



## An Investigation of the Cultural Significance and Symbolism of Limas House Architecture in the Lives of the South Sumatran People

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### ABSTRACT

Limas houses, known for their unique features like tiered roofs, serve as more than mere architectural constructions. They embody a cultural emblem that signifies equilibrium, safeguarding, good fortune, affluence, and robust communal bonds in the everyday existence of the inhabitants of South Sumatra. The tiered roof symbolizes equilibrium and concord, representing the conviction in a harmonious interconnection among humanity, nature, and the spiritual realm. A Limas house is believed to provide protection against malevolent spirits and negative energy, fostering a sense of security and tranquility. Moreover, the Limas house is frequently associated with a sign of auspiciousness and affluence, with the expectation that its existence will bestow blessings upon the household and its inhabitants. Limas houses serve as venues for traditional ceremonies, including weddings, births, and funerals. It serves as a prominent emblem of social interaction and enhances the bonds among individuals within a community. Limas homeowners are renowned for their magnanimity, willingly extending hospitality to guests and individuals in need.

### 1. Introduction

South Sumatera, as one of the provinces in Indonesia, is rich in cultural diversity and traditional heritage that is rooted in a diverse ethnic and traditional society. In the midst of this diversity, the limas house, a typical traditional building, has become a symbol of cultural richness and deep meaning in the lives of the people of South Sumatra. Limas houses are not just physical buildings; more than that, it reflects strong beliefs, symbolism, and cultural identity. The study of the cultural meaning and symbolism of limas house buildings in the lives of the people of South Sumatra is an effort to absorb and understand the values contained in the architecture and design of this traditional house. The limas house building, with its characteristic towering terraced roof, creates a deep visual icon and involves a long history that connects humans with nature and the supernatural world.<sup>1,2</sup>

Limas houses are a window into local belief systems and wisdom that have been passed down from generation to generation. It contains symbolism that depicts balance, respect for ancestors, protection, and ethnic identity. This study explores the cultural meaning and symbolism of the limas house, as well as how this house is closely connected to the daily lives of the people of South Sumatra. This study reflects on how limas house architecture reflects deep cultural beliefs and how this symbolism creates a rich cultural identity. In addition, this study explores the importance of cultural studies in preserving traditional heritage in an ever-changing era.<sup>3,4</sup>

#### Balance symbol

The typical terraced roof shape of a limas house is a symbol of balance and harmony in South Sumatran culture. The roof steps do have deep meaning in the

context of the culture and beliefs of the local community. It reflects the harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and the unseen world. The stepped roof of a limas house is a very striking and meaningful characteristic in South Sumatran culture. Each step on the roof has a deep meaning and symbolizes the principles of balance in people's lives. These steps symbolize harmony between various elements in the universe and human life. The people of South Sumatera believe that this balance is the key to happiness and success in their lives. The terraced roof also reflects the harmonious relationship between humans and nature. Each step represents the close relationship between humans and nature, such as the sun, water, land, and wind. This roof reminds people of their dependence on nature and how important it is to maintain balance with the surrounding ecosystem. In the traditions of the people of South Sumatra, nature is not just a source of life but also a partner that needs to be respected and preserved. Apart from connecting humans with nature, terraced roofs also reflect a connection with the unseen world. The people of South Sumatera often view limas houses as places where ancestral spirits and supernatural entities can communicate with the human world. The stepped roof becomes a bridge between the real world and the unseen world, creating harmony in relationships with spiritual entities. An in-depth cultural study of the limas house helps us appreciate the complex and deep cultural values in South Sumatran society. The stepped roof is one of the most striking and meaningful elements in a limas house, and the symbolism behind it creates a cultural icon that unites humans, nature, and the supernatural world in beautiful harmony. This symbolism is a valuable cultural heritage that needs to be preserved and respected by future generations.<sup>5-</sup>

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### **Protection symbol**

The emphasis on the protection provided by the limas house against evil spirits and negative energy is an important aspect of the symbolism and cultural meaning of the limas house. This reflects the strong belief of the people of South Sumatera in the need for spiritual protection and security in everyday life. It is

believed that the limas house is able to provide protection from evil spirits and negative entities. The distinctive stepped roof and structure of the house are thought to have spiritual powers to ward off evil spirits that might try to disrupt family life. This creates a feeling of security and calm in the household. The limas house is not only a physical residence but also a place that is considered a spiritual sanctuary. The towering terraced roof is considered a shield that protects the family from all forms of danger, both physical and spiritual. The people of South Sumatra believe that maintaining a limas house well will bring prosperity, luck, and protection to the family. Apart from the physical architecture, the importance of ceremony and ritual in a limas house also reflects protection and balance. Some traditional ceremonies involve honoring ancestral spirits and spiritual entities as a form of request for protection and support. This creates a close connection between humans and the unseen world.

Symbolism of protection in decorative arts: Apart from architecture, decorative arts in limas houses also reflect the symbolism of protection. The carvings and ornaments that decorate limas houses often have motifs depicting protection and symbols of good luck. They are artistic expressions that reinforce the meaning of protection in everyday life. In the overall context, a limas house is more than just a place to live; it is a symbol of protection, prosperity, and harmony in the lives of the people of South Sumatera. The architecture, rituals, and decorative arts that surround limas houses all reflect a belief in the need for spiritual protection in everyday life. The limas house is the center of family life and a place where cultural and spiritual values are passed on from one generation to the next.<sup>8-10</sup>

### **Symbol of luck and prosperity**

The emphasis on symbols of good luck and prosperity associated with the existence of the limas house is a very important aspect in understanding the cultural meaning and role of the limas house in the lives of the people of South Sumatera. This reflects hope and confidence in the effort to achieve a prosperous and blessed life. The limas house is

considered a symbol of good luck and abundance. The people of South Sumatera hope that their homes will be a source of good luck in various aspects of life, including economic prosperity, health and family happiness. The stepped roof and limas design of the house create a powerful icon of good luck in their culture. The limas house also symbolizes family prosperity. The people of South Sumatra believe that having a good limas house and maintaining it well will bring prosperity to their family. This includes hopes for intelligent and healthy children, as well as a harmonious life in the family. The good luck and abundance expected from the limas house are often also related to agriculture and natural resources. The people of South Sumatera, who are mostly farmers, often associate the symbolism of the limas house with the hope of a good harvest and abundant natural resources. Traditional ceremonies and rituals associated with limas houses often reflect hopes for good luck and abundance. Some ceremonies involve invoking blessings and blessings for the household and family. Limas house is a place where cultural values and traditions are transmitted from one generation to the next. The belief in good luck and prosperity associated with the limas house is an important part of the inherited cultural heritage. A deeper understanding of the symbolism of good luck and prosperity in the limas house helps us reflect on the broader role of this traditional house in the lives of the people of South Sumatra. A limas house is not just a place to live; it is a manifestation of cultural hopes and values passed down from generation to generation. This symbolism depicts the belief in the possibility of a better life and good luck that continues to flow in that society.<sup>11-13</sup>

### **Symbol of social life**

Limas houses play a very important role as a place to gather and celebrate various traditional ceremonies in South Sumatran society. This reflects deep social values and strengthens relationships between members of society. Limas houses are often considered the center of social life in South Sumatran society. It is a place where family and community members gather to celebrate important moments in

life, such as weddings, births, and deaths. Apart from that, the limas house is also used for community meetings, deliberations and other traditional celebrations. This creates strong relationships between community members. Weddings are one of the most important traditional ceremonies in South Sumatran culture, and limas houses are often the place where wedding ceremonies are held. Wedding ceremonies at home limas reflect the importance of family and community in celebrating the union of two married people. When a child is born, the limas house also becomes a place to celebrate this birth. Traditional ceremonies involving the extended family and neighbors are often held here to welcome new members to the family. Limas houses are also used in funeral and mourning ceremonies. This is a time when the community gathers to pay their last respects to the deceased and provide support to the families left behind. During celebrations at the limas house, oral traditions and ancestral stories are often passed on. It is a way to preserve and convey cultural heritage to the younger generation. Limas houses are a forum for learning and exchanging traditional knowledge. Apart from being a place of celebration, the limas house is also an important symbol of social relations in South Sumatran society. At important moments in life, the limas house becomes a place where the community supports each other and celebrates together. This creates a sense of solidarity and unity in society. Understanding the social role of the limas house in South Sumatran society helps us appreciate the richness of human relationships and the importance of celebrating together in their culture. Limas houses are not only physical residences, but also spaces that promote unity, support and cultural exchange.<sup>14-16</sup>

### **Symbol of generosity**

The tradition of limas house owners being known as generous and generous people is one of the social aspects that reflects strong cultural values in South Sumatran society. This shows the importance of sharing and caring for others. Limas homeowners are often seen as leaders in the community and are important examples of sharing and caring for others. They are known as generous people, ready to help

people in need and open the doors of their homes to guests. The limas house is not only a place for the owner to live but also a place of protection and warmth for those who come. Limas homeowners often ensure that guests feel welcome and comfortable in their homes. This creates a warm and friendly atmosphere in the community. Limas' generous homeowners help strengthen relationships within the community. They are often figures respected and relied upon by neighbors and community members. This sharing and caring creates strong social bonds among community members. The generous and caring values inherited by the limas house owners are an important part of the cultural heritage. The younger generation learns from the actions of limas house owners and continues this tradition in South Sumatran society. Limas house owners often have a special role in traditional ceremonies, including welcoming guests and maintaining the tradition of a warm welcome. This reflects the importance of their social role in maintaining cultural traditions. By assuming the role of gracious hosts, Limas homeowners not only create a warm and welcoming atmosphere in their homes but also strengthen relationships within the community and preserve important cultural values in South Sumatran society. Their existence as protectors and welcomers reflects important values in South Sumatran culture, which prioritizes mutual cooperation and social care.<sup>17-20</sup>

## 2. Conclusion

Limas houses, with their distinctive characteristics such as stepped roofs, are more than just physical structures; it is a cultural symbol that reflects balance, protection, luck, prosperity, and strong social relationships in the daily lives of the people of South Sumatra. The symbol of balance and harmony embodied in the terraced roof reflects the belief in a harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and the unseen world. The existence of a limas house is associated with protection against evil spirits and negative energy, creating a feeling of security and calm. In addition, the limas house is often identified as a symbol of good luck and prosperity, with the hope that its presence will bring blessings to the household

and family. Limas houses also act as places to celebrate traditional ceremonies, such as weddings, births, and deaths. It reflects a strong symbol of social life and strengthens relationships between members of society. Limas homeowners are often known as generous people who open their homes to guests and people in need.

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