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The Proposal of Landscape Design Concept for Islamic Graveyard at Berangan, Selangor, Malaysia

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Abstract

Islam brings upon harmony and peace to humanity. From an architectural perspective, harmony is valued based on how a space designed to bring comfort, peace and protection to the occupants. A comfortable home is a necessity. The design of a house has to plan by taking into consideration the physical factors, environment and the major needs of the occupants. Unfortunately, nowadays the design of the modern Malay houses has neglected the factor of harmony. The design of the modern Malay houses no longer takes into consideration factors such as climate, the Malay culture, religious restrictions and the comfort of the occupants. This has consequently produced designs of buildings, which are not conducive to be occupants. The solution to this problem is the Malay heritage architecture. This research will look into the benefits of the Malay architecture, specifically the Minangkabau architecture in Negeri Sembilan. The main advantage of the Minangkabau architecture is the ability of the craftsmen in understanding the needs of the environment while designing the houses. The living culture that is Islamic based has blended well among the Malays and the craftsmen have successfully materialised it in designing the Malay houses. Generally, the Minangkabau architecture clearly follows the Islamic concept in providing harmony and comfort to the occupants. This research attempts to see how the Minangkabau architecture has practically applied the Islamic concept in the modern Malay houses to build harmony and comfortable houses in terms of ventilation, the usage of natural sunlight, the design of nature-friendly space and the usage of space to preserve the tradition and culture, which based on Islam. Research carried out by making comparisons between modern Malay architecture and Minangkabau heritage architecture in relation to the concept of harmony in Islam. The finding of the research become as guidelines in designing houses in Malaysia to provide harmony and comfort to the occupants.

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Key-word: - Islamic graveyard landscape, muslim cemetery and jannah

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1. Introduction

The perfection of 'Kifaya' obligatory must be implemented in accordance with Shari'a Islam that has been set. According Md Zain (2003), no corpses were buried in bad condition and had to be accelerated for burial and the depth of ground must also be appropriate in order not to bring reproach on corpses. That perfection is demanded to be implemented in Islam. The burial, by completely covering the body with dirt is a collective duty. Allah (SWT) says what means: "Then he causes him to die and puts him in his grave." [80:21]. It is necessary to level the earth over the grave, since the Messenger of Allah (S) commanded that. However, raising the grave about a hand span from the earth is permissible, since the grave of the Prophet (S) was raised in this manner (Md Zain 2003). So a place called as a Muslim cemetery was supposed to produce a sense of calm to visit and positive atmosphere in which this park reminds us of death and a beautiful picture of a burial. The location of the study site was at Beranang Islam Graveyard, Selangor. Beranang is a small region that located in the district of Hulu Langat, Selangor. Beranang area is close to Mantin and the northern side is Semenyih. Beranang position is bordered with Negeri Sembilan. Referring to the Department of Lands and Mines Beranang (2014), Beranang has a total area of 6190 hectares. There is 11 traditional villages and one PKNS Housing at Beranang. The traditional village is administered by the village head who was appointed while PKNS Housing, headed by the Chairman of JKJK. The proposed burial site, is about 2 hectares wide. Based on the capacity of the current grave, 12.5% of the site area was filled with graves, and only 87.5% of the area that can be developed. Although there were 11 traditional villages and a PKNS housing, but only 3 villages were involved in the project. Villages that involved were Kg. Sesapan Batu Rembau, Kg. Sesapan Kelubi and Kg. Indah Taman PKNS. Means that only the remains of this three villages to be buried in the cemetery reserved. Table 1 shows the estimated population of the village according to age group and Table 2 the death rate of population shows for the three villages.

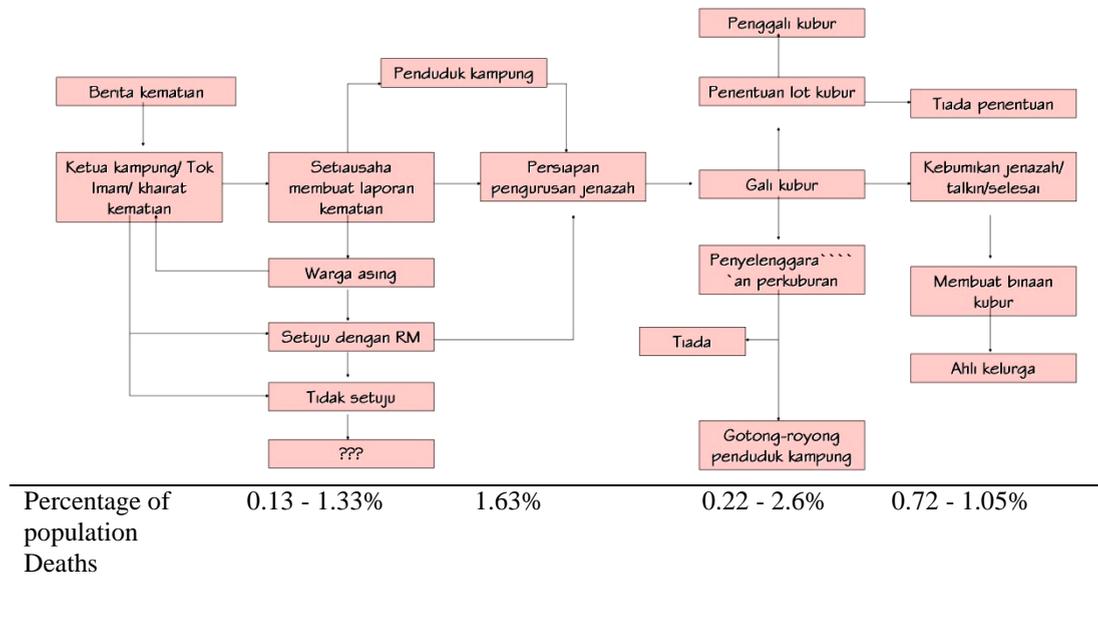
Table 1 The estimated population of the village

Population groups	Kampung Sesapan Batu Rembau	Kampung Sesapan kelubi	Kampung Indah PKNS	Total
Elders Group	165	180	268	613
Adults Group	353	700	403	1456
Children Group	234	350	673	1257
Total	752	1230	1344	3326

Source: Chieftain office of Mukim Beranang (2014)

Table 2 The death rate of Residents

Village name	Kampung Sesapan Batu Rembau	Kampung Sesapan kelubi	Kampung Indah PKNS	Total
The annual Death Rate	1 - 10 person	20 person	3 - 5 person	24 - 35 person



Source: Chieftain office of Mukim Beranang office(2014)

Based on questionnaires and Q & A session with the head of the village, Figure 1 shows the management procedure of death in Mukim Beranang.

Figure 1 Death management procedures in Beranang

Source: Based on questionnaires and Q & A session with the head of the village

2. Research Strategy

The study session was held from January 2014 to June 2014. This study was made at Tanah Perkuburan Beranang involving Kampung Sesapan Batu Rembau, Kampung Sesapan Kelubi and Kampung Indah Taman PKNS. In this study checklist items were formed to simplify the carried out data collection. Formed checklist was used in research work site and site analysis. A questionnaire was prepared to study the level of Beranang people's willingness to accept changes to the concept of cemetery. The combinations of quantitative and qualitative methods have been used in the research to analyze data. Multiple sources of data were gathered, such as semi-structure interviews, direct observations of an environmental survey supported by photographs and review of relevant documents.

3. Site Inventory and Analysis

Base on the survey, existing graves plots were irregular and not uniform. There is no place or proper garbage disposal system in the area. Management Station or a stopover remains neglected, dirty and quite outdated. Burial area does not have any indication direction of the entrance to the burial site. There is no specific parking. The design of the fence is uninteresting. Retaining wall design ineffective and inappropriate. The front area of the site quite steep and exposed to erosion. In addition, drainage system were poorly maintained. Many large trees in the old cemetery, which can damage the structure by root growth. The site does not have clear boundaries with Chinese burial sites. Road routes that are not interesting.

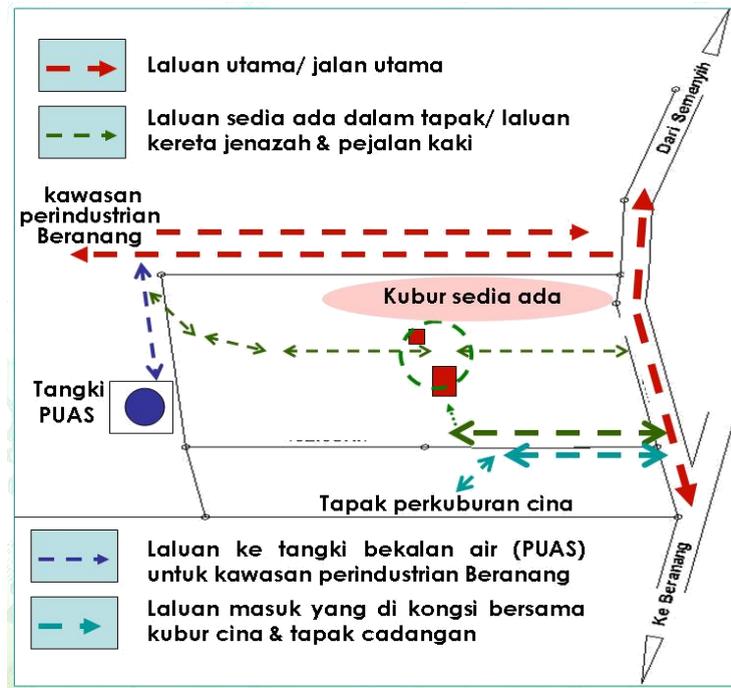


Figure 2 Circulation and Basic Amenities

Generally, circulation at the project site had no problems except the route is shared with Chinese burial site as shown in Figure 2. The use of this route can be conflict in the event of a clash each occasion. The problem that may arise is like traffic jams and the use of parking. The water flow of the whole site are much more flow to the main roads and to drains at the rear of the site. There are no drain at the front of the site opposite the main street and it can causes overflow into the streets in abundance, especially when it rains. The site situation is quite steep and it should be emphasized for effective drainage system so that the surrounding areas are undisturbed by water overflow. The site Physical condition is quite steep in the range of 3 to 5 degrees. Middle section of the site is the highest peak, the range of 7 meters above the road. At the burial site, we can see several species of birds find shelter and food resources. Among these are 'Tiong Tanah', 'Murai', 'Burung Merbok' and Sparrow. Tree planting does not have a good arrangement. There is also a tree that grows and unregulated. There are three types of large trees that are on site i.e. *Acacia mangium*, *Hura cripitan* dan *Hopeo odorata*.

4. Concept Selection

Written in the Quran that "Jannah" it means garden or orchard " *Indeed, those who fear to be placed in the gardens of paradise and bliss that has no equal* " (At-Tur:17) Concept selection of "Jannah" or "Garden" atau "Orchard" was based on the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad which reads " *It was a hole of a number of hell hole or a garden of gardens in Paradise* "(Hadith : Baihaqi & Ibnu Abiddunya). Based on this concept of landscape design, the Muslim cemetery development system can better executed.

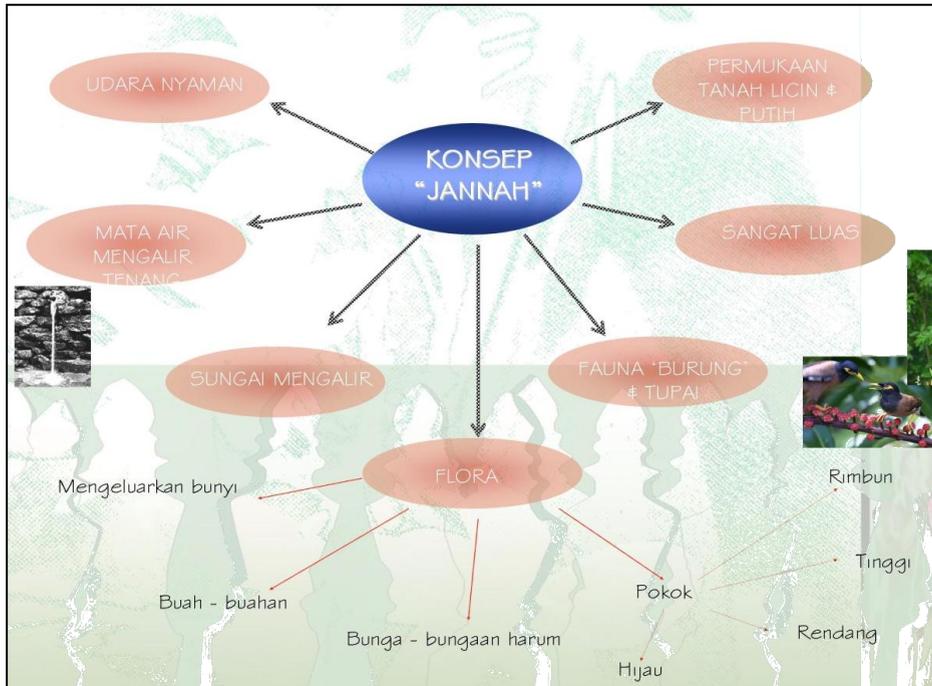


Figure 3 Concept "Jannah"

Guided by the concept is a number of design strategy that is focused on sensory, grave layout, design application, route of space and the concept of planting. Inherent sense of smell with the scent of plants grown. The sense of touch and see exist from the selection of soft and hard landscape. Sound sensory exist from water, wind, birds chirping and the foliage of trees. While the layout of the graves are arranged base on the analysis of the site, where the restructuring of the old burial plots to be more organized and neat. Simply shift on concrete, stone and do not involve the bodies in the grave. Design guidelines emphasize to Islamic design. Path space to human and vehicle expedite the circulation for a cemetery. And so the concept of cultivation with physical characteristics, scent, color, sound and fruits help identify the location of course lots of new graves and burial because of the ever increasing. The concept of "Jannah" give benefit to management in terms of layout burial plots that facilitate the death records, lots and pathways to the funeral, pilgrims and maintenance of grave sites. For pilgrims or family members, it gives a calmer emotions during the funeral escort. It also can generate awareness and consciousness of the wisdom of death as The Messenger of Allah (S) said: *"I had prohibited you from visiting the graves, (now), visit them, since this reminds you of the Hereafter."* [Muslim]. In addition, family members will be easier to identify the location of the grave with the layout of the grid.

Conclusion

After making a research study on the proposed design concept that have been produced, it appears that the concept of "Jannah" is still not acceptable by society of Beranang. Chief Office parties of Mukim Beranang as organizer this cemetery is also not sure to apply the concept of "Jannah". This is due to the culture and customs of a Muslim graveyard. Opinions such as the prohibition of eating fruits that are planted in the cemetery be among the reasons of this design concept was rejected even though the decline is no basis or any clear reference by Islam. Similarly related, tombstones and concrete above the graves be prohibition but rather become an option to continue to be used as a sign of the graves of the deceased. Basic concept of "Jannah" is to beautify the cemetery Beranang so it create emotionally calmer for visitors or relatives when visiting the cemetery but it seems to be considered wasteful and a burden to the existence of the proposed maintenance financial expenditure. What the researchers found for the conclusion of this study is thought of the Beranang Muslims community really was not ready to take "Jannah" as a concept for their cemetery park.

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