

The Function, Space, Form and Meaning of the Traditional House of *Tolaki* Tribe in Konawe, Southeast Sulawesi

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Abstract

The architecture of traditional house of the *Tolaki* tribe has characteristics that indicate the activities, identity and socio-cultural values of the community. This study aimed to examine the function, space, form, and meaning of the traditional house of the *Tolaki* tribe. Field surveys were conducted at Meluhu Village in Meluhu District and Asambu Village in Unaaha District of Konawe Regency. This research is qualitative with phenomenological method. Data were collected through field observations, in-depth interviews, and document studies. The objects of research were is *Laika Mbuu* (main house) and *Laika Aha* (big house) houses which were selected from nine forms of *Laika* in Konawe Regency using purposive-criteria sampling technique. Data were analyzed descriptively, then the results were discussed and associated with relevant theories. The result revealed that the function of *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* was formerly the residence a *Mokole* (King) and a place to hold traditional ceremonies. However nowadays *Laika Mbuu* has become a communal gathering place and other public purposes, whereas *Laika Aha* become a customary house for ceremonial events. The spatial arrangement of *Laika Mbuu* has no partition hence the local community can carry out all activities in one open space, whereas *Laika Aha* still remains with partitions that divide the space into several rooms. Both the *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* have a rectangular building shape. The square shape on the building facade has a bottom container called *Kalo Sara*, which is a set of objects perceived as symbol of social class and has a meaning as customary law in the *Tolaki* community. This research concludes that both the *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* are similar in function and form but different in spatial arrangement. Both the *Laikas* express many symbolic meanings, among others that the house as symbol of a human body, and the residents symbolize organs of the human body, so that once the house is built and filled, it must try to protect itself from all obstacles and calamities.

Keywords: Customary house; Laika Aha; Laika Mbuu; symbolic meaning; traditional architecture; Tolaki tribe

1. Introduction

Traditional houses were commonly built in the same way by previous generations without undergoing any changes so that the houses were formed based on the traditions that existed in the community. Traditional houses are also called customary houses or original houses or folk houses [1].

A house is the result of culture, the product of the hands and the human minds guided by their cultures which are manifested in the form of physical buildings and which have certain functions and values [2]. On the other hand, in a traditional society where the house represents a microcosm of the whole universe. Every element of the house may symbolizes a particular element of the universe.

In the architecture of the *Tolaki* community in Konawe, a house is called *Laika* which has several forms, namely *Laika Aha* (large house or palace), *Komali* (palace) or

Laika Mbinapati (carved palace house), *Laika Mbu'u* (main house), *Laika Landa* (garden house), *Laika Kataba* (board house), *Patende* (rest area), and *Laika Mborasa'a* (guard house). The differences between these seven buildings are the size of the building's height, the type of stairs, the carvings, the function, and the meaning of the building [3]. Considering the physical condition of the existing buildings and the state of their habitability, this study discussed two of the most intact ones that are *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha*.

A number of previous studies have discussed the *Tolaki* tribe, including the concept of religion, system of government, to the traditional customs [4-8]. However, the discussions about *Laika*, particularly regarding the function, space, form and meaning not been carried out more rigorously by previous researchers.

Studies on the relationship between the *Laikas* and the socio-cultural activities as well as the community values of

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the *Tolaki* tribe are still lacking. In this regard, this study intended to raise the uniqueness of the architecture of *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* as the objects of research. Accordingly, this research aimed to examine the traditional houses of the *Tolaki* Tribe in Konawe Regency, focusing on the function, space, form and meaning of both the *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha*.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Functions in architecture

Function is a group of activities belonging to the same type based on its nature, implementation, or other considerations. Broadbent [9] asserted six functions that can be carried out by architecture, namely:

- a. Environmental filter
- b. Container of activities
- c. Capital investment
- d. Symbolic function
- e. Behavior modifier
- f. Aesthetic function

Moreover, according to Norberg-Schulz [10] there are four functions in architecture, namely:

- a. Physical control
- b. Functional frame
- c. Social milieu
- d. Cultural symbolization

So according to Christian Noberg Schulz [10] function is a task and work that must be carried out by an environment.

2.2. Space in architecture

According to Prijotomo [11] space is a part of the building in the form of cavity, between two objects and the open nature that surrounds and encloses us. Space is not a visible object that tangible, it can only be felt by hearing, smelling and touching.

Rapoport [12] stated that there are five aspects that can affect the formation of dwellings, these are:

- a. Some basic need, which is a basic human need.
- b. Family, namely the existence of a lifestyle that adheres to the understanding of polygamy or monogamy and the existence of planning for house expansion because one family with relatives living together.
- c. Position of women, the position and role of women that create different perceptions and interpretations of space in the social system of a particular society.
- d. The need for privacy, namely the role of having self-esteem in the space that is its territory and personal places that can influence a person's attitude which refers to self-liberation.
- e. Social intercourse, where humans need the opportunity to meet or gather with other people.

According to Surasetja [13] space is formed by three elements that make up space, namely:

- a. The base plane
- b. The vertical space divider
- c. The overhead plane

2.3. Forms in architecture

Shape is the result of a certain configuration of the surfaces and sides of the shape [14]. Shapes can also be recognized because they have visual characteristics, namely:

- a. Form, is the result of a certain configuration of the surface and sides of the form.
- b. Dimensions, a shape is length, width and height. This dimension determines the proportion, while the scale is determined by the ratio of its size relative to the shape around it.
- c. Color, is the pattern, intensity and tone on the surface of a form. Color is also the most striking attribute that distinguishes a form from its environment.
- d. Texture is the surface character of a shape. Texture affects how we feel when we touch it, as well as when the quality of the reflection of light hits the surface of the shape.
- e. Position, the relative location of a shape to an environment or visual field.
- f. Orientation, the relative position of a shape to the base plane, the cardinal directions or to the viewer's view.
- g. Inertia visual, is the degree of concentration and availability of a form

With appreciation of the form we can get satisfaction. Being can captivate our attention, invite curiosity, give a pleasant or unpleasant sensation in various ways.

2.4. Meaning in architecture

Meaning is intersubjective because it is grown and developed individually. However, meaning is shared, accepted and approved by the community, to comprehensively interpret the meanings that are interwoven in various wide and complex networks of social relations. Thus, a system of meaning becomes a cultural unit for the phenomena described [15]. Art is a sensory phenomenon that supports implicit meaning, the meaning of art and culture cannot be separated from the form of its symbols even though it is theoretically separated from it.

Phenomenology uses the word meaning in terms of the essence or nature of something, psychoanalysis uses it to explain will and desire, aesthetics uses it to describe a certain level of emotion involved in a work, hermeneutics sees meaning as the product and interpretation of a text, symbolic is concerned with the unique relations between an object and the world and semiotics uses the term meaning to explain the concept behind a sign.

According to Sumarjo [16] what is meant by referent is everything, object, fact, quality, experience, idea, thought, response, psychological, and so on. While symbols in the

form of words or images that must be interpreted, when a symbol is expressed, meaning appears. Symbols in premodern Indonesian culture do not simply refer to concepts but something absolute, something transcendent, the immanence of God, something supreme. The symbol is a sign of absolute presence. The symbols in modern civilization refer to meanings, concepts and experiences.

Referring to the description above, this research on *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* examines the cultural and social meanings. The purpose of the study is to find out the cultural meanings such as customs and cultural beliefs of the *Tolaki* tribe as well as the social meanings contained in the *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* buildings, such as social strata and socio-cultural interactions in the *Tolaki* tribe.

2.5. A brief history of the Tolaki tribe

Regarding the historical background, it can be stated that before the *Tolaki* tribe inhabited this area it is suspected that the indigenous people who inhabited the coastal area of the Konawe Eha River were *To Laiwoi*. They lived in rock caves and subsisted on farming and hunting. They were very small in number and lived in remote places, before the coming of a group of people from the North who to be called the *Tolaki* people afterwards. The existence of the *Tolaki* tribe historically cannot be separated from *Kalo Sara*, an object or a set of objects considered sacred by the tribe.

Kalo Sara for the *Tolaki* people is something that can integrate the elements that exist in *Tolaki* culture which has four functions [17], namely:

- a. Idea in culture and as a reality in the life of the *Tolaki* people.
- b. Focus and integration of elements of *Tolaki* culture.
- c. Way of life for the creation of social and moral order in the life of the *Tolaki* society.
- d. Unifier and solution to socio-cultural conflicts in the life of the *Tolaki* people.

The *Tolaki* people generally live by farming, fishing, hunting, trading, carpentry, civil servants, and others. The *Tolaki* tribe is called *rapu* which means clump, someone who marries is called *merapu* which means to form a new clump or household. Each nuclear family has its own house and takes care of its own household economy as well.

Before embracing Islam and Christianity, the *Tolaki* people believed in gods who controlled nature and life. Besides, there is belief in spirits, supernatural powers, metaphysical powers, and so on. Among the *Tolaki* tribe, the God is known as *Sangia*. There are three main *sangia*, namely: 1) *Sangia Mbuu* (god of tree) as the creator of nature; 2) *Sangia Wonua* (land god) who takes care of nature; and 3) *Sangia Mokora* (god of destruction).

2.6. Traditional Tolaki architecture

The house is one of several shelters in the architectural civilization of *Tolaki*, namely as: 1) Temporary shelter

(*Pineworoko*); 2) Moveable shelter (*Payu*); 3) Lake (*Patande*); and 4) Barn (*O'ala*).

Based on the function, the *Tolaki* people recognize several types of houses, those are:

- a. Palace or Big House (*Laika Aha*), a building that has a wide, large, and rectangular shape made of wood which is raised about 20 feet above the ground, and is located in the forest.
- b. House in the Garden (*Laika Landa*), namely the type of house built in the middle or on the edge of the garden and inhabited by a family.
- c. *Patande*, namely the type of house built in the middle of the garden as a place of resting. The shape of the building is smaller than *Laika Landa*.
- d. Burial House (*Laika Soronga* or *Laika Nggoburu*), that serves as the burial house for the king (*Mokole/Sangia*).
- e. Board House (*Laika Kataba*), a board type building that was built using a certain password or code.
- f. Headhunting House (*Laika Mborasaa*), a type of house that was built in a place of guard, and as a place of resting for people who have carried out the task of headhunting.
- g. King's Residence (*Komali*), a type of *Laika Owose* or a big house, a strong and tall building.
- h. Land House (*Laika Wuta*), a smaller building than *Laika Landa*, which shape of roof is like a *jengki* house.
- i. Rice Storage (*O'ala*), a type of storage house, small in shape with high pillars, its wall material consists of thick barks, arranged tightly with four or six pillars.
- j. Dutch Architectural Style Long House (*Laika Walanda*), a type of long house, also known as a Dutch house which is used as a place to relax and party.
- k. Roast House (*Laika Mbondapoa*), a type of building on stilts where copra is roasted.
- l. Main House (*Laika Mbuu*), a type of building that is larger than an ordinary house, also often referred to as the main house or prime house and is erected on the outskirts of fields or gardens.

The house where the *Tolaki* tribe lives consists of the following parts: 1) Pole (*Otusa*); 2) Floor (*Ogoro*); 3) Wall (*Orini*); 4) Door (*Otambo*); 5) Ladder (*Lausa*); 6) Rafter (*Olaho*); 7) Roof (*O'ata*); 8) Insert house (*Powire*); 9) Window (*Lomba-lomba*); 10) House ridge shape (*Pemumu*); 11) Attic (*Lembe-Lembe*, *Owaha* and *Parapara*); 12) Additional space (*Tinumba*, *Kinesa*, *Galamba*); and 13) Connection room (*Pineworoko*).

Prior to the construction of a *Tolaki* traditional house, a ceremony is conducted called *mombaka owuta* which means feeding the land, while during the construction process another ceremony is also carried out called *molisa* which means restoring. The purpose of all these ceremonies is as a repellent for reinforcements, so that the residents of

the house can live healthy and peaceful lives, lots of good luck, and away from all diseases and calamities.

3. Research Method

This research is qualitative with phenomenological methods. The researcher collects data about the traditional houses of the *Tolaki* tribal community, especially regarding the function, space, form and meaning, including facts, aspirations, and idea, which are obtained through field observations and direct interactions with informants in the community, and analyzes the phenomena that occur.

3.1. Research sites

The research is located in Konawe Regency, South Sulawesi Province. *Laika Mbuu* is in Meluhu Village, Meluhu District, while *Laika Aha* in Arombu Village, Unaaha District (Figs. 1 and 2).

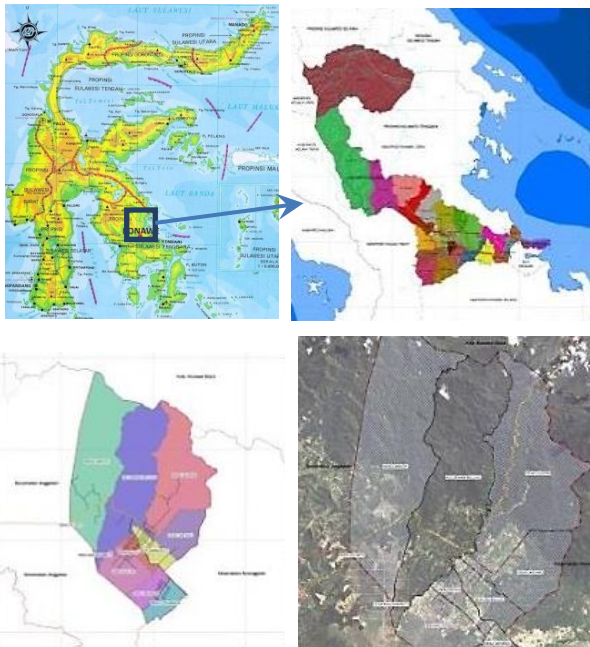


Figure 1. (a) Map of Sulawesi Island (b) Map of Konawe Regency; (c) Meluhu District; (d) Meluhu Kelurahan Village



Figure 2. (a) Unaaha District Map; (b) Arombu Village Map

3.2. Research object

The object of research is a scientific goal to obtain data with a certain purpose and use about something objective, valid and reliable about a thing or a certain variable [18]. The objects examined in this research are: a) *Laika Mbuu*, the former palace or the king's residence of *Mokole More Wekoila* (circa 1150), however at present this building has been rebuilt and become the home of the indigenous community of *Wonua Ndinudu Meluhu* which is a *Tolaki* community located in the administrative area of Meluhu District; b) *Laika Aha* which used to be the palace or the king's residence of *Mokole Lakidende II* (circa 1701). For the purpose to maintain and preserve the customs and culture of the ancestors, the local government has rebuilt the *Laika Aha* in order to bring back the wheels of the past and the local wisdom of the *Tolaki* people.

3.3. Data collection

Data were collected using 3 techniques: 1) Field observation; 2) In-depth interviews with informants who were selected using purposive-criteria sampling and snowball sampling; and 3) Archive and document studies. The informants comprised of: (1) Ajemain Suruambo who was *Puutobu Ndinuhu* Meluhu; (2) Gusli Topan Sabara, H. Ujung Lasandara and Bachrudin Lakoreasa who are traditional leaders for the *Tolaki* community; (3) Basrin Melamba who is a historian and writer about *Tolaki* tribal culture; (4) Lasmudin Pagala who is an ordinary people.

3.4. Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis is an effort made by working with data, organizing data, sorting it into manageable units, synthesizing it, looking for and finding patterns, discovering what is important and what is learned, and deciding what to tell others [19]. The data analysis process is carried out with the following stages:

- Data reduction: as the process of selecting, focusing on simplifying, abstracting, and transforming rough data that emerges from written notes in the field.
- Display (data presentation): limited as a set of structured information that is adjusted and clarified to make it easier for researchers to master the data and not be immersed in a pile of data.
- Verification (conclusion): during the research, the meanings that emerged from the data that were tested for their validity, robustness and compatibility were then linked to theoretical insights that served as background knowledge.

4. Discussion

4.1. The function, space and meaning of the *Tolaki* tribe traditional house

Laika Mbuu has the meaning of main house and *Laika Aha* has the meaning of big house. Although with different names both the two buildings have the same function as the

residence of the king, the center of government, and a place to hold customary events or traditional ceremonies. At the reigning time of the *Mokole More Wekoila* kingdom, cultural influences were very strong. The development of traditional architectural values was very important as a reflection of symbolical performance of social strata. The king's house was called *Laika Mbuu*, the house which at that time had the largest size and was domiciled in Unaaha as the center of government.

At the time *Mokole Lakidende II* came to power, he built his house as *Laika Aha* or the big house, before he moved the government from Unaaha to Anggaberu. *Laika Aha* was built very large with the extra large to accommodate many people when an important meeting was held by the village leaders. Another reason was that the large size was made so that the house was built as a respect for *Mokole*.

The form of *Tolaki* tribal house reflects two meanings, namely: 1) A house as traditional customary space; and 2) A house as divided spaces, where the house symbolizes application of a human body, and the occupant as fillers symbolize organs of the human body. Accordingly, once the house is built and filled, it must try to protect itself from all obstacles. When the house does not have interior elements and details then it is considered as a house that is functioned not for its occupants but for everyone, so that it expresses openness and keeps no secrecy.

Spatial arrangement of the house vertically and horizontally can be described as the followings:

a. Vertical

Vertically, *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* are divided into three parts, namely, *Wawo Laika* (top of the house), *Tonga Laika* (middle of the house), and *Lolo Laika* (bottom of the house) as shown in Fig. 3.

• *Wawo Laika*

Wawo Laika is called the upper house, which has the meaning of life above human consciousness, related to beliefs that are not visible (holy, goodness, suggestion, sacred). As in the understanding of *Tolaki* society, the world above is the abode of the Goddess of Rice (*Sanggoleo Mbae*). With this understanding and belief, many *Tolaki* people use the top of the house as a storage place for rice or other agricultural products, also as a hiding place for girls who are being secluded.

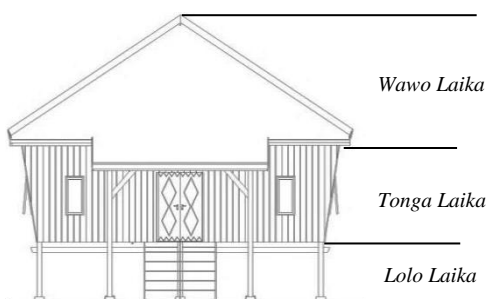


Figure 3. *Laika* vertical shape

• *Tonga Laika*

Tonga Laika which is called the middle of the house, contains the meaning of life in the human consciousness which is related to daily activities. *Tonga Laika* or the body of the house is also divided into three parts, consisting of the front which is used for receiving relatives or family and a place for traditional activities, the middle part which is used for bedrooms, and the back which is used for the kitchen.

• *Lolo Laika*

Lolo Laika which is called the bottom of the house, constitute the part of the house that is between the floor and the ground. This section is usually used as a place to store agricultural tools, also to raise livestock, and other activities related earning a living.

The meaning of the vertical spatial arrangement of the interior spaces is manifestation of the human body. The top of the building or the attic space of the roof is identified as the sky or the human head, the middle space of the building is identified as the surface of the earth or the human body trunk, and the bottom of the house or space under the house is identified as the human foot of the underworld.

b. Horizontal

Horizontally, the *Laika Mbuu* building is divided into four parts, namely (Fig. 4):

- Front part: *Tinumba Hohu*.
- Middle part: *Butono Laika*.
- Attic part: *Lembe-lembe*.
- Rear part: *Dongge*.

The *Laika Mbuu* is a unique building since it does not have partitions between one room and the others. *Butono Laika* is a room that serves as a meeting place, a place for reception of guests, a place to eat, a place to sleep and even this place can be a multipurpose room, while the kitchen or *dongge* is on the back side as shown in Fig. 5.

In *Laika Mbuu* there is *lembe-lembe* which means the attic of the house which functions as a place for storing valuable objects, a place for ancestor worship, a place for storing crops, and a place for seclusion for girls as shown in Fig. 6.

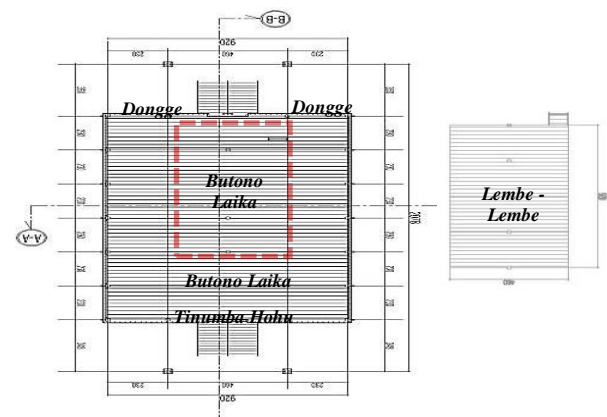


Figure 4. Floor plan *Laika Mbuu*



Figure 5. (a) *Butono Laika Mbuu*; (b) *Dongge Laika Mbuu*



Figure 9. *Tinumba Hohu Laika Aha*



Figure 6. *Lembe-lembe Laika Mbuu*



Figure 10. *Butono Laika Aha*



Figure 7. *Tinumba Hohu Laika Mbuu*

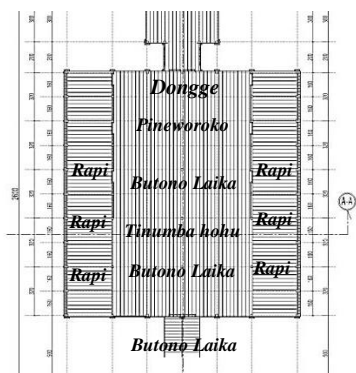


Figure 8. Floor plan *Laika Aha*

Tinumba Hohu shown in Fig. 7 means the terrace of the house that serves as a place to pound rice and a place to wait for guests before entering the house.

The *Laika Aha* consists of three parts, namely: 1) The *Tinumba Hohu* and *Butono Laika*, 2) *Rapi*, the middle part, and 3) *Pineworoko* and *Donggae*, the rear part.

Figure 8 shows that there is a space *tinumba hohu* which means the terrace of the house that serves as a transitional space from the outside area to the inside of the house or vice versa. The location of the terrace is in front of the house, and the function is as a waiting place for guests until the host comes out to entertain. This is because at *Laika Aha* shown in Fig. 9 every new guest or ordinary people must firstly get permission before entering the house, and not to behave carelessly in entering the house.

Butono Laika shown in Fig. 10 means the living room or the guest room that serves as a room to receive and entertain guests. In *butono laika* there are no chairs and tables for guests. Instead, the owner of the house only uses mats as a seat to be set on a raised floor that has a different floor height with a size of about twenty-five centimeters, also sloping wall that functions as a place to lean on for guests.

Rapi shown in Fig. 11 means a room as an insulated space, used as a resting place for the owner of the house. *Laika Aha* has a total of six *rapi* which are also commonly occupied by the nobles when visiting. *Rapi* is also a place for discussion, yet ordinary people are forbidden to enter. All *rapi* rooms have the same size so that there is no differences between one aristocrat and the others.

Pineworoko is the connection between the main house and the kitchen, also a place to put the water basin or water well of the home owner. *Dongge*, which is also a separate building, is kitchen that serves as cooking and dining place.

When the construction is completed and the owner of the house will enter the house, a ceremony is held with the aim that all residents of the house can live safely and peacefully. In order to carry out the ceremony, the owner of the house will call *mbusehe* as the leader and performer of the ceremonies.

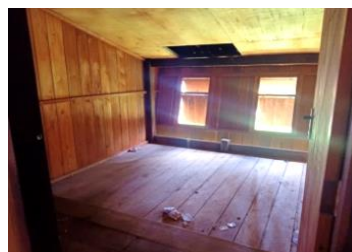


Figure 11. *Rapi Laika Aha*

4.2. The shape and meaning of the Tolaki tribe traditional house

• O'tusa (Pole)

In every house on stilts, the first thing that is erected is the pillar of the house shown in Fig. 12. The pole is the part of the house that functions as a support for the house to carry the burden of the body of the house such as the floor, walls and roof. The buildings of *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* have the shape of a rectangular house pole, and the pole material must be especially selected wood, namely iron wood (*nona*). Moreover, the wood must be selected first considering that the tree trunk to be used should not have branches.

In addition, the meaning of the rectangular pillar is a hope that everything given by the ancestors will reach their successors as inheritance that remains intact. The concept of intactness is in the sense that everything given by their ancestors can be maintained and continuously implemented such as traditional rules, customary laws, ceremonial events, festivities, and rituals.

In pole construction, as shown in Fig. 13, in order to protect the base of the pole from being eaten by termites and other insects also fungus, the tip must be firstly burned to become charcoal. The charcoal naturally will not rotten in the soil, and will be safe from termites (called *anai-anai* in the *Tolaki* language) attacks.

The nowadays existing *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* use a pedestal made of trapezoidal concrete. The pedestal is installed under each support post as shown Fig. 14. All poles are interconnected each other with wooden beams that are installed at the bottom of the pole, which also serves as a support for the floorboards. The top of the pole is then attached to the roof frame. In order to maintain durability of the wood, the pedestal is constructed protruding from the ground surface as high as 20 cm.



Figure 12. (a) O'tusa Laika Mbuu; (b) O'tusa Laika Aha

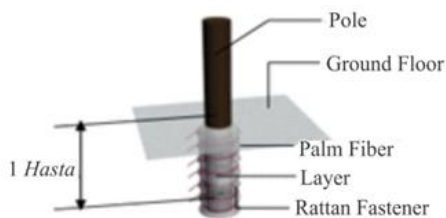


Figure 13. Laika foundation system



Figure 14. (a) Home baseboard Laika Mbuu; (b) Baseboard Laika Aha



Figure 15. (a) O'tusa Laika Mbuu; (b) O'tusa Laika Aha

After the installation of *Otusa Petumbu*, the eight pillars are installed surrounding it and continue to the installation of other *Otus* afterwards shown in Fig. 15. Furthermore, there are four pillars at the corners of the house called *tusa huno* which are the main pillars of the house. The main poles must not have interconnecting parts, they must be whole poles from the base to the upper cover of the pole. Other poles that are located between the main poles are called *totoro* or supporting pole.

In the interior space of *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha*, there are four pillars that symbolize the Konawe kingdom's territory and their meanings, namely: 1) *Bara Tahihara* which is called the right side wing or the north side, 2) *Bara Tahi'wohei*, the left wing or the south side; 3) *Tambo Loso Alo Oleo*, the east gate, and 4) *Tambo Tepui Alo Oleo*, the west gate.

The number of poles in *Laika Aha* as many as ninety pillars and *Laika Mbuu* has seventy-seven pillars. In *Tolaki* society, odd numbers relate to leadership in the sense that odd numbers are equated with the structure of Konawe kingdom called *tolu eto lausa* and *sio sowu ananiawo* which mean three hundred steps or three hundred household heads and nine hundred commoners.

Material for *otusa* is specially selected wood which is usually called spinach wood (*upi*), iron wood (*nona*), and bitti tree. The height of the ground floor space under the main floor is based on consideration to the extent of being unreachable by buffalo horns when tied under the house.

• Ohoro (Floor)

The floor is the basic part of a space, which has an important role to strengthen the existence of objects in the space. The function of the floor in general is to support activities in space. The floor of the house is used to put furniture and household appliances such as chairs, tables, cabinets, and so on and supports various activities such as walking.



Figure 16. (a) *Ohoro Laika Mbuu*; (b) *Ohoro Laika Aha*

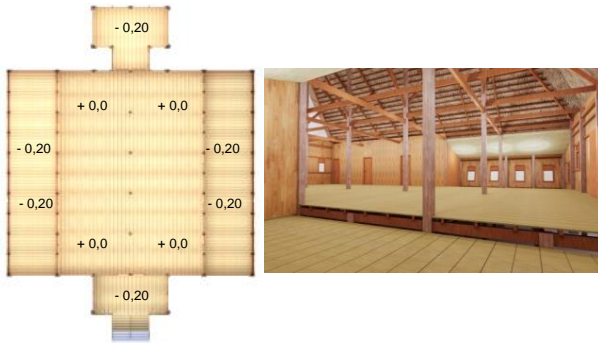


Figure 17. Height *Ohoro Laika Aha*

The floors of *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* shown in Fig. 16 are made of board construction which is positioned longitudinally called *porambuhi*, and arranged rather rarely called *sumaki* or *polandangi* which aims as gaps for the wind to enter from the groundfloor underneath.

There is a different in floor height in *Laika Aha* which is located on the front, the right and left sides of the building, the terrace, also the neck of the building to the kitchen, where the floor height is meant to differentiate the seating of *Mokole* with the people as shown in. Fig. 17.

• *Orini* (Wall)

The wooden wall is space divider which is generally built vertically as shown in Fig. 18. The essence of the wall lies in its capacity as a separator of two areas that cannot be penetrated, even if it is manifested in a transparent or non-solid form. Board walls that are arranged vertically produce the shape of a building facade that has elements of vertical lines. Board walls with a vertical type are directly attached to wooden posts and beams. Installation only uses nails that are used at every connection of the board walls and the beam. The board are installed tightly to avoid opening gaps in the walls. The vertical line is also a measuring tool for the occupants.



Figure 18. (a) *Orini Laika Mbuu*; (b) *Orini Laika Aha*



Figure 19. *Lembe-lembe Laika Mbuu*

Orini or the walls are shaped like rectangular pillars following the shape of the house. *Orini* limits a building and supports other structures, restricts space in a building into a room, or protects or limits a space in the open nature. *Orini Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* are installed vertically and the wall is tilted about 15 degrees, this wall serves as a replacement backrest *kadera*.

• *Lembe-lembe* dan *O'waha* (Attic)

Lembe-lembe or an attic is located at the top of the building as shown below.

Lembe-lembe in *Laika Mbuu* functions as a place for protecting girls, a place to store heirlooms, a place to store agricultural products, also a place to present offerings to the ancestors as seen in box notation in Fig. 19.

Lembe-lembe It has a width of three meters and a length of five meters at a height of two meters and a half from the ground floor of the building and there is a circular slit measuring twenty centimeters to see outside the building walls.

Owaha shown in Fig. 20 is also a building attic which is located above the kitchen door and serves as a place to store food and other kitchen utensils. *Lembe-lembe* and *owaha* are only found in the *Laika Mbuu* building and not in *Laika Aha*.

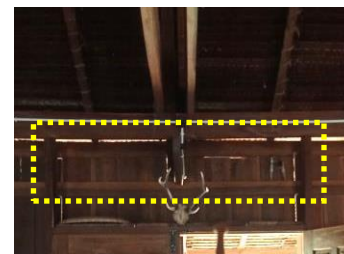


Figure 20. *Owaha Laika Mbuu*



Figure 21. (a) *Lausa Laika Mbuu*; (b) *Lausa Laika Aha*

• *Lausa* (Ladder)

Lausa or the stairs shown in Fig. 21 is a construction link between the ground floor and the upper floor. *Lausa* in the *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* have an odd rung of seven steps which means the seven power structures of the Konawe kingdom, namely: 1) *Sulemandara I Pu'osu*, who is in charge of political affairs or the prime minister, is in the kingdom of *Puosu*; 2) *Tusawuta I Kasipute* who is in charge of agricultural affairs is in *Kasipute*; 3) *Kotubitara I Wonggeduku* who is in charge of justice matters, is in *Wonggeduku*; 4) *Kapita Ana Molepo I Uepai* who is in charge of security and land affairs, is in *Uepai*; 5) *Kapita Lau I Sambara* who is in charge of maritime security and defense in *Sambara*; 6) *Tamalaki Tutuwi Motaha I Anggaberri* who is in charge of war matter and enemy attacks is in *Anggaberri*; and 7) *Pombeota'eahako I Toriki* who is in charge of logistics matter is in *Toriki*. According to the *Tolaki* tribe, the number of steps must be odd because according to their belief even numbers associated with possible misfortune, otherwise odd numbers are called *konanggoa* to be believed that the owner will continuously get fortune.

In the *lausa* there is a neck of the ladder which is in the middle or called *woroko lausa* which has the meaning of a mother's love for her child. The head of the ladder that leans on the door step to the left and right has the meaning of responsible and reliable head of the household who always maintains the dignity and safety of his family.

• *O'ata* (Roof)

The roof is the main part as a distinguishing feature for the existing types of the traditional houses. The roof covering materials are generally relatively light, *O'ata* is the roof of a house that made of thatch leaves woven using a layer of *poambisi* or bamboo tongs as shown in Fig. 22.

The triangle shape is a formation that is commonly used as roof shape. A triangle is considered a form that has a solid structure so that it is stable applied for roof structure. The triangle applied for roof shape resulting in pointed shape at the top of the triangle pointing upwards. According to Basrin Melamba, this symbolizes the existence of the great above (God), then the closest thing to God is the thoughts that come from the head. So the triangular shape of the roof means the human head.

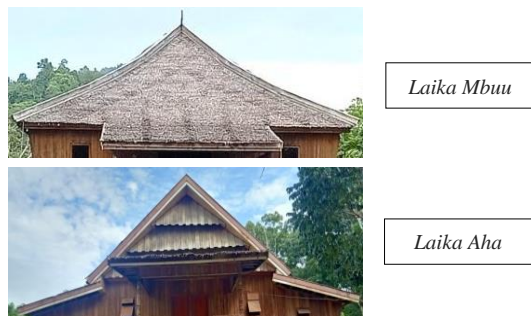


Figure 22. (a) *O'ata Laika Mbuu*; (b) *O'ata Laika Aha*



Figure 23. (a) *Lomba-lomba Laika Mbuu*; (b) *Lomba-lomba Laika Aha*

The roof of *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* have the same shape but are different in form when they are built. There are two tips that protrude above the front and the back of the roofs. The tips are symbols of human desires in realizing higher achievements such as the sun and the moon as the highest objects in this universe. This means that the owner of the house has high aspirations as high as the sun and the moon.

• *Lomba-lomba* (Window)

Windows of houses for the *Tolaki* people are made for the lighting purposes and surveillance of the enemy. There is no standard regarding the number of windows to be used for houses. Windows are made according to the needs of home owners. According to H. Ujung Lasandara, the number of windows or *lomba-lomba* are six to seven window holes in *Laika Mbuu*. He added that the *Tolaki* house has four holes which are analogous to two elements of *obiri* (ears) and two elements of *totopa* (armpits). However, empirically regarding the number of *lomba-lomba* can be made as needed, because in each *kataba* there are *lomba-lomba* in each room as shown in Fig. 23.

Laika Mbuu and *Laika Aha* has the shape of window with up-swing model, thus a type of window that open by tilting it outward. This window mechanism prevents the narrowing of the room. Up-swing windows provide good air insulation, and prevent rain from entering the room. The size of the *lomba-lomba* in *Laika Mbuu* is 60 centimeters wide and 120 centimeters high and for the *Laika Aha* is 80 centimeters wide and 60 centimeters high.

Lomba-lomba Laika Mbuu has a window hole of 12 holes while for buildings *Laika Aha* as many as 24 holes. There is a believe in *Tolaki community* that putting *lomba-lomba* should be in the direction where the sun rises and sets. This is related to a belief about the flow of upstream and downstream rivers that flow like a fortune coming from downstream to upstream under the river current. In order to get fortune, windows are the place where the fortune enters.

• *Otambo* (Door)

Otambo uses a rectangular shape as shown in Fig. 24. This shape is the basic form of wood used as the main material for making doors, so using the basic shape is considered to save time and costs. The entrance to the house has two doors, which contain the meaning that all happiness can be opened with the hope of goodness that enters *Laika*. *Otambo Laika Aha* has only one entrance and that door must face the road and must not turn its back, while *Laika Mbuu* has two doors in front and back.



Figure 24. (a) *Otambo Laika Mbuu*; (b) *Otambo Laika Aha*

Based on the results of the discussion above, the function of the building is divided into four [10], namely:

- Physical control (controlling factors), the role of physical control on the function and role of the building includes climate control (air, humidity, temperature, wind, rainfall, light, sound, smell, dust, smoke, insects, animals and humans as well as radioactivity). Most of the factors mentioned above are geographical in nature and it can be understood that all aspects of physical control are related to the relationship between the building and its environment.
- Functional frame, discussion of the physical aspects of human behavior. Basically, humans always carry out activities, so they need an architectural container to accommodate these activities.
- Social millieu (social environment), can be a static expression, roles, groups, associations, institutions and groups of buildings that can represent the social system as a whole.
- Cultural symbolization (cultural symbol), architecture can symbolize cultural objects that reap empirical facts, because the history of architecture shows that this aspect has formed an important part of the role of the building.

What was found in the field was that *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* functioned to protect their residents from exposure to weather changes, protect them from natural disasters, attacks by wild animals and criminals. Even *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* also function as a place to accommodate various activities, including traditional ceremony and customary events. *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* are social and cultural symbols of the *Tolaki* people in Konawe Regency.

The atmosphere can change with history, while the function remains. Functions will change when there is a fundamental change in lifestyle. The fact is that every activity requires a certain space, and every space can have a size. According to Rapoport [12], space is not only physical environment where there is an organizational relationship between various kinds of objects and humans who are separated in certain spaces. A space becomes meaningful when social intercourses occurs, where people need the opportunity to meet or gather, a space is formed by social and cultural ideas occurring within.

Laika Mbuu is a building that does not have a room divider so that objects and humans are inseparable, *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* have interconnected spaces and there is also a space that has a role as a personal place that can affect a person's attitude, namely the space contained *otusa*

petumbu or king's pole which is a sign that the pole is the seat of a *Mokole* the pole is right in the middle of the building which also signifies that other people other than family members cannot cross the boundary and sit in that place.

From the results of the configuration of the space can produce a form with visual characteristics. According to Ching [14] a form has visual characteristics, namely: 1) Form; 2) Dimensions; 3) Color; 4) Texture; 5) Position; 6) Orientation; 7) Inertia visual. It is known that *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* have the visual characteristics described and the building forms of *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* have the same building shape. According to Santosa [15] a system of meaning becomes an integrated cultural setting for the phenomena described. The phenomena found in the *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* buildings are the cultural meanings and beliefs of the *Tolaki* people.

4.3. Concluding remarks

This research has clarified 3 (three) important findings as the followings:

- The function of both the *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* traditional houses is as a residence for a *Mokole* (King). *Laika Mbuu* which means the main house is also a place to carry out social life of the royal family with the community, also as a place of worship to the spirits of their ancestors and grandmothers. Meanwhile *Laika Aha* means a big house whose function is not only as a place for *Mokole* to live in, but also as a gathering place for large families from one tribe and a place for ceremonies and other customary activities.
- The space of both *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* are vertically divided into three parts, namely: 1) *Wawo Laika* (above the house); 2) *Tonga Laika* (middle of the house); and 3) *Lolo Laika* (under the house) which means identification of the human body. *Lolo laika* is the foot, *tonga laika* is the body and *wawo laika* is the head. Horizontally, the *Laika Mbuu* space has four zones, namely: 1) The front consists of *tinumba hohu*; 2) The middle part is *butono laika*; 3) The back consists of *dongge* and 4) The upper part consists of *lembe-lembe*. *Laika Aha* has three zones, namely: 1) The front consists of *tinumba hohu* and *butono laika*; 2) The middle part consists of *rapi*; and 3) The back consists of *pineworoko* and *dongge*.
- The building form of both *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* is stilt house like *Tolaki* houses in general and is rectangular in shapes, indicating social status of the occupants. The square shape in the building facade shows the lower part, so that the square is considered the underworld (earth), yet it can also be seen as a container called *Kalo Sara*, which is a set of objects as symbols of social class and has a meaning as customary law in the *Tolaki* tribe community. The sloping shape of wall in *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* reflect and symbolize a boat from, from which the *Tolaki* community believe to have come to Konawe

using boats. On the roof there are two tips that protrude towards the front and back that symbolize human desire in realizing or achieving wishes in life.

- The house symbolizes a human body, and the residents symbolize organs of the human body, so that once the house is built and filled, it must try to protect itself from all obstacles and calamities. The concept of intactness of the four main pillars symbolizes that everything given by their ancestors can be maintained and continuously implemented including traditional rules, customary laws, and ceremonial events. The triangle roof shape pointing upward symbolizes the human head look up towards the existence of God. The protruding tips of roof form to the sky are symbols of human desires and aspirations in realizing higher achievements as high as the sun and the moon. Position of windows to the direction where the sun rises and sets, symbolises the flow of upstream and downstream rivers like a fortune flow coming through and entering the house. The middle neck of the ladder symbolizes a mother's love for her child, while the strong and balancing head of the ladder symbolizes a responsible and reliable head of the household to keep the dignity and safety of his family.

5. Conclusions and Suggestions

5.1. Conclusions

This research concluded that both the *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* have similar function and form, however differ spatial arrangement. Both the *Laikas* were formerly residences of a king, however nowadays *Laika Mbuu* has become an ordinary communal home whereas *Laika Aha* become a customary house for public purposes. *Laika Mbuu* has no partition so that the local community carries out all activities in one openspace, whereas *Laika Aha* contains partitions that device the space into several rooms. The form of both *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* building is rectangular in shape, in which the square shape in the building facade shows the lower part, as a form of container called the *Kalo Sara*, which is a set of objects as symbol of social class and has a meaning as customary law. Moreover, both *Laikas* express many symbolic meanings, among others that the house symbolizes a human body and the residents symbolize organs of the human body, the concept of four main pillars symbolizes that everything given by thr ancestors should be conserved.

Thus, this research has strengthened Rapoport's theory [12] that socio-cultural aspect are utmost important in shapping the traditional architecture of tribal communities. This research has also developed Ching's theory [14] that architecture concerns not only form, space, and order, but also sosio-cultural meanings in individual and communal life. Moreover, this research has also verified Broadbent's theory [9], [20] that symbol is an indispensable characteristics in the architecture of human settlement.

5.2. Suggestions

Based on the above coclusion, the proposed suggestions are as follows:

- The architecture of the *Tolaki* traditional houses, especially the *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* buildings, is the product of the thoughts of the *Tolaki* people, in Konawe Regency, which must be preserved as part of the regional culture as well as one of the diversity and richness of the Indonesian culture.
- The values implied in the traditional houses built by *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* should be used as guidelines to maintain and strengthen solidarity for the *Tolaki* community.
- The government would be better restore the *Laika Mbuu* and *Laika Aha* buildings based on originality referring to relevant archive and historical document, considering that the current buildings appear to hardly resemble the original.
- Future researchers should continue this research by adding other objects of *Laika* with the topic of the *Tolaki* tribal architecture.

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