

Façade Color of Shop-houses in Historic City in Asia

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ABSTRACT

Shop-houses are traditional buildings in Southeast Asia, commonly with a shop on the ground floor and residence above the shop. Malacca is one of the historic cities in Asia, and designated as a World Heritage Site. In this study, we conducted the field survey on the façade color of shop-houses in Malacca, and discussed the façade color of shop-houses in Malacca and town-houses dwelling with shop called Machiya in Kyoto comparatively. As a result, low saturated colors were used on Machiya façade in Kyoto, on the basis of “Design standard for buildings and others” including color design standards. It was shown that façade design of shop-houses in Malacca was different in each era, and many colors were used in the late era of England colony. It was also shown that façade of some shop-houses were repainted in vivid color, and these façade might detract the landscape in Malacca.

INTRODUCTION

Shop-houses are commonly seen in Southeast Asia. They were built in large numbers from the 17th century through the early 20th century. Their structure is two or three stories in height, with a narrow frontage but long depth backward. They have one or two internal courtyards, and have a public arcade called “five-foot way” or “veranda-way”. They are commonly with a shop on the ground floor and residence above the shop. The design of the façades of shop-houses is very versatile by age because it is influenced by the culture of the ruling country. They have formed a unique landscape of the city, while receiving the culture of the Western European countries by colonial rule and culture of indigenous. Malacca has been designated a World Heritage City in 2008 since it became a colony Portugal, Holland, England and has left heavily culture of these countries. The townscape consisting of old shop-houses was to be preserved by Antique Act (1976), Town and Country Planning Act (1976) and Restoration and Conservation of Cultural Heritage Enactment of State of Melaka (1988). But these laws and regulations do not define the color of the façade of shop-houses concretely.

On the other hand, Kyoto is one of the historic cities in Japan, and designated as a World Heritage Site in 1994, since Kyoto has a substantial number of historic buildings and has the largest concentration of designated Cultural Properties in Japan. There have been many traditional shop-houses called “Machiya”. Kyoto city enacted a “Design standard for buildings and others” in 2007 ^[1]. In this standard, the use of the color, the R and YR over Chroma 6, Y over Chroma 4 and other Hue over Chroma 2, are prohibited, except the original color of wall materials. It was reported that the bright colors of plaster wall and mud wall were rated highly, and the dark colors of the red iron oxide (Bengara), bricks and wooden wall in the historical district, and also that the landscape color in Kyoto became brighter in recent years, but it is necessary to think about the landscape colors in Kyoto which make the best use of the characteristics in the historical district ^[2].

In this study, for the purpose of understanding the color and design of shop-houses facade that make up the landscape of historic city in Asia, we surveyed the façade color of the 45 shop-houses in the preserved historical districts in Malacca, and discussed the façade color of shop-houses in Malacca and Machiya in Kyoto comparatively.

TYOLOGIES OF SHOP-HOUSES IN MALACCA

The shop-houses of Malacca are divided into 4 types, Netherlands style, Transition style, England early period style and England late period style^[3]. The facade design of shop-houses is different in each style. Figure 1 shows the 4 types of façade design of shop-houses in each. The shop-house in Netherland style has a lower base and small windows and the outside wall of them is non-decorated. The shop-house in Transition style has a lower base as in the case with Netherland style but has large windows as in the case with England style. The shop-house in England previous period does not have a lower base and second floor is overhung like a terrace. The decoration of the façade is mostly simple but outside wall under the windows of the second floor has some patterns. The shop-house in England late period has some tall windows with fanlights. The second floor of them in England late period is overhung similarly to those in England early period, and the outside wall and pillars are decorated brilliantly such as flowers, fruits or icons in myth.



Figure 1. Typologies of shop-houses in Malacca

METHODS OF THE FIELD SURVEY

In this study, we focused on a variety of facade design of shop-houses of the historic city that is specified as the core zone in Malacca. Before this field survey, we took photos of 232 shop-houses in the core zone as a preliminary survey, and we narrowed the range of survey area and focused on the targeted shop-houses in terms of the façade style and the usage conditions. We conducted the field survey on the façade color of the 45 shop-houses along Tun Tan Cheng Lock street (called Heeren street), Hang Jebat street (called Jonker street) and Bukit China street. Heeren street and Jonker street are in the area many tourists visit, and we can see a variety types of shop-houses along these streets. Bukit China street is in the area where many overseas Chinese have lived, and most of the shop-houses along Bukit China street are in England late period style. We conducted the visual color measurement of outside wall, pillars, shutters, door, eave and floor of veranda way with JIS Standard Colour Charts. We also investigate the design of the decoration on the outside wall and on the floor of veranda way.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We could see many colors in the core zone in Malacca. Figure 1 shows the results of the visual color measurement of the outside wall. The shop-houses with white or gray outside wall accounted for approximately half. It was shown that the outside wall in Munsell Value over 6.5 accounted for 86%, and in Munsell Chroma under 3.5 accounted for 90%.

According to the results of the color survey on the façade of Machiya in Kyoto^[4], the colors of the outside wall was not so colorful, and they were only Y, YR and N. The lightness of the outside wall of Machiya in Kyoto was somewhat lower than that of the shop-houses in Malacca, and the Chroma was low as in the case in Malacca.

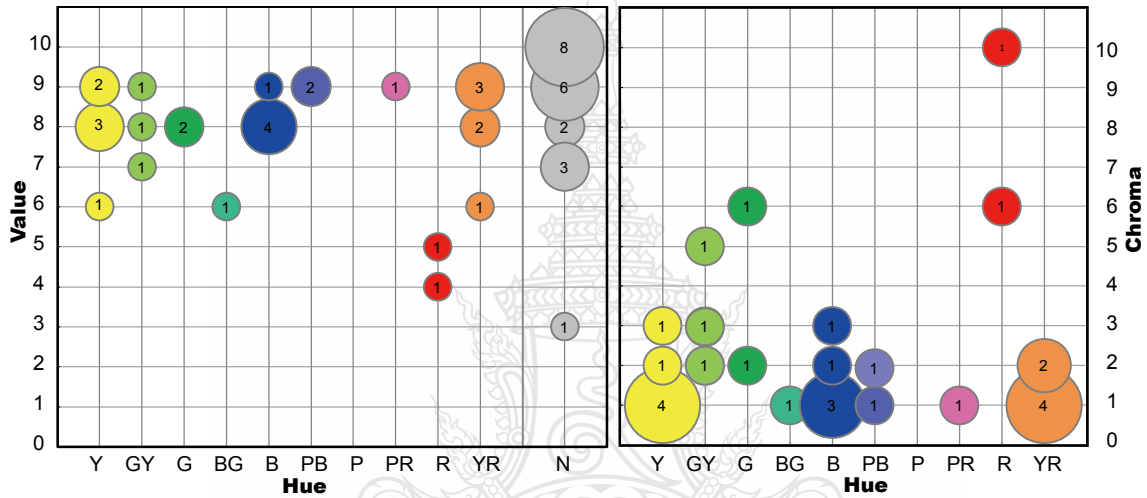


Fig.1 Results of the visual color measurement of outside wall.

Figure 2 shows the veranda way and the design of the floor of the shop-houses. The color of veranda ways of shop-houses in Netherland style and Transition style was mostly achromatic, but the color of those in England early and late period style was reddish or yellow reddish. It was cleared that the colors of design elements of shop-house façade differed in the façade style, since they were influenced by the culture of the ruling country.



Fig.2 Veranda way & design of floor Fig.3 Rebuild or repainted outside wall of shop-houses

We could also see some shop-houses which were rebuild or repainted in vivid colors in Malacca. Figure 3 gives examples of rebuild or repainted façade in high saturated color. It was shown that the shop-houses in Netherland style or Transition style were often repainted, since the façade was aged and non-decorated. It was considered that high saturated color of the façade might detract the historical landscape in Malacca.

CONCLUSION

We could understand the landscape color in Malacca and discuss the façade color of shop-houses in Malacca and Machiya in Kyoto comparatively. The façade color of shop-houses in Malacca is very important because they have formed a unique landscape of Malacca. Actually, the shop-houses in Malacca should be fascinated to tourist and also be of great interest in business appeal for owners. Therefore, some kind of regulations or standards are required to define concretely the landscape color in Malacca in a quantitative way.

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