

Characteristic of Local Pelangi Cloth Motifs

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Abstract

'Pelangi' cloth flourished locally circa 18th century. Began to decline then extinct due to the development of the Batik industry around the 1930s. In the 1960s, the tie and dye textiles were spread across the world that often mistaken by the community as 'Pelangi' cloth, although the design characteristics were different. The objectives of this study are to identify the elements and to show how the textile motifs design features are. This research used field study methods, interviews and library studies. The novelty of this study is to reveal the actual character to avoid misinterpretation and misperception of the community.

Keywords: Characteristic, Cloth, Local 'Pelangi', Motif

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1.0 Introduction

The role of ancient Malay rulers informing the direction of the Malay arts and culture field by inspiring local textile motifs and designs. The Malay rulers of ancient times were so concerned about the development of cultural arts. Many of the Malay artisan at that time worked in the palace court under the patronage of the sultan, queen and palace dignitaries who not only encouraged, but also donated beautiful motifs, designs and clouds to artisans who were well-versed in their respective fields (Aziz, 2006). In the past, appreciation for the textile arts manufacture was further expanded through the support of the Malay Rulers and the Palace as patron for the industry. At that time, the 'Pelangi' cloth was often used as a garment and decoration in the daily lives of the Malay rulers and nobles. Textiles were commonly used in attending various occasions and ceremonies in certain official customs. The beautifully crafted and delicate artwork of 'Pelangi's' cloth was often used as a gift to the people who have served to the king and the State. On the other hand, the 'Pelangi' textiles were also used as gifts in the form of a complete garment and souvenirs to King from guests who came to the palace for various affairs and purposes (Aziz, 2006; Ismail, 2006; Jamal, 2007). Today, the community is still not exposed. It recognises the motifs and design of the traditional 'Pelangi' cloth rather than other local traditional cloth motifs and design, which the making of those textiles are still ongoing. This situation has caused a misunderstanding due to the lack of understanding of 'Pelangi' cloth. The major misconception is that the question of how the motifs and characteristic of the traditional 'Pelangi' cloths is that exist in this country. The beauty and specialities of local traditional textiles can be seen in its motifs, designs besides their form and functions. However, the motifs, designs, form and functions of traditional 'Pelangi' cloth are still blurred and have never been shown for general knowledge as Batik cloth, 'Songket' cloth and 'Pua' cloth (Samin, 2011). The community of textile is now more recognising and appreciating the tie and dye designs that have been introduced by Western societies around the world. Including in Malaysia since the 60s and 70s. Apart from that, the local people today are still confusing as they consider the tie and dye and the 'Pelangi' cloth are the results of the same textiles directly because both types of textiles are using tying techniques in their designs making. Also, the present generation even regards Batik and 'Pelangi' clothes as the same; this is because they are less familiar with the 'Pelangi' cloth motifs and characters in the real sense.

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Therefore, this study was conducted by tracking and identifying the traditional 'Pelangi' cloth artefacts that are still available and stored in several museums and galleries around Peninsula Malaysia.

2.0 Literature Review

The previous study, like Peacock (1977) defined that the 'Pelangi' cloth is one of the three easiest ways to resist techniques but still has the speciality. The 'Pelangi' is a Malay word which means the colours of a rainbow that has many colours. It starts with a piece of raw cloth, then needs to be bound and tied to the design that has been determined with the fibre straps to prevent it from penetrating of the colour. The cloth that has been strapped may be dyed once or dyed several times to produce a colour effect. 'Tritik' is also a special technique in the finer 'Pelangi' cloth that is found around Southeast Asia. It is a running stitches technique on the surface of the cloth then tightened which will give a colourless effect on a certain small part. This 'Tritik' technique is commonly used in combination with bound and tied dyeing techniques in single colour effect fabric. In the past, art and appreciation for the manufacture of artistic textile were further expanded through the support of the Malay Rulers and the Palace as patron for the industry. The Malay rulers in ancient times were concerned about the development of local art and culture. Many of the Malay artisan at that time was employed in the courtroom under the patronage of the Sultan, Queen and palace chief. These royal and aristocrats are not only encouraging but also contributing beautiful motifs, designs and ornaments to artisans who are well-versed in designing and creativity in their respective fields (Aziz, 2006). The beautiful designs and delicate textiles often belong to kings and nobles for various purposes (Samin, 2015). Like the 'Pelangi' cloth, in ancient times was often used as a garment and decoration in the daily life of the Malay rulers and nobility. This Textiles are often used and worn in attending various occasions and ceremonies in certain official customs. In addition, it is also often used as a gift and gift to the people who have served the King and the State. The beautiful and refined 'Pelangi' cloth is also a gift in the form of full set garment and souvenirs to the invited guests of the King who come to the palace for various affairs and purposes.

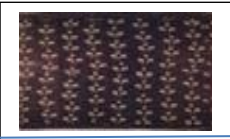





















'Pelangi' cloth is a kind of local traditional textiles with Malay motifs and designs. Produced by bound and tapered stitches on the surface of the fabric with a colourful colouring effect and then finishing with the paint brush technique 'colek'. Often used as a complement to garment, palace decorations, and souvenirs among Malay Kings around the 17th to 18th centuries. This textile had been manufactured in Perak and Terengganu around the 18th century and in Kelantan in the 19th century. It was being popular as a Malaya garment around the beginning of the 20th century. Unfortunately, the manufacturing of this textile began to decline after the 1930s due to the development of the Batik Blok textile industry followed by the Batik Screen textile industry introduced around the 1920s. The result of visual documentation study of the traditional 'Pelangi' cloth has been studied by making a comparative analysis based on the appropriate justification for the real answer. The features of the table of each traditional 'Pelangi' cloth and 'Songket' cloth was similar in terms of the types, name and forms of motifs that were produced is also shown in the comparison table. As to making a better understanding of the traditional motif's types, name and forms of the Pelangi cloth, researchers have conducted a field study to several museums and galleries around Peninsula Malaysia. This activity is to document the 'Pelangi' cloth for this research from Kelantan State Museum, Terengganu State Museum, National Textile Museum, Selangor State Museum and RA Fine Art Gallery. Also, an interview with experts and practitioners of traditional textile arts include the curator of the museums and galleries were also involved. Over fifty pieces of traditional 'Pelangi' cloths with various designs were viewed and documented. However, only thirty-two the local traditional 'Pelangi' clothes are suitable to be used for this study as refer to Figure 1 below. The documentation of 'Pelangi' cloths was then identified, recorded and arranged into structured form and analysed.

3.0 Methodology

The result of visual documentation study of the traditional 'Pelangi' cloth has been studied by making a comparative analysis based on the appropriate justification for the real answer. The features of the table of each traditional 'Pelangi' cloth and 'Songket' cloth was similar in terms of the types, name and forms of motifs that were produced is also shown in the comparison table. As to making a better understanding of the traditional motif's types, name and forms of the 'Pelangi' cloth, researchers have conducted a field study to several museums and galleries around Peninsula Malaysia. This activity is to document the 'Pelangi' cloth for this research from Kelantan State Museum, Selangor State Museum, National Textile Museum, Terengganu State Museum and RA Fine Art Gallery. Also, interviews with experts and practitioners of traditional textile arts include the curator of the museums and galleries were also involved. Over fifty pieces of traditional 'Pelangi' cloths with various designs were viewed and documented. However, only thirty-two the local traditional 'Pelangi' clothes are suitable to be used for this study as refer to Table 1 below. The documentation of 'Pelangi' cloths was then identified, recorded and arranged into structured form and analysed.

The study of identifying the motifs design about 'Pelangi' cloth was made based on numerous sources of traditional textile design and related literature from previous studies. The essential references are from 'Motif Ornament Melayu' (1993), 'Motif-Motif Etnik Malaysia' (1985), 'Songket Malaysia' (2002), 'Corak dan Ragi Tenun Melayu Riau' (2003), 'Teks Lengkap Pendidikan Seni Visual Tingkatan 4 & 5' (2004), 'Motif Alam Dalam Batik Dan Songket Melayu' (2006), and 'Rupa Dan Gaya: Busana Melayu' (2006). Later, as to verify on the traditional 'Pelangi' cloth and 'Songket' cloth motifs documentation table, the researcher held a discussion session with several textile craft artisans, practitioners and instructor of weaving and batik crafts that were familiar with 'Songket' motifs and local traditional textile motifs at the National Craft Institute (Mrs Yusnida Yusof, Mrs Norizah Abdullah, Mrs Noridah Johan, Mr Zailani Kassim, Mrs Kamariah Abdullah, Mr Arshad Ibrahim and Mr Abdullah Saari, 2011).

Table.1: Visual Documentation of Local Traditional 'Pelangi' Cloth

'Pelangi' Cloth Artefact from Malaysia State Museums and Gallery	Column A (t)	Column B (t)
'Pelangi' Cloth from Kelantan State Museum		
'Pelangi' Cloth from Selangor State Museum		
'Pelangi' Cloth from National Textile Museum		
		
		
'Pelangi' Cloth from Terengganu State Museum		
		
		
		
		
'Pelangi' Cloth from R.A. Fine Art Gallery		

(Source: Researcher Personal Photo Collection)

4.0 Results

Item	Local 'Pelangi' cloth types of Motifs Form and Shape	Local 'Songket' Cloth types of Motifs Form and Shape	Name of The Motifs
1.			'Pucuk Rebung' (Bamboo Shoot)
2.			'Tampuk Manggis' (Mangos teen Guts)
3.			'Bunga Cengkih' (Clove) and 'Buah Cermai' (Cider Fruit)
4.			'Tampuk Kesemak' (Persimmon Guts)
5.			'Bunga Tanjung' (Bullet Wood or 'Mimusops Elengi')
6.			'Bunga Tiga Dara' (Fuchsia Flower)
7.			'Bunga Mahkota Raja' (King's Crown Flower)
8.			'Bunga Kertas' (Bougainvillea) 'Bunga Cina' (Gardenia) 'Bunga Kemuncup' (Love Grass) 'Bunga Pisang' ('Heliconia')
9.			'Bunga Ketola' (Luffa Flower) 'Bunga Seri Pagi' (Morning Glory)/ 'Bunga Ati-Ati' (Patchouli Flower)
10.			'Bunga Pecah Empat' (Four Petals Flower) 'Bunga Melur' (Jasmine)
11.			'Putik Setangkai' (A Stalk Bulb) 'Bunga Semangat' (Spirit Flower)
12.			'Tampuk Berembang' ('Sonneratia Caseolaris' Guts)
13.			'Bunga Cabit' (Small Flower)
14.			'Bunga Bebalng' or 'Lambaian Angin' (Blades Flower)
15.			'Daun Setangkai' (A Stalk Leaf) 'Daun Inai' (Henna Leaf)
16.			'Bintang Pecah Lapan' (Eight-Pointed Star) 'Bintang Beralih' (Moving Star) 'Tapak Sulaiman' (Star Fish)

17.			'Awan Larat' or 'Kerawang' (Cloud bend or Foliage)
18.			'Matahari' or 'Sinar Matahari' (Sun or Sunshine)
19.			'Gigi Yu' (Shark Teeth) 'Pergunungan' (Mountain Range) 'Siku Keluang' (Bat Elbow)
20.			'Ombak-Ombak' (Waves)
21.			'Pagar Istana' (Palace Fence) 'Air Mulih' (Spinning Water)
22.			'Potong Wajik' (Sweet Rice Cake in Diamond Shape Cut) 'Madu Manis' (Sweet Honey Cake Pudding)
23.			'Biji Tamar' (Dates Seed)
24.			'Buah Setangkai' (A Stalk Fruit)
25.			'Tepung Talam' (Malay Cake Pudding)
26.			'Unduk-unduk Laut' (Sea Horse)
27.			'Biji Peria' (Bitter Gourd Seed)
28.			'Bunga Cendawan' (Mushroom Flower)
29.			'Buah Cermat' (Cider Fruit)
30.			'Bunga Melur' (Jasmine)
31.			'Tapak Catur' (Chessboard)

Figure 2: Traditional 'Pelangi' Cloth Motifs Compare to Traditional 'Songket' Cloth Motifs
(Source: Researcher PhD. Thesis, Title: Kelestarian Kain Pelangi Tempatan Melalui Rekaan Dan Inovasi Proses Penghasilannya (Sustainability of The Local 'Pelangi' Cloth Through the Design and Its Innovation Production Process), pp 87- 95, 2015)



Figure 3: Traditional 'Pelangi' Cloth Artefacts of the National Textile Museum Collection
(Source: Researcher Personal Photo Collection)

The Figure 2 above shows certain similarity and also differences in how the motifs design that discovered from the 'Pelangi' cloth and 'Songket'. The features that recognised from both types of textiles are planted motifs, fruit motifs, leaf motifs, flower motifs and delicacy motifs. On the other hand, the other element that was inspired is from cosmic motifs, natural objects and abstraction motif that design from chooses animals. The detail information from, a textile craft teacher at the National Craft Institute, as she is a 'Limar' and

'Songket' weaving expert (Mrs Halimaton Abd. Shukor, 2011), while according to a textile Curator at the State Museum of Terengganu (Mrs Ramlah, 2011) and she mentioned that previously the 'Pelangi' cloth was always produced by the 'Limar' and 'Songket' cloth weavers. They usually used the balance of white threads for woven as to make a white fabric. The surface of the plain white cloth was then crafted with tying and running stitches technique with Malay traditional motifs design. Once the fabric was ready, then immersed process was prepared with the dye bath and then dried the fabric. When the fabric was dried the tying and stitches should be removed as to become a piece of 'Pelangi' cloth (Samin, 2015). The similarity and differences are in how the motifs design that discovered from the 'Pelangi' cloth and 'Songket' (refer in Figure 2). The features that recognised from both types of textiles are planted motifs, fruit motifs, leaf motifs, flower motifs and delicacy motifs. On the other hand, the other element that was inspired is from cosmic motifs, natural objects and abstraction motif that design from chooses animals (Legino, 2012).

5.0 Conclusion

To sum up, the results have shown precisely how exactly is the local 'Pelangi' cloth motifs characteristic. This exposition is supported by the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Company and the Group for the financial year ended 31 December 2002, p. 46) with the titled about 'Pelangi' cloth, where the patterns on this cloth comprises of geometric shapes of animals, circles and triangles and also renditions of plants and fretwork (Samin, 2015). As an example of Figure 3, there are various types of motifs inspired by the appearance of flowers, leaves, fruits and parts of the plants are often used in both local traditional cloths. Among the motifs are the motif of 'Pucuk Rebung' (Bamboo Shoot), 'Tampuk Manggis' (Mangos teen Guts), 'Bunga Cengkih' (Clove) 'Tampuk Kesemak' (Persimmon Guts), 'Bunga Tanjung Flower' (Bullet Wood or 'Mimusops Elengi'), 'Bunga Tiga Dara' (Fuchsia Flower), 'Bunga Mahkota Raja' (King's Crown Flower) , 'Bunga Setangkai' (A Stalk Flower) , 'Bunga Kertas' (Bougainvillea), 'Bunga Cina' (Gardenia), 'Bunga Kemuncup' (Love Grass), 'Bunga Pisang' (Heliconia), 'Bunga Ketola' (Luffa Flower), 'Bunga Seri Pagi' (Morning Glory), 'Bunga Ati-Ati' (Patchouli Flower), 'Bunga Pecah Empat' (Four Petals Flower) 'Bunga Melur' (Jasmine), 'Putik Setangkai' (A Stalk Bulb), 'Bunga Semangat' (Spirit Flower), 'Tampuk Berembang' ('Sonneratia Caseolaris' Guts), 'Bunga Cabit' (Small Flower), 'Bunga Bebalang' or 'Lambaian Angin' (Blades Flower), 'Daun Setangkai' (A Stalk Leave), 'Daun Inai' (Henna Leave), 'Bintang Pecah Lapan' (Eight Pointed Star), ' Bintang Beralih' (Moving Star), 'Tapak Sulaiman' (Star Fish), 'Awan Larat Or Kerawang' (Cloud bend or Foliage), 'Matahari' or 'Sinar Matahari' (Sun or Sun Shine), 'Gigi Yu' (Shark Teeth) 'Pergunungan' or 'Siku Keluang' (Mountain Range or Bat Elbow) 'Ombak Ombak' (Waves), 'Pagar Istana' (Palace Fence), 'Air Mulih' (Spinning Water), 'Potong Wajik' (Sweet Rice Cake in Diamond-Shape Cut), 'Madu Manis' (Sweet Honey Cake Pudding), 'Biji Tamar' (Dates Seed), 'Buah Setangkai' (A Stalk Fruit), 'Tepung Talam' (Malay Cake Puding), 'Unduk-Unduk Laut' (Sea Horse), 'Biji Peria' (Bitter Gourd Seed), 'Bunga Cendawan' (Mushroom Flower), 'Buah Cermat' (Cider Fruit), 'Bunga Melur' (Jasmine), 'Tapak Catur' (Chessboard). There are also a kind of inspired motif of the appearance of life in the air and in the water. Among these motifs are the the 'Siku Keluang' (Bat Elbow) and 'Tapak Sulaiman' (Star Fish) There are also a kind of inspired motifs of the appearance of the sun and the stars such as the 'Sinar Matahari' (Sun Shine) and 'Bintang Pecah Lapan' (Eight Pointed Star) In addition, there are also types of motifs inspired by the appearance of mountains, clouds and oceans. Among these motifs are 'Pergunungan' (Mountain Range), 'Awan Larat' (Cloud bend) and 'Ombak Ombak' (Waves). There is also a type of motifs used in the design of local traditional 'Pelangi' cloth inspired by the appearance of cakes, sweets and dried fruits. Among the motifs are the 'Potong Wajik' (Sweet Rice Cake in Diamond Shape Cut), 'Madu Manis' (Sweet Honey Cake Pudding) and 'Biji Tamar' (Dates Seed). Then there are also types of motifs inspired by the appearance of the decoration and items found in the palace. Among these motifs are the 'Pagar Istana' (Palace Fence) and 'Tapak Catur' (Chessboard). Therefore, this study is very significant and useful to be documented, which can be referred to textile society, textile practitioners, researchers, educators and students from textile and fashion field, whether for local and international.

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