation, interviews with local community leaders and residents, as well as literature studies. The analysis is carried out using content analysis techniques to uncover the symbolic meanings of each ornament, carving, and motif on the Lamin. The results of the study show that the architecture of the Lamin reflects the cultural identity of the Dayak Kenyah community, rich in spiritual and traditional values. The ornaments and carvings on the Lamin act as a medium to honor ancestors and preserve cultural heritage, while integrating local wisdom with the surrounding natural environment. This study is expected to contribute to the understanding of the importance of preserving cultural values and traditional architecture in modern society.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Each culture has its own distinctive characteristics, differing in terms of traditional beliefs, arts, and the appearance of its traditional houses, both exterior and interior. A culture will inevitably undergo constant change and development, including in terms of exterior and interior architectural styles.

Culture is closely related to the art and architectural style of traditional houses, which are widely applied to the exterior and interior, in the form of ornaments/carvings/motifs of local wisdom typical of the culture itself, and of course all of this is not just for the aesthetics or color of the building facade, but more than that, these architectural styles contain many meanings or philosophies that are inseparable from the depiction of the ancestors.

Each culture certainly has its own customs for building traditional houses, each with a distinctive and unique architectural form. This ultimately differentiates one ethnic group from another and, indirectly, makes it easier for laypeople to distinguish the characteristics of a culture.

One of the traditional Dayak houses, the Dayak Kenyah tribe, commonly called Lamin, has its own distinctive local architectural style and characteristics, featuring numerous ornaments, carvings, motifs, and statues that make the lamin a popular attraction. The ornaments, carvings, motifs, and statues applied to the lamin are not merely decorative elements, but rather a symbol of the Dayak Kenyah people's trust and respect for their ancestors.

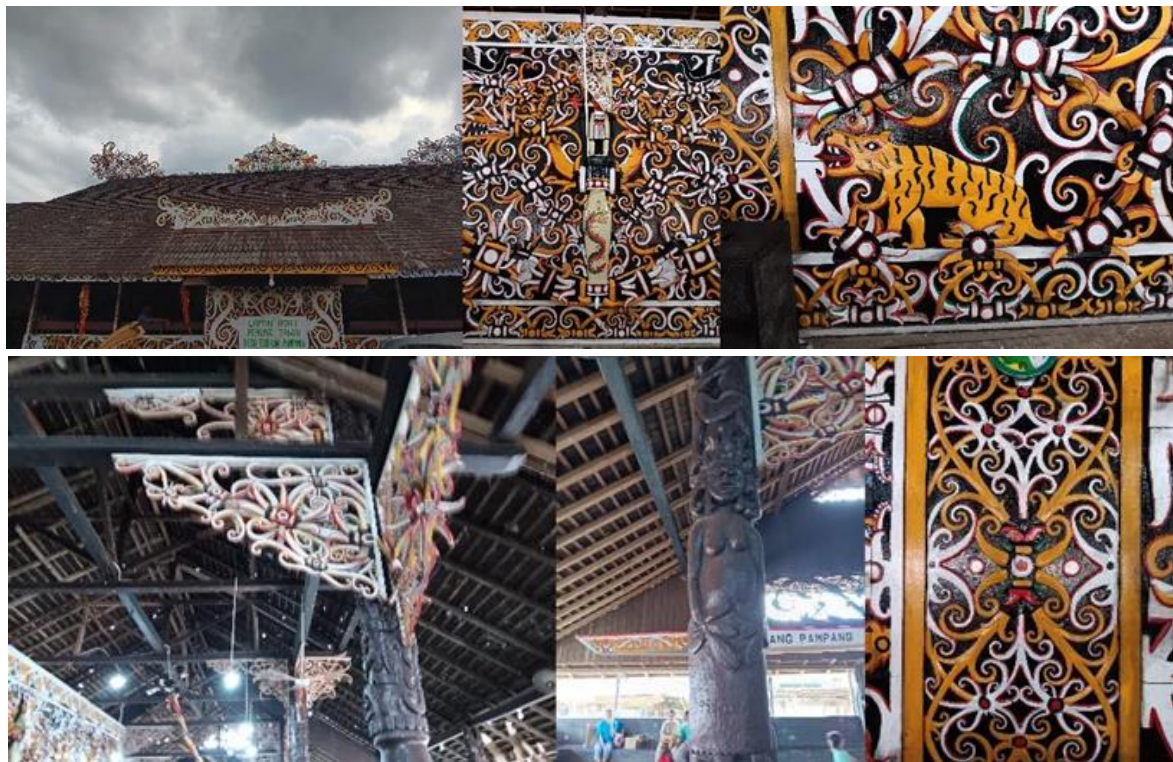


Figure 1. Pemung Tawai Traditional Village (Lamin), Pampang Cultural Village  
Source : Documentation, 2023

### 1.2 Research Objectives

This study aims to examine and analyze the meaning and philosophy contained in the ornaments, carvings, motifs, and statues in the Lamin traditional house of the Dayak Kenyah tribe. The focus of this research is to understand how these architectural elements not only

function aesthetically, but also represent beliefs, customs, and respect for ancestors, thus reflecting a distinctive local cultural identity. This study also seeks to delve deeper into how the local wisdom of the Dayak Kenyah is applied in the architectural style of their traditional houses.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODS**

This study aims to uncover the symbolic meanings contained in the ornaments/carvings/motifs of the Pampang Dayak Kenyah lamin as a representation of the identity and local wisdom of the community. This study uses a qualitative method with a semiotic approach. Data were collected through direct observation, in-depth interviews with traditional leaders and local communities, and literature studies. Data analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques. The results of this study are expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of the cultural values contained in the Pampang Dayak Kenyah lamin, as well as support efforts to preserve it.

## **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1 General Description**

The Pemung Tawai traditional lamin (household) in Pampang Cultural Village is a cultural symbol of the Dayak Kenyah people, rich in traditional values. The lamin serves not only as a residence but also as a center for social and cultural activities. The lamin's structure has distinctive characteristics that reflect local wisdom, from its exterior to its interior architecture.

- **Exterior Architecture**

Externally, Lamin are typically constructed using natural materials such as wood, bamboo, and thatched roofs. The tall, elongated structure reflects their broad social function, often used for gatherings and traditional ceremonies. The ornaments adorning the exterior of Lamin, such as carvings and motifs, hold profound meaning, reflecting the Dayak Kenyah people's beliefs about nature and their ancestors.

- **Interior Architecture**

Inside, Lamin houses are spacious and open. Walls are often decorated with carvings depicting folk tales and symbols important to Dayak culture. The use of ornamentation in Lamin interiors demonstrates the close connection between art and the daily lives of the community. Every detail in the interior of a Lamin holds profound meaning, reflecting the philosophy of life held dear by the Dayak Kenyah people.

- **Local Wisdom and Symbolism**

The ornaments and carvings on Lamin (traditional house) serve not only as aesthetic elements but also as symbols of respect for ancestors. The Dayak Kenyah believe that each motif possesses spiritual power and can bring blessings to its owner. In the context of the Pemung Tawai Traditional Lamin, these ornaments serve as reminders of identity and cultural heritage that must be preserved for future generations.

### **3.2 Location Overview**

Pampang Cultural Village is located in East Kalimantan, specifically in the North Samarinda District, Samarinda City. This village is known as one of the cultural centers of the Dayak Kenyah tribe, who still preserve their traditions and customs in their daily lives. Pampang Village began to be developed as a cultural tourism village in 1991, and since then, it has become an attractive tourist destination for both domestic and international tourists who want to learn more about the life of the Dayak Kenyah people. This village not only offers the

unique natural beauty of Kalimantan, but also a strong cultural life, including art, dance, traditional clothing, and traditional house architecture.

One of the main attractions in Pampang Cultural Village is the Lamin Adat, the traditional house of the Dayak Kenyah tribe, which has unique architecture and is full of distinctive ornaments. This Lamin Adat is not only the center of local cultural activities, but also often used to welcome tourists with various traditional arts performances such as Dayak dances. Lamin in Pampang is famous for its carvings on the walls and pillars filled with typical Dayak motifs, which reflect the local wisdom and spiritual values of the Dayak Kenyah people. Each carving and motif on this lamin has a deep meaning and serves as a medium to honor ancestors and show gratitude and appreciation for nature.

Pampang Cultural Village also hosts a regular event known as the "Pampang Cultural Festival," typically held on Sundays. At this event, visitors can experience various Dayak arts, such as the Hudoq dance, the Kancet Lasan dance, and the Kancet Papatai dance, and hear folktales from traditional elders. Furthermore, visitors can interact with the friendly local community, who are willing to share stories about their daily lives and the traditional values they uphold. These cultural events serve as a way for the Dayak Kenyah people to preserve and introduce their culture to the younger generation and beyond.

Geographically, Pampang Village is surrounded by pristine forests and plantations, creating a calm and peaceful atmosphere, far from the hustle and bustle of the city. This village is a true example of harmonious living between humans and nature, where the local community continues to care for the surrounding environment while maintaining their cultural heritage. Life in this village provides a clear picture of how the Dayak Kenyah people integrate their traditions with the natural environment, which is evident in their architecture, lifestyle, and customs. This makes Pampang Cultural Village an appropriate location for research on local wisdom, traditional architecture, and the interaction of the community with its environment.

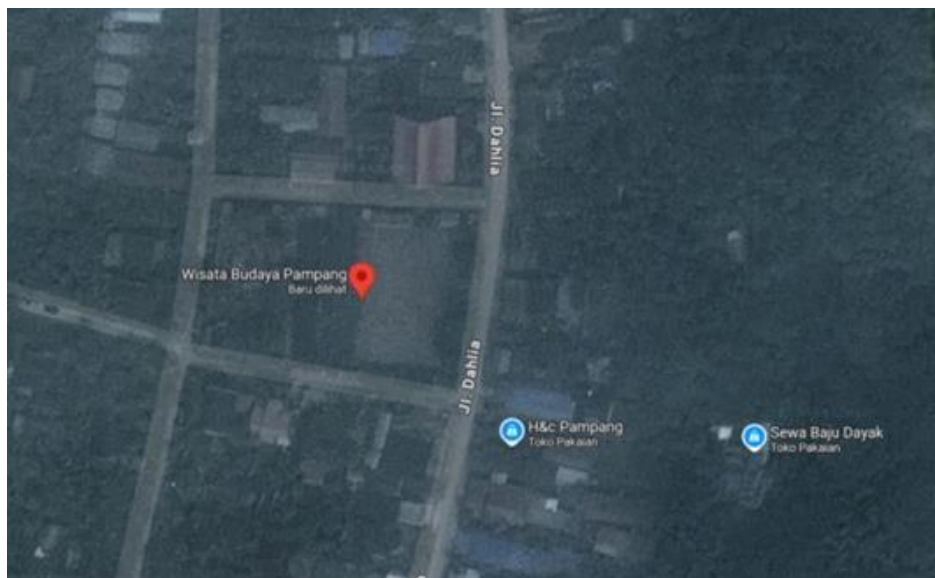


Figure 2. Location of the Pemung Tawai Traditional Lamin, Pampang Cultural Village  
Source : Google Maps

### 3.3 Philosophy

#### 1. Building Philosophy

Dayak Kenyah lamins are designed on stilts, also known as "rumah stilts," for several reasons related to function, culture, and the environment. Here are some explanations for why Dayak Kenyah lamins are built on stilts:



Figure 3. Lamin Stage Philosophy  
Source : Documentation, 2024

- **Function and Security**

- 1) **Flood Protection:** The Dayak Kenyah people frequently experience flooding in their homes. By building their houses on stilts, they can protect themselves from the risk of flooding and ensure their living spaces remain safe and dry.
- 2) **Protection from Insects and Wild Animals:** Stilt structures also help reduce contact with wild animals and insects, which can pose a threat to the safety of the home's occupants.

- **Ventilation and Comfort**

**Good Air Circulation:** The stilt design allows for better air circulation, making the house feel cooler and more comfortable, especially in hot and humid tropical areas.

- **Connectedness with Nature**

**Relationship with the Environment:** Stilt houses create a closer relationship with the natural environment. Residents can easily access land, plants, and other resources, and engage in farming or hunting activities.

- **Cultural and Social Aspects**

- 1) **A Place for Gathering and Interaction:** Stilt structures often serve as gathering places for various social activities, rituals, and cultural celebrations. This fosters a sense of community and strengthens social bonds among residents.
- 2) **Symbol of Cultural Identity:** The design of stilt houses is a symbol of the Dayak Kenyah cultural identity. It reflects the way of life and values of a community deeply connected to its environment and traditions.

- **Aesthetics and Tradition**

**Architectural Beauty:** Stilt houses also possess high aesthetic value, with ornaments and carvings that add beauty and meaning. This demonstrates the creativity and artistic skill of the Dayak Kenyah people.

Thus, the stilt design of the Lamin Dayak Kenyah is not merely an aesthetic choice, but also reflects the community's way of life, values, and adaptation to their environment.

## 2. Half Wall Philosophy

The half-wall section of a Lamin is an architectural element often found in traditional Dayak buildings, including in the context of the Pemung Tawai Traditional Lamin in Pampang

Cultural Village. A half-wall typically refers to a wall structure that does not fully reach the ceiling, creating an open space above. This element is often used to provide natural ventilation and better lighting to the room. The meaning and function of the half-wall include:



Figure 4. Lamin Wall Philosophy  
Source : Documentation, 2024

- **Ventilation and Lighting:** Half walls allow air and light into the space, creating a fresher and brighter atmosphere.
- **Aesthetics and Symbolism:** In the Dayak cultural context, half walls can have symbolic meaning, reflecting the connection between the physical and spiritual worlds. The open space above the wall can symbolize the connection between humans and nature.
- **Social Space:** These structures also facilitate social interaction, as the area above the half wall can be used for various activities, including ceremonies and meetings.
- **Spatial Organization:** Half walls can help organize space without restricting interaction between spaces, creating a sense of greater space.
- **The half walls in a Lamin** are an example of how traditional architecture integrates function, aesthetics, and cultural values, creating spaces that are not only comfortable but also meaningful.

### 3. Lamin Roof Philosophy

The gable roofs of Dayak Kenyah Lamin houses have a distinctive design and serve not only as a building covering but also hold deep cultural significance. Here's an explanation of the gable roofs of Dayak Kenyah Lamin houses and their meanings:



Figure 5. Lamin Roof Philosophy  
Source : Documentation, 2024

- **Roof Design**

- 1) **Roof Shape:** A gable roof typically has two sloping sides that meet at the peak, forming a sharp angle. This shape is not only aesthetic but also functional, allowing rainwater to drain easily and preventing pooling.
- 2) **Materials:** These roofs are generally made from natural materials such as palm leaves, straw, or other locally available materials. The use of these materials reflects local wisdom and the community's connection to their environment.
- 3) **Height:** High roofs are often used in Lamin designs to provide more space inside and promote good air circulation.

- **Cultural Meaning**

- 1) **Symbol of Life:** The gable roof is often seen as a symbol of protection and security. Its upward-pointing shape can be interpreted as a hope for safety and success for its inhabitants.
- 2) **Balance and Harmony:** The symmetrical design of the gable roof reflects the values of balance and harmony in the lives of the Dayak Kenyah people. This reflects how they strive to live in harmony with nature and their culture.
- 3) **Cultural Identity:** The gable roof also serves as a distinctive feature of Dayak Kenyah architecture, distinguishing the Lamin from other traditional buildings in Indonesia. It reinforces the community's sense of community and pride in their cultural heritage.
- 4) **Ritual and Spirituality:** In ritual contexts, the gable roof can serve as a place to store sacred objects or as an area for conducting certain ceremonies. This indicates that the building serves not only as a residence but also as a spiritual space.
- 5) **Overall,** the gable roof on a Dayak Kenyah Lamin is not only an architectural element but also a manifestation of the cultural, social, and spiritual values of the community.

#### **4. Ornament Philosophy**

The philosophy behind the facade of the Lamin Dayak Kenyah building is steeped in traditional values, culture, and beliefs passed down through generations. Here are some key points of this philosophy reflected in the facade of the Lamin Dayak Kenyah:

- **Curved Ornaments**

The ornaments, with their curved and circular motifs, are based on the fern, whose young, spiral-curved leaves are common in Kalimantan. These curves symbolize the unwavering unity of the Dayak Kenyah (Laing Along) people.



Figure 6. Curved Ornaments  
Source : Documentation, 2024

- **Statue**

The statues on the columns, which are shaped like human beings in various forms, symbolize the close family ties between the Dayak Kenyah people despite their various differences (Laing Along).



Figure 7. Statue  
Source : Documentation, 2024

- **Tiger (Harimau)**

The shape of the tiger (lenjeu) depicts the natural riches that animals on earth are not limited to just one type of animal/animal, it also depicts everything that exists on this earth, which is worthy of emulation and is a lesson for the Dayak Kenyah tribe that they want to convey to other people. That is why it is depicted in the form of carvings or motifs. This symbol

also describes the nature of a human being who is wise, does not immediately use his own strength, is humble, and obeys a leader (Laing Along).



Figure 7. Tiger

Source : Documentation, 2024

- **Dragon (Naga)**

The dragon (lengunan), is a depiction of the nature of a leader who does not act carelessly and is wise (Laing Along).



Figure 8. Naga (Dragon)

Source : Documentation, 2024

- **Tempayan**

The shape of tempayan/the jar (tajeu) depicts that everything, such as problems in society, must be done in private so as not to divide the community (Laing Along).



Figure 9. Tempayan  
Source : Documentation, 2024

- **Human Ornament**

This ornament depicts the importance of a leader in protecting his region and people (Laing Along).



Figure 10. Human Ornaments  
Source : Documentation, 2024

- **Hornbill Ornament**

In the Dayak Kenyah culture, the Hornbill bird (also known as the Hornbill or Hornbill in English) has a deep and important symbolic meaning. The hornbill is a symbol of peace for the Dayak Kenyah people, because based on a survey of the ancestors of the Dayak Kenyah tribe, this bird was found not to like to disturb other flocks of birds, for example when eating banyan fruit in the forest together with various other types of birds, it remains calm, and does not even disturb other birds (harmonious). That is why the Dayak Kenyah people chose this hornbill as a symbol of peace because it is considered a good exemplary nature, polite, even though it is big or strong, it is not arbitrary with the small or weak (Laing Along).

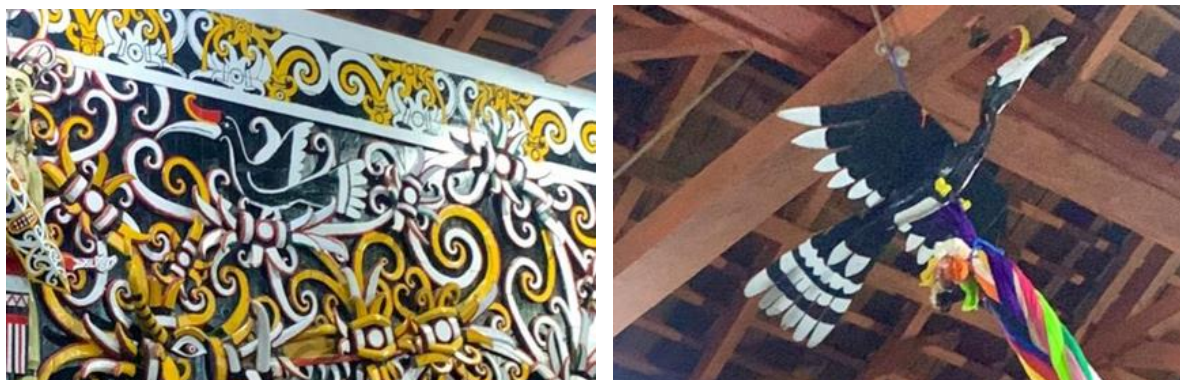


Figure 11. Hornbill Ornament  
Source : Documentation, 2024

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the Pemung Tawai Traditional Lamin in Pampang Cultural Village is not only a traditional building, but also a symbol of Dayak Kenyah cultural identity and heritage rich in meaning. The ornaments, carvings, and motifs on the exterior and interior of this lamin reflect the community's beliefs, traditional values, and respect for their ancestors. These elements function beyond mere aesthetics, becoming symbolic media that possess spiritual values and life philosophies, such as respect for nature and the forces believed to bring blessings.

The Pemung Tawai Traditional Village serves as the center of social and cultural activities for the Pampang community, emphasizing its role in preserving traditions and introducing local wisdom to the younger generation and visitors. Pampang Cultural Village, with its natural charm and preserved cultural richness, not only offers insight into Dayak Kenyah culture but also demonstrates how their traditions remain alive and thrive in harmony with the natural environment. All of these elements support efforts to preserve the culture and local wisdom of the Dayak Kenyah people amidst changing times.

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