

Rebuilding Tazo Traditional House East Nusa Tenggara by Excavating Collective Memories *Restore the Memories in an Extinct Village*

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Abstract

Keywords:

*collective memory;
disconnected
generation;
documentation; Tazo;
traditional house;
vernacular architecture*

Traditional life in Indonesia is significantly related to spoken culture from the older generation to the young age. This condition unconsciously shows a risk of void space when there is a disconnected generation. Only a few written documentation and drawings exist for Vernacular Architecture in Indonesia or Architecture Nusantara. Tazo is one of several villages in Riung district, Flores island, in Nusa Tenggara Timur province, Indonesia. The current condition of the traditional house of Tazo is extinct, and there are no physical traces anymore. In this paper, we will show the excavation of the traditional house of the Tazo with the method of searching for data through oral interviews with existing traditional elders who have experienced living in their traditional house before. Step by step, the shape of this traditional house is illustrated architecturally and can be recognized again by the memory of the traditional elders of Kampung Tazo.

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1. Introduction

Tazo is a village in the northern part of Flores, East Nusa Tenggara, which has encountered the extinction of traditional houses in the last three decades. Tazo's traditional house is no longer exists and has no record ranging from photos, writings, buildings, or any tangible things, but this is not the end of history in Kampong Tazo. Naturally, in our condition, documentation in physical form has a higher value than non-physical records that can be lost at any time. It turns out that today the only remaining records of the traditional Tazo house are the people's memories from generation to generation. The Tazo House will only be a fairy tale if it is not physically documented soon for the younger generation. Tazo peoples and the others concerned with the traditional architecture of Indonesia must collect the record of the Tazo traditional house in a data set to be valuable.

The data sets of Kampong Tazo could significantly impact the architectural historiography of vernacular architecture in Indonesia. Typically, in carrying out an architectural building, data in drawings, calculations, or other processed data sets will be

the basis for the subsequent development. But this is not fundamental to traditional societies in Indonesia. Traditional peoples do not document most traditional houses due to the limited documentation skill or even reading and writing ability. They do not have a cultural obligation to draw it or write it in a structural context. The only remain until today is the memory of the people.

To draw history and memory of Tazo house on the same page, a journal article from Olick & Robbins in *Annual Review of Sociology* may represent this essay.

"History is dead memory, a way of preserving pasts to which we no longer have an organic experiential relation. On the surface, this understanding of the distinction negates the self-image of historiography as the more important or appropriate attitude toward the past: History's epistemological claim is devalued in favor of memory's meaningfulness. At the deeper level, however, the distinction is the same that traditional historians would draw between history and memory: Only the former is engaged in a search for truth". (Olick & Robbins, 1998 pp110)

Engaging in this search of truth is very important for reconstructing the data. The result of historiography based on digging a memory of Tazo house should be meaningful. Not only for Tazo's people but for the architectural science in Indonesia.

Traditional life in Indonesia is in the form of spoken culture passed down from generation to generation, which unconsciously shows a risk of space when there is a disconnected generation. There have been many examples of the loss of traditional building culture in Indonesia because of this space, such as natural disasters, religious doctrines, and the simple reason of not having any willingness to build anymore due to modernization factors. A new stigma embedded in the younger generation is that everything modern becomes more valuable than traditionality. The reconstruction of traditional houses with no traces has its challenges because we cannot trace it through literature studies. This situation shows the importance of documentation in Indonesian vernacular architecture, both for those that still exist in the physical form of traditional houses or an extinct condition as encountered by Kampong Tazo in Flores, East Nusa Tenggara. Until now, the documentation of Tazo traditional house never exists in an article or architecture drawing science. This essay may take the first appearance to show the data reconstruction of Tazo traditional house.

2. Method

The Rumah Asuh Foundation conducted this research led Gregorius Antar Awal, one of many architects who set up the Young Indonesian Architects Association, commonly known as *Arsitek Muda Indonesia (AMI)*, in the early 1990s. After the Timor house reconstruction in 1994, Gregorius Antar, or his nickname Yori Antar again focused on rediscovering Indonesian vernacular architecture in 2008. Waerebo is the first project of Rumah Asuh and won the UNESCO Asia Pacific Award in 2012. This research project continues with research projects in Ratenggaro, Southwest Sumba, Suroba Wamena, and other parts of Indonesia.

From 2013, the author acted as a mentor in Rumah Asuh and with Seisy Zakia in this research project was helping two field researchers, namely Florencia Irena Rustamadi and Winson Christian Anggoro from the Faculty of Architecture and Design, Soegijapranata Unika Semarang. Due to the absence of written data or images regarding the traditional Tazo house. The method used in conducting this research is described as follows.

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The first is a field study, and the research team worked on a live-in project with the community for one month to dig deeper into the architecture and culture in Kampong Tazo. The live-in project includes analyzing the physical traces of the house or village of Tazo in the reallocation. This field study intends to get closer emotionally to the community. With the presence of emotional closeness, the process of digging into people's memories will be easier to do.

The second method is a literature study. The literature study is used to explore all the possibilities in the form of the physical records of the Tazo community and the theoretical basis related to research based on extracting memories. Since Tazo does not have any documents regarding the construction of traditional houses, this literature study is needed for other matters related to the culture of traditional buildings in the surrounding area or the form of conventional houses in the same community group on the Flores Island.

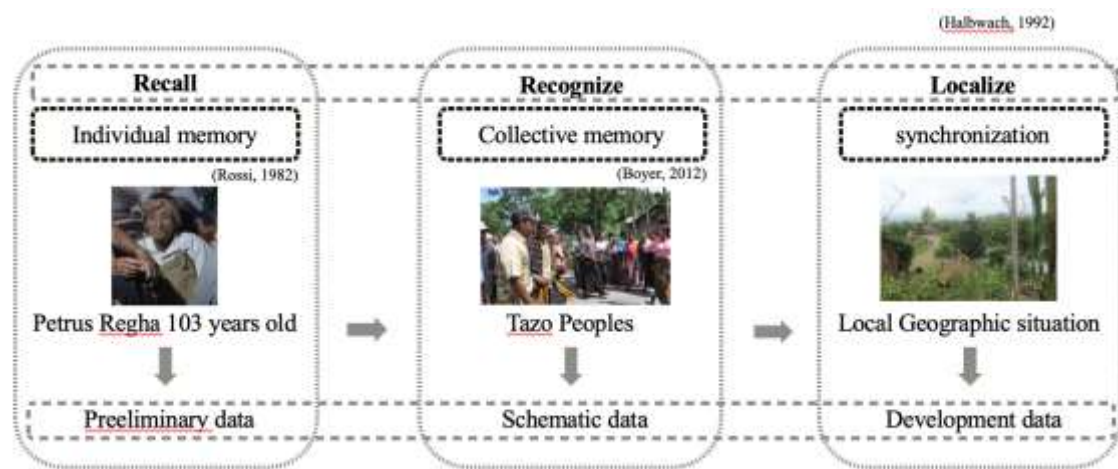


Figure 1. Diagram for the third, fourth and fifth method

Source: Halbwach, 1992

The third method is interviews and data reconstruction, and this is very important to extract primary data from the individual memory of an elder who is more than 100 years old. This memory is used as the forerunner of the initial data reconstruction in architectural drawings. Reconstruction of data based on this narrative must be repeated several times after getting the elders' input to match the existing memory.

The fourth method is the reconstruction of the initial data. The initial data only departs from individual memory, and this data needs to be developed into collective memory-based data. Direct discussions with the community regarding the initial data and receiving input from the community can strengthen the validation of the data.

The last method is re-check the current location's physical condition following the existing geographical conditions of Kampong Tazo. It is more about synchronization to the actual situation of the existing site.

The development of this research is constructive from the beginning to the end of existing architectural data. The constructive research method is in line with the theory of Groat & Wang (2013), which states that one of the architectural research frameworks is to reconstruct it. This framework is studied more deeply in conformity with science and its more concrete existence. The subjective factor of the informants and the relationship with the community's interpretation of their traditional house makes the case discussed in this

construction method cannot rely only on the memory of one or two people. For that, we need a collective memory from several figures and other people to produce and achieve a reconstruction of vernacular architecture with good validation quality.

3. Result and Discussion

In a journal article by Amos Rapoport, an architect who explores the complexity of the environment and human behavior states in the section on Why are we studying vernacular architecture. Most studies of vernacular design have been and continue to be for their own sake because of their fascination or emotional reaction to specific qualities (Rapoport, 1999). The study of vernacular design offers the most useful entry point for the study of environmental-behavioral relationships (Rapoport, 1983). Vernacular itself is an architectural behavior of the local community, and this is a dialectic between ethnic, regional, and local as a product of non-experts (Oliver, 2006). The tradition of the building in vernacular architecture itself is a form of deposition of time, space, daily life, and the community's memory. Therefore, the articles can say that the building form of vernacular architecture reflects the life of the people who occupy it. House is the product of culture and the human mind. It is assembled with all the awareness and belief that the lives of the residents depend on it (Priyotomo, 2008). This situation becomes a dialectical relationship between the residents and their house (Pangarsa, 2006).

In the discussion of vernacular, architectural writing relies on images and artifacts, visual figures of speech that form the essential elements of selective systems and their combinations (Boyer 1994). These essential elements and their combinations configuration a fundamental part of a composition of images produced by memory and are often related to the surrounding environment. Architectural landscapes are often essential factors of memory (Boyer 1994). Memory is a mental process that allows individuals to store information for later recall, and urban forms represent the cumulative memory and how it grows (Rossi, 1982). There is an exciting term by Aldo Rossi regarding collective memory reinforced by Boyer (2012) in his article that collective memory is different from individual memory. Individual memory is in each person's head, while collective memory reflects several individual memories that mold a structured collective record. The memory record in each person's head turns out to be not static. Janet's (1927) statement about studying the evolution of memory and the concept of time also brings us a new viewpoint about how memory significantly relates to the concept of time (Bakhurst, 1990).

Maurice Halbwachs, a sociologist from France who studies social behavior in terms of collective representation, provides another vital point that will be the focus of the discussion in this paper, the part of generating memory that takes the sequence of recall, recognize and localize the memory (Halbwachs, 1992). This recall is how the memory excavates from the deepest position, then recognized by the owner of the memory and the surrounding people. The last is localize, how the memory is brought together with the existing social and environmental conditions at that time. This study will describe memory generation in a case study to bring back the traditional architecture of the Kampong Tazo in Flores, East Nusa Tenggara. It was extracting the memory of the elders as the primary basis, reconstructing it through two-dimensional and three-dimensional images, and exploring the collective memory between them.

Extinction of Building Tradition

Kampong Tazo is located in the northern part of the island of Flores, Riung District, Ngada Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province Indonesia. This village is close to the

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Riung marine park, which has 17 beautiful islands. Riung is one of the native kingdoms in Ngada regency that has a close family relation to Manggarai (Toda, 1999). Kampong Tazo sits on a relatively high hill when measured from above sea level. In this village, fifty years ago, one of Flores's most beautiful vernacular architecture existed. But today, Kampong Tazo can no longer be found.



Figure 2 Flores island and the position of Kampong Tazo with the red dot.

Source: <http://www.devonshaw.com>, 2021

Periodical build activities are one of the efforts to preserve a culture. The periodical build is also one of the principal points of the concept of time when we are maintaining the tradition. In traditional societies, the connection of culture in rebuilding a house is when all the knowledge from the previous generation gave to a new generation who will later hold the baton from the life of a village. This continuity makes it called a tradition in the structure of society. It should be done periodically on each generation to bring all the building traditions to move forward to leave the extinction.

What happens if this building tradition is lost in one generation. It might be saved if there is a written record. But, in the case of the Kampong Tazo, this building tradition has been missed, and there are no records of any traditional Tazo houses. We call the extinction of building traditions because the local people have missed a great moment on one generation to build their own houses. It happens for many external factors. For now, the condition is they still have the willingness to revive it so that building tradition can be passed on to their children, grandchildren. However, now what remains is only the memory in the elder's head.

Compared to other traditional houses in Flores, an area that is still in the closest radius to Kampong Tazo is Kampong Nggela and Kampong Bena. The typology of the traditional houses from the two villages is also an initial reference in reviving the memory of Tazo's house. Both villages are lucky because they have maintained their culture in traditional houses until now. The traditional house from Kampong Nggela is also one of the revitalization programs by the Rumah Asuh Foundation in 2021.



Figure 3 Rebuilding one of traditional house in Kampong Nggela

Source: Rumah Asuh Documentation



Figure 4 Kampong Bena, one of several Kampong that well maintain interm of culture and building.

Source: Documentation of Author

Cutting the Memories Turns Off the Culture

Kampong Tazo's research program is based on an architectural journey to rediscover the vernacular architecture of the Tazo village in 2017. Tazo is a village in northern Flores that still has blood ties to the Gowa empire in Sulawesi. The data mining process efforts were carried out by interviewing Petrus Regha, a 103-year-old man who had lived in the house from childhood until it disappeared. The initial purpose of this trip was to collect data from people's memory and rebuilt according to the original one.



Figure 5 The research team together with the Tazo people under a large rock which portray the characteristic of Tazo site.

Source: Personal Documentation of Author



Figure 6 The traditional ceremony of welcoming guests by the Tazo people.

Source: Personal Documentation of Author

The traditional village of Tazo began on Mount Wolomeze, or as most peoples call it, Mount Niki. In Wolomeze, there was a lake called Tasik Rembe (Tasik is the water and rembe, which means mountain). Due to a natural situation in the form of a large earthquake that opened the lake in the mountain. The villagers moved back to several places such as Zea, Kotokunis, Rii, Mupload, Waka, Watuling, and Azang. One of them is Mount Tazo, known as *tolong* (mountain) Tazo or *Tazo Manga*.

Tazo is a defensive type village used by neighboring villages such as Mulu, Poma, and Rii. Tazo has the advantage of a location covered with large cliff stones with holes used as hidden doors (figure 5). The complexity of natural conditions makes it a perfect maze and fortress for Tazo (figure 7). The Tazo fairy tale tells that no enemy survived when attacking Tazo because the Tazo people were good at hiding in crevices of large rocks and attacking them. Tazo is also known to be an expert in war because they have a good strategy by taking advantage of the advantages of the natural environment by hiding among rocks that have springs. At the same time, the enemy dies from running out of water supplies among large stones. At that time, the traditional house in Tazo was the residence of war strategists who lived in the highlands.



Figure 7 Kampong Tazo neighborhood 2017.
Source: Personal Documentation of Author



Figure 8 Existing Tazo house in 2017, not in the form of traditional house.
Source: Personal Documentation of Author

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The Tazo traditional house then changed in 1968 based on information from the local community. The shape of the Tazo traditional house was considered unhealthy due to the lack of good ventilation and sanitation. At that time, the government was promoting a homogeneous standard of healthy homes in Indonesia. Therefore, with the arrival of Mantri Markus Muru in health with the Suah Praja Team to the villages around Riung, they were cutting the shape of traditional houses to have a healthier building. From 1969-1970 there were no traditional houses anymore. The place turns into a house with bamboo walls or boards with a gable roof with partitions in each room and doors like villager conventional houses in Indonesia.

The point conveyed here is that the Tazo people have their way without writing or drawing skills. All events about their life and architecture are only preserved well through oral traditions passed down from generation to generation. When the standardization of healthy homes came with the inclusion of healthy modern home ideas according to other people's perspectives, there was a tragic memory cut about Tazo traditional houses. After that tragedy happens, there will be no more traditional house knowledge for the next generation. The tradition of building this traditional house just disappeared in a second. There is a difference between tradition and memory. If the tradition can be removed, the memory is still stored in the minds of the perpetrators. However, the question is how long this memory is structured in the memories of elderly parents.

Reviving Memories

Memory is also different from history, although both intend to decipher the past (Halbwachs, 1992). History can be composed through written documents, photography, physical artifacts, and others. Whereas memory is a living and actual dimension, writing it down and passing it on by word (Boyer, 2012). Reviving the memory, in this case, reveals the real and living dimension of Petrus Regha as the last person who still feels and remembers about his life in the traditional Tazo house at that time.

In addition to individual memory and collective memory, there are several terms related to memory proposed in Olick and Robbins (1998) paper entitled Social Memory Studies: From "Collective Memory" to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices. Some of them are mimetic memory, material memory, communicative memory, and cultural memory. The four types of memory above are alternative lists of memory that readers can find in this paper.



Figure 9 The translator Gabriel Nggotang.
Source: Documentation of Author



Figure 10 The last person who have a full package of memory, Petrus Regha 103 years old.
Source: Florencia Irena documentation

The reconstruction of this memory begins with a personal approach to Petrus Regha as the last person who has a total memory of the traditional Tazo house. Because there is a pretty striking language barrier, Gabriel (figure 9) finally assisted the research team in translating it into Indonesian. It is not easy to re-open a memory embedded for more than 50 years. One by one, through widespread vocabulary to Tazo people, the data collected through this interview explores the memory of an individual who has been separated from the physical building of the house where he lives for a long time.

The traces of memory are present in a narrative and descriptive by Mr. Petrus Regha (figure 10), starting with the physical shape of the roof of the traditional Tazo house, what roofing materials are used and how they construct it. This roof is a significant part because it covers almost 80% of the Tazo's house until it almost meets the ground. The cold temperatures in certain months are even said to produce ice flowers that spread throughout the village. According to Regha, the shape of the roof is beneficial to protect the house from the weather because of its shape.

The roof and walls in Tazo's house have a space in the middle about one meter wide. At that time, Mr. Regha told me that he had pounded rice in that area. The situation indicates that the roof is a double skin of the walls of the Tazo house. What Mr. Regha said to us is a reasonable finding when associated with the need to anticipate cold air in a particular condition. The process of a recall from memory mentioned by Maurice Halbwach at the beginning of the discussion of this paper has just started.

From the outside of the house, this description slowly shifted to the inside of the house. Mr. Regha's memory was flying to the 1960s to see how the main door opened with a simple sliding system. A bamboo rod at the top of the door serves as the main beam for hanging the door. Then proceed back to the interior about the arrangement of space in the house and the position of the floors, which have different heights from one to another. *Kapok* or fireplace for cooking is in the middle, usually found in Indonesian vernacular architectural layout arrangement. Para - para or food storage that is hung above it is also a type that is repeatedly discovered, such as the Sumba traditional house on the neighboring island of Flores. This data series produces a reconstruction of the initial image document of a vernacular architecture that wants to revive after the extinction that occurred in the past.

Reknitting the Memories

As Aldo Rossi (1982) stated, memory is a mental process that allows individuals to store information. After the initial data reconstruction, the first process was to communicate and describe the data to Petrus Regha as the primary resource person. There was so much new information obtained by the field research team based on the memory of Regha after the communication. This input is a process of recognizing existing memory through an architectural drawing medium.

Only one source in reviving memory could be a weak point in memory manipulation; manipulating memory sometimes becomes a tool to achieve specific goals (Douglas, M., 2003). For that reason, we need a recognition of a memory-based narrative. Other Tazo residents who recognize the house through stories from their parents also become an essential part of the recognition process. The recognizing process is like a key that opens the door to many other memories. Our team believes there are so many different doors still closed and already waiting to open. Regia said a small area behind the

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house was still covered by the thatched roof, which he used to pound rice to prepare himself and his family's meals, and he could still pound in the rain situation. After beating rice, Regha played with his friends in another house around him. He met his neighbor, and finally, he tells us the name in order sequentially, starting from the top of the hill one by one.



Figure 11 Three-dimensional perspective of Tazo House (Winson and Rena)

Source: Rumah Asuh Documentation

The memories that appear are no longer limited to the house where Regha lives but go much deeper into who the neighbors are, the other houses in the vicinity, and what activities Regha did at that time. The position of the main marker of Tazo village is also revealed. The traditional house called *Suku* is one of the traditional houses in the Tazo Traditional Village, which functions for boys' maturation process. Another marker is *Ngadu*, a wooden pillar that has a function to tie up the buffalo. This memory is precious to redraw this part of the Tazo village site plan, what the conditions were like at that time when Regha was doing his daily activities.

Figure 12 describes the condition of the Tazo village in 1932. All of Tazo's houses face the *Natar* as the primary function of gathering places in the village. *Natar* is the main spatial space of the traditional village. Usually, *natar* is located in the middle of the traditional house arrangement and is the village's core. The house in the red block was no longer shows its position, while the house in the blue block still stands in its place even though it no longer has the original type of house from Tazo village. The condition of the house is currently bamboo walls with a gable roof. Figure 13 shows the conditions in 2017 when this research was conducted first.

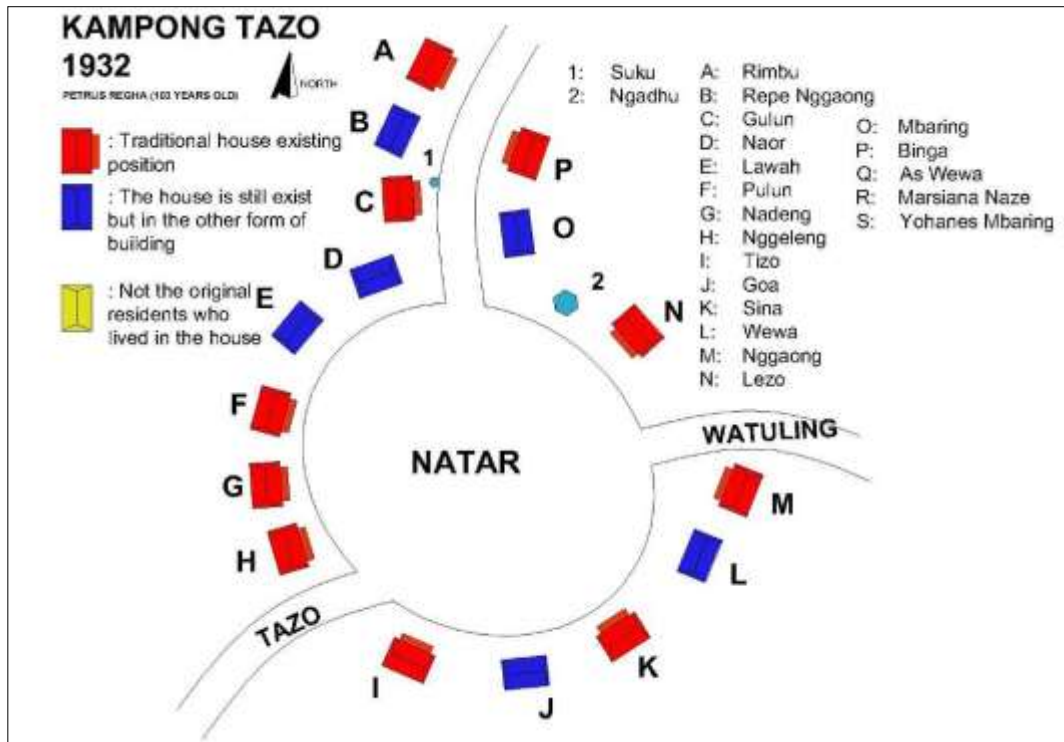


Figure 12 The situation of Kampong Tazo in 1932.
 Source: Rumah Asuh Documentation (Winson, Rena and Resha)



Figure 13 Situation in Kampong Tazo 2017 (Winson, Rena and Resha)
 Source: Rumah Asuh Documentation

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Recognizing memory has produced a variety of data that has just been documented in a modern way through digital processes. However, to clarify this memory, collective memory by the local peoples of Tazo is needed. A few days later, the compilation of data was communicated back to several people from Tazo village, especially those who still have a piece of memory of their village. This collective memory knitting has an equally important function to further deepen the validation of documentation.

From just one individual memory of Petrus Regha, this memory is woven back into a collective memory directly linked to the heirs of other houses in the village. Each house has its own story, and it clarifies other existing data in a connected way. The knitting process produces data directly integrated with the current conditions, standing straight in the middle of a present-day Tazo village but with a simulation of thinking about past village situations. A recognized process does require a lot of people to clarify the recall process that occurred previously.

Figure 14 is a photo of the situation of Tazo's village in 2017, Natar is still well preserved, but there was no longer Tazo's house that surrounded it. Figure 15 shows the result of the data reconstruction on a bigger situation, a three-dimensional simulation of the Tazo village in 1932.



Figure 15 The situation of the *Natar* in Kampong Tazo
Source: Personal Documentation of Author



Figure 14 Three dimensional simulation of Kampong Tazo (Winson and Rena)
Source: Rumah Asuh Documentation

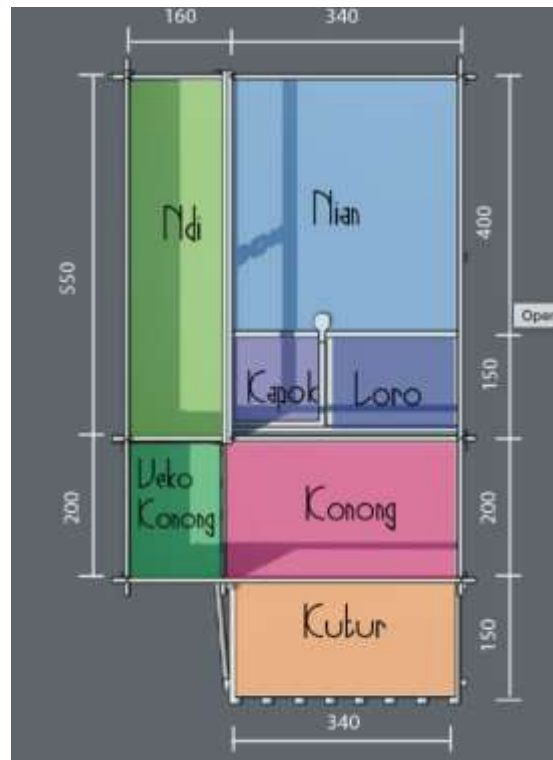


Figure 16 Tazo house layout. NTS (Not To Scale).
Source: Rumah Asuh Documentation (Winson and Rena)

In general, the form of a traditional house has seven rooms (figure 16) with their respective functions, while the division of the room is:

Kukur

This Tazo house turns out to be one of the many vernacular houses in Indonesia that has a terrace called a *kukur*. This terrace is an area that is considered public to all. Any person or guest can sit in the *kukur* of Tazo's house.

Konong

The terrace in Tazo's house has an area called *konong* that divides public and semi-private spaces. When people have entered the *konong* area, they become an integral part of the house. All the rules of the homeowner are already applied here.

Veko Konong

This is a guest room in the house, usually used as a bedroom for people who do not live in the house or future sons-in-law when they are in the marriage ceremony process. Sometimes the *veko konong* is also used to store corn as a main source of food.

Loro

The first part that has a private value in this Tazo house is the area that is separated by a sliding door. The private level that can be used as an example is for men who have not completed the *belis* or customary requirements to propose a girl. This man may enter the house but cannot step over the beam at the *loro* and *nian* border.

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Kapok

As commonly found in vernacular architectural layouts in Indonesia, the fireplace is the heart of the house. Fireplaces are believed to have an important role from generation to generation and have communication value to ancestors. This is the place where life is given in the form of food. As the heart of a house, the fireplace is also used as a place to chat, discuss, give each other advice and warm up from the cold weather. There are three stones in the Tazo house's fireplace that are arranged and always respected. Every family who wants to eat always sets aside a portion of food that believe to be destined for the ancestors. Because they believe, they live side by side with all their ancestors.

Nian

When we are talking about symbols in a traditional house, *nian* takes a unique role in Tazo's house as a symbol of men in the house. This is a multifunctional place that is usually used for all male activities, from sleeping to gathering. *Nian* is one of gender symbol in Tazo House for masculinity.

Ndi

Among all, *Ndi* is the part of the room in Tazo's house that has the highest private value. This area is reserved for elders and women. The difference in floor height on the *ndi* indicates a function of more respect for the area.

Those divisions of the space in the Tazo traditional house are the result of the recall and recognition process from the collective memory. The three-dimensional village image simulation (figure 15) is also a final process called localization. This process is related to the existing geographical conditions of Tazo Village. With this process, a complete picture of the village can occur in more detail, starting from the location between houses, the area of natar and others. All data from these three processes have gone through several stages of communication and reconstruction to the main sources, namely Petrus Regha and several people from the Tazo village community. This image has also been unconditionally distributed to the people of Tazo village as documentation of their traditional house and village so that it can be reused if they want to rebuild the Tazo traditional house and village.

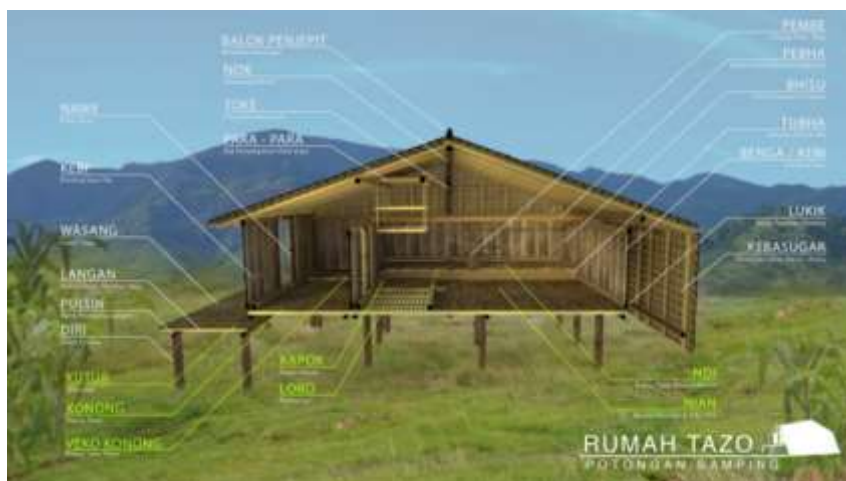


Figure 17 Section A Tazo House.

Source: Rumah Asuh Documentation (Winson and Rena)



Figure 18 Section B Tazo House (Winson and Rena).
Source: Rumah Asuh Documentation

4. Conclusion

The paper is a result of an attempt to rebuild with a memory. A cultural interpretation of writing from a more modern world can be used to benefit the Tazo village in reviving the collective memory between them. Along with Halbwachs (1992) theory, the recall process was carried out by interviewing Petrus Regha to direct the architectural forms of the past that he had inhabited. The recognition process was carried out by presenting the image of the memory reconstruction to Regha and other Tazo villagers. And lastly, the localizing process was proven by exciting discoveries that occurred with the rebuilding of this traditional house in the form of drawing. Those activities provoke more data about mimetic memory, material memory, communicative memory, and cultural memory among the people of Tazo village. As if we are open the door, it turns out that many other memories are opened one by one by looking at this drawing. "Collective memory quite naturally brings to mind notions of mnemonic speech and representation" (Vinitzky-Seroussi, V & Teeger, C. 2010). Either from Petrus Regha or other people who still experience oral stories from previous generations. This is a very good start to continue the transformation of previously non-physical and only exists in the memory of each person into a physical data of Tazo's vernacular architecture that will have meaningful value to the younger generation in the future.

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