

EDITORIAL

Despite the fact that there is an unprecedented disturbance in the everyday lives of people due to the pandemic, academic activities it seems, continue unabated, as visible in the current journal papers. In the present scenario of the modern city being an 'uninhabitable' place due to the serious impediments it brings to the hygiene of the communities, villages and not-so-congested settlements appear to be more favourable today. In fact, there is a growing consensus that we have a lot to learn from the vernacular settlements and that the future will rest upon the unsophisticated past which taught us how to live in harmony with Nature, rather than the more modern world which attempted to conquer Nature, which in a way have been beneath the current pandemic and many more to come.

In this issue, five papers have been published on numerous aspects of the vernacular settlements; a number having been rejected in maintaining the standards. The first paper by Tessa Eka Darmayanti and Azizi Bahauddin examine the very idea of the vernacular settlements. They look at 'vernacularity' as an idea which has recently been debated, particularly at the ISVS conference held in 2018 in Bali, Indonesia. They argue that vernacularity is a characteristic that rises with cultural authenticity and demonstrate it by examining spatial experience in the peranakan house, Kidang Mas, Chinatown, Lasem, Indonesia. According to this analysis, vernacularity is not a characteristic that comes only from the structure of the building or the spatiality but also by the kind of activities that take place within those spaces. An existential perspective, this re-definition offers a new way of thinking about vernacular beyond the materiality of architecture to involve people and place.

In the second paper, Gun Faisal and Dimas Wihardyanto discuss how the tribal communities in Talang Mamak, in East Sumatra, Indonesia, negotiate the vernacular shapes and materials as they adapt to the modern ways of life. This is indeed an ongoing battle between tradition and modernity and more and more vernacular settlements face the intrusion of modern ways of life; materials, machines, tools and cultural artifacts and there is a natural tendency to abandon the traditional and the vernacular. However, Gun Faisal et al point out that in the case of Talang Mamak people, they have negotiated with the modern world, to ensure that their traditions are not violated.

In contrast to the conflicts between vernacular traditions and modernity, Solanilla Medina Yor Maikol, Shuvalov Vasily Maksimovich, Bykova Galina Ivanovna and Sultanova Ainur look at the traditional practices of bamboo construction and how they are being adopted to create modern structures. After surveying the emerging practices of bamboo construction, they demonstrate how beautiful and sophisticated structures can be constructed using bamboo, re-inventing the traditional. The paper presents the case of Sharma Springs in Bali designed by Architect Elora Hardy as well as the gallery made from 'Guadua' Bamboo by the authors.

Karen Claudia, Rudy Trisno and Fermanto Lianto look deeply at the traditional vernacular settlements to search for the fundamentals of architecture in response to the frustratingly monotonous and identity lacking developments of Jakarta. They argue that modern architecture that underlie the high-rises and modern developments in cities such as Jakarta have subjugated 'spirituality' and 'genius loci' that naturally emerged in the vernacular settlements. An insight into traditional Javanese architecture shows a methodology that can synthesize and transcend architecture consisting of harmony between mass and emptiness, Nature and Humans, light and shadow and space and time. The paper concludes that unity between dualities are important in designing spiritual architecture.

The final paper by Velika Ivkowska looks in depth at the Ottoman era town house in Ohrid, Macedonia. She points out that the town of Ohrid was part of the vast Ottoman Empire, positioned in the lands of the Ottoman territory of Rumelia for many centuries. The town has had a long history during which the traces of the previous eras were sometimes 'covered' with the Ottoman presence. She shows that these are evident especially in the domestic and vernacular architecture. This paper demonstrates that Ottoman era patterns appear in the town of Ohrid as an astonishing example of the Ottoman era vernacular house in the Balkans. The paper offers good insights into the analysis of typology and construction of the houses.

Needless to say, these insights provide us more convincing arguments that there is a lot to be learnt from the vernacular settlements to construct a more holistic human habitat for the future.

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