

# Children Customary Clothes in Malay Ceremonies of Adat Memijak Tanah; baby's first step ceremony and Adat Bertindik; ear piercing ceremony.

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**Abstract:** *The Malay archipelago, Malay community have a unique tradition and custom that are aligned to their belief and lifestyle. Each ceremony is regarded as unique and special as they have different purposes and different participants. This research is focused on two different ceremonies which emphasized on children customary clothes. The ceremonies are adat memijak tanah; (baby's first step ceremony) and adat bertindik; (ear piercing ceremony). This research contributes to a new knowledge of some Malay practices towards children. This study emphasizes on Meyer Schapiro's theory of style in the context of artifacts or material culture objects where the culture is constantly being reinvented in different times and places [10]. This research paper applies the qualitative method due to its flexibility views from the informants, and observations made from the photo collection of these ceremonies. This study provides a valuable source of references in Malay custom and culture that benefits for all especially the Malays inclusive all ages, researchers, museum curators, academicians, scholars, students, and also cultural activists in archiving the customary clothes in Malay ceremonies.*

**Index terms:** *customary clothes, children, Malay tradition, baby's first step ceremony, ear piercing ceremony.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

This research discusses a part of children customary ceremonies in Malay practice and tradition in Malaysia. This is a part of researcher's dissertation topic which still in ongoing progress. This research is focused on children from new-born until eighteen year olds. Children are human beings between the stages of birth and puberty. Based on Malaysia Child Act 2001, it defines children as a person whose age is under eighteen year olds. While the Convention on The Rights of the Child (1997) claimed that children means every human being below the age of eighteen years or less.

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Malay tradition is inherited from generation to generation. Therefore, the objective is to learn and reveal the Malay practice on children customary clothes so that the tradition still remain practice. Other than that, the purpose of this research is to know and study the process involved in both ceremonies. In the end, this research will be a priceless and valuable source of references of Malay custom and culture that benefits the royalty's family, researchers, academicians, scholars, students, cultural activist, and museum curators in archiving about the customary clothes. It also displays the traditional costume wearing by the participants during the ceremonies [1].

In Malay customs, there are different ceremonies for different age level. In each ceremony, it has variation of practices. This research discusses a part of children customary ceremony in Malay tradition especially practised in Malay Royal culture in Malaysia. This is a part of researchers' dissertation topic that still in ongoing progress that also analyses on the photos collected by the researchers. Culture is the common way of life of a community or a nationhood. The cultural activist has divided the human aspect of life into many field. It involves the arts, custom and tradition, agriculture, economy, language, attires and accessories, politeness, way of life, the neighbourhoods and many more [2]. In general, culture is defined as an instruction to the members of a society in a closer way of life.

Besides that, Culture is what we think we do, and we have, in life encompasses all areas of life, knowledge, belief, arts, law, morals, and customs or any way of life that is rebirth of any that we have been inherited from our society [3], [4]. A part from that, Malay is classified into two group of cultural manifestation. The first group is the royal tradition or known as complex society. This royal tradition is practiced by the royals, nobels and intellectuals in the urban cities. On the other hand, another group is called communal tradition or known as medium society. This communal tradition is practiced by ordinary people in rural areas [5]. Both groups practice the same traditions that have the same related cultural values. The only difference is only based on the lifestyle of each group encompassing the technology, demographic and economy. The royal tradition practitioner has better communication technology in accessing



information compares to the communal tradition practitioner[13].

Clothing is a basic need for everybody regardless of status and position. Clothing is required in every activities of life; from the official ceremony to normal activities. Different occasion needs different clothing style. Each activities tend to have different type of clothing that suit in different agenda. Clothes are used to wrap up the body as a cover up, a protection for the body from being harm or hurt, an adjustment of body temperature with the fluctuate weathers, keep their dignity and pride and also give the comfy to the wearer[6]. Clothing style also reveals the wearer's status which involved ethnicity, belief ritual and social position in the society.

*Baju*' or known as cloth is one of Malay traditional clothes. It is made from the weaving fabric or textile. Most of the styles of Malay traditional cloth are inspired and influenced from the Persian Arab. The term '*baju*' is originated from the word *bazu* or *badhu* in Arabic which means forearm in English. It means as a cover up of the whole body such as coat, *bajukamis* (or *qamissun*; Arabic), known as shirt, *bajukurung*, *jubah(jubattun)*, known as robe (Mohd Idris as-Marbawi 1987) [7]. Before the expansion of Islam in the Malay civilisation, the Malays cover up their body with a sarong which wrapping around the body as *berkembangan*. They use the sarong or a long piece of cloth till chest line while *berkelubung* covers up to the chest part for women.

Ismaniza (2015) explained that *Adat Memijak Tanah* (baby's first step ceremony) is a ceremony where a newborn child has his first step on the ground<sup>8</sup>. The baby is carried by the parents and his foot are released to step on the ground for the first time. This customary ceremony Destructive ceremonies to cancel the abandonment of the land, the ceremony is believed to be held in order to prevent the baby from getting any disease such as diarrhoea, vomiting, disability that may cause to death.

Meanwhile *Adat Bertindik* (ear piercing ceremony) is a ceremony that mainly celebrated by the Malay girls. The girls are usually aged between five to ten year olds<sup>9</sup>. Traditionally, the piercing in the customary ceremony, the girls' both ears will be pierced by a sharp tool such as needle with a string. The string is stayed in the hole for few days. After the healing, the string will be replaced with earrings. During the ceremony, the children are dressed in gorgeous clothes. They usually wear Malay traditional dresses such as *bajukurung* and sarong, *songket* sarong or *tenun*.

## II. METHODOLOGY






This study focuses on baby's first step and ear piercing ceremonies in Malay tradition and custom. This research paper applies the qualitative method due to its flexibility views from the informants, and observations made from the photo collection of these ceremonies. Moreover, this study also applies the theory of style by Mayer Schapiro.

According to Mayer Schapiro; an excerpt from style, by style is meant form. It also refers as the constant elements, qualities, and expressions in the art of an individual or a group. The term also applied to the whole

group of activity of an individual or in a group form and also the society. It's applied as in the speaking of a life style or the style of civilization. But in artifacts, style is exemplified in a motive or pattern, on in some directly grasp quality of the work of art that help them to localize and date the work and establish connection between groups of works or between cultures. Style here is a symptomatic trait, like the non-aesthetic features of an artifact<sup>10</sup>.

This study analysed on the artifacts gathered from pictorial sources from the royal's album of different states in Malaysia. These selected pictures been analysed and studied based on the customary clothes worn by the children during both ceremonies[4]. This research is simplified in a flowchart methodology that requires several steps to get the validity of the data. The data are gathered via two types of data collection; the primary data and secondary data sources. The second step, upon gathering more viability source, researcher makes verbal interviews and discussion with selected informants that are expert in this research topic field. The open ended questions are discussed with them to gather and to scrutinize more precise information related to this study. All the data are analysed and referred start form the analysis, finding and up to reaching the final step of research conclusion. This is the guide for the researcher to achieve the objective, research question and finalize all the data collection in proper manner.

This method must accordingly attend answering the research questions.

The Royal Tradition	The Communal Tradition.
Baby's First Step ceremony.	
	
1. The royal children during the ceremony <sup>11</sup> .	2. The ordinary children during the ceremony <sup>12</sup>
Ear Piercing ceremony	
	
3. The Royal children during the ear piercing ceremony <sup>13</sup>	5. The ordinary children during the ear piercing ceremony <sup>15</sup>
	
4. The royal children during circumcise and ear piercing ceremony, they sat on the royal dais <sup>14</sup>	

The first illustration is Tunku Zain with Tuanku Aishah Rohani during their prince's first step ceremony at Istana Munarah on April 24, 1983. The prince wore a set of baju Melayu in specific style for Malay children during the baby's first step and ear piercing ceremonies. Does it involve any specific costume that has been customised for them specifically for this ceremony. Table 1: List of research illustrations pastel brown colour during the ceremony [11]. Next, is the picture of the ordinary children during the same ceremony. The baby boy is walking towards his mother. He is adorned in a set of baju Melayu in pastel yellow colour. While the baby is walking towards the mother, the rest of the family members are watching them and recite a prayer or dua' for the baby's good health [12].

The third illustration is the ceremony specific for the Malay girls. The ear piercing ceremony of HRHTunku Miratun Madihah and HRHTengku Asra Jehan blessed by His Royal Highness. Both princesses wore bajukurung in royal blue colour. The princesses also wore accessories; a set of diamond tiara and necklace with a pair of shoes.

They sat politely on the royal dais to have a blessing from their family members<sup>13</sup>. Next, another illustration of a princess; Tengku Ameera Asya (middle) Tengku Eddie Akasya (left) and Tengku Ahmad Firhan Shah (right) sat on the royal dais during the circumcise ceremony and ear piercing ceremony on April 20, 2004 [8]. The princess wore traditional





bajukurung fully in blue *Songket* from head to toes. She also wore a beautiful princess tiara during the ear piercing ceremony[14].

The fifth picture, is the scenario of the ordinary people during the same ceremony. This photo taken by the researcher during her field work in Sultan Alam Shah Museum, Shah Alam in 2017. The girl wore a set of beautiful *bajukurung* during he ceremony[15]. In the communal tradition, the girl is only wearing *bajukurung* made from affordable fabric. The mother will hold the girl in her arms compared sitting down on the dais for the royal tradition.

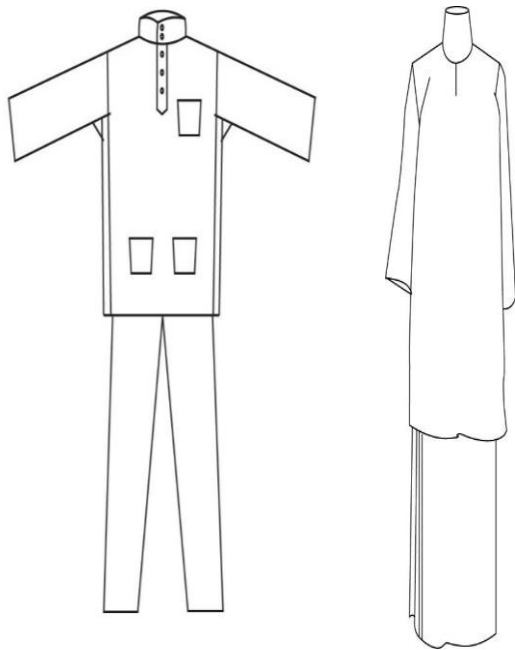


Figure 1: Technical Drawing of traditional Malay clothes

*Baju Melayu and Baju Kurung.*

Figure 1 is an illustration of technical drawing of the Malay traditional attire of *bajumelayu* for the boys and men while *bajukurung* for the girls and women. These style of clothing is worn by both the boy and girl during the baby's first step and ear piercing ceremony. *Bajumelayu* comes in various styles. In figure 1, is the style of *bajumelayucekakmusang* made for the boys. Other than this style, there is much simpler style which has an opening at the neckline with single button and hand embroidered finishing; is called *bajumelayutulangbelut*. It has two patch pockets at the front part.

Meanwhile, the other style of traditional customary attire worn by the Malay girls during the baby's first step and ear piercing ceremonies is called *bajukurung*. It has single front opening and paired with a sarung. Its sarung has pleats at one side. *Bajukurung* for the royals is made from beautiful

and lavish material such as brocade or *songket*, rather than the communal, they use much economical material such as plain cotton or rayon.

The royalty's children wear accessories with beautiful jewellery, such as diamonds, tiara and matching shoes with their clothes. While the communal use much affordable and simpler style for their children. Therefore, based on this research process, from the data collection, interviews, analysis and finding, it can be concluded that both these groups; the royal tradition and communal tradition, still well maintained in wearing traditional clothes in most of custom ceremonies.

### III .CONCLUSION

Argumentation regarding the children customary clothes especially that emphasis on the baby's first step and ear piercing ceremonies for the royal and the communal tradition do not finish here. It is still needed to be studied in depth especially in term of children customary clothes in Malay tradition and custom. During this era, children are influenced by the modern, western and Korean of clothing style. The traditional attire are being forgotten even in custom ceremonies such as wedding. However, the wearing of traditional attire might not suitable with current climate or activities compares in the past. For example, the usage of *songket* and brocade is not fully effectively in today's climate as it is hot nowadays that make them prefer to wear much comfort clothes with practical. They prefer cotton based clothes rather than *songket* or brocade. In addition, the Malays are still wearing the traditional clothes up till today but with materials that suit with current climate. This study provides valuable source of references in Malay custom and culture that benefits for all especially the Malays inclusive all ages, researchers, museum curators, academicians, scholars, students, and also cultural activists in archiving the customary clothes in Malay ceremonies.

Conflict of Interest – nil

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## V. ETHICAL STATEMENT CLEARANCE

I testify on behalf of all co-authors that our article submitted to Indian Journal of Public Health Research & Development (Print ISSN: 0976-0245, Online ISSN:0976-5506)\_Journal Link: <http://www.ijphrd.com/>:

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All authors:

- 1) this material has not been published in whole or in part elsewhere;
- 2) this materials sources taken from the primary and secondary data sources and the sources are listed in the list of references;
- 3) the manuscript is not currently being considered for publication in another journal;
- 4) all authors have been personally and actively involved in substantive work leading to the manuscript, and will hold themselves jointly and individually responsible for its content.

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