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## THE CHINESE INFLUENCE ON THE VARIOUS ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS IN THE PALEMBANG LIMAS TRADITIONAL HOUSE

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### ABSTRACT

#### KEYWORDS

architecture, Limas traditional house, Palembang, Chinese

This study aims to inventory the influence of Chinese culture on the forms, elements, and ornaments of the Limas Traditional House in Palembang. The method that used in this study was through observing 4 original buildings, namely, the house of the Cek Mas family, the SMB Museum, the residence of the Mr. H. Rozak, and the residence of Mr. Aziz family. The study was carried out through field observations and also analyzing the architectural elements contained in the 4 original houses in the city. The results show that the most dominant Chinese influence in the house is the use of wood material for almost all parts of the house ranging from walls, floors, ornaments, to the construction of the House. The investment in the House can serve as a valuable learning resource for future generations, considering its endangered condition.

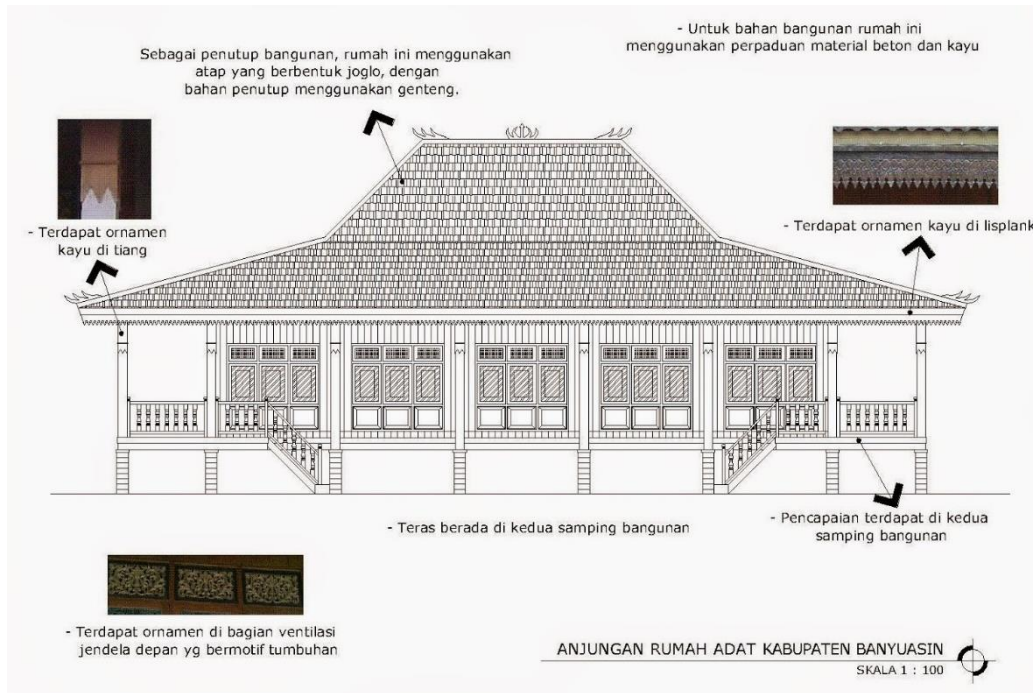
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### INTRODUCTION

The Limas Traditional House in Palembang city has a variety of architectural elements that are influenced by Chinese culture. The Limas' Palembang Traditional House is a reflection of the history of acculturation of people's culture. Limas Traditional House, from the name, this house is in the form of a Limas with terraced levels with its own cultural philosophy for each level in it. The levels at the Limas Traditional House as *bengkilas* referred by people in South Sumatra Province (Nyero.id, 2020; Wahyuni, 2015).

The influence of Chinese culture can be found in the Limas Traditional House in Palembang due to the acculturation of the culture of the people caused by the arrival of the Chinese to the archipelago to trade in the 5th to 7th centuries AD. (Duniakumu, 2018). The architectural characteristics of Chinese houses that need to be discussed and recognized include: spatial patterns, style and style, decoration (ornamentation) and construction structures (Ivashko et al., 2020; Knapp, 2012; Li et al., 2017; Song & Liao, 2023; Widiastuti & Oktaviana, 2016; Xia et al., 2020).

According to Kohl (1984) in his book *Chinese Architecture in The Straits Settlements and Western Malaya*, explaining the characteristics of Chinese architecture that exist mainly in Southeast Asia are courtyards or open spaces, distinctive roof shapes, open structural elements, and use of typical colors. The characteristics of Chinese architecture according to David Kohl can also be found in the Limas Traditional House in Palembang.




**Figure 1.** Limas Traditional House in Banyuasin

Source : (Home Design and Ideas, 2014)

The influence of Chinese culture that found in the Limas Traditional House in Palembang are the shape of the building which is always rectangular with the same size and symmetrical rooms, then on the building elements such as roofs, walls, floors, building structures, doors and windows that use wood as materials, and finally lies in the use of typical Chinese colors in the ornaments on the fences, roofs, walls and windows of the Limas Palembang Traditional House.

This study aims to inventory the influence of Chinese culture on the forms, elements and ornaments of the Limas Traditional House in Palembang. The following of a research matrix table which serves as a reference in making this research are :

**Tabel 1.** Research Matrix

Traditional Houses	Shape	Elements	Ornaments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rectangular</li> <li>• Symmetrical</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roof</li> <li>• Wall</li> <li>• Floor</li> <li>• Structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Floral Motifs</li> <li>• Animal Motifs</li> <li>• Typical Chinese Colors</li> </ul>

**Figure 2.** Limas Traditional House of Cek Mas

Source : Researcher, 2015



**Figure 2.** The SMB Museum  
*Source: Researcher, 2022*

- Rectangular
- Symmetrical
- Roof
- Wall
- Floor
- Structure
- Floral Motifs
- Animal Motifs
- Typical Chinese Colors



**Figure 3.** Limas Traditional House of Mr. H. Rozak  
*Source: Researcher, 2022*

- Rectangular
- Symmetrical
- Roof
- Wall
- Floor
- Structure
- Floral Motifs
- Animal Motifs
- Typical Chinese Colors



**Figure 4.** Limas Traditional House of Mr. Aziz  
*Source: Researcher, 2022*

- Rectangular
- Symmetrical
- Roof
- Wall
- Floor
- Structure
- Floral Motifs
- Animal Motifs
- Typical Chinese Colors

*Source : Researcher, 2022*

## RESEARCH METHOD

The method that used in this study was through observing 4 original Limas Traditional Houses in Palembang city. The stages that will be carried out in this research are as follows :

- 1) Literatur Study Stage: Literature studies that will be used are from various previous research sources or journals that are most related or with the most citations are taken because citations are needed in collecting data related to the Limas Traditional House in Palembang.
- 2) Field Observation Stage: At this stage, field observations and also analyzing the architectural elements contained in the 4 original Limas Traditional House in Palembang, namely the residence of the Cek Mas family, the SMB Museum, the residence of the Mr. H. Rozak, and the residence of Mr. Aziz family.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Building Shape






The shape of the Limas Traditional House in Palembang is always rectangular with the same room size and symmetrical. This is exactly the shape of the building in Chinese architecture which has a symmetrical arrangement of building masses and has an axis. The symmetrical spatial planning pattern is the basis of spatial layout which is influenced by climate and the basis of Confucian teachings that have been used by Chinese society since ancient times (Widiastuti & Oktaviana, 2016).



**Hip Roof (Resting Hill Roof, Hanging Hill Roof, Hard Hill Roof or Xie Shan Roof)**

According to Kohl, the roof ridges of Chinese architecture have 5 types of ridges which are usually carved into animal or flower symbols, namely (Tan, 2019):

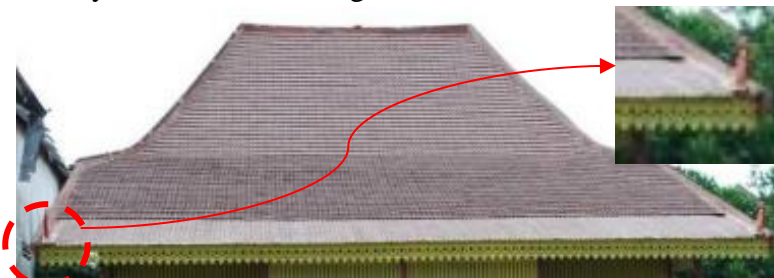



**Table 2.** Ridge type Chinese building roof

No	Ridge Type	Picture	No	Ridge Type	Picture
1	End of Straw or taper tip type		4	Curling Wave or choppy cloud type	
2	Geometric or geometry type		5	Curling End or twisting cloud / twisting ends type	
3	Rolling Wave or rolling cloud type				

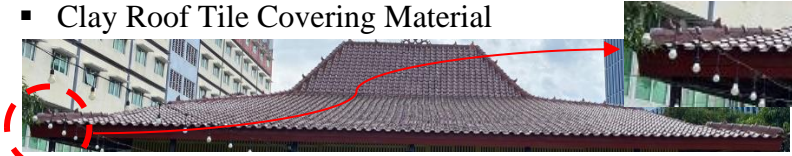
Source: (Tan, 2019)

This following table shows the inventory of roof and ceiling elements in 4 Limas Houses in Palembang:

**Table 3.** Roof and Limas House Structure

Roof of Limas House	Ceiling of Limas House
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The shape of the roof resembles the shape of a hip roof</li> <li>End of Straw <i>Cam Type</i> or Taper End Type</li> <li>Clay Roof Tile Covering Material</li> </ul>  <p><b>Figure 7.</b> The roof of the Limas house Cek Mas Source: Researcher, 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plafond using wooden boards Unglen or Trembeau</li> </ul>  <p><b>Figure 10.</b> Plafond rumah limas Cek Mas Source : Researcher, 2022</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The shape of the roof resembles the shape of a hip roof</li> <li>End of Straw <i>Cam Type</i> or Taper End Type</li> <li>Clay Roof Tile Covering Material</li> </ul>  <p><b>Figure 7.</b> Atap Museum SMR Source : Researcher, 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plafond using wooden boards Unglen or Trembeau</li> </ul> 

- The shape of the roof resembles the shape of a hip roof
- End of Straw *Cam Type* or Taper End Type
- Clay Roof Tile Covering Material



**Figure 8.** The roof of the five house Bpk. H. Rozak

*Source : Researcher, 2022*

- The shape of the roof resembles the shape of a hip roof
- End of Straw *Cam Type* or Taper End Type
- Clay Roof Tile Covering Material



**Figure 9.** The roof of Mr. Aziz's Limas house

*Source: Researcher, 2022*



**Figure 11.** Plafond Museum SMB

*Source : Researcher, 2022*

- Plafond using wooden boards
- Unglen or Trembeau

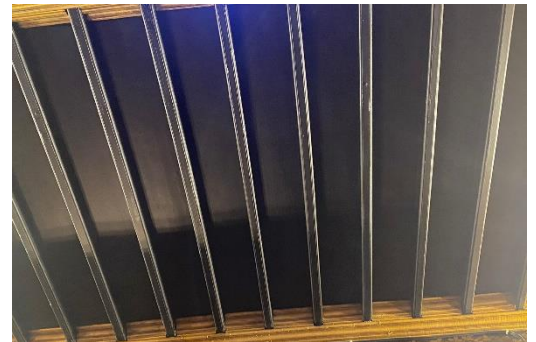


**Figure 12.** Ceiling rumah limas Bpk. H.

Rozak

*Source : Researcher, 2022*

- Plafond using wooden boards
- Unglen or Trembeau



**Figure 13.** Ceiling rumah limas Bpk. Aziz

*Source : Researcher, 2022*

*Source : Researcher, 2022*

### Wall and Floor Elements of Limas House

The most dominant Chinese influence in the Limas Traditional House in Palembang is the use of wood material for almost all parts of the house ranging from walls, floors, ornaments, to the construction of the Limas Traditional House in Palembang. The use of Ulin wood or Unglen wood and trembesu wood on the wall and floor elements of the Limas Traditional House in Palembang because these two types of wood are famous for having advantages in terms of ecology and have low prices. This wood is also known as wood that will become stronger when exposed to water.

**Table 4.** Limas House Walls and Floors

**Limas House Wall**

**Limas House Floor**

Material Wall of Limas House using unglan wood or trembesu

The covering material of the Limas House Floor uses unglan wood or trembesu

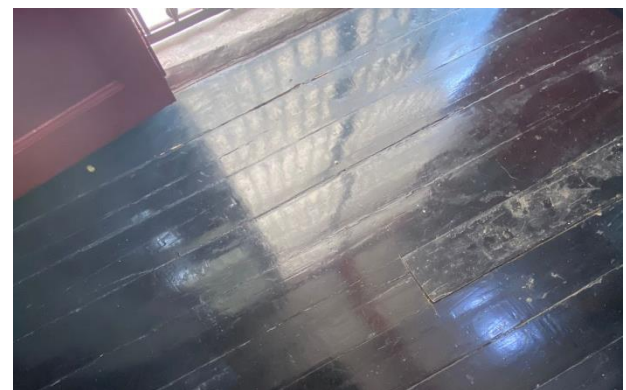


**Figure 14.** Wall of the Limas house Cek Mas  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*

**Figure 15.** Limas House Cek Mas Floor  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*

Limas House Wall Material uses brick walls

The covering material of the Limas House Floor uses unglan wood or trembesu



**Figure 16.** Museum SMB Wall  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*

**Figure 17.** Museum SMB Floor  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*

Material Wall of Limas House using unglan wood or trembesu

The covering material of the Limas House Floor uses unglan wood or trembesu



**Figure 18.** Wall of Mr. H. Rozak's Limas house  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*

**Figure 19.** The floor of Mr. H. Rozak's Limas house  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*

Material Wall of Limas House using unglen wood or trembesu



**Figure 20.** Wall of Mr. Aziz's Limas house

Source : Researcher, 2022

The covering material of the Limas House Floor uses unglen wood or trembesu



**Figure 21.** Floor of Mr. Aziz's Limas house

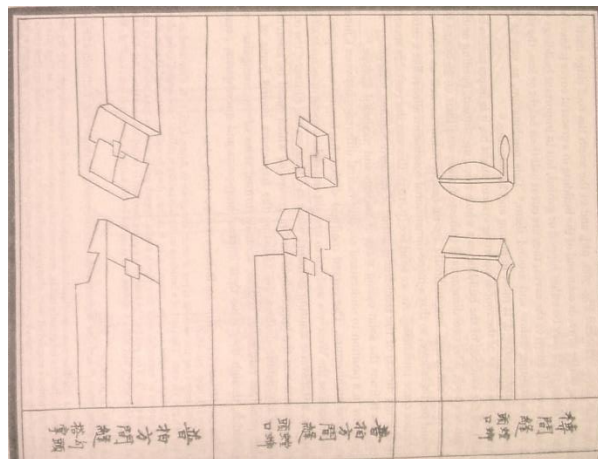
Source : Researcher, 2022

Source : Researcher, 2022

### Structural Elements

Rumah Limas, which is in the form of a stage, has columns - support columns made of Ulin wood or Unglen wood and exciting wood. Both types of wood are also known to be strong and waterproof because the type of soil in Palembang is watery or swampland. Especially rare exciting wood is only used on the frame of the house because in the belief of the ancient Palembang people that exciting wood should not be stepped over or stepped on.

In general, the type of construction of the Limas Traditional House building is pen and hole construction. In this case it is known as *lanang* and *betino*, *jalu* and *weaning* and *chicken*. Other known structures in Limas houses are: *poteeng* (Mustika, 2014). This explains that acculturation occurs in the joints of wooden structures, which is characteristic of Chinese architecture.



**Figure 22.** Chinese special wooden extension models

Source : (Wikipedia, 2024)

The following is a table of inventory figures of Structural Elements in 4 buildings of Rumah Limas in Palembang:



**Table 5.** Columns and Joints of Limas House Structures

<b>Limás House Column</b>	<b>Limás House Structure Connection</b>
Limás House Column Material using Seru wood	Pin and hole connection
	
<p><b>Figure 23.</b> Limás house column Cek Mas  <i>Source : Researcher, 2022</i></p>	<p><b>Figure 24.</b> Connection House structure of Cek Mas' Limás House  <i>Source : Researcher, 2022</i></p>
Limás House Column Material using concrete columns	Pen and hole connection
	
<p><b>Figure 25.</b> Museum SMB Column  <i>Source : Researcher, 2022</i></p>	<p><b>Figure 26.</b> SMB Museum Structure Connection  <i>Source : Researcher, 2022</i></p>
Limás House Column Material using Seru wood	Pen and hole connection
	
<p><b>Figure 27.</b> Limás house column of Mr. H. Rozak  <i>Source : Researcher, 2022</i></p>	<p><b>Figure 28.</b> Connection Structure of Mr. H. Rozak's Limás house  <i>Source : Researcher, 2022</i></p>

Limas House Column Material using Seru wood      Pen and hole connection



**Figure 29.** Limas house column of Mr. Aziz  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*



**Figure 30.** Connection Structure of Mr. H. Rozak's Limas house  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*

*Source : Researcher, 2022*

**Door and Window Elements**

Similar to wall and floor elements, door and window elements use Ulin wood or Unglen wood and trembesu wood which are famous for having strong advantages against water and economical. The following is a table of inventory figures of door and window elements in 4 buildings of Rumah Limas in Palembang:

**Table 6.** Doors and Windows of Rumah Limas

Limas House Door	Limas House Window
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limas House Door Material using Unglen and Trembesu wood</li> <li>▪ Pintu Ganda Khas Sina</li> <li>▪ Chinese special gate shape doors</li> <li>▪ Use of Chinese special wooden beam locks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limas House Window Material using Unglen and Trembesu wood</li> <li>▪ Chinese double windows</li> <li>▪ Typical Chinese gate shape window</li> <li>▪ Use of Chinese special wooden beam locks</li> </ul>



**Figure 31.** The door of the Limas house Cek Mas  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*



**Figure 32.** Limas house window Cek Mas  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*

- Limas House Door Material using Unglen and Trembesu wood
- Pintu Ganda Khas Sina
- Chinese special gate shape doors
- Use of Chinese special wooden beam locks



SM

**Figure 33.** Museum Door  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*

- Limas House Window Material using Unglen and Trembesu wood
- Chinese double windows
- Typical Chinese gate shape window
- Use of Chinese special wooden beam locks



**Figure 34.** SMB Museum window  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*

- Limas House Door Material using Unglen and Trembesu wood
- Pintu Ganda Khas Sina
- Chinese special gate shape doors
- Use of Chinese special wooden beam locks



**Figure 35.** The door of Mr. H. Rozak's Limas house  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*

- Limas House Window Material using Unglen and Trembesu wood
- Chinese double windows
- Typical Chinese gate shape window
- Use of Chinese special wooden beam locks



**Figure 36.** Limas house window of Mr. H. Rozak  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*

- Limas House Door Material using Unglen and Trembesu wood
- Pintu Ganda Khas Sina
- Chinese special gate shape doors
- Use of Chinese special wooden beam locks
- Limas House Window Material using Unglen and Trembesu wood
- Chinese double windows
- Typical Chinese gate shape window
- Use of Chinese special wooden beam locks



**Figure 37.** The door of Mr. Aziz’s Limas house  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*



**Figure 38.** Window of Mr. Aziz's Limas house  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*

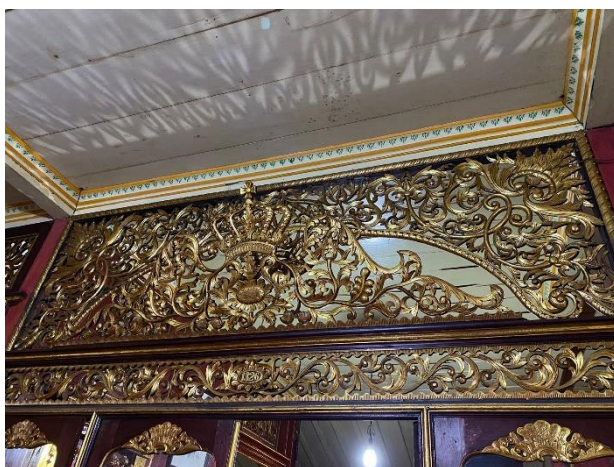
*Source : Researcher, 2022*

**Elemen Ornamen**

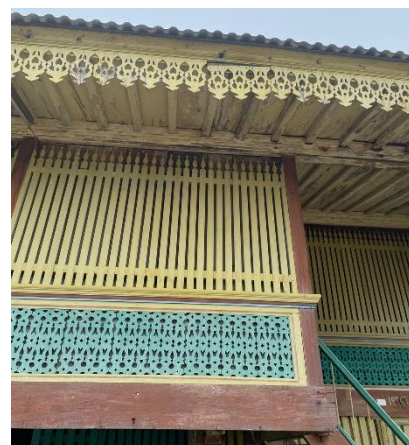
The ornaments in the Limas Traditional House in Palembang are in the form of flora and fauna. Ornamental coloring – these ornaments use typical Chinese colors, namely red, gold or yellow, and green. The following is a table of inventory figures of door and window elements in 4 buildings of Rumah Limas in Palembang:

**Table 7.** Limas House Ornaments and Coloring

Colors in Limas House	Colors in Limas House
Ornaments of flora and fauna with a combination of gold, yellow, red, and green colors	Gold, yellow, red, and green coloring on the walls and fences of the house



**Figure 39.** Cek Mas’ Limas house ornament  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*



**Figure 40.** House coloring of Cek Mas’ Limas house  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*

Ornaments of flora and fauna with a combination of gold, yellow, red, and green colors



**Figure 41.** Ornament of Museum SMB  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*

Gold, yellow, red, and green coloring on the walls and fences of the house



**Figure 42.** SMB Museum Coloring  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*

Ornaments of flora and fauna with a combination of gold, yellow, red, and green colors



**Figure 43.** Ornament of Mr. H. Rozak's Limas house  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*

Gold, yellow, red, and green coloring on the walls and fences of the house



**Figure 44.** Coloring of Mr. H. Rozak's Limas house  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*

Ornaments of flora and fauna with a combination of gold, yellow, red, and green colors



**Figure 45.** Ornament of Mr. H. Rozak's Limas house  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*

Gold, yellow, red, and green coloring on the walls and fences of the house



**Figure 46.** Coloring of Mr. Aziz's Limas house  
*Source : Researcher, 2022*

*Source : Researcher, 2022*

## CONCLUSION

The Limas Traditional House in Palembang, Philippines, has been influenced by Chinese culture due to the arrival of Chinese traders in the 5th to 7th centuries AD. Research on four original buildings reveals characteristics of Chinese architecture, including rectangular, symmetrical buildings, hip roofs, clay tiles, and unglazed wood boards. The house also uses Chinese colors and traditional Chinese elements like gates, double doors, and wooden beam locks. The investment in the Limas Traditional House in Palembang can serve as a valuable learning resource for future generations, considering its endangered condition.

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