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# Bali cultural transformation in standard house in Surabaya

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**Abstract:** Humans need a home for a comfortable life especially with family. For the Indonesian people, culture shapes the human life, as well as for the Balinese people who have strong traditions. Balinese people believe that there is a relationship between the universe or macro-cosmos (the natural environment) and micro-cosmos (the houses), whereby human life must maintain harmony with nature, where all three elements (philosophy, art and aesthetics) are applied. This can be seen to the reliefs carved on the walls of standard houses in the front yard to the back yard of the house, including outer space adjacent neighbors. Those are filled with reliefs and sculptures which have full of meaningful tradition. Given that the standard house has a limited area of spaces, it is difficult to restructure it for the application of Balinese tradition because it has already been established. The structuring of rooms and spaces of the house and the sculptures are placed, to present meaningful presence according to the Balinese culture (Main Problem).

**Keywords:** Micro-Cosmos, Macro-Cosmos, Philosophy, Aesthetics

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## 1. Introduction

A house is one of the basic human needs in life, and its development continues as time goes by. For the people of Indonesia who have diverse cultures, the cultures are incorporated into the physical habitats; this is not so different for the Bali tribe.

The Balinese people believe there is a relationship between the universe/macro-cosmos (application: natural environment) and micro-cosmos (application: private house), whereby both are complementary and the formed harmony sustains the world.

These two factors always conflict whenever there is a general problem, for instance, the presence of a new technology that brings a new value and all other possibilities that come with it. This Condition appears in certain Standard House in Surabaya as a modern architecture, which has limited space due to spatial organization and arrangement. Then this will be fitted by practice used. The main problem is the difficulty of incorporating the Bali traditional architecture from one generation to another with little or no change, successfully as a constant reminder that modern architecture is evidently more promising from its appearance. The reality is that the meaning contained in traditional architecture is very deep, bearing a religious and traditional norms, background as well as it is in accordance to the climatic

conditions of Indonesia.

The conflict can be solved if the occupants have a local knowledge in ordering the space arrangement in which the traditional sense is still used to decorate the present architecture. This study investigates a house located at Surabaya city, owned by a Balinese person who has an in depth knowledge of the Balinese art culture. The owner teaches at an Art Institute and also as a lecturer at Petra Christian University in Surabaya, where he teaches Philosophy, History of Art and Aesthetics course. Later, he plans to move back to Bali in the near future when he gets retired. The motto of his life illustrates his love for art where he says "My great love for general philosophy and philosophy in particular has continued to engender my interest in the problem", thus if there are some problems mean we must solve it and cannot be avoided.

The principle of human life according to him must ensure harmony with nature, where all three elements (philosophy, art and aesthetics) are applied to his daily life for example applying Balinese architectural ornaments and orders in his house. It is carved on the walls of the residence as well as its owned the craft statues, placed in the front yards of the house to the back yard, and full of meaningful tradition

## 2. Problem Statement

On matters relating to traditional Balinese architecture, though of basic characteristics, they are a bit difficult to apply/implement in the building in Surabaya city due to its relatively narrow nature and also because the standard house has a relatively small courtyard in the front and rear. For such conditions the most important thing is to ensure that the traditional meaning contained there is maintained.

The application of the principles include:

- (a) The direction of the front side of the house cannot be changed since the standard residence and its facilities have already been established. This leaves the best option of the application of Balinese tradition, to suit the already existing conditions of the house. Since the house faces the west this affects the positioning of the Nawasanga points, thus changing the layout of important locations within the residence, such as the location of the place of worship which is based on several considerations (a place that is easily visible and accessible, separated from other household activities, strategically placed at a corner).  
The ordering/structuring of rooms and spaces of the house depends on the raised /elevated places in the house which are reserved for the shrine, for worship, known as temple or *candi* (Javanese-Hinduism acculturation).
- (b) The aspect of life, where there is always a harmonious relationship with nature is applied in the form of reliefs and how the sculptures are placed, to present meaningful presence.

This is applied without unduly changing the original building, just a little touch on the house structure to reflect the existence of Nawasanga, although not perfect, but equipped with reliefs and sculptures that contain Balinese tradition which are arranged universally given the house is in Surabaya city. The explanation from homeowners is very orderly and in stages, such that it is easy to understand the material as well as its meaning. Since explaining the meaning of architecture and works of art is not easy, the use of mastery of psychology that utilizes comparison as a strategy to explain something specific is applied.

## 3. Research Objectives

This study evaluates the transformation of application of Balinese tradition in standard residences, which are already finished products from the developer, and which have limited space due to spatial organization and arrangement.

Acculturation of cultures which involves the ability of cultural adaptability and compatibility to different situations and locations, helps to ensure the cultural meaning which is maintained and applied properly.

The objectives of this study include:

1. To evaluate the application the Balinese tradition in the standard residential building in Surabaya city.
2. To know the elements that can be presented there in.

3. To know how to harmonize human life and the nature in the standard residence, even though the space is limited space especially when the residential buildings are finished according to standard set by the developer.

## 4. Theory Review

In examining matters relating to tradition, the standard rules used are based on the guidelines of the culture, so as not to violate the decisions of the owner.

Adhering to Balinese architectural tradition is important to be implemented in Bali. However, since the geographical positions are outside the Bali Island, the application of these traditions needs to be adapted to the existing conditions of the house. This faces some challenges to the direction of the house which is towards the West, as opposed to the North-South axis in the traditional architectural rules (must face the North-South axis or the Kaja-Kelod axis). The theory used as the basis for the arrangement of the standard home in Surabaya city is obtained from: I Nyoman Gelebet<sup>1</sup>, I Wayan Meganada<sup>2</sup>, I Made Yasa Negara<sup>3</sup>, I Made Suwirya<sup>4</sup> (1986), among others:

- (a) Given the presence of a mountain in the middle, then for South Bali, 'Kaja' is towards the mountains in the north and 'Kelod' towards the sea in the south; while for North Bali 'Kaja' is towards the mountains in the south and 'Kelod' towards the sea in the north.
- (b) Nawasanga, a division system at three points on double sides, such that the whole results into nine points or a specific value. Direction of the system for both sides is the "top / prime, middle, lower", which for the prime location is located on the corner and used for the highest functions such as for worship. It is called a shrine or temple for worship.
- (c) Living beings in the world have a close relationship with nature, where residential or private residence is as a micro-cosmos as part of the so-called macro-cosmos. Nature in itself, also maintains a relationship between the continents (the private local residence) with great continent (the wider foreign nature without), thus preserving the overall character.

Amos Rapoport<sup>5</sup> (2005) states that there are three basic questions that define the domain, which are:

- (a) Do the biosocial, psychological and cultural characteristics of human beings, as members of a species, as individuals, or as members of various grouping, influence (and in design should influence) the characteristics of the built environment?
- (b) Are the effects and aspects of an environment in which the groups of people live under in good condition?
- (c) Is there an interaction between people and environment, and what are the mechanisms that link the two?

Kr Santosh Pandey<sup>6</sup> (2011), Pankaj Kant Dixit<sup>7</sup> states that

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> (1986): *Arsitektur Tradisional Daerah Bali*, 1986.

<sup>5</sup> (2005): *Culture Architecture and Design*

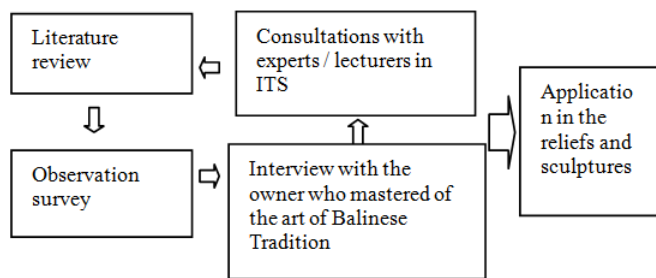
<sup>6,7</sup> (2011): *The Influence of Culture on Consumer behavior*.

“Culture not only influences consumer behavior but also reflects it, it is the mirror of both the values and possessions. Marketing strategies are unlikely to change cultural values, but marketing does influence culture, cultures influences what people wear, what and how they eat, where they live, and etc”.

The house has a spacious living standards, including building lots of approximately 120 m<sup>2</sup>, with a small courtyard in front and behind it; thus the application of the theories above is more to the meaning of the presence of reliefs and sculptures, along with the existence of spaces available.

The field data collection to obtain study materials is processed based on the theory, carried out in the object of study observation, documentation and interviewing qualified sources, as well as supporting literature data that confirms the research. In this study, the homeowner is a Balinese and an academician who is has an in-depth knowledge of traditional Balinese art of, so that the information provided maybe justified.

The research method used is "descriptive, deductive, qualitative", where the results of observations in the field on the object of study, are compared with the results of theoretical studies that have been done before.



**Figure 1.** The Flow Chart of Four Research Activities.

## 5. Result and Discussion

The Balinese tradition, as described in the previous theoretical studies, is actually a rule that is, absolute; it is fully implemented in Bali. The oneness of micro-cosmos and macro-cosmos is applied on buildings in Bali, which is unique as a tourism asset for Indonesia state.

The traditional Balinese architecture in Bali, was built, inhabited and used by Bali residents of Bali cultures which have a natural-look as well as ritual-spirited. In fact, many Balinese people who live outside Bali Island become agents of their traditions in the new locations, including who live in Surabaya city. Not all traditions of Bali can be presented in occupied buildings especially when residential buildings are finished according to standard set by the developer. In such a case the Balinese tradition meaning is usually adopted, such that the appearance represents Balinese architecture though not entirely. A Balinese traditional home, is influenced by the position of the owner in the caste, social status and role in society, resulting in a classification of the “main, middle and simple house.”

In Bali, the existence of the Agung Mountain is considered

sacred, such that the existing buildings in North Bali and South Bali, have a conceptual design of traditional architecture that is different one from the other, based on the values of the space formed by the presence of the three axes: The axis of the cosmos bhuah, bhuah and shuah (hydrosphere, lithosphere and atmosphere in the universe). The axis ritual Kanguh-Kauh (sunrise and sunset), and such a rich natural axis Kaja-Kelod (mountain and sea), each with a central area value are associated.

Application of the Balinese tradition on the house in Surabaya city, by the owner is applied in the form of:

- (a) A home is a place where the inhabitants must live in harmony with nature, so that it can bring blessings and powerful miracles, this is evident from the number of facilities in a family, also among the children, who do not get difficulties in finding quality jobs and a promising future. The entire wall in the house is not left empty, but it is filled with reliefs that help to make the residential atmosphere cool and friendly. The buildings around have a boundary/fences called “Penyenger or fences”, that keeps off the influence evil or dirty value. The gate does not have “Regol or protective cover” only a column with specific Bali carving.



**Figure 2.** The harmony in place.

- (b) The location of the holy place is at the prime position, the placing here is “strategic” where the functions do not mix up with other activities, it is easily accessible, easy to identify and situated in a corner; which is considered a sacred place for the family as Temple (though it does not face Kaja-Kanguh as required in Bali, since the direction of the house faces to the west), this condition shows acculturation to the culture in Java, which calls for building of Hindu places of worship such as temple or shrine.



**Figure 3.** The holy place of temple.

- (c) The space patterns of traditional Balinese architecture, are on the concept of Tri Hita Karana, which focus on “the mental, physical and force spirit” and all of them

are applied in the worship space, to become “the activities of public area and service space”. It is believed that all the objects have life, and thus need to be taken care of; starting from the outer court, to the trash bin, to the two ends of the gate (to which are attributed a certain sculpture, circular medallion with vines where there is a large snail attached, inscribed "Wong sabar gede wekasane" meaning "A patient person finds a big blessing").

The front yard, the inside of the house, and the backyard is filled up with meaningful relief such as:

Relief on the wall of the carport, which describes the oneness of nature to human life that forms the harmony of life. Here is depicted a village life with forests, rivers, humans and animals all living together in harmony and do not interfere with each other.



**Figure 4.** *The harmony of life relief.*

The carport does not use flat roofs that is considered suitable in the Middle East region which hardly receives rains, but instead uses an arched roof which, according to the owner, is suitable for the tropical climate, which indicates an adaptation to Indonesia that has two seasons, dry and rainy.

Relief on the wall of the front porch, about Kamajaya and Dewi Ratih, which describes the origin of human beings from affection / love between a man and woman, resulting to birth of a child which is nourished through breast feeding, this cycle continues and repeats itself which illustrated by the perfect circle surrounding the two beings.



**Figure 5.** *Kamajaya & Ratih Davit relief.*

The statue of an old man accompanied by his grandson, for fishing in a beautiful natural lake, where on the body of the caught fish is an inscription "The transfer culture" which emphasizes the importance of maintaining culture. So, the Indonesian national ready that the traditional architecture is a cultural product that needs to be preserved.



**Figure 6.** *The old man and grandson.*

The level of the floor towards the back of the house is raised, because the backyard is where temple reliefs are made and the cave where "Brahma Catur Muka" sculpture is placed and complete with gurgling water that is collected in a small pond which brings the freshness to life. Suku temple is a Hindu temple that located on the slopes of mount Lawu. shrines are deliberately placed in hard to reach places, to ensure that the people who come to pray in these places really have a true intention of worship with a sincere heart. In fact since ancient times, the building of worship always received precedence over the king's palaces, for instance in the cases of Pharaohs and their Pyramids in Egypt or Cailendra Dynasty with his Borobudur Stupa building. The presence of both Hindu and Buddhist temples, are depicted in the reliefs are located in the backyard, where has a sense of unification religious communities and the universe.



**Figure 7.** *The cave of Brahma Catur Muka.*

According to the owner, loving your neighbor should include love for all living things (fish, plants and etc) and should continue to be maintained. This concept is also applied in the house as an expression of "green building". The park has a decorative element, art as well as delivers the message that harmony of nature and human life.

Culture represents the result of the relationship between man and nature, in which the native background is based on religious norms and local customs. In relation to the embodiment of form that occurs, then the cultural background gives logic pattern, aesthetics and ethics. Sometimes the logic cannot be reached, when aesthetics and art are incorporated in the making of a work of art. This condition can occur in a case where the owner makes sculptures, and the end result turns out to have six fingers instead of five. This condition leads to the completed statue being fixed again.



The views of the home owner's life, include: "Back to nature; Living between beautiful things; A thing of beauty is a joy forever; A beautiful environment gives a thoughts of harmonious feelings; The consistency of implementing the principle of life results in a calm atmosphere and light of life

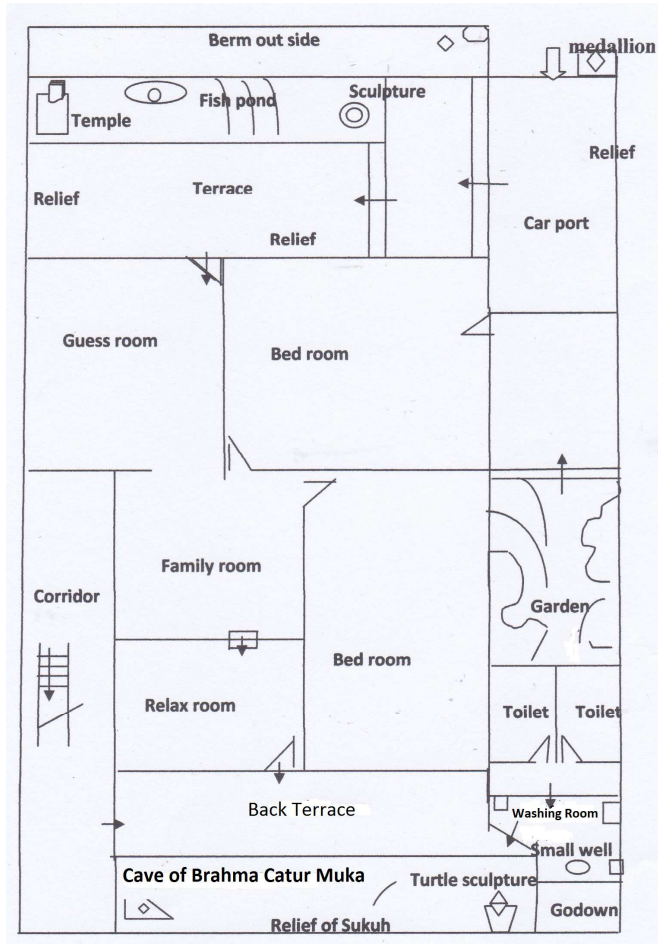


Figure 8. The House Maps

## 6. Conclusion

The life and human life, have a principle of oneness with nature, where it is not against the nature, but rather living in harmony with nature (Made Sukarata<sup>8</sup>, 2014).

Living in oneness with nature, reduces the consumptive nature of a person leading to evaluation of the potential of nature which has limitations while at the same time preventing the destruction of nature (David H Cohen<sup>9</sup>, Akira Yamaguchi<sup>10</sup>, John D Spengler<sup>11</sup>, 2003).

The love of nature, creates a sense of peace, with generates love for all, despite the differences with each other, and compassion to all living things that are God's creation (Made Sukarata<sup>8</sup>, 2014).

The clear evidence of a meaningful and environmentally sound traditional Indonesian architecture concept needs to be developed in the future and not to be abandoned (Josef

Prijotomo<sup>12</sup>, 1986).

The traditional architecture is a embodiment of space for accommodating the activities of human life with the repetition of forms / shapes from generation to generation with little or no change; based on religious norms and customs as well as the animated based on the potential of natural environment. The meaning contained in traditional architecture of Indonesia needs to be understood well, because it contains a lot of elements that can maintain a balance with nature and the environment (I Nyoman Gelebet<sup>1</sup>, I Wayan Meganada<sup>2</sup>, I Made Yasa Negara<sup>3</sup>, I Made Suwiry<sup>4</sup>, 1986).

The transcendental nature of human being, has a great concern to the living objects as well as the dead, all need proper care even though they are only animals (Made Sukarata<sup>8</sup>, 2014).

The important things in life, comprise of rogo / exercise, roso / ownership and ratio / intellect. All of these are aimed at increasing health, reducing forgetfulness thus increasing work productivity (Made Sukarata<sup>8</sup>, 2014).

Human beings should be able to coexist in difference, this is a very valuable thing if achieved. Hatred must be eliminated despite the different in beliefs and races, because all are God's creation (Made Sukarata<sup>8</sup>, 2014).

The application of Balinese tradition in standard residence (Made Sukarata<sup>8</sup>, 2014), include:

- The direction of the front side of the house cannot be changed since the standard residence and its facilities have already been established. This leaves the best option of the application of the Balinese tradition that suits to the existing conditions of the house. Since the house faces the west this affects the positioning of the nawasanga points, thus changes the lay out of the important locations within the residence such as the location of the place of worship which is based on several considerations (easily visible and accesible, separated from other household activities, strategically placed at a corner).
- The structuring of rooms and spaces the house is according to the Balinese culture, the raised/ elevated places in the house are reserved for the shrine, for worship., that is known as temple or candi (Javanese-Hinduism acculturation).
- The aspect of life is always a harmonious relationship with nature which is applied in the form of reliefs and how the sculptures are placed, to present meaningful presence.

The way of life of the home owner's and Balinese life (Made Sukarata<sup>8</sup>, 2014), are include:

- Back to nature.
- Living between beautiful things.
- Learning that things of beauty are a joy forever.
- Knowing that a beautiful environ - ment makes everybody think that is harmony thought
- The consistency of implementing the principle of life, results in a calm atmosphere and light of life.

<sup>8</sup> (2014) : Lecturer at Petra Christian University

<sup>9,10,11</sup> (2003): Building Culture and Environment

<sup>12</sup> (1986) : Dinamika Arsitektur Nusantara

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