

# Tepak Sirih (Betel Box): The Heritage Treasure of Perak

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## ABSTRACT

*This study was conducted to study the uniqueness of Tepak Sirih (Betel Box) as a Perak State Heritage Treasure. Tepak sirih custom equipment that is dominant in certain ceremonies, especially the Malay community in the Malay wedding customs and traditions of the Royal. The fact Tepak sirih been placed by the Malay community in the past as heritage items and heritage which is a must for those belonging to the palace until the commoners. It reflects the warmth, courtesy and stratification of the Malay community in their daily lives. The sharpness and finesse of the art of interiors reflect the height of status possessed by these heritage objects. The main aim of this study was to study the uniqueness of the ornaments on the periphery of Perak state. The research method used is a qualitative research method based on observation, interview and document analysis to obtain the findings. It is hoped that the efforts of the researcher in displaying the uniqueness of the decoration of the Perak state heritage treasure can be accepted as a meaningful study. Keywords: Midgets, Decorations, Heritage Treasures.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Tepak sirih, Decorations, Heritage, Treasures.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

*Tepak Sirih (Betel Box) synonymous with wedding and engagement customs of the Malays in Perak Darul Ridzuan. Nowadays, the use of betel box function only as a symbolic Malay cultural heritage of yore. Previously, tepak sirih plays an important role as an opening and closing speech in the custom engagement of traditional Malay maiden. Performing ceremonies during the ceremonies of engagement, betrothal and marriage were considered as the opening and complement of the ceremony without which the ceremony would be considered non-traditional and indecent. However, today there is no longer among the Malay people who chew betel leaves, betel leaf is present and remains a symbol of the engagement and wedding ceremonies in the state alone. In the context of Malay wedding, tepak sirih stakeholders as custom head and the opening speech in any process related to the business to investigate, propose and apply even the absence of tepak sirih while receiving guests also considered disrespectful or do not serve guests coming by customs [3]. Modern Malay society nowadays, do not understand the symbols betel box and betel nut philosophy in life, particularly those involving the discussion [5].*

*Tepak Sirih* is cultural heritage object required in traditional Malay wedding before. Syed Alwi Alhady [1] and Amran Kasimin [2] defined this *tepak sirih* as the head of a custom or leader. The absence of any patronage during the custom of those who support the custom will be considered ignorant. The use of betel nuts is not explained in detail except as discussed by the two researchers above. Sheppard [6] further described the use of the sheathing in the custom of weaving. Non-verbal communication that symbolizes the meaning behind the customary behavior in both events is discussed in detail by Sheppard. According to Jasmani [4], *tepak sirih* is a special container used for laying the betel and its alloys are made of box, either of gold, bronze or carved wood.



Photo 1.1: Tepak Sirih Tekat Negeri Perak

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used is qualitative method. Qualitative research is a detailed research method for information retrieval. Therefore, qualitative research can explain the process, the steps and the reasons behind it. The during fieldwork, researchers do extensive research that requires observation through a survey method. Among the features of qualitative field research are observation, interviews and document analysis. The observation method is done by recording the embroidery activity of *Sulaman Tekat Benang Emas* step by step in detail. During the interview, researchers will interview famous people in the manufacture of *Sulaman Tekat Benang Emas* to find information on the motifs and design patterns used on the *Tepak Sirih Sulaman Tekat Benang Emas*. The interview was conducted with *Mrs. Azizah Binti Adam*, a prominent embroidery figure in Kampung Padang Changkat, Kuala Kangsar, Perak. Finally, researchers will analyze data in the form of scientifically-relevant documents, books, journal articles, and past research on pastoral data to improve data collection and dissemination.

The fieldwork study is based in Kuala Kangsar, Perak. The location of this study was chosen as it is the main location of the still active *tekat sulaman emas* making. The site of this study houses well-known figures of *tekat sulaman emas*, which were selected to prove their knowledge of the motif of intricate embroidery in the *tepak sirih* of the State Of Perak. Selected characters are people who have received awards and have over 40 years of experience in embroidery. This is to confirm the authenticity of the information obtained and their traditional value. The motif of the selected study sample was extracted and the design pattern was reproduced by the researcher. The process of redesigning the design was done using *Adobe Illustrator CS6* software. The main purpose of this is to illustrate the type of motif and design of the motifs in the *tepak sirih tekat sulaman emas* more clearly and in detail.

### 3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The results of the field study showed that the dominant flower motif was used in the production of intricate embroidery motifs on the periphery of Perak State. The motif used in the decoration of *tepak sirih tekat sulaman emas* consists of floral elements. Plant motifs are composed of two forms: leaf or shoot and flower shape. The shape of the leaves is like *pucuk paku*, *daun peria*, leaves of the yam (*daun keladi*), paddy flower (*bunga padi*) and bamboo shoots (*pucuk rebung*). Other forms of flower such as chrysanthemum, hibiscus flower, clove flower (*bunga cengkih*), star anise (*bunga lawang*), bitter gourd flower (*bunga peria*), the flower of kenanga, the flower of cempaka, orchid flower and more.



Photo 1.2: Motif Flower Design

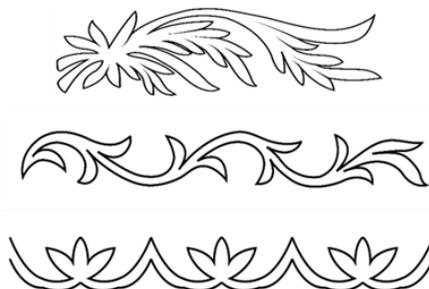


Figure 1.1: Illustration of Flowers Design



Photo 1.3: Motif Flower Design

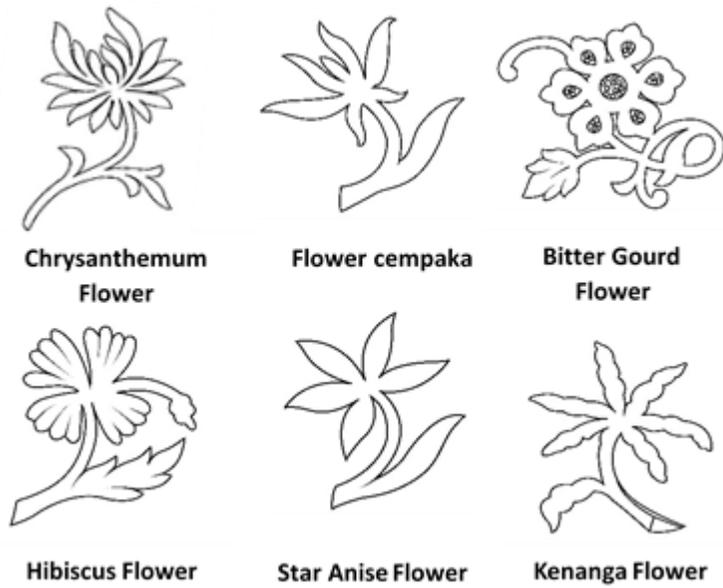


Figure 1.2: Illustration of Flowers Design



Photo 1.4: Photo Of *Tepak Sirih* And *Cembul*

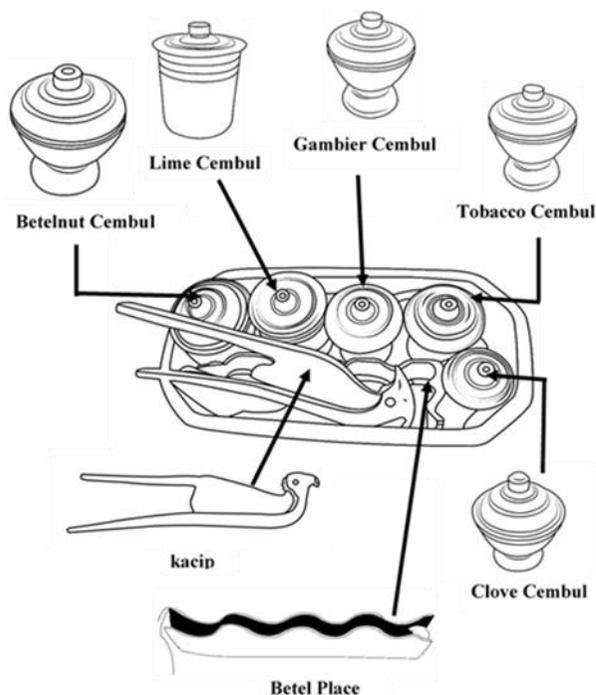


Figure 1.3: Illustration of *Tepak Sirih* and *Cembul*

#### 4. SUMMARY

The ranking of *tepak sirih* a very important role in the culture of the Malay community has highlighted a betel as an object of high cultural value of art making. The complicated and fineness of the artwork of the former can reflect the status that this cultural object possesses. The decorative motif found on *The State of Perak heritage* showcases the delicate craftsmanship of intricate art. The tray of *tepak sirih* containing a *cembul* brass is highlighted with a beautiful ornamentation design and in accordance with its function and use. The accuracy and diversity of decorative betel height was infused with the philosophy and the meaning contained in the customary modesty and Malay culture for centuries. In this study it has been found that the use of floral motifs are very close to the lives of the Malays were as chrysanthemums, hibiscus, cloves, star anise, bitter gourd flowers, kenanga flowers and cempaka flowers.

In conclusion, this study shows that the beauty of the art born and the culture created by the community is in fact a complete package to show the great height and sense of community of its creators in the most harmonious and symbolic way through the influence of culture in the arts. Here are some research findings and suggestions to conserve and place the cherry blossoms as valuable and enduring national heritage treasures in the days, decades and decades of the millennium:

- i. Documents related study materials betel found in the states in Malaysia that can be used as a reference and guide to the Malay heritage of generations of art lovers.
- ii. Interior *tepak sirih* put back in place the highest in the heritage of the Malay community has almost lapsed in time through the accumulation of material, images and comparisons which show similarities and differences of the various types of betel in Malaysia.
- iii. Restore custom and cultural function through appreciation of art and the uniqueness of exploration of interiors in the states of Malaysia.

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