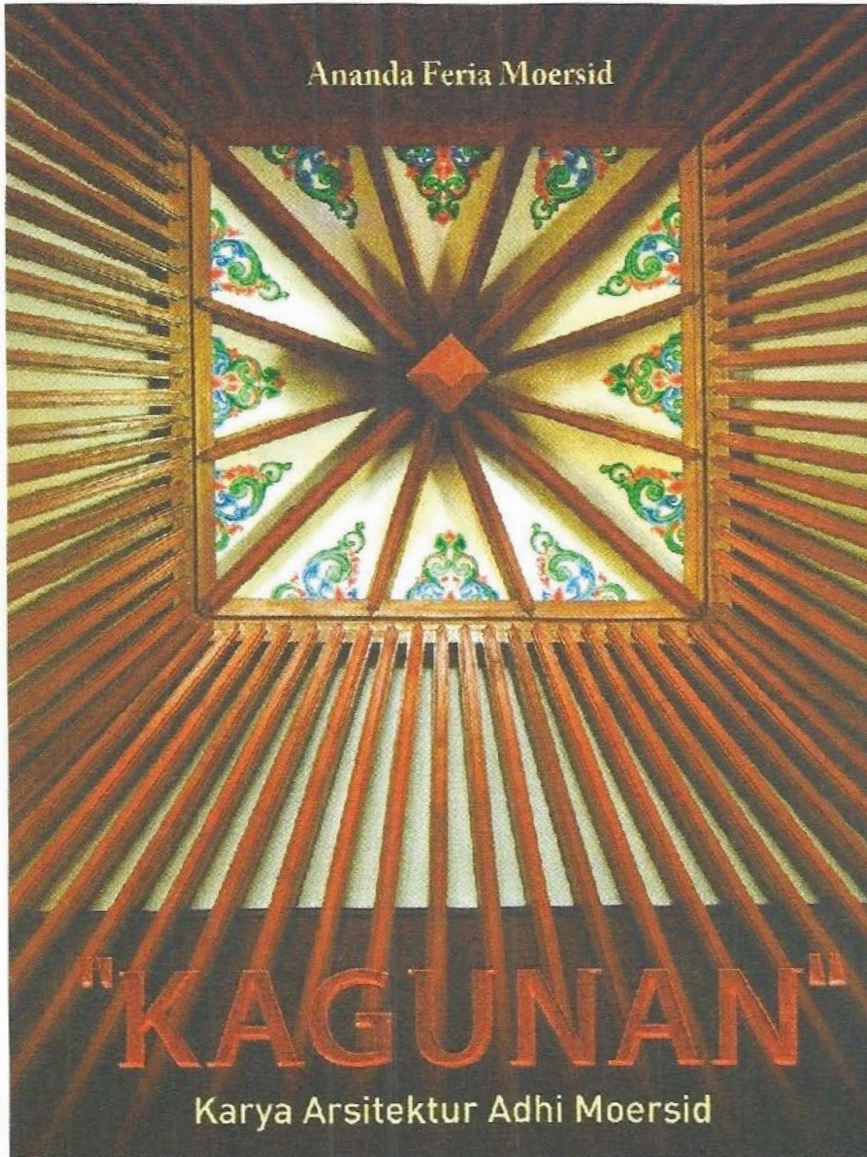


TINJAUAN BUKU

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Penulis: Ananda FERIA Moersid

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“THE UNSAID OF KAGUNAN”:

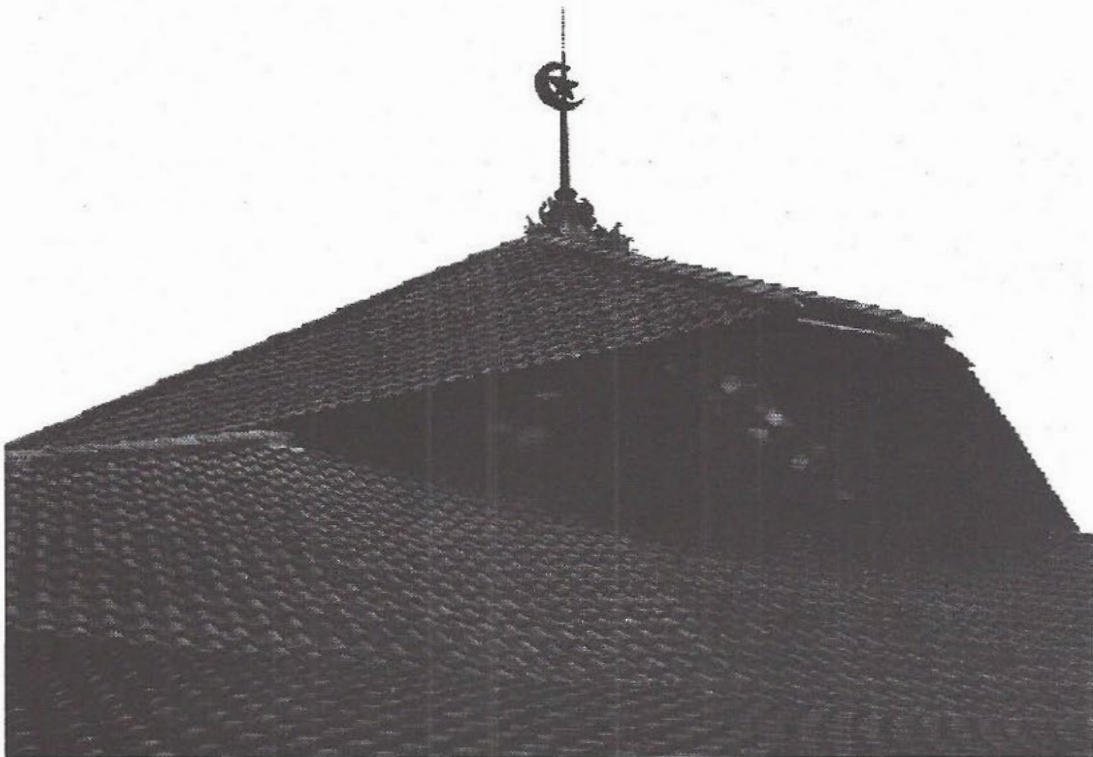
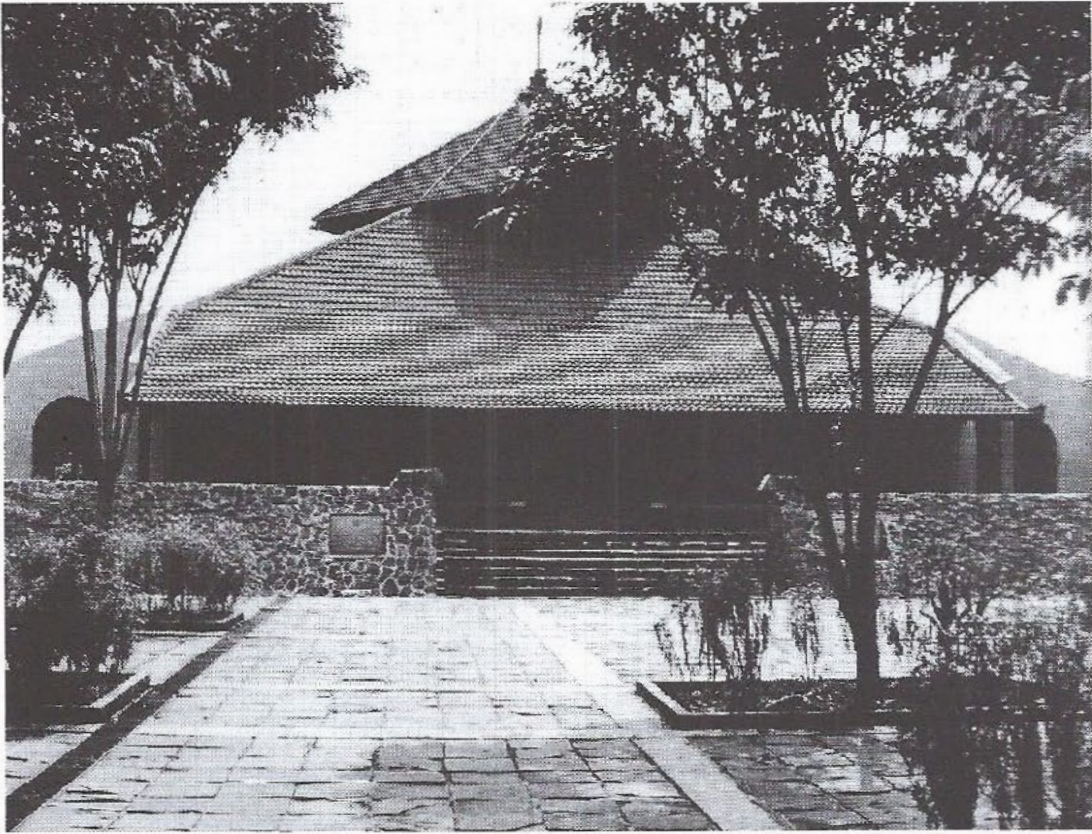
NOTES ON THE ARCHITECTURE OF ADHI MOERSID

Recently, Adhi Moersid published his works as professional architect: Kagunan. The publication has marked a benchmark on the Post-Colonial architecture in Indonesia beyond the Nation-building era of Soekarno. With this publication, it becomes clear to public that architecture for him is conceived as the work in the sense of 'kagunan': in Javanese the concept conveys idea, context, task and articulation that the essence of arts and crafts is necessarily functional. In terms of kagunan, architecture is understood in the framework of implement that works well, and aesthetically is beneficial. This essay is neither a tribute nor a critical examination on his works. Rather, this article is a survey and study on the unsaid of Adhi Moersid's architecture. This is to say that this study is in the search for the essential beyond what has been built as artifacts and things. The focus is to reveal and dismantle the aspects of the life-world that matters for the presence of its architectural form, material, technique, and function in relation to humanity.

On Kagunan

The concept has been clearly defined in the book as something useful in practical sense and beneficial in in the context of humanity. By having such a concept, the readers and users are provided with a leading guidance that supposedly illuminates and binds up the Adhi Moersid's works as a whole. Indeed, *kagunan* in the first part is to work in the architect's private house, that utilizes and implements a simple construction system based on board-and-nail joint. What is unsaid is the context why such construction method and system has been applied for the house. Of course, the main reason was probably related to the scarcity of building materials in the market and the early New Order program for recovery economy of the country. Moreover, the private house is the departure of the further unsaid of the works, namely the significance of colonial heritage for the presence of architecture in Indonesia. The main line of *kagunan* for the hotels that the architect designed, highlights the importance of colonial architecture as its precedence. The problem is of course not the question of style and appearance but the exposition what is the contribution of European heritage for the development of architecture in Indonesia. From the question on

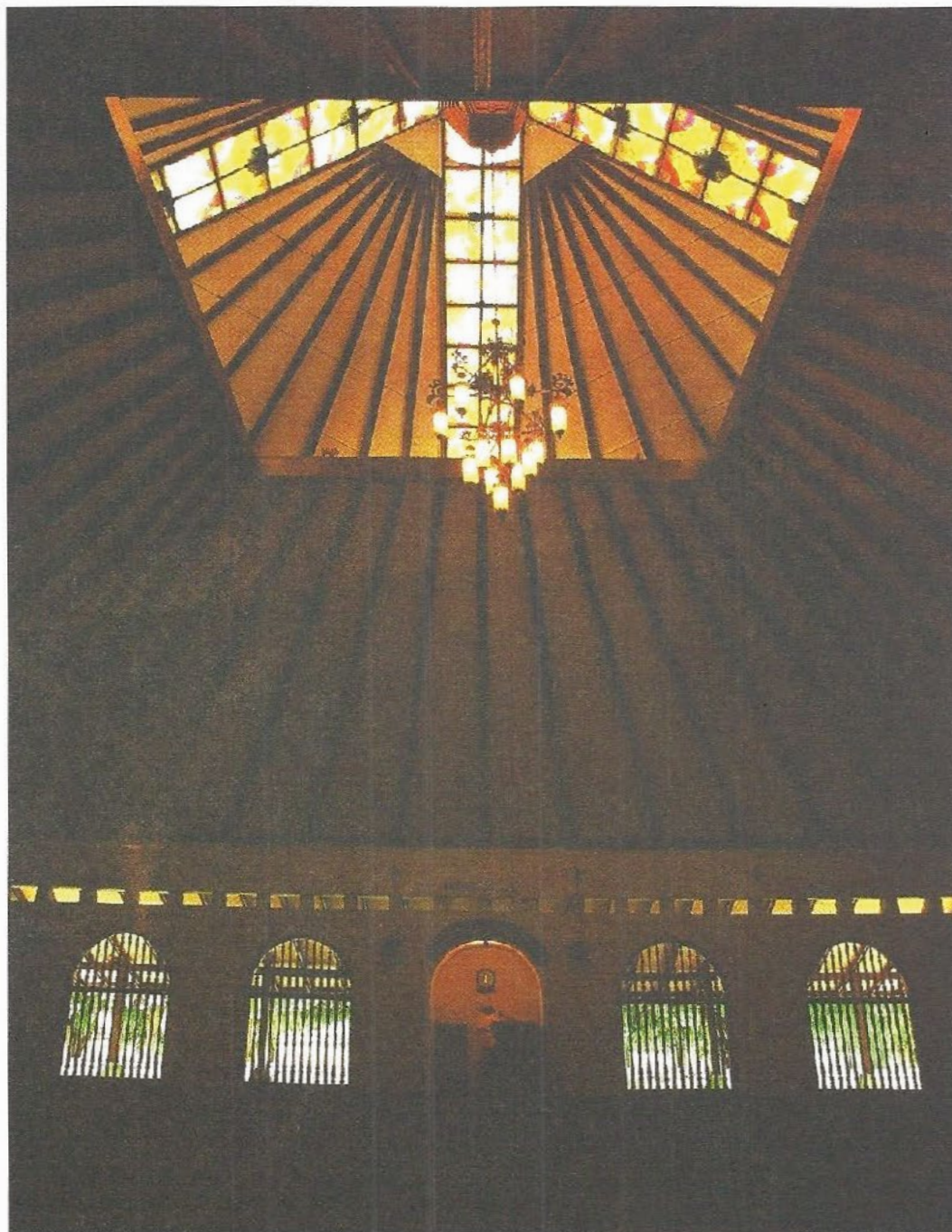
value, the concept of *kagunan* in the book moves to deal with spiritual dimension of architecture. Needless to say, spiritual and religious issues are different things. The unsaid of *kagunan* leads readers and audiences to experience the beneficial dimension of the concept that works within humanity in terms of aesthetics and the need for humbly subsuming to the transcendence. This exploration ends up with the necessary for mark out the journey of life. This is the mission of *kagunan* in the practical world. Creating and establishing landmarks that reminds people on their time-space reality from the past, present, and to the future. However, how this mission is incorporated within the revitalization of the historical traces is an open question. The unsaid of the works conveys a loud message of the justification of traditional patronage and feudalistic hegemony in a new form and fashion. To clear up the mind from the shadow of the past from the dark side of absolutism and conservatism. The unsaid of the works sets forth its method on the necessity for dialog in the way of building time and space. This is understandable for those who always search for wisdom and truth beyond the appearances. Everything goes from houses, palaces to that presents in collegial



Said Naum Mosque Jakarta, The Aga Khan Award recipient 1986-completed 1997.

conversations. Any architectural dialog today does not have any effectiveness unless it concerns and deals with urbanity. The architect utilizes *kagunan* for urban built forms in the way of cost conscious design and of adapting new technology and new building materials based on fabricated system of construction. Nevertheless, *kagunan* as

a leitmotif of architectural illumination leaves us with the fundamental question: is there any un-useful and non-beneficial in the life world? If the architect divides the life-world into two categories of *kagunan* and non-*kagunan*, how can we get a whole understanding about the light without experiencing the dark?



Said Naum Mosque Interior.

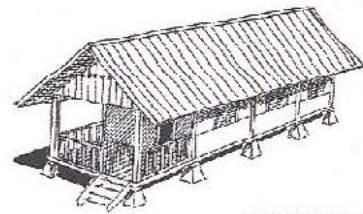
Architecture and Politics in Indonesia between 1957 and 1968

Adhi Moersid, born in 1937 is one of well-known Indonesian architects who graduated in 1968 from Department of Architecture and Fine Arts, Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB). The School of Architecture is the first institution that trains and educates early generations of architect in Indonesia. Even though their professors and instructors were predominantly Europeans by background, the regard to local and indigenous architecture as well as cultural monuments was strong. One important teacher was the Dutch Prof. VR van Rommondts who taught from 1950 to 1962. He is the pioneer of architectural teacher and scholar who dedicates his teaching with a passionate care for local and indigenous architecture. His care for ingenuity of local architecture had been proved with his successful leadership in the restoration of the Prambanan Hindu temple complex in Yogyakarta in the 1930s. Under his teaching and guidance, students were trained and educated to appreciate vernacular and monumental buildings in Indonesia. Field trips and visual studies to historical sites and towns of Java and Bali were part of the school's educational program. During the conflict with the Dutch on the status of Papua, the government of Indonesia urged Dutch professors in many Indonesian universities to leave the country. However, Indonesia's first president Soekarno kept Prof. Van Rommondts staying and teaching at the ITB School of Architecture until his retirement in 1962.

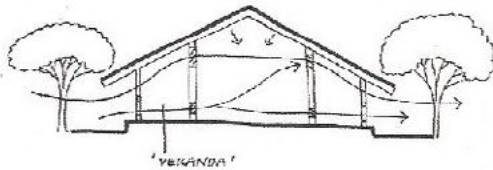
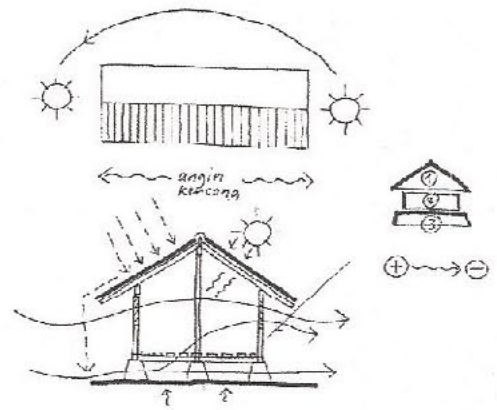
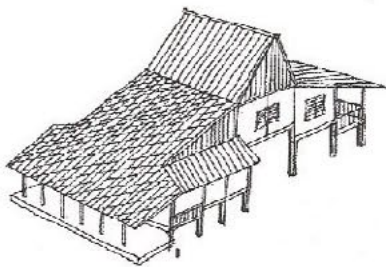
Despite the interruption of the Pacific War 1942 - 1945, the curriculum and program of the school remained the same that was derived from the Delft Technical University's model in the Netherlands. Of course, contextuality of the program had been always debated within the school and university circle, concerning tropical

climate and local culture. The confrontation with local and indigenous building tradition brought about new direction of Dutch architecture in the Far Eastern colony. The architecture of West and East Aula of ITB designed by Henri Maclaine Pont was the outcome of the debates and deliberations on cultural identity of the Dutch Indonesian architecture. Hybrid and synthesis of form between Western and Indonesian building tradition had been an intriguing issue since the critics of the influential Dutch architect and teacher Hendrik Petrus Berlage on the ignorant practice of Dutch architects concerning locality during his first visit in the country with the painter Isaac Israels in 1904 (Bank and van Buuren 2004: 89).

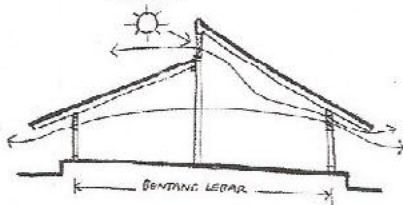
Despite the intensive influence of Western architecture was obvious through lectures, text books and magazines that came into play in the School of Architecture under the United States of America's University of Kentucky Aids in 1957-1962 (Sudradjat 1991: 190-4). The aids enabled the students to be familiar with the architectural theories and works of functional modernism by Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Frank Lloyd Wright, Richard Neutra etc. However, the mainstream of teaching in the school remained strong under the van Rommondts school of thought. Accordingly, respect to local culture and climate is the key to establish new architecture with strong cultural root in the archipelago. Ideologically speaking, the direction of school was clear towards the synthesis of Western functionalism based on rational construction and the climate adaptability of form and material based on local tradition and culture. In this sense, the concept of functional architecture has evolved within the framework of tropical architecture and open-minded life style of local culture.



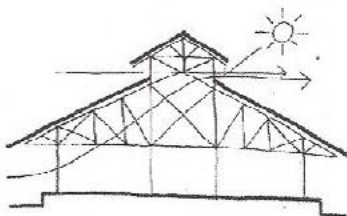
RUMAH BETAWI PINGGIRAN
(DEPA DIANGSANA)



'VERANDA'



BENTENG LEBAR



Studies of architecture based
on rational construction
and the climate adaptability
of form and material of
local tradition and culture.
(Courtesy of "Kagunan")

The Journey of Practice

As many students of architecture do, Adhi Moersid has been engaged with the real world of architectural practice since his times of school. During those times, learning from the masters is the best way to the world of practice. One of his mentor is Soejoedi. As an individual, Soejoedi is well known a strong silent person with charisma and principle. Learning process from the master is probably neither a class-room instructional nor an open debate interactive. Rather, it must have been an intuitive process in terms of learning by observing, following, doing and reflecting.

Based on his graduation, he belongs to the second generation of Post-Colonial architects. He and other five school mates in his generation, Darmawan Prawiroharjo, Robi Sularto, Iman Sunario, Sidharta and Yuswadi Saliya, worked together with Soejoedi, the first generation of Indonesian architect, for the national projects of Soekarno's anti neocolonialist movement; later the six people are known as the founding members of Atelier 6 Architects and Planners established in Jakarta 1968. The cultural atmosphere in the end of the 1960-s and the beginning of 1970-s was neither conducive nor supportive for building construction industry. Catastrophic domestic economy and political chaos characterize the situation of the country at those years, between 1965 and 1973. Adhi Moersid witnessed the nation-building projects under the 'Guided Democracy' era of Soekarno. He worked with his mentor Soejoedi for the Conference for New Emerging Forces (Conefo) complex from 1965 to 1966, now the Parliament Building. It was one of the large scale development projects after the Senayan sport venue (now the Gelora Bung Karno complex) for 100.000 spectators designed by Fredrick Silaban and Russian architects; the Conefo complex comprises the floor area of 80.000 square meters.

Of course the role and function of Adhi Moersid in Atelier 6 is significant from various levels, from administrative to creative works. Several projects and works that Adhi Moersid intensively involved in

do not include in his monograph *Kagunan*, such as: Social Facilities of the Indonesian Aviation Industry in Bandung, hotels and mosques in various cities. Needless to say several unbuilt projects from design competitions and development proposals, are not presented with detailed descriptions.

Based on the author's personal encounter --as his pupil and protégé-- with the architect, Adhi Moersid approaches to design is strongly intuitive with a long process of reflection. He is not the type of person in rush and impatient for creative production. Everything must follow its own course and go with the flow. The form comes into being according to its natural process. The construction system and the material come into play together with its functional content. Of course, nothing is without reason. The sense of *kagunan* guides the process of design from its very idea to its mature presence. The sense provides the architect with the path along the question of appropriateness at various levels of reality, from mundane to spiritual, from tangible to intangible and from practical to ethical. The most important thing of design process for him is not to be deceived by its appearance. Prior to any presentation to the clients, thoughtful examinations and comprehensive deliberations are necessarily done. Again, the sense of *kagunan* provides the architect with solid foundation why the thing is that presents built form, space, ambience, environment and reward to humanity and its location.

As an individual architect and a team member of Atelier 6, Adhi Moersid plays an important role in shaping and establishing a new architecture in Indonesia. The search for cultural identity is always the quest of the company's practice from the beginning of their business in 1968. The work of the team for the search reveals on the architecture of Hilton Executive Club, Jakarta. The characteristics and features of the Club are apparently unique in its attempt to deal with modern construction in tropical humid climate. Exposed concrete shear wall-structure for the steep roof and terracotta floor material demonstrate an



Adhi Moersid's House, completed 1975-extended 1986, 2009.



Adhi Moersid's House-Detail.

attempt to accommodate the need of modern urban society for meeting place with leisure and wellness facilities. Such an informal place for business meeting needs an architectural and mechanical treatment for its warm atmosphere and comfortable environment. The installation of air conditioning system becomes imperative that controls high humidity and temperature for certain level of comfort.

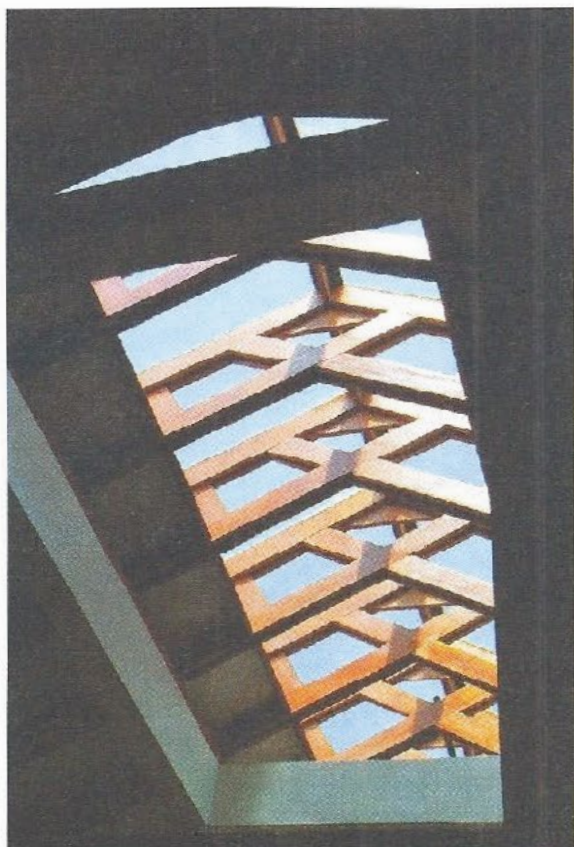
From House to Palace: the Sense of Home

Indeed it is not easy to get up close and personal with Adhi Moersid without studying his private house. A house is the place where people find their sense of freedom; it is the place where people find themselves as they *are*. The private house of the architect is indivisible from his personality and his life-world. Studying his private house is listening and reading the traces and traits of his intimate realm and preferences. From its architectural expression, Adhi Moersid's house is like any house in the area, far from extravagance and superfluity; it stands on the site filled with lush trees and plants. The spaciousness of the house is provided with flowing spaces at various floor levels, and architecturally united under simple gable roof forms covered by terracotta tiles. It is constructed on wooden board-and-nail frame. Adhi Moersid, his wife, Ananda, and his son Satrio have been living in their family house in South Jakarta area since 1975. The house for him is an oasis; it is more than just a place of stop.

Oasis gives us the opportunity for nourishment, refreshment, recollection, and rejoice. In the Javanese culture and tradition, oasis enables one walking the line with resourceful stop for further journey through their age and growth. Life for the

Javanese people is a walk in gaining knowledge and wisdom to be human, at its finest manner and its most sophisticated level in terms of *budi luhung*. Accordingly, the search for identity is a spiritual journey to find the traces and traits of the Almighty in persons, works and others that they are spiritually from the same source. The house for Adhi Moersid is neither a showcase of personal achievement nor a castle of indulgence. Plain and simple, house is the place for learning to grow up in alignment with the sense of *kagunan* for the wellness of mind-body-spirit.

Of course, house is personal. The other houses Adhi Moersid designed are not something apart from its owners. However, the sensible touch of the architect makes the houses the niche for its owners. In this sense, the task of architect, according to Adhi Moersid, is to help the owners find their sense of home in their house. This approach is neither a design intervention nor a submission but purely and simply professional devotion in the spirit of cooperation between architect and the owner of the house. The guiding principle for the cooperation is comprised with the single concept of *kagunan*. Accordingly, what is to design is out of necessity for something essential, and omit everything superficial and trivial. In the sense of *kagunan*, working on form, material, construction, and aesthetical treatment is worked out within the search for something necessary that presents the genuine life-world as it is; a house is capable for being a home, a hotel for a temporary stay with comfort and provided with amenities.



Ami Priyono's House-Skylight's Detail (1994).



Sardono's House-Detail (1992).

In the end, the essence
of building is necessarily
functional.....

From Sociocultural to Spiritual

Variety of buildings that Adhi Moersid have to deal with are almost all building types and institutions, from residential, commercial, educational, cultural and spiritual. The search for spiritual tranquility is probably the ultimate quest of humankind. Adhi Moersid is a person with passion for spirituality. As many Javanese personalities, he values the essential beyond appearances. Of course, to certain extent, spirituality has nothing to do with religiosity. In Javanese tradition, subsuming the transcendence behind all beings is probably the powerful faith that underlies all possible presence therefor there is no reason for arrogance and superiority. The Javanese credo of *ojo dumeh* guides and keeps every step of Adhi Moersid's work in the search for the essential. In his words: everything is from *Allah* (Moersid 2014: 27).

Concluding Remarks

The search for cultural root of architecture has deeply rooted in the search for home in community. It is the reason why the architecture of Adhi Moersid strives the necessity for cultural root in local tradition and geographical condition. The integration into local context becomes crucially necessary because from which the work is able to present as a team player in the orchestra of the life-world from family house, neighborhood, village, town, city to global world. Adhi Moersid understands this search for integration in terms of *kagunan*. The concept stems from the Javanese word *guna* meaning useful, beneficial, suitable and valuable. *Kagunan* speaks of the presence of things that bring about the life-world lively and joyfully at its moderation and humility. The architecture that Adhi Moersid wants to share with people is not something glorious and extravagant but respectful and graceful.

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