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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PRESERVING THE GENIUS LOCI IN NURTURING HISTORIC-RELIGIOUS URBAN SETTLEMENT CASE STUDY : KAMPUNG LUAR BATANG (JAKARTA, INDONESIA)¹

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Historic-Religious Kampung refers to the historical urban kampung which has an artifact or tradition of religious ritual. This type of kampung is able to grow independently because of the spirit that comes from its religious tradition, which in turn generating the resident's and migrant's economic activities. Currently there is an argument that formalism and universalism of the physical forms and the demolition of urban kampung have alienated the local spirit and culture. The socio-spatial-economic approach on to the historic-religious kampung case presented here will be significantly contributing to the preservation of the local spirit (Genius Loci). This paper is based on the empirical study of historic-religious kampung Luar Batang (Jakarta, Indonesia) which hopefully will be able to uncover the relationships between the local spirit and spatial structure. Dialogues based on the comparative study with the other similar kampung have been carried out as an attempt to conceptually formulate the significant aspects that would be useful for consideration in environmental regulation planning and maturation process, especially for the historic-religious kampung settlements in urban areas in Indonesia and other similar contexts.

Key words: Genius Loci, Historic-Religious Urban Kampung, Preservation.

INTRODUCTION

Historically, kampung Luar Batang was developed on the reclaimed land on Batavia's northern coast which was sanctioned by VOC (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or the Dutch East India Company which established its capital at the port city of Batavia) during the years of 1650-1700. The land was then called as 'Kampung Jawa' or *Java Kwartier / Javasche Kwartier* because it was allocated for mud digger's housing who came from Java (*de modder Javanen*). They were employed by VOC to

clean the canals in the city and to dig the mud at the mouth Ciliwung River which was getting shallow and causing the ships couldn't sail. (Heuken, 1997:164,331; 2000:13; 2003:45,47; Funo at.al, 2004:173). Later, *Java Kwartier* called as *Buiten de Boom / Kampong Loewar Batang* because of its location which was closed to the boom (a wooden stick across Ciliwung River) where a number of Dutch officials controlled the ships (Hakim, 1989; 51). When territorial administration was reformed by the government in 1960s, the name of place was to be *Kampung Baru Kampung Satu Luar Batang* to signify

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that it was the first kampung existed in the north region of Batavia. Nowadays the locals related the name of kampung with the myth of Yemeni's Muslim missionary Alhabib Husein Bin Abubakar Bin Abdillah Al-Aydrus who transited in Sunda Kelapa harbor together with Gujarati traders in 1736. According to genealogy, Al Habib Husein is the Saint, the oldest trustee in Jabotabek (Jakarta-Bogor-Bekasi), who is considered as a close relative of the Prophet Muhammad. (Sayyid Abdullah, 1998, p.4-5, Heuken, 2003, p.47-48 quoting Brug. P.A van der, 1994). According to myth he passed away (June 27, 1756) and when the body was to be buried at other location, it miraculously get out from the coffin (*kurung batang*) and returned to the kampung. The locals call it 'Luar Batang' or out of the coffin. (Interview the native, 2009).

Late 18th century kampung Luar Batang was positioned as a defense area of the city. This was indicated by the lanterns / *batterij* (quarantine) that were found in the kampung (Peter in Grijs, 2007:52-77). Marine sedimentation and formation of land in the northern kampung were increasingly expanded and because of that kampung Luar Batang position became land locked (W.Heydt's map of 1853, E.van Minos's map of 1948 in Dinas Kebudayaan dan Permuseuman DKI Jakarta, 2007)



(Source : Dinas Pemetaan Dan Pengukuran DKI Jakarta and Google Earth, Reconstructed by Author, 2007-2008)

Figure 1 : Morphology of Kampung Luar Batang in the years of 1985,1992,1996 and 2008

The maps of 1985, 1992, 1996 shows that the morphology of the kampung has been undergone rapid changes. 1985 map indicated that slums filled up the reclaimed river on the west side, and in 1992 map it was shifted to the north on swamps

area soon after Muara Baru street was opened. The street line in the northern part of the kampung is clearly visible in 1996 map, and the swampy area is blank. The line and reclaimed land on the river on the east side (which would be developed for apartment later), indicate efforts to assign property right to the land. Currently, kampung Luar Batang is a strategic location that is relatively closed to the urban economic centers around North Jakarta. Seventy five percentage of the inhabitants are migrants who rent rooms, houses or lands to stay temporary or to open small business that serve the daily needs and others supporting activities for pilgrimage tradition. Therefore the two main factors that make economically the kampung survived are rental business and *maqom* pilgrimage tradition of Al Habib Husein.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Urban kampung is a symbiosis between urban and kampung as quoted by Sihombing that the phenomenon of differences between kampung and kota... can be simplified to be the difference or contrast between qualitative value and quantitative value; social and human development versus economic and political development; personal and interpersonal relationships versus management; day-to-day needs and aspirations versus business orientation;...(Sihombing, 2004, quote Radovic 1994: 166 and Jacobs).

Reflecting to Schulz's theory (1963), urban kampung, considered as a space, holistically has four dimensions of role, namely: 1) physical control (comfort, security, robustness, stability); 2) functional frame (activities, usability, usefulness); 3) social milieu (kinship, exchange, atmosphere), and 4) cultural symbolical (meaning, imagination, belief). In the social milieu context, *social space is a social product*. The social space is considered as public domain which is universal and overt, while the nature of private domain is protected, controlled by individual and shared with family and friends / relatives. Spectrum of public-private or external-internal spaces mediated by a midst space namely *external-internal public space or pseudo public space*. Culturally, social space as *container (tangible thing)* accommodates a *mental thing* or a *mental space as contents (intangible thing)* which include: an expression of idealism, an actualization of belief and religion, a manifestation of social relation, etc. *Mental space* transforms 'space' to 'place' (Latin: loci) that has the values, symbols and spirit/transcendental aspects (Lefebvre, 1984 : 31-32; Schulz, 1980; Dear & Wolch in Carmona, 2003:106;). Edmund Husserl

stated that *Constitutive Phenomenology* is useful to uncover the transcendental aspects behind the physical appearance comprehensively and holistically on the dynamics of community's daily life. (Emb-

ree,1997:9-11,205; Lefebvre,1984: 30; Kuswano, 2009:47; Haryadi, 2010: 22-23).

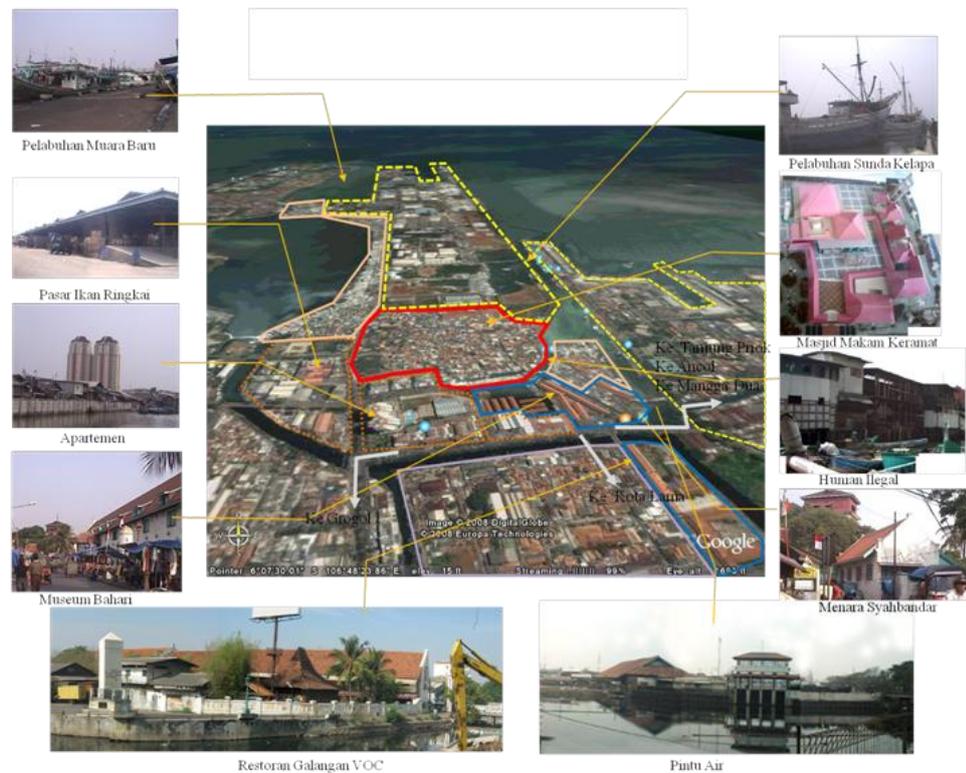


Figure 2 : The current position of kampung Luar Batang and its surrounding.

METHOD

This article is the result of empirical study based on the phenomenological paradigm. The source of phenomenological study is events which intuitively can be understood by experiences. Sensory experience is the reflection of relationship between subject and object that is processed by knowing, thinking, telling and sending object properties to the brain, understanding, judging and taking action. A truth of knowledge in phenomenological perspective is compatibility between what is seen, thought and experienced which is used as a basis for giving meaning to the existence of the object. To reveal the truth, language is used as a tool to develop a structured logic of ideas, perceptions, emotions and the content of experiences. Therefore, the nature of phenomenology is descriptive and reflective (Kuswano, 2009:29-32, 48).

The descriptive data used in this article are directly obtained by researcher through interviewing informants and observing phenomena supported by physical setting. While the secondary data used are obtained from the literatures and documents which were compiled by related institution. The phenomena presented here are part of the whole

phenomena that have been recorded; therefore the illustrated models, at the end of this article, are the initial models that can be changed according to the additional information obtained over time.

DISCUSSION

Context : Tradition, Accessibility and Investment

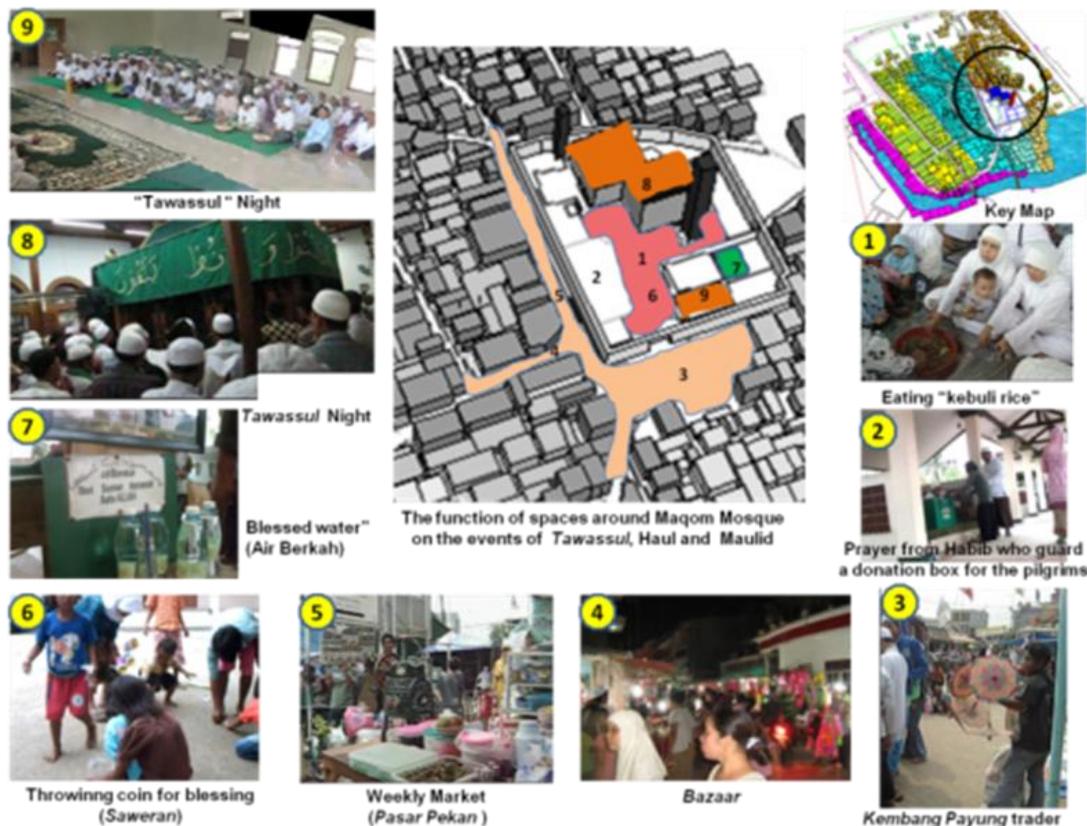
Tradition of Maqom Pilgrimage (Figure.3)

The pilgrimage to the *maqom* of Al Habib Husein is conducted in a room within the mosque. There are two tombs inside the *maqom* room, one is the tomb of Al Habib Husein and the other is his follower's. Generally the name Al Habib Husein as *Waliyullah* is mentioned by the majority of the pilgrims. The pilgrimage tradition is carried out by prayer offering and Al Quran reading within the *maqom* room by facing to both tombs. *Maqom* has different meaning with the term of *makam* (tomb). *Maqom* refers to the level degree of somebody's knowledge about Islam faith or someone who is considered as a close relative of the Prophet Muhammad, while *makam* is a tomb (source: Mr. Hamid, the native people of RW-3, 2008).

The pilgrimage activities reach its peaks especially on Thursday night (*tawassul* night), Sunday, Haul day (commemoration of the death) of Al Habib Husein, the weeks before the fasting months, the birthday of Prophet Muhammad (Maulid Nabi Muhammad SAW), and other Islamic holidays. During those days the mosque becomes centre of activities although it is physically not located at the centre of the kampung. Generally the pilgrims said that they performed the pilgrimage to get *karomah* (the saintly miracles) from Al Habib Husein and to get Allah blessing. Other activities which appeared as impacts of the religious activities are considered as enrichment the worship experience, such as: alms giving, distributing the blessing through *saweran* (throwing coins as thanksgiving for deeds they did), or giving donation to *penadong* (beggar). The belief to the

strength of Al Habib’s *karomah* is facilitated by the *kembang payung* (a packet of flower and a small umbrella) and incense traders.

During the Haul and Maulid days, the pilgrims are reciting *dzikir* (prayer) with *marawis* in the afternoon, common prayer for the *Air Berkah* (blessed water) and *nasi kebuli* (kebuli rice), eating kebuli rice from a tray together in groups of 4-5 persons, listening to religious preaching, etc. *Marawis* is an art of tambourine playing with specific rhythms to regulate the intonation, adding into the solemnity of prayer. While on Friday night (*tawassul* night) the prayer reading is accompanied by *marawis* all night long.



Source : Reconstructed by Author, 2007-2009

Figure 3 : Phenomenon of Al Habib Husein Maqom Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage activities generate *bazaar* on Friday nights, weekly market on Maulid celebration, traders of *kembang payung* and incense, kiosks selling religious objects, *penadong*, *musafir* (wayfarer), *saweran*, etc. This became a reason for conflict between the native inhabitants and the group who claimed as the family of Al Habib Husein (*Mutawali*). Later the *Mutawali* was given the right to maintain the *maqom*, to live inside the mosque compound, and to manage the financial matters related to pilgrimage activities,

while the native community has the right to maintain and to manage the mosque. *Mutawali* has important role in the management of pilgrimage activities and as spiritual mediator to Al Habib. The permanent native traders settle inside the mosque compound and around the main gate. The itinerant and migrant traders occupy the neighborhood roads, while the hawkers do not occupy a specific place but wandering around the mosque and neighborhood roads.

Traders in Bazaar and weekly market occupy the yard and parts of local properties or on the wooden drain cover, and even expanded into the road around the mosque. As compensation, the traders pay for the electricity supply (during the *tawassul* on Friday night) or pay space rent to the house owner, and pay cleaning money to the neighborhood unit (RW) on voluntary basis. During the Haul and Maulid, especially during the worships for women, the weekly market appears on the road towards the mosque with 1x2 m² rental space of

Rental Dwelling (Figure. 4)

The high accessibility to the centers of urban economic activities that exist along the coastline of North Jakarta has led the development of rental housing in the kampung Luar Batang. Physically 75% of the buildings inside the kampung are used as rental housing for workers from outside the kampung, or those who do business in the kampung. Some migrants open their businesses within the kampung by occupying rental land and then erecting building for various businesses, such as small shops, telecommunication shops, beauty salon, etc. Rental and pilgrimage activities have been attracting daily

Rp. 35,000 per-day, rented out by RW. To get the right to occupy a certain place permanently, the migrant trader has to get permission from the coordinator. The possibility to use the private property for commercial activities is enabled not only because of the monetary compensation, but also the local community's awareness to the preservation of tradition, humanitarian attitude (helping each other), and similarity of fate as migrants or former migrants, common struggle in earning for living, and common hope to get the blessing.

services business. The high investment value has prompted the native population to sell their house or land, or to rent out their house or land, to buy a new land or to live outside the kampung. The same phenomenon was also indicated in the illegal settlements that consist of box houses (*Rumah Kotakan*) which were built through permission given by someone who is assumed to have control over that location. This kind of investment in property has prompted the owners to expand spaces both vertically and horizontally by adding floors and widen the living space until the boundary line of the road. The high intensity of the occupancy rate has caused changes in the function of alleys into the parking lot at night.

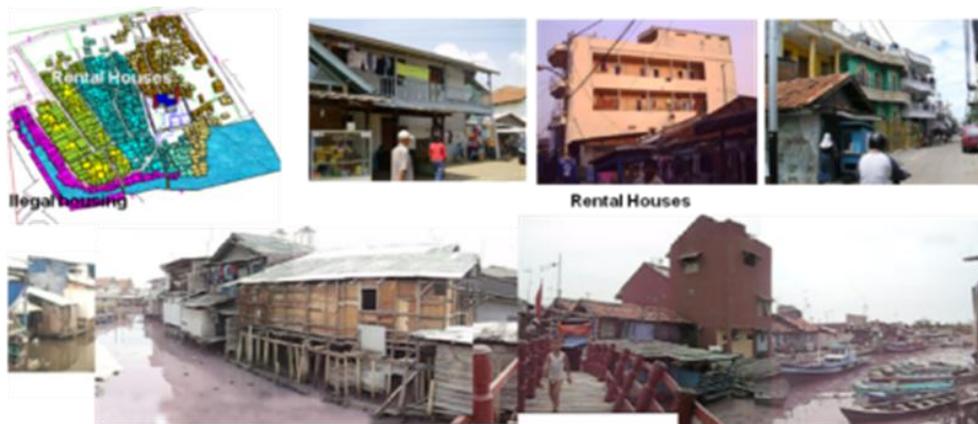


Figure 4: The spreading of rental houses (Author's documentation, 2009-2010)

INTERPRETATION : LOCAL SPIRIT, SPATIAL STRUCTURE AND UNPLANNED SETTLEMENT

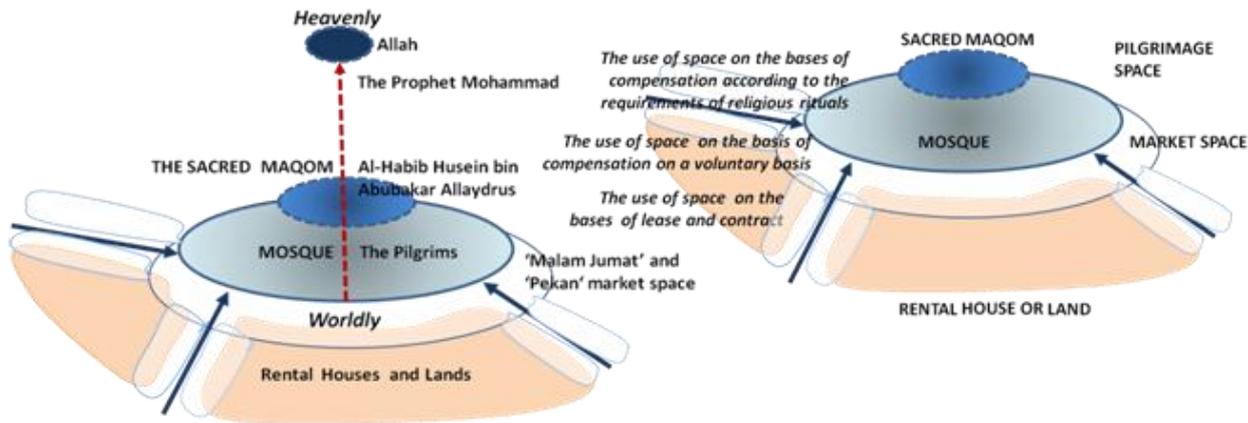
Although temporal and regular, intensive pilgrimage activities by pilgrims coming from outside the kampung, but this has significantly increased the economic activities including commercialization of public space by the both local and migrant population. The sustainability of tradition is promoted by the strong sense religiosity which is manifested through rituals and humanistic attitudes. Although the belief to Al Habib Husein's *karomah* is essentially transcendental and individual, but it has be-

come a necessity and strongly maintained by the religious community. Tradition connects spiritual-religious need and material-physical needs. These two aspects are conceptually manifested into the horizontal and vertical spatial structure. If there is no maqom inside the Luar Batang mosque, then the competition to get space for commercialization will not happen around the mosque. Indirectly the opportunity to commercialize the space is related to: 1) Legitimation status of of closeness to Al Habib Husein (Mutawali), 2) settling status in relation to the length of stay (native population, penadong) and

insider or outsider status (commuter, *kembang pa-yung* traders), 3) social networking with the coordinator of commercial space and native population (migrant traders). Kinship, settling status, and social networking are directly related to the distance between occupied commercial space and the position of the *maqom*.

Housing investment is individual business that can't be controlled by the community at large.

It has been encouraged the investor to not care about the importance of maintaining environmental quality. It can only be controlled by the firmness of legality and regulation of the government because the phenomenon indicates that the elements of a religious tradition and housing investment are two aspects that relatively did not affect each other even though both occur in the same place.



Source: Interpretation Model by Author, 2010

Figure 5. Vertical Structure Of The Spirit Value And Economic Value Use Of Horizontal Space And The Ethical Use Space Layer

CASE DIALOGUE (FIGURE. 6)

The phenomenon of pilgrimage to saint's *maqom* was also found in several other countries that were parts of the spread of Islam in Southeast Asia. One of the acknowledged *awliya* in Singapore is Habib Nuh bin Muhammad bin Ahmad Al Habsyi, whose *maqom* sits atop a hill on Palmer Road in the former Kampung Sambau, Tanjong Malang/Tanjong Pagar. This kampung was then a multicultural village which has been gone for a long time and now has developed into business district. But amidst these rapid and extreme changes, the *maqom* of Al Habib Noh and the pilgrimage activities are still well maintained. His noble lineage can be traced to Hadramaut, Yemen. The *maqom* of Al Habib Noh continues to be highly-respected by the pilgrims to this day who seek his blessing and similarly shows similar phenomenon in terms of Haul and Maulid ritual traditions but does not show the impact of specific support activities except for the Bazaar.

CONCLUSION

The high accessibility from both sea and land which connect the kampung with economic activities centers and the pilgrimage to *maqom* Al Habib Husein have been identified as the generator

of the appearance of space commercialization phenomenon which are both related to religiosity and **economic motives. What we've learned above** theoretically supports the opinion of Mause (1961) and Belshaw (1981) who described that the traditional rituals has the magical power to control everyday life, and became the basic consideration in determining social relations, economic and political activities, and other factors.

The pilgrimage of Al Habib's *maqom* is a local spirit of the place ("genius loci") that is controlled by the strong belief and the awareness of the need of religiosity actualization besides having the power to control the use of spaces. Kampung settlement with its unique characters (in physical terms: growing organically, irregular pattern; in social terms: strong kinship and communality, humanitarian attitude, togetherness) has a high potential to be developed and planned by their community according to their historical memory (community based planning and development). Revitalization has not to an action of demolition or new construction but it can be also an action of maintenance of local spirit. This can be realized by considering "the genius loci" as infill element and reformation or upgrading of its utilities

and sanitation that is considered as support elements. A historic-unplanned urban settlement should not be regarded as a constraint or conflict

but it should be considered as historical dynamics that exists between the past and contemporary.



Source: URA and Google Earth, 2010; Majelis Haul Habib Noh-147, Singapore, 2009

Figure 6: Preserving the maqom of Al Habib Noh in Tanjong Pagar, Singapore

Urban Planning process should not ignore the intangible factors, such as beliefs, rituals, and “genius loci” – and its relationships with space and place. Planning professionals should be able to recognize, to understand, and to integrate those components into the tangible formal plans and designs. Through the above cases we have learned that the power of the intangible could not be underestimated, and their presence in the built environment – especially in Asian context – is very important for holistically sustaining the well-being of the urban community for the present and future generations.

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