

The background image shows a picturesque village street. On the left, there are stone buildings with tiled roofs and chimneys. A stone wall runs along the right side of the street. The street is paved with cobblestones and has a wooden fence on the right. The sky is clear and blue.

# VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE

Week 3

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# Perception of Built Forms: Indigenous and Colonial

- ◆ Colonisers have very different perception on what housing and dwelling should look like
- ◆ Indonesian cities are much bigger than the traditional European cities
- ◆ Rural customs carried over to the “city”:
  - ◆ Cities/villages built in the woods
  - ◆ Houses made of wood, easily constructed and transported
  - ◆ Surrounded by fruit trees

# Perception of Built Forms: Indigenous and Colonial

- ◆ Colonisers then built “landed houses”, using brick and stone
- ◆ There were issues of flooding and drainage and waste disposal
- ◆ Batavia was a pit of malaria and other illnesses because the Dutch attempted to replicate Dutch city design of canals and ditches



# Perception of Built Forms: Indigenous and Colonial



- ◇ Dutch people also refused to adopt to the local way of living such as:
  - ◇ Frequent bathing
  - ◇ Frequent change of clothes
  - ◇ Siestas
  - ◇ Building airy and ventilated houses
- ◇ They insist on wearing wigs and layers of clothes, refused to rest in the afternoon, and drank too much alcohol

# Tall roof and dark houses: what gives?

- ◆ Prominent roofs, sometimes even without walls with 1:1:9 ratio of stilts : wall : roof.
- ◆ Small, dark, dirty interior
- ◆ Lavish exterior
- ◆ Hearth is the only source of warmth and lights
- ◆ Rubbish dumped through the floor
- ◆ Why are the houses so dark?



# Where are the windows?

- ◆ Houses in highland avoid windows to protect from the winds
- ◆ Dark places in houses are used to store heirlooms, sometimes highly purposefully being made pitch-black
- ◆ Rotinese and Tanimbar houses were subjected to unfavourable reviews from European observers, some in outrageously derogatory manner
- ◆ However, some adored the Tanimbar houses for their artistic decorations



# Multi-Family house = death pit?



- ◇ Manggarai houses can host up to 100 people
- ◇ A source of disease
- ◇ Demolished by Dutch administration, what happened:
  - ◇ Built rectangular houses, which blew in the wind
  - ◇ Local people rebuilt smaller circular houses
  - ◇ Living condition improved

# Separation of men and women

- ◇ Tana Toraja houses have hearth in the east side of the centre of the house but Dutch government urged the community to move the hearth to a separate building
- ◇ Men ate in the house, women ate in the back house
- ◇ Donggo of Sumbawa used to have one room in the house until Islam came and encouraged separation of back and front room

Changes in built form affect changes in social relationships too!



# Some other top-down changes

- ◆ People of Central Sulawesi are moved from their fortified hilltop dwellings to the valleys
- ◆ East Timor were resettled by the military for the ease of control and distribution of aid
- ◆ Brou, Cambodia saw people from the highlands with their circular houses being resettled by the Khmer administration to more accessible settlements
- ◆ Nuaulu people of Seram Island were forced to live on landed housing
- ◆ Javanese trans migrants found difficulties in adapting to live in piled structures in Sumatera
- ◆ Sakudei of Siberut in Mentawai suffered because they were forced to:
  - ◆ Leave their longhouse
  - ◆ Wear clothes
  - ◆ Cut their hair
  - ◆ Convert to Islam/Christianity
- ◆ Destroyed coastal ecology & the people's sustainability

# Discuss

- ◇ What is savage?
- ◇ Can people who know how to build well-structured houses be called 'savage'?
- ◇ What do you think of government intervention?
- ◇ What do you think of our modern houses now that you have learnt the facts of the history?