

The residential structure of Aceh communities in the context of change

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<i>Article history:</i> Received November 27, 2025 Received in revised form Dec. 28, 2025 Accepted March 12, 2026 Available online June 01, 2026 <i>Keywords:</i> Aceh dwelling Cultural meaning Peumulia Relation Ritual spatiality Vernacular transformation *Corresponding author: Purnama Salura Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Katolik Parahyangan, Indonesia Email: purnama.salura@unpar.ac.id ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3652-7192	<i>Transformations in vernacular dwellings are often understood primarily as changes in physical form, while the cultural structures that sustain them receive far less scholarly attention. In Aceh, the traditional stilted Rumoh Aceh has been extensively replaced by the masonry Rumoh Batee, yet both continue to accommodate the same ritual practices across the life cycle—birth, marriage, growth and development, and death. This study argues that the persistence of these practices reveals a continuous cultural logic that structures domestic space beyond its formal and material transformation. Using an interpretive-structural approach grounded in Salura's form-function-meaning framework, this research analyzes how ritual activities are spatialized in both house types. Fieldwork was conducted in two mukim, encompassing four cases of Rumoh Aceh and four of Rumoh Batee. The findings indicate that a single cultural value, Peumulia (to honor and dignify others), operates as an overarching spatial ordering principle. This value is expressed architecturally through the adaptive public conversion of domestic space during rituals, the hierarchical orientation of principal rooms, and respectful spatial segregation within kinship relations. The study contributes to an understanding of how cultural continuity can endure through architectural transformation, demonstrating that a change in physical form does not necessarily signify a change in cultural meaning.</i>

Introduction

Vernacular dwellings frequently undergo transformation in response to shifting social needs, technological developments, and the dynamics of cultural practices (Koentjaraningrat 2015; Philokyprou 2015; Radja et al. 2024; Rapoport 1969). However, in many traditional societies, changes in architectural form do not necessarily lead to changes in the cultural meanings that underlie dwelling practices. Cultural values often persist and continue to influence how space is organized, inhabited, and interpreted (Eco 1980; Panjaitan 2017; Rapoport

1969; 1990). Such transformation processes generally unfold gradually, as deeply rooted cultural systems ensure that tradition remains foundational to everyday spatial practices (Lähdesmäki 2018).

This dynamic is clearly observable in Aceh, where the traditional stilted *Rumoh Aceh* has been widely replaced by the masonry-based *Rumoh Batee*. Although these two-house types differ in terms of architectural form and construction material, the *Rumoh Batee* is presumed to retain structural concepts that bear resemblance to those of the *Rumoh Aceh*. These shared concepts are believed to emerge from the continuity of dwelling traditions grounded in the central roles

of *adat* (customary law) and Islamic law as the primary foundations of Acehnese social life (Fauzi 2024; Ichwan, Salim, and Srimulyani 2020). This foundation is reflected in the expression *Hadih Maja* “Adat Ngon Hukom Lagee Zat Ngon Sifeut,” which affirms that *adat* and Islamic law are inseparable (Alfian et al. 1978; Fauzi 2024; Srimulyani 2010). The customary system shaped and influenced by Islamic values functions as a normative framework regulating patterns of thought, behavior, and social interaction, including kinship relations and marital practices (Kurdi 2005).

Architectural transformation involves not only changes in form but also the meanings and dwelling practices embedded within it (Alexander, Ishikawa, and Silverstein 1977; Eco 1976; Rapoport 1969; 1990). Yet, there remains a lack of studies examining the relationship between form and function to reveal meaning within the realm of tradition, particularly in buildings undergoing transformation. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the relationship between past and present dwelling traditions in order to construct, or even formulate, a conceptual understanding of the continuity of architectural traditions in Acehnese residential culture. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the development of vernacular

architectural studies and provide a strategic foundation for Acehnese communities in sustaining their dwelling traditions within contemporary contexts.

Methods

Material

The material objects of this study are the *Rumoh Aceh* and *Rumoh Batee* located within the study area, which is delimited at the level of the *Mukim* (a territorial unit consisting of several *Gampong* with relatively homogeneous socio-cultural characteristics). The criteria for selecting case studies are *Mukim* locations that still possess functioning *Rumoh Aceh* and *Rumoh Batee*. This criterion ensures the availability of adequate information related to the objects under study. Based on these criteria, Mukim Empee Ara, Indra Puri in Aceh Besar, and Mukim Gumpueng, Beureunun in Pidie, Aceh, Indonesia were selected as the research locations. In each *Mukim*, two samples of *Rumoh Aceh* and two samples of *Rumoh Batee* were examined, resulting in a total of four *Rumoh Aceh* and four *Rumoh Batee* across the two *Mukim* as the research objects (see figures 2 and 3).

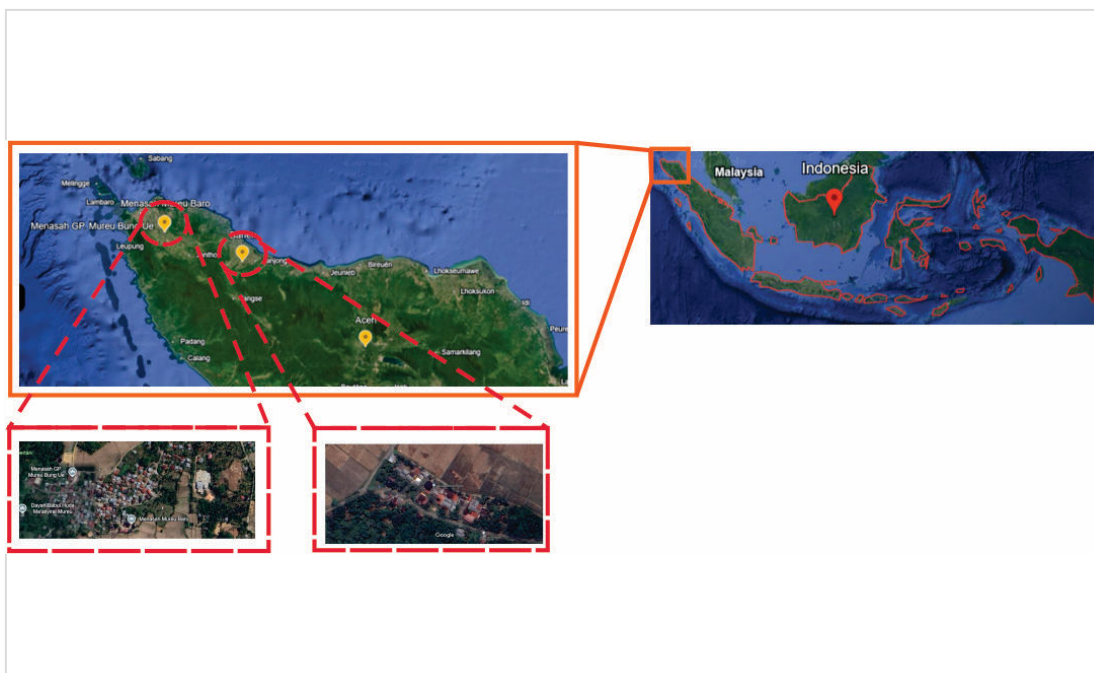


Figure 1. The study locations are situated in Mukim Empee Ara, Indra Puri in Aceh Besar, and Mukim Gumpueng, Beureunun in Pidie, Aceh, Indonesia



Figure 2. Study case of Rumoh Aceh (top) and Rumoh Batee (bottom) in Mukim Gumpueng, Beureunuen, Pidie, Aceh, Indonesia



Figure 3. Study case of Rumoh Aceh (top) and Rumoh Batee (bottom) in Mukim Empee Ara, Indra Puri, Aceh Besar, Aceh Indonesia

Method

This research is situated within an interpretivist paradigm, aiming to understand the meanings embedded in actions, symbols, and cultural expressions within residential environments. The study employs a qualitative method, operationalized through the analytical framework of the Form–Function–Meaning theory as developed by Salura (Salura 2018b; 2018a).

In line with the principles of structuralism, every architectural element is viewed not as an isolated entity but as one that is interrelated and forms a structured pattern (Alexander, Ishikawa,

and Silverstein 1977). Accordingly, residential architecture is understood not only as a physical or constructive artifact but also as a representation of meanings embedded in the cultural and religious practices of Acehnese society.

The operationalization of this approach is arranged through the following research steps:

Step 1. Identification of Activities and Spatial Containers (*Wadah*) in Rumoh Aceh and Rumoh Batee

This stage establishes the primary aspects of dwelling, namely activities and their spatial containers (Oliver 2003; Norberg-Schulz 1985;

Sharr 2007). Activities refer to the stages of life proposed by Alfian et al. (1978) and Ahmad (2003) which state that each individual must undergo a set of life-cycle phases: birth, growth and development, marriage, and death (Gennep 1960). The spatial containers in this study are *Rumoh Aceh* and *Rumoh Batee*, selected because of the architectural transformation occurring in Acehese residential culture from *Rumoh Aceh* to *Rumoh Batee*.

Step 2. Analysis of Properties and Compositions of Main Ritual Activities and Their Spatial Containers, Followed by the Establishment of Spatial and Activity Concepts

This stage decomposes the properties and compositions of customary activities and their corresponding spatial containers in *Rumoh Aceh* and *Rumoh Batee* through the property-and-composition framework of Salura (2018b). The resulting analyses are then compared to formulate conceptual patterns of activities and containers based on emerging alignments.

Step 3. Interpretation of Meaning

The interpretation of meaning, which emerges from the relationship between form and function (Salura 2018b; 2018a), is revealed through the interrelations between architectural elements and human activities in space. This process is essential to trace the cultural structures that influence architecture. Revealing these underlying structures illustrates the continuity between transformed dwelling forms forms that have changed, yet whose essences remain recognizable. The interpretation of meaning is

conducted by analyzing the relationship between activity concepts and spatial-container concepts. In this study, a cultural-theme approach is added as a foundation for revealing the meanings embedded in the relationship between activities and space within the Acehese cultural context.

Step 4. Synthesis of Meaning

Following the interpretation of meaning, a selection is made of the meanings that significantly influence the structure of Acehese dwelling traditions within the case studies. This synthesis identifies the core value that plays a role in maintaining traditional dwelling structures despite transformations in physical form.

Results and discussion

Identification of activities and spatial containers in Rumoh Aceh and Rumoh Batee

Based on theoretical review and interviews, several customary activities were found not to be performed in the houses within the case studies. For example, marriage rituals such as *peunikah* are conducted in the mosque or the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA); the *Tueng Dara Baro* procession is held in the groom's house; *Intat Beut* is carried out in the *Meunasah* or the *Rumoh Tengku*; and the burial of the deceased takes place in the cemetery. Because these activities do not occur in the studied houses, they are not further analyzed. The customary activities that have been performed in the case-study houses and are thus analyzed further are listed in figure 4.

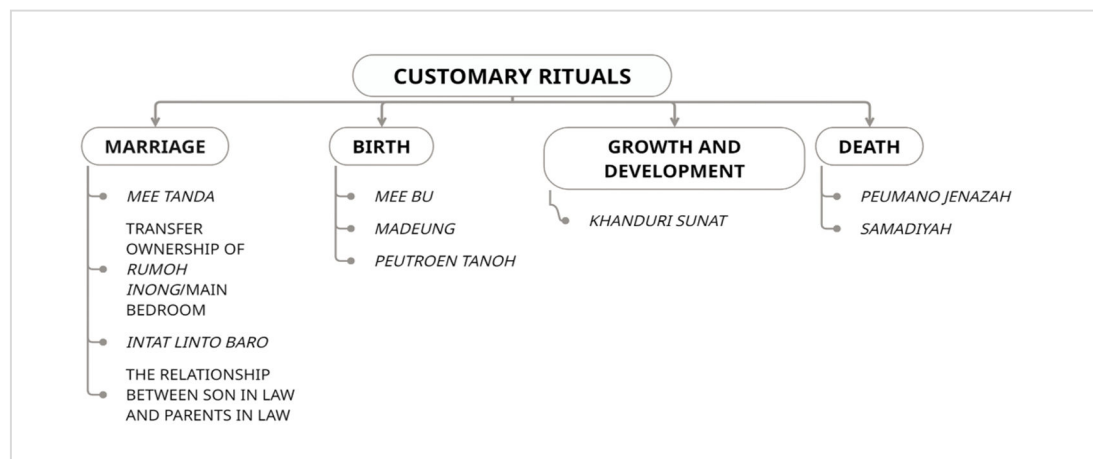


Figure 4. Traditional activities that have been recorded as having been carried out in the case study house and will be analyzed further

Decomposition of properties and compositions of main ritual activities and their Spatial containers, and establishment of activity and spatial concepts Marriage

In Acehnese marriage customs, the sequence of ritual activities that influence the spatial concepts of the *Rumoh Aceh* and the *Rumoh Batee* is divided into three stages. The first stage, conducted before the marriage, is *Mee Tanda* (the proposal). The second stage, performed during the marriage, is *Intat Linto* (the procession of escorting the groom to the bride's house), which includes the transfer of ownership of the *Rumoh Inong* or main bedroom to the daughter an act that symbolizes the shifting of responsibility to the newlyweds, particularly to the *Dara Baro* in

relation to the household. This stage also includes *Bi Bu Linto* and *Jamee Linto* (hosting the groom and his attendants), as well as *Peusanding* and *Peusijuk* (the rituals of seating and blessing the couple). The third stage occurs after the marriage, involving the tradition of honoring the son-in-law by separating the daily activities of the newlyweds from those of the parents' household, even while they continue to reside under the same roof.

The following presents the process of decomposing the properties and compositions, and determining the conceptual structures for each marriage ritual activity:

Mee-Tanda Marriage

Table 1. The process of decomposing the properties and compositions of the activity and its spatial container, and establishing the conceptual framework for the Mee Tanda activity

Aspect	Acehnese house – Seuramo Keu (figure 5)	Batee House – Living Room (figure 6)	Concept
Activity properties	Participants: Village elders, family, and relatives from both sides	Participants: Village elders, family, and relatives from both sides	The activity concept is introduction, and the spatial concept is linear and equality; the container is located in the front, in a public space, with linear seating without hierarchy
Activity composition	Proposal, discussion, communal meal	Proposal, discussion, communal meal	
Container properties	Room shape: rectangular; Room type: public space; Openings: main door	Room shape: rectangular; Room type: public space; Openings: main door	
Container composition	Room position: front of the house; orientation: east–west; Participant position: linear seating on the north and south sides, facing each other; <i>Idang</i> position: center of the room	Room position: front of the house; room facing direction: front of house facing the street; Participant position: linear seating facing each other; <i>Idang</i> position: center of the room	

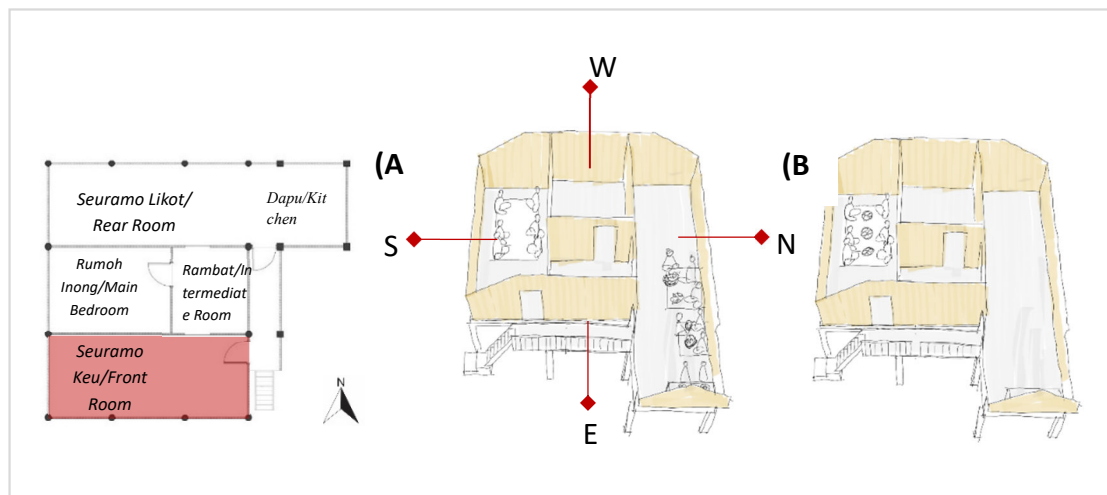


Figure 5. The mee tanda process begins with a discussion between the two families (A), followed by a communal khanduri meal held in the Seuramo Keu (B)

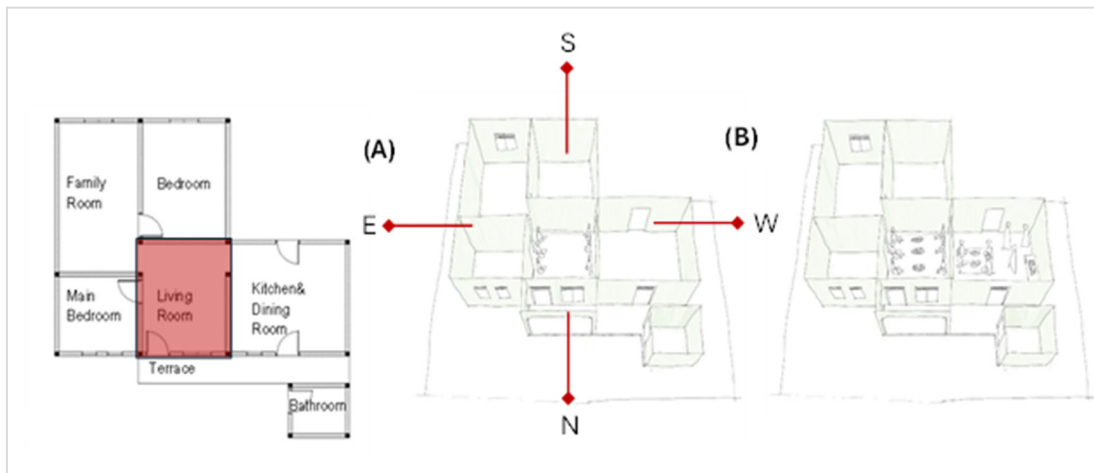


Figure 6. The mee tanda ceremony begins with an introduction and discussion between the two families, conducted in the living room (A). The procession then continues with the khanduri event (B)

Marriage - Intat linto

Table 2. Process of decomposing the properties and compositions of the activity and its spatial container, and establishing the concept for the Bi Bu Linto and Jamee Linto activities

Aspect	Acehnese House – Seuramo Keu (Figure 6A)	Batee House – Living Room (Figure 6B)	Concept
Activity Properties	Participants: <i>Linto Baro</i> , male guests	Participants: <i>Linto Baro</i> , male guests	The activity concept is “king–queen for a day,” and the spatial concept is “primary position (elevated/front).”
Activity Composition	Banquet	Banquet	
Container Properties	Shape: rectangular; Room type: public space; Openings: main door & windows; Traditional elements: <i>pelaminan</i> , <i>ulee idang, idang</i>	Shape: rectangular; Room type: public space; Openings: main door on the north side; Traditional elements: <i>pelaminan</i> , <i>idang</i> , and <i>ulee idang</i>	
Container Composition	Room position: front of the house, close to the stairs and main entrance; Room orientation: short sides facing west and east; Main door: east; <i>Linto</i> position: western end of the house; <i>Jamee Linto</i> position: surrounding the room facing the center; <i>Pelaminan</i> position: west side facing east/main door; <i>Ulee Idang</i> position: in front of <i>Linto Baro</i> ; <i>Idang</i> position: center of the room	Room position: front of the house; Room facing direction: toward the village street; <i>Pelaminan</i> position: at the wall facing the main door; <i>Ulee Idang</i> position: in front of <i>Linto Baro</i> ; <i>Idang</i> position: center of the room; <i>Linto</i> position: western end of the house; <i>Jamee Linto</i> position: surrounding the room facing the center	

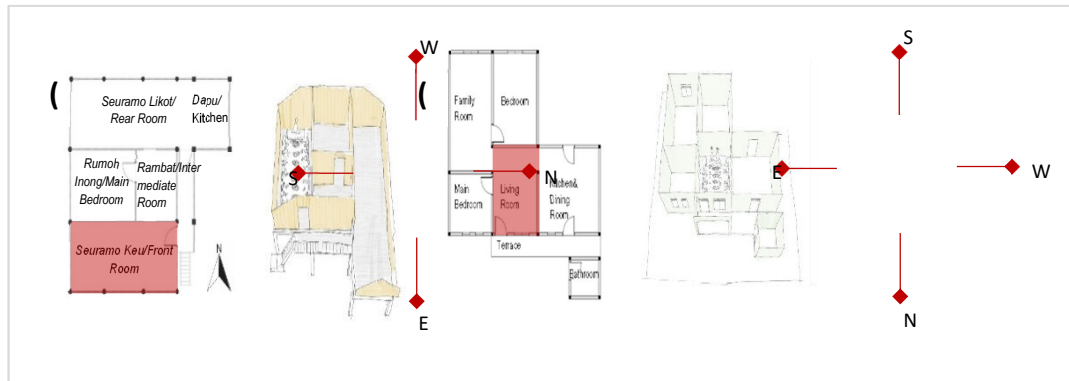


Figure 7. The Bi Bu Linto and Jamee Linto ceremonies held in Seuramo Keu at Rumoh Aceh (A) and in the living room of Rumoh Batee (B)

Table 3. Process of decomposing the properties and compositions of the activity and its spatial container, and establishing the concept for the Peusanding and Peusujuk activities

Aspect	Rumoh Aceh – Rambat (figure 8)	Rumoh Batee – Living Room/Yard (figure 9)	Concept
Activity Properties	Participants: Village elders, male and female family members, Linto Baro and Dara Baro	Participants: Village elders, male and female family members, Linto Baro and Dara Baro	Activity Concept: Linto Baro and Dara Baro as King and Queen for a day. Spatial Concept: High/front position; easily accessible and visible; flexible space that serves the purpose of publicizing the wedding
Activity Composition	Puesujuk—praying for the bride and groom; pairing of the bride and groom	Puesujuk—praying for the bride and groom; pairing of the bride and groom	
Container Properties	Space Type: Private space transformed into public space. Visibility: Open space. Accessibility: Easily accessible. Cultural Element: Bridal dais	Living Room: Public space; Visibility: Opening through main door used during the ceremony; Accessibility: Easily accessed during the event; Cultural Element: Bridal dais. Yard: Public space; Visibility: Open space; Accessibility: Easily accessible; Larger than Living Room ; Cultural Element: Bridal dais	
Container Composition	Spatial Position: Center of the house, east side, in front of Rumoh Inong. Hierarchy of Height: Rambat and Rumoh Inong positioned higher than other rooms. Bridal Dais Position: Placed on the east side of Rambat, facing west	Living Room: Front of the house. Bridal Dais Position: Placed on the wall facing the main door. Yard: Front of the house. Bridal Dais Position: Facing the street	

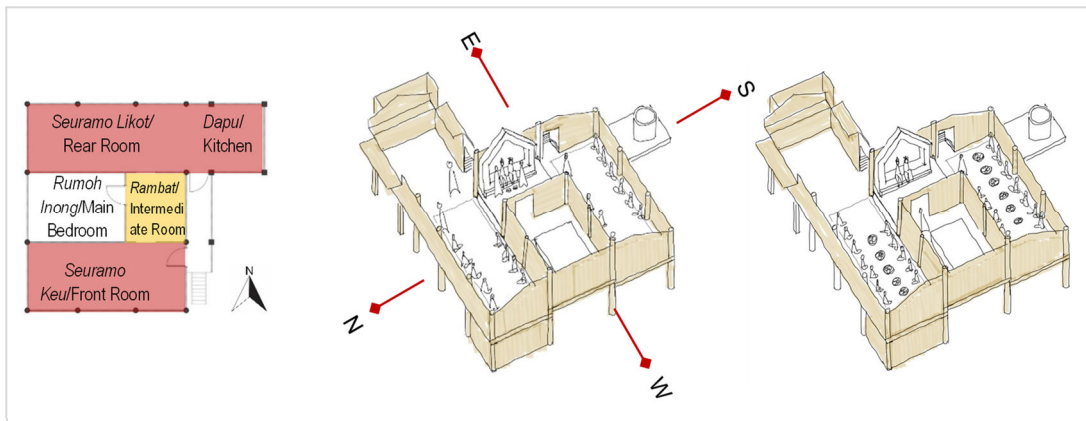


Figure 8. The Peusanding and Peusijuk ceremonies in the Rumoh Aceh

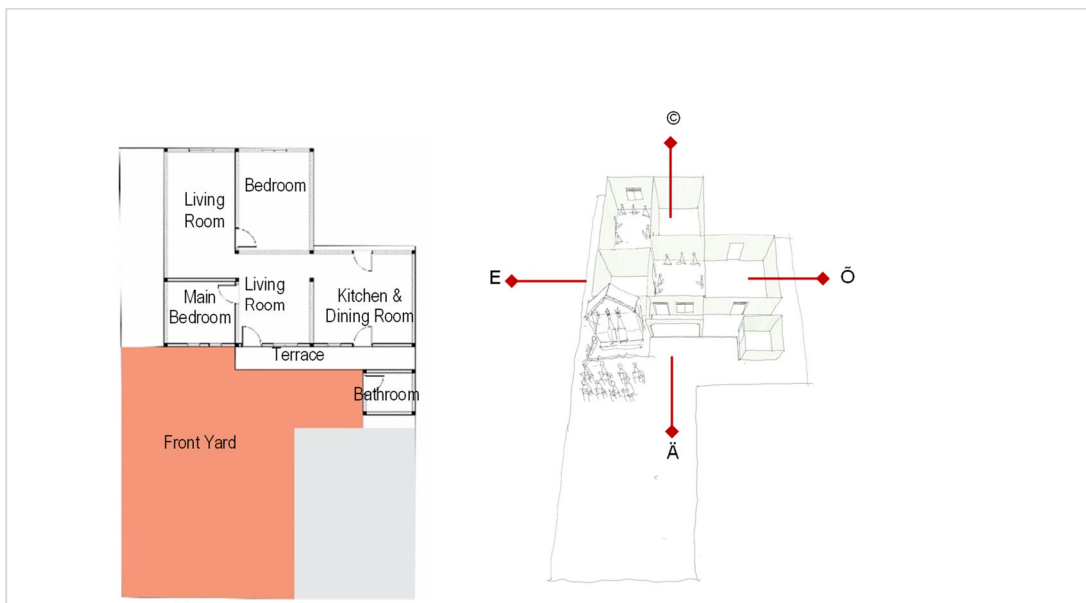


Figure 9. The Peusanding and Peusijuk ceremonies in the Rumoh Batee

Marriage – Transfer of Ownership of Rumoh Inong/Main Bedroom

Table 4. Process of decomposing the properties and compositions of the activity and its spatial container, and establishing the concept for the transfer of ownership of the Rumoh Inong/main bedroom

Aspect	Rumoh Aceh – Rumoh Inong (figure 10A)	Rumoh Batee – Main Room (figure 10B)	Concept
Activity Properties	Participants: parents of Dara Baro, Dara Baro, and Linto Baro	Participants: parents of Dara Baro, Dara Baro, and Linto Baro	The activity concept involves the transition of ownership of the Rumoh Inong/main room, while the spatial concept is defined by the primary position Front/High indicating the occupant's status
Activity Composition	Transfer ownership of the Rumoh Inong to the daughter. The Rumoh Inong is decorated with markers of social status and displayed to guests	Transfer ownership of the main room to the daughter. The main room is decorated with markers of social status and displayed to guests	
Container Properties	Space Type: Private space transformed into public space. Cultural Elements: Traditional decorative elements	Space Type: Private space transformed into public space. Cultural Elements: Traditional decorative elements	

Aspect	Rumoh Aceh – Rumoh Inong (figure 10A)	Rumoh Batee – Main Room (figure 10B)	Concept
Container Composition	Spatial Position: The highest room is located at the center of the house (aligned with Rambat). Likot. Spatial Orientation: East–West	Spatial Position: Located at the front of the house. Orientation: Facing the street	

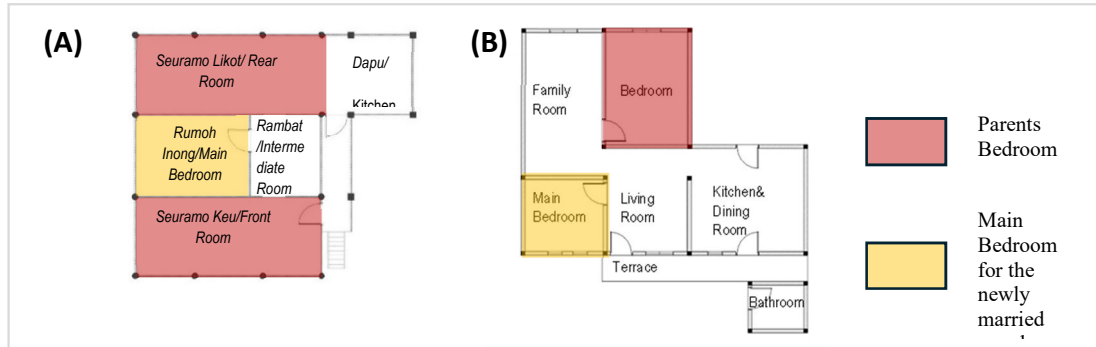


Figure 10. Transfer of ownership of the Rumoh Inong / main bedroom in (A) the Rumoh Aceh and (B) the Rumoh Batee

Marriage – Relationship Between Son-in-Law and Parents-in-Law

Table 5. Process of decomposing the properties and compositions of the activity and its spatial container, and establishing the concept for the relationship between son-in-law and parents-in-law

Aspect	Rumoh Aceh – Rambat – Dining Room (figure 11A)	Rumoh Batee – Living Room (figure 11B)	Concept
Activity Properties	Participants: parents of Dara Baro, Dara Baro, and Linto Baro	Participants: parents of Dara Baro, Dara Baro, and Linto Baro	Activity Concept: Separation of domestic activities.
Activity Composition	Separation of the dining area serves as a form of respect for the newlyweds while instilling values of independence	Transfer ownership of the main room to the daughter. The main room is decorated with markers of social status and displayed to guests	Spatial Concept: Demarcation and division/separation
Container Properties	Space Type: Private space	Space Type: Public space transformed into private space	
Container Composition	Spatial Position: Rambat (newlyweds): the highest room (aligned with Rumoh Inong). Seuramo Likot (parents): close to the kitchen	Spatial Position: Guest Room (newlyweds): located at the front of the house. Dining Room (parents): close to the kitchen	

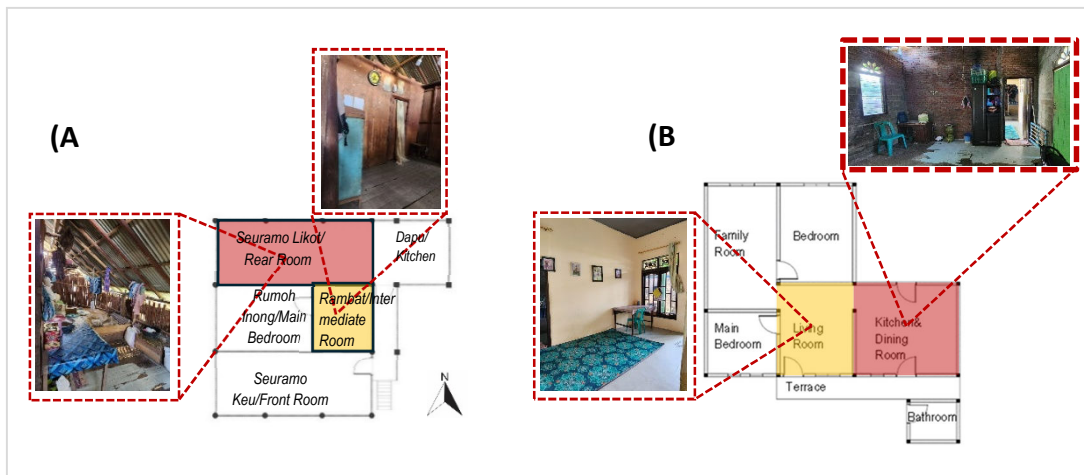


Figure 11. Separation of the dining spaces in (A) the Rambat and Seuramo Likot in the Rumoh Aceh and (B) the Living Room and kitchen dining area in the Rumoh Batee, serving as a symbolic act by the parents-in-law to honor the newlyweds.

Birth

In the series of traditional birth rituals, three customary activities influence the spatial configuration in both *Rumoh Aceh* and *Rumoh Batee*. These include pre-birth rituals, the *Mee Bu* activity (a communal meal involving the parents-in-law and the pregnant daughter-in-law), and post-birth rituals, namely *Madeung* (a confinement period during which the mother and

infant are restricted from leaving the house) and *Peutroen Tanoh* (the ceremony marking the infant's first permitted exposure to the outside world). The following outlines the process of property and composition analysis, as well as the conceptual determination for each birth-related activity:

Birth- Mee Bu

Table 6. Analysis of property, composition, and conceptual determination for the Mee Bu activity

Aspect	Rumoh Aceh – Rumoh Inong/Seuramo Likot (figure 12)	Rumoh Batee – Main Bedroom/Living Room (figure 13)	Concept
Activity Properties	Participants: Husband's family (female), Wife, Wife's family (female)	Participants: Husband's family (female), Wife, Wife's family (female)	Activity concept: Early and late pregnancy ritual activity
Activity Composition	Puesijuk and communal meals during the 4th–5th month and 7th–8th month	Puesijuk and communal meals during the 4th–5th month and 7th–8th month	Spatial concept: Primary position front and prominent
Space Properties	Seuramo Keu (guest reception): Rectangular, Public space, Main door on east side, Customary elements: Idang/Hidangan. Rumoh Inong (Puesijuk): Private space	Living Room and Main Bedroom: Rectangular, Public space, Main door at front wall, Customary elements: food offerings Main Bedroom: Private space	
Space Composition	Spatial Position: Rambat (newlyweds): the highest room (aligned with Rumoh Inong). Seuramo Likot (parents): close to the kitchen.	Both rooms located at the front of the house; the mother-to-be typically faces west during Puesijuk	

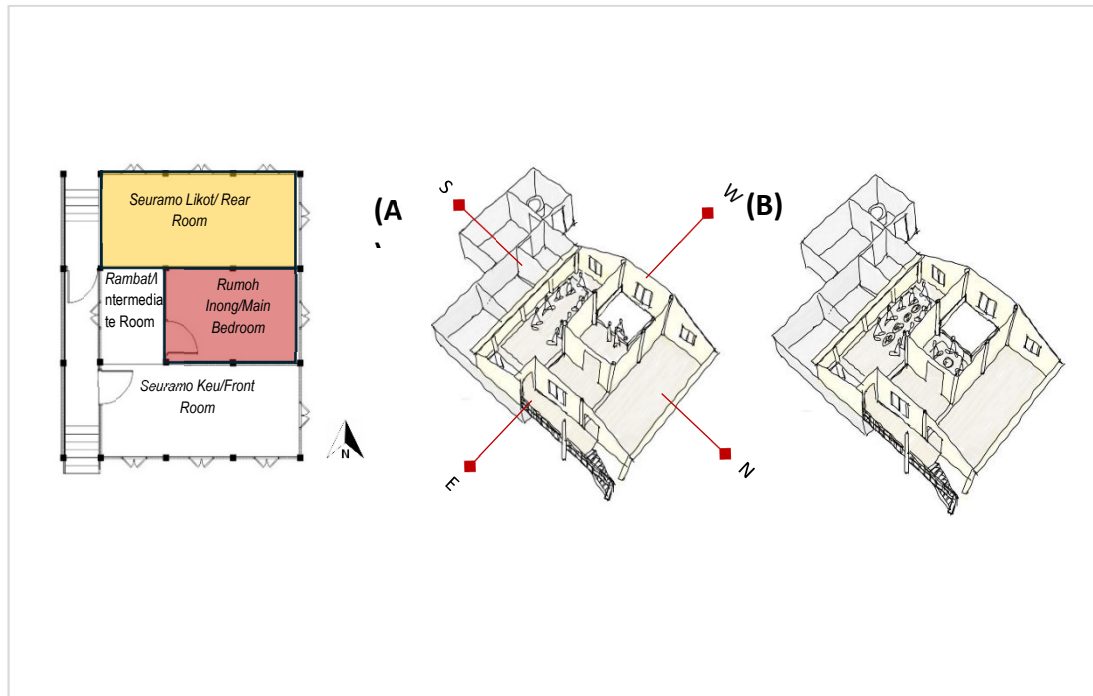


Figure 12. The Puesijuk ceremony for the pregnant mother performed by the parents-in-law in the Rumoh Inong (A). The communal meal involving the wife's family and the parents-in-law held in the Seuramo Likot (B)

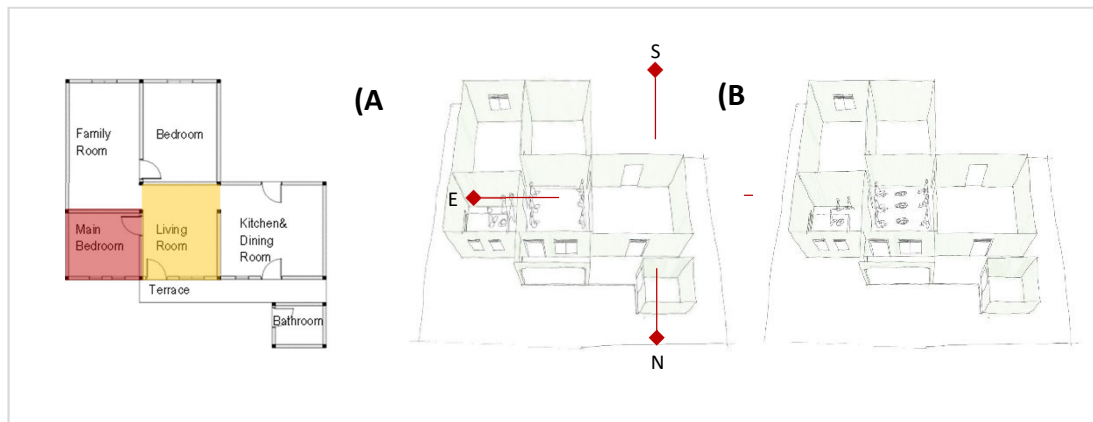


Figure 13. The Mee Bu procession begins with the Puesijuk ritual for the pregnant mother, performed by the village elder and the parents-in-law (women) (A). This is followed by a communal Khanduri, with the dishes provided by the parents-in-law (B)

Birth- Madeung

Table 7. Analysis of property, composition, and conceptual determination for the Madeung activity

Aspect	Rumoh Aceh – Rumoh Inong/Seuramo Likot (figure 14)	Rumoh Batee – Main Bedroom/Living Room (figure 15)	Concept
Activity Properties	Participants : Wife (mother of the newborn) ,newborn and husband (father of the newborn)	Participants : Wife (mother of the newborn) ,newborn and husband (father of the newborn)	Activity concept: Prohibition/restriction Spatial concept: Boundary
Activity Composition	A customary prohibition in which the mother and	A customary prohibition in which the mother and	

Aspect	Rumoh Aceh – Rumoh Inong/Seuramo Likot (figure 14)	Rumoh Batee – Main Bedroom/Living Room (figure 15)	Concept
	newborn remain inside the house for all daily activities, while the husband is required to sleep separately from his wife.	newborn remain inside the house for all daily activities, while the husband is required to sleep separately from his wife.	
Space Properties	Seuramo Likot (mother and newborn space): rectangular, private space, has a dedicated entrance used exclusively by female relatives and neighbors. Floor material: timber planks with drainage openings, or bamboo slats arranged with deliberate gaps. Rumoh Inong (for husband): private space, main bedroom	Additional Bedroom (wife/mother and newborn space): private space. Main Bedroom (husband/father of the newborn): private space	
Space Composition	Seuramo Likot : located at the rear part of the house, directly connected to the kitchen.	Additional Bedroom: located adjacent to the main bedroom, close to the living/family room; its entrance opens towards the living/family room. Main Bedroom: located in the front part of the house, with the door oriented toward living room.	

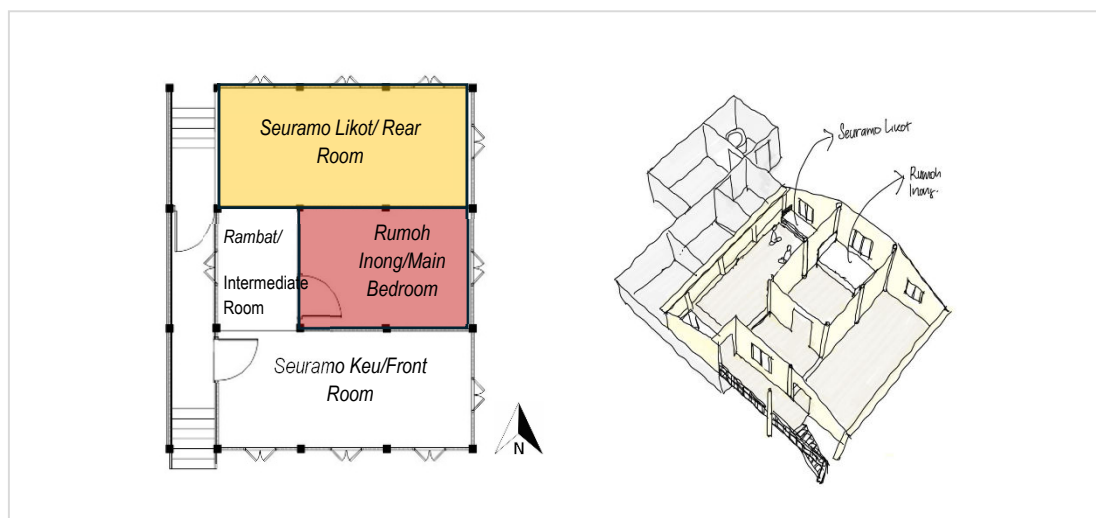


Figure 14. The Madeung ceremony is a prohibitive ritual for the mother and the Baby, preventing them from leaving the house for a period of 44 days. Throughout this period, all daily activities are carried out inside the house

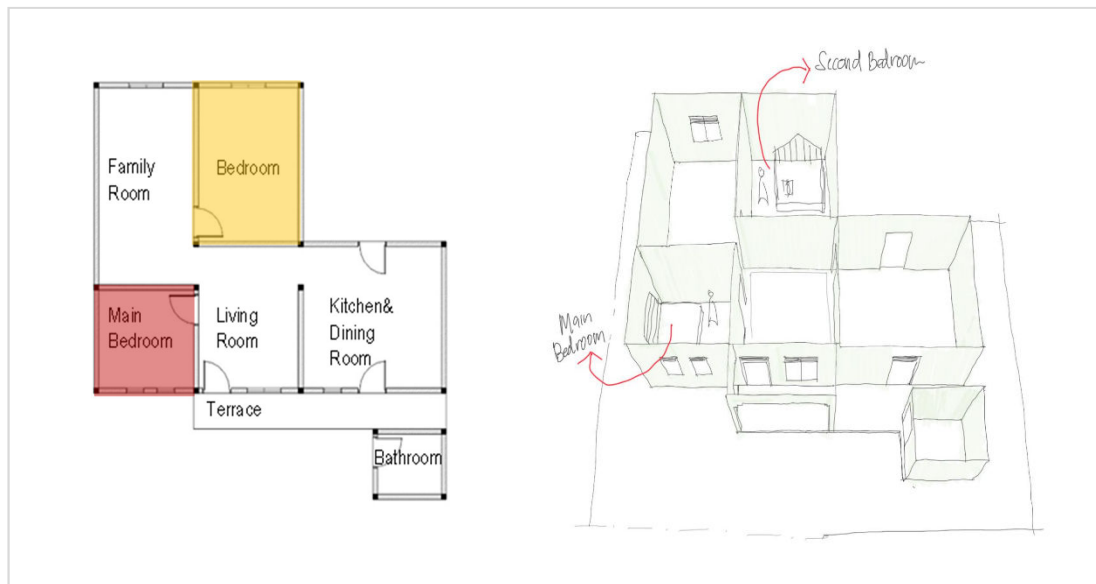


Figure 15. During the Madeung period, the mother and the Baby sleep separately from the father/husband. The Mother and the Baby sleep in the rear bedroom, while the father/husband sleeps in the front bedroom

Birth – Peutroen Tanoh

Table 8. Analysis of property, composition, and conceptual determination for the Peutroen Tanoh activity

Aspect	Rumoh Aceh (figure 16)	Rumoh Batee (figure 17)	Concept
Activity Properties	Meudoa: Tengku, father of the infant, male family members, male guests Peusijuk: Tengku, infant, mother/grandmother Peutroen Tanoh: infant, mother, elder/Bideun, female guests	Meudoa: Tengku, father of the infant, male family members, male guests Peusijuk: Tengku, infant, mother/grandmother Peutroen Tanoh: infant, mother, elder/Bideun, female guests	Activity concept: Introducing the world and life to the infant Spatial Concept: Movement from interior to exterior as a symbol of the infant beginning a new life
Activity Composition	Meudoa – Peusijuk – moving the infant from inside to outside (Peutroen Tanoh)	Meudoa – Peusijuk – moving the infant from inside to outside (Peutroen Tanoh)	
Space Properties	Meudoa – Seuramo Keu: Rectangular, short sides west-east, long sides north-south, main door, Public space. Peusijuk – Rambat: Private converted to public during ceremony Peutroen Tanoh: Movement path - Rambat → Seuramo Keu → Seuramo Reunyeun → House Yard	Meudoa and Peusijuk – Living Room: Rectangular, short sides face street, main door, Public space Peutroen Tanoh: Movement path - Living Room → Terrace → House Yard	
Space Composition	Meudoa – Seuramo Keu: Front of the house, interior-to-exterior movement path	Living Room at front of house.	

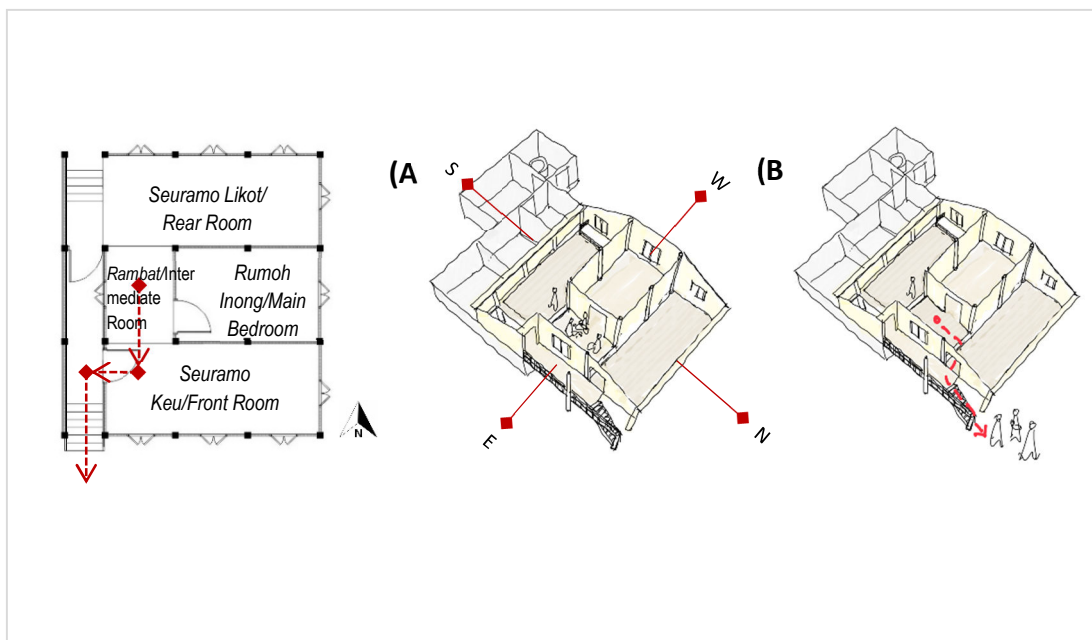


Figure 16. The Peutroen Tanoh procession is a Puesijuk ritual for the infant, performed by the Tengku in the Rambat space (A), and followed by carrying the baby from the Rambat area to the front yard of the house

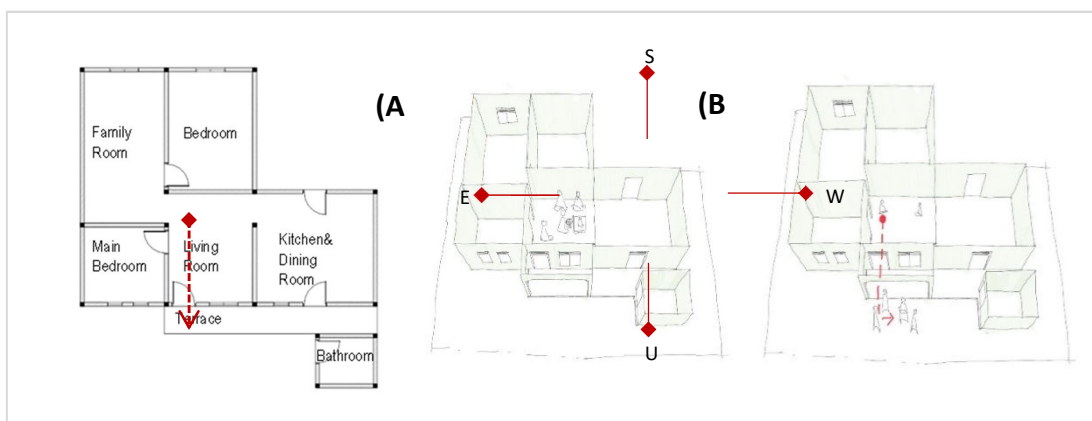


Figure 17. The Peutroen Tanoh procession continues with the infant's Puesijuk performed by the Tengku in the living room (A), after which the baby is taken to the front yard to have its feet placed on the ground as a symbolic act indicating that the baby is now permitted to leave the house (B)

Growth and Development

The growth-and-development activities that shape the spatial structure of Acehese domestic architecture include the customary ritual of Khanduri Sunat Rasul, an adat practice marking a child's transition into *akil baligh* or adolescence. In Islam, this period represents the stage at which a child is taught to assume personal responsibility. The Khanduri Sunat Rasul ceremony is

performed specifically for boys and is usually held prior to the circumcision rite. The following section outlines the process of identifying the properties and compositions of activities and spatial settings, followed by the formulation of concepts for each growth-and-development activity.

Growth and Development – Sunat Rasul

Table 9. Process of identifying the properties and composition of activities and spatial settings and establishing the concept for the Sunat Rasul activity

Aspect	Rumoh Aceh – Seuramo Keu – Rambat (figure 18)	Rumoh Batee – Living Room (figure 19)	Concept
Activity Properties	Participants: Son, Teungku, invited male guests	Participants: Son, Teungku, invited male guests	Activity Concept: Celebrating the transition of a child into adolescence. Spatial Concept: Primary position—Front/High
Activity Composition	Meudoa and Puesijuk; Puesijuk is prayed over by the Teungku, followed by a communal feast (Khanduri)	Puesijuk is prayed over by the Teungku, followed by a communal feast (Khanduri).	
Container Properties	Rambat: Room Shape: square. Space Type: Private space transformed into public space. Cultural Element: bridal mattress Seuramo Keu: Space Type: Public space. Room Shape: rectangular. Openings: main door	Room Shape: rectangular. Openings: main door. Space Type: Public space. Cultural Element: bridal mattress	
Container Composition	Spatial Position: Rambat used for Puesijuk is located at the center of the house. Rambat occupies a higher position than other rooms, aligned with Rumoh Inong. The child's position is at the east side of Rambat, facing west. Seuramo Keu is used for the communal feast and is located at the front	Spatial Position: Front of the house, near the family room and terrace. The child's position is at the short end of the Guest Room, facing the main door	

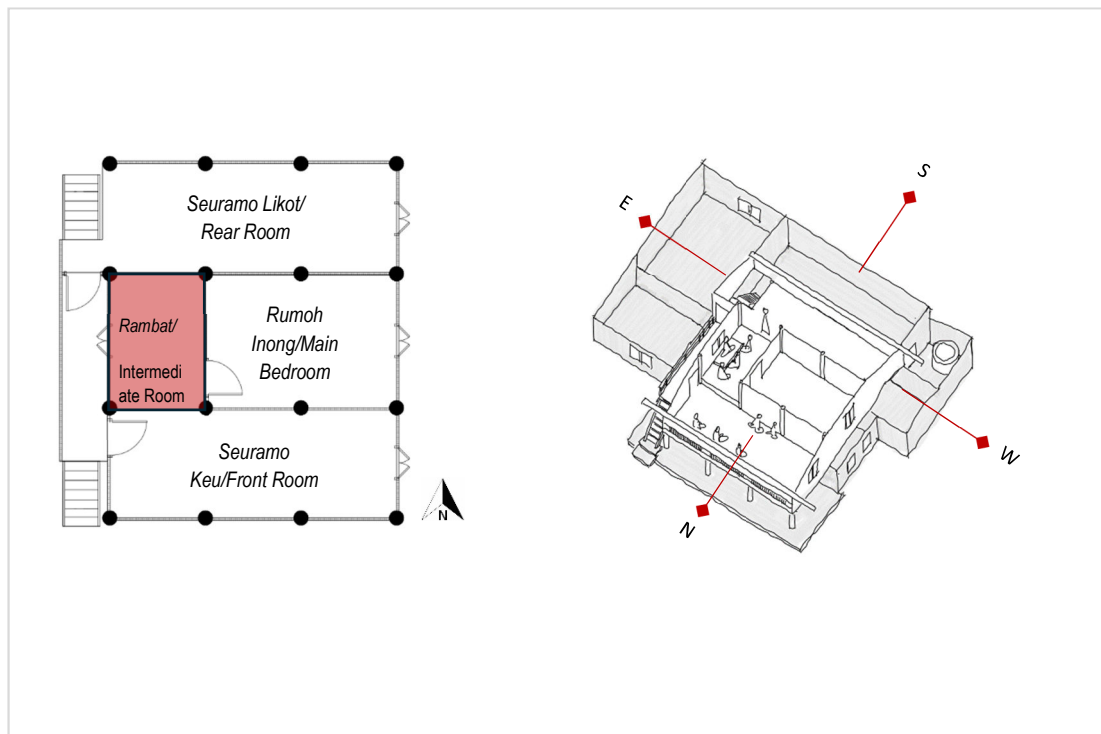


Figure 18. The Pesusijuk for a male child is performed in the Rambat prior to the circumcision activity

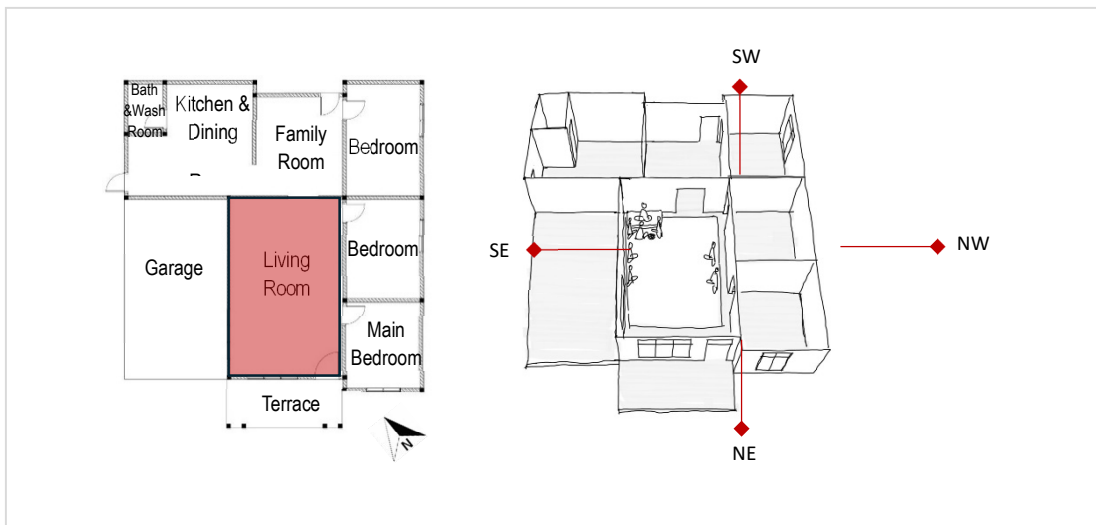


Figure 19. The Peusujuk for a male child is performed in the living room prior to the circumcision activity

Death Rites

In the series of Acehese funerary traditions, the customary activities that influence spatial configurations in both *Rumoh Aceh* and *Rumoh Batee* are *Peumano Jenazah* (ritual cleansing of the corpse) and *Samadiyah* (collective prayer for

the deceased). The following section details the process of identifying the properties, compositions, and conceptual formulations for each funerary activity.

Death – Peumano Jenazah

Table 10. Process of identifying the properties and composition of activities and spatial settings and establishing the concept for Peumano Jenazah

Aspect	Rumoh Aceh – Rumoh Inong / Seuramo Likot (figure 20)	Rumoh Batee – Bedroom (figure 21)	Concept
Activity Properties	Actors: Deceased, Teungku, 2–3 family members	Actors: Deceased, Teungku, 2–3 family members	Activity Concept: Concept of Physical Purification of the Deceased. Spatial Concept: Private space and micro void.
Activity Composition	The deceased is bathed while supported by 2–3 family members and guided by a Teungku.	The deceased is bathed by 2–3 family members and guided by a Teungku.	
Container Properties	Space Type: Private space. Floor Material: Wooden or bamboo planks. Openings: hole to drain water from the bathing process out of the house.	Space Type: Private space. Openings: hole to drain water from the bathing process out of the house (micro void).	Container Concept: Private space and micro void.
Container Composition	Spatial Position: Located at the center of the house (Rumoh Inong) or at the rear of the house (Seuramo Likot).	Spatial Position: Front of the house, with the bedroom wall facing the yard.	

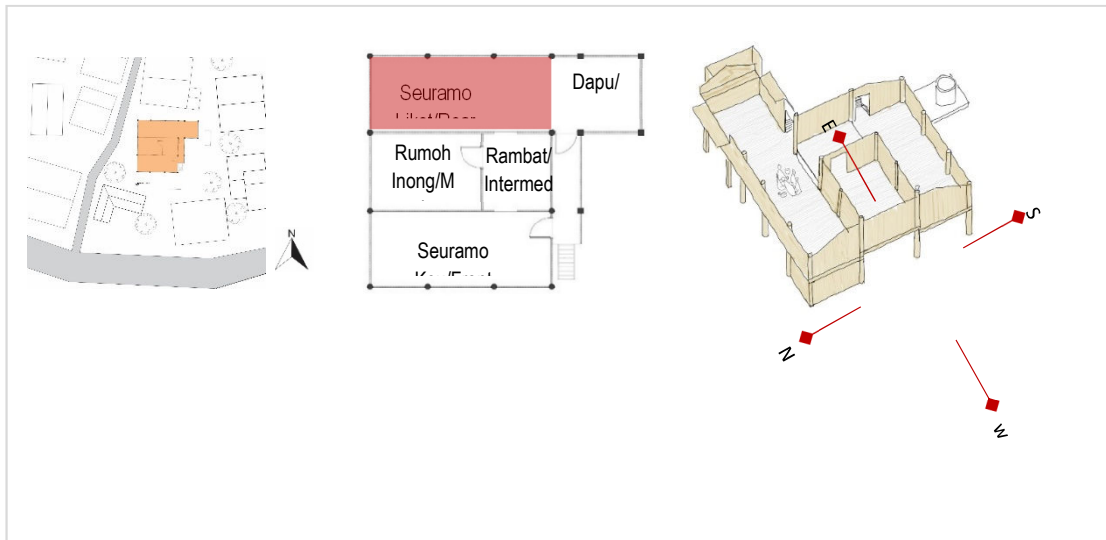


Figure 20. Peumano (Funeral Ritual) at an Acehnese house



Figure 21. Peumano (Funeral Ritual) at a Batee house

Death – Samadiyah

Table 11. Process of identifying the properties and compositions of activities and spatial settings and establishing the concept for Samadiyah

Aspect	Rumoh Aceh – Seuramo Keu (figure 22)	Rumoh Batee – Guest Room (figure 23)	Concept
Activity Properties	Teungku, male guests (family and neighbors)	Teungku, male guests (family and neighbors)	Activity Concept: Spiritual Purification of the Deceased's Soul. Spatial Concept: Public and accommodative space
Activity Composition	Collective prayer for the deceased	Collective prayer for the deceased	
Container Properties	Room Shape: rectangular. Openings: main door. Space Type: Public space. Room	Room Shape: rectangular. Openings: main door. Space Type: Public space. Room	

Aspect	Rumoh Aceh – Seuramo Keu (figure 22)	Rumoh Batee – Guest Room (figure 23)	Concept
	area sufficient to accommodate guests.	area sufficient to accommodate guests	
Container Composition	Spatial Position: Front of the house, near Rambat and Seuramo Reunyen	Spatial Position: Front of the house, near the family room and terrace	

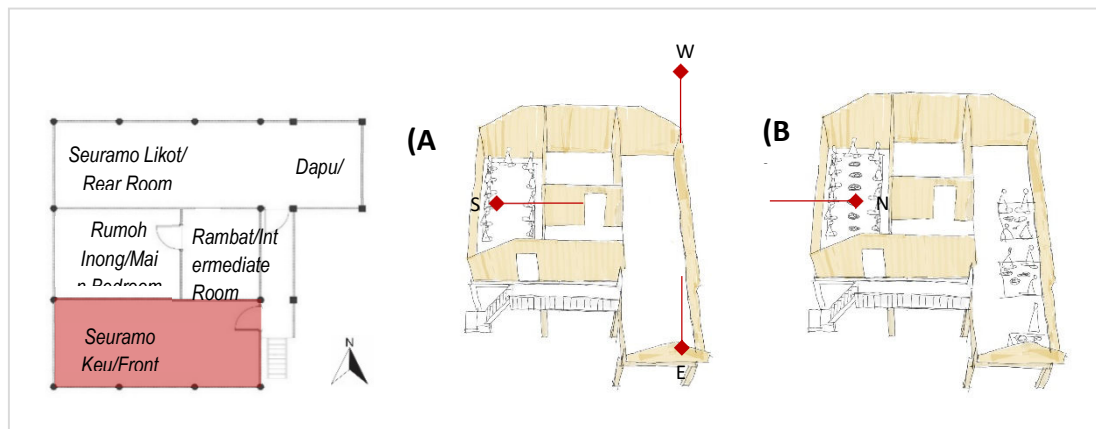


Figure 22. Samadiyah at an Acehnese House



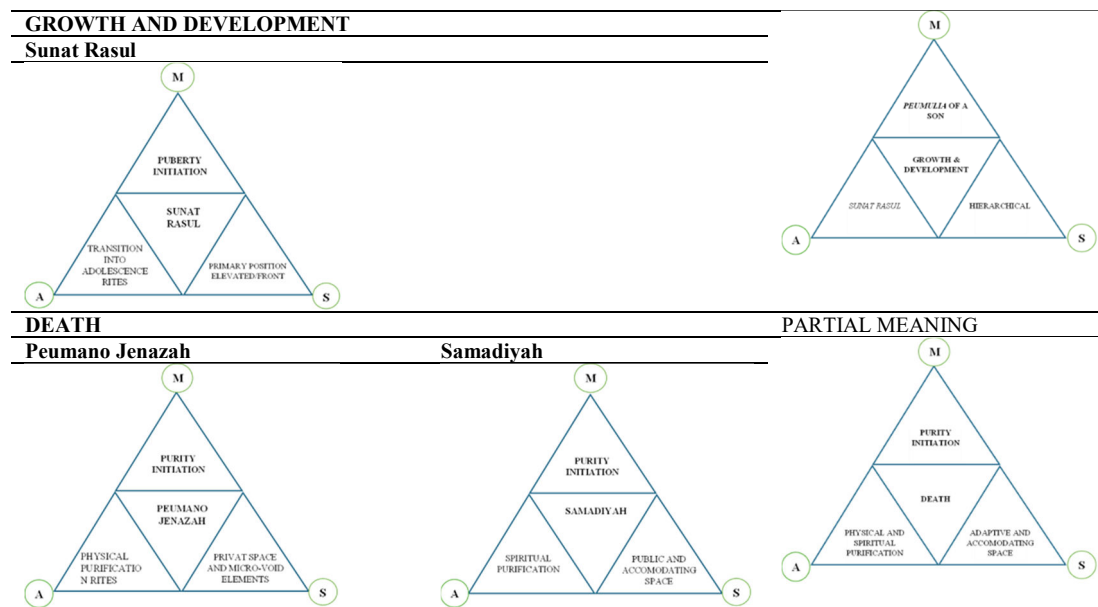
Figure 23. Samadiyah at an Acehnese House

Interpretation of meaning

After identifying the concepts, the relationship between activity concepts and spatial concepts can be interpreted as shown in the following table 12:

Table 12. Steps in deriving meaning from the relationship between activity concepts and spatial concepts

Relation of Concept and Activity		Partial Meanings
Marriage		
Mee Tanda	Intat Linto	
Alih Inong/Kamar Utama	Rumoh	Perkawinan Hubungan Menantu dan Keluarga Mertua
BIRTH		PARTIAL MEANINGS
Mee Bu	Madeung	
Peutroen Tanoh		



Synthesis of meaning in acehnese domestic traditions

From the synthesis of the partial meanings derived from customary activities across the four life-cycle phases, Marriage, Birth, Growth and Development, and Death, emerges a common foundational value: all activities serve to honor and dignify their subjects, whether guests, newlyweds, mothers, infants, children, or the deceased. Specific meanings such as equality, honoring newlyweds, female authority, honoring sons-in-law, celebrating life, boundary-making, externalization, initiation into adolescence, and the purification of body and soul all converge into a single overarching concept: *Peumulia*.

As an overarching meaning, *peumulia* functions as the foundational principle of

Acehnese domestic traditions and is manifested in three architectural aspects:

1. Adaptive–Transformational Spaces: The house transforms from a private to a public space during the performance of customary activities.
2. Hierarchical Concept: The main or primary space is positioned at an elevated or front location, often oriented opposite the main entrance.
3. Segregative–Respectful Concept: Spatial separation between family members functions as a form of respect and teaches independence. Consequently, the concept of *peumulia* is not merely a social value but also an architectural principle manifested in both Rumoh Aceh and Rumoh Batee.

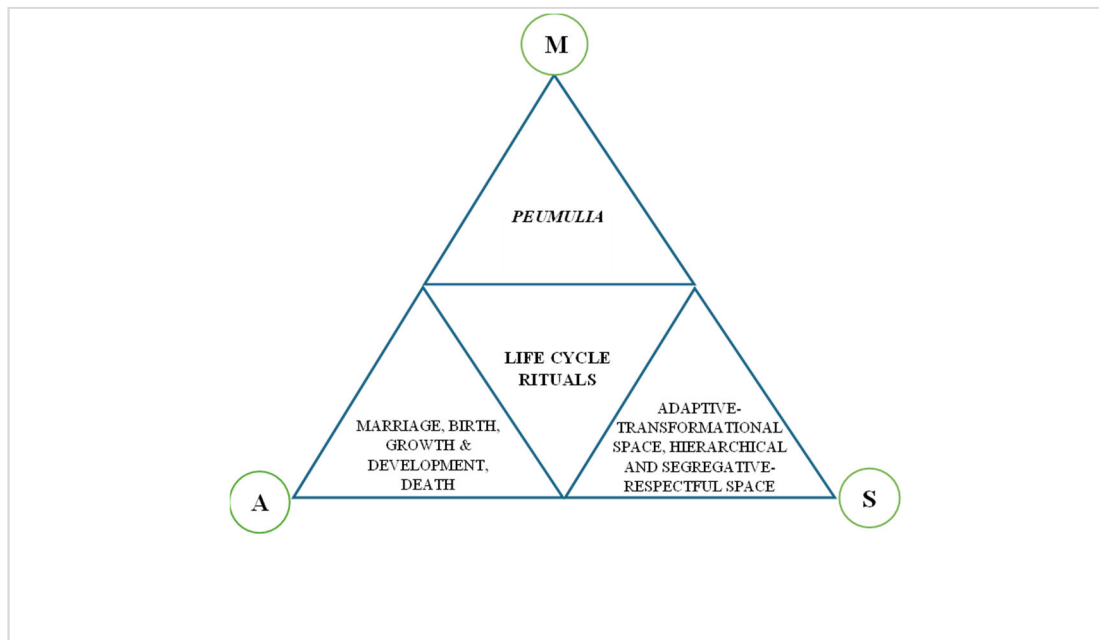


Figure 24. Overarching meaning in the concept of dwelling among acehnese society

Conclusion

The synthesis of partial meanings derived from each customary activity across the life cycle of Acehnese society reveals a single, overarching meaning: *Peumulia*, a value that honors and dignifies humans at every stage of life. *Peumulia* serves as a fundamental principle structuring the dwelling traditions of Aceh, both in social practices and in the spatial organization of the house.

In architectural terms, *peumulia* is realized through three primary spatial patterns. First, adaptive and transformational spaces, where domestic interiors are dynamic and capable of shifting from private to public functions during customary rituals. Second, hierarchical spaces, characterized by the positioning of main spaces according to elevation or orientation relative to the entrance, symbolizing the honor of ritual participants or the household owner. Third, segregative-respectful spaces, emphasizing respect and independence among family members through spatial separation while maintaining social connectivity.

Thus, *peumulia* functions as an overarching meaning that integrates social, symbolic, and spatial dimensions, making Rumoh Aceh and Rumoh Batee not merely cultural artifacts but spatial manifestations of a value system that

places human dignity at the core of dwelling practices.

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Author(s) contribution

Rahil Muhammad Hasbi contributed to the research concepts preparation, methodologies, data analysis, visualization, articles drafting and revisions.

Purnama Salura contributed to the research concepts preparation, literature reviews, data analysis and validation of article drafts.

Indri Astrina Fitria Indrarani Wirakusumah contributed to the supervision of the overall research process, critical review of the manuscript, and editing of the final article draft.