

Himasari HANAN and Fitri MEISYARA

Lesson Learned from the Transformation Process of Toba Batak Villages

Abstract

This study deals with three Toba Batak villages that have experienced a significant change in its traditional layout and house form, by which only 20% of traditional houses have retained its original state. The other 80% have been changed into new buildings with a style of modern landed house. The process of transformation has been started off when the Dutch people during colonial time initiated a new house form with large openings and high ceiling. In the post-colonial time, a new type of landed house has been introduced in conjunction with a new standard of living adopted from the urban lifestyle. Nowadays, people prefer to use industrial building materials and practical construction system that may reduce the cost and time of building houses. The investigation is undertaken by field survey in 2013-2014 by identifying spatial uses in houses and interviewing inhabitants of the villages. Primary data are analyzed to identify the pattern of physical changes and its relation to the family life in the house. The result of the study indicates that contemporary needs of living space for the family have exceeded available space in the traditional house, which causes people either expand the old house or build a new house with more rooms. The house for the multi-family living in a shared common space has been replaced by the house for the single-family living in multi-rooms. The process of transformation is inevitable; however, it should be directed towards the preservation of the traditional house that accommodates diverse indoor activities, and individual comfort and privacy.

Keywords: domestic life, house expansion, landed house, Toba Batak village, traditional house, transformation